2020 General Elections: Sample educational email from Illinois Policy Institute

Note: State think tanks may reference this example email to develop any educational election resources for their own states. Please note that this example is specific to Illinois, and any state-specific information should be updated for your specific state and its 2020 voting laws and procedures.

This Election Day is significant in Illinois because voters will have the chance, for the first time in 50 years, to tell state leaders whether they want their taxes raised and whether they trust state lawmakers with greater power to set their tax rates.

But before anyone gets to cast that vote, they may need a guide to navigating the confusing voting process. The important first step in making anyone's voice heard is registering to vote.

Who can vote in Illinois?

You must:
- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be a resident of Illinois and of your precinct at least 30 days before the election
- Be at least 18 years old on or before the next election
- Cannot be serving a sentence in prison
- Cannot be voting anywhere else

How can I tell if I'm registered to vote?
Not sure if you've already registered? The easiest way to see if you've registered to vote is by checking online. The Illinois State Board of Elections has an online tool Illinoisans can use. To check, you simply add in your name, date of birth and address. If you are already registered, you are good to go.

How do I register to vote in Illinois?
There are a couple routes you can take to register to vote. Regardless, you must ensure you're registered in a timely manner. Regular registration is open year-round, but ends 27 days prior to the election, on Oct. 6.

What do I need to register to vote?
Federal law requires some form of identification for first-time registration. Valid identification could include a state-issued ID or a copy of a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or another government document showing your name and address.

Illinois does not require a voter to declare a political party to vote in a General Election. Although the option exists to pick a party, it is not required.
You will be required to sign your voter registration card.

A person who is 17 may register to vote if they will turn 18 on or before Election Day. **How do I register online to vote?**

Online registration is available until 16 days before the election on the Illinois [State Board of Elections website](http://www.elections.il.gov). In order to register online, a person must have completed their registration by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 18. When filling out the registration form, the voter will need to input some personal information such as their driver's license, age, name and address.

**How can I register by mail to vote?**

To register by mail, you may print out [this form](https://www.fvap.gov) from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and mail it to the Illinois State Board of Election at this address:

State Board of Elections  
2329 S. MacArthur Blvd.  
Springfield, IL 62704

You will be required to submit identification with your mail-in form. If you do not submit the necessary identification, you will be required to show it in person when you vote, and you will not be eligible to vote by mail.

Additionally, mail-in registration forms must be postmarked by Oct. 6.

**How do I register in person to vote?**

If you miss the online or mail-in voter registration windows, you may also register in person during the “grace period” starting Oct. 7 and extending through Election Day, Nov. 3. Each county has designated locations where a person can register to vote. It is best to check out your local county clerk's website or call their office to find a place near you. Typically, in addition to the county clerk's office, you can register in-person at city and village offices, public libraries, and locations that are set up as permanent and temporary voting locations.