

# CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

## CITY CLERK DEPARTMENT

**David J. Rushford, City Clerk**

**Susan M. Ledoux, Assistant City Clerk**  
**Niko Vangjeli, Assistant Director of Elections**

Thank you for allowing me to update you concerning the activities of the Board of Election Commissioners, the City Clerk Department staff who support the Commission, and to discuss our efforts with voter education in 2015 and in 2016.

1. The Worcester Rising Civics Camp was held again this year at Worcester State University and hosted by the Urban Studies Department. The 3-day event allowed students to participate in a variety of discussions hosted by local civic leaders from the justice system, law, higher education and local government. All students agreed to conduct voter registration sessions in their respective high schools in the Fall of 2015 and work at the polls on Tuesday, November 3, 2015.
2. As in past years, staff will partner with local organizations such as colleges, universities, neighborhood centers and special event organizers to register voters in the community in advance of the September Primary and November Municipal Election and to educate all voters about the dates and details for voting in the upcoming elections.
3. A newly-developed brief voter guide is being distributed to anyone inquiring about the process and timetable for running in this year's election.
4. For the first time, it is anticipated that an informational flyer will be developed and inserted into the Fall, 2015 real estate tax bills informing the public of the details of the November, 2015 election, including the hours that polls are open and to promote the "Where do I vote?" button located on the city's web site.
5. Previous efforts to install motivational signage at strategic locations throughout the city will be enhanced with the anticipated purchase and hanging of banners on the exterior of City Hall, Union Station, the Main Public Library and neighborhood centers, reinforcing the date and details of the November, 2015 election.
6. A new, updated and more detailed video will be created for viewing on the city's web site and government TV channel, providing details on the registration and voting processes.
7. Local radio personalities of both English and Spanish language programs will be asked to promote participation in the registration and voting processes.
8. Beginning in August, 2015 state law will allow for on-line voter registration. Once guidance is received from the Commonwealth, local efforts will be developed to inform the public of this new method of voter registration.

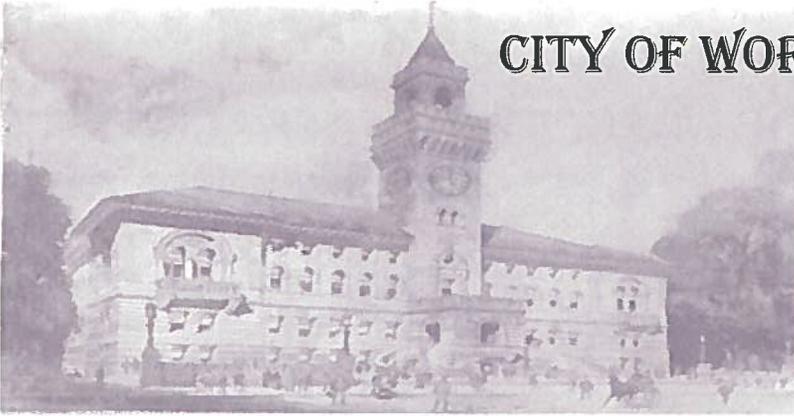
9. Planning for the roll-out of Early Voting in the November, 2016 election, the Commission and the Clerk staff will discuss the deliberations for formulating the local implementation by holding discussions in all five City Council Districts once the Commonwealth provides the city with the framework. Strong consideration will be given to convenience the public at a location (s) and times that will aim to encourage participation rates among all populations and areas of the community.
10. Efforts will continue to be made to broaden amongst the poll worker group those second languages spoken by Worcester voters across all areas of the city.

On behalf of the Commission members, I invite any and all ideas to pursue additional efforts you feel we might make to open access to the registration and voting processes in 2015 and 2016.

Cordially,



David J. Rushford  
City Clerk



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### Voter Registration Information

#### Who may register?

Only a person who is:

- a US citizen, and
- a resident of Massachusetts, and
- 18 years old on or before Election Day (must still meet registration deadlines set forth below).

#### What must I do if I've changed my address since I registered?

If you have moved within the same city or town, notify your local election office of your new address in writing. If you have moved to a new city or town, you must register again in your new city or town.

#### Can I register to vote before I turn eighteen?

Yes, as long as you will be 18 on or before the next election or town meeting. However, please note that you must still register by the deadline for that election.

#### Are there deadlines for registration?

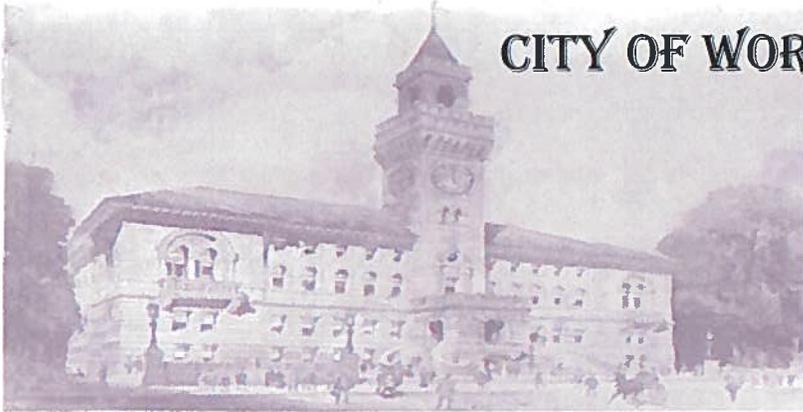
Yes. In order to vote you must be registered:

- **20 days** before all primaries and elections.
  - **Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2015, 8:00 pm**
  - **Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015, 8:00 pm**

#### What should I do if I registered to vote and I have not heard from my election official?

If you have NOT received confirmation of your voter status from your city or town election official within 2 or 3 weeks from the date you registered please contact the Worcester Election office at (508) 799-1134.

Source: MA Elections Division [www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm)



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### **“INACTIVE” – WHAT DOES IT MEAN? HOW DID IT HAPPEN? HOW TO CHANGE BACK TO “ACTIVE” STATUS?**

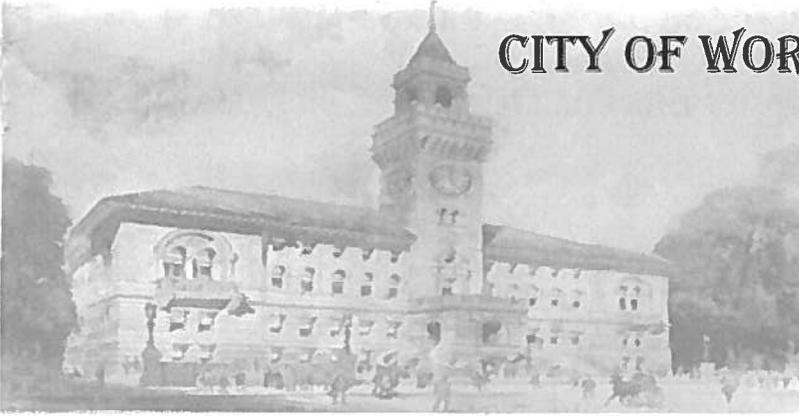
Voters become “inactive” on the Voting List when they (1) do not respond to the Worcester Annual Street Listing; (2) move within the City and do not submit a change of address with the Election Department; or (3) move out of the City and have not registered to vote in their new city or town.

### **INACTIVE VOTERS CAN STILL VOTE!**

- To verify your voting status please visit [www.worcesterma.gov](http://www.worcesterma.gov) “Where do I vote?”.
- You must go to the polling location for the precinct where you were last registered to vote.
- At the check-in table, give the clerk your name and your old address. Your name will have a letter “I” next to it, indicating you are Inactive.
- You will be asked to show identification (from your current address).
- You will be required to fill out a form called “Affirmation of Current and Continuous Residence” which means that you have maintained residency in the City of Worcester.
- You will fill out a new voter registration form for the new address and leave it with the election officers. Once processed, this will transfer your registration to the new address.
- You will be allowed to vote. To avoid these problems in the future, please make sure to respond to the Annual Street Listing which is mailed to every household each year.

The Annual Street Listing is conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. By taking a moment to respond, the Election Department is able to keep your voter history and voting address up-to-date, even if you may occasionally miss the opportunity to vote.

Source: MA Elections Division [www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm)



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**Absentee Voting**

**I can't get to the polls on Election Day. Can I still vote?**

Yes. You may vote by absentee ballot if you:

- will be absent from your city or town on Election Day, and/or
- have a physical disability that prevents you from voting at the polling place, and/or
- cannot vote at the polls due to religious beliefs.

**Must I be a registered voter in order to vote by absentee ballot?**

Yes, unless you are a "specially qualified voter." A specially qualified voter is a person:

- who is otherwise eligible to register as a voter and whose present domicile is outside the United States, and whose last domicile in the United States was Massachusetts or whose present domicile is Massachusetts and who is:
  - (a) absent from the city or town of residence and in the active service of the armed forces or in the merchant marine of the United States or a spouse or dependent of such person;
  - (b) absent from the Commonwealth; or
  - (c) confined in a correctional facility or a jail, except if by reason of felony conviction.

## **How can I apply for an absentee ballot?**

Apply in writing to at the Worcester Election Office, and include your:

- name
- address as registered
- ward and precinct (if you know them)
- address where you wish the absentee ballot sent
- in a State Primary, the Party ballot you want, and
- your signature

Absentee ballot applications are available at the Worcester Election Office or you can download them from the Election Page-Document Center on the city website @ [www.worcesterma.gov](http://www.worcesterma.gov). You may also request for an absentee ballot by a letter or note. Whichever method you choose, the application/note must be made in writing and signed.

## **How do I vote by absentee ballot?**

You can either have an absentee ballot mailed to you, or you can arrange with the Worcester Election Office to vote in their office. The deadline for applying for an absentee ballot is noon of the day before the Election.

## **When should I submit my application for an absentee ballot?**

If you wish to vote by absentee ballot for more than one election in a year, you may make one application and request that ballots for all elections during that calendar year be sent to you. If you vote by mail, make certain the application arrives at your local Election Office early, so that they can process your request and mail the ballot to you in time. Remember, the ballot must be mailed to you – no faxes, e-mail attachments, pickups, etc. You may mail or hand-deliver the ballot back to the Election Office, but it must arrive before the close of the polls on Election Day (8:00 p.m. for State Elections).

## **Can anyone else apply for an absentee ballot for me?**

Yes. A family member may apply for you.

## **Can I vote by absentee ballot in person?**

Yes. You can apply and vote at the same time two to three weeks before an Election. Call your Election Office ahead of time to make certain that the absentee ballots are available. Please remember that you must meet one of the requirements listed above for absentee voting.

## **What if I'm not able to mark my absentee ballot?**

You may ask any person to help you. The helper must print his or her name and your name on the brown envelope, write the reason you needed help, and then sign his or her name as the assisting person.

## **How do I return my absentee ballot to my local Election Office?**

The ballot will come with instructions and a set of return envelopes. After marking your ballot, insert it into the inner envelope provided and seal that inner envelope. Read and sign the affirmation on the inner envelope. Place the signed and sealed inner envelope in the mailing envelope provided with your ballot. The ballot can either be mailed back to the Worcester Election Office, or you or a family member may deliver it by hand to the Election Office. If mailing your ballot, please make sure to include the proper postage. You cannot deliver an absentee ballot directly to the polling place on Election Day. To be counted, a completed ballot must be received by the time the polls close on Election Day. If you are voting from outside the United States, your completed absentee ballot for a final State or City Election can be received up to 10 days after the Election, but it must be postmarked on or before the Election Day.

## **I'm permanently disabled. May I vote at home?**

Yes. You must apply to the Worcester Election Office to do so. File a letter from your doctor with the Election Office. The doctor must state that you are permanently unable to cast your ballot at the polling place due to a physical disability. The Election Office will automatically mail you an application for an absentee ballot for all elections in a calendar year. You must sign the application and send it back to the Election Office. Call the Election Office at (508)799-1134 for more information about how to register to vote at home or to request that a mail-in registration form be sent to you.

*Source: MA Elections Division [www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm)*

