

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, which they mail or deliver in person to their county board of elections. They may also complete the form in an online portal by visiting the State Board of Elections website. The ballot is then mailed to the voter with 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 required to include a copy of an acceptable photo ID or complete a *Photo ID Exception* form when they vote by mail.

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 sign your name. Two witnesses must be present when you mark your absentee ballot (but should not see how you vote) and must complete and 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.

Are there restrictions on care facility staff assisting with absentee voting?

If a resident requests assistance due to a disability, care facility staff may provide assistance, although they are not required to do so. If a resident is not seeking assistance due to a disability, however, it is illegal for the owner, manager, director, or employee of care facilities to complete or submit absentee request forms or to assist residents with voting mail-in absentee ballots.



COVID-19 Precautions

MAT visits must be conducted in accordance with the visitation policy for each facility. This includes following facility guidance related to COVID-19 precautions such as wearing personal protective equipment.

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