

DAG Voter Assistance

Voters are asking for support with their ballot requests and returns, either when they are called by phonebankers or by using the form on our website. Please consider the following templates when answering voter's questions and send a bcc to secretary@democratsabroad.de so we can log the contact. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions or suggestions. Thanks for your time and assistance!

Categories for email templates:

[Never resided in US](#)

[This is my first time registering to vote](#)

[I need help registering to vote or requesting my absentee ballot](#)

[I don't know my U.S. voting address](#)

[I can't reach my I don't know my U.S. voting address local election official. What should I do?](#)

[Can I choose which U.S. state I want to vote in?](#)

[How does my child register to vote?](#)

[FAQs - Can I register to vote if I've never resided in the US?](#)

[How can I request my FWAB?](#)

[It's getting close to the election and I haven't received my blank ballot yet. What should I do?](#)

[What is the best way to send back my ballot?](#)

[What can I do if my ballot has not arrived?](#)

[Fax Return of Ballots](#)

[Mailing Q & A](#)

Never resided in US

Dear (Name of Voter),

Thank you for reaching out to us with your voting question! My name is (your name), and I received your inquiry.

Your issue was: **For example: I am a US citizen born in Germany. My parents left the US in 1957. I therefore have no US address. So do my children, who have US citizenship as well.**

I'm happy to help! We recommend going to www.VoteFromAbroad.org, a website that will help you complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your state's requirements. You and each of your children who are eligible to vote should submit this form. By doing so, you are both registering to vote *and* requesting your absentee ballot. We recommend submitting this form every calendar year, as it offers a number of voter protections and will make sure you receive your ballots for that calendar year.

As for your voting address in the U.S., since you have never resided in the U.S., you should use the address where your American parent(s) last resided in the United States, even if you no longer have any attachment to that address. If you don't remember that address, here are some ideas to try to find that information:

- Look for old documents that might have your US street address, such as tax returns, letters, address books or your birth certificate.
- Ask relatives and friends if they remember the address.
- If you have a general location but no street address, use Google Earth "street view" to look for a street address.
- If you know the county where it was located, call the Local Election Official for the area and describe the location. They may be able to help find the address. You can find contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states

If your children have resided in the U.S., they should use the address where they last resided. **If they have never resided in the U.S.**, then they should use the same address that you use (the last address where your American parent(s) resided). Please see the "FAQs" (below my own message), which offer specific guidance on this issue. If this information does not resolve your specific case, let me know, and we can further discuss what your voting address would be.

A couple of important points:

- When you do apply for your absentee ballot using Vote from Abroad, we highly recommend that you choose to receive your blank ballot by **email**. This will help avoid any postal delays with receiving your ballot. And of course, we recommend completing and submitting the ballot using the fastest version that your state allows (which will be indicated on the ballot).
- Soon after you submit your FPCA on Vote from Abroad, you should definitely **contact your Local Election Official (LEO) by phone or email to confirm that it was indeed received**. You will not be contacted if your form was never received, so it's important to confirm this.

- When you are submitting your ballot request on Vote from Abroad, it will tell you who your local election official is and provide the current contact information; however, you can also find that information here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>

Please go to our **Vote From Germany website for important information on ballot return, including a special deal for 25 Euro Overnight Ballot Return through FedEx.**
https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

Please let me know if you run into any challenges or still have questions! I would be happy to follow up with a phone call. I would also appreciate it if you could confirm that you have received this message.

All my best,
Your Name

Vote From Abroad FAQs:

WHAT IS MY “US VOTING ADDRESS”?

As a US citizen living abroad, your “voting address” is the street address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies even if your family no longer owns the property, or you no longer have ties to the state, or you don't intend to return to that address or that state, or even if it no longer exists as a residence. It also doesn't matter if you were registered to vote at that address.

If you are a US citizen who has never lived in the US, your “voting address” is the street address of the last place your US citizen parent lived in the US. If both of your parents are US citizens, you may use the last US address of either one.

I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST US ADDRESS, HOW DO I FIND IT?

If you don't remember your US voting address (that is, your last residence address in the US), here are some ideas to try to find that information:

- *If you were previously registered to vote, check your state's website to see if your voter registration information is still available. It may include your voting address.*
- *Look for old documents that might have your US street address, such as tax returns, letters, address books or your birth certificate.*
- *Ask relatives and friends if they remember your old address.*
- *If you have a general location but no street address, use Google Earth “street view” to look for a street address.*
- *If you know the county where it was located, call the Local Election Official for the area and describe the location. They may be able to help find the address. You can find contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states*

Can I register to vote if I've never resided in the US?

Yes! As a U.S. citizen living outside the U.S., federal law guarantees your right to vote in federal elections. See the answer to FAQ #1 (“I Live Outside The U.S., Am I Eligible To Vote In U.S. Elections?”) You will need to submit the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote

and to request a ballot every calendar year. See FAQ #5 (“How Do I Register To Vote Or Request A Ballot As A U.S. Citizen Living Abroad?”)

When you fill out the FPCA-which VoteFromAbroad (VFA) will help you do-your “voting address” is the address of the last place your U.S. citizen parent lived in the U.S. If both of your parents are U.S. citizens, you may use the last U.S. address of either U.S. parent. See also FAQ #13 (“What Should I Use As My ‘Voting Address?’”)

If you are a civilian overseas voter, you will also see the question: “Are you abroad temporarily or indefinitely?” For most states, you will choose one of these three alternatives: “I intend to return”; My return is uncertain”; or “Never resided”. Depending on the state, “never resided” voters may receive only a federal ballot or may receive the full state and federal ballot.

However, the “Never Resided” category is not applicable for the 13 states-Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Illinois (non-military), Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas and Utah-that require registered voters to have resided in the state for a set amount of time. If you are registering to vote in one of those states, you will choose between: “I intend to return” or “My return is uncertain.”

It's getting close to the election and I haven't received my blank ballot yet. What should I do? See here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/24>

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

[This is my first time registering to vote](#)

Dear **Name of Voter** ,

Thank you for reaching out to us with your voting question! My name is **(enter your name)**, and I received your inquiry: **For example: "I have the US citizenship and a social security number but have never lived in the US (always Germany). I am not sure how to register to vote as I do not have a past address in the States."**

I'm happy to help! We recommend going to www.VoteFromAbroad.org, a website that will help you request your absentee ballot by completing your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your state's requirements. By submitting this form, you are both registering to vote and requesting your absentee ballot. We recommend submitting this form every calendar year, as it offers a number of voter protections and will make sure you receive your ballots for that calendar year.

Normally your voting address is the last place that you resided in the U.S.; however, if you have never resided in the U.S., like you said, then it's the last place where your American parent(s) resided in the U.S. For more specific guidance on this, please see the "FAQs" that I've included

below my own message. Of course, if none of what I am telling you resolves your question about what U.S. voting address to use, then please let me know, and I can help you figure out your situation. We know that there are many unique circumstances.

A couple of important points:

- When you do apply for your absentee ballot using Vote from Abroad, we highly recommend that you choose to receive your blank ballot by **email**. This will help avoid any postal delays with receiving your ballot. And of course, we recommend completing and submitting the ballot using the fastest version that your state allows (which will be indicated on the ballot).
- Soon after you submit your FPCA on Vote from Abroad, you should definitely **contact your Local Election Official (LEO) by phone or email to confirm that it was indeed received**. You will not be contacted if your form was never received, so it's important to confirm this.
- When you are submitting your ballot request on Vote from Abroad, it will tell you who your local election official is and provide the current contact information; however, you can also find that information here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>

Please go to our Vote From Germany website for important information on ballot return, including a special deal for 25 Euro Overnight Ballot Return through FedEx.

https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

Please let me know if you run into any challenges or still have questions! I would also appreciate it if you could confirm that you have received this message.

All my best!

Your name

Vote From Abroad FAQs:

WHAT IS MY "US VOTING ADDRESS"?

As a US citizen living abroad, your "voting address" is the street address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies even if your family no longer owns the property, or you no longer have ties to the state, or you don't intend to return to that address or that state, or even if it no longer exists as a residence. It also doesn't matter if you were registered to vote at that address.

If you are a US citizen who has never lived in the US, your "voting address" is the street address of the last place your US citizen parent lived in the US. If both of your parents are US citizens, you may use the last US address of either one.

I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST US ADDRESS, HOW DO I FIND IT?

If you don't remember your US voting address (that is, your last residence address in the US), here are some ideas to try to find that information:

- *If you were previously registered to vote, check your state's website to see if your voter registration information is still available. It may include your voting address.*
- *Look for old documents that might have your US street address, such as tax returns, letters, address books or your birth certificate.*
- *Ask relatives and friends if they remember your old address.*
- *If you have a general location but no street address, use Google Earth "street view" to look for a street address.*
- *If you know the county where it was located, call the Local Election Official for the area and describe the location. They may be able to help find the address. You can find contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states*

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

[I need help registering to vote or requesting my absentee ballot](#)

Dear **Voter name**,

Thank you for reaching out to us with your voting question! My name is **Your name**, and I received your inquiry about: **"How to register to vote & request my absentee ballot"**

I'm happy to help! We recommend going to www.VoteFromAbroad.org, a website that will help you request your absentee ballot by completing your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your state's requirements. By submitting this form, you are both registering to vote (or updating your voter registration information) and requesting your absentee ballot. We recommend submitting this form every calendar year, as it offers a number of voter protections and will make sure you receive your ballots for that calendar year.

Your U.S. voting address is the last address where you resided in the U.S. If you have never resided in the U.S., then it's the last place where your American parent(s) resided. If you need additional guidance, please see the "FAQs" that I've included below my own message.

A couple of important points:

- When you do apply for your absentee ballot using Vote from Abroad, we highly recommend that you choose to receive your blank ballot by **email**. This will help avoid any postal delays with receiving your ballot. And of course, we recommend completing and submitting the ballot using the fastest version that your state allows (which will be indicated on the ballot).
- Soon after you submit your FPCA on Vote from Abroad, you should definitely **contact your Local Election Official (LEO) by phone or email to confirm that it was indeed**

received. You will not be contacted if your form was never received, so it's important to confirm this.

- When you are submitting your ballot request on Vote from Abroad, it will tell you who your local election official is and provide the current contact information; however, you can also find that information here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>

Please go to our **Vote From Germany website for important information on ballot return, including a special deal for 25 Euro Overnight Ballot Return through FedEx.**
https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

Please let me know if you run into any challenges or still have questions! I would also appreciate it if you could confirm that you have received this message.

All my best!

Your name

Vote From Abroad FAQs:

WHAT IS MY "US VOTING ADDRESS"?

As a US citizen living abroad, your "voting address" is the street address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies even if your family no longer owns the property, or you no longer have ties to the state, or you don't intend to return to that address or that state, or even if it no longer exists as a residence. It also doesn't matter if you were registered to vote at that address.

If you are a US citizen who has never lived in the US, your "voting address" is the street address of the last place your US citizen parent lived in the US. If both of your parents are US citizens, you may use the last US address of either one.

I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST US ADDRESS, HOW DO I FIND IT?

If you don't remember your US voting address (that is, your last residence address in the US), here are some ideas to try to find that information:

- *If you were previously registered to vote, check your state's website to see if your voter registration information is still available. It may include your voting address.*
- *Look for old documents that might have your US street address, such as tax returns, letters, address books or your birth certificate.*
- *Ask relatives and friends if they remember your old address.*
- *If you have a general location but no street address, use Google Earth "street view" to look for a street address.*
- *If you know the county where it was located, call the Local Election Official for the area and describe the location. They may be able to help find the address. You can find contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states*

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

I don't know my U.S. voting address

Dear **Name of Voter** ,

Thank you for reaching out to us with your voting question! My name is **(Your name here)**, and I received your inquiry about: "**How to register to vote & request my absentee ballot**"

I'm happy to help! We recommend going to www.VoteFromAbroad.org, a website that will help you request your absentee ballot by completing your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your state's requirements. By submitting this form, you are both registering to vote (or updating your voter registration information) and requesting your absentee ballot. We recommend submitting this form every calendar year, as it offers a number of voter protections and will make sure you receive your ballots for that calendar year.

Your U.S. voting address is the last address where you resided in the U.S. If you have never resided in the U.S., then it's the last place where your American parent(s) resided. If you need additional guidance, please see the "FAQs" that I've included below my own message.

A couple of important points:

- When you do apply for your absentee ballot using Vote from Abroad, we highly recommend that you choose to receive your blank ballot by **email**. This will help avoid any postal delays with receiving your ballot. And of course, we recommend completing and submitting the ballot using the fastest version that your state allows (which will be indicated on the ballot).
- Soon after you submit your FPCA on Vote from Abroad, you should definitely **contact your Local Election Official (LEO) by phone or email to confirm that it was indeed received**. You will not be contacted if your form was never received, so it's important to confirm this.
- When you are submitting your ballot request on Vote from Abroad, it will tell you who your local election official is and provide the current contact information; however, you can also find that information here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>

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Please let me know if you run into any challenges or still have questions! I would also appreciate it if you could confirm that you have received this message.

All my best!
Your name

Vote from Abroad FAQs:

WHAT IS MY “US VOTING ADDRESS”?

As a US citizen living abroad, your “voting address” is the street address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies even if your family no longer owns the property, or you no longer have ties to the state, or you don't intend to return to that address or that state, or even if it no longer exists as a residence. It also doesn't matter if you were registered to vote at that address.

If you are a US citizen who has never lived in the US, your “voting address” is the street address of the last place your US citizen parent lived in the US. If both of your parents are US citizens, you may use the last US address of either one.

I CAN'T REMEMBER MY LAST US ADDRESS, HOW DO I FIND IT?

If you don't remember your US voting address (that is, your last residence address in the US), here are some ideas to try to find that information:

- *If you were previously registered to vote, check your state's website to see if your voter registration information is still available. It may include your voting address.*
- *Look for old documents that might have your US street address, such as tax returns, letters, address books or your birth certificate.*
- *Ask relatives and friends if they remember your old address.*
- *If you have a general location but no street address, use Google Earth “street view” to look for a street address.*
- *If you know the county where it was located, call the Local Election Official for the area and describe the location. They may be able to help find the address. You can find contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states*

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

How/when will I receive my absentee ballot?

Dear **Voter name**,

Thank you for reaching out to us with your voting question. My name is **Your name**, and I received your inquiry.

Your question was "**When will I get my ballot for the presidential election 2020?**"

I first want to ask, did you request your absentee ballot this year using the website: www.votefromabroad.org? We recommend completing the form (called the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)) on that website at the start of each calendar year, as it will then require that your local election office in the U.S. sends you all the ballots for that calendar year. You can also request to receive your blank absentee ballot by email (rather than postal mail), which we highly recommend.

Second, if you did already submit your ballot request this year, did you follow up with your local election office (LEO) in the United States to confirm that your request was received? We strongly recommend contacting your LEO (which you can look up here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>) by phone or email to confirm that they received your request for an absentee ballot. The LEO will not contact you if the request was not received.

And now to answer your question! If you submitted your absentee ballot request using the FPCA form, then your state is required to send the blank absentee ballot **45 days in advance of the election**. This means that they should have sent out ballots (electronically and by postal mail) by September 19th at the latest. If you requested that your blank ballot be sent by email, then you should already have it in your inbox - please also check your spam folder. If you requested to receive it by postal mail, it might not arrive in Germany until October 1st. **If you have not received your ballot by October 1st, please contact your Local Election Official and ask where it is.**

If you have any questions or challenges at that time (or in the meantime!), please don't hesitate to reach out to us again. You can email this email address or you can always contact Vote From Abroad's help desk at: helpdesk@votefromabroad.org

Please confirm that you have received this email and that I have answered your question.

Thank you for voting!!

Best,
Your name

[I can't reach my local election official. What should I do?](#)

Dear **Voter name**,

My name is **Your name**, and I received your voter assistance inquiry. Thanks for reaching out to us! I would be happy to give you a call to discuss your questions, but first I wanted to ask a few clarifying questions.

Did you use the website www.VoteFromAbroad.org to submit your FPCA (Federal Post Card Application) form? Or did you use the www.FVAP.gov website to complete your FPCA? (or another site) How did you submit your FPCA (e.g., by email, postal mail, fax, etc.)?

Would you mind me asking where your local election official is located? I will also look up the contact information to make sure that we both find the same contact information.

We will definitely help you get this resolved, and the good news is that there is still time to submit another FPCA form in the case that yours was not received, so we will get to the bottom of this!

Best regards,
Your name

- The reality in this case is that helping a voter confirm that their FPCA or ballot was received (if the LEO is being unresponsive) might take some more effort. Here are some options for helping the voter:
 - Confirm s/he has correct email and phone for county clerk. You could try to call, just to see if you get through (and then advise the voter on how to do so, if it works!)
 - Or, suggest s/he go to VFA, click on the State Guide, scroll down to the link, where it asks in red: "Am I registered?" The voter can see what their status says.
 - S/he can always submit another FPCA using VFA.
 - If you get no good result, send report to gotv@democratsabroad.org. They can send it on to the Voter Protection team if necessary.
 - It's possible to suggest a FWAB, but for a FWAB to be valid in most states, it's necessary to have submitted an FPCA, so be cautious here.

[Can I choose which U.S. state I want to vote in?](#)

Dear **Voter name**,

My name is **Your name**, and I received your voting inquiry. With regards to your question, yes, it sounds to me like your voting address would indeed be in ..., at the last address where you lived, even if you no longer have any ties there. Here is what we tell voters about their US voting address:

"As a US citizen living abroad, your "voting address" is the street address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies even if your family no longer owns the property, or you no longer have ties to the state, or you don't intend to return to that address or that state, or even if it no longer exists as a residence. It also doesn't matter if you were registered to vote at that address."

With regards to changing your voting address, also a common question, here is what we tell voters:

CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE IN A DIFFERENT STATE?

As a US citizen living abroad, your voting address is usually the address of the last place you lived in the US. This applies no matter how long you've been away or whether or not you ever intend to return to that state.

However, if you feel you have sufficient ties with another state, you may be eligible to register to vote in that location. The strength of your ties to the state will depend on the facts of your situation and typically involve questions like: Do you own property in the state? Do you pay state taxes? Do you stay in the state for lengthy periods of time? How long have you been going to the state? Simply setting up a mailing address in a new state is typically not sufficient to establish ties for voting.

Please keep in mind, this is general advice about registering to vote as an overseas voter. The Local Election Official in the voting district makes the final determination whether to accept your voter registration in their jurisdiction. You may wish to contact them, explain your situation and ask what their decision will be. You can look up the contact information for Local Election Officials here: www.votefromabroad.org/states (scroll down to "Find Your Election Office). Or, you can try submitting the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and see if it is accepted.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions!

Best regards,
Your name

How does my child register to vote?

Dear **Name of Voter**,

Thank you for your inquiry and for helping your **son/daughter** get set to vote for the very first time! **His/Her** state is your voting state, and **he/she** simply uses your last address in the US. I've included one of our Vote From Abroad FAQs with further details as well as some additional information relevant to this year's election. Please let me know if you need any further clarification, and I am happy to do that in a phone call.

FAQs - Can I register to vote if I've never resided in the US?

Yes! As a U.S. citizen living outside the U.S., federal law guarantees your right to vote in federal elections. See the answer to **FAQ #1 (“I Live Outside The U.S., Am I Eligible To Vote In U.S. Elections?”)** You will need to submit the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and to request a ballot every calendar year. See **FAQ #5 (“How Do I Register To Vote Or Request A Ballot As A U.S. Citizen Living Abroad?”)**

When you fill out the FPCA-which **VoteFromAbroad (VFA)** will help you do-your “voting address” is the address of the last place your U.S. citizen parent lived in the U.S. If both of your parents are U.S. citizens, you may use the last U.S. address of either U.S. parent. See also **FAQ #13 (“What Should I Use As My ‘Voting Address?’”)**

If you are a civilian overseas voter, you will also see the question: “**Are you abroad temporarily or indefinitely?**” For most states, you will choose one of these three alternatives: “I intend to return”; “My return is uncertain”; or “Never resided”. Depending on the state, “never resided” voters may receive only a federal ballot or may receive the full state and federal ballot.

However, the “Never Resided” category is not applicable for the 13 states-Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Illinois (non-military), Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas and Utah-that require registered voters to have resided in the state for a set amount of time. If you are registering to vote in one of those states, you will choose between: “I intend to return” or “My return is uncertain.”

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

A couple of important points:

- When you do apply for your absentee ballot using Vote from Abroad, we highly recommend that you choose to receive your blank ballot by **email**. This will help avoid any postal delays with receiving your ballot. And of course, we recommend completing and submitting the ballot using the fastest version that your state allows (which will be indicated on the ballot).
- Soon after you submit your FPCA on Vote from Abroad, you should definitely **contact your Local Election Official (LEO) by phone or email to confirm that it was indeed received**. You will not be contacted if your form was never received, so it's important to confirm this.
- When you are submitting your ballot request on Vote from Abroad, it will tell you who your local election official is and provide the current contact information; however, you can also find that information here: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/states>

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https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

Thanks again for reaching out!

Your Name

How can I request my FWAB?

Dear **Name of voter**,

I received your request for further information regarding the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). We are currently recommending that you send in the FWAB now in order to guarantee that your vote is counted even if your actual ballot is delayed.

There's no downside to using the FWAB. When you receive your official state ballot, you mail that in as well. If both arrive in time, the FWAB will be discarded and only your official state ballot will be counted. But, if your official state ballot is delayed and misses the deadline, your FWAB will be counted as your VOTE.

I have included the information relevant to the FWAB from the FAQs section of our Vote From Abroad website.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Best wishes,
Your Name

It's getting close to the election and I haven't received my blank ballot yet. What should I do?

SPECIAL UPDATE FOR THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 GENERAL ELECTION:

Due to postal delays in many countries related to the global pandemic, we recommend that voters submit the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) right away if they vote in states that require ballots to be returned by postal mail.

There are 20 states that require most overseas voters to return their ballots by mail:

Arkansas, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky

Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire

New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee

Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

The FWAB is an emergency backup ballot specifically for overseas voters to use to preserve your vote in uncertain circumstances. Submitting a FWAB now will preserve your vote in the event that international mail to the US is disrupted during this election.

For detailed instructions how to use a FWAB, please go here: www.votefromabroad.org/fwab

To check your state's requirements for ballot return, please go here:
www.votefromabroad.org/states

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https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

If you successfully submitted a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to request your ballot, your state is required to send out your ballot 45 days before the election (or within a few days of receiving your FPCA form). For the November General Elections, ballots are typically sent out by the third week of September.

(To verify your FPCA was received and approved, see FAQ #19 (“How Do I Check If I Am Registered To Vote And My Ballot Request Form Was Received So That I’ll Receive An Overseas Ballot?”))

If you requested your blank ballot be sent by email, be sure to check your “spam” folder and any secondary inboxes. You’d be surprised how many ballots are found hiding in there.

If your ballot isn’t in your email folders, contact your Local Election Official right away to find out what happened to it. It’s possible it was lost or that they don’t have you on their voter rolls as an overseas voter. You can look up the contact information [here](#)

Finally, if you’re concerned you may not receive your blank ballot in time to return it by the deadline for voted ballots, you can vote using the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)-also known as the “back-up ballot.” For detailed instructions how to use a FWAB, please go here: www.votefromabroad.org/fwab

The FWAB is a ballot-please be sure to follow the instructions carefully! And be aware of the deadline to submit your ballot. The deadline information for your state will be in the Instructions that print out with your completed FWAB. Please be sure to allow enough time for your FWAB to get back to the US!

[What is the best way to send back my ballot?](#)

Dear **Name of Voter**,

Thank you for your inquiry about how to return your ballot. My name is **Your name**, and I received your inquiry.

Once you've received your ballot, please fill it out and return it immediately. Ballot return methods vary by state (online, email, postal mail, fax). Especially if your state only allows postal mail return – which is the case in many swing states like Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin – it is imperative that you return your ballot as quickly as possible. Try to return

your ballot within 48 hours of receiving it. For advice on ballot return, please check the Vote from Abroad resource page: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/how-to-return-your-ballot/>.

You can check your state's exact ballot return methods [here](#).

If your state allows email or fax ballot return, please use these options as they're not subject to delay. Here is more information on [fax submission](#). Please note that some states that allow email or fax return require that the ballot be sent by postal mail, too.

For postal mail ballot return:

- We recommend using the Deutsche Post until October 5.
- After October 5, we recommend using a private courier, like DHL Express (different than DHL), FedEx, or UPS, if financially feasible. All states that require postal mail return have confirmed that they will accept ballots sent with such couriers.
- ★ *In either case, please take your ballot to the post office / private courier's store to ensure it receives the correct postage.*
- ★ *Please also be aware that if you use registered mail (Einschreiben), your ballot may be returned to you if the clerk isn't there to sign for it.*

Please go to our Vote From Germany website for important information on ballot return, including a special deal for 25 Euro Overnight Ballot Return through FedEx.
https://www.democratsabroad.org/vote_from_germany

Need help printing the envelope or cover sheet for your fax/email - check [here](#).

We do NOT recommend using the diplomatic pouch at U.S. embassies or consulates as return times, and orders issued by the current administration, are highly unpredictable.

Regardless of how you send in your ballot, remember that you (the voter) must be the one who places it in the mail. In some states, it is unlawful for any other person to handle your voted ballot, even if it is sealed.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Best wishes,
Your Name

[What can I do if my ballot has not arrived?](#)

Dear Name of Voter,

I received your request for further information regarding what to do if you don't receive your ballot, and I am happy to help!

If you requested that your ballot be sent by postal mail, it should already be on its way to you. If you requested that your ballot be sent to you by email, please check your spam folder to see if your ballot was labeled "junk mail" by mistake. If you still can't find your ballot, you should follow up directly with your Local Election Official (LEO), preferably by phone since many counties need a while to reply to emails.

You can find contact details for your Local Election Official by visiting www.votefromabroad.org/states and your Local Election Official should be able to confirm when and how your ballot was sent.

In the meantime, we are currently recommending that you send in the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot in order to guarantee that your vote is counted even if your actual ballot is delayed. There's no downside to using the FWAB. When you receive your official state ballot, you mail that in as well. If both arrive in time, the FWAB will be discarded and only your official state ballot will be counted. But, if your official state ballot is delayed and misses the deadline, your FWAB will be counted as your VOTE. Detailed instructions on how to use a FWAB can be found here: www.votefromabroad.org/fwab

I hope this helps to clear up any confusion, but please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Best wishes,
Your Name

Here are other frequently asked questions: <https://www.votefromabroad.org/faqs/>

[Mailing/Faxing Q & A](#)

How do I return a ballot by mail? Follow the instructions provided with your ballot as ballot return varies by jurisdiction. The points below are provided for guidance only. Always follow the instructions from your local election official.

When mailing back your ballot, it usually requires two envelopes: a "Security envelope" and a "Mailing envelope". This is done to maintain a secret ballot. Typically you seal your voted ballot in a "security envelope". Then the security envelope AND any identifying materials go inside a larger "mailing envelope". This way, your Local Election Official will be able to verify you're an eligible voter, but will not be able to see your sealed ballot.

Once your voter status is verified, your still-sealed ballot will be separated from your identifying information before it is tallied.

Does paper size matter? You may use A4 paper without risking ballot invalidation because federal law dictates that the paper size for voters from abroad cannot be used to discount the legitimacy of the vote.

Can ballots be returned in one private courier envelope? As long as you are all of the same household and voting at the same elections office, then you may return your separate ballots in a single courier envelope. Think of the courier envelope as being like a mailbox, so make sure that each ballot/declaration is in its own envelope and addressed in accordance with the instructions. There should not be any loose papers in the courier envelope, only envelopes containing each voter's ballot and supporting documentation as required.

Is there a faxing app that you recommend? You can fax your ballot to _____ County with a free app like faxdroid.com (where you use your computer to email faxdroid, and they turn it into a fax to your county) or via the FVAP website noted on the front of the FVAP.gov transmittal sheet that you also downloaded with your ballot. It sometimes takes more than one try by faxdroid.com to get through. I imagine the fax machines are quite busy right now, so be patient.

If you decide to use faxdroid.com (or any other app found in the internet under "free fax to the US,") be aware that you'll be faxing back numerous pages, which may fall out of the free part (3 pages). 6 pages costs \$.60 to send by fax, which is not a problem if you have a US credit card or PayPal account.

We are not endorsing faxdroid, but our members have used it and found it reliable. Your county should notify you that your ballot was received - if not, please follow up with them.

Fax Return of Ballots

Dear Name of voter,

Your voting state allows you to fax your ballot, which we strongly recommend due to potential delays in postal mail. You do not need to have a fax machine in order to send back your ballot. There are several apps that convert email to fax and the Federal Voting Assistance Program will fax your ballot back for you as well. Please refer to the Vote From Abroad FAQs for further information and let us know if you have any questions on how to return your ballot by fax.

Best wishes,
Your NAME

If my state allows it, should I return my voted ballot electronically?

Yes, we highly recommend that you use the option to return your ballot electronically if it is available to you. More than half of all states now allow overseas voters to return their ballots electronically-that is, by Email, Fax or Online Upload.

This option is a huge boon to overseas voters who live in areas where the postal system is unreliable or non-existent or who otherwise may not be able to meet the deadline for returning their ballots by postal mail.

Sending in your ballot electronically is simply a means to return your ballot. This a ballot that you printed out (if you received it electronically) and marked and are now returning as an email attachment, fax or online upload. And you retain a copy of your marked ballot, so there is a paper trail. There is no security concern that a ballot returned as an email attachment, fax or secure online upload will be changed from the voter's intention.

This is very different from the "electronic voting" about which there has been widely reported security concerns. With electronic voting, voters at in-person polling places submit their vote using a computer system that holds a large cache of votes and which may be vulnerable to inaccuracies as well as the more remote risk of outside manipulation. And if there's no paper receipt provided, the voter has no way to know that their vote was properly recorded and counted.

Finally, it may actually be safer to send in your ballot electronically than by postal mail as you don't have to worry that it may get lost or delayed in transit.

If your state allows return of voted ballots by Email or Fax: You will need to sign a waiver of your right to a secret ballot as your ballot will not be sealed when you send in. Your Local Election Official will separate your identifying information from your vote as soon as possible and no one should be able to see how you personally voted, but it will be open when you submit it.

If your state only allows return of voted ballots by Fax (not Email): If you don't have access to a fax machine, there are apps that will convert an email attachment to a fax. Scan in your ballot and any required materials (see your state's instructions) as an email attachment, then search for "fax app for Android/iPhone." Follow the instructions to convert your email attachment to a fax transmission.

Or, you can use the Fax service* through the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP.gov). You will need to email your ballot and any required supporting materials (see your state's instructions) to fax@fvap.gov using the FVAP fax transmission coversheet at: www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/materials/forms (scroll to the bottom of that page). FVAP will then fax your election materials to your Local Election Officials.

**But don't wait until the last minute when using the FVAP fax service! The service can get overloaded and FVAP does not guarantee that your faxed ballot will be sent on to your Local Election Official by the deadline.*