

U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION



2010 Election Administration & Voting Survey

New Jersey

Statutory Overview

In order to better understand state laws governing federal elections, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, as part of its biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey, is collecting information on state election laws and procedures. These answers will help EAC to better understand the quantitative data relating to the 2010 general election that we are collecting from all U.S. states and territories.

EAC understands that responding to this Statutory Overview may require significant staff time on the part of your office. Please be assured that we have attempted to minimize the burden, and we appreciate your cooperation in this very important project.

Information Supplied By	
Name	Robert F. Giles
Title	Director
Office/Agency Name	Division of Elections
Address 1	225 West State Street, 5th Floor
Address 2	
City	Trenton
State	New Jersey
Zip Code	08608
Email Address	Robert.giles@sos.state.nj.us
Telephone (area Code and number)	609-292-3760
Fax Number (area code and number)	609-777-1280

DIRECTIONS AND EXAMPLE

Please provide your state's legal citation for the responses to these questions (where applicable).

Please answer each question to the best of your ability. If terms are ambiguous or not relevant, please explain why. If a question is not applicable to your state, please explain why. If a definition or term lacks statutory reference but is widely understood in practice, please explain. If election procedures vary at the local level within your state, please explain to the best of your ability.

If state laws are currently enjoined or otherwise blocked from enforcement by a state or federal court, or executive decision, please specify.

Please put your responses between the red, bracketed text lines. This will help us extract your answers into our central database.

Example:

A1. How does your state define the following terms related to votes and ballots? Please provide your state's legal citation defining these terms, where applicable.

- a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

Your answer goes here. You may enter the text directly, or cut and paste from another word processing program.

There is no limit to the length of your response.

[End definition (a) above this line.]

SECTION A: GENERAL

A1. How does your state define the following terms related to votes and ballots? Please provide your state's legal citation defining these terms, where applicable.

a. Over-vote

[Begin definition (a) below this line.]

The term "over-vote" is referenced in New Jersey law, but is not defined. Generally, the term is used in practice to refer to when a voter marks more names than there are persons to be elected to an office or marks both "yes" and "no" on a public question.

[End definition (a) above this line.]

b. Under-vote

[Begin definition (b) below this line.]

The term "under-vote" is referenced in New Jersey law, but is not defined. Generally, the term is used in practice to refer to when a voter marks no names for persons running for an office, marks fewer names than there are persons to be elected to an office, or marks neither "Yes" or "No" on a public question.

[End definition (b) above this line.]

c. Blank ballot

[Begin definition (c) below this line.]

The term "blank ballot" is referenced in New Jersey law, but is not defined. Generally, the term is used in practice to refer to a wholly blank ballot.

[End definition (c) above this line.]

d. Void/Spoiled ballot

[Begin definition (d) below this line.]

A "void ballot" under New Jersey law is a ballot which:

- is either wholly blank;
- has more names marked for every office than there are persons to be elected to such office and which has both "Yes" and "No" marked upon every public question; or
- has on its face or back, any mark, sign, erasure, designation, or device whatsoever, other than is permitted by the election laws, by which such ballot was intended to be distinguished from another ballot. N.J.S.A. 19:16-4.

A "spoiled ballot" under New Jersey law is a ballot which has been spoiled or rendered unfit for use by a voter and which may be returned to the district board member who may then give the voter a replacement ballot. N.J.S.A. 19:15-29.

[End definition (d) above this line.]

e. Provisional/Challenged ballot

[Begin definition (e) below this line.]

A “provisional ballot” is a paper ballot used by certain categories of voters and which is reviewed by the appropriate county election office to confirm the voter’s eligibility before the ballot may be canvassed for counting. N.J.S.A. 19:53C-1 to -21. The term “challenged ballot” is not used in New Jersey law.

[End definition (e) above this line.]

f. Absentee

[Begin definition (f) below this line.]

The term “absentee” has been replaced with the term “mail-in” with the enactment of the “Vote by Mail Law of New Jersey, P.L. 2009, c. 79.

[End definition (f) above this line.]

g. Early voting

[Begin definition (g) below this line.]

There is no provision for “early voting” in New Jersey law. On the 40th day before election day, however, the county clerks, begin forwarding mail-in ballots to each mail-in voter whose mail-in ballot application was approved. N.J.S.A. 19:63-9. Mail-in ballots may be sent to the county board of election up until the time for the closing of polls on election day. N.J.S.A. 19:63-16(d)(1). No other form of voting is available to voters before an election day.

[End definition (g) above this line.]

h. Active Voter

[Begin definition (h) below this line.]

The term “active voter” is not defined in New Jersey law. The term is used in the Statewide Voter Registration System to refer to a voter who is eligible to vote.

[End definition (h) above this line.]

i. Inactive Voter

[Begin definition (i) below this line.]

The term “inactive voter” is not defined in New Jersey law. The term is used in the Statewide Voter Registration System to refer to a voter to whom a confirmation notice has been sent, has not responded to the same, and remains eligible to vote.

[End definition (i) above this line.]

j. Other terms (please specify) _____

[Identify each TERM and definition separately and begin below this line.]

Mail-in ballot

A "mail-in ballot" is defined as a ballot used by a mail-in voter to vote by mail in any election. N.J.S.A. 19:63-2.

Mail-in voter

A "mail-in voter" is any qualified and registered voter of this State who wants to vote in any election using a mail-in ballot under the provisions of this act. Ibid.

[End TERM(s) and definition(s) above this line.]

A2. Please provide the legal citation for any *significant* changes to election laws or procedures that have been enacted or adopted since the previous Federal election. "Significant" does not include routine or technical changes (such as changes to election district boundaries or polling place changes). However, EAC would like to learn about any new identification requirements for voters or registrants; changes in eligibility for voting or registering; adoption of alternative voting methods; and other changes that you believe represent a significant change in the way your state runs its elections.

[Begin response to above question (A2) below this line.]

Effective July 1, 2009, the "Vote by Mail Law of New Jersey" replaced the former absentee voting provisions. P.L. 2009, c. 79. The key changes in law are as follows:

- Prior to P.L. 2009, c. 79, any voter who was permanently disabled could, by way of one application, receive ballots for all elections in one calendar year. A voter could also request a ballot application only for all general elections. Now, any voter can request, with one application, all the eligible ballots in one calendar year or a ballot for all general elections. N.J.S.A. 19:63-3.
- Prior to P.L. 2009, c. 79, any voter who was sick or confined could designate an authorized messenger to apply for, and obtain, a mail-in ballot for a ballot. There was no limit as to the number of voters for whom someone could serve as an authorized messenger. Now, any voter can now apply for, and obtain, a mail-in ballot by way of an authorized messenger. Also, an authorized messenger can now only serve as such for ten voters. N.J.S.A. 19:63-4.
- Prior to P.L. 2009, c. 79, a voter for whom records reflected an absentee ballot was requested could only vote at the polling place if he or she claimed no such application was made or that no such ballot was received. Now, a voter may vote by provisional ballot at the polling place if he or she requested and received a mail-in ballot, but did not transmit the ballot to the county board of election. N.J.S.A. 19:63-20(b), N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(j).

[End response to above question (A2) above this line.]

SECTION B: VOTER REGISTRATION

B1. Is your state's voter registration database system best described as a bottom-up, a top-down, or a hybrid? (Note: A bottom-up system generally uploads information retained at the local level and compiled at regular intervals to form the statewide voter registration list. A top-down system is hosted on a single, central platform/mainframe and is generally maintained by the state with information supplied by local jurisdictions. A hybrid is some combination of both systems described above.)

[Begin response to above question (B1) below this line.]

Top Down; a central State server is used by all 21 counties to add/update voter records.

[End response to above question (B1) above this line.]

If your state uses a bottom-up or hybrid system, how often do local jurisdictions transmit registration information to the state list?

[Begin response to above clarification question to B1 below this line.]

[End response to above clarification question to B1 above this line.]

B2. Please describe the process used in your state to move voters from the active list to the inactive list, and from the inactive list to the active list. Is a different process used for UOCAVA voters?

[Begin response to above question (B2) below this line.]

A voter is moved from active to inactive status on the Statewide Voter Registration System when a confirmation notice is sent to the voter. A confirmation notice is sent when the county commissioner of registration has a reasonable basis to believe a registered voter no longer resides within the county of registration. N.J.S.A. 19:31-15.

[End response to above question (B2) above this line.]

B3. Please describe your state's process for removing voters from the voter registration rolls (not merely moving them from active to inactive). Please include information regarding notices and confirmations. Are these procedures the same for UOCAVA voters?

[Begin response to above question (B3) below this line.]

Voters are removed from the Statewide Voter Registration System upon the following occurrences:

- Death confirmed by the records of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration;
- Criminal disqualification confirmed by the records of the New Jersey Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board, or the New Jersey Judiciary Administrative Office of the Courts;
- Mental disqualification confirmed by a court order;
- Personal request of a voter to be removed from the Statewide Voter Registration System;

- Out-of-State move confirmed by the voter;
- Failure to respond to a confirmation notice and vote, or appear to vote, in any election from the date the confirmation notice is sent up until the day after the second subsequent federal election. A confirmation notice is sent when the county commissioner of registration has a reasonable basis to believe a registered voter no longer resides within the county of registration. N.J.S.A. 19:31-15. The confirmation notice is a “postage prepaid and pre-addressed return card, sent by forwardable mail, ...” Ibid. No confirmation notices are sent after the 90th day prior to the date of a primary or general election for federal office consistent with 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-6(c)(2)(A).

[End response to above question (B3) above this line.]

B4. Can your state’s voter registration database (or equivalent) share information electronically with your state’s drivers license agency (for example, to match records or trace changes in address)? Can your voter registration database be similarly linked with databases in any other state or federal agencies? Please describe these links, including any use of database matching to verify voter registration applications.

[Begin response to above question (B4) below this line.]

New Jersey’s Statewide Voter Registration System interfaces with the computerized records of the following State agencies:

- The New Jersey Motor Vehicles Commission for motor vehicle license information and social security numbers;
- The Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Vital Statistics and Registration, for death records;
- The Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board, and the New Jersey Judiciary Administrative Office of the Courts for data on persons incarcerated, on probation, or on parole for convictions for indictable offenses.

[End response to above question (B4) above this line.]

B5. Please describe how your state uses National Change of Address (NCOA). What has been your state’s experience with NCOA?

[Begin response to above question (B5) below this line.]

New Jersey does not use NCOA as part of the SVRS.

[End response to above question (B5) above this line.]

B6. Please describe your state’s voting eligibility requirements as they relate to individuals with a felony conviction. (For example, are convicted felons allowed to vote while in prison or while on parole or probation? Are voting rights automatically restored or does the individual have to apply for a pardon, certificate of eligibility or other similar certificate? Does an individual whose voting rights have been restored have to produce documentation of his/her status when registering to vote?)

[Begin response to above question (B6) below this line.]

Under New Jersey law, a person convicted of an indictable offense, i.e. a felony, is disqualified from the right to vote for as long as the person is serving a prison sentence or is on parole, probation, or federal supervised release as a result of such conviction. N.J.S.A. 19:4-1. In general, a person who has served his or her sentence and has completed any subsequent period of parole or probation is eligible to register, or re-register, to vote. Ibid. A person who has been convicted of violating any provision of Title 19, the Election Laws of the State of New Jersey, and has had criminal penalties imposed, including the loss of the right to vote, however, may register, or re-register, to vote only after a pardon or if his or her right to vote has been restored by law. Ibid.

[End response to above question (B6) above this line.]

B7. Does your state currently use the Internet in any way to facilitate voter registration? If yes, please describe how your state allows voters to use the Internet in the registration process (e.g., entire registration completed online; completed online but then must be printed, signed, and mailed by voter, etc.).

[Begin response to above question (B7) below this line.]

New Jersey does not currently use the Internet to facilitate voter registration except for military and overseas civilian voters who may transmit a federal postcard application to register to vote by electronic mail. These voters must also simultaneously mail the federal postcard application form to the appropriate election official. N.J.S.A. 19:59-4.

The State Division of Elections website, njelections.org, allows voters to fill out a registration form on line but it must be printed, signed and mailed by the voter.

[End response to above question (B7) above this line.]

SECTION C: ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

C1. Please describe how all votes cast at a place other than the voter's precinct of registration are tabulated (for example, please include descriptions of such votes as absentee ballots, mail-in ballots, votes cast at vote centers, provisional ballots, early voting locations, etc.).

a. Are the votes counted centrally or at the precincts?

[Begin response to above question (a) below this line.]

Mail-in ballots, which are mailed or hand-delivered to the county board of election or its designee, are counted centrally at the county board of election office. N.J.S.A. 19:63-18. Provisional ballots, which are cast at the voter's precinct of registration, are also counted centrally at the county board of election office. N.J.S.A. 19:53C-13.

[End response to above question (a) above this line.]

b. If centrally tabulated, are the votes redirected to the appropriate precinct for reporting in the canvass?

[Begin response to above question (b) below this line.]

No.

[End response to above question (b) above this line.]

c. Are the absentee, mail, etc., votes reported separately for each precinct, or are they added to the in-precinct results and reported as just a single number?

[Begin response to above question (c) below this line.]

Depends on the county.

[End response to above question (c) above this line.]

d. How are UOCAVA ballots counted and reported?

[Begin response to above question (d) below this line.]

UOCAVA ballots are counted centrally at the county board of election office in the same manner as is applicable to other mail-in ballots. N.J.S.A. 19:59-11.

[End response to above question (d) above this line.]

C2. Does your state require a reason for voting absentee, or does your state allow no-excuse absentee voting? (If a reason is required, please provide the legal citation.)

[Begin response to above question (C2) below this line.]

No reason is required for voting by mail in New Jersey. N.J.S.A. 19:63-3.

[End response to above question (C2) above this line.]

C3. Does your state provide for in-person early voting? If so, how is early voting defined? When early voting is used, are the ballots counted at the precinct or at a central location? How are these votes reported?

[Begin response to above question (C3) below this line.]

No. New Jersey does not have early voting, but anyone may vote "Vote by Mail" at the county clerk's office up to 3:00 p.m. of the day before the election.

[End response to above question (C3) above this line.]

C4. Do any jurisdictions in your state use a vote-by-mail system to replace (and not merely supplement) at-the-precinct voting in any elections?

[Begin response to above question (C4) below this line.]

Yes. A municipality with a population of 500 or fewer persons, according to the latest federal decennial census, may conduct all elections by mail. N.J.S.A. 19:62-1, et seq.

[End response to above question (C4) above this line.]

C5. Please list each of the situations that require a provisional ballot in your state. Please provide the relevant legal citation for each situation.

[Begin response to above question (C5) below this line.]

The following voters are required to vote by provisional ballot:

- A voter who moved outside of his or her registered election district, but within the county, without informing the commissioner of registration, N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(b), (c), N.J.S.A. 19:31-11(b);
- A voter whose registration information is incomplete, N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(g), N.J.S.A. 19:31-11(b);
- A voter who was required to provide identification at the polling place and did not. N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(i); and
- A voter who applied for a mail-in ballot, but either (a) did not receive one or (b) did receive one and did not transmit it to the county board of election before the time for the opening of the polls, N.J.S.A. 19:63-20(b), N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(j).

[End response to above question (C5) above this line.]

C6. Does your state count provisional ballots of voters who are registered in different precincts, or are those ballots automatically rejected? Please describe the process used by local election officials in determining whether to count a provisional ballot.

[Begin response to above question (C6) below this line.]

Where a provisional ballot voter votes a ballot in a district other than the one in which the voter is qualified to vote, the votes for those offices and questions for which the voter would be otherwise qualified to vote are counted. N.J.S.A. 19:53C-17. All other votes are not counted. Ibid.

[End response to above question (C6) above this line.]

C7. Please describe your state's laws regarding post-election audits, if any.

[Begin response to above question (C7) below this line.]

New Jersey law provides for post-election audits of voter-verifiable paper records used with the State's electronic voting machines. N.J.S.A. 19:61-9. These audits are not conducted because New Jersey has not implemented a voter-verifiable paper record system to be used with the State's electronic voting machines, the requirement of such implementation having been suspended in 2009. P.L. 2009, c. 17.

[End response to above question (C7) above this line.]

C8. Please describe any state requirements for poll worker training.

[Begin response to above question (C8) below this line.]

New district board members, i.e. poll workers, must be instructed in the conduct of elections and in their duties in connection therewith, within 30 days before each election. N.J.S.A. 19:50-1. All district board members are required to attend these instructional sessions at least once every two years. Ibid.

[End response to above question (C8) above this line.]

SECTION D: ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

D1. Please describe your state's process for capturing "over-vote" and "under-vote" counts.

[Begin response to above question (D1) below this line.]

New Jersey's voting machines do not allow over-voting so there is no way to get counts. Under-voting can be determined by subtracting actual vote from possible eligible votes.

[End response to above question (D1) above this line.]

D2. What identification does your state require from voters in the following situations:

a. registering to vote;

[Begin response to above question (a) below this line.]

All persons seeking to register to vote are required to provide identification information consistent with the Help America Vote Act. A person must provide his or her driver's license number or a Motor Vehicles Commission no-driver identification number. If the person does not have a driver's license or non-driver identification, the last four digits of the social security number must be provided. If the person does not have a driver's license, non-driver identification, or a social security number, he or she will have to so affirm on the voter registration form.

[End response to above question (a) above this line.]

b. casting an in-person ballot;

[Begin response to above question (b) below this line.]

Persons who do not provide any identification numbers or affirm a lack of such identification and persons who register by mail whose identification numbers provided on the registration form cannot be verified must show identification to the district board members in order to vote in the voting machine. Acceptable forms of identification include:

- A current and valid photo identification card;
- A current utility bill, bank statement, government check or pay check;
- Any other government document that shows the voter's name and current address; or
- Any other identifying document that the Attorney General has determined to be acceptable for this purpose. N.J.S.A. 19:15-17; N.J.S.A. 19:31-5.

If persons so affected do not show identification to the district board members, the voter will have to vote by provisional ballot and will have until the close of business on the second day after the election to provide the applicable county commissioner of registration with the required identification. N.J.S.A. 19:53C-3(i).

[End response to above question (b) above this line.]

c. casting a mail-in or absentee vote;

[Begin response to above question (c) below this line.]

Persons casting a mail-in ballot who are required to show identification for either of the reasons discussed in the previous section, must include copies of the required identification information with the mail-in ballot. N.J.S.A. 19:63-3(e)(1). This requirement does not apply to individuals entitled to vote under the UOCAVA or the "Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act," or to any other voter entitled to vote otherwise than in person under any other federal law. N.J.S.A. 19:15-17; N.J.S.A. 19:31-5.

[End response to above question (c) above this line.]

d. casting a ballot under UOCAVA;

[Begin response to above question (d) below this line.]

The identification requirements discussed above do not apply to UOCAVA voters. N.J.S.A. 19:15-17; N.J.S.A. 19:31-5.

[End response to above question (d) above this line.]

e. any other stage in registration or voting process in which identification is required (please specify).

[Begin response to above question (e) below this line.]

None.

[End response to above question (e) above this line.]

D3. Please describe your state's laws regarding access to the polling place for election observers. Election observers are people allowed inside the polling place who are not poll workers, election officials or voters. If decisions on access to observers are left to local jurisdictions, please explain.

[Begin response to above question (D3) below this line.]

New Jersey law provides for challengers who represent candidates, political parties, and the opponents or proponents of a referendum in a polling place on election day. N.J.S.A. 19:7-1 to -6.1.

[End response to above question (D3) above this line.]

SECTION E: OTHER

E1. Under HAVA, Section 402, states are required to establish and maintain administrative complaint procedures to remedy grievances. Has your state revised its administrative complaint procedures since they were first implemented? If so, how?

[Begin response to above question (E1) below this line.]

No

[End response to above question (E1) above this line.]

E2. The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act (MOVE) was signed into law on October 22, 2009. The MOVE Act contains, among other things, provisions regarding States' methods of communication with UOCAVA voters and UOCAVA ballot transmission.

Please describe your State's processes and procedures for implementing MOVE (including any changes in your State's laws or regulations) as they relate to:

- **Protecting the security and integrity of the voter registration and ballot application process, the privacy and personal information of the voter, and absentee ballots. (Sect. 577, 578)**
- **Designating a means of electronic communication for all voting-related materials to UOCAVA voters. (Sect. 577)**
- **Establishing a ballot tracking mechanism to allow voters to determine whether their ballots were received by the appropriate election official. (Sect. 580(d))**

Also, please describe your State's plans to capture data related to the number of registration applications, ballot applications, and blank ballots transmitted to UOCAVA voters via mail and electronic means (Internet, email, fax) *and* the number of registration applications, ballot applications, and completed ballots returned by UOCAVA voters via mail and electronic means (Internet, email, fax).

[Begin response to above question (E2) below this line.]

The means of "electronic means" designated by New Jersey law are any transmission made by an electronic telefacsimile machine or a similar device or by any other form of electronic transmission including, but not exclusive to electronic mail, that transports an authentic copy of a document from one user to another. N.J.S.A. 19:59-2(e).

[End response to above question (E2) above this line.]

E3. Please add any additional comments or information about your state's election administration processes that would help to inform the EAC's interpretation of your data.

[Begin response to above question (E3) below this line.]

[End response to above question (E3) above this line.]

* The information collection associated with the Election Administration and Voting Survey is required for the EAC to meet its statutory requirements under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15301), the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-1 et seq.), and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voters Act (UOCAVA) (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1). Respondent's obligation to reply to this information collection is mandatory as required under NVRA (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-1 et seq.) and UOCAVA (42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1). This part of the information collection is being requested to help the EAC to better understand state laws governing federal elections. Respondents include the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. This information will be made publicly available on the EAC website (www.eac.gov). According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB Control No. 3265-0006 (expires 5/31/2013). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 59 hours per state response. This estimate includes the time for reviewing the instructions, gathering information, and completing the form. Comments regarding this burden estimate should be sent the U.S. Election Assistance Commission – 2010 Election Administration and Voting Survey, 1201 New York Avenue, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005.