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May 26 Update on the June 2 Primary Election in Delaware County

Delaware County continues to prepare for the June 2 primary election, including putting safety precautions into place for in-person voting and sending absentee and mail-in ballots to residents.

As of May 26, the County has approved approximately 76,000 absentee or mail-in ballots, all of which will have been mailed out by May 27. Currently, there are approximately 6,000 applications pending. Pending applications, if approved will be mailed by May 28.

Ballots for all applications received by May 1 have been sent. Ballots for paper applications received by May 16 and online applications received by May 20 will have been sent by May 27.

You can check the status of your ballot here: www.votespa.com. Residents are asked to complete and return their ballot as soon as possible.

If you receive your ballot too close to the June 2 election to be confident that it can be returned by mail and received by the County by June 2, you will have several options to have your vote counted:

- Return your completed ballot in the sealed return envelope in person to the Delaware County Government Center (201 W. Front St., Media, PA) Monday- Friday from 8:30a.m to 4:30p.m., Saturday from 9:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. and on Election Day from 8:30a.m. to 8:00p.m.

- Return your completed ballot in the sealed return envelope to any polling location on Election Day where there will be drop boxes while the polling locations are open. These drop boxes will be positioned just inside the polling location, where they are under observation by the poll workers. However, voters seeking to drop their mail in ballots will not be required to check in with the workers. Residents are asked to observe social distancing when dropping off a ballot to a polling location.

- The County is planning to have a mobile drop box visit retirement communities on Election Day to collect ballots that were received too late to be returned by mail for those residents who cannot leave the facility. The County has been reaching out to senior communities to determine where this mobile drop box would be helpful for residents on lockdown. Details on that will be provided once they are confirmed.

- Anyone who requested an absentee or mail-in ballot and did not receive it in time or who does not want to return it in one of the ways noted above, can go to their polling location and ask for a provisional ballot. The ballot will be put in an envelope and then counted when the County Election Bureau confirms that the requested mail-in ballot was not returned. Since all ballots are being counted centrally, provisional ballots will likely be included in the initial results.

The Delaware County Election Bureau is updating the FAQ's on its website to provide additional information on how voters who have problems with their ballots (e.g., received a damaged ballot or a ballot for the wrong party or precinct) can seek an expedited corrected ballot. An updated FAQ will be posted this week.

Delaware County is currently projecting over 85,000 absentee or mail-in ballots. To put this number into context, prior to this year, the most mail-in ballots ever previously processed was approximately 25,000 for the 2008 general election, and the projected number of mail-ins for this year's primary from the Secretary of State's office at the start of the year was 40,000.

As a result of the passing of Act 77 last year, which made mail-in balloting far more accessible, as well as the emphasis on mail-in voting due to COVID-19 concerns, the unprecedented number of mail-in ballots being requested for this year's primary has created extraordinary challenges for elections offices across the state, including in Delaware County. Additionally, given that the state courts did not resolve ballot challenges and finalize the County's ballot until April 28, the County was not able to send mail in ballots until May 4. This compressed the timeframe to process this historically high number of mail-in ballots, all in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating further staffing and logistical challenges. The Election Board was simultaneously consolidating polling locations and recruiting poll workers to fill in for long time election board members who decided not to work this election due to their elevated risk from COVID-19.

Delaware County is incredibly grateful to the many volunteers and County employees who are working outside of their own departments to work overtime in order to get out the mail in ballots. Over Memorial Day weekend and for the next several days, 40 volunteers and 27 temporary employees working in shifts to maintain social distancing are working extended hours to keep up with the demand for ballots by mail.

Mail-in ballots are just one option to vote. Delaware County will continue to have in person voting on Election Day, June 2, between 7:00a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, polling locations have been consolidated. The list of consolidated polling locations can be found online and registered voters whose polling location has changed are being notified by mail. Information on polling locations can be found here: www.delcopa.gov/departments/votingmachines.html.

If you are not sure of your voting precinct, you can check your new voting location by using your address here: https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx

Delaware County is providing personal protection equipment for every polling location to ensure the safety of both poll workers and the members of the public who are exercising their right to vote. The personal protection equipment includes face masks, gloves and sanitation kits provided by the state for poll workers. The County is also providing table shields, single use pens, and face shields for poll workers. The local election boards will implement procedures to maintain social distancing while signing-in and while voting. Poll workers will be wearing masks to protect voters and other poll workers. All voters who choose to vote in person are urged to wear face masks and maintain social distancing inside the polling locations in order to protect the poll workers and fellow voters. This will help reduce anxiety for everyone who is participating in our democratic process.

Poll workers are being contacted this week both by phone and by mail with details on online training. People who have volunteered to help fill vacancies will also be contacted.

Ways to Vote in the 2020 Primary Election in Delaware County

Vote in Person:

Vote in person on Election Day between 7am-8pm.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, polling locations have been consolidated. The list of consolidated polling locations can be found here: www.delcopa.gov/departments/votingmachines.html

Mail in and Absentee Ballots:

Return your completed ballot in the sealed return envelope in person to the Delaware County Government Center
(201 W. Front St., Media, PA)
Monday- Friday from 8:30a.m to 4:30p.m., Saturday from 9:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. and on Election Day from 8:30a.m. to 8:00p.m.
Ballots must be received BY June 2.

Return your completed ballot in the sealed return envelope to any polling location on Election Day where there will be drop boxes inside of the polling locations. Residents are asked to observe social distancing when dropping off a ballot to a polling location.

The County is planning to have a mobile drop box visit retirement communities on Election Day to collect ballots that were received too late to be returned by mail for those residents who cannot leave the facility. Details will be released shortly.

Anyone who requested an absentee or mail-in ballot and did not receive it in time or who does not want to return it in one of the ways noted above, can go to their polling location and ask for a provisional ballot.