

June 2 Primary Election & Vote-by-Mail FAQ

The League of Women Voters is doing what it can to help engage and inform voters ahead of the Primary Election. Given all the recent changes and the current stay-at-home order, this is not easy work. We hope you'll design an Action Plan and play a role in fostering civic engagement.

Below is an FAQ you can use to help engage and inform those you know.

When is Indiana's Primary Election?

Indiana's Primary Election has been moved to Tuesday, June 2.

What is the voter registration deadline?

The voter registration deadline has moved to May 4.

A mailed-in voter registration form must be clearly *postmarked* by May 4 or earlier. Online registration must occur by 11:59pm on May 4. A voter's registration should be updated every time they move or change their name.

When is the deadline to request an absentee/vote-by-mail ballot?

Applications to vote-by-mail are due by 11:59pm on May 21.

How can voters register to vote, update, or verify their status?

Visit IndianaVoters.com or call the Marion County Election Board at (317) 327-5100.

Will the polls be open on Election Day?

It is likely some polling locations will be open on Election Day, but probably not as many as we are used to. Voters are encouraged to vote-by-mail for the Primary Election. The rule requiring voters have a reason to vote-by-mail has been waived for the June 2 Primary.

What's the difference between "vote-by-mail" and "absentee voting?"

Technically, there are 3 ways to vote by absentee: Vote by Mail, Traveling Board, and Military. Most of the discussion going on in the community right now involving "absentee voting" means "vote-by-mail."

Will no-fault absentee voting (i.e., "everybody can vote-by-mail") be allowed in November?

We don't know. If you believe a vote-by-mail option should be made available to all voters in November, please contact your elected Statehouse officials, the Governor, and Indiana Secretary of State. You can find contact information at IndianaVoters.com.

How does vote-by-mail work?

Voting-by-mail requires the voter to 1.) request an absentee ballot, 2.) fill out the ballot application and physically sign the form, 3.) mail/fax/email the ballot application by 11:59pm on May 21, 4.) receive a ballot in the mail and vote it, 5.) return the ballot in a signed return envelope by noon on Election Day, June 2. (Dropping it in the mail on Election Day does not count! It will not be counted unless it is *received* by noon on Election Day.)

Where do I request a ballot/find an application?

Voters can download a form at IndianaVoters.com or request one be mailed to them by calling their county election board. (In Marion County, the number is 317-327-5100.)

Are there any special instructions with the ballot application?

Yes! Even if you use the online form and fill out the fields using your keyboard, you still must print the form and physically sign it. A “wet signature” is required or the ballot application will be rejected. Read the application instructions first and contact your county election board (or the LWV) if you have any questions.

Are there any special instructions when it comes to voting in the Primary?

Yes. Indiana requires voters select either a Republican or Democrat ballot. Failure to make a ballot selection means you will not receive a ballot.

I heard you can apply to vote-by-mail online. Is this true?

As of this writing (April 10), voters must physically sign a ballot application and there is no online option to vote-by-mail. We have heard an online system that pulls the voters’ signature from the BMV database is in development, but we do not know when or if that will be available.

Once I apply to vote-by-mail, do I need to re-apply for future elections?

Yes. Voters must re-apply to vote-by-mail for every election. Requesting a ballot once does not mean a ballot will automatically be mailed to you each election cycle. Ballots are NEVER mailed without first applying to receive one.

What do I do after receiving my ballot?

All voters, even those sharing a household, receive their own ballots and their own return envelopes. Follow the voting instructions included with your ballot and return your ballot in its own (postage paid) envelope. Voters MUST sign the return envelope. Failure to sign the return envelopes means the ballot will be rejected.

What’s with all the signatures?! Why do we have to sign the application and the return ballot envelope?

Vote-by-mail applications are kept on file with the county election board. When ballots are returned in their envelopes, they are matched to the application and a bi-partisan team compares the signatures. Another bi-partisan team compares the application and return ballot envelope signatures on Election Day. Only after this second signature comparison is completed on Election Day is the ballot envelope opened and the ballot cast.

I’ve heard vote-by-mail/absentee ballots only need to be counted if an election is close. Is this true?

No, this is false. State law requires all ballots received by noon on Election Day should be counted, unless the election board has a reason to reject the ballot (e.g., an unsigned return envelope or multiple household ballots returned in one envelope).

How are vote-by-mail ballots counted?

In Indiana, ballots are counted at a central location in the county on Election Day. Teams of bi-partisan poll workers are needed to help with this process just as they are needed at the actual polls.