

Absentee Ballot

The type of ballot a voter living abroad, serving in the military, traveling, or attending school would use to vote. Voters who will be away from home on or near Election Day can request that an absentee ballot be mailed to their temporary address.

- Military and overseas voters are mailed a ballot at least 45 days before the election, a federal requirement as part of the [MOVE act](#).
- Out of state absentee ballots are mailed 29 days before the election.
- In-state absentee ballots are mailed 20 days before the election.
- Absentee ballots are available starting on the 43rd day prior to the election with a completion of the [absentee ballot request form](#).

Amendment

A change to the U.S. Constitution or the constitution of a state. Voters must approve any changes to the constitution.

Ballot

A paper form with contests (a list of candidates of office) and ballot measures (proposed laws and amendments) that voters mark to make choices. What contests are on each voter's ballot depends on where that voter lives (which jurisdictions and districts the voter lives in).

Ballot Envelope

Also sometimes referred to as a "signature envelope", is an envelope that a voter places their finished ballot in, seals it, and signs it. The envelope is then returned to the elections office where the signature is verified and the vote can be counted.

Ballot Initiative

A proposed law drafted by residents and placed on the ballot to be approved or rejected by voters. Ballot initiatives are usually drafted by a group of residents who are passionate about a particular issue.

Bonds

Bonds are debt obligations issued by jurisdictions to fund major capital improvement projects. Similar to a home mortgage, they are used to finance large purchases over time. Bonds are generally repaid through property taxes. The financial impact of a bond election will vary from resident to resident based on property values and the number of bonds issued.

Candidate

A person running for elected office.

Certification Day

The day that marks the official end of vote counting following an election and certification. Certification by each county in Oregon occurs 27 days after Election Day.

Closed Party Primary Election

Major political parties in Oregon hold primary elections to choose candidates to represent them in general elections. Oregon law allows major political parties to decide whether to hold open or closed primary elections. In a closed party primary election, only voters registered with the party holding the primary election can participate in its primary election. Voters receive a ballot listing only those candidates running for office in the major political party with which the voters are affiliated, along with non-partisan races and ballot measures. In Oregon, voters must be registered with their party of choice at least 21 days prior to the election. Voters not registered with a major political party receive non-partisan candidate races and ballot measures in closed party primary elections.

Charter

A charter is the legal document that creates and sets the rules for a municipal government. Oregon is a home rule state which means that incorporated municipalities can make limited rules that have the force of law. There are 241 incorporated areas in Oregon.

Congressional District

A political subdivision for the purpose of electing U.S. representatives. Oregon currently has six Congressional districts.

Constituency

The voters and residents in a district that an elected official represents.

Delegates

The people who have been chosen to represent each state at a political party's convention.

District

A geographical area that an elected official serves or represents. There are many different and overlapping special districts (school, water, fire, and other districts). Where you live determines what districts you are in.

General Election

General elections are statewide elections that are held so that registered voters can decide state and national officials who will head the government. General elections happen on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even years.

Incumbent

A person currently holding the office.

Measure

A measure is any of the following submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at an election: (a) A proposed law, (b) an Act or part of an Act of the Legislative Assembly, (c) a revision of or amendment to the Oregon Constitution, (d) local, special or municipal legislation, (e) a proposition or question.

Nonpartisan Election

Nonpartisan elections are elections usually held at the state or local level where the candidate's party membership is not given on the ballot.

Precinct

A precinct is the smallest geographic subdivision for voting purposes. Morrow County has 5 precincts.

Primary Election

Primary elections are preliminary elections in which voters choose party candidates to run for office representing their party in general elections. Primary elections happen on the third Tuesday in May of even years.

Referendum

A proposed piece of legislation (a law) that people can directly vote on. Referendums approved by the voters become law.

Special District Election

An election to elect board members to special districts, such as school boards, water, or fire districts. Special district elections happen on the third Tuesday in May of odd years.