



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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LANSING

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Regarding options to vote early by absentee ballot in the Nov. 3 election

With the upcoming General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2020, voters are reminded that they have the option to securely request an absentee ballot in person at their local clerk's office.

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

**1. What options are available to voters who would like to vote early by absentee ballot?**

Michigan voters have the choice to vote in person at the polls on Election Day or to vote early by requesting an absentee ballot from home or in person at their local city or township clerk's office before Nov. 2, 2020.

Voters can request an absentee ballot in person at their city or township clerk's office by Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, at 4 p.m. Information for all local Michigan clerks is available on [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote).

While all registered voters are eligible to vote early by absentee ballot, voters are reminded that state law prohibits the tabulating of ballots until the day of the election. All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature received by a local clerk before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

**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. How can registered Michigan voters complete their absentee ballot early from home?**

All registered Michigan voters have the right to vote early by requesting an absentee ballot at their local clerk's office.

Voters can request an absentee ballot in person at their city or township clerk's office by Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, at 4 p.m. Information for all local Michigan clerks is available on [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://Michigan.gov/Vote).

Voters may return their completed ballot to their local clerk's office or an absentee ballot drop box. All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature that are received by a local clerk by 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

**4. Can registered Michigan voters request an absentee ballot to vote early in person?**

Michigan's voter identification requirement asks voters to present up-to-date and accurate photo identification in order to request a 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. Additionally, while all registered voters are eligible to vote early by absentee ballot, voters are reminded that state law prohibits the tabulating of ballots until the day of the election. All valid absentee ballots with a matching voter signature received by a local clerk before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, will be tabulated.

For information on clerk office locations and hours, please visit [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://www.michigan.gov/Vote).

**5. Can Michigan residents register to vote and request an absentee ballot at the same time?**

Yes. Michigan residents who are eligible to register to vote may register to vote and request an absentee ballot in the same visit. Michigan law now provides the option for residents to register to vote up to and on Election Day.

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

Yes. Voters can request an absentee ballot in person at their city or township clerk's office by Monday, Nov. 2, 2020, at 4 p.m. Information for all local Michigan clerks is available on [Michigan.gov/Vote](https://www.michigan.gov/Vote).

**7. 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](https://www.michigan.gov/Vote).

**8. 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](https://www.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.

**9. 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.

#### **10. Can voters who have already returned their completed absentee ballot change their vote?**

If a voter has already voted absentee and wishes to change their vote, a voter can spoil their ballot by submitting a *written and signed request* to their city or township clerk. Voters have three options to spoil their ballot:

- **By Mail** - The voter must sign the request and state if they would like a new absentee ballot mailed to them or if they will pick it up in person at the clerk's office. This request must be received by 5 p.m. the Friday before the election (Oct. 30, 2020) if received by mail.
- **In Person** - An absentee ballot that has been returned to the clerk may be spoiled in person at the clerk's office until 10 a.m. the Monday prior to the election (Nov. 2, 2020).
- **Return & Spoil a Ballot** - An absentee ballot that has not been returned to the clerk may be spoiled in person at the clerk's office until 4 p.m. the Monday prior to the election (Nov. 2, 2020).

If a voter has not returned his or her ballot, the voter can surrender the ballot or sign a statement stating that the ballot was lost or destroyed and vote at the polls. There is no option on Election Day to spoil an absentee ballot that has been received by the clerk.

**11. If a voter has a condition that makes it challenging for them to complete their absentee ballot independently, can another individual assist them in filling out their ballot on their behalf?**

If an absentee voter receives assistance from another person when voting the ballot, the individual who provided the assistance must sign the designated line on the outside of the ballot return envelope. The certificate must be signed by any person who assists an absentee voter mark his or her ballot including the voter's spouse, a household member who lives with the voter, an election official or an individual employed as an election assistant.

**12. Is a voter required to personally return their own absentee ballot or may another permitted individual do so on their behalf?**

Under Michigan law, a voter is *only* permitted to ask a member of their immediate family, member of their same household, postal carrier, or an authorized local election official to return their absentee ballot on their behalf.

**13. Is it secure to vote early by absentee ballot?**

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.