

Frequently Asked Questions About Voting Options for 2020

1. I received or downloaded an application to Vote by Mail in the November 2020 election. When should I complete and return the application to the County Clerk in order to receive a vote by mail ballot?

*If you have decided that you **do** want to vote by mail, consider returning a completed application to vote by mail **now**. Although the law provides that vote by mail applications can be requested until the end of October, potential mail delays could mean your ballot might arrive after November 3rd. Ballots must be postmarked no later than Election Day, November 3rd to be counted. Voting your ballot by mid-October is the best way to ensure that your vote will be received and counted.*

*If you think that you **might** want to vote by mail, consider returning a completed application to vote by mail any time now until mid October. If you receive a vote by mail ballot you can still vote in person, however, **DO NOT DESTROY THE VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT**. Either bring the ballot to an early voting site at Carbondale Civic Center, SIU Student Center or Jackson County Courthouse or bring the ballot to the polls on November 3rd.*

2. When will I receive my vote by mail ballot?

On September 24th, County Clerks will begin mailing ballots to voters who have requested an application. If you requested an application by October 1st, a ballot should be received by October 6th. After October 1st County Clerks will mail ballots to applicants within 2 business days of receipt.

3. What should I do if I have applied for a vote by mail ballot and have not received one?

Call your County Clerk. In Jackson County: Frank Byrd, 684-7366.

4. What should I do upon receiving my vote by mail packet?

The packet will include 4 items: ballot, ballot certification sheet, privacy envelope and mailing envelope.

- Vote the ballot by blackening the ovals next to choices.*
- Insert the completed ballot into the privacy envelope.*
- Complete and **sign** the ballot certification sheet.*
- Place the privacy envelope with ballot into the larger mailing envelope. (The outside of the mailing envelope will be addressed to the County Clerk and include your return address.)*
- Place the completed, **signed** ballot certification sheet into the mailing envelope, **keeping it outside and separate** from the privacy envelope.*
- Seal the mailing envelope.*

These are your options for returning the ballot to the County Clerk:

A. *Return via U.S. Mail: Place 70 cents postage on the outside envelope. Although legislation allows that ballots postmarked by November 3rd will be counted, to avoid mail delays and be sure your vote will be counted, consider mailing no later than October 23rd.*

B. *Return via "secure collection site". In Jackson County there will be a dropbox in the vicinity of the Jackson County Courthouse in Murphysboro. No postage required. If outside Jackson County, ask your County Clerk whether it is available in your county.*

C. *Deliver the ballot in person to the Jackson County Clerk's office on or before November 3rd.*

No matter how you return the vote by mail ballot, be sure the ballot certification sheet is signed!!!!

Reminder: If you applied for and received a vote by mail ballot and decide you prefer to vote in person at an early voting site or at the polls on Election Day.....**DO NOT DESTROY (OR LOSE) THE VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT!!!!** Take the ballot with you and surrender at the in person voting site. You will be given a new ballot to vote. If your vote by mail ballot is lost, you can vote provisionally.

5. How does the County Clerk ensure a vote by mail ballot was completed by you, the person to which it was mailed?

Just as with in person voting, election judges will look at your signature to determine whether it matches your signature on file in the County Clerk's office. A three bipartisan election judge panel will verify the signature. Your signature is considered valid unless all three judges determine the signature is NOT a match.

6. Can my ballot be rejected?

Yes, vote by mail ballots can be rejected for these reasons:

A. *Lack of signature.*

B. *All three election judges determine signature on ballot does not match the signature on file.*

C. *The vote by mail envelope was delivered to the County Clerk opened.*

D. *You have already voted in person by the time the vote by mail ballot is received.*

7. If my ballot is rejected or spoiled will I have a chance to vote?

Yes, if your ballot is rejected the County Clerk must notify you within two days after the rejection or within one day if the rejection occurs after Election Day and in all cases before the close of counting provisional ballots (November 17th). You will be notified through mail, email or both as to the reason for rejection.

If your ballot was rejected based on the signature or lack of a signature, you will be permitted to submit a statement that you cast the ballot and upon receipt, the ballot will be deemed valid and counted.

If your ballot was rejected because the envelope was delivered opened, you will be permitted to vote in person or can request another vote by mail ballot, provided you submit an application and cast a new ballot prior to the close of polls on Election Day.

If your ballot was spoiled by over voting or spoiled in any way you will be notified and allowed to obtain another ballot as long as the ballot was returned prior to the close of polls on Election Day.

Note: If voting by mail, it is recommended that you return the ballot early, significantly before Election Day to ensure time to rectify ballot rejection and make sure your vote will count.