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## ELECTION NEWS

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### **VOTE-BY-MAIL APPLICANTS ASKED TO AVOID IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING PENDING ARRIVAL OF MAIL BALLOTS**

**SPRINGFIELD (Sept. 25, 2020)** – On Sept. 24, early voting began in Illinois and election authorities statewide also began mailing vote-by-mail ballots to more than 1.82 million voters who had requested them.

Several local election authorities have reported that voters whose ballots were mailed but not yet delivered have come to early voting locations to vote in person during the first two days of early voting. While the Illinois Election Code contains a provision to allow voters whose mail ballots have not arrived in a timely fashion to vote in person, voters who applied for mail ballots before and in the days since Sept. 24 are asked to avoid in-person early voting until allowing sufficient time for their mail ballot to be delivered.

“The Election Code allows a voter who applied for but did not receive a vote-by-mail ballot to sign an affidavit and vote in person,” said Illinois State Board of Elections spokesman Matt Dietrich. “This is intended for situations in which the late delivery imperils the individual’s ability to cast a vote, such as a ballot that hasn’t arrived on or near Election Day.”

In the incidents reported in the last two days, the additional paperwork has caused delays at early voting locations that could have been avoided had the voter waited to allow the mail ballot to be delivered, Dietrich said.

Once a voter signs the affidavit and votes in person, the mail ballot is no longer valid and should be discarded upon delivery. Any voter who votes in person then attempts to also vote by mail is subject to prosecution for vote fraud, a class 3 felony.

A voter who requests and receives a vote-by-mail ballot but subsequently decides to vote in person must surrender the mail ballot at the polling place to receive an in-person ballot. A voter who does not surrender his or her vote-by-mail ballot will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot that will be counted once the election authority verifies that the mail ballot was not returned upon completion of all mail ballot processing on Nov. 17.

Voters interested in voting by mail who have not yet applied for a ballot can apply [here](#). While applications will be accepted through Oct. 29, the State Board of Elections advises voters to apply much earlier – preferably by Oct. 15 – to allow adequate time for arrival and return of the ballot. Mail ballots must be postmarked no later than Nov. 3 and can be received through Nov. 17 to be counted.

The Board also encourages those voting by mail to return their ballots as soon as possible. This allows adequate time for an election authority to resolve any problems that may arise with a ballot and helps election authorities manage the work of processing incoming ballots.

Mail ballots can be returned through the United States Postal Service, at a secure collection site where available or by personal delivery at the office of the election authority. A listing of collection site locations by election authority is [here](#).

Early voting begins in the city of Chicago on Oct. 1 and in suburban Cook County on Oct. 7. Early voting locations and hours statewide are listed [here](#).

As of midday Sept. 25, [1.9 million voters](#) statewide had requested vote-by-mail ballots. In the 2016 presidential election, about 430,000 voters applied for mail ballots and 370,000 votes were cast by mail.