



# Pennsylvania Permanent Voter Lists Guidance

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## Background

Act 77 of 2019 provided for voters in Pennsylvania to be placed on a permanent voter list when applying for an absentee or mail-in ballot. If a voter is placed on a county's permanent voter list, they are entitled to receive, once per year, an application to receive mail (absentee or mail-in) ballots for all elections held that year ("**Annual Ballot Application**"). Placement on the permanent absentee ballot voter list or permanent mail-in ballot voter list does not mean that the voter will automatically be mailed a ballot every election; instead, the county must provide the voter with an Annual Ballot Application so that the voter can decide to receive mail-in or absentee ballots for all elections that year and for all special elections to be held before the third Monday in February of the succeeding year. The following guidelines define both what is required and what is permissible under the Election Code pertaining to the permanent mail-in ballot and permanent absentee ballot voter lists and the corresponding Annual Ballot Applications.

## Process Overview

<b>Deadline Dates</b>	<b>Permanent Mail-in Ballot Voter List</b>	<b>Permanent Absentee Ballot Voter List</b>
At any time during the year	Any voter may apply to be placed on the county's permanent mail-in ballot voter list. The voter may seek placement on this list when submitting an online mail-in ballot request, an online Voter Registration Application, a paper mail-in ballot request, or a Voter Registration Application and Mail-in Ballot Request Application. Paper application forms can be submitted in person or by mail.	A voter with a permanent illness or permanent physical disability may apply to be placed on the county's permanent absentee ballot voter list.  This request must be done in person or by mail, and it must include the signature of the voter's physician on the Certificate of Permanent Illness or Physical Disability.
On or before the first Monday in February	The county mails an Annual Ballot Application to each person on the permanent mail-in ballot voter list.	The county mails an Annual Ballot Application to each person on the permanent absentee ballot voter list.
At any time after receiving the Annual Ballot Application	The voter may, but is not required to, return the Annual Ballot Application to the county in order to automatically receive mail-	The voter may, but is not required to, return the Annual Ballot Application to the county in order to automatically receive

	in ballots for all elections for which the voter is eligible occurring within that annual period, so long as the elections occur on or before the third Monday in February of the following year.	absentee ballots for all elections for which the voter is eligible occurring within that annual period, so long as the elections occur on or before the third Monday in February of the following year.
During the mail-in voting and absentee voting period for any election occurring before the third Monday in February of the following year	The county will send a mail-in ballot to all voters on the permanent mail-in ballot voter list who submitted an Annual Ballot Application for that year.	The county will send an absentee ballot to all voters on the permanent absentee ballot voter list who submitted an Annual Ballot Application for that year.
During the mail-in voting and absentee voting period for any election occurring before the third Monday in February of the following year	The voter returns their completed mail-in ballot to the county.	The voter returns their completed absentee ballot to the county.
If the voter moves counties and changes their registration to that new county	<p>If a voter wishes to be listed as a permanent mail-in ballot voter in their new county, they must select that option on the form registering them to vote in their new county.</p> <p>Their new county of registration must contact their prior county to electronically transfer the records of their status.</p>	<p>If a voter wishes to be listed as a permanent absentee ballot voter in their new county, they must select that option on the form registering them to vote in their new county.</p> <p>Their new county of registration must contact their prior county to electronically transfer the records of their status.</p>

## Deadlines

The county **must** mail an Annual Ballot Application to voters on the permanent lists no later than **the first Monday in February** each year. This applies for both absentee ballot and mail-in ballot voters who are on the permanent lists.

If the voter returns the Annual Ballot Application and the county approves the voter's application, the voter is then entitled to receive mail ballots automatically through the remainder of the year and until the third Monday in February of the following year for any election for which the voter is eligible during that time, which would include any

scheduled special election. This applies for voters on either the permanent absentee ballot list or the permanent mail-in ballot list.

Permanent list voters have the same absentee and mail-in ballot deadlines as regular voters.

- A voter on a permanent list who does not return the Annual Ballot Application, or who does not indicate on another application that they want to receive ballots for the entire year, will not receive mail ballots unless they make a request prior to each primary or election.
- The deadline to request a mail ballot for any upcoming election is the Tuesday before the election.
- The deadline to return an absentee or mail-in ballot is **by 8 p.m. on Election Day**. The county election office must actually receive the ballot by that time; postmarks are not enough.

A voter who submits an Annual Ballot Application but who is not eligible to receive a ballot for a primary due to the voter's party affiliation does not need to resubmit a request to receive a mail-in or absentee ballot for the remaining elections in the annual period. Counties must ensure that these voters' requests for mail-in and absentee ballots are processed for subsequent elections.

## For Voters

A voter may apply to be placed on either a permanent absentee ballot voter list or a permanent mail-in ballot voter list depending on the voter's status.

- The permanent absentee ballot voter status is only for voters with a permanent illness or permanent physical disability.
  - To be placed on the permanent absentee ballot voter list, a voter must obtain their physician's signature on the **Certificate of Permanent Illness or Physical Disability**. A voter may submit their application to join a permanent list at any time during the year.
  - A permanent absentee ballot voter list application may only be submitted in person or via mail. Since a physician's certification is required for a permanent absentee ballot list request, it cannot be submitted online.
  - Voters who do not qualify for the permanent absentee ballot voter list may apply for permanent mail-in ballot voter list status.
- A voter may apply to be placed on the permanent mail-in ballot voter list when submitting an online mail-in ballot request, an online Voter Registration Application, a paper mail-in ballot request, or a Voter Registration Application

and Mail-in Ballot Request Application. Paper application forms can be submitted in person or by mail.

Once a voter is placed on one of the permanent lists, they are entitled to receive annually either an absentee ballot request renewal form or a mail-in ballot request renewal form—the Annual Ballot Application. These forms must be sent to voters on the permanent lists by **the first Monday in February** each year. The voter will need to complete the form and return it to the county board of elections to automatically receive ballots for eligible elections.

Voters on the permanent absentee ballot voter list or the permanent mail-in ballot voter list remain on the list indefinitely until their record is cancelled, they are removed from the list by court order, or they request to be removed from the list.

If a voter wants to continue receiving the Annual Ballot Application each February after the voter has moved to another county in Pennsylvania, the voter must update their voter registration record **and** they must also request that their Annual Ballot Application be transferred to the new county. The voter must do this by checking the “**Transfer My Annual Ballot Request**” box on the Voter Registration and Mail-in Ballot Application. By checking the box, the voter is requesting to continue to maintain their annual ballot application status when updating their address.

## For County Elections Officials

Currently, a voter may request to be placed on a permanent voter list by checking a box on the application for absentee ballot form or the application for mail-in ballot form. Also, a voter may submit a permanent mail-in ballot request through the online ballot request and online Voter Registration Application or on paper through the combined Voter Registration Application and Mail-in Ballot Request. Due to the physician’s certification requirement for placement on the permanent absentee ballot voter list, online submission for a permanent absentee ballot request is not supported at this time.

Once a voter is approved for either the permanent absentee ballot voter list or the permanent mail-in ballot voter list, they are on the list indefinitely until the voter requests to be removed, the voter record is cancelled (through transfer or the voter’s request), or the court requires a change. In other words, permanent voter list status does not expire.

*Tip: If a voter has been assigned to either the permanent absentee ballot voter list or the permanent mail-in ballot voter list, the county will be able to see a designation on the voter record in red that reads “perm.”*

After the county approves a voter’s initial application for permanent voter list status, the county must send ballots for eligible elections for the remainder of the year through the third Monday in February of the following year. The initial application counts as their request to receive eligible ballots for that entire period.

Counties must send the Annual Ballot Application to all permanent mail-in ballot voters and permanent absentee ballot voters to renew their ballot request by ***the first Monday in February*** each year.

The Department of State has developed two standard forms for the annual renewal mailings:

- Absentee Ballot Request Renewal (AR)
- Mail-in Ballot Request Renewal (MR)

*Note: The forms are only available to county election officials. They are not available to the public because they are only for the annual mailing to voters on the permanent lists.*

Once a voter's permanent list application is approved for any eligible elections through the third Monday in February of the following year, counties must send the voter their eligible ballots automatically for regularly scheduled elections or special elections occurring during this period.

- For example, if a voter submits a request to join a permanent list during the summer and they are approved by the county, they are now entitled to receive eligible ballots automatically for the remainder of the year through the third Monday in February of the following year for regularly scheduled elections or special elections.

A permanent absentee ballot list voter needs to complete the physician's certification only with their initial application. A physician's certification is not required with the Absentee Ballot Request Renewal.

If a voter registration record is transferred to another county, the permanent voter list status will only follow the voter to the new county if the voter requested that it transfer. Voters need to indicate the request to transfer on the Voter Registration Application and Mail-in Ballot Request submitted when registering to vote in the new county.

County election officials should ensure the voter checked the "***Transfer My Annual Ballot Request***" box and that all documentation related to the permanent list request is scanned and updated on the voter record prior to transferring the voter registration to a new county. Additionally, county election officials should process transfer records quickly to ensure the voter record is transferred within a timely manner.

A permanent voter list status remains on a voter's record whether the record is active or inactive. The permanent voter list status becomes invalid, and the voter is removed from the permanent list, when a voter record is cancelled.

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<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
1.0	03.5.2020	Initial document release
2.0	09.25.2023	Updated with the new transfer procedures from Act 2020-12