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# Voting by Mail

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In most elections in Massachusetts, voters can choose whether they would prefer to vote in person or by mail.

No-excuse early voting by mail is available in all state elections, state primaries, presidential primaries, and most local elections. These ballots are known as "Vote by Mail" ballots and can be requested using the [Vote by Mail Application](#).

While early Vote by Mail ballots are more common, there are special circumstances where you may need to use the [Absentee Ballot application](#) to apply for an absentee ballot instead. [Find more information about absentee ballot eligibility here](#).

## Applying for your Ballot

To request your Vote by Mail ballot, you will need to submit a Vote by Mail application to [your local election office](#):

- [Online](#)
- By mail
- By email
- By fax

Vote by Mail applications can be submitted [online through the Mail-in Ballot Application System](#).

If you prefer to use a paper application, a Vote by Mail applications can also be downloaded or printed [here](#). Further, any written request with your signature is an acceptable application. You can simply write a signed letter to [your local election office](#) to apply for your ballot.

Applications can be submitted by [mail, email, or fax](#), but they must include a signature that can be compared to your hand-written signature. Electronic signatures, scanned applications, and photos of applications are acceptable.

**Typed signatures on applications cannot be accepted, unless you are a voter who requires accommodations due to physical disability.** If you are unable to sign your application or mark your ballot by hand due to a disability, visit our [page about voting with disabilities](#) for information on requesting an accommodation.

Absentee ballots can be requested in the same manner as early Vote by Mail ballots, using the [Absentee Ballot application](#).

## Application Deadlines

Any mail-in ballot must be requested in writing by 5 p.m. on the 5th business day before the election. Your application can only be accepted if it has reached your local election office by the deadline.

**Apply as early as possible**, especially if your ballot will need to be mailed out of town. The U.S. Postal Service recommends allowing up to 7 days for mail delivery. To ensure you receive your ballot with enough time to mail it back, you should apply 2-3 weeks before Election Day.

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## Returning your Ballot

There are several options for returning your ballot. You may return your ballot by:

- Mailing it back using the envelope provided
- Hand-delivering your ballot to your local election office
- Dropping your ballot off at an early voting location during early voting hours
- Using a ballot drop box provided by your city or town

**Ballots cannot be dropped off at a polling place on Election Day.**

Ballots must reach your local election office by the close of polls on Election Day in order to be counted.

[Use our Track My Ballot tool to check the status of your ballot](#). The tracker will show you the date your ballot was mailed, the date it was returned, and whether your ballot was accepted or rejected.

You can still vote in person if you've applied to vote by mail. You can vote at an early voting location or your polling place on Election Day.

You cannot vote in person if your ballot has been accepted by your local election office. You can't take your ballot back or vote again. [Use our website to track your ballot status](#). If your ballot hasn't been accepted by Election Day, you may vote in person at your polling place. If your ballot arrives at your local election office after you've voted, the mail-in ballot will be rejected.

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## Local Elections

State law allows cities and towns to opt out of no-excuse early voting by mail in local elections. A city or town can only opt out of Vote by Mail for a local election after the city council or board of selectmen hold a public hearing and take a recorded vote to do so at least 45 days before the election.

**If your community opts out of Vote by Mail for your local election, a Vote by Mail application will not be valid for that election.** Check with your [local election office](#) about whether your community has opted out of Vote by Mail in an upcoming local election.

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## Military & Overseas Voters

If you are a U.S citizen residing out of the country or on active military duty, you may use the [Federal Post Card Application](#) or the [Massachusetts Absentee Ballot Application](#) to request your ballot. More information is available on our [Voting for Military & Overseas Citizens](#) page.

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## Vote by Mail Accommodations

If you have a disability that prevents you from marking a paper ballot independently, you may qualify to use the Accessible Vote by Mail system. Visit [our page for voters with disabilities](#) to find more information and an Accessible Vote by Mail Application.

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## Download a Vote by Mail Application

- [Application to vote by mail \(PDF\)](#)
- [Solicitud para votar por correo \(PDF\)](#)
- [邮寄投票申请 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Đơn Đăng Ký Bỏ Phiếu Vắng Mặt \(PDF\)](#)
- [ពាក្យសុំបោះឆ្នោតតាមប្រៃសណីយ៍ \(PDF\)](#)