Voting Made Easier

MAIL-IN and ABSENTEE VOTING

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

your VOTE
is your VOICE

This tutorial will provide information for ***registered voters*** about:

- Why a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot may be an *excellent option for voters*
- Why a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot is *available and secure*
- How to complete an *application* for a **Mail-in or Absentee Ballot**
- How to *deliver* the Mail-in or Absentee Ballot

The League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and is nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties.

Will My Vote COUNT with a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot?

Mail-in or Absentee Ballot: Available and Secure

- **Available** to PA registered voters; *no reason is needed for a Mail-in Ballot*
- **Election Security:** *"Multiple defenses are in place to ensure that our elections are secure and accessible to all eligible voters." (VotesPA.com)*

Available and Secure:

- **Act 77 allows a registered voter in Pennsylvania to request a "no-excuse" Mail-in Ballot, *with no special reason needed.***

- *The **Absentee Ballot** used to be the only option for voters. When applying **online** for the "no-excuse" Mail-in Ballot, voters must first answer three questions. **If answered, "No",** the Mail-in Ballot application process continues. If any answer is "Yes", an Absentee Ballot is an option.*

- Every attempt is made to make a request for a Mail-in or Absentee ballot available to all eligible voters. Requests may be made online or in person, by mail, by fax, or by phone (1-877-868-3772). A printed version is available in Spanish.

- At VotesPA.com, voters may view the infrastructure in place for **Election Security.** Vote by Mail voter fraud is extremely rare (Verified Voting.org). ***Mail-in ballots may be an excellent choice for voters during the pandemic.***

Registered voters should complete the application for this ballot AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE— Application process is NOW OPEN!

Choices for Voters:

Voting at Your HOME Polling Place

Voters Have CHOICES about Where and How to Cast Their Ballots!

Home (Assigned) Polling Place:
The **Polling Place** assigned on your **Voter Registration Card** is determined by:

- the **address*** you use when you register to vote

- Your Voter Registration Card will list your **home address**, which political party you have chosen if any, and your Polling Place.

- Polling Places are open from 7am to 8pm.

- **Proof of ID**, either with a photo or non-photo ID is required the first time you vote *or* the first time you vote in a new Polling Place. More information here.

Please Note: If you are temporarily living away from home but *want to vote* in your **home (assigned) polling place**:

- Make sure you return home to vote in the Presidential General Election on **November 3, 2020**.
    Put this date in your phone calendar NOW!

*Due to the pandemic, your polling place may be changed or combined with others. If this becomes necessary, your County Election Office will work to inform voters by publishing the new information and sending a postcard to voters' home addresses.

There may be many reasons that you *may not* be able to vote in person on Election Day at your home polling place, like:

- Illness, disability, or temporarily living elsewhere (post-high school education, work, or military)

- Risks for older voters and persons with pre-existing conditions due to the pandemic.

For the reasons above or because it is simply *your preference*, *no reason is needed* to request a no-excuse **Mail-in ballot** in Pennsylvania (Act 77).

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR A MAIL-IN OR ABSENTEE BALLOT!

- *Apply for a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot here at VotesPA.com. (See **Slide 6** for ID requirements **before** completing the Mail-in or Absentee ballot application.)*

- Voters may be added to the ***Annual* Mail-in or Absentee Ballot request list** here**,** by checking the box at the bottom of the application.

Note to those who currently are or may be joining the Military:
The rules for voting are different and specific to members of the military. Information will be available to you from the military and here.

Even More Choices:

MAIL-IN and ABSENTEE Ballot

- *Think about where you will be on Election Day, November 3, 2020*

If you decide to vote with a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot:

- Start the process **NOW** or
- Apply for a ballot **at least 6 weeks** before the application deadline— *the earlier the better!*

Other situations for registered voters to consider:

1. **If you are a college student or anyone who wants to vote where you** *temporarily live (still living in PA):*

- Apply for a **Mail-in or Absentee Ballot** for your home address here.
- Or update your Voter Registration with your current address at least 15 days before the next election here.

2. **You want to vote where you** *temporarily live (outside of Pennsylvania):*

- Apply for a **Mail-in or Absentee Ballot** for your home address here.
- Or register to vote in that other state.

Two Ways to APPLY for a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot:

What ID Do I Need to APPLY for a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot?

- Online
- Paper Application

Voter Registration Status must be verified

When you apply for a Mail-in or Absentee ballot *online:*

- You must provide a PA Driver's License number or PennDOT ID.

- If you do not have either of these, you may apply with a paper application (below).

- If you provide your email address on your online application, you will receive emails which confirm and follow your Mail-in or Absentee ballot application and ballot here.

When you use a *paper application* for a Mail-in or Absentee ballot:

- Download here, print, and mail the paper application.

- You may use your PA Driver's License number or PennDOT ID *or* the last four digits of your Social Security number as the required ID for the application. (If you don't have any of these, you must submit a photocopy of acceptable ID here.)

*(You may also provide this information to your **county election office** by phone or in person.)*

Once your Mail-in or Absentee ballot application is received by the County Elections Office your voter registration status will be verified using the information on the voting record (voter rolls). *Check your voter registration status here.*

How Do I MARK My Mail-in or Absentee Ballot?

You will receive 4 items in the mail:

- Instruction Sheet
- Your Mail-in or Absentee Ballot
- The "Secrecy" Envelope
- The "Official Election Mail" Envelope

Follow These Steps Carefully!

1. Mark your **ballot,** with **black or blue pen**, *following the instructions. (Do not cross out mistakes on your ballot—if you make a mistake, contact the [county election office.](#))*

2. Place your ballot in the *secrecy envelope and seal it,* and then put the secrecy envelope into the official election envelope.

3. **Be sure to sign *t*he "declaration" statement found on the official election envelope or your ballot may not count.**

4. After signing, fill out the date, PRINT your name and your address.

5. **Return your ballot so it *arrives* at the [county election office](#) by 8pm on election day—postmarks are not enough.** (No postage is required.)

Please Note: Voters with disabilities may need assistance marking and returning a Mail-in or Absentee ballot. [Accessible ballot](#)

Note about Deadlines:
Be aware that any changes to deadlines before the election would be posted [here](#).

Last-Minute Emergencies may be:

- Unexpected Illness or Hospitalization
- Disability
- Last-minute Absence

What Is an EMERGENCY Absentee Ballot?

Emergency Absentee Ballot for last-minute emergencies:

In emergency situations (such as an unexpected illness or disability and last-minute absence) following the deadline at *5pm on the Tuesday before the election,* you can request an Emergency Absentee Ballot.

County Election Office must receive your Emergency Absentee Ballot Application by 8pm on November 3, 2020.

- [Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot (PDF)](#)

- [Authorized Representative for Emergency Absentee Ballot Form](#)

Another option for unusual or unexpected situations could be "In-person Absentee Voting".

- You may always appear *in-person* at the County Elections Office to request and complete an Absentee Ballot.

More Information About a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot

Available and Secure

DELIVER Your Mail-in or Absentee Ballot *AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE to meet the 8pm Election Day deadline:*

- by Mail, to the County Election Office or to Drop Boxes, if available

Track Your Mail-in or Absentee Ballot:

Q Track the Status of Your Mail-in or Absentee Ballot Q

APPLICATION RECEIVED — APPLICATION PROCESSED — BALLOT MAILED — BALLOT RECEIVED

© 2020 League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh

Available and Secure:

- Return your Mail-in or Absentee ballot so it arrives at the county election office on time. (No postage is necessary if mailed.)

- If you didn't receive your ballot or if it is lost, damaged or destroyed, you can vote in person at your polling place on election day using a provisional ballot*.

- If you provided your email address when you applied, you may track the progress of your Mail-in or Absentee ballot here.

PLEASE NOTE: *Act 12, Voter-Spoiling of Mail-in or Absentee Requests:

For General Elections only, and beginning with the **November 3, 2020 General Election,** a voter **may set aside** their Mail-in or Absentee Ballot if they choose to vote **in-person on election day**. The ballot and the official election envelope must be returned to the voter's polling place. After *signing a declaration*, the voter will be allowed to vote a regular ballot. (Act 12 significantly alters Act 77.)

ONE VOTER, ONE VOTE

- **Election Security** is a system designed to ensure that each voter may cast only **their own, single vote** whether in-person or by mail

*"The PA Dept. of State directed all PA counties to select **new voting systems** with **voter-verifiable paper ballots**...to ensure that PA voters are voting on the most **secure, accessible and auditable** equipment available." (VotesPA.com)*

The INTEGRITY of Your Vote

Voting *IN-PERSON* at your polling place *in Allegheny County:*
*Allegheny County's **new voting system** consists of a paper ballot, or a ballot-marking machine and ballot card, and a ballot scanning machine, at each polling place.*

- As you check-in with election officials, your voter registration status will be verified. (Proof of ID for first-time voters or the first-time in a polling place here.)

- You may either mark a paper ballot by hand, or use a ballot-marking machine and ballot card.

- After making your choices, you will insert your ballot into the *ballot scanning machine* and a message will **confirm** that your vote **has been cast.**

Voting with either a *MAIL-IN or ABSENTEE Ballot:*

- A **unique bar code** is created and linked to your voter registration record. The correct ballot for your precinct is sent to the address on your Mail-in or Absentee ballot *application.*

- The unique bar code ensures that you may only vote once even if you receive an *extra ballot* in error. *Only one vote per unique bar code can be cast.*

- You will receive a **confirming email** that your vote has been recorded. You may also check your Mail-in or Absentee ballot status online here.

Need More Reliable Voter Information?

To Register to Vote and more, go to
VotesPA.com

Info for Choosing Candidates, go to
Vote411.org

VotesPA.com: here

- Where you can register to vote, apply for a Mail-in or Absentee ballot, change your address, your political party affiliation, or find your registration status, your polling place, and more.

Vote411.org: here

- At this *League of Women Voters* website, a few weeks before every election, type in your address and view the candidates who will be on your ballot, and more. If candidates have answered three questions, you will be able to compare their answers side-by-side.

For Even More Voter Information via the LWVGP Website Homepage:
- *See "Why Vote" here.*
- *See "Voter Registration" here.*
- *See "Understanding Elections" here.*

League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh:
       "Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy"