

VOTING BY MAIL IN ILLINOIS

10 ILCS 5/19



WHO MAY VOTE BY MAIL?

-Any qualified elector of the State of Illinois who is properly registered to vote may apply for a vote by mail ballot.

-Any registered or non-registered member of the United States Armed Forces while on active duty, members of the Merchant Marines, and/or U.S. Government employee serving outside the U.S., as well as his/her spouse and dependent(s)* who expect to be absent from their county of residence on Election Day may apply for a vote by mail ballot.

-Any registered and non-registered citizen of the United States, temporarily out of the country, and his/her spouse and dependent(s) of voting age when residing with or accompanying him/her, who maintain a precinct residence in a county in this State may apply for a vote by mail ballot.

-Any State or federal employee (and their spouse) who had a voting residence in the precinct at the time he/she entered employment, but who now resides elsewhere due to state or federal employment, may retain his/her voting rights in that precinct.

**Dependent children of military members who have never resided in Illinois are eligible to vote, and may also vote by mail.*

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO VOTE BY MAIL?

A voter must obtain an application for a vote by mail ballot, either by mail, in person or online (if available) from his/her election authority (county clerk or board of election commissioners). These applications may also be produced, reproduced or distributed by anyone. Upon receiving the application, the voter completes and returns it to the election authority. It must include his/her name; home address; address where he/she wants the ballot mailed; party affiliation for a primary election; and signature*. The completed application must then be returned to the election authority with in the appropriate time frame. Such ballot shall be delivered to the elector only upon separate application by the elector for each election.

**If application is made electronically, and the applicant has properly filled it out, a signature is not required.*

WHEN CAN AN APPLICATION BE MADE TO VOTE BY MAIL?

In Person: Not more than 90 days nor less than 1 day prior to the election.

By Mail inside the US: Not more than 90 days or less than 5 days prior to the election.

By Mail outside the US:

- Not less than 30 days prior to the election to receive full ballot or;
- Less than 30 days prior to the election, but more than 10 days prior to the election to receive a Federal Ballot only.

CAN THE APPLICATION FOR VOTING BY MAIL BE REPRODUCED?

Yes. Any person may produce, reproduce, distribute, or return to an election authority the application for a vote by mail ballot.

WHEN DOES THE VOTING BY MAIL ACTUALLY START?

Military and overseas voters may start voting by mail 45 days prior to each election, while everyone else may start voting by mail 40 days prior to each election.

CAN ANYONE WHO REQUESTED A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT VOTE AT THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY?

A person who has requested a vote by mail ballot cannot be permitted to vote in the polling place on Election Day, unless one of the following exceptions apply:

- the voter submits to the election judges their vote by mail ballot, or a portion of the ballot for cancellation;
- the voter fills out an affidavit stating that they never received the vote by mail ballot;
- the voter fills out an affidavit stating they completed and returned the vote by mail ballot and the election authority did not receive it;

If the voter admits receiving a vote by mail ballot, but did not return it to the election authority, he or she would only be eligible to vote provisionally.

WHO MAY VOTE BY MAIL, AND IS A REASON REQUIRED?

Anyone may request a vote by mail ballot without specifying any reason for their absence on Election Day.

MUST BALLOTS BE RETURNED BY MAIL?

No. A voter may authorize any person to return their ballot to the election authority, as long as the voter has signed the affidavit on the ballot envelope affirming that authorization was given to deliver the ballot.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

Voting by mail includes the same obligations as those who vote in the polling place on Election Day. After completing the application, voters must vote their ballot in complete secrecy.

The affidavits on the application and the ballot envelope must be signed. These affidavits attest to the accuracy of the information provided on the application. The affidavit on the envelope also attests to the fact that the voter is voting his/her own ballot in secret.

Any vote by mail ballot must be placed into the certification envelope provided. The certification on the envelope must be completed, signed, and the envelope sealed. Mailed ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day, and must be received within 14 days of the election. All vote by mail ballots are processed centrally.

If the voter receives assistance in voting their ballot, the name and address of the individual providing the assistance must be placed on the ballot certification envelope. Remember that a candidate is NOT allowed to assist a voter unless the candidate is a spouse, parent, child or sibling of that voter.