



# 2020 General Election FAQ

Available at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/2020General](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/2020General)



## When is the 2020 General Election?

The General Election is scheduled for November 3 and will be conducted mainly by mail-in ballots. To request a duplicate mail-in ballot (if you have misplaced or made a mistake on yours, etc.), [click here](#).

Per Governor Phil Murphy's **Executive Order 177**, all active voters will be mailed 2020 General Election ballots automatically, and with certain exceptions as outlined below all voting will be done using vote-by-mail ballots submitted by U.S. Mail, in a ballot drop box, or to a Board of Elections employee. The Somerset County Clerk's Office will continue to update this page to ensure voters have the information and resources to ensure their ballots are properly filled out and counted.

## How do I request a replacement Ballot?

If your ballot is lost or damaged, you can **request a replacement ballot online** or in person at the County Administration Building at 20 Grove Street in Somerville from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

## How do I make sure I fill out the ballot correctly?

We have developed a few tutorials to help voters fill out their ballots. There is a video of Somerset County Clerk Steve Peter completing a ballot in **English** and **Spanish**, and an **online photo slideshow** of the complete ballot submission process.

## Can I get in-person help with voting?

The atrium of the Somerset County Administration Building at 20 Grove Street in Somerville has been opened from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** on weekdays to provide assistance to voters with registering, submitting ballots, or obtaining a replacement for lost or damaged ballots.

### Somerset County Board of Elections staff will be available to:

- Accept mail-in ballots** from voters who wish to hand their ballot to a person. Voters will be required to present identification, have a completed mail-in ballot enclosed in the certificate and mailing envelope, and sign the registration book.

### Somerset County Clerk staff will be available to assist voters in:

- Obtaining a mail-in ballot** whether for new registration, or those requiring a duplicate ballot because of a misplaced, damaged, or improperly filled out ballot.

## Where can I find the closest Ballot Drop Box?

There are 13 Ballot Drop Boxes in Somerset County. You can find them on the Board of Elections [web page](#) or on our new [GIS map](#) that also includes the [polling places](#) in Somerset County.

## How do I track my ballot to be sure it has been received?

Once your ballot has been entered into the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) it can be tracked by going to the **New Jersey Department of State - Division of Elections website**. The unprecedented nature of this election requires all ballots to be hand verified, and that process takes some time. We are asking for everyone's patience as Somerset County's Board of Elections, Clerk and volunteers work to provide a free, fair and transparent election process. It may take a little longer than usual, but we are committed to making it happen.

*There is a known issue with logging in to the state system with a Voter ID. Every voter ID starts with a letter, not a number. Many times, the letter "o" or letter "i" looks like the numbers zero and one when capitalized. Be sure when entering your Voter ID that the first character is a letter and not a number.*

## Can I vote in person?

The vast majority of voters will **NOT** be able to vote in person this election due to COVID-19 restrictions. Voting in person is extremely limited for the 2020 General Election, and there will be **NO voting on a machine** except for voters in need of assistance due to a disability.

The primary way to vote is by submitting your ballot by U.S. Mail, at one of the 13 ballot drop boxes in Somerset County, or by bringing your ballot to the County Administration Building at 20 Grove Street in Somerville from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays.

Voters can bring their own ballot to their designated polling place to hand to a polling worker on election day, or if they do not have their ballot they can cast a paper provisional paper ballot. You cannot bring another voter's ballot to a polling place, but must instead submit it to a ballot drop box or the Board of Elections.

There will be at least one polling location in every Somerset County town from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. A list of polling places can be found at [somerset.maps.arcgis.com](http://somerset.maps.arcgis.com)

## How can I submit my Vote-by-Mail Ballot?

There are several ways to submit your ballot:

- ☑ Ballots can be submitted by **mailing** them to the address on the pre-printed envelope with a postmark before 8 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**. It is highly recommended that mail-in voters submit their ballot earlier.
- ☑ Ballots can be submitted by inserting them in one of the **Ballot Drop-Off Boxes** throughout Somerset County. There are at least 13 Ballot Drop-Off Boxes in the County. Current Ballot Drop-Off Boxes can be found on the **Board of Elections website**.
- ☑ Voters can come to the County Administration Building at 20 Grove Street in Somerville between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays and deliver their ballot to a Board of Election staff member. Voters submitting their ballot this way must present identification and sign the ballot registration book.
- ☑ Voters can go to a **polling location** from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 3, 2020**. Voters can bring their own vote-by-mail ballot to a polling place, but not be a bearer for other voters. If they do not have their vote-by-mail ballot they can cast a paper provisional ballot. Voters who are disabled and require an accommodation can vote on a special device to assist them.

## Do I need to put a stamp on my ballot?

Ballots for the 2020 General Election will have a **prepaid label** so that voters can submit their ballot without paying postage. The ballots will be considered first class mail, so there is no benefit to the voter if they use a stamp.

## What if a ballot is delivered to someone who isn't at my address?

If you receive a ballot at your address for someone who does not live there, do not be alarmed. Some people have moved or passed away and not notified the Board of Elections and as such have not been removed from the rolls. Simply write **RETURN TO SENDER** on the envelope and place it back in the mail. It will be sent back to the county where the process will begin to ensure the voter is no longer eligible to vote at that address.

## How will my ballot be counted?

The Somerset County Board of Elections is responsible for counting all Vote-by-Mail and provisional ballots, regardless of how these ballots are submitted. The Board of Elections is made up of four members, two Republicans and two Democrats who work together to ensure the vote count is accurate, transparent, and fair. Once they have counted the paper ballots, they submit the results to the County Clerk, who then adds the number of votes received by voters in need of assistance and then certifies the election. You can see the whole process in our online video.

## Why does my signature matter?

**You must make sure your signature matches your voter registration form** to prevent invalid ballots from being counted, every mail-in ballot will be reviewed by Somerset County Board of Elections personnel with both Democratic and Republican staff present. The name, address, and signature are checked against the voter-database records for verification and to determine if the voter has cast another ballot. If the signature does not match the signature on record, the ballot is put aside and the voter will be mailed a “Cure Letter” within 24 hours notifying them of the disposition of their ballot, as well as a “Cure Form” they can return to verify their identity by providing their designated IDs or official documents/utility bills.

## Can I submit someone else’s ballot?

Someone who submits another voter’s ballot is called a “bearer” and must fill out the bearer portion of the mailing envelope in the presence of the voter. Bearers can submit no more than three ballots for other people (they can also submit their own) and can only submit them via the United States Postal Service, at the Somerset County Board of Elections, or at one of 13 official Ballot Drop Boxes around the county. A bearer may not bring someone else’s ballot to a polling place and hand it to a poll worker.

## Who is eligible to cast a ballot?

Ballots were mailed out the week of September 21-25 to every active registered voter in Somerset County from the Clerk’s Office and should be received by October 5. If you have not received a ballot in a timely manner, please call the Clerk’s Office at 908-231-7013 to determine if there is an issue.

New voters who register by October 13 and inactive voters who restore their status to active before October 23 will receive their ballots in the mail automatically. *New voter registration for the 2020 General Election has closed.*

Inactive voters can update their voter registration up to Election Day, November 3, to be eligible to vote with a Vote-by-Mail ballot. If they update their registration by October 23 they will be sent a ballot automatically, or if they do it later can pick it up at the County Administration Building, 20 Grove Street in Somerville, NJ. Inactive voters who have not yet updated their registration can also visit their assigned polling location on Election Day and vote using a paper provisional ballot.

## Will a preliminary vote count be available?

The first preliminary and unofficial vote count will be **available online on the Clerk’s website** late on Election Night, November 3, and be updated as the Board of Elections delivers new counts. The counts must be completed by both the Board of Elections on Friday, November 20 and the Clerk by Monday, November 23 and certified that day by the Clerk.

However, at this time campaigns still have the right to challenge election results and request recounts, so results may still change after this date.

## How long will it take to get final election results?

Because the 2020 General Election is being conducted primarily by mail, the ballot count will take longer than in previous years. Voters and the public are asked for their patience as the process is completed to ensure a free, fair, and transparent election process.

Ballots that are postmarked on Election Day, November 3, will be counted by the Board of Elections if they arrive within seven days by November 10. This means that there will still be votes arriving a week after the balloting closes, but the same care and concern to ensure these ballots are valid and counted will be taken to ensure a fair and transparent election.

Following the final counting of the mail-in ballots, the Board of Elections will *then* count any provisional ballots cast at polling locations. These must be verified as being cast by valid voters, and then compared against the mail-in ballot records to ensure no voter has cast two ballots.