

Voting Before Election Day

The Availability of Early In-Person and Mail Voting in the 2022 General Election

Early in-person and mail voting are integral components of keeping our elections secure and accessible.¹ Heading into the 2022 general election, the majority of states will offer opportunities to all voters to cast their ballot before Election Day through various methods of their choice. Forty-six states and Washington, D.C., will offer all voters the opportunity to vote early in person; of these, 35 states and Washington, D.C., will offer all voters the option to vote by mail without an excuse. Not only do these policies give eligible voters more ways to make their voices heard in the democratic process, but they also enhance election integrity by spreading voting out over several days rather than concentrating it on a single day. Put simply, a longer voting period bolsters efforts to quickly detect and mitigate technical glitches, fraud, cyberattacks, and other potential threats.²

The success of early in-person and mail voting was on full display during the 2020 general election. Amid an ongoing global pandemic and record turnout, more than 69% of voters nationwide cast their ballot before Election Day—up from about 40% of voters just four years earlier.³ With regard to election security, ongoing scrutiny, audits, and analysis by actors across the political spectrum have repeatedly upheld the 2020 general election as the most secure in American history.⁴ With the 2022 midterm election year well underway, many anticipate that voting before Election Day will continue to remain popular among voters. Given the current prevalence of election misinformation, it is as important as ever to provide voters with the facts about the options available to them during this fall's election.

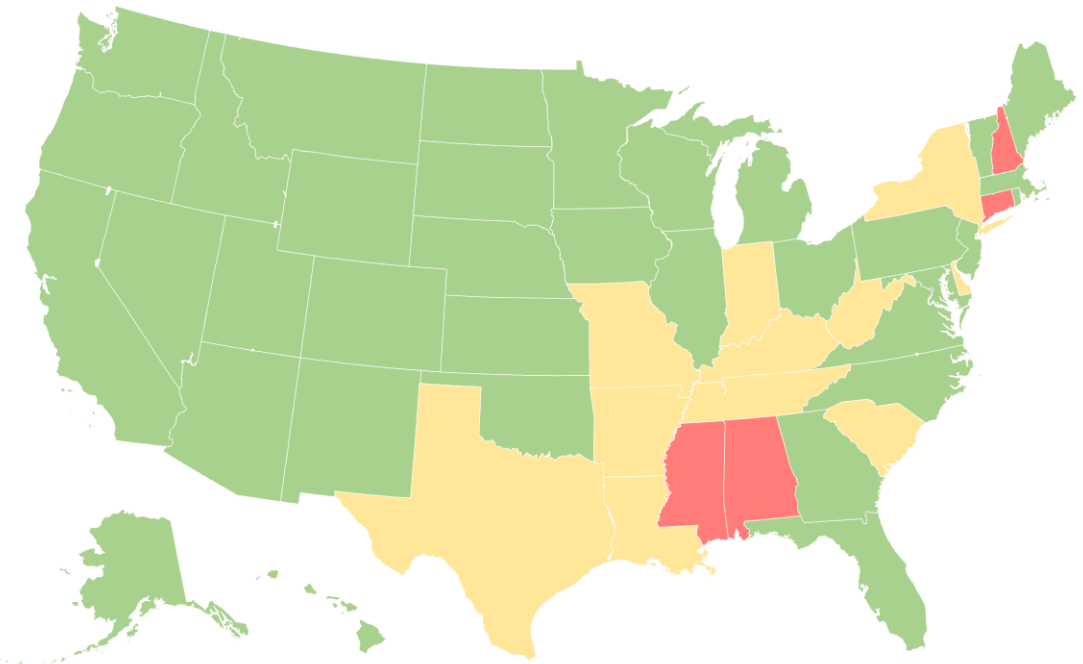
Toward that end, the Center for Election Innovation & Research conducted a review of laws governing early in-person and mail voting in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. For each jurisdiction, Figure 1 indicates (a) which options to vote before Election Day will be offered to voters in the 2022 general election, either in-person or by mail, and (b) whether an excuse will be required.

This report updates our April 2021 early voting report. Since we issued that report, two states—Missouri and South Carolina—enacted laws expanding the options available to voters to cast a ballot before Election Day, with both implementing early in-person voting in time for the 2022 general election.⁵ Information in this report is current as of October 11, 2022, and may be subject to change in response to legislation, litigation, or other developments as the election approaches. Voters should check with their local election officials to confirm dates, locations, and procedures for early in-person and mail voting in their area.



Figure 1. Options for Voting Before Election Day: 2022 General Election^{6,7}

<p>Options to vote early in-person and by mail available to all voters.</p>	<p>AK AZ CA⁸ CO⁸ DC⁹ FL GA HI⁸ ID IL IA KS ME</p>	<p>MD MA MI MN MT NE NV⁸ NJ NM NC ND¹⁰ OH OK</p>	<p>OR⁸ PA RI SD UT⁸ VT⁸ VA WA⁸ WI WY</p>
<p>Option to vote early in-person available to all voters. Excuse required to vote by mail.</p>	<p>AR DE IN KY</p>	<p>LA MO NY¹¹ SC</p>	<p>TN TX WV</p>
<p>No early in-person voting option available to all voters. Excuse required to vote by mail.</p>	<p>AL CT¹²</p>	<p>MS NH</p>	



Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Microsoft, TomTom



¹ While states may use different terminology to refer to their early in-person voting policies, most voters experience little or no difference between casting their ballot before the day of the election through an in-person no-excuse absentee or early voting process. This report therefore uses the term “early in-person voting” to refer to voting that is available to all voters and conducted in person before the day of the election, including in-person no-excuse absentee voting, early voting, and advanced voting. Similarly, this report uses the term “mail voting” to refer to voting that is available to all voters and conducted via mail, including all-mail voting and no-excuse absentee by mail.

² Patrick Howell O'Neill, “Why More, Earlier Voting Means Greater Election Security-Not Less,” MIT Technology Review, December 14, 2020, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/12/10/1013584/expanding-voting-access-improves-election-security/>.

³ Zachary Scherer, “Majority of Voters Used Nontraditional Methods to Cast Ballots in 2020,” United States Census Bureau, April 29, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/what-methods-did-people-use-to-vote-in-2020-election.html>.

⁴ David Becker, “Restoring Confidence in American Elections | Opening Remarks (April 29, 2022),” The Carter Center, filmed April 29, 2022, video of the lecture, 19:08, https://www.cartercenter.org/news/upcoming_events/promo/restoring-confidence-in-american-elections.html.

⁵ Delaware passed a vote-by-mail law that went into effect in 2022. However, a state court ruled it violated the state constitution and on appeal, the state Supreme Court affirmed that decision, striking down the law on October 7, 2022.

⁶ Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and West Virginia temporarily authorized no-excuse absentee voting by mail or allowed all voters to cite concerns about COVID-19 as an acceptable excuse to vote absentee in the 2020 general election. For the 2022 general election, these states will require voters to provide an acceptable excuse—and will no longer consider concerns about COVID-19 as such an excuse—to vote absentee by mail.

⁷ Montana and New Jersey authorized all-mail elections in the 2020 general election as a temporary response to COVID-19. Voters in these states will no longer automatically receive a ballot but can still apply to receive a no-excuse absentee ballot by mail in the 2022 general election.

⁸ California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington have laws implementing all-mail elections, wherein all registered voters are automatically sent a mail ballot. Options to vote early in-person are also available to all voters in these states. The State of Vermont conducts all-mail elections for general elections in even-numbered years only.

⁹ The Washington, D.C., Board of Elections announced that, for each election in 2022, it will mail a ballot to all active registered voters.

¹⁰ Under North Dakota law, all counties must provide no-excuse absentee voting. Counties have the option to also provide early voting during the 15 days before the election.

¹¹ New York authorized all voters to cite concerns about COVID-19 as an acceptable excuse to vote absentee in the 2020 general election. For the 2022 general election, New York will continue to allow voters to cite concerns about COVID-19 as an acceptable excuse when requesting an absentee ballot.

¹² Connecticut temporarily authorized all voters to generally cite COVID-19 as an acceptable excuse to vote absentee in the 2020 general election. In 2022, Connecticut passed legislation allowing voters to generally cite sickness, not just their own illness, as an acceptable excuse when requesting an absentee ballot. According to the Office of the Secretary of the State, this may include the continued presence of COVID-19.

