

# The Life and Times of a Pennsylvania MAIL-IN BALLOT

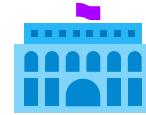
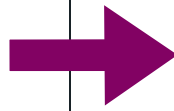
## AT THE VOTER'S HOME

## AT THE COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE

### Requesting a Ballot



Jane Q. Public decides to vote by mail in the next election. No reason is needed. She goes to [vote.pa.gov](https://vote.pa.gov) and fills in a Mail-In ballot application, providing approved proof of identity - a PA driver's license or PennDOT ID. Jane also provides an **email address** so she can be notified about the progress of her ballot request. (The process and the ballot are the same for an absentee ballot application.)



The County Elections Division sends Jane an email right away, letting her know that her request has been **received**. After confirming that she is a registered voter in her precinct, and that her ID is valid, the Elections Division sends an email telling Jane that her request has been **approved**. She will receive a ballot in the mail once it becomes available.

### Ballots are prepared



Jane waits for her ballot to be prepared. Ballots will be ready about a month before election day.



The County Board of Elections compiles lists of candidates and races from the 1300+ precincts in Allegheny County. Ballots are different in each precinct due to local races. Final information can sometimes be delayed by run-off elections or court challenges.



### Ballots are sent (about a month before election day)



Jane receives her Mail-In Ballot materials:

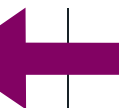
- Instruction sheet
- Mail-In Ballot
- Secrecy Envelope
- Outer "Declaration" Envelope

She marks her ballot. Because she's at home, she can use [vote411.org](https://vote411.org) and other resources to research the candidates as she makes her decisions.

After completing her ballot, she places ...

- the **ballot in the Secrecy Envelope** and **seals it**, which protects the privacy of her vote.
- the **Secrecy Envelope in the Declaration Envelope**, which ensures that her ballot is identified and accepted for voting.
- She then **signs** and **dates the declaration statement, seals the envelope**,

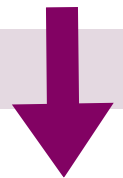
...and mails it back to the County Elections Division.



When ballots are finalized and printed, the Elections Division creates a **unique barcode** linked to Jane's voter registration record.



A mailing label is printed with Jane's address and unique barcode. At this point, Jane is notified that her ballot has been **prepared for mailing**. It may still be a week or more before the ballot is mailed. Then the Elections Division sends Jane the appropriate ballot for her precinct, and the Official Election Mail Envelope marked with her unique barcode.



### The ballot is received at the Elections Office.

When the ballot arrives at the Elections Division, the barcode is scanned, and the signature is checked. Jane is notified that her ballot has been **received** on time and **recorded**.

The workers who process Jane's incoming ballot cannot see how she voted. The ballot remains sealed in the two envelopes until the ballot processing, or "pre-canvass," is allowed to begin, currently set for 7 a.m. on Election Day.



### On Election Day



Jane relaxes at home while her vote is cast privately and securely!

When the polls open at 7:00 am, workers open and scan Jane's ballot. The workers who process the inner envelope can see how the ballot is marked, but they do not have information on her name or identity. When Jane's ballot is scanned **her vote is cast!**

