

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

YOUR RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND
OBLIGATIONS AS A MASSACHUSETTS VOTER - A WILLIAMSTOWN
VOTER

Williamstown Board of Registrars:

J. Elwood Lamphear, Clerk
Arthur Snide
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The Williamstown Board of Registrars wishes to present the following information concerning the registering to vote in Williamstown for the benefit of all new comers to Massachusetts, and in particular, for the student group who will be voting for the first time. All voters have rights, privileges, and obligations to meet as a Massachusetts voter, and the information supplied herewith is to acquaint new registrants with the facts at hand, not as a deterrent, but to serve as a guide in meeting the requirements of the State.

If the information supplied is not entirely clear, you are urged to contact the local Town Clerk, either at his office, or telephone Williamstown 458-5358, who serves as the Clerk of the Board of Registrars, to help clarify the matter.

RIGHTS AND
PRIVILEGES:

It is the right and privilege of every Massachusetts voter to sign nomination papers, to sign petitions, to attend and participate in town meetings, to vote in all elections at all levels, to serve on any town committee, and to run for elective office.

OBLIGATIONS:

Along with the rights and privileges of the Massachusetts voter go certain obligations. These obligations are binding on all voters. However, they are not meant to be a deterrent, nor a road block. They are merely stated here so that all prospective registrants, especially students, may be aware of them.

State Income Tax:

There is a State income tax that must be paid by every person claiming Massachusetts as his legal residence. There are two types of forms available - one for the full year resident, and one for the resident moving in during the year. Your tax consultant can tell you which form to use.

State income tax is withheld from the wages of all State residents where applicable. State income tax returns should be made in Williamstown using your town address.

Motor Vehicle License and Registration:

As a new resident, you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license and/or register your motor vehicle within thirty days of taking up legal residence in Williamstown. In conjunction with this, you must have adequate automobile insurance, including compulsory liability, reflecting your Williamstown address. You must also pay an annual excise tax

on your car based on 90% of its F.O.B. value the first year, 60% the second year, 40% the third year, and 25% the fourth year and fifth year, and thereafter, 10%. Age, condition, and so-called market value are not considered. All questions of value are referred to the Board of Assessors.

Jury Duty:

Every registered voter is eligible for jury duty. Jurors are chosen at random by the Board of Selectmen from the voter registration list.

Personal Property Insurance:

If you are a student wishing to register to vote in Williamstown, you would be wise to have your own personal property insurance. Once you declare Williamstown your legal residence, the extended coverage clause of your parents' personal property insurance policy will no longer cover your belongings at school.

REGISTRATION: In order to vote in any election, you must first register.

Who:

You can register to vote if:

- (1) You have been a resident of Massachusetts six (6) months prior to election time. Proof of residence or domicile involves two things: Actual physical presence, and also the intent to remain in the particular city or town indefinitely.
- (2) You are a citizen of the United States.
- (3) You will be eighteen (18) years of age by election time.
- (4) You sign an affidavit written by the Board of Registrars of Williamstown testifying to the above facts.

Where:

You can register any week day from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. in the Town Clerk's Office in the Williamstown Municipal Building. There are also extra registration sessions held evenings and Saturdays just prior to the closing dates for elections.

(3)

When:

You must register at least 20 days prior to a town election, and 31 days prior to a State election. These time intervals also pertain to primary elections or caucuses. No one can register within 20 days prior to a town election or within 31 days prior to a State election.

Absentee Registration:

A request for an absentee ballot may be made to the Town Clerk if you will be away on the date of the election, provided that your application is received at the Town Office in ample time to process, send by mail to you, and have time to be returned by mail.

The Town Clerk is pleased to certify all absentee ballots for out-of-State absentee voters, and all students are urged to use this service without cost.

One-Time Registration:

You have to register only once in Massachusetts unless you move to another city or town, or change your name through court action or marriage, or your name was omitted from the annual listing of residents on the January 1 previous to the election in which you wish to vote or you wish to change or cancel your party affiliation.

Party Affiliation:

This pertains only to State and national primaries. Your party affiliation is not binding in any town, state, or national general election. The town elections in Williamstown are done without party affiliation.

To vote in the primary, you must state your party affiliation and use only the ballot of your chosen party. If you voted a particular party ballot in the last primary election and have not changed your party enrollment, you are still a member of that particular party and may use only that party's ballot.

You can establish, cancel, or change your party enrollment by appearing in person at your place of registration any time up to the 31 days before the primary.

If you cancel your party enrollment or have never declared a party preference before, you can then choose either ballot at the next primary election.

VOTING:

Time:

The polls in Williamstown are open from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. for all town, state, and national elections. They are open from 12:00 noon until 8:00 P.M. for a town caucus.

Place:

The polling place in Williamstown is located in the gymnasium of the Mitchell School on School Street.

Procedure:

To cast your ballot, go to the polling place during the hours designated and give your name to the clerk, and your party affiliation if this is a state or national primary election. Take the ballot the clerk hands you, go to the voting booth, read the ballot carefully (there will be a sample ballot posted just outside the voting area for examination before entering), and mark it in pencil as directed with an X. Fold the ballot as it was when you received it, give your name and ballot to the clerk at the ballot box, and see that your name is checked off and your ballot deposited.

ELECTIONS:

Every city or town in Massachusetts will hold municipal elections every year. Most town elections are held during the first three months of the year. Williamstown holds its town elections on the first Monday of March. All city elections take place during the fall. Primary elections or non-partisan preliminary elections (town caucus in Williamstown) may be held in some communities. General elections for state, national and county offices are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Presidential primary elections are held the last Tuesday in April in Presidential election years. State primaries are held the seventh Tuesday prior to the State election in even-numbered years. Voters nominate candidates for the offices to be filled by election in November.

The above information is subject to change by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and such changes and updating will be publicized for the benefit of all voters.