

What Is the Difference Between Early Voting and Absentee Voting?

(Which form should I choose?)

An **early mail ballot** can be requested by any registered voter without needing a reason, allowing them to vote by mail before Election Day.

An **absentee ballot** requires a valid reason for being unable to vote in person on Election Day, such as being away from your county, illness, caring for someone ill, being a patient at a Veterans Health Administration Hospital, or being in jail for a non-felony offense.

Regardless of the type of mail-in ballot used, as long as it is **postmarked by Election Day**, it will be counted. (If possible, ask the postal clerk to stamp it in front of you.) You will need to put a stamp it.

Both kinds of ballots come to you with a mailing envelope and "affirmation" envelope that must be properly filled out, sealed, and inserted in the mailing envelope.

You need to **follow directions exactly**, e.g., inserting your properly completed ballot in the affirmation envelope; seal the affirmation envelope; sign and date the affirmation envelope with your voting name (not a nickname, using or not using a middle name/initial); insert the affirmation envelope into the mailing envelope; seal the mailing envelope and add a stamp. The affirmation envelope will be used to check your registration and to count you as voting — after that, your ballot will be removed and put with other ballots before being counted.

Curing Your Ballot: Recent changes in NYS laws have allowed "curing" your ballot before election day if there's a defect on your affirmation envelope — or alerting you that your ballot has been rejected so you can send a new ballot before election day. These rules are strict and handled by bipartisan staff. It is in your interest to provide phone and/or email addresses to speed curing, if they are available to you.

[Learn more:](#)

<https://elections.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/10/curesprocess2021guidance.pdf>