



Department of the Secretary of State

Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions

Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

Julie L. Flynn
Deputy Secretary of State

To: Municipal Clerk
From: Heidi Peckham, Director of Elections
Re: Semi-Open Primary Memo
Date: December 5, 2023

Effective January 1, 2024, Maine will be transitioning from a closed primary system to a semi-open primary. Unenrolled voters will now be able to participate in primaries including the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary and the June 11, 2024 State Primary.

- 1. Unenrolled Voters - Voters who are not enrolled in a party may choose to vote in one party's primary.
2. Voters enrolled in a party - may only vote in that party's primary.

Each qualified party had until October 1, 2023 to file a certification with the Secretary of State to participate in the Presidential Primary. The Democratic and Republican parties are the only parties that will hold primaries on March 5th. The Green Independent and Libertarian parties will not be participating.

The chart below illustrates the ballot options for the Presidential Primary based on voter enrollment:

Table with 2 columns: Voter Enrollment Status, Ballot Options. Rows include Unenrolled, Democratic, Green Independent, Libertarian, Republican, and No Labels (qualifying).

Revised Absentee Ballot Request Application (illustration on reverse)

The Absentee Ballot Request Application has been updated with the following changes to accommodate the new semi-open primary requirements:

- 1. An "Enrollment" box has been added to the upper right box.
2. A "Ballot requested" question (#5) has been added for unenrolled voters to select a primary ballot.

Continued on reverse

Two Updates to the Application for Absentee Ballot



Application for Absentee Ballot March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary

Absentee ballots will become available and will be provided to voters beginning in early February.

An absentee ballot request must be received by the Municipal Clerk by the close of business on Thursday, February 29, 2024, unless special circumstances exist.

Voted absentee ballots must be received by the Municipal Clerk by 8 p.m. on March 5, 2024.

Application Received
(Date/Time)

Ballot Sent/Delivered
(Date/Time)

Enrollment

1. Full Name of Registered Voter Requesting the Ballot _____
2. Residence Address of Voter _____
(Street Address) (Municipality)
3. Voter's Date of Birth / / - / / - / / - / /
m m d d y y y y
4. Contact Information – Please complete. Clerk will use only to notify the voter if there is a problem with the application or ballot.
Daytime Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

5. **Ballot requested:** A voter not enrolled in a political party may participate in a party's primary without enrolling in the party. An unenrolled voter may vote in only one primary election. Indicate the party for which you want to receive a ballot. NOTE: A voter enrolled in a party will receive the ballot for that party regardless of the party indicated below.

Democratic Republican

6. Method of Delivery of Ballot to the Voter
 - a. Issued to Voter (Application Required if voter will vote **Outside the Municipal Clerk's Presence**)
 - b. By Mail to this Address _____
 - c. By Immediate Family Member of Voter
Designated Here _____
(Name) (Relationship to Voter)
 - d. By this 3rd Person (Designated by the Voter) _____
(Name) (Telephone #)
7. Signature of Voter OR Immediate Family Member of Voter _____ Date _____

Note: If an immediate family member of the voter is completing this application, the relationship to the voter must be provided in 6(c) above. The absentee ballot can be delivered to the immediate family member in person or mailed to the address provided in 6(b).

8. Signature of Immediate Family Member Returning the Ballot _____
Relationship to Voter _____
(Complete Section #8 Only if Ballot was Delivered to the Voter or a Different Immediate Family Member of the Voter)

AIDE CERTIFICATE: (Must be Completed if Applicant was Assisted as Designated Below)

If the voter received assistance in reading and/or signing this application, the person who assisted the voter must complete and sign this certificate.

I helped this voter: read the application sign the application read and sign the application

Signature of Aide _____ Printed Name of Aide _____

How to Process Absentee Ballot Requests for the Semi-Open Presidential Primary

1. Set up a hard copy “Unenrolled Absentee Request File”
2. Search the voter in CVR to verify that the voter is registered in your municipality.
3. If the voter is enrolled in a qualified or qualifying party, enter the party abbreviation in the new upper right “Enrollment” box on the application.
4. If the voter is unenrolled, enter a “U” in the new upper right “Enrollment” box on the application.
5. Enter all requests in CVR as usual, except for the party ballot selection, which is not available in the current CVR.
6. File all the requests from unenrolled voters into the “Unenrolled Absentee Request File”
Note: This file will segregate the unenrolled voter applications, so that you can enter the party selection ballot once the new CVR is implemented. The new CVR will have a field for the ballot selection.

Reminder: Voters Enrolled in a Party

- Voters that are enrolled in a qualified party participating in the primary must be provided with that party ballot, even if the voter selects a different ballot on the absentee ballot request. Only unenrolled voters can participate in a party’s primary without enrolling in the party.
- You will undoubtedly receive absentee applications from voters enrolled in a party that will try to select a different ballot in Question #5. Disregard the ballot selected in Question #5 and enter the voter’s current enrollment in the “Enrollment” box. This will help prevent errors when ballots are provided to voters.
- Voters enrolled in a qualifying party (Forward, No Labels or People’s) do not have an option to select a ballot. They must either enroll in a qualified party or become unenrolled to participate in the primary.
- Voters that change or withdraw their enrollment within 15 days of the election are ineligible to participate in the primary.

Reminder: A voter must remain in a party for 3 months before changing parties or unenrolling. They must do so at least 15 days before the primary in order to be eligible to vote in the primary.

If you have any questions about this new process, please contact the Elections Division.