



Harris County Clerk's Office Elections Department

Prepping for the Primary
February 2026

Agenda

1. Harris County Clerk's Office Overview
2. What is a Primary Election
3. Accessibility and Ballot by Mail
4. Updates to Voter Processes
5. The Year Ahead
6. How to Get Involved

The Harris County Clerk's Office



Personal Records

Records personal financial statements, issue marriage licenses, assumed name certificates, vital records, DD-214s, etc.



County Civil Courts

Maintains documents resulting from property, business, and personal civil proceedings.



Elections

Carries out electoral duties as required by federal and state legislation.



Public Records

Provides public access to records filed with the County Clerk's Office.



Probate Courts

Maintains documents resulting from probate and mental health proceedings.



Archives

Preserves, protects, and provides access to historical county government records.



Commissioners Court

Maintains the meeting minutes for Commissioners Court and handles Toll Road Adjudications.



Real Property

Records deeds, liens etc.

Types of Elections

Primary

- Every 2 years
- Ballots differ by party
- To determine partisan candidates for the General Election

Primary Run-Off

- Tie breaking elections for contests with no clear candidate winning over 50% of the votes

General

- 6-9 months after Primaries
- Held jointly by the County and State governing authorities

Primary Election

- ▶ What is a Primary Election (cont'd)
 - ▶ Each party has its own ballot of candidates for their respective party.
 - ▶ The Primary ballot consists of a list of candidates from one party which is narrowed down to one representative for the November Election ballot.
 - ▶ This election includes candidates vying for positions at the: Federal, State, and County levels ranging from Precinct Chair to Senate

Primary Election

- ▶ In previous years, and this year, each political party will host their own election within the same space/polling location.
- ▶ How it Works
 - ▶ Both parties occupy/share space in the same vote center.
 - ▶ Separate voter certification lines for Republicans and for Democrats
 - ▶ Voters choose to enter the line for their preferred Party's Primary Election.



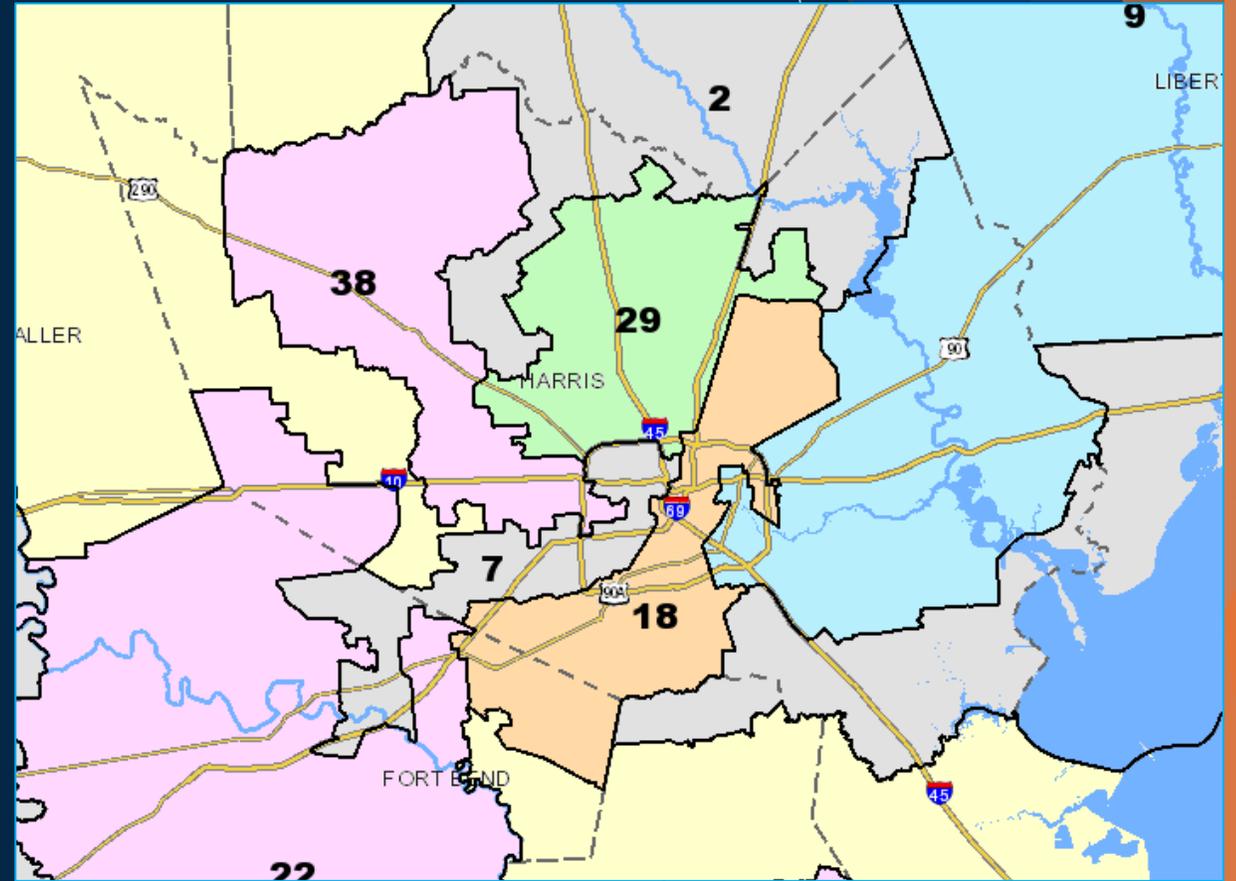
Photo Source: Houston Chronicle

Primary Election

- ▶ Texas has Open Primaries
- ▶ You do not have to be a “member of” or “belong to” a political party to vote in its primary election. However, if that race goes to a run-off you may only vote in that party’s run-off.
 - ▶ Ex. If you vote in the Republican Primary in March you will have to vote in the Republican Primary Run-off if there is a Run-off in May.

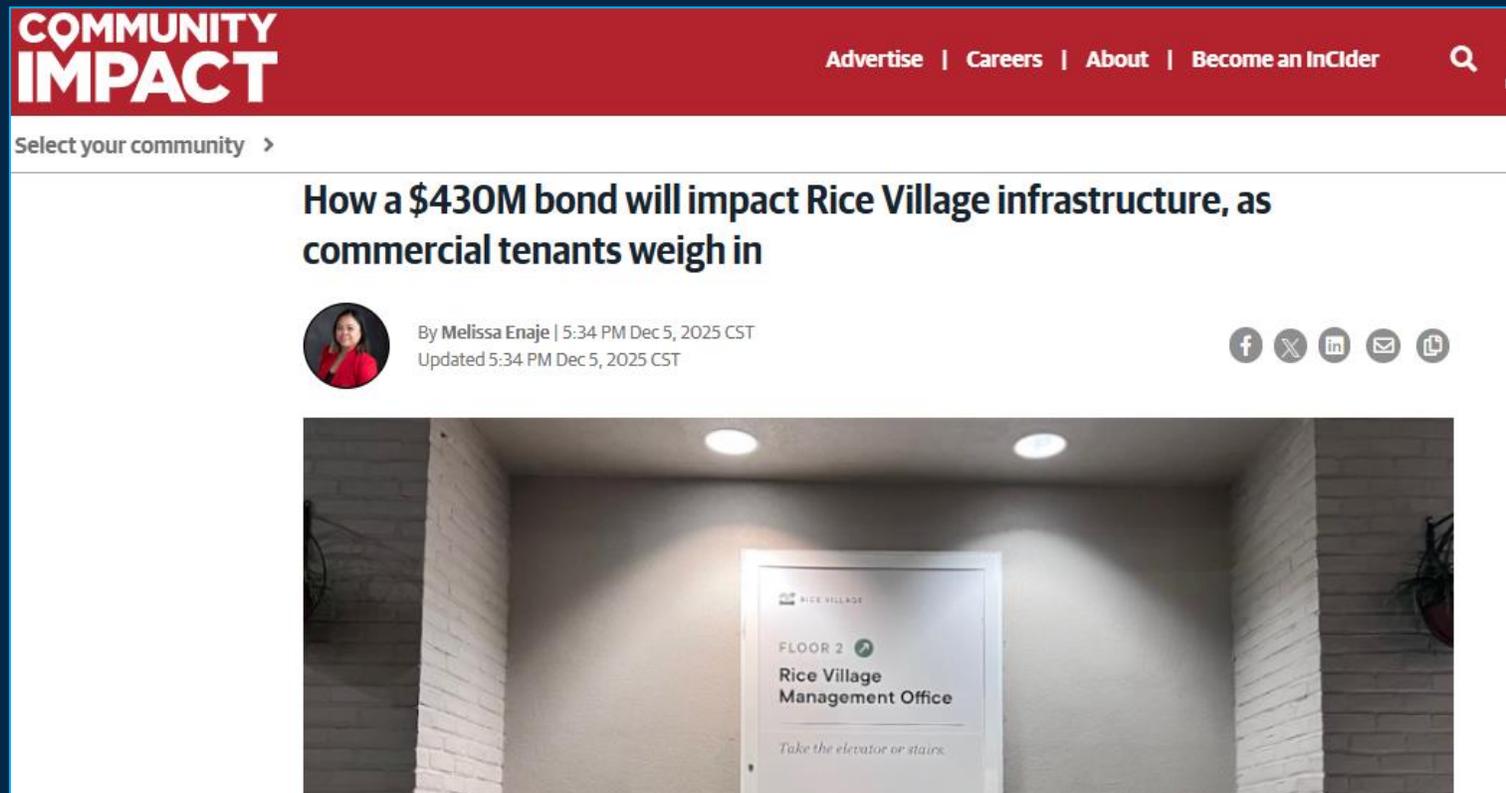
New Maps

- ▶ During the 89th Texas Legislative Session, legislators enacted new Redistricting Maps.
- ▶ These maps changed voting boundaries for many voters in Harris County.
 - ▶ As a result, many people are now in different Congressional Districts.
- ▶ The new maps go into effect in 2026 starting with the March Primaries.
- ▶ Check your voter registration certificate to see if your Congressional District has changed.



Voting Impact

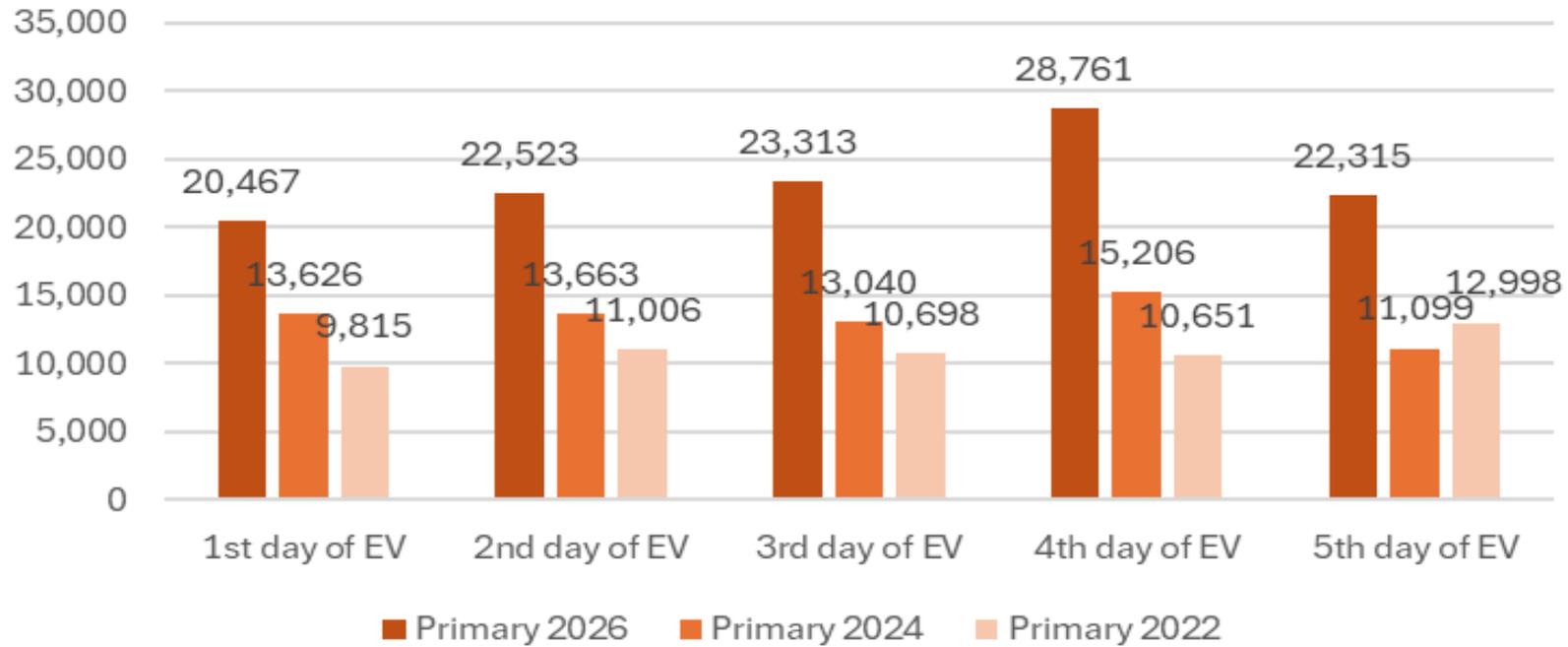
- ▶ Every vote counts is not just a catchy phrase.
 - ▶ Twelve people were eligible to vote in a Rice Village area bond election. However, only four voters turned out and decided the fate of \$430 million in bonds for the Rice Village area.



The screenshot shows the top of a news article on the Community Impact website. The header is red with the logo 'COMMUNITY IMPACT' in white. Navigation links include 'Advertise', 'Careers', 'About', and 'Become an InCider'. Below the header is a white bar with the text 'Select your community >'. The article title is 'How a \$430M bond will impact Rice Village infrastructure, as commercial tenants weigh in'. The author is 'By Melissa Enaje | 5:34 PM Dec 5, 2025 CST' and it was 'Updated 5:34 PM Dec 5, 2025 CST'. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Email, and Print. The main image shows a hallway with a white brick wall and a sign that reads 'RICE VILLAGE FLOOR 2 Rice Village Management Office Take the elevator or stairs.'

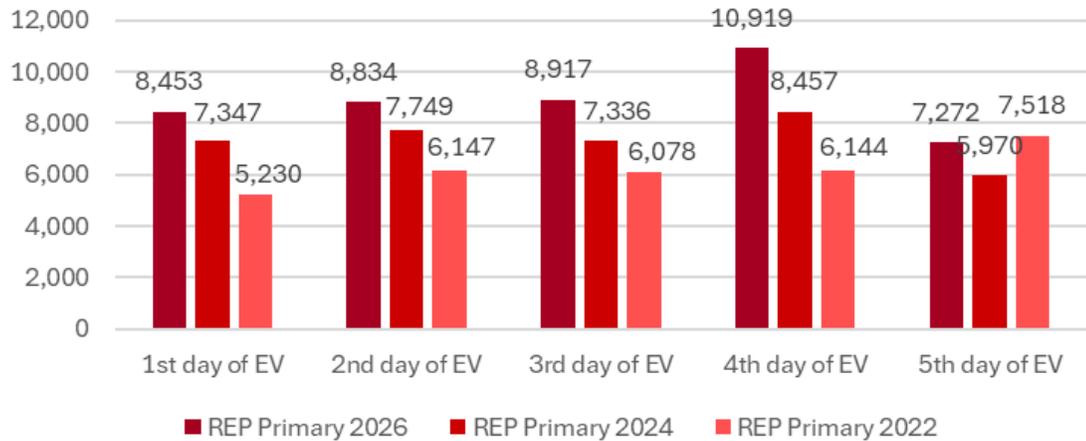
Early Voting Turnout

Early Voting In-Person Check-In Daily during Primary Elections in Harris County

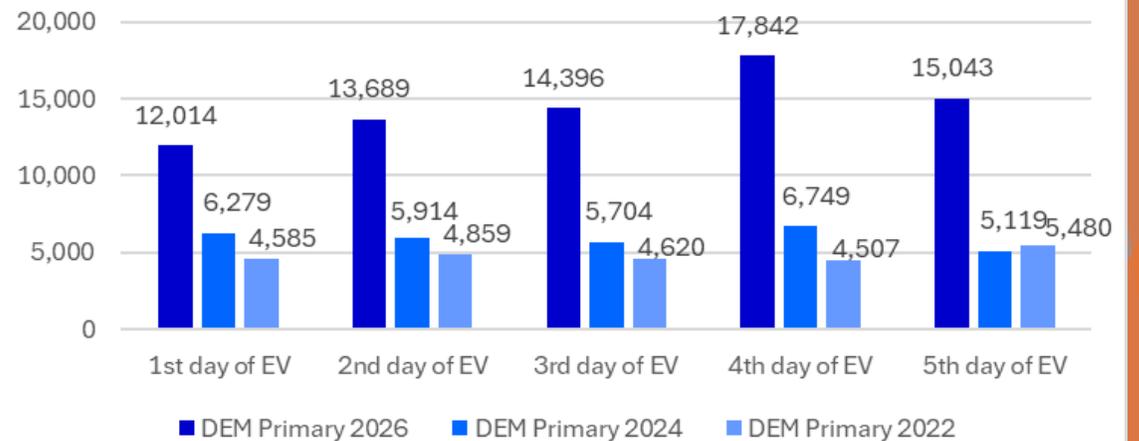


Early Voting Turnout By Party

Early Voting In-Person Check-In Daily during **Republican Party Primary Elections** in Harris County



Early Voting In-Person Check-In Daily during **Democratic Party Primary Elections** in Harris County



Important Dates

Midterm Primary Election

Feb. 2

**Last day to
register to
vote**

Feb. 17

**First day of
early voting**

Feb. 20

**Last day to
apply for
mail ballot**

Feb. 27

**Last day of
early voting**

Mar. 3

Election Day
**Last day to
return mail
ballot**

How to Vote: 1 of 3 ways



**In person at a
vote center**



**In person via
curbside**



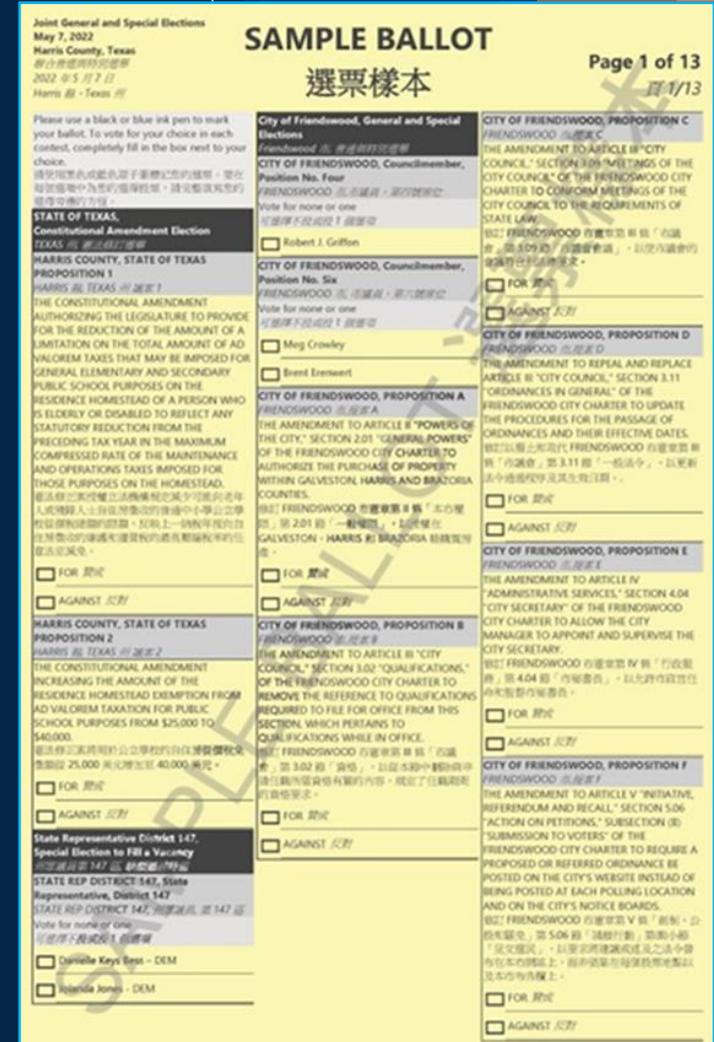
Vote by mail

- Domestic
- FPCA

Ballots

Your ballot is based on where you live.

- ▶ Sample ballots are typically available 30 days before an election on HarrisVotes.com
- ▶ Your Primary Sample Ballot is currently available
- ▶ Go to HarrisVotes.com to access your address-specific Sample Ballot. It's an easy way to see all the contests and candidates you'll be voting on!
- ▶ Be sure to review your ballot and learn who the candidates are **BEFORE** you go to the polls.



Ballots

- ▶ Every voter will utilize an 8 ½ x 14 sheet of ballot paper for the primary election.
- ▶ Follow the prompts on the screen
- ▶ When in doubt, always ask a worker for assistance.
- ▶ Practice at any of our in-person outreach events from now until Election Day



Voting By Mail

Do you qualify to vote by mail?

- ▶ 65 years of age or older on Election Day;
- ▶ You are sick or disabled;
- ▶ You expect to give birth within three weeks before or after Election Day;
- ▶ You will be out of the county on Election Day and during the Early Voting period;
- ▶ You are confined in jail or have an Involuntary Civil Commitment but are otherwise eligible to vote.

If you meet any of the above criteria, you are eligible to apply to vote by mail.



Photo Source: Houston Public Media

Update to Voting by Mail

- ▶ If a voter submits their ballot by mail carrier and it is defective they will receive a notice telling them what must be fixed. They will NOT receive the defective carrier back.
- ▶ The correction must be made in person or on the Secretary of State's website.
- ▶ If the voter chooses to vote in person without making the correction they must vote using a provisional ballot.
 - ▶ The voter can visit Elections Headquarters to receive a notice of cancelled mail ballot form. This form will allow the voter to vote a regular ballot in person.



Photo source: Houston Chronicle

Voting By Mail

Avoid Delays with your VBM Application

1

You MUST provide one or both of the following.
(It is recommended that you provide both to prevent delays.)

A. Texas Driver's License No. / Texas Personal I.D. No. (Issued by the Department of Public Safety) or Election Identification Certificate Number*

B. Last 4 digits of your Social Security Number

* Please note that your Election Identification Certificate Number IS NOT your Voter Registration Number.

The number you provide **MUST** match what the office has on file. If you can't remember which number you registered with, we suggest you fill both out.

Check the box at the bottom of this section if you don't have a TX Driver's License/Personal ID or Social Security Number.

Complete your Ballot by Mail application in its **entirety to avoid delays.**

Pro-tip: Add both your ID number and the last four of your social security number to reduce likelihood of rejection.

- ▶ Select the annual application option to receive a ballot for each election for which you are eligible.
- ▶ For primary and any resulting runoff election, you must select your party, otherwise your application will be rejected.

4. Send me a Ballot for the Following Elections:

<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Application Send me a ballot for all Elections in this voting year (January – December) Annual Applications only available for voters 65 and older and voters with disabilities. You must select a party if you wish to vote in a primary. Select only one party's primary and its resulting runoff.	Uniform Election Dates <input type="checkbox"/> November Election <input type="checkbox"/> May Election (not a primary runoff) <input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Other Special Election: _____ (Name or Date of Special Election, if known)
Primary Election (even numbered years only) <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Send me a Primary Ballot	OR Primary Election (even numbered years only) <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Any Resulting Runoff (Voters who are absent from the county or confined in jail/civily committed may only apply for one election and its resulting runoff.)

Request your mail ballot application by calling 713-755-6965 or log on to harrisvotes.com to print it.

Avoid Delays With Mail Ballot Applications

Under the Mail Ballot Carrier Envelope Flap

REQUIRED INFORMATION: YOU MUST PROVIDE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS AND IT MUST BE ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION				
<input type="checkbox"/> Texas Driver's License or Texas Personal Identification Card or Election Identification Certificate Number issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (NOT your Voter Registration VUID #)	OR (O)	<input type="checkbox"/> If you do not have a Texas Driver's License or Personal Identification Card or a Texas Election Identification Certificate Number, give the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number XXX - XX - _____	OR (O)	<input type="checkbox"/> I have not been issued a Texas Driver's License or Texas Personal Identification Card or Texas Election Identification Certificate or Social Security Number
CONTACT INFORMATION: Phone: _____ Email: _____				

BEFORE SEALING THE ENVELOPE

Be sure to fill out the required ID information outlined in red under the envelope flap.

The number you provide MUST match what is on file. IF you can't remember which number you registered with, we suggest you fill both out!

AFTER SEALING THE ENVELOPE

Sign in the red rectangle over the flap. This is how we ensure the ballot was not tampered with before getting to the elections office.

***Pro tip - Carry your ballot into the post office to have it post marked and avoid potential delays.**

Voting in Person

Curbside Voting

- ▶ Voters physically unable to enter polling locations without assistance or the likelihood of affecting voter's health
- ▶ Every polling location has a curbside option. Press the buzzer and an election worker will assist you.
- ▶ A portable voting machine will be brought to you



Curbside Voting Update

- ▶ As required by new State Legislation, rules governing curbside changed.
 - ▶ The voter must sign an affidavit stating that they are unable to enter the vote center without assistance or likelihood of injuring their health.
 - ▶ The driver of the vehicle can now vote curbside as well.
 - ▶ Two election workers will be at the car to assist the curbside voters.



Photo source: Texas Tribune

Voting in Person



Accommodations Provided

- ▶ Aids for audial, visual impairments and/or limited mobility
- ▶ Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- ▶ Accessible Voting Machines
- ▶ Access Device – Audio Tactile Interface

Voting in Person



Assistance

- ▶ You can bring someone to help you at the voting booth. Notify the Presiding Judge and a form/oath is completed.
- ▶ Often, helpers assist voters who:
 - ▶ Have difficulty reading the screen;
 - ▶ Are comfortable in another language
 - ▶ Have a disability

The Year Ahead

Midterms in 2026

March 3, 2026

- Primary Election



April 4, 2026

- Special Election



Nov. 3, 2026

- General Election

Why Do We Have So Many Elections

- ▶ In Texas, election schedules are created by the Secretary of State.
 - ▶ An example of this is General, Primary, and Uniform Elections
- ▶ In addition to the SOS, other entities (municipalities, MUDs, etc.) have rules which dictates timelines and dates for elections in their charters.
 - ▶ We see this with elections to fill seats vacated by elected officials such as Houston City Council.

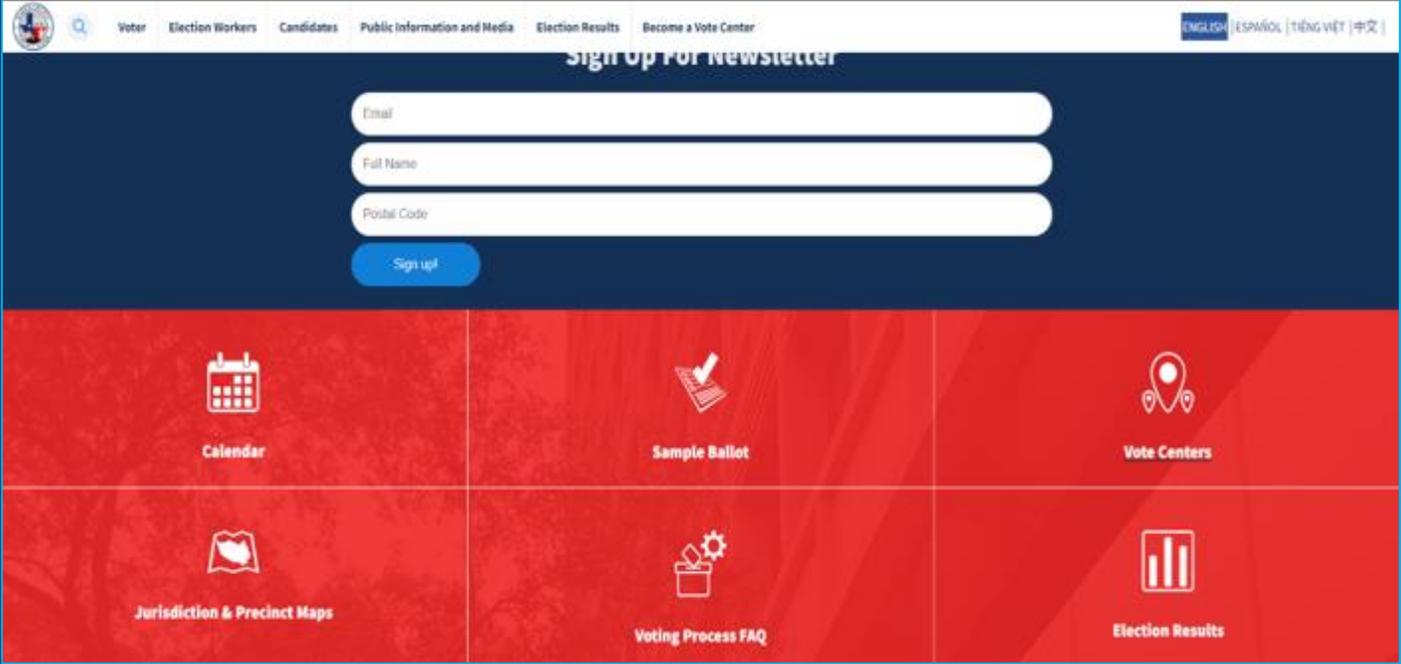


Photo source: Houston Chronicle

Harrisvotes.com

Make a plan to vote!

- ▶ Find your closest polling location.
- ▶ Harris County provides county-wide voting.
- ▶ View and print your sample ballot.
- ▶ Track your mail ballot.



The screenshot displays the Harrisvotes.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Voter', 'Election Workers', 'Candidates', 'Public Information and Media', 'Election Results', and 'Become a Vote Center'. A search icon is also present. On the right side of the header, there are language options: 'ENGLISH', 'ESPAÑOL', 'TIẾNG VIỆT', and '中文'. Below the navigation is a 'Sign Up For Newsletter' section with three input fields for 'Email', 'Full Name', and 'Postal Code', followed by a blue 'Sign up' button. The main content area features a red background with a grid of six icons and their corresponding labels: 'Calendar' (calendar icon), 'Sample Ballot' (ballot icon), 'Vote Centers' (location pin icon), 'Jurisdiction & Precinct Maps' (map icon), 'Voting Process FAQ' (FAQ icon), and 'Election Results' (bar chart icon).

How You Can Help

- ▶ We look forward to working with old friends in new ways.
 - ▶ Share this information we have shared today.
 - ▶ Make sure everyone knows their voter registration status.
 - ▶ Invite us to collaborate with your groups so we can share this information.
 - ▶ Direct people to our website and social media accounts to get the latest and most relevant voter information.



Get Involved

Work as a High School Student Runner (\$17/hour)

Eligibility Requirements

- Be at least 16 years old on Election Day and enrolled in an accredited high school program
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- Complete a paid training
- Must have legal guardian's permission



Get Involved

Serve as Election Night Support Staff (\$17/hour; 18+)



Photo source: Shirley Wong

Eligibility Requirements

- Be at least 18 years old on Election Day
- Must be a U.S. Citizen
- Complete a paid training

Get Involved

- ▶ Election Judges are nominated by the political parties.
- ▶ Our office places all early voting workers at the various vote centers.
- ▶ On election day, we place the Presiding Judges, and they hire their clerks.
- ▶ Visit [HarrisVotes.com](https://www.harrisvotes.com) to apply to be a clerk.





**Harris County Clerk's Office
Elections Department**

**THANK
YOU**

Elections Outreach

-  (713) 755-6965
-  OutreachEAD@vote.hctx.net
-  www.HarrisVotes.com
-  15600 Morales Rd.
Houston, TX 77032

