

## Can a “Snowbird” Register to Vote in Florida? YES - Here’s How:

### Considerations:

- You cannot vote in two states. If you choose to vote in Florida, you give up your right to vote in your alternate state.
- To register to vote in Florida, and specifically in Sarasota County, you must be:
  - At least 18 years old,
  - A citizen of the United States of America.
  - A legal resident of Florida and Sarasota County (see paragraph below).

Contrary to popular belief, you do NOT need to spend six months and a day in Florida to vote here, nor do you need to own real estate. You can be both a legal voting resident of Florida and a taxpaying resident of another state. The so-called “183-day rule” is a residency rule used by many states for taxation purposes; it has nothing to do with voter registration in Florida. The Florida Division of Elections states unequivocally: **“Legal residency is not defined in law. Over the years, the courts and the Florida Department of State/Division of Elections have construed legal residency to be *where a person mentally intends to make his or her permanent residence for purposes of registration.*”** (emphasis added) (“Voter Residency in Florida DE Reference Guide 0003 Updated 06-2019”)

**Please note that while one’s intention to make Florida her or his permanent residence is *subjective*, factual circumstances should support that intent** – for example, owning or renting property in Florida, using a Florida address for homestead filings, etc. Please also be aware that registering to vote in Florida might impact residency definitions for taxation, homestead exemption, or other purposes in the state where you are currently registered. Please check with your tax or legal advisor about this.

### How to Register:

Print out and complete the Florida Voter Registration Form at <https://dos.myflorida.com/media/702368/dsde39-eng-pre-7066-with-2019-addresses.pdf> and mail it to the address provided.

Some specifics:

In Question 5, where you are asked for a Florida Driver License or Florida ID Card (issued by the Dept. of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles), you are instructed to provide the last four digits of your Social Security number if you do not have either of these cards.

In Question 7, “Address Where You Live,” provide your Sarasota County address.

In Question 8, “Mailing Address,” provide the address where you want the Voter Information Card sent.

In Question 9, “Address Where You Were Last Registered to Vote,” provide your most recent voting address so that the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections can contact your previous jurisdiction to cancel your voter registration there.

The Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections will mail your Voter Information Card to your preferred mailing address (either your Sarasota County or alternate address). To get your ballot mailed to you

after you register to vote, sign up for Vote by Mail. You may do so either online at [www.sarasotavotes.com](http://www.sarasotavotes.com) or by calling the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections at 941-861-8618. Vote by Mail ballots are generally mailed about one month before the Primary Day or Election Day, so you must provide the address where you will be at that time. (If you include your email address on your Vote by Mail application, the Supervisor of Elections will notify you when your Vote by Mail ballot is en route.) The Post Office will NOT forward a Vote by Mail ballot. We highly recommend Voting by Mail as a safe, secure way to vote.

Note: Florida is a closed primary state, so you must register as a Democrat to vote in a state Democratic Primary. If you register without a party affiliation, you may vote only in the General Election. The deadline to register is 29 days before a primary or an election.

#### **How to Vote if You Will Be in Florida During an Election Season:**

- You may go to the Polling Location on your Voter Information Card or, during Early Voting, to any Early Voting Polling Location in Sarasota County. However, for greatest safety both during and after the current COVID-19 health crisis, we recommend that you Vote by Mail (see above).
- Voters who go to their polling place must present a valid photo ID with signature. The ID does not need to display your Florida address, but merely show your photo and your signature. Note that you may not use your out-of-state driver license at the polls.
- Among acceptable IDs for in-person voting are a U.S. passport, a debit or credit card, military or student identification, neighborhood association card, and an employee identification card issued by any entity of the federal government, a state, a county, or a municipality. For a full list of acceptable identification, go to <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/election-day-voting/>

#### **How to Vote If You Will NOT Be in Florida During an Election Season:**

- After you register to vote, sign up to Vote by Mail (see above). Request that the ballot be mailed to the address where you plan to be about one month before any election. You must provide your address to the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections before every election to ensure that your Vote by Mail ballot arrives at the correct address.

**Example:** You own property in Buffalo, NY, and you rent in Sarasota, FL. You go back and forth between both residences. You want to vote in Florida and not in New York. You can legally vote in Florida by registering to vote in Florida and then either going to the polls with a photo and signature ID or by signing up to Vote by Mail and requesting that your ballot be sent to the address where you will be about one month before any election. Remember to notify the Supervisor of Elections before the next election as to where you want your ballot sent. The Post Office will NOT forward a Vote by Mail ballot.

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