

Time to apply to vote by mail

The mid-term election on Tuesday, Nov. 8, will be here before you know it. If you will be out of town on Election Day and during early voting (I'm talking to you, you young folks headed away to college soon), now's the time to apply to vote by mail (sometimes also called "absentee voting").

Per Texas law, any registered voter of the county may apply for a ballot by mail if you are 65 years of age or older, sick or disabled, out of the county on Election Day and during the period of early voting by personal appearance (October 24-November 4) or confined in jail but eligible to vote.

You can pick up an application to vote by mail at the Kendall County Elections Office, 221 Fawn Valley Drive in Boerne, or by clicking on the link on its website. (Google it.)

Toward the top of the application, next to the voter information box, the voter must provide either your Texas driver's license number or the last four digits of your Social Security number. To be extra safe, include both numbers.

If the number is missing or incorrect on the application, the voter will have the opportunity to correct the defect either by submitting a new application or by validating his or her identification number in the Ballot by Mail



Tracker (more information below on the online tracker).

Those who will be out of town on Election Day and during early voting must provide their out-of-county mailing address in Section 2 of the application ("Mail my Ballot to"). Also, in Section 3 of the application ("Reason for Voting by Mail"), you will check the fourth box ("expected absence from the county"). Note that you will need to provide the date you can start to receive mail at your out-of-county location.

When you've completed the application, the voter must sign the application in Section 5. To return the application, the best option is for the voter to drop it off at the elections office. Or, you can fold it, fill in the mailing address of the elections office (P.O. Box 2384, Boerne, TX 78006) and drop it in the mail. Don't forget to attach a stamp.

If you requested a ballot by mail prior to the primary and checked the "annual application" box, you do not need to apply for a ballot by mail again.

The elections office plans to mail out ballots on or about Oct. 1. You can use the handy online Ballot by Mail tracker to track both your application and your ballot. You can find the online tracker on www.votetexas.gov. Look for the "Track my Ballot" button on the right.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 27 states and Washington, D.C., offer "no-excuse" absentee voting, which means that any voter can request and cast an absentee/mail ballot, no excuse or reason necessary. Unfortunately, Texas is not one of those states. To vote by mail in Texas, you must meet one of the qualifications listed above.

If you have further questions or need additional assistance, contact the elections office at 830-331-8701.

We'll have more information on actually completing your mail-in ballot later this fall. In the meantime, you can learn more about the candidates at www.vote411.org, sponsored by the non-partisan League of Women Voters.

If you're eligible, apply today to vote by mail.

For more information on voting or elections, call our office at 830-331-1243 or visit www.kcdems.us

Laura Bray is the chair of the Kendall County Democratic Party.