



Requesting a Mail-In Ballot and Voting by Mail in Iowa

Deadline to Request a Mail-In Ballot: Received by October 24th at 5:00PM

Deadline to Submit a Mail-In Ballot: Received by November 3rd at 7pm, or postmarked by November 2nd and received by 12PM November 9th

How can voters request a mail-in ballot?

Submit a Ballot Request Form – Registered voters will be mailed absentee ballot applications. (Register to vote [here](#).) Voters must complete [this form](#) or the one they receive by mail, and return it to their county auditor. Voters can find information about their county auditor [here](#).

Can you assist voters in requesting a ballot?

Individuals acting as representatives of a political party, candidate or committee (as defined by Iowa Code Chapter 68A) who solicit and collect absentee ballot request forms from voter and must use the official absentee ballot request form with receipt found [here](#), and return the receipt to the voter with the information requested completely filled out.

Turnaround Time: The collected request forms must be returned to the county auditor’s office within 72 hours of receiving the form or no later than 5pm on the deadline to request an absentee ballot, whichever is earlier. An application received by a political party after the deadline, but before the date of the election, must return the application to the respective county auditor within twenty-four hours.

For more information, please see the Secretary of State’s website [here](#).

The voter may ask for assistance and if unable to sign, may have someone sign the form on the voter’s behalf as long as it is done in the voter’s presence and with the voter’s permission.

Iowa law does not address assistance from others in requesting a ballot.

How can voters return a marked ballot?

Voters can submit their marked ballots by mail or deliver the to the counter auditor. The voter’s respective [county auditor](#) will provide specific instructions on how to mark the ballot and to return the ballot.

Can you assist voters in returning a marked ballot?

Yes. Voters may designate a person to deliver a completed absentee ballot.

Turnaround time: If the ballot is returned via delivery to the county auditor by the voter’s designee, the envelope must be delivered within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the voter or before the closing of

the polls on election day, whichever is earlier. If mailed by the voter's designee, the envelope must be mailed within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the voter or within time to be postmarked or, if applicable, to have the postal service barcode traced to a date of entry into the federal mail system not later than the day before the election, whichever is earlier. The voter may ask the designee to fill out a receipt; call auditor for details.

If a voter needs help in marking the ballot due to physical disability or inability to read the ballot, the voter may choose any person to help except the voter's employer, employer's agent, or an officer or agent of voter's union.

If the voter is unable to sign independently, the voter may also ask for assistance to sign the absentee ballot or have someone sign the form on the voter's behalf as long as it is in the voter's presence and with the voter's permission.

Fair Elections Center and Campus Vote Project intend the information contained herein to be used only as a general guide. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed Iowa legal professional.

Last updated October 2020

For more information, visit
www.fairelectionscenter.org