GENERAL ELECTION VOTER FAQ
Last updated: July 14, 2021

*** This information may change based on developments from the Secretary of State, State Election Board, county boards of elections, and courts. It will be updated, so make sure you check back frequently as you go through the voting process! ***

If you have any questions, please call our voter hotline at 404-955-7322!

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What if the voting machines are down when I go to vote?

Can I receive any language assistance with voting in person?

OTHER QUESTIONS

My voter registration says that I am in “pending” status because the Department of Driver Services’s records incorrectly says I am not a citizen. Can I still vote?

VOTE BY MAIL/ABSENTEE BALLOT VOTING

Can everyone vote by mail?
Yes. Every voter in Georgia has the right to vote by mail (also known as absentee voting by mail) with no excuse needed. All you have to do is request a ballot and return it to your county Board of Elections by Election Day. You can find your county board of elections contact information here.

How do I vote by mail?

STEP 1: Request an absentee ballot.

Timing: You can request an absentee ballot as early as 78 days before Election Day. For the November 2, 2021 elections, this means you can submit your request starting Monday, August 16, 2021.

How to request: You can request an absentee ballot using this online portal on the Secretary of State’s website if you have a Georgia State ID or driver’s license number.

If you do not have a Georgia State ID or driver’s license number, or would otherwise prefer to complete a paper application, you can download a fillable PDF of the absentee ballot application here and, once you’ve completed it, return it to your county board of elections office either by mail, fax, email, or in person.

Identification requirements: If you have a Georgia State ID or driver’s license, the application will ask you to provide your ID or license number. If you do not have either, you will need to provide a copy of one of the following with your absentee ballot application: (1) one of the forms of acceptable photo ID, found here; or (2) a current utility bill, current bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document showing your name and address.

Deadline: Your absentee ballot application must be received by your county board of elections no later than 11 days before Election Day. For the November 2, 2021 elections, this means your absentee ballot application must be received by your county board of elections by Friday, October 22, 2021.

After you submit your absentee ballot application, if there are no problems with it, an absentee ballot will be mailed to you.

STEP 2: Return your completed absentee ballot.
*How to submit:* When you receive your absentee ballot in the mail, complete the ballot and return it to your county board of elections office either by mail, at a dropbox in your county, or in person.

*Identification requirements:* Similar to the process for requesting your absentee ballot, if you have a Georgia State ID or driver’s license, you will be required to provide your ID or license number where indicated on the outer envelope of the absentee ballot.

If you don’t have a Georgia driver’s license or state ID, you should print the last four digits of your social security number where indicated on the ballot envelope.

If you do not have a social security number either, you will need to provide a copy of one of the following in the return envelope with your absentee ballot: (1) one of the forms of acceptable photo ID, found here; or (2) a current utility bill, current bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document showing your name and address. You will need to do this even if you included one of these documents with your absentee ballot application. It can be a copy of the same document provided at that stage.

**Important note:** If you registered to vote using your Georgia drivers’ license or state ID number or last 4 digits of your social security number, but without providing ID and are voting for the first time, you will also need to provide a copy of one of the above ID documents with your absentee ballot.

If you are required to and do not include a copy of your ID with your absentee ballot, you will likely have to provide it to your county board of elections in another way before your ballot can be counted. In all cases, you should check the status of your ballot after you submit it at My Voter Page and contact your county board of elections if you have any questions.

*Deadlines:* If you return your absentee ballot by mail, it will only be counted if it is received by Election Day. If you choose to return your absentee ballot by mail, do so as soon as possible.

If you return your absentee ballot to a dropbox, it must be dropped off no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted. We recommend you consult your county board of elections website first to find out where dropboxes are in your county and when they are accessible. Under recently passed law, dropboxes are no longer permitted
to be outside (except during Governor-declared emergencies), and, depending on your county, there may be more limits on when and where you can access them.

If you return your absentee ballot in person, it must be brought to your county board of elections office no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.

Can someone request an absentee ballot for me?

Yes, but only if you cannot request an absentee ballot yourself because of a physical disability or because you are out of town. In those cases, specific relatives (your mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, spouse, son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law) over the age of 18 may request an absentee ballot on your behalf. Anyone who requests an absentee ballot on your behalf must indicate so in the appropriate space provided on the application.

I need help reading and/or writing in English, or seeing/marking my absentee ballot application. Can someone help me with filling out my absentee ballot application?

Yes. You are allowed to receive assistance if you have difficulty reading English or have a disability that makes you unable to see or mark your ballot application. Someone else may help you fill out your absentee ballot application as long as the person prints and signs their name on the application as a person who provided assistance.

**Important note:** under recently passed law, it is now a misdemeanor for anyone to handle your completed absentee ballot application aside from: (1) you (the voter); (2) a relative authorized to request your absentee ballot for you as detailed in the previous question; (3) a person providing language or disability assistance to you; (4) a mail carrier; (5) an absentee ballot clerk or registrar; and (6) a law enforcement officer conducting an investigation.

Can I drop off my absentee ballot application to a dropbox?

No. The dropboxes are intended for absentee ballots only, not absentee ballot applications.

Do I need to put postage on my absentee ballot?
If you return your absentee ballot by mail, you should put two stamps on the return envelope. However, if you forget, USPS has stated that its policy is to deliver absentee ballots even with unpaid or insufficient postage.

If you return your absentee ballot to a dropbox in your county or deliver it in person, you do not need any postage.

Can I track my absentee ballot online?

Yes. Once you return your absentee ballot, you can track the status of your ballot via the My Voter Page here or through the BallotTrax website. We also encourage you to call your county board of elections to confirm your ballot has been received. Your board of elections may have more up-to-date information than the My Voter Page website.

What if there is a mistake on my ballot when I receive it, such as an incorrect name or address, or if I notice that any races, candidates, or questions are missing?

Report it immediately. Any mistake discovered on an absentee ballot should be reported to your local county board of elections office as quickly as possible.

I need help reading and/or writing in English. Can I receive language assistance with completing my absentee ballot?

Yes. You are allowed to receive assistance if you have difficulty reading English. You can receive this help from anyone except your employer, an agent of your employer, an officer of your union, a candidate on the ballot, or a family member of that candidate (unless you are related to the candidate). The person providing you assistance must also sign on your ballot where indicated.

I have trouble seeing or marking my ballot. Can I receive assistance with completing my absentee ballot?

Yes. You are allowed to receive assistance if you have a disability that makes you unable to see or mark your ballot. You can receive this help from anyone except your employer, an agent of your employer, an officer of your union, a candidate on the ballot, or a family member of that candidate (unless you are related to the candidate). The person providing you assistance must also sign on your ballot where indicated.

What if I realize I made a mistake on my ballot after I mailed it in?
You cannot change your vote after you mail or send it in. Voters cannot change their vote once they submit their ballots, even if they left the space blank. Voters who realize they may have left sections of their ballots blank or have changed their mind about a selection are NOT able to make changes to the ballot once it has been sent to the board of elections.

But some mistakes can be fixed after you send in your ballot. If the board of election finds a mistake in the ballot that could keep it from being counted - such as missing a piece of required information like a signature - the board will contact the voter by phone and/or mail to provide an opportunity to fix the mistake. If you realize or think you made a mistake after you sent in your ballot, contact your board of elections office right away to determine the best way to address it.

Do I have to return my absentee ballot myself?

Generally, yes, but you can get help from specific people. An absentee ballot may be mailed or delivered by a voter’s parent (including in-law), grandparent, aunt or uncle, sibling (including in-law), niece or nephew, grandchild, spouse, child (including in-law), or roommate. A disabled voter may also have their caretaker mail or deliver their absentee ballot even if the caretaker does not live with the voter. These rules apply whether the absentee ballot is returned by mail, in person, or at a dropbox.

Can I vote in person if I requested an absentee ballot but did not receive it?

Yes. You can vote in person by appearing before the manager of your precinct, an absentee ballot clerk, or your county board of elections and requesting in writing that your absentee ballot be canceled.

If I received my absentee ballot but did not return it yet, can I decide to vote in person instead?

Yes. You will have to cancel your absentee ballot in person. To cancel your absentee ballot, you have to appear in person before the manager of your precinct, an absentee ballot clerk, or your county board of elections and request in writing that your ballot be canceled. We encourage you to bring your absentee ballot with you to the polls, if possible, because it makes the cancellation process faster and easier. However, you do not have to have your absentee ballot in order to cancel it and vote in person.
What if I already returned my absentee ballot but would rather vote in person instead?

If your county board of elections has already received your absentee ballot, your absentee ballot will be counted as your vote, and you cannot vote in person.

If the board of elections has not yet received your ballot, you can vote in person by canceling your absentee ballot in person. To cancel your absentee ballot, you have to appear in person before the manager of your precinct, an absentee ballot clerk, or your county board of elections and request in writing that your ballot be canceled.

You can check whether your county board of elections has received your absentee ballot on the My Voter Page or by calling your county board of elections, which is more likely to have the most up-to-date information than the My Voter Page website.

IN-PERSON VOTING

If I recently moved within Georgia, where do I go to vote?

If you updated your voter registration with your new address by the voter registration deadline for this election, you should be able to vote at the polling place associated with your new address, unless there are administrative issues or delays.

If you moved within the same county and do not re-register to vote at your new address, you can vote at the polling place associated with your former address. You will need to update your address with your county; one way to do this is to fill out a form to update your voter registration address when you go vote at your former polling place.

If you moved outside of the county in which you are registered to vote:

1. **Within 30 days of the election:** you can vote at the polling place associated with your former address for that election.
2. **More than 30 days before the election:** you cannot vote in the county of your former address. You must register to vote in your new county of residence. If you don't do this by the voter registration deadline, you cannot vote in that particular election.

In any case, we encourage you to confirm your polling place at your My Voter Page before you head to the polls.
Can I vote at an early voting location on Election Day?

Most likely, no. It’s unlikely that an early voting location is also your polling place on Election Day. To find out your Election Day polling place, check your My Voter Page.

Is there a way for me to know what’s on my ballot before I go to the polls?

Yes. You can access your sample ballot on your My Voter Page.

There are a lot of races and questions on my ballot. Am I allowed to bring notes with me to the polls to guide me as I vote?

Yes. You can bring notes with you in the polling booth to assist you with your voting. We recommend printing and completing your sample ballot from My Voter Page to bring with you. But you cannot use your phone while in the voting booth, so be sure to bring paper copies of any notes or materials.

What is a provisional ballot? Why else might I vote with a paper ballot instead of the machines?

A provisional ballot is a paper ballot that is given to voters in certain circumstances. For example, you will be required to vote by provisional ballot if you don’t have the right ID; your name is not on the voter rolls; you’re at the wrong polling place (but in the right county); or you vote during court-ordered extended polling hours.

You may also vote using a paper ballot if voting machines are down or a polling place experiences exceptional or emergency problems or delays in voting. These ballots are sometimes referred to as “emergency paper ballots.”

If I voted by provisional or emergency paper ballot, will my vote be counted?

County elections officials will determine within three days of election day whether to count a provisional ballot.

In some situations, in order for your provisional ballot to count, you must proactively address with your county board of elections the problem(s) that arose at the polling place which required you to vote provisionally. For example, if you voted provisionally because of an ID issue, you must present ID to your county board of elections within the three-day period for your vote to count. If you voted provisionally
because you weren’t on the voter rolls, we recommend that you present any record of your voter registration to your county board of elections.

**In some situations, your provisional ballot should automatically be counted without any further action on your part.** For example, if you vote during court-ordered extended polling hours, your county board of elections should make sure your ballot is counted. We recommend you confirm this with a poll worker before leaving the polling place.

**Emergency paper ballots should also automatically be counted.** We recommend you confirm this with a poll worker before leaving the polling place.

**In all cases, if you voted using a paper ballot (provisional or emergency), no matter what the reason, we recommend you confirm whether your vote was counted using instructions that should have been provided to you at the polls.** If you did not receive instructions, contact your county board of elections.

**What should I do if I accidentally go to the wrong polling place on Election Day?**

**Find your correct polling place on the My Voter Page.** If it is before 5 p.m., go there and cast your ballot. Any out-of-precinct provisional ballots cast before 5 p.m. will not be counted.

However, if it is **after 5 p.m.,** you cannot make it to your correct polling place by the close of polls, and you are in the right **county** but wrong polling place, you can cast a provisional ballot. Your provisional ballot should be counted automatically, but we recommend that you confirm with your county board of elections within three days.

**What if the voting machines are down when I go to vote?**

If voting machines are down, you should be allowed to vote with an emergency paper ballot. Your vote should be automatically counted without any need for further action by you, but we still advise you to contact your county board of elections to confirm your vote was counted.

**Can I receive any language assistance with voting in person?**

**Yes.** You are allowed to receive assistance if you have difficulty reading English. You can receive this help from anyone except your employer, an agent of your employer, an
of your union, a candidate on the ballot, or a family member of that candidate (unless you are related to the candidate).

**OTHER QUESTIONS**

*My voter registration says that I am in “pending” status because the Department of Driver Services’s records incorrectly says I am not a citizen. Can I still vote?*

**Yes.** In order to vote, you will need to present documentary proof of your citizenship (such as a U.S. passport or your naturalization certificate) when you request an absentee ballot or at the polls if you vote in person. If you vote in person, your proof of citizenship must be presented to the poll manager or a deputy registrar. You should then be allowed to cast a regular ballot. Once you cast a ballot and receive credit for voting, your status will be updated from 'pending' to 'active.'*