



# Office of Representative Carole Fiola Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## **KEY ITEMS TO KNOW ABOUT VOTING IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS**

### **VOTER REGISTRATION**

The deadlines for registering to vote are August 22 for the state primary election and October 24 for the general election, both Saturdays. Register online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>

### **VOTING IN-PERSON**

Polls will be open from 7am to 8pm on Tuesday, September 1 for the state primary election and Tuesday, November 3 for the general election. Find out where to cast your ballot at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx>

Early in-person voting for the state primary election begins on Saturday, August 22 and ends on Friday, August 28. General election early in-person voting begins Saturday, October 17 and ends on Friday, October 30. Check with your town/city clerk's office to confirm locations and hours of operation for early in-person voting.

### **VOTING BY MAIL – GETTING A BALLOT**

Technically, Massachusetts distinguishes between voting absentee and the new option of voting by mail. The focus here will be no-excuse voting by mail.

The Secretary of the Commonwealth mailed out applications for acquiring mail-in state primary ballots in mid-July to all registered voters except for those who had already signed up for absentee voting covering all of 2020. If you didn't receive an application, get one at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/2020-Vote-by-Mail-Application.pdf>

To receive a mail-in ballot, complete the application, noting which state primary ballot you are requesting if you are not enrolled in a political party. Unenrolled voters can choose which state primary ballot to complete; everyone else must accept the ballot of the major party in which they are enrolled.

Since there are no statewide primary races involving candidates other than Democrats and Republicans, if you are a member of the Green-Rainbow Party or Libertarian Party and want to vote for a statewide candidate, you'll have to change your party designation to unenrolled, Democratic or Republican by completing a new voter registration request. Members of minor parties, such as the Pirate Party and United Independent Party are treated the same as unenrolled voters.

Applications for mail-in voting in the general election will be sent by September 14. If, on your state primary ballot application, you selected that you want to participate in mail-in voting for all 2020 elections, you won't need to repeat the application process.

Applications must be received by election clerks by 5pm on Wednesday, August 26 for the state primary election and Wednesday, October 28 for the general election. You can return the application in person to your clerk's office, deposit it in the clerk's secure drop box, or mail it.

### **VOTING BY MAIL – WHAT'S IN THE PACKET**

You'll receive your voting materials in a first class envelope from your city/town clerk. It contains:

- 1) Vote by mail instructions
- 2) Ballot
- 3) Early ballot envelope
- 4) Return envelope

Read the instructions, complete your ballot, place and seal the ballot in the early ballot envelope, and place and seal the early ballot envelope in the return envelope. Don't forget to sign the early ballot envelope (not your ballot). There is a barcode on the early ballot envelope to make the process of logging that you voted more efficient.

#### VOTING BY MAIL – RETURNING YOUR COMPLETED BALLOT

Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, September 1 for the state primary and November 3 for the general election. Ballots arriving in clerks' offices by 5pm on the Friday after Election Day will be counted.

Mail or hand deliver your ballot to the city/town clerk's office. Given the questions popping up about the USPS' ability to manage the flood of mail created by mail-in voting, you should strongly consider delivering your ballot personally or have a trusted person do that for you.

Clerks have secure drop boxes that you can use without having to enter their offices; however, if you are delivering your ballot on Election Day, it's best to hand it to an election officer so that your non-postmarked ballot doesn't get confused with the postmarked ballots that are allowed to be accepted until 5pm on Friday after the election.

#### VOTING BY MAIL – PROCESSING

When the clerk receives your mail-in ballot, the return envelope will be opened and the sealed early ballot envelope's barcode will be read by the voter tracking system. This is equivalent to going to the checkout table at a polling place on Election Day. At this point, you have been logged as having voted.

Prior to early in-person voting, your ballot will be stored by precinct in a secure area. Once voter registration has closed and anytime up to Election Day, the clerk will run the mail-in ballots through the voting machine(s) and maintain those voting statistics in confidence until after the close of voting on Election Day.

#### VOTING BY MAIL – TRACK YOUR BALLOT

Curious about if your ballot has been mailed to you, or that it has been processed at your clerk's office? Use this link to find out:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema/track/trackmyballot.aspx>