



Michigan.gov/Vote

Safely voting in Michigan's 2020 elections

- Voting from home is a **right all Michigan voters have** as a result of the constitutional amendment passed by voters in November 2018 that no longer requires voters to be absent to cast an "absent voter" ballot. Voting from home is a safe way to vote and protect your health, and the process is secure.

Applying for and obtaining your absent voter ballot

- To obtain an absent voter ballot, voters must **submit a request to their local clerk in one of the following ways:**
 - Voters with a Michigan driver's license or ID may apply online for an absent voter ballot at Michigan.gov/Vote.
 - Voters may download and complete an absent voter ballot application at Michigan.gov/Vote, print it and sign it, OR write out a request for an absent voter ballot and sign it.
 - **Signed** applications/requests may be mailed to the clerk OR scanned or photographed and emailed to the clerk. Make sure the entire application, including your signature, is readable in the picture.
 - You can find your clerk's contact information at Michigan.gov/Vote or by calling your city or township office.
 - Accessible absent voter ballot applications are available at Michigan.gov/Vote. Voters with qualifying disabilities may apply for an accessible electronic ballot that can be marked remotely, printed and returned to the clerk.

- Voters should **request a ballot well in advance of the deadline for any election** to allow time for processing and delivery. If possible, get your request to the clerk one month before Election Day. Once your request is received by the local clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued.
- The Michigan Bureau of Elections ensured that **absent voter ballot applications were mailed in the summer to every registered voter** in the state for the Aug. 4, 2020 and Nov. 3, 2020 elections. Voters will not receive an actual ballot unless they sign and return the application, and their signature and information are validated by the clerk.

Casting your absent voter ballot

- After receiving your absent voter ballot, **you have until 8 p.m. on Election Day** to complete the ballot and return it to the clerk's office. Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the outside of the return envelope and matches your signature on file.
- **Ideally, voters should mail their ballot at least TWO WEEKS prior to the election**, to give the U.S. Postal Service enough time deliver it. Within two weeks of Election Day, if possible, voters should deliver their ballot to a clerk's office or a ballot drop box if one is available. Voters should contact their clerk to verify the hours they can drop off their ballot in the office. Clerk address and contact information can be found at Michigan.gov/Vote.
- **Many clerks offer secure ballot drop boxes** where voters can return their completed absent voter ballots. This is a good option anytime but especially when there is not enough time to mail the ballot back. Check [this list](#) or your clerk's website to see if they offer a drop box.

Secure voting by mail

- **Mailing of absent voter applications does not make voting by mail less secure.** It's very easy to get an absent voter *application*—it has long been freely available online for download, and political parties and organizations mail applications out before most elections—but the local election clerk will not issue a *ballot* until they have verified the completed, signed application. The ballot envelope must also be signed and verified for the ballot to count.
- **Voting by mail is secure and trying to cheat is a crime.** Forging someone else's signature on an application and submitting it to receive a ballot is a crime that is often prosecuted as a felony. It is rarely attempted.

- If a resident receives a mailing for someone who no longer lives in their residence or is deceased, they are advised to write “**No longer at this address**” or “deceased” on the envelope and put it back in the mail. When the mailing is returned, clerks will use the information to cancel or update voter registration after a federally required notice and waiting period, improving the accuracy of the registered voter list.
- Bureau of Elections staff and clerks across Michigan **work closely with U.S. Postal Service specialists** to approve the design and markings of election-related envelopes so they’re clearly marked, and to quickly address any issues so the vote-by-mail process functions efficiently. If a voter has a question about whether their ballot has been sent or received, they should contact their clerk.
- **Michigan voters can track their ballot** – whether their clerk has mailed it out and when their completed ballot has been received – by visiting Michigan.gov/Vote.
- Clerks are instructed to make every attempt to contact a voter without delay if there is an issue with their ballot application or ballot (for example if the signature is missing or does not match the one on file). For this reason, voters should **provide their phone number and/or email address** so they can be easily contacted. This information will only be used for election purposes.
- Michigan uses paper ballots, which is **the most secure way to conduct elections**, as they can be audited and recounted.

Registration any time

- Michiganders can **register to vote up to and on Election Day**. They can do so online or using other approved methods until two weeks before the election. **Within two weeks of Election Day, they must register in person at a city or township clerk’s office.**
- The Michigan Department of State and clerks across the state will continue to do **outreach to people of all ages** so they know they can register to vote at Michigan.gov/Vote or with their local clerk and that they can vote from home.

For voters who are or were serving time

- Citizens who are **currently** serving a sentence in jail or prison are **ineligible to vote**. Those in jail or prison awaiting trial or sentencing may vote using an absent voter ballot. **Once a resident has been released from jail or prison, their voting rights are immediately restored and they are eligible to vote** – even if they are on probation, on parole, have unpaid fines, or are in a halfway house.

Voting in person

- **In-person voting will be available in every jurisdiction** for voters who choose to do so and will be provided in accordance with social distancing and safety protocols to ensure the safety of voters and election workers.

For voters with disabilities

- Voters with qualifying disabilities **may apply for an accessible electronic absent voter ballot** at [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://www.michigan.gov/Vote). They are able to vote this ballot from home, print it out and send it to their clerk.
- Inside the polling location, at least one voting station will be adapted to allow a person to vote while seated. In addition, all voters, including voters with disabilities, **have access to a Voter Assist Terminal in all polling places**. The Voter Assist Terminal helps the voter mark a ballot. It will mark the ballot with the voter's choices but does not tally the votes. Once the ballot is marked, it is counted in exactly the same fashion as all other ballots.

For more information

- The Department of State will continue to make **election-related materials** available on its social media accounts, on its website at [Michigan.gov/SOS](https://www.michigan.gov/SOS) and in communications with its partners and stakeholders. To request specific information, please contact Elections@Michigan.gov.