

TOMPKINS COUNTY

EARLY VOTING FAQ

OCTOBER 26TH—NOVEMBER 3RD

What is early voting?

New York State has passed the Early Voting Act, which gives New Yorkers nine extra days to vote by machine prior to Election Day, at special Early Voting locations. With this new law, New York joins a number of other states that already offer early voting days for their citizens. The 2019 General Election will be the first opportunity New York voters will have to try early voting.

Who is eligible to vote early?

Everyone who is registered to vote in New York State and has resided in Tompkins County for at least 30 days can vote early. Unlike voting with an absentee ballot, you do not need to be unable to vote on Election Day in order to choose early voting. If you are registered to vote in the election district in which you live, you will be able to cast your ballot on the voting machine in either early voting site. If your registration has not yet been updated following a move, you will be able to vote by affidavit ballot.

Where and When can I vote early?

In Tompkins County, early voting will take place at two locations: Town of Ithaca Town Hall at 215 N Tioga St. (corner of E. Buffalo St.), and at the Crash Fire Rescue (CFR) Building at 72 Brown Rd. (next to Taughannock Aviation). Both locations will be open the following hours: Saturday and Sunday (10/26-27/2019) 9am-2pm; Monday (10/28) 7am-3pm; Tuesday (10/29) 12pm-8pm; Wednesday (10/30) 7am-3pm; Thursday (10/31) 12pm-8pm; Friday (11/1) 7am-3pm; Saturday and Sunday (11/2-3) 9am-2pm.

Does it matter which early voting site I go to?

No. If you are a Tompkins County resident you may vote at either of our early voting sites. You choose the site that is most convenient for you. Your vote will be recorded for your town, ward, and election district no matter which site you choose.

I am eligible for an absentee ballot. Can I still get one?

Yes. Anyone who already receives an absentee ballot due to a permanent disability, or who has applied to receive one due to temporary illness or inability to vote in person on Election Day, may still vote their absentee ballot the same as always. People who will be out of the county on Election Day now have the choice of voting early at an early voting site or voting by absentee ballot by mail or in person at the Board of Elections office. Early voting is meant to supplement, not replace, voting by absentee ballot.

If I vote early, can I change my mind and go to vote on Election Day?

No! This is an important difference between early voting and voting with an absentee ballot. If you go to an early voting location and cast your vote on the machine, your vote is recorded and you may not go back and vote again later, even if you change your mind. Absentee ballots are not counted until after the polls close, so if you vote by absentee ballot and then discover you are able to vote in person on Election Day, you may do so.

How can the Board of Elections know no one will vote more than once?

When you go to the Early Voting site, you will see new equipment. We will be using Electronic Poll Books (E-Poll Books), which will make sure voters can only vote once. Here is how the Monroe County BOE describes the process: "The E-Poll Books will communicate via a secure network connection and only transmit non-personal information to update files. Based on where a voter lives, the E-Poll Books will make sure each voter is given a ballot containing only the candidates they are authorized to vote for in their district."

Are the Early Voting sites accessible?

Yes, just as with our Election Day poll sites, early voting sites are fully accessible. The CFR Building has ample parking available. The Town Hall building is located in the same block as the TCAT station at Seneca and Tioga. There are also several parking spots across N. Tioga St. from the Town Hall that are dedicated for Early Voters at no charge, as well as many other parking spots around the Town Hall that permit 10 minutes of free parking.

Why vote early

Early voting provides more opportunities to vote for people whose schedule or obligations might make it hard to get to the polls on Election Day. In years when a heavy turn-out is expected, people who choose to vote early will help to reduce the wait times for others who vote on Election Day and make sure everyone has the chance to vote. Early Voting sites will have the feel and flow of your normal Election Day polling site, but with more staff and heightened expertise. Whether to vote early or wait until Election Day is a personal choice that New Yorkers will now be able to make.