



DIRECTIVE 2020-18

August 31, 2020

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Processing Absentee Application Requests

BACKGROUND

The Secretary of State's website provides an easy option for voters to request an absentee ballot application. The information entered by the voter will be provided to each board of elections, who will then mail the application to the voter. This Directive provides detailed instructions for processing requests for absentee ballot applications.

INSTRUCTIONS

PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR ABSENTEE APPLICATIONS

Consistent with a process utilized in the completion of the March 17, 2020 Primary Election, voters may request an application for an absentee ballot on the Secretary of State's website. The request form for an application requires voters to provide their name, phone number, email address, date of birth, voter registration address, county, and mailing address (if different than the voter registration address). This information will populate in a data file that will be provided to each board each night. The Secretary of State's Office will send the file through the secure board of elections portal under the new Absentee Ballot Request section.

Each board of elections must use the information in this list to:

- Determine if the voter is properly registered to vote at the address provided;
- Determine if the voter already submitted a complete application for a ballot for the upcoming election;
- Update the voter's registration to an active-active status and update the activity date for the record; and
- Mail an absentee ballot application to the address provided by the voter (if the voter has not already submitted a complete application).

The board of election must review the information each day and mail absentee applications no later than the next business day after the information is made available.

If the voter is not properly registered at the address provided, the board must contact the voter and provide instructions on how to update their voter registration or vote a provisional ballot.

If the voter already submitted a complete application, the board should not send the voter another application. Whenever possible, boards should contact the voter to explain that the first application was received.

Voters may request the board of elections to mail their application to an address that is not their permanent residence. If the voter provides a mailing address, boards must mail the application to that address. If the voter did not provide a mailing address, mail the application to the voter registration address.

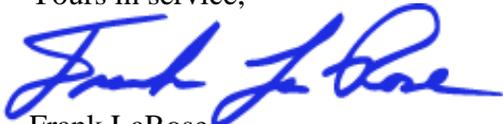
UPDATING VOTER ACTIVITY

[Directives 2020-14](#) and [2020-15](#) reminded boards of elections that “voter activity includes voting, requesting an absentee ballot application, registering to vote, updating or confirming an address with a board of elections or the BMV, or signing a candidate or issue petition that is verified by a board of elections.”

If the board receives a request for an absentee ballot application via telephone, the board must provide an application to the voter. However, the board must receive a completed application before updating the voter’s registration status to active-active and updating the activity date associated with the transaction.

If you have any questions concerning this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State’s elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State