

Voters that do belong to a party having a primary election are NOT eligible to request another party's primary ballot, and must vote their own party's ballot.

## CASTING EARLY BALLOTS:

There are three ways to cast an early ballot, but in all instances the ballot should be returned sealed within the special envelope provided for this purpose, and signed on the outside where indicated.

### 1) Return by Mail

The easiest method is to send the ballot in through the mail using the special envelope provided for this purpose. Just make sure to send it early enough to arrive by 7:00 p.m. on the day of the election, otherwise:

### 2) Deliver to the County Election Office

Beginning 33 days before the election, voters may drop off early ballots to one of the County Election Offices listed below:



**Downtown Phoenix**  
111 S 3rd Ave  
510 S 3rd Ave

**Southeast Valley**  
222 E Javelina, Mesa

### 3) Turn in at a Polling Place

On the day of the election, voters can drop off early ballots at any polling place within Maricopa County by 7:00 p.m.

## SECURITY MEASURES:

Every early ballot that is cast must be sealed within its special envelope and signed on the outside. The signatures on the outside of the early ballot envelopes are compared against the signature on the voter registration form for each and every voter. Every early ballot is verified by County Election workers trained in signature analysis by the FBI.

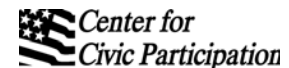
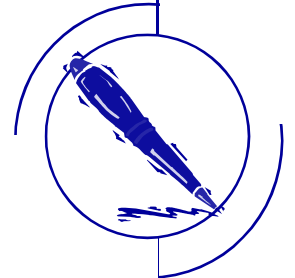
## SO WHY VOTE BY MAIL?

Early ballots give voters a safe and convenient way to participate in elections while eliminating many of the difficulties that may arise on election day and make it more difficult or impossible for some voters to get to the polls. Voting by mail also gives voters the opportunity to spend more time considering the choices available to them and to feel comfortable with their choices – so give it a try!

For more information on this and other voting guides, please contact:

**Alberto Olivas**, Director  
Voter Outreach Programs  
Maricopa Community Colleges-Center  
for Civic Participation  
145 N Centennial Way Suite 207  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
Phone: 480.461.4160  
Email: [alberto.olivas@mccmail.maricopa.edu](mailto:alberto.olivas@mccmail.maricopa.edu)

# A Citizens' Guide to Early Voting



Produced by the Maricopa Community Colleges  
Center for Civic Participation  
and the Maricopa County Elections Department

## DEFINITION:

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Early ballots, mail-in ballots, absentee ballots, ballots-by-mail... these are all just different ways of referring to the same thing – an official ballot for any given election that can be sent to a voter in the mail before the date of an election. The ballot can be mailed in or dropped off in person (see “Casting Mail Ballots” below).

## ELIGIBILITY:

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Any registered voter may request an early ballot and vote by mail. There is no need to indicate any reason or justification for doing so.

## EARLY BALLOT TIMEFRAME:

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### Ballot Requests:

Voters can request mail-in ballots as early as 93 days prior to an election, and up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday before the election.

- NOTE: Friday, March 3, 2006 is the last day to request early ballots for the March 14, 2006 local elections.**

### Ballot Submittal & Deadline:

There is no official “cut off” date for mailing in ballots, but they will only be counted if received by the County Elections office by 7 p.m. on Election Day, regardless of the postmark. Ballots can also be dropped off in person (see “Casting Mail Ballots” below).

## HOW TO REQUEST AN EARLY BALLOT:

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Early ballots can be requested a number of ways:



**BY PHONE:** Call the Maricopa County Elections office at (602) 506-1511. (see note\*)



**ONLINE:** Go to <http://recorder.maricopa.gov/earlyvoteballot/> (see note\*)

***\*NOTE:** These options are only available if the ballot is to be sent to the residence address listed on the voter registration form. If a different mailing address was provided on your registration form then that is the address to which the early ballot will be mailed. If the ballot needs to be sent to a location other than that which is provided on your voter registration form, the voter must submit a written request for an early ballot.*



**IN WRITING:** Voters can mail-in an early ballot request, but it must contain, at a minimum:

1. Full Name
2. Address
3. Birth Date
4. Signature
5. Election for which ballot is requested
6. Primary Elections Only—Independent Voters & Members of Non-Recognized Parties ONLY must specify the party ballot they wish to receive (See “Arizona’s Open Primary Law & Early Ballots”).

Early Ballot Request cards are available from the County Elections office in bulk and cost \$4 per packet of 250 cards as of 9/15/05. However, use of these cards is optional - any written request that contains the information listed above is a valid request.

**BY FAX:** Send a fax request to Maricopa County Elections at (602) 506-3069.

Voters can fax-in an early ballot request, as long as it contains the information listed above, including a signature.

## ARIZONA’S OPEN PRIMARY LAW & EARLY BALLOTS:

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Primary elections are elections held by members of political parties to choose candidates to represent each party on the general election ballot. In the past, only members of any given party could vote in that party’s primary election. Voters that didn’t belong to a party holding a primary election were therefore not eligible to vote in primary elections.

Arizona’s Open Primary Law allows all voters to participate in state primary elections, whether or not they belong to any of the parties that will be holding primary elections. This includes voters that are not members of any political party (unaffiliated voters) as well as voters that are members of political parties that are not recognized in Arizona. These voters may vote at the polls or may request an early ballot for the primary election. However, they **MUST** specify a political party for which ballot he or she wishes to vote in the primary election. This does not have the effect of changing that voter’s party affiliation.