

Voting in November 2020: The Basics

There are 3 ways to vote:

Vote by mail: No reason or excuse is needed to vote by mail. Voters can apply for a ballot online. All requests for a mail ballot must be received by October 29, 2020. Suburban Cook County voters may request a mail ballot at mailvoting.cookcountyclerk.gov.

Vote in person during the early voting period: Early voting begins October 19 and ends November 2. Early voting sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Vote in person on election day: Lookup your polling place at cookcountyclerk.com/service/your-voter-information.

Will I need to show ID at the polls?

Usually no.

Visit cookcountyclerk.com/service/when-voters-do-and-dont-need-identification-id for more information.

If voting by mail be sure to sign your ballot with the same signature you used to register to vote as they will need to match.

Can I see what the ballot will look like before I vote?

Yes. Visit

cookcountyclerk.com/service/your-voter-information or

Illinoisvoterguide.org for a sample ballot.

Can I take notes with me to the polling place?

Yes. You can take notes or a completed sample ballot with you into the voting booth.

Voting in November 2020: What's New Due to Covid-19

Illinois has passed a new Vote By Mail (VBM) law to make voting safer and more accessible during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The basics:

- All registered voters who have voted in the 2018 general, 2019 consolidated, or 2020 primary elections will be sent a mail ballot application. We encourage people to request their ballot early to save time and resources.
- Election authorities will begin sending requested ballots on September 24, 2020. Ballots must be returned or postmarked by November 3, 2020.
- In person voting is still available during the early voting period from October 19- November 2, 2020 and on election day November 3, 2020.
- Election day, November 3, 2020 is a state holiday.

How do I apply for a mail-in ballot?

- Visit cookcountyclerk.com/agency/vote-mail.



What if I get a VBM ballot and then decide to vote in person or my ballot doesn't arrive on time?

- You can surrender your ballot at your polling place and vote in person.
- If you do not have your ballot you'll be asked to sign an affidavit and vote provisionally.

Where/How do I cast my VBM ballot?

- You can return your completed VBM ballot by USPS mail, by dropping it in a secure ballot box at an early voting site, or by returning it to your local election authority.

Is VBM Safe? Is fraud a problem?

- Voting by mail is safe. Currently 5 other states conduct their elections entirely by mail. 28 states allow any voter to vote by mail if they choose. Election authorities have tools to combat fraud attempts, such as looking for statistical irregularities and signature matching.

Voting By Mail: Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for a mail-in ballot?

Suburban Cook County voters should visit [cookcountyclerk.com/agency/vote-mail](https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/agency/vote-mail). When you apply through the Cook County Clerk's website you will receive a url that allows you to track your ballot.



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How do the drop boxes at early voting sites work?

Ballots will be picked up daily, secured, and delivered to the mail-in ballot processing center. The ballots will be stamped with the day's date.

I'm a first time voter that registered online. Can I vote by mail?

Yes. The signature on file with the Secretary of State (your ID signature) will be used for signature matching if you registered online.

I'm a first time voter that registered by mail. Can I vote by mail?

Yes, if you provided both your IL State ID/License number **AND** the last four digits of your social security number. The signature on file with the Secretary of State (your ID signature) will be used for signature matching.

If you did **NOT** provide both your IL State ID/License number **AND** the last four digits of your Social Security number, or submit a copy of identification along with your registration form, then you must vote in person the first time you vote.



Voting: Frequently Asked Questions

Can I vote if I have a criminal record?

Yes, you can register and vote. While there are states with restrictions on voting rights for the formerly incarcerated, in Illinois there is no distinction between formerly incarcerated community members and their fellow citizens.

Can non-english speakers vote?

Yes. In 1975, Congress expanded the Voting Rights Act to protect language minorities from voting discrimination. All election information that is available in English must also be available in the minority language.

I'm a college student from another state. Can I vote here on campus?

Students have a choice about where to vote. You can register and vote at your college address. Being an out-of-state student for tuition purposes doesn't prevent you from choosing to register and vote on campus. Voting at your college doesn't affect your status as a dependent on your parents' taxes or your federal financial aid. For more information about student voting visit campusvoteproject.org.

The other option is to vote at your home address by requesting an absentee ballot if you have previously registered to vote there. You may only be registered and vote at one location.

Voting Informed: Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I get a sample ballot?

Voters can find a sample ballot at cookcountyclerk.com/service/your-voter-information or [Illinoisvoterguide.org](https://illinoisvoterguide.org).

Where can I find information about the candidates?

- [Illinoisvoterguide.org](https://illinoisvoterguide.org) (QR Code to the right)
- [Ballotpedia.org](https://ballotpedia.org)



Where can I find information about the judges?

- For most judicial offices, the Illinois State Bar Association will provide an evaluation or a poll rating. [Isba.org/judicialevaluations](https://isba.org/judicialevaluations).
- Another website for information about judicial elections is voteforjudges.org.

If I don't know enough about one or more of the candidates running for an office, can I skip that on the ballot and just not vote for that office?

- Yes. You are not required to vote for every office listed on the ballot. The candidates you want to vote for will still be counted.

Where can I find information about referendum questions that will be on the ballot?

- You can find a list of the referendum questions at the Cook County Clerk's website. Cookcountyclerk.com/service/view-all-referenda.
- The Fair Tax Amendment is a referendum that will be on the ballot in November. "Yes" votes support repealing the state's constitutional requirement for a flat tax, and allow the state to enact legislation for a graduated income tax. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization, but we take positions on issues. We strongly endorse a yes vote on this referendum. For more information: lwvil.org/fairtaxarticle.html.



Voting: Troubleshooting Problems at the Polls

If I'm in line when the polls close can I still vote?

Yes. On Election Day, you can cast your ballot after the polls close if you are in line at the time listed as closing.

If there is a problem at my polling place and my right to vote is challenged, what should I do?

If your name does not appear on the rolls, or if you do not have ID (in the few circumstances where ID is required), or your right to vote is challenged for any reason, you are entitled to a provisional ballot.

Provisional voting allows you to vote on Election Day even if your ability to vote has been questioned. Be sure the poll worker gives you instructions about the steps you need to take in order to ensure that your ballot is counted.

If you encounter problems while voting, call the election protection hotline at 1-866-687-8683 (866-OUR-VOTE) - administered by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.