

## Pennsylvania

# Pennsylvania General 2020 Mail-In Ballot Questions and Answers

### Who is eligible to vote by mail in Pennsylvania?

Any registered Pennsylvania voter can vote by mail. Check your voter registration status at <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>

### I want to vote by mail. What do I need to do?

#### Request an application:

Your county election board must receive your application by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, October 27. If you have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license or PennDOT ID, you may apply online.

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin>

If you do not have either of those IDs, you may download a paper application at [votespa.com](https://www.votespa.com).

#### Here's what you need to do to request one:

1.) Check that your voter registration is up to date here:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx>

2.) If you have access to the internet and a Pennsylvania driver's license or PennDOT ID number, you can request an absentee or mail-in ballot online here:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin>

3.) If you do not have a Pennsylvania driver's license or PennDOT ID number, you can request an absentee or mail-in ballot by visiting [www.votespa.com](https://www.votespa.com), printing off an application and mailing it to your county election office.

4.) If you do not have internet access, you can request an absentee or mail-in ballot by:

- a. Calling your county election office and requesting an application; or
- b. Calling the Pennsylvania Department of State at [1-877-VOTESPA](tel:1-877-VOTESPA). and requesting an application.

**NOTE:** If you are mailing in your application, you will need normal postage unless you live in Philadelphia or Erie county. If you do not have a stamp, you can turn in your application in person at your county election office.

## **What are the differences between absentee voting and mail-in voting? Why does it matter?**

### **Absentee voting:**

You should request an absentee ballot if you plan to be out of the municipality where you are registered to vote on Election Day, or if you have a disability or illness that prevents you from getting to the polls. You'll need to list a reason for requesting an absentee ballot.

### **Mail-in ballot:**

Any registered voter who is not qualified to vote absentee is qualified to vote by mail. Unlike absentee voting, you don't need an excuse to request a vote by mail ballot.

NOTE: If you mistakenly apply for the wrong ballot, don't panic! Just contact your county elections office, explain the situation, and ask them to send the correct ballot.

## **When are Mail-In Applications due?**

For the November 3, 2020 general election, your application must be received by your county election board office by October 27, 2020 at 5pm.

## **Can I receive an application in either English or Spanish?**

Yes. Mail In applications and ballots are available in both English and Spanish.

## **What happens after I fill out the Mail-In application?**

### **If you fill out the online application:**

- You will receive an application number. Hold onto that number and take a photo of – or print out – your confirmation page for your records.
- You will also have the option to request to be added to an annual mail-in ballot request list. This will ensure that you receive an application to renew your mail-in ballot request each year. When your application is approved, you'll receive ballots for elections held during the remainder of the year you applied.

### **If you mail in your application:**

- Make sure you use correct postage
- Keep a copy of your application for your records.

### **Once your county election office receives your request:**

- 1.) The county will check to make sure that you are a registered voter in the county.
- 2.) They will enter your application into their system and either send you a notice that your application has been approved or notify you that your application has been rejected and an explanation why.
- 3.) Your ballot will be mailed to you prior to Election Day.

If you provided an email address, you should receive an automatic update via email when your application is received, when it is accepted, and when your ballot is mailed to you. You can also track your ballot online here: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>

Your voted ballot must be received in the county office by 8 p.m. on Election Day (postmarks don't count!). If your ballot arrives after 8pm on Election Day, it won't be accepted, even if you sent it before the deadline. Try to send it as early as possible to ensure your vote is counted.

### **What if I lose my ballot or did not receive it?**

If you lose your mail-in ballot or it does not arrive, you should call your county elections office or the Department of State at [1-877-VOTESPA](tel:1-877-VOTESPA) (option 3). If you haven't received your ballot by election day, you can still vote at the polls using a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots ensure that voters are not excluded from the voting process due to an administrative error. They provide a fail-safe mechanism for voters who arrive at the polls on Election Day.

### **How do you fill out my mail in ballot?**

1.) Mark your ballot, following the instructions.

**DO:** Use blue or black ink to completely fill in the oval next to your choices.

**DO:** Read the ballot closely and vote for the correct number of candidates in each race.

**DO:** Turn your ballot over and vote for races on both sides.

**DO NOT:** Use pencil or any other color of pen.

**DO NOT:** Write or make any extra marks on your ballot.

2.) Once you have voted, fold the ballot, place the ballot in the envelope marked "OFFICIAL BALLOT" and seal the envelope.

3.) Place the sealed envelope marked "OFFICIAL BALLOT" (with your ballot inside) into the envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections and seal the envelope. Do NOT put anything else in either envelope.

4.) Look at the envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections. On the side WITHOUT the stamp, you should see the words "Voter's Declaration". Fill out, date, and SIGN the "Voter's Declaration".

5.) If you are mailing in your ballot: put a stamp on the envelope addressed to the County Board of Elections in the upper right-hand corner over the words "PLACE STAMP HERE". (NOTE: if you are dropping your ballot off at your county elections office, you do not need to use a stamp.)

6.) Mail your ballot!

**DO NOT:** bring your voted ballot to your polling place. You must mail your ballot or drop it at your county elections office or another designated location.

**DO NOT:** Give your ballot to anyone else to turn in.

## Can I track my ballot?

Yes. <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>

## What is the deadline to return my voted mail-in ballot?

Your voted ballot must be received by your county election office by 8 p.m. on Election Day. If you are unable to return your ballot by the deadline either in person or by mail. You may only by a provisional ballot or at your polling place.

## When should I mail in my ballot?

As soon as possible. Give yourself as much time as possible to ensure your ballot gets to the county before the election day deadline – USPS mail can take several days to reach its destination. And remember that you can drop off your voted ballot at your county elections office.

## Is voting by mail secure?

Yes! Voting by mail is a secure system with safeguards against fraud. Active military, seniors, and people who are sick have used mail in ballots for decades. The integrity of our vote by mail system is strong and we can ensure every vote is counted. Whether you vote from home or at a polling place, you can have confidence that your vote will be counted.

## If I request a vote by mail ballot, but change my mind and want to vote at my polling place will I be able to?

No. If you apply for a ballot you must cast your vote via mail in ballot. If you attempt to vote at the polls you will be asked to use a provisional ballot. If your county receives your vote by mail ballot, that will be the vote of record, not your provisional ballot.

## What act or law gives citizens of Pennsylvania the right to vote with a mail-in ballot?

The Pennsylvania 2019 Act 77 <https://www.votespa.com/About-Elections/Pages/Voting-Reforms.aspx> takes effect with the 2020 primary election and allows qualified Pennsylvania registered voters to use either an absentee ballot or mail-in ballot.

## If I move after applying for my mail in ballot, what should I do?

If you have moved either temporarily or permanently contact your new county and ask for them to help to “cancel your previous mail ballot, register you to vote at your new address, and then send a new ballot”.