



STATE OF MICHIGAN
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding early voting options ahead of the Nov. 3, 2020 election

With the upcoming general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020, voters are reminded that they have the option to securely cast their vote early in-person at their local clerk's office or by mail or from home by absentee ballot. Pursuant to Michigan law, the mailing of requested absentee ballots and early in-person voting will begin 40 days before the election on Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020.

Below are answers to frequently asked questions regarding options for voting early from home, by mail, or in person.

1. What is early voting?

Michigan voters have the choice to vote in-person at the polls on Election Day or to vote early, either by casting an absentee ballot from home or in-person at their local city or township clerk's office. All registered voters are eligible to vote early.

2. When are absentee ballots sent to voters?

Michigan election law requires local clerks to start sending absentee ballots at least 40 days before the election. This fall, clerks' offices must begin mailing absentee ballots starting Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020.

3. What is the timeline for early voting?

Pursuant to Michigan law, early voting begins exactly 40 days ahead of the election. This fall, early voting will begin Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020, and voters may request, complete, and return an absentee ballot at their local clerk's office or satellite office locations. Early voting is available until 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, 2020.

For information on early voting locations and hours, voters should contact their local clerk's office. Contact information for all clerks is located online at Michigan.gov/Vote.

4. How can registered Michigan voters cast their vote early from home?

All registered Michigan voters have the right to vote early by requesting an absentee ballot be provided to them in-person at their local clerk's office or by mail.

To request to vote early from home or by mail with an absentee ballot, voters must submit an absentee ballot application online at Michigan.gov/Vote or download an absentee ballot application to return to their local clerk's office by email, mail, or in-person before the deadline on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020 at 5 p.m.

Voters may return their completed ballot to their local clerk's office by mail, at a designated absentee ballot drop box, or in-person at their local clerk's office. All completed absentee ballots must be received by a voter's local clerk's office no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

If choosing to return their absentee ballot by mail, voters must include first-class postage and are advised that they mail their ballot no later than Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020, to allow plenty of time for mail delivery.

5. How can registered Michigan voters cast their vote early in-person?

Voters may cast their vote early in-person at their local clerk's office or satellite office locations up to 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, 2020. Michigan's voter identification requirement asks voters to present up-to-date and accurate photo identification in order to cast their ballot or, if they do not have it, to sign an affidavit. Those planning to vote early in-person should plan to provide an acceptable form of photo ID including:

- Michigan driver's license or state identification card
- Driver's license or state ID card issued by another state
- A valid U.S. passport
- Federal or state government-issued photo identification
- Military ID with photo
- Student ID card
- Tribal identification card with photo.

Please note, state law does not require that the voter's photo ID show the voter's address.

For information on early voting locations and hours, voters should contact their local clerk's office. Contact information for all clerks is located online at Michigan.gov/Vote.

6. Can Michigan residents register to vote and vote early at the same time?

Yes. Michigan residents who are eligible to register to vote may register to vote online at Michigan.gov/Vote through Monday, Oct. 19, 2020, and request to vote early either by requesting an absentee ballot application online or downloading an absentee ballot application to complete and return to the voter's local clerk's office by Friday, Oct. 30, 2020.

Michigan residents also have the option to register to vote in-person up to and on Election Day and may also request to vote early in-person at the same time, provided that they do so by Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, before 4 p.m.

7. Can voters still request an absentee ballot after Thursday, Sept. 24?

Yes. Voters can request to receive an absentee ballot by mail by submitting an absentee ballot application online at Michigan.gov/Vote or downloading an absentee ballot application to complete and return to their local clerk's office via email, by mail, or in-person up by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020. Voters can also request an absentee ballot in-person at their clerk's office anytime up to 4 p.m., on Monday, Nov. 2.

8. How can voters track their absentee ballot application and absentee ballot to make sure they are received?

Voters can securely track the progress of both their absentee ballot application and their absentee ballot online at Michigan.gov/Vote.

9. What happens if a voter does not receive their absentee ballot in the mail by Election Day?

Voters are encouraged to securely track the progress of their absentee ballot application and absentee ballot online at Michigan.gov/Vote. Those who identify any issues or inconsistencies with the status of their absentee ballot application, absentee ballot, or listed voter information listed should contact their local clerk's office immediately for assistance.

Voters who have not received their ballot in the days leading up to Election Day may request an absentee ballot in-person at their city or township clerk's office up until 4 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, or may vote in-person at the polls on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020.

10. Are voters who requested an absentee ballot *required* to vote absentee?

No. Voters who requested an absentee ballot are not required to vote absentee and can surrender their ballot at their precinct polling location on Election Day to receive a new ballot. If their absentee ballot was lost or destroyed, they may sign a statement stating that the ballot was lost or destroyed and vote at their precinct polling location on Election Day.

11. Can voters who have already cast their ballot early change their vote?

Yes, voters who choose to vote early do have the option to spoil their ballot and request a new one. To do so, voters must submit a *written and signed* request to their local clerk, and include whether they will pick up their new ballot or wish to have it mailed. Any request to spoil a previously casted absentee ballot for issuance of a new ballot must be received by the voter's local clerk's office no later than 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31, 2020.

Voters have the ability to spoil their absentee ballot in-person and request a new ballot at their clerk's office anytime up before Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, at 4 p.m. Please note, voters cannot spoil an absentee ballot on Election Day.

12. Is early voting secure?

Yes, the process of voting early by absentee ballot is safe and highly secure. Voters requesting to vote by absentee ballot from home, by mail, or in-person must provide their signature or personal identification information at the time of submitting their application, which once received is verified against the voter's signature and information on record. If the signatures do not exactly match, the application or ballot may not be tabulated.

Additionally, Michigan's robust election infrastructure has several checks and balances throughout the process to ensure that all residents who cast a ballot are eligible and registered Michigan voters and that no voter casts more than one ballot.