

Important Changes to Arkansas Election Laws

Arkansas voters need to be aware of two significant changes to voting laws which were adopted during the 2021 Legislative Session:

1) PHOTO ID REQUIRED: All voters, including those voting absentee, will be required to submit a government-issued photo I.D. (or enclose a copy with their absentee ballots) in order for their ballots to be counted. (There is an exception for absentee voters residing in licensed long term care facilities.) The Optional Verification of Identity previously available on absentee voter statements and provisional ballot envelopes **will no longer be available.**

- Some examples of accepted forms of photo ID include: an **ARKANSAS** Driver's License or non-driving photo ID (Out of state drivers' licenses **do not** qualify), a U.S. passport, U.S. military ID, an Arkansas concealed handgun carry license, or a student or employee ID from an accredited post-secondary educational institution in the State of Arkansas.
- Voters not providing an accepted form of photo ID may vote a provisional ballot, and will have until 12:00 noon on the first Monday following election day to submit their photo ID to the County Clerk's Office or Election Commission office in order for their provisional ballot to be counted.
- Voters who are **UNABLE** to provide an accepted form of photo ID may obtain one from the County Clerk's office at no cost to the voter.
 - The voter must submit an application which includes a sworn statement that they have no other accepted form of photo ID, along with documentation verifying their full legal name and date of birth, and residential address.
- The County Clerk's office will issue a "Voter Verification Card" for use **ONLY** for voting purposes. The application and instructions for applying for the County Clerk-issued Voter Verification Card can be found at: vote.bentoncountyar.gov

2) ABSENTEE BALLOT DEADLINES HAVE CHANGED:

- **The last day to obtain** an absentee ballot, either in person or by bearer, will be the close of business on the last Friday before election day. (Deadline was previously the day before Election Day)
- **The last day to return** an absentee ballot, either in person or by bearer, will be the close of business on the last Friday before election day. (Deadline was previously close of business on the day before election day for voters returning their own ballots, and 7:30 p.m. on election day for those being returned by bearer)
- Deadlines applying to absentee ballots sent or returned via U.S. mail remain unchanged – the last day to mail an absentee ballot to a voter is Tuesday one week prior to election day, and ballots returned by mail must be received by the County Clerk no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.
- An exception is still available for persons who are hospitalized on Election Day to obtain an absentee ballot.

Both of these laws are currently undergoing legal challenges, so stay tuned for the latest updates at our voting information website at: VOTE.BENTONCOUNTYAR.GOV, where you can also find information on upcoming elections, voter registration, absentee ballot information, and candidate filings.