

## Why and How Do You Register to Vote?



Twenty-four million young people, ages 18 to 29, voted in the 2008 presidential election but many more couldn't vote because they failed to register properly.

The American democracy is based on the idea of one person gets one vote. Every voice needs to be heard through voting in order to make our system of

government work. To be eligible to vote you must: be a U.S. citizen; be a resident of, that is actually live in full time, the state you will be voting in; and be at least 18 years-old when the election occurs.

These are simple rules but if everyone had to prove that they were eligible to vote when they arrived at the polling place (the location for voting), the voting process would be very complicated and slow. Instead voters register in advance, some time before the election, and prove that they meet the criteria for voting. Each state sets its own deadline for voter registration.

The local voter registration board checks the information and makes lists of registered voters. In most states voters are assigned a polling place where to go to vote but as computerized voting is becoming a national trend, polling places and dates for voting are becoming more flexible. This flexibility meets the needs of the American people who are increasingly busy.

Most states accept mail-in voter registration. New voters must provide a photocopy of proof of identification and address. Anytime people move out of their current polling area, they must re-register in the new location or update their voter registration in order to vote in the next election.