



NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AFFAIRS

METHODS TO VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

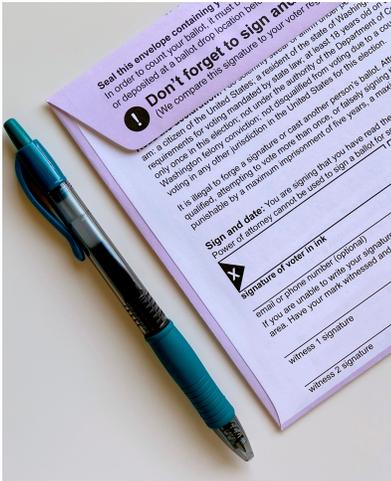
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In this article, we review the different methods that New Mexico voters can use to cast their ballot in this year's General Election.

As we prepare to vote, let us keep in mind words of wisdom from the late Civil Rights Leader John Lewis , "*The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It's the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society and we've got to use it.*"¹

Remember, everything we can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 will make voting safer. Regardless of the voting method that you choose, you can continue to protect yourself, your family, and your community through social distancing, regular hand washing, and donning a face mask in public spaces.

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ABSENTEE VOTING

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham urges voters to choose absentee voting in the interest of safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.² Absentee voting promotes social distancing because some or all the steps occur through mail. As of September 29, over 271,000 New Mexicans have requested an absentee ballot!³ Here are the steps to follow for absentee voting.

1. First, request an absentee ballot. There are three options:

- Fill out an application online (**click here**).
- Contact your County Clerk's Office by phone, mail or email. For contact information, (**click here**).
- Download an absentee ballot application (**click here**) and mail it to your County Clerk's Office.
 - **Deadline:** Absentee ballot requests will be accepted until **October 20, 2020**.

2. Fill in the ballot

- Absentee ballots will begin to be mailed out to voters starting on October 6, 2020.
- Once you receive your ballot, read the instructions *carefully* and follow them to the letter.

3. Return the ballot. There are a few options:

- Mail your ballot to your County Clerk's Office:
 - **You must mail it in no later than October 27, 2020 to ensure it arrives before 7 PM on Election Day.**
- If you forget to mail it in or miss the deadline, you can also return your ballot in person on Election Day at a polling site. For locations, (**click here**).

EARLY VOTING

New Mexico voters can vote in-person before Election Day. Unlike Election Day, early voting is not limited to one calendar day. Early voting is spread out over a few weeks which potentially results in smaller crowds.

- The early voting period runs from Saturday, October 17, 2020 to Saturday, October 31, 2020.
- For polling locations and hours of operation (**click here**).

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

The General Election will be on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**. Polling locations will be open from 7 AM to 7 PM. You can check polling locations at this link (**click here**).

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COMMON CONCERNS

Voter suppression is a valid concern in 2020. It is essential to become aware of your voting rights to fight voter suppression ([click here](#)). It is also important to know tactics that detractors may use to diminish the public's trust in the voting process and confuse voters.

• Misinformation on social media and otherwise

- Our world has become increasingly more virtual. Therefore, it is not surprising that attempts to mislead voters are present online.
- Examples of misinformation include posting false information about dates, locations, and voting procedures.
- **If you see a post on social media about voting procedures, check the facts!**
 - Do not forward the post to friends or family without checking the information first.
 - Visit the New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State's website or contact your County Clerk's Office to see if the information is correct ([click here](#) or [here](#)).
 - All information concerning voting procedures in the OAAA newsletter was directly pulled from the New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State's website.

• Misinformation about absentee ballots/voting by mail

- At this time, there are concerns in some states about slowed mail delivery through the United States Postal Service (USPS).
- Here are the facts for New Mexicans:
 - 46 states received a USPS letter expressing concern about the General Election. New Mexico was not one of those states.
 - The voting process in New Mexico receives high marks in comparison to other states.⁴
- **There are safeguards in place to ensure every absentee ballot in New Mexico is counted:**
 - Voters can track their absentee ballot at every stage ([click here](#)).
 - If their absentee ballot is not completed correctly, a notification with the reason why the absentee ballot was not accepted will be sent by the County Clerk to that voter within 24 hours of receiving it. That notification will include instructions on how the voter can fix the mistake and have their ballot counted.⁵