



# DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW YORK

New York's Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program

## Absentee Ballots

### What is an absentee ballot?

If you are unable to get to your polling site to vote on Election Day, you can apply for and use an absentee ballot. An absentee ballot enables you to mail in your vote, or deliver your ballot early, instead of appearing at a polling site on Election Day.

**To qualify to vote with an absentee ballot in New York State you must fall within one of these categories:**

- Expect to be out of the county, or if you're a resident of New York City, out of the city on Election Day.
- Be unable to appear at the polls due to illness or disability or because you are the primary care giver for someone who is ill or has a disability.
- Be a patient in a Veterans' Administration Hospital.
- Be detained in jail awaiting trial or incarcerated after conviction for an offense other than a felony.

### How do I vote with an absentee ballot?

- Applications for absentee ballots are available at your local County Board of Elections. You can also download an absentee ballot application at: [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov)
- If you are unable to download the application or pick it up, you can send a letter to your County Board of Elections to request an absentee ballot. Your letter must include:
  - the address that appears on your voter registration
  - an address where the ballot is to be sent
  - the reason for the request, and
  - the signature of the voter (you can make a mark if you are unable to sign because of a disability).

725 Broadway, Suite 450  
Albany, New York 12207  
(518) 427-6561 (fax)

25 Chapel Street, Suite 1005  
Brooklyn, New York 11201  
(718) 797-1161 (fax)

44 Exchange Blvd, Suite 110  
Rochester, New York 14614  
(585) 348-9823 (fax)

mail@DRNY.org • www.DRNY.org

(800) 993-8982 (toll free) • (518) 432-7861 (voice) • (518) 512-3448 (TTY)

- The letter requesting an absentee ballot must be received by your County Board of Elections no earlier than 30 days and no later than seven days before the election.
- If you request an absentee ballot by letter rather than using an application form, the application form will be mailed with your ballot. The application form must then be completed and returned with your ballot.
- Once you receive and complete your ballot, make sure to return it by the deadline. Your completed ballot must be postmarked by the day before Election Day and be received no later than seven days after Election Day.
- You can vote absentee in-person by dropping off your absentee ballot at your County Board of Elections. You can do that starting as soon as ballots are available (at least 32 days before Election Day) and until closing of the polls on Election Day at 9 pm.

**Absentee ballot tips:**

- Make sure that you are registered to vote before you request an absentee ballot.
- If needed, you have the right to designate someone to pick up your absentee ballot. Only that person designated on your application may pick up and deliver your ballot.
- If you are permanently ill or physically disabled, you have the right to receive an absentee ballot for each subsequent election without further application.
- If the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot by mail has passed, and you cannot appear at the polls on Election Day because of an accident, sudden illness, or disability, then you may send a representative with an authorized letter to receive an absentee ballot application and absentee ballot and return both to the County Board of Elections by 9:00 pm on Election Day.
- If you are unable to sign your absentee ballot application because of an illness or physical disability, you must declare in front of a witness that you cannot sign the application. You can then make your mark and the witness can sign to certify that you made your mark on the application.

**If you have any questions regarding absentee ballots, or if you have a disability and experience problems related to accessing an absentee ballot, or any other issues related to being a voter with a disability, please contact Disability Rights New York at [Voting@DRNY.org](mailto:Voting@DRNY.org) or 518.432.7861.**