

## Vote by Mail – Frequently Asked Questions

### What are the advantages of Vote by Mail?

- **Convenience** -- Get your ballot delivered to you weeks before Election Day, fill it out at your convenience, then return it by mail.
- **Serves everyone** -- including voters who might have trouble getting to the polls, such as senior or disabled voters; rural voters far from a polling place; single parent working two jobs; First Responders whose schedules can be preempted; a family with sick children or other responsibilities that prevent them from getting out; anyone with an unexpected trip or change in plans; anyone facing bad weather.
- **Secure and efficient** -- It relies on paper ballots that cannot be electronically hacked, with a full audit trail.
- **Saves money** -- Saves on poll workers and hundreds of polling place machines that need to be maintained and replaced.
- **Increases voter turnout** -- States that have higher levels of vote by mail ballots see higher levels of voting -- in primaries as well as general elections. Local elections see an even more dramatic uplift. Voter groups generally less likely to vote (often younger or minority voters) see a strong positive increase in voting.

### Who is eligible to vote by mail?

Any registered voter can apply to vote by mail (versus going to a polling place). Note: for the November 3, 2020 General Election, all New Jersey registered voters will automatically receive a Vote by Mail ballot.

Not registered? New Jersey's Division of Elections has launched the state's first online voter registration tool allowing registering voters to provide their information electronically. Previously, those registering to vote needed to print, sign, and mail a registration form. Go to <https://voter.svrs.nj.gov/register>

The last day to register for the November election is October 13, 2020.

### How much time before an election can I apply for Vote by Mail?

For the November 3, 2020 General Election, all New Jersey registered voters will automatically receive a Vote by Mail ballot.

(Under normal circumstances, the mailed-in application must be received by the County Clerk up to 7 days before the election. However, a voter can apply in person to the County Clerk until 3:00 PM on the day before the election.)

### When should I receive my ballot?

Your ballot is mailed to you at least 18 days before the election. New Jersey election officials will begin mailing out ballots by October 5. If you do not receive it, contact your County Clerk (contact information below for Middlesex County Clerk).

Note: The Monroe Township Clerk reports that ballots are due to be mailed out on Wednesday, September 23, 2020.

### Do I have to vote the entire ballot?

No, you may pick and choose the races or ballot questions for which you want to vote.

**I need help in filling out my application and my mail-in ballot. Are there any restrictions on who can help me?**

Yes. The person must be a registered voter in New Jersey and cannot be a candidate for any office on the ballot in the upcoming election. The helper will need to enter his or her name on the ballot.

**When do I mail in my ballot?**

You can mail in your completed ballot any time after you receive it. However, it must be postmarked by Election Day and received by the Board of Elections within 2 days after the election.

You can also deposit your ballot in a secure Vote By Mail Drop box within your county. A box is located in front of the Monroe Township Public Library.

In New Jersey, mail-in ballots will begin being verified and counted starting 10 days prior to Election Day.

**How do I know my mail-in ballot was received?**

All New Jersey ballots come with a bar code that is unique to each ballot, allowing your ballot to be tracked going to you and coming from you.

[Sign up for a NJ Public Access Account](#) to see if your Vote by Mail ballot was received and accepted. This site also shows you

- your current voter information: party, polling place, etc.
- all the current elected officials for your county, freehold, etc.

Already signed up? [Click here](#) to access your account.

**What if I don't want to vote by mail, even if I requested to vote by mail?**

You can go to your polling place on Election Day, where you will be given a provisional ballot, which is exactly the same as a filling out a Vote by Mail ballot (only your name and address are not already filled in, as they are on a Vote by Mail ballot). Once it is signed and sealed, your ballot will be placed in a red sealed bag at the polling place, which will be delivered to the County Board of Elections when the polls close. Your ballot will be counted within 2-3 days of the election, in accordance with the law.

You can also hand-deliver your Vote by Mail ballot to a polling place on Election Day. You can bypass the line and hand in your sealed ballot in its sealed mailing envelope.

**Note that you cannot send in a Vote by Mail ballot and also go to a polling place and submit a provisional ballot.** This is "voting twice", which is breaking a federal law (which is punishable up to 5 years on prison), as well as committing a third-degree criminal offence in New Jersey (punishable by a maximum fine of \$15,000 and a prison term of 3 to 5 years).

**Middlesex County Clerk**

P.O. Box 1110  
75 Bayard Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1110

(732) 745-4202 [Office hours: 8:30am to 4:15pm]

[www.co.middlesex.nj.us/Government/Departments/CS/Pages/County%20Clerk/County-Clerk--Elections.aspx](http://www.co.middlesex.nj.us/Government/Departments/CS/Pages/County%20Clerk/County-Clerk--Elections.aspx)

**Application for Vote by Mail (Middlesex County)**

<https://www.nj.gov/state/elections/assets/pdf/forms-vote-by-mail/vote-mail-ballot-middlesex-english.pdf>

**Application for Vote by Mail – other county in NJ or other language**

<https://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml>