

Many registered voters in Illinois are unable to vote in person at the polling place on Election Day. This pamphlet provides general information regarding the correct procedures to follow in order to vote by absentee ballot.

ABSENTEE VOTING PROCEDURES

When can applications for absentee ballots be made?
(Be certain to apply within the following time frames.)

By Mail - Not more than 40 days nor less than 5 days prior to the election
In Person - Not more than 40 days nor less than 1 day prior to the election.

Some voters, primarily those who are temporarily out of the country, may make application for an absentee ballot not less than 10 days prior to the election. Such request shall entitle the applicant to an absentee ballot for every election in one calendar year in which federal offices are filled. Contact your election authority EARLY for specific details if you plan to be out of the country. Absent members of the armed forces while on active duty may apply for an absentee ballot by fax machine.

NOTE: For hospitalized voters voting absentee, refer to “Health Care Facility Voting” brochure.

STEP 1

Obtain the proper application for absentee ballot, either by mail or in person, from your election authority (county clerk or board of election commissioners).

STEP 2

Upon receipt, complete the application. Make certain to include your name, home address, address where you want the ballot to be mailed, and be sure to sign the application. In primary elections you must state your party affiliation.

STEP 3

After completing the application, either mail it or deliver it yourself to your election authority. If you return the application in person or complete the application in the election authority’s office, you may immediately vote your absentee ballot in the election authority’s office. If you mail the application and it is properly completed, the election authority will mail your absentee ballot to you.

STEP 4

After receiving your ballot, VOTE THE BALLOT IN SECRET. Insert the ballot into the envelope provided, seal it, complete and sign the certification on the back and PERSONALLY return it or mail it. (The absentee voter may authorize, in writing, a spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, or licensed motor carrier, to deliver to the election authority the completed absentee ballot in sufficient time to be delivered to the polling place on Election Day.)

WHO MAY VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Registered voters expecting to be absent from their county of residence on Election Day;

Registered voters appointed to be judges of election in a precinct different from where they reside;

Registered voters unable to be present at the polls because of a physical incapacity;

Registered voters observing a religious holiday and unable to be present at the polls because of the tenets of their religion;

Registered voters who because of election duties in the office of a state's attorney, county clerk, a board of election commissioners or State Board of Elections will be unable to be present at the polls;

Registered voters who are serving as sequestered jurors on a state or federal jury only;

Registered or non-registered members of the United States Armed Forces while on active duty, and members of the Merchant Marines, as well as their spouses and dependents who expect to be absent from their county of residence on election day;

Registered or non-registered members of religious groups, welfare agencies as well as their spouses and dependents who are officially attached to or assisting members of the armed forces who expect to be absent from the county in which they reside on Election Day;

State and federal employees 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;

A registered citizen temporarily residing overseas may vote by absentee ballot;

Any citizen residing outside of the country, not registered to vote but qualified to vote in a federal election, may vote by absentee ballot for federal offices only.

Confinement in jail pending acquittal or conviction of specified reason for absentee voting.

DID YOU KNOW?

Absentee voters have the same obligations as those who vote in the polling place on Election Day. They must complete an application and vote their absentee ballot in complete secrecy.

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 attests to the fact that the voter is voting his/her own ballot in secret.

If the voter receives assistance in voting his/her absentee ballot, the name and address of the individual giving the assistance must be placed on the ballot certification envelope. Remember that a candidate is NOT allowed to assist an absentee voter unless the candidate is a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of the absentee voter.

IMPORTANT

Knowingly giving, lending, or promising to give or lend any money or other valuable consideration to any other person to influence another person to vote for or against any candidate or public question is a Class 4 Felony. It is a Class 3 Felony for any person to intimidate or unduly influence another person to cast an absentee ballot inconsistent with the voter's intent or to mark or tamper with an absentee ballot of another person.

Any unusual activity or irregularity associated with absentee voting procedures should be reported immediately to proper authorities.

The goal of the State Board of Elections is to help bring about a greater understanding and participation in the electoral process.

For more information on election laws and procedures, write or call the State Board of Elections.

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