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## **ALL ABOUT BALLOTS**

[activateiowa.org/all-about-ballots/](https://activateiowa.org/all-about-ballots/)

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**WE WILL PREVAIL OVER FEAR** The noise machine out there wants us to worry about whether our ballots will count. Iowa has a good voting system, and very good people working hard to count every ballot. There could be a few bad apples, or outside attempts at intimidation, but Democrats have an entire voter protection team observing and ready to address any problems. **Make a voting plan that works for you and stick to it.**

### **WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUESTS I GOT IN THE MAIL?**

This year many organizations decided to mail absentee ballot requests to voters. If you want to vote by mail follow the following steps:

**1. Choose a blank form that has been sent to you, or print one out here:**

<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/absenteeballotapp.pdf>

**2. Fill out the absentee ballot request form.**

**3. Either send your absentee ballot request form in by mail, or hand deliver it to your county auditor's office.** Do so right away. October 24th is the deadline for a request to reach your Auditor's Office, but realistically, send it by October 17th, or make a plan to vote in person.

*Note: If you sent in more than one request, you will be mailed one ballot.*

*Note: Here is where to check the address of your County Auditor's Office:*

<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/auditors/auditorslist.html>

The ballots that are mailed in, delivered, or voted during early voting, are all counted as "absentee" ballots. They will be opened starting on Saturday, October 31st, and voted into voting machines starting on November 2nd. In most counties, those votes will be counted and reported out after the polls close on election night. You will hear news reports about problems with the absentee vote count, but that should not be a problem in Iowa.

### **IF YOU LIVE IN JOHNSON, LINN OR WOODBURY COUNTIES—ABOUT PRE-FILLED FORMS**

If you live in Johnson, Linn, or Woodbury counties, the Trump campaign sued and won an injunction that invalidates any pre-filled absentee ballot request forms that were sent to voters and returned by them. Your Auditor's office will contact you, but you don't have to wait – fill out your information on a blank absentee ballot request form, and send it in. **You will only be mailed one ballot.**

## **I ALREADY REQUESTED MY BALLOT. WHAT HAPPENS NOW?**

Ballots that were already requested will be sent out on October 5th. Requests that come in after October 5th will be processed, and ballots sent out on a rolling basis. Look for your ballot in the mail. Give it a week. We have been warned that there could be delays with the mail, but postal workers are also working hard and doing their best, despite bad leadership at the top.

## **MY BALLOT ARRIVED. YAY! WHAT DO I DO NOW?**

### **1. When you receive your ballot, fill it out with your votes.**

**Use a dark pen and follow instructions on how to fill in the ovals.**

**Place the ballot in the secrecy envelope.** There is a good reason for the secrecy envelope – election workers can handle your ballot without knowing who you voted for.

**The secrecy envelope then goes inside the affidavit envelope.**

[Please follow instructions here, too.] Your ballot will not count if the envelope is not signed and dated.

**Next, put the affidavit envelope in the mailing envelope.**

Place the affidavit envelope in the mailing envelope and either mail or hand deliver at the Auditor's Office. No postage is necessary.

*Note: Put only your own ballot in the affidavit envelope. If you and a family member, for instance, put them in the same envelope, for instance, the ballots are invalid.*

### **2. Either hand deliver it to the Auditor's Office, or put it in the mail. Do not delay.**

*Note: If you are curious about the status of your ballot, the ballot tracker will tell you when the ballot was received, although there may be a clerical delay in getting that information posted.*  
<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/absenteeballotstatus/absentee/search>

**What if I made a mistake?** If you forgot to sign the affidavit, or made another mistake, such as putting more than one ballot in the envelope, the Auditor's Office will offer you a chance to come in and fix the problem. Of course it's better to get it right the first time. Starting on October 31, make sure that someone can reach you to let you know that there is a problem to fix – answer your phone and check email.

Once your ballot has been received, the extra added bonus is that volunteers will not contact you to urge you to vote. Done!

## **MY BALLOT DID NOT ARRIVE – WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

There are two ways to check the status of your ballot:

**1. You can simply call your auditor’s office to check whether the ballot was mailed and when.** Find your County Auditor’s phone number here:  
<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/auditors/auditorslist.html>

**2. Or, use the ballot tracker to check whether the ballot was mailed and when:**  
<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/absenteeballotstatus/absentee/search>

Allow about a week to receive your ballot once it has been mailed.

**Next, if you do not have your ballot these are your options:**

1. Vote early at a satellite location, or at the Auditor’s Office.

Tell them that you requested an absentee ballot that but do not have that ballot. You will be asked to fill out a “Lost or never received ballot” form. The elections workers will void the missing absentee ballot, and give you a new ballot. This will take a bit of time, but it works.

2. Go to your polling place on election day.

Tell them that you requested an absentee ballot that but do not have that ballot. Poll workers should call the Auditor’s Office to verify that your absentee ballot was never received. You should be allowed to sign the “Lost or never received” form, get a new ballot, and vote.

*Note: Some poll workers might be operating under old rules and ask you to vote a provisional ballot. That’s not the end of the world –such provisional ballots are counted, assuming your absentee ballot was never voted –but if you can convince the poll workers to avoid the provisional ballot, that is better.*

## **MY BALLOT DID ARRIVE BUT I CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT HOW I WANT TO VOTE**

Your options are:

### **Vote early at a satellite location or at your Auditor's Office.**

If you have your ballot, fill it out with your votes, following all instructions carefully. Check with your Auditor's Office, but you should be able to turn that ballot in at a satellite voting location. It is best to take it to the Auditor's Office, but you may have the option to "walk it in" to a satellite voting location that is closer to home.

### **Vote on Election Day.**

You can take your ballot with you and vote at your regular polling place on election day. Turn it in "unvoted" – the poll workers are not allowed to check – and you will be issued a new ballot, which you then vote and feed into the voting machine.

To figure out where to vote (your "polling place"), visit this site and type in your address:

<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>

Some polling places may change due to Covid-19.

## **I HAVE MY BALLOT, BUT I AM RUNNING OUT OF TIME BEFORE THE ELECTION**

Ballots may be mailed as late as November 2nd, and still be counted if they are received at the Auditor's office by noon on November 9th. **However, it is not a good idea to mail a ballot that late.**

That ballot should be delivered to the Auditor's Office, or you could decide to vote in person on election day at your regular polling place. Bring your absentee ballot with you (see notes above).