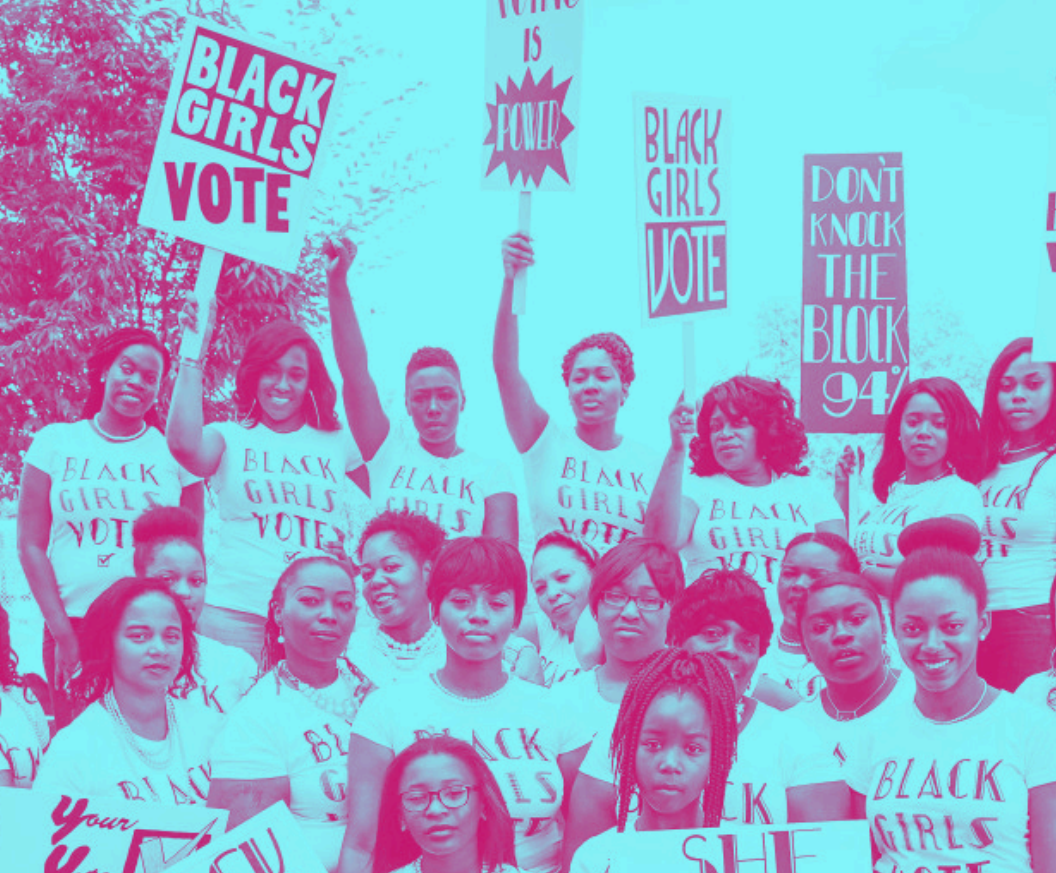




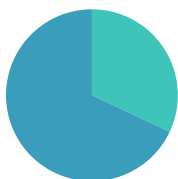
Black Girls Voting Guide Election 2026

THE TENNESSEE EDITION

WHAT IS VOTING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Voting refers to the process of choosing officials or policies by casting a ballot. The leaders we elect make decisions that affect our daily lives. **Elections are our chance to stand up for what matters most to us** and to have an impact on the issues that affect us, our communities, our families and our future.

Black women have historically faced significant barriers to voting in the United States, and continue to face voter suppression to this day. **Despite these challenges, Black women are one of the most powerful voter blocs in this country** and are at the forefront of voter mobilization efforts.



MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF BLACK WOMEN TURNED OUT TO VOTE IN THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

Source: CAWP/Higher Heights, 2022

“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”

Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm

First Black Woman Elected to Congress

First Black Woman to Run for President

Black Girls Vote launched on Shirley Chisholm’s birthday, November 30th, 1924.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN TENNESSEE?

You can vote if you are a U.S. citizen, a Tennessee resident, at least 18 years old on or before Election Day, and are registered to vote.

If you've been convicted of a crime: Restoration is not automatic in Tennessee. Most people need a court order restoring their voting rights, and recent changes to state law also require that you be current on any child support obligations for the 12 months before you apply.

Registering to Vote

The registration deadline for Ohio was on October 5, 2026. Ohio does not offer same-day registration, so if you have not registered to vote, you are no longer eligible to vote.

How to Vote



Early Voting

Vote early at your county election commission or satellite location. Early voting runs **October 14–29, 2026**.



Vote by Mail

Tennessee requires an approved reason to vote by mail. If you qualify, request your ballot by **October 24, 2026**. Ballots can only be returned by mail, not in person.



Vote on Election Day

This is the last day you can vote! Election Day is Tuesday, **November 3, 2026**. Polls are open 7 a.m.–7 p.m. *Hours vary slightly by county.*



Scan QR for
more info



Tennessee requires a Tennessee or federal government-issued photo ID to vote (expired is fine). Student IDs and out-of-state IDs don't count.



THE VOTING EXPERIENCE

However you choose to vote, knowing what to expect can help you cast your ballot with confidence.

Voting In-Person

Know where to go.

During Early Voting, you can vote at any early voting center in your county. On Election Day, vote at your assigned polling place.

Ask for help.

If you have questions or experience a problem, ask to speak with an election judge before leaving the polling place.

Stay in line.

If you're in line by 8 p.m. on Election Day, stay in line. You can still vote.

Know your rights.

Voter intimidation is illegal. If someone threatens, harasses, or attempts to interfere with your ability to vote, alert an election judge and contact Election Protection at 866-687-8683.

Voting By-Mail?

See if you qualify.

Tennessee mail voting requires an approved reason. Early voting is the simpler no-excuse option if you don't qualify.

Request your ballot.

Your county election commission must receive your request by October 24, 2026, but you should request ASAP.

Follow the instructions.

Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully and complete all required steps before returning it.

Return your ballot.

Ballots can only be returned by mail. Your county election office must receive it by the close of polls on Election Day. After you return your ballot, check its status to make sure it was received.

TENNESSEE'S GOVERNMENT

Tennessee's government has three branches with different roles and responsibilities. Knowing how they work can help you better understand the offices and candidates on your ballot.



Executive

Enforces state laws and oversees the state budget. Led by the Governor, who is the only statewide executive official Tennesseans directly elect.



Judicial

Interprets state law through Trial Courts (Circuit, Chancery, and Criminal) and Appellate Courts, including the Tennessee Supreme Court.



Legislative

Makes Tennessee's laws. The Tennessee General Assembly is made up of the State Senate and the House of Representatives.

2026 is a big election year in Maryland!

Governor, one U.S. Senate seat, all U.S. House seats, odd-numbered State Senate districts, the entire State House, and a Tennessee Supreme Court retention question are all on the November 3 ballot.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON & NASHVILLE

Tennesseeans elect representatives to make laws at both the federal and state levels. Your members of Congress represent you in Washington, D.C., while your state legislators represent you in Nashville.

U.S. Congress

In U.S. elections, voters elect members to the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together form Congress.

House of Representatives

All 9 of Tennessee's U.S. House seats are up. Tennessee redrew its congressional map earlier in 2026, so district lines may look different than in past elections.

Senate

Louisiana has a U.S. Senate race in 2026. There are 10 nominees on the ballot, including two Black women: Democrat Marquita Bradshaw and Independent Yoshi Matthews.

Tennessee General Assembly

The General Assembly makes Tennessee's state laws and is made up of two chambers:

State Senate: 33 senators

House of Representatives: 99 representatives

Every odd-numbered district in the Senate and every seat in the House is up for election in 2026. State lawmakers make decisions on issues such as education, health care, housing, and public safety.



Look up your
representatives

VOTING FOR JUDGES IN TENNESSEE

You may see judges on your ballot, but not every Tennessee judge is elected the same way. Here's what to know about the different ways judges are selected and when voters have a say.



Appellate & Supreme Court Judges

Appellate & Supreme Court Judges are appointed first, then stand for a retention election with a simple yes/no vote on whether to keep them for a new term. One Tennessee Supreme Court justice is up for retention in 2026.



Trial Court Judges

Trial Court Judges (Circuit, Chancery, and Criminal Courts) run in direct, contested elections. In these elections, you're voting for named candidates.

Judicial decisions can shape people's rights, freedoms, families, and livelihoods. Research the judges and judicial candidates on your ballot so you can make an informed choice.



TENNESSEE'S STATEWIDE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Unlike most states, **Tennessee voters directly elect only one statewide official: the Governor**, who is on your 2026 ballot. The rest are chosen in other ways, but here's what each one does and why the role matters.



Governor

The Governor leads Tennessee's executive branch, oversees state agencies, proposes the state budget, and signs or vetoes legislation. The Governor also appoints key state officials and helps set Tennessee's policy priorities.



Lieutenant Governor

In Tennessee, the title of Lieutenant Governor goes to the Speaker of the State Senate, who is chosen by the senators rather than by voters statewide. The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Senate and assumes the governorship if the Governor can no longer serve.



Attorney General

The Attorney General is Tennessee's chief legal officer, representing the state in legal matters and providing legal counsel to state agencies. The office is filled by appointment of the Tennessee Supreme Court, not by voters.

Other officials include the Secretary of State, the Treasurer, and the Comptroller of the Treasury. All three are chosen by the General Assembly, not by voters, which makes your vote for state legislators extra meaningful.

BALLOT QUESTIONS

Candidates aren't the only choices on your ballot! Tennessee voters will consider three statewide constitutional amendments in 2026. Depending on where you live, your ballot may also include local questions — review your sample ballot before you vote.

Amendment 1: Bail for Serious Crimes

Would let judges deny bail before trial for a longer list of serious crimes (including terrorism, second-degree murder, and aggravated rape) beyond the current exception.

A vote **FOR** would expand the list of charges where bail can be denied before trial.

A vote **AGAINST** would keep the current, narrower bail exception in place.

Amendment 2: Ban on a State Property Tax

Tennessee currently has no state-level property tax. This amendment would add a permanent constitutional ban on one..

A vote **FOR** would lock that ban into the constitution going forward.

A vote **AGAINST** would leave things as they are today: no state property tax, but no constitutional bar against one in the future.

Amendment 3: Crime Victims' Rights (Marsy's Law)

Would expand existing constitutional rights for crime victims, including requiring that victim and public safety be considered before parole or early release.

A vote **FOR** would add these additional protections to the constitution.

A vote **AGAINST** would leave the current, narrower set of victim rights in place.

MAKE A VOTING PLAN

Election Day will be here before you know it! Take a few minutes now to decide how you'll vote, research your ballot, and make a plan to get to the polls.

Research your ballot before you vote!

You can find a sample ballot with candidates and ballot measures on your state voting site.



QR for Vote 411

MY VOTING PLAN



I WILL VOTE...

☐ by mail ☐ during early voting ☐ on Election Day

VOTE BY MAIL PLAN

I will **request** my ballot by: _____

I will **return** my ballot by: _____

VOTING IN-PERSON PLAN

I will vote on this **day**: _____

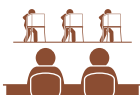
At this **time**: _____

At this **location**: _____



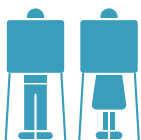
OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

There are many ways you can step up to strengthen our democracy and show up for your community in this election!



Become an Election Judge or Monitor

You can make sure we have safe, fair, and efficient elections for all voters. Step up and become a paid poll worker for the next election today at powerthepolls.org.



Vote together!

When you take someone to the polls with you, you can bring more people into our democracy and make sure your community's voices are heard. Bring a friend, family member, or even an acquaintance with you to vote!



Spread accurate information

Disinformation and misinformation are everywhere. According to Onyx Impact, over **40 million Americans** within Black online spaces may have been given disinformation about the election. Make sure to fact-check everything and spread accurate information to others.



Become a member of BGV!

Black Girls Vote membership is a direct and powerful way to change our communities and stand as a united front for our representation of our women and girls. Learn more at blackgirlsvote.org/membership.



ABOUT BLACK GIRLS VOTE

Black Girls Vote is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization designed to represent the concerns and interests of Black women.

We are not affiliated with any political party. We are invested in ensuring that Black women are empowered to advance education, economic development, quality health care, and improve outcomes.



blackgirlsvote.com



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