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Gov. Wolf Encourages Voters to Apply for a Mail-in Ballot

Harrisburg, PA – As Pennsylvania continues mitigation efforts to fight COVID-19, Governor Tom Wolf is encouraging registered voters to [apply for a mail-in ballot](#) for the June 2 primary election. The governor also announced the Department of State has launched an awareness campaign to inform the public about the new primary election date and how to apply for a mail-in ballot, including sending 4.2 million postcards to primary voters. In-person voting at polling places will remain available.

"There is no more important civic duty than voting, but we also want to make sure that every primary voter can cast their vote safely," said Governor Wolf. "This election is the first time that voters have the option to vote by mail-in ballot and I encourage every Pennsylvania voter to visit [votesPA.com](#) to conveniently update their registration or apply for a mail-in ballot."

Registered voters can apply online for a mail-in or absentee ballot at [votespa.com](#). The deadline is 5 p.m., May 26. So far, 462,085 voters have applied for a mail-in ballot and 139,572 voters have applied for an absentee ballot.

"The 2020 election season is bringing unprecedented changes for Pennsylvania voters," Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar said. "We are using every tool available to make sure voters know about the changes in voting while also staying safe, including the new option for all voters to vote by mail from the comfort of their home. Nearly 600,000 voters have already applied to vote by mail or absentee – a secure, convenient method for all voters."

The Department of State's voter education outreach includes:

- A public awareness campaign on radio, television and multiple digital platforms including social channels, streaming services and mobile apps.
- Mailing 4.2 million postcards and sending weekly emails to registered voters regarding the new primary date and mail-in ballot option, along with important deadlines.
- Outreach to stakeholders to help spread the word.

The Wolf Administration will provide counties with funding to send informational mailings to voters, purchase equipment and protective supplies, promote and facilitate mail-in voting, increase needed staffing, and take other actions to improve election administration and voting safety and security. The federal CARES Act and state appropriations from election security and technology is providing funding.

The department is also purchasing infection-protection kits for all counties to provide to precincts so poll workers can maintain a safe voting environment at polling locations on June 2. These kits will include masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, floor marking tape and other sanitizing supplies and will be provided to the counties at no cost to them.

Voters and county election officials in Pennsylvania were already preparing for historic change following the passage and signing of [Act 77 of 2019](#). Act 77 was the first major amendment to the state's Election Code in more than 80 years. It brought the option of mail-in ballots with no excuse needed, along with later deadlines for voter registration and for returning mail and absentee ballots.

With the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed, and Governor Wolf signed, [Act 12 of 2020](#), which rescheduled the primary election and made additional changes in the process for voters as well as county election officials.

The new deadline to [register to vote or update a voter registration](#) for the primary is May 18. Registered voters have until 5 pm May 26 to [sign up to vote by mail ballot](#) and until 8 p.m. on election day to return their voted ballot. Voters who applied for a ballot before the change of election date do not need to apply again, but voters whose address may have changed should contact their county election office.

Act 12 also allows counties to temporarily consolidate polling places more easily as they work to relocate voting sites such as those at senior centers, now closed because of the COVID-19 emergency.

“In coming weeks, voters should pay special attention to their county's announcements regarding relocation of polling places,” Secretary Boockvar said. “For the primary election, many voters could be voting at different locations than in the past if they cannot or do not wish to vote by mail.”

Once counties have finalized their polling place plans, voters will be able to check their voting location through the [Department of State's polling place locator](#).

For more information on the new mail-in ballots and all things related to voting in Pennsylvania, call the Department of State's toll-free hotline at 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) or visit [votesPA.com](#).

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