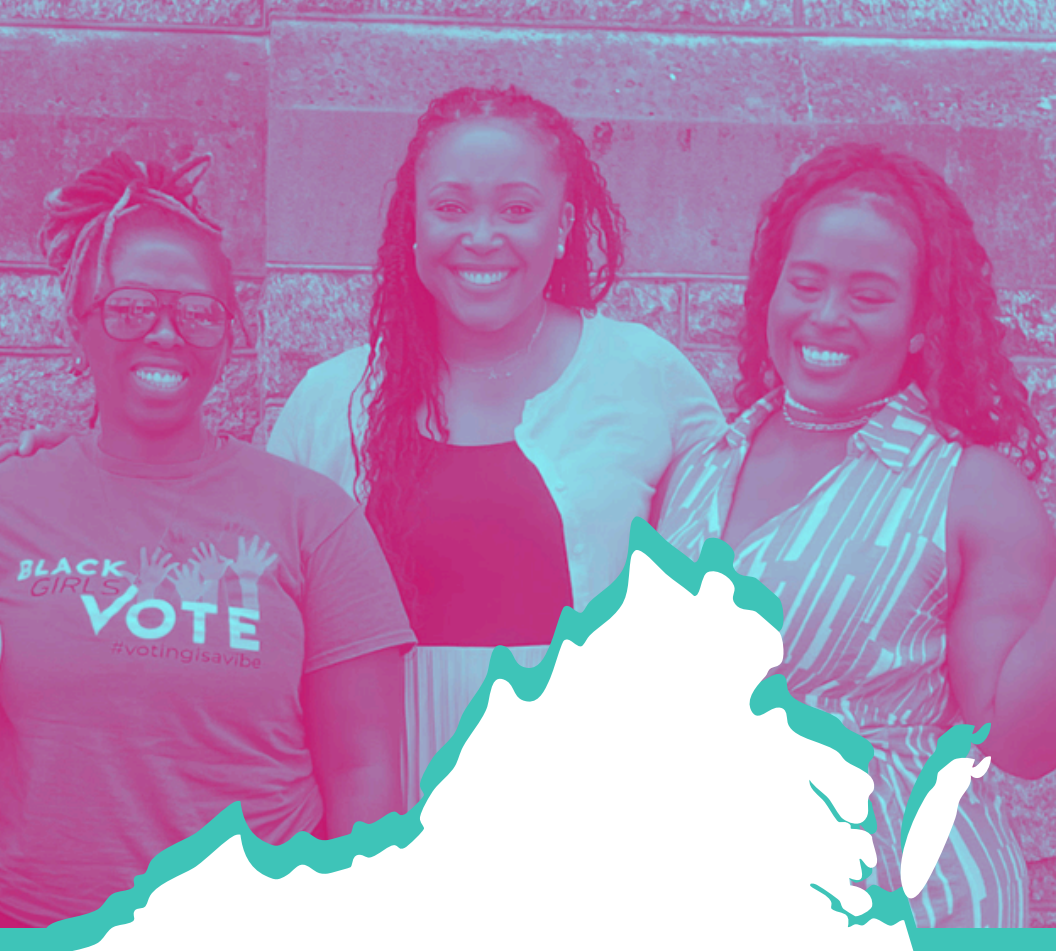




Black Girls Voting Guide Election 2026

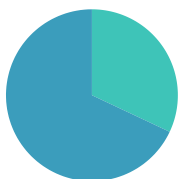
THE VIRGINIA EDITION



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 VIRGINIA?

You can vote if you are a U.S. citizen, a Virginia resident, and at least 18 on or before Election Day.

If you've been convicted of a felony: Your voting rights are now automatically restored once you're released from incarceration (except for murder or manslaughter convictions, which require a governor's petition).

Registering to Vote

Register online, by mail, or in person by October 23, 2026. Virginia offers same-day registration at local registrar offices and at any early voting location.

How to Vote



Early Voting

Vote early at any early voting location in your county. Early voting runs from September 18–October 31.



Vote by Mail

Virginia offers no-excuse mail voting. Request your ballot ASAP, but by 5 p.m. on October 23, 2026 at the latest.



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.–8 p.m. If you're in line by 8 p.m., you can vote!



Scan QR for
more info



ID is requested when voting in-person in Virginia.

Bring your ID, but if you don't have an accepted form with you, you can simply sign an ID Confirmation Statement at the polls instead and still cast a regular ballot.



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?

Request your ballot.

Submit your request by 5 p.m. on October 23, 2026

Follow the instructions.

Read the instructions that come with your ballot carefully and complete all required steps before returning it. First-time mail voters who didn't provide ID when registering will need to include a copy of an accepted ID with their ballot.

Return your ballot on time.

Your ballot must be received by your local registrar by the close of polls on Election Day. Virginia no longer accepts ballots by postmark alone, so mail early or use a drop box/registrar's office.

Track your ballot.

After you return your ballot, check its status to make sure it was received.

VIRGINIA'S GOVERNMENT

Virginia'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 law and oversees the state budget. Led by the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, elected together, along with the separately elected Attorney General. All three were elected in 2025 and are not on the 2026 ballot.



Judicial

Interprets state law. Virginia's system includes the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Court of Appeals, Circuit Courts, and General District Courts.



Legislative

Makes Virginia's laws. The Virginia General Assembly is made up of the House of Delegates (100 seats) and the State Senate (40 seats). Like the Governor, General Assembly members were elected in 2025. Virginia holds its state elections in odd years, so the legislature is not on your 2026 ballot either.

The 2026 ballot centers on Congress (a U.S. Senate seat and all 11 U.S. House seats) plus three statewide constitutional amendments. Virginia's Governor and General Assembly won't be up again until 2029.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON & RICHMOND

Virginians 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 Richmond.

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 11 of Virginia's U.S. House seats are up for election, as they are every two years.

Senate

Virginia does have a U.S. Senate race in 2026. Incumbent Democrat Senator Mark Warner is up for reelection against Republican Bert Mizusawa.

Virginia General Assembly

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

State Senate: 40 senators

House of Delegates: 100 delegates

Virginia elects these in odd years. The current General Assembly was elected in 2025 and will next be on the ballot in 2027, so you won't see these races in 2026.



Look up your
representatives

VIRGINIA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Virginia does this differently than most states: judges are not elected by voters at all. Instead, the Virginia General Assembly reviews candidates and votes to elect judges directly.

Because of this, you won't see any judges on your Virginia ballot, but the legislators you vote for in future elections are the ones who decide who sits on the bench. Courts include:



Supreme Court

Hears final appeals from lower courts and handles constitutional and administrative matters for the state's judicial system.



Court of Appeals

Hears appeals from circuit courts in panels of at least three judges, covering criminal cases, traffic cases with jail time, and domestic relations matters.



Circuit Court

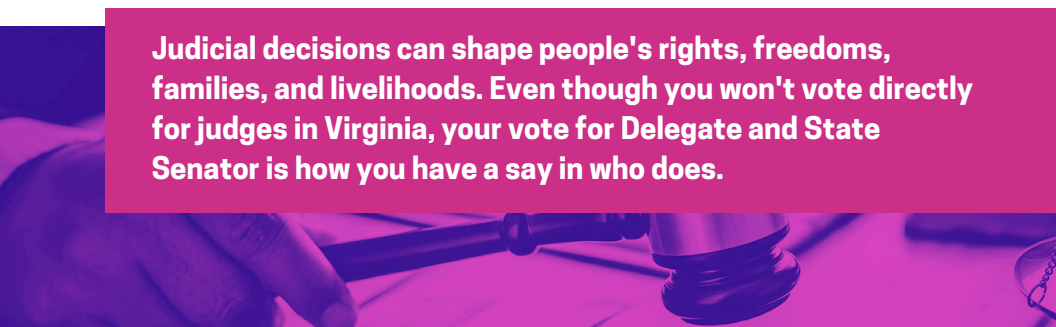
Serves as the state's general jurisdiction trial court. They try major civil claims, all felony criminal cases, and appeals from district courts.



General District Court

Hears limited-jurisdiction cases, including traffic violations, misdemeanors, preliminary felony hearings, and civil claims.

Judicial decisions can shape people's rights, freedoms, families, and livelihoods. Even though you won't vote directly for judges in Virginia, your vote for Delegate and State Senator is how you have a say in who does.



VIRGINIA'S STATEWIDE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Virginia voters elect statewide leaders who oversee state government, manage public dollars, and enforce state laws. These offices aren't on your 2026 ballot (they were last elected in 2025 and are next up in 2029) but here's what each one does and why the role matters.



Governor

The Governor leads Virginia'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 Virginia's policy priorities.



Lieutenant Governor

The Lieutenant Governor presides over the State Senate, casts tie-breaking votes, and assumes the governorship if the Governor can no longer serve. Virginia elects the Lieutenant Governor separately from the Governor.



Attorney General

The Attorney General is Virginia's chief legal officer, representing the state in legal matters and providing legal counsel to state agencies. The office also works to protect Virginians in areas including consumer protection and civil rights.

BALLOT QUESTIONS

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

Question 1: Reproductive Freedom

Would add a right to reproductive freedom, covering decisions about contraception, prenatal care, pregnancy, and abortion, to the Virginia Constitution.

A vote **FOR** would add this right to the constitution.

A vote **AGAINST** would leave reproductive health care governed by existing state law, not the constitution.

Question 2: Marriage Equality

Would remove Virginia's existing constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and affirm that any two adults can marry, regardless of sex, gender, or race.

A vote **FOR** would remove the ban and add marriage equality protections to the constitution.

A vote **AGAINST** would leave the unenforced ban in place, but same-sex marriage would remain legal under federal law.

Question 3: Voting Rights Restoration

Would add a fundamental right to vote to the Virginia Constitution and make voting rights restoration automatic upon release from incarceration, removing the governor's role in approving individual restorations.

A vote **FOR** would make automatic restoration a permanent part of the constitution.

A vote **AGAINST** would leave rights restoration subject to the policy of whoever holds the governor's office.

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**: _____

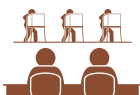
At this **time**: _____

At this **location**: _____



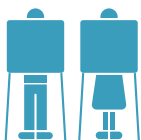
OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

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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