

MULTI-PARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAM

In North Carolina, any registered voter can vote by mail-in absentee ballot. Some voters find it necessary due to disability, limited mobility, or age.

Often times, these voters may require assistance in completing the request forms or marking the ballot. The first preference, according to the law, is for the voter to receive assistance from a near relative or legal guardian. But some voters, particularly those who live in facilities, may not have a near relative or guardian available to provide that assistance.

In every county, an impartial team called a Multi-partisan Assistance Team is available to visit facilities such as nursing homes in order to provide assistance with mail-in absentee voting.

What is a “Multi-partisan Assistance Team”?

A Multi-partisan Assistance Team, or “MAT,” is a group of persons appointed by the county board of elections to provide assistance with mail-in absentee voting to voters living at facilities such as nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, or adult care homes. The makeup of the Team includes, at a minimum, two people who have different party affiliations or who are not affiliated with a political party. When you request help from a MAT, you will receive impartial, professional assistance; their job is to help you vote, but your voting choices will remain confidential.

What is absentee-by-mail voting?

Any registered voter may vote absentee by-mail. To vote absentee by mail, a voter completes a request form for an absentee ballot, then mails, faxes, or emails it to their county board of elections. They may also complete the form online using the absentee request portal. The ballot is then mailed to the voter with detailed instructions on how to complete and return the ballot, including information on who can serve as a witness or assistant.



Is a photo ID required when voting absentee-by-mail?

Voters are not required to show photo ID when they vote in person or by mail in the 2020 general election.

What does a Multi-partisan Assistance Team do?

MATs can assist voters in requesting and casting a mail-in absentee ballot.

Requesting a mail-in absentee ballot

To receive an absentee ballot by mail, a request must be made on the official Absentee Ballot Request Form. MATs can provide this form and help you fill it out if necessary. The MAT can then deliver the form back to the County Board of Elections office, and the ballot will be mailed to you in the following days. The Absentee Ballot Request Form includes a check-box to request assistance from a MAT in casting a mail-in absentee ballot. If you check that box, someone from the county board of elections will be in contact about arranging a visit.

Casting a mail-in absentee ballot

If you've requested a mail-in absentee ballot, it will arrive in the mail, along with a special return envelope. On the back of the return envelope, you must enter some information and sign your name. A witness must be present when you mark your absentee ballot (but should not see how you vote) and must sign the witness section on the return envelope. MATs can help with marking the ballot, completing the required information on the return envelope, and serving as a witness to the act of voting.

I work at a facility such as a nursing home. How do I arrange a visit by a MAT?

To inquire about scheduling a MAT visit, contact your county board of elections office. It is most helpful if the facility informs residents about MATs and determines a time when the most voters who need help will be available so that the MAT can help the maximum number of voters during the visit. It is also important, if possible, to know whether some voters have already received assistance in voting from family members (or if a family member plans to drive the resident to vote in person), particularly if the voter has memory difficulties.

I reside at a facility. How do I request help from a MAT?

Contact the activity coordinator of your facility. If you do not know who the activity coordinator is, or if there is no activity coordinator, talk to staff or management at your facility. Ideally, the local elections office can schedule a MAT visit to help several voters in one visit, so it is preferable that the visit is arranged by the facility. However, residents of the facility may also call the county board office to request a visit.

Employees of Facilities Cannot Assist Residents with Absentee By Mail Voting

It is a Class I felony for the owner, manager, director, or employee of facilities from assisting residents with mail-in absentee voting.



COVID-19 Precautions

MAT visits must be conducted in accordance with the visitation policy for each facility. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services issued guidance to help ensure that MATs who are assisting residents of facilities can reduce the risk of exposure to, and transmission of, COVID-19. When providing assistance, MATs must follow this guidance, which includes wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times during visits and socially distancing whenever possible.

**For more information or to find a list of county board of election contacts visit
www.ncsbe.gov or call (919) 814-0700**