

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Poll Sites:

Q. Will there be poll sites on November 3rd?

A. Kern County will have as many poll sites in November as in the March Primary. Once the locations are finalized they will be posted on our website KernVote.com.

Q. Do I need to notify the election office if I want to vote at my poll site?

A. No.

Q. Why are there poll sites if all registered voters are being mailed a ballot?

A. Poll sites are available for voters who need assistance (lost or spoiled ballot, missed the voter registration deadline of October 19, or who need language, audio, visual or other assistance to mark their ballot) as well as for voters who simply prefer to vote in person.

Q. Will I need to do anything differently if I am voting in person in November?

A. We strongly recommend voters bring their mail ballot with them and surrender it at their precinct prior to voting. This will make the process go more smoothly. However, if you lose your ballot or forget to bring it, you will still be able to vote, but you will have to vote provisionally. Once the election office verifies that you have not also voted your mail ballot, the provisional ballot can be processed.

Q. Are masks required to vote at the polls?

A. Masks are strongly encouraged, but not required. We will have alternate protocols in place for voters without masks, to protect the health of poll workers and other voters, so the voting process may take a little longer.

Q. Will there be special safety protocols in place at the poll sites due to COVID-19?

A. We will be following CDC guidelines regarding frequent disinfecting of surfaces, use of hand sanitizer, and physical distancing. In order to comply with physical distancing requirements, voters may be asked to wait in line outside the poll site until they can be accommodated at their precinct.

Vote by Mail:

Q. Do I need to submit an application to vote-by-mail?

A. No. Vote-by-Mail ballots will be mailed to all active, registered voters.

Q. When will my ballot be mailed?

A. Ballots are mailed starting the week of October 5th. If you do not receive your ballot by October 16th, contact the election office.

Q. Will my ballot be counted if there are delays in mail delivery?

A. Ballots returned by mail must be postmarked on or before election day. For the November 3, 2020 election, ballots must be received by the election office by 17 days after the election (November 20). We strongly encourage voters mail their ballots early.

Q. Will I be able to drop my ballot off in person?

A. Yes. A secure drop box is available outside the County Administrative Building in Bakersfield for the 29 days prior to the election. There will also be ballot drop off opportunities available throughout Kern County during the weeks prior to the election. More information will be available regarding locations, dates, and times once these are finalized. Ballots can also be dropped off at any poll site on election day.

Q. How will I know if my mail ballot is counted?

A. You can track the status of your ballot by using Ballot Trax. For more information go to vote.ca.gov.

Q. What are the reasons a ballot may not be counted?

A. A ballot may not be counted if:

1) It is postmarked after election day or received after November 20.

2) The return envelope is missing the voter's signature or the signature does not compare to the signature on file at the election office. In this case the voter is notified and given an opportunity to correct the deficiency so the ballot can be counted.

Q. With the anticipated increase in vote by mail voting in November, will the election office still be able to review every signature on the return envelopes?

A. Yes. During the March primary 72% of the ballots cast were vote by mail. We will be able to handle any increase in November. We do, however, encourage voters to return their ballots early, either through the mail or at one of the many in-person ballot drop off

opportunities that will be available throughout the county prior to election day. This will enable us to process these ballots prior to election day and include them in the election night count, so there will be fewer ballots to process after election day.

Q. What is the difference between absentee and vote by mail voting?

A. They are the same thing. Some jurisdictions refer to it as absentee voting and others refer to it as vote by mail.

Early Voting:

Q. Will early voting be available in Kern County?

A. What voters call “early voting” in Kern County consists of requesting a vote-by-mail ballot in person rather than having it mailed to them. All active, registered voters will be mailed a ballot. However, the election office will be available to provide assistance to voters in the weeks prior to election day, such as reissuing a mail ballot to a voter if it is lost or spoiled. Conditional voter registration will also be available for voters who miss the voter registration deadline (October 19). In addition to the election office, satellite election offices will be available in various areas of Kern County for voters needing assistance. More information will be available regarding locations, dates, and times of satellite offices once these are finalized.

Preparing for the Election:

Q. What can I do now to get ready for the November election?

- A.***
- 1) Voters can check their voter registration information to make sure it is up-to-date by going to voterstatus.sos.ca.gov.***
 - 2) If you are eligible to vote but not yet registered, you can register at registertovote.ca.gov or you can call the election office at 661-868-3590 or 1-800-452-VOTE to request a registration form.***
 - 3) You can update your signature on file with the election office by going to KernVote.com/VotebyMail/Forms.***
 - 4) To apply to be a poll worker or learn more about it, go to KernVote.com.***
 - 5) To view a video of how mail ballots are processed and the controls in place at the Kern County election office, visit KernVote.com.***
 - 6) For further election information, visit vote.ca.gov.***