



Frequently Asked Questions for the West Virginia 2020 General Election amid COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Emergency:

Overview

When is the 2020 General Election?

The West Virginia 2020 General Election is November 3, 2020.

How do I vote?

Voters may still cast a ballot in-person during the Early Voting period (October 21 – 31) and on Election Day (November 3).

Additionally, West Virginia voters may apply to vote absentee due to concerns of COVID-19. For instructions and deadlines on the absentee process, please see the Absentee Voting section below.

To make sure you are ready to vote, visit [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.GoVoteWV.com) to confirm that your voter registration information is up to date. If you do not have internet access, contact your county clerk to check your registration. The last day to register to vote or update your voter registration for the 2020 General Election is October 13, 2020.

How do I register to vote?

There are many options to register to vote in West Virginia, which include:

- Registering online at [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.GoVoteWV.com) (a valid driver's license is required);
- Registering by mail by downloading the voter registration application from [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.GoVoteWV.com) and mailing it to your county clerk;
- Contacting your county clerk and requesting a voter registration application by mail;
- Registering at a state agency or department (Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Health and Human Resources, or Women, Infants and Children facilities)

The last day to register to vote or update your voter registration for the 2020 General Election is October 13, 2020.

How do I stay up to date on election-related information?

The most recent West Virginia election information can be found on our website at [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.GoVoteWV.com). Please refer to this website as your number one trusted source for obtaining accurate election information.

You can also subscribe to our email list. Simply send an email to communications@wvsos.gov requesting updates and you will be added to the list.

Absentee Voting

Do I have to apply for an absentee ballot?

Yes. By law, the first step in the absentee process is to submit an absentee ballot application. Here are a few ways to easily obtain an absentee application:

- Apply online to vote absentee at [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.govotewv.com);
- Download an [application](#);
- Call your county clerk to request the application to be sent to you by mail, fax, or email; or
- Pick up an application in person at your county clerk's office.

You should always check to make sure your voter registration is up to date. You may verify your registration at [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.govotewv.com) or by calling your county clerk.

How do I complete an absentee ballot application?

1. Enter your name, residence address, and date of birth on the provided lines.
2. If your mailing address is different than your residence address, print the address where you'd like your ballot mailed. Also be sure to enter your contact information, in case your county clerk needs to get in touch with you about your application.
3. If you are applying due to concerns of COVID-19, check the box for "Illness, injury or other medical reason which keeps me confined (includes concerns of COVID-19)."
4. Verify that all the information you provided is true, and sign the line provided after the words "signature/mark of voter," and print the date. If a voter cannot sign and makes a mark on the signature line, a witness must sign and date below the mark.
5. If you will receive assistance completing your ballot, the person who assisted you must sign and date the application.
6. Submit your application using the online ballot port, or if you are using the paper application, mail, fax, or email it to your County Clerk.

What is the deadline to apply for an absentee ballot?

You should return your application to your county clerk as soon as possible. The county clerk must receive your application, in the Clerk's office, by October 28, 2020. Absentee applications received after October 28, even if postmarked, cannot be accepted by law.

I applied for an absentee ballot. When will my county clerk send my ballot?

Your county clerk will begin mailing ballots for the 2020 General on September 18, 2020 and continue mailing absentee ballots until all applications received by the deadline on October 28 have been processed.

County clerks typically place absentee ballots in the mail within one day after receiving the absentee application. However, due to the increase in absentee applications during the Coronavirus emergency, the Governor issued an executive order allowing county clerks to mail absentee ballots as quickly as possible, but the 1-day deadline is no longer in place. If you do not receive your absentee ballot within a few days after placing your application in the mail, please call your county clerk to request the status. You may also track your absentee ballot online at [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.govotewv.com).

Do I need to show ID to vote absentee?

You will need to provide identification only if you are a first-time voter in West Virginia or a new county who has not shown proof of residency for voter registration purposes.

Under W. Va. Code §3-2-10, a first-time voter that has not shown ID at the time of registration must submit a copy of one of the following documents that shows your current name and address with your absentee ballot:

- Valid photo identification
- Utility bill
- Bank statement
- Government check
- Paycheck
- Any other official government document

If you have questions or do not have a copy of any of these documents, contact your county clerk as soon as possible.

[I received my ballot, when should I return it?](#)

Due to the increases in absentee ballots during the Coronavirus emergency, county clerks will need as much time as possible to process all the ballots in time for the election. Therefore, you should mail your ballot as soon as possible.

Deadlines to submit your absentee ballot are:

- Absentee-by-mail ballots must be *postmarked* by Election Day (November 3), and your county clerk must receive it by the start of canvass (November 9).
- If you or someone else hand-delivers your ballot, your county clerk must receive it by the day *before* the election (November 2). Remember, each voter may only deliver up to two absentee ballots.
- If your ballot is not postmarked, it must be *received* by your county clerk by the day *after* the General Election (November 4).

[I returned my absentee ballot. How do I know if my county clerk received it?](#)

You may track your ballot by going to [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.govotewv.com) and clicking the “Track Your Absentee Ballot” button. If you have questions or concerns about your ballot, contact your county clerk.

[How do I vote as a member of the uniformed services on active duty, their spouse or dependent, or a citizen residing overseas?](#)

Uniformed service members on active duty inside or outside of the United States, their spouses and dependents, and citizens residing outside of the United States that consider West Virginia their last place of residence may vote by mail or electronically. Due to the current situation with COVID-19, mail may not be deliverable to certain countries. Uniformed and overseas voters are highly encouraged to participate through the electric absentee option. For more information, visit [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.govotewv.com), call or email your county clerk.

[Due to a medical emergency, I cannot make it to the polls Election Day. How can I vote?](#)

If you are in the hospital on Election Day, two election officials can bring you an emergency absentee ballot. You or a family member should contact your county clerk no earlier than the seventh day before the election and no later than noon on Election Day (October 27 – November 3).

Some counties also allow a voter who recently moved to a nursing home to vote an emergency absentee ballot. In addition, some counties allow voters who, on or after the seventh day preceding an election, become confined to a specific location within the county because of illness, injury, physical disability, immobility due to advanced age, or another medical reason to vote emergency absentee.

To learn whether your county has an emergency absentee ballot option, please contact your county clerk.

[I am in the Address Confidentiality Program. How can I vote?](#)

If you are a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program, call 866-767-8683 (toll-free) or 304-558-6000 and ask to speak with our Address Confidentiality Program staff.

[I have a permanent disability that prevents me from going to a polling place. How can I vote?](#)

If you have a permanent physical disability that prevents you from going to the polling place, you may use the [Permanent Absentee Voter Application](#) to apply to your county clerk. Once your application is approved, you will receive a ballot by mail in every election.

[How do I vote absentee electronically as a qualified voter with a physical disability?](#)

In 2020, the Legislature passed SB 94 which allows voters living with physical disabilities, who cannot get to the polls, and who cannot vote an absentee-by-mail ballot without assistance, the ability to vote an electronic absentee ballot.

If you are eligible to vote an electronic absentee ballot, you must submit the [full-length Absentee Ballot Application](#) to your county clerk and await the instructions provided at the email address listed on the application. To download the full-length application, visit [GoVoteWV.com](#) or call your county clerk to request an application to be sent by mail, fax, or email.

For more information on electronic absentee voting options, as well as instruction and tutorials, please visit [GoVoteWV.com](#), contact your county clerk, or contact an advocate at Disability Rights of West Virginia.

[May I assist a family member, friend, or neighbor with completing his or her absentee ballot and/or application?](#)

You may only assist a voter in completing his or her absentee ballot and/or application if he or she requests your assistance due to a disability. If you aid someone in completing his or her absentee ballot and/or application, you must sign the affidavit printed on absentee ballot application and ballot materials.

[May I deliver a family member, friend, or neighbor's absentee ballot to the courthouse?](#)

By law, an individual may deliver up to two absentee ballots to the courthouse. The deadline to deliver absentee ballots is the day before the election (November 2).

Are there write-in candidates on the 2020 General ballot?

Write-in candidates for statewide offices will appear on the 2020 General ballot. However, there may be county or municipal write-in candidates depending on which county, city/town or district you live in. A list of county or local write-in candidates is available upon request to your county clerk.

Due to Coronavirus, there will be a lot of absentee ballots to process. How can I help?

Just like poll workers on Election Day, temporary workers may be needed in some counties to help process absentee ballots and applications in the days leading up to and after the election. If you are interested in helping in this process, contact your county clerk. He or she may have a paid position waiting for you.

What are the absentee voting dates and deadlines for the 2020 General Election?

- **September 18, 2020** – County clerks begin mailing absentee ballots to voters who have submitted absentee applications.
- **October 28, 2020** – Last day to apply for an absentee by mail application. The county clerk must receive your application by October 28. Absentee applications received after October 28, even if postmarked, cannot be accepted by law.
- **November 2, 2020** – Last day to hand-deliver absentee ballots to the county clerk's office. By law, an individual may deliver up to two absentee ballots.
- **November 3, 2020** – Electronic ballots (only available to certain military & overseas voters, as well as voters with physical disabilities who meet certain criteria) must be submitted by the close of the polls (7:30 PM EST) on Election Day.
- **November 4, 2020** – Last day for county clerks to accept absentee ballots returned by mail without a postmark.
- **November 9, 2020** – Last day for county clerks to accept absentee ballots returned by mail with a postmark on or before Election Day. Ballots must be received by the start of canvass.
- **November 9, 2020** – Last day for county clerks to accept military and overseas voter absentee ballots returned by mail, regardless of postmark. Ballots must be received by the start of canvass.

Election Day and Early Voting

May I still vote in the 2020 General Election in person?

Yes, the polls will still be open for in-person voting during Early Voting and on Election Day; however, Early Voting locations and Election Day polling places could change between now and the election due to poll worker shortages and unavailability of polling locations due to Coronavirus concerns. Be sure to check GoVoteWV.com or contact your county clerk to make sure you know where to vote.

If you go in person to vote and your polling place appears closed, your county clerk will have posted a notice on or near the polling place door with directions to the new nearby location of your polling place.

I already mailed or delivered my voted absentee ballot - can I still vote in person?

No, you may only vote once in each election. Contact your county clerk to confirm your ballot was received. If it was not received, you may vote in person. If it was received, you may not cast another ballot by law.

I received my absentee ballot, but I have not sent it in yet - can I still vote in person?

Yes, just bring your absentee ballot with you to the polling place to give to your poll worker. The poll worker will then “spoil” your absentee ballot and allow you to vote at the voting booth.

If you forget your absentee ballot, you may still vote in person. However, your in-person vote will be by “provisional” ballot. The county clerk’s office will simply double-check the absentee ballots received in the office prior to canvass. If your absentee ballot was not received by the county clerk, the Board of Canvassers will count your in-person vote.

When is Early Voting?

You may early vote in person from October 21 – October 31, 2020. Early Voting is at the county courthouse, annex, or designated community voting location during normal business hours and Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM in every county.

Some counties also offer satellite or community voting locations throughout the county. Please contact your county clerk to learn whether your county offers these additional Early Voting locations.

Due to Coronavirus concerns, Early Voting locations may change between now and the election. Be sure to contact your county clerk to make sure you know where you can vote.

What time are the polls open on Election Day?

Polls will be open for in-person voting on Election Day (November 3, 2020) from 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM. If you are in line at the polling place at 7:30 PM, you will be able to vote after the polls close. However, if you arrive at the polls *after* they close, you are not permitted to vote by law.

How will counties ensure the safety of voters and election workers at the polls during the Coronavirus emergency?

County clerks and commissions are preparing to have supplies on hand to sanitize surfaces, objects, voting machines, etc. at the polls. Social distancing best practices will be implemented at the polls during under the guidance and regulations issued by the U.S Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the WV Department of Health and Human Resources.

As the Coronavirus situation changes, the Secretary of State’s Office, and county clerks will continue to properly implement safety protocols to protect voters, poll workers, election officials and the general public to ensure a safe and secure election, even during the State of Emergency.

How do I sign-up to be a poll worker?

There is a great need for those able to serve our state on Election Day. Please go to [GoVoteWV.com](https://www.GoVoteWV.com) and click the “Become a Poll Worker Button” to let your county clerk know you would like to work. Not only will you be doing a great service for the State of West Virginia and veteran poll workers who may not be willing to work due to the Coronavirus emergency if they are in an especially at-risk demographic, but you will also be paid for your service.

Will the results of the election be available on election night?

As always, unofficial results will be available on election night that will include early voting, Election Day, and absentee ballots that are received by the close of the polls. Official results will be released upon certification of the election, which may take a little longer due to the increase in absentee ballots being returned by voters.

Preventing Fraud

What is the Secretary of State doing to prevent election fraud?

The Secretary of State has partnered with the U.S. Attorney's Office to create an Election Crimes Taskforce, consisting of USAO, FBI, WVSP, WV SOS, and local prosecutors. The Secretary of State is also working very closely with the West Virginia Attorney General to detect and investigate election fraud.

What should we be watching out for?

- Election Fraud
 - Improper influence and bribery
 - Improper removal or possession of ballots
 - Ballot tampering
 - Voter intimidation
 - Voter suppression
 - Vote buying
 - Illegal assistance to voter
 - Hand delivery of more than 2 absentee ballots
- Voter Fraud
 - Registering to vote when not eligible
 - Requesting an absentee ballot on some other voter's behalf
 - Stealing absentee ballots from mailboxes
 - Voting more than once in an election
 - Voting when not eligible
 - Voting in the primary on the wrong party ballot
 - Providing false information on an official form
 - Aiding another in providing false information or committing an election crime
 - Signing the name of voter without consent
- Campaign Finance
 - Failure to comply with reporting requirements
 - Providing false information
 - Exceeding finance limits
 - Straw-man contributions to candidates under another person's name

What do I do if I need to report an election-related violation?

To report fraud or abuse contact us at 877-FRAUD-WV. For more information or to download the formal complaint form, visit the Investigations Unit website, which is at wvsos.gov in the "About Us" section.