

2020 Absentee Vote by Mail Process

Important Dates

First date to request an absentee ballot - You can request them now!

Last date to request an absentee ballot - October 27, 2020, 5 pm But don't wait – the Board of Elections will be very busy processing requests!

Date absentee ballots will be available - Starting September 4, 2020

Last date to return an absentee ballot - November 3, 2020: In person at the Forsyth County Board of Elections by 5 pm, or by mail: the ballot must be hand-postmarked at the post office to show that it was mailed by November 3.

Requesting your absentee ballot

- Any registered Forsyth County voter who is qualified to vote in an election may request and receive a mail-in absentee ballot. **You do not need a reason to vote a mail-in absentee ballot.**
- **A voter can request a ballot for him/herself AND for a voter's near relative** (spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild). A legal guardian may also request it for them.
- Voters can request a ballot **now**. Their names will be added to a list and ballots will be mailed starting September 4.
- Ballots can only be requested using the official NC State Board of Elections request form. Completed and signed request forms can be mailed or hand delivered to the Forsyth County Board of Elections, scanned and emailed to absentee@forsyth.cc or faxed to (336) 727-2893.
- To access the ballot request form, voters may go to <https://tinyurl.com/requestyourballot>.

Filling out and submitting your ballot request form

- The ballot request form may be printed to be filled in by hand or filled in online, then printed out.
- The required fields to be completed are highlighted in **RED** on the form.
- It's a good idea to also include the voter's email and phone number in case the Board of Elections cannot read the handwriting or has a question.
- Sections of the form that need to be completed:
 - Section one - all voters
 - Section two, top part - all voters
 - Section two, bottom part - near relative/legal guardian requesting a ballot
 - Section three - military or overseas voters
- All requesters, whether the voter, a near relative or guardian, must sign and date the request form.
- The completed form should be mailed or hand-delivered to the Forsyth County Board of Elections. Request forms can also be scanned and emailed to absentee@forsyth.cc, or faxed to (336) 727-2893
- In order to be processed, ballot request forms **must be** returned by the voter, the voter's near relative, or legal guardian.

Submitting your completed ballot

- When the voter requests an absentee ballot, the Forsyth Board of Elections will send by mail:
 - An absentee ballot
 - A return envelope with a certificate statement
 - An instruction sheet
- Current rules state that voters must find one witness (who must be at least 18 years old) to witness and sign their completed ballots. If a voter thinks they will need assistance, we will do our best to provide a witness.
- Once a voter's ballot has been witnessed, signed by the voter and dated, the ballot **can be returned by a voter or his/her nearest relative** by:
 - Mailing it to the voter's county Board of Elections
 - Dropping it off at the voter's county Board of Elections
 - Dropping it off at an Early Voting site during hours of operation
- No one besides the voter, his/her near relative, or a legal guardian is allowed to submit the ballot.
- Relatives will be asked to sign an affidavit attesting to their relationship to the voter when they drop off a ballot.
- Mailing a ballot requires **one (\$.55) stamp or a Forever stamp**.

Frequently asked questions

Where should I send my absentee ballot request form?

All forms go to the Forsyth County Board of Election, 201 N. Chestnut Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101.

What is the phone number for our local Board of Elections?

(336) 703-2800

How can I prove my ballot was received and counted?

You can track your ballot directly at <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>.

What if I change my mind and decide I want to vote in person (early or on election day)?

No problem! Requesting a mail-in absentee ballot does not "lock you in" to voting that way. If you change your mind, and have not returned your mail-in ballot, you can still vote in person.

Can I drop off my mail-in ballot at any of the early voting sites?

Yes! In addition to the Board of Elections office, mail-in ballots can be returned at any early vote location during hours of operation.

What if I wait until election day to decide if I still want to vote using my absentee mail-in ballot – can I still do this?

Yes. You have two options. 1) Take your completed, signed and witnessed ballot to your local post office and get it hand-postmarked by the clerk (a dated postmark is the only way to certify that your ballot was mailed on time); or 2) Hand-deliver your ballot to the Forsyth County Board of Elections office by 5 pm.

My child, who is registered to vote here, is away at college right now – can I request a ballot for them?

Yes! You can request to have it sent to their college address, or you can request that it be sent to your home address (just make sure they plan to return home in time to complete the ballot).

Who can and cannot serve as a ballot witness?

Any person who is at least 18 years old may serve as a witness so long as they are not candidates in the election unless that candidate is the nearest relative of the voter. Employees of hospitals, nursing homes or assisted living facilities may not serve as a witness for patients/residents.

What if an elderly voter in a facility needs assistance in completing their ballot?

Voters can contact their county Board of Elections to request assistance from the Multipartisan Assistance Team (MAT). A MAT can help a voter in a facility complete their absentee request form and ballot.

What if a voter has a disability and needs assistance mailing their absentee mail-in ballot?

A voter who, due to a disability, needs assistance placing their ballot in the closest mailbox may receive assistance by anyone not disqualified from assisting the voter.

Are absentee mail-in ballots considered “provisional” and only counted if elections are close?

No. Absentee mail-in ballots are counted as they are received. They are added to in-person early voting ballots and considered a part of early voting.

Will voters using absentee mail-in ballots need to submit a copy of a photo ID in order to vote?

No. As of now, both state and federal courts have blocked North Carolina’s voter photo ID requirement from taking effect.

Can I register to vote and request an absentee ballot at the same time?

Yes! Until Friday, October 9, any unregistered voter can complete and send in a voter registration form along with their absentee mail-in ballot request form. The voter registration form is available online at <https://www.ncsbe.gov/Voters/Registering-to-Vote>. After October 9, unregistered voters can only register to vote at a One Stop Early Vote location during hours of operation, using a process called Same Day Registration. If you register using Same Day Registration, you will need to show one of the following IDs:

- North Carolina driver license or DMV-issued ID card
- Other photo identification issued by a government agency. Any government-issued photo ID is acceptable, so long as the card bears the voter's current name and current address
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document showing the voter’s name and address
- For college/university students who live on campus: a current college/university photo identification card paired with proof that you live on campus

If I cast an absentee mail-in ballot, can I make a change to my vote prior to election day?

No. Once you send in your ballot, your vote is considered final and cannot be amended.