



Voting by Mail

10 ILCS 5/19

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Who May Apply for a Vote by Mail Ballot?

- 1) Any qualified elector of the state of Illinois who is properly registered to vote.
- 2) Registered or non-registered members of the U.S. Armed Forces while on active duty, members of the Merchant Marine, and/or U.S. government employees serving outside the U.S., as well as their spouse and dependent(s) who expect to be absent from their county of residence on Election Day.
- 3) Registered and non-registered citizens of the U.S. temporarily out of the country, and their spouse and dependent(s) of voting age when residing with or accompanying them who maintain a precinct residence in Illinois.
- 4) Any State or federal employee (and their spouse) who had a voting residence in the precinct at the time they entered employment, but who now reside elsewhere due to State or federal employment, may retain their voting rights in that precinct.

Note: Dependent children or military members who have never resided in Illinois are eligible to vote, and may vote by mail.

When to Apply?

Vote by Mail applications can be submitted 90 days through 5 days prior to the election.

If submitted by mail outside the U.S., an application must be made not less than 30 days prior to the election to receive a full ballot or less than 30 days prior to the election to receive a federal only ballot.

For a Vote by Mail Ballot:

Voter must obtain a vote by mail application from their election authority, in-person or online to request a vote by mail ballot. Upon receiving the application, the voter completes, signs and then returns it to the election authority.

Voting by Mail Begins:

Military and overseas:
45 days prior to the election

Everyone else:
40 days prior to each election

Permanent Vote by Mail:

Voters can be added to a list of permanent vote by mail voters that receive an official vote by mail ballot for the general elections. This would allow voters to receive an official ballot for each general and primary election without having to apply each time.

The election authority will notify qualified voters of this option for permanent vote by mail, which will include an application for permanent vote by mail.

Vote by Mail Application Must Include:

- 1) Name
- 2) Residence Address
- 3) Address where the voter would like ballot to be mailed
- 4) Party Affiliation for Primary Election
- 5) Signature
- 6) Placed in the certification envelope and the certification envelope completed. Mailed ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day and must be received within 14 days of the election.

Those who requested Vote by Mail ballots, but turn up at the polls on Election Day can vote if:

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

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

Important Facts

- 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.
- If available, a voter may return their vote by mail ballot to a collection site (drop box) postage free before the close of the polls on Election Day.
- Voting by mail includes the same obligations as those who vote in the polling place on Election Day.
- 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 their own ballot in secret.
- 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.
- If application is made electronically and the applicant has properly filled it out, a signature is not required.
- Any person may produce, reproduce, distribute, or return to an election authority the application for a vote by mail ballot.

