

MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAM
OFFICIAL TRAINING MANUAL



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board *of* Elections

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1 INTRODUCTION TO MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

A Multipartisan Assistance Team, or MAT, is a team of voters who represent different political parties in each county who assist patients and residents in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and adult care homes (“facilities”) with absentee voting. MATs can help voters in facilities with disabilities or who otherwise require assistance in requesting or casting a mail-in absentee ballot, but who do not have a family member or guardian available to provide assistance. The team provides a public service to these voters by giving them lawfully authorized, neutral assistance with the absentee voting process.

These training materials include the laws (enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly) and the Administrative Rules (adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Elections) that govern the conduct of MATs. You must become familiar with these legal authorities as you prepare to address issues associated with mail-in absentee voting, learn the role of the MATs, and understand the requirements for certification for MAT membership. Sample forms associated with MAT activity are provided in the appendices at the end of these materials.

The materials in this manual review how a person may become certified as a MAT member and what that service entails. These training materials are provided to address practical concerns and to summarize the applicable laws and rules. MAT members are also required to be familiar with and comply with the actual laws and rules, which are found in the appendices at the end of this document.

These training materials address practical concerns about how to interact with voters and other persons while representing the county board of elections office. Team members must conduct themselves with impartiality and professionalism. Although team members belong to different political affiliations, their role is not to *promote* those affiliations. Rather, it is essential that members of diverse political affiliations demonstrate to the voter(s) that they are working cooperatively to deliver service that is free of bias with respect to candidates or issues. Team members are not expected to be experts on all aspects of elections. If you don’t know an answer to a question, don’t guess. Refer the question to your local county board of elections office.

1.1 ELECTION TERMINOLOGY

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|---|--|
| Absentee Ballot Request Form | A form produced by the North Carolina State Board of Elections (State Board) and made available to voters to request a mail-in absentee ballot. This form must be signed by the voter or the voter’s near relative or verifiable legal guardian. |
| Absentee Application and Certificate | The form on the ballot container-return envelope that a voter, the voter’s witnesses, and anyone assisting the voter must sign when returning an absentee ballot to the board of elections. |
| Ballot container-return envelope | Envelope provided to the voter (with a mail-in absentee ballot and instructions) for returning the voted ballot to the board of elections. On the outside of the envelope is an application and certification to be completed by the voter. Spaces are included for the voter’s signature and information, and for the signatures of two required witnesses. |
| County Board of Elections | A five-member board responsible for administering elections in a county. Each county board of elections has an office managed by a director. |
| Covered Facility | A facility, including a hospital, clinic, nursing home, or adult care home, that provides residential or in-patient healthcare in the state that is licensed or operated pursuant to Chapter 122C, Chapter 131D, or Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, or by the federal government or an Indian tribe. |
| MAT | Multipartisan Assistance Team. |
| Mail-in Absentee Ballot | A ballot that is requested before an election, is delivered to the voter by mail, and which must be marked, witnessed, and returned on or before election day. |
| Near Relative | Spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild. |
| One-Stop Early Voting Site | A voting site at which voters may vote in person during a designated period before an election. |
| Political Party | A political party recognized by the State of North Carolina. Currently, five political parties are recognized: Constitution Party, Democratic Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party and Republican Party. The two largest political parties, as measured by the number of registered voters, are currently the Republican and Democratic parties. |
| Team member | Member of a Multipartisan Assistance Team. |
| Verifiable Legal Guardian | A person who has been legally designated as the guardian of a voter under Chapter 35A of the General Statutes. It is possible that a corporation (organization or institution) may be a verifiable legal guardian of a voter, in which case certain persons may be designated to act on behalf of the corporation as verifiable legal guardians. |
| Voter Affiliation | Typically, voter affiliation refers to the political party that the voter chooses to affiliate with through voter registration. However, a voter may choose to register without being affiliated with a political party. In such a case, the voter is referred to as “unaffiliated.” |

1.2 PURPOSE OF MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

08 NCAC 16 .0101 MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

(a) Each county board of elections shall assemble and provide training to a Multipartisan Assistance Team ("Team") to respond to requests for voter assistance for any primary, general election, referendum, or special election. (b) For every primary or election listed in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, the Team shall be made available in each county to assist patients and residents in every covered facility in that county in requesting or casting absentee ballots as provided by Article 21 of Subchapter III of Chapter 163A of the General Statutes. For the purposes of this Chapter, a "covered facility" is any facility that provides residential or in-patient healthcare in the State that is licensed or operated pursuant to Chapter 122C, Chapter 131D, or Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, including, for example, a hospital, clinic, nursing home, or adult care home; or by the federal government or an Indian tribe. (c) The Team may assist voters in requesting mail-in absentee ballots, serve as witnesses to mail-in absentee voting, and otherwise assist in the process of mail-in absentee voting as provided by Article 21 of Subchapter III of Chapter 163A of the General Statutes. Upon the voter's request, the Team shall assist voters who have affirmatively communicated, either verbally or nonverbally, a request for assistance.

Residents or patients of facilities are sometimes limited in mobility and may have trouble reading or writing or may have other impairments due to aging or other conditions. Some may require assistance with matters as simple as requesting an absentee ballot, marking an absentee ballot (the act of which must be witnessed) or returning the voted ballot by mail.

By law, voters in need of assistance may request help from a near relative or guardian. Persons who do not have a near relative or legal guardian available are legally permitted to choose someone else to assist them, as long as the other person is not prohibited from assisting the voter. People who fall within certain categories by profession or political activity are legally prohibited from providing voting assistance with absentee ballots:

- For voters who are patients or residents of a facility, assistance is prohibited by:
 1. an owner, manager, director, or employee of that facility;
 2. an individual who holds any federal, state or local elective office; and
 3. an individual who holds office in a state, congressional district, county or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party.
- For all voters, assistance is prohibited by a candidate for office, unless the candidate is the voter's near relative.

Unfortunately, residents of facilities often find their circle of acquaintances limited by circumstance. Their most common contacts may be with the employees of the facility where they reside. These employees, however, are not authorized to assist patients and residents of facilities with voting absentee ballots. In recognition of the difficulty with voting that facility residents may face, the North Carolina General Assembly has authorized the creation of Multipartisan Assistance Teams [MATs] in each county. These teams may be made up of members, employees, or volunteers of a county board of elections. MATs serve a critical function by providing all qualified persons with the opportunity to vote, including voters who are elderly or who face limitations in mobility, communication, or other functions.

2 ESTABLISHING MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

08 NCAC 16 .0102 TEAM MEMBERS

(a) For purposes of this Chapter, the county board of elections shall compose the Team as follows: (1) At least two registered voters shall be on each Team. The two political parties having the highest number of affiliated voters in the State, as reflected by the registration statistics published by the State Board on January 1 of the current year, shall each be represented by at least one Team member of the party's affiliation. If the Team consists of more than two members, voters who are unaffiliated or affiliated with other political parties recognized by the State of North Carolina may be Team members. (2) If a county board of elections finds an insufficient number of voters available to comply with Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule, the county board, upon a unanimous vote of all of its sworn members, may appoint an unaffiliated Team member to serve instead of the Team member representing one of the two political parties as set out in Subparagraph (a)(1) of this Rule. (b) Team members shall not be paid or provided travel reimbursement by any political party or candidate for work as Team members.

08 NCAC 16 .0105 REMOVAL OF TEAM MEMBERS

(a) The County Board of Elections shall revoke, pursuant to G.S. 163-33(2), a Team member's certification granted under Rule .0103 of this Section for the following reasons: (1) violation of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes or one of the Rules contained in this Section; (2) political partisan activity in performing Team duties; (3) failure to respond to directives from the County Board of Elections; or (4) failure to maintain certification pursuant to Rule .0103 of this Section. (b) If the County Board of Elections revokes a Team member's certification, the person shall not participate on the Team.

2.1 APPOINTMENT OF MAT MEMBERS

- MAT members may be recruited by county board directors and staff but must be appointed by the county board of elections.
- The team must be represented by *at least* two members.
- Ideally, one team member should be a registered Democrat and the other team member should be registered as a Republican.
- If a team consists of more than two members, the additional team members may be unaffiliated with a political party or be a member of another recognized political party (Constitution, Greene or Libertarian).
- If a county board of elections is unable to establish a 2-person team with both a Democrat and Republican team member, a person who is unaffiliated may serve, provided they are selected by a unanimous vote of the county board of elections.

2.2 PAYMENT OF MAT MEMBERS

A county board of elections may compensate team members for their time or provide reimbursement for travel or other expenses. MAT members may not be paid or compensated by political parties or candidates.

3 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

08 NCAC 16 .0103 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF TEAM MEMBERS

(a) The State Board of Elections shall provide uniform training materials to each County Board of Elections. The training shall review the Rules of this Chapter as well as G.S. 163-226.3, 163-230.1, 163-230.2, and 163-231, including the statutory deadlines associated with absentee voting, and provide information to help Team members interact with persons who have disabilities. Every Team member shall confirm in writing that he or she has reviewed and understands the content of the training. Each County Board of Elections shall administer training for every Team member as directed by the State Board of Elections in this Rule.

(b) Every Team member shall sign a declaration provided by the County Board of Elections that includes the following statements: (1) the Team member will provide voter assistance in a nonpartisan manner, will not attempt to influence any decision of a voter being provided any type of assistance, and will not wear any clothing or pins with political messages while assisting voters; (2) the Team member will adhere to the rules of this Chapter and the General Statutes listed in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, and the Team member will refer to County Board of Elections staff in the event the Team member is unable to answer any question; (3) the Team member will not use, reproduce, or communicate to anyone other than County Board of Elections staff any information or document handled by the Team member, including the voting choices of a voter, a voter's date of birth, or a voter's signature; (4) the Team member will not accept payment or travel reimbursement by any political party or candidate for work as a Team member; (5) the Team member does not hold any elective office under the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of this State; (6) the Team member is not a candidate for nomination or election, as defined in G.S. 163-278.6(4), for any office listed in Subparagraph (b)(5) of this Rule; (7) the Team member does not hold any office in a State, congressional district, or county political party or organization, and is not a manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party. For the purposes of this Subparagraph, a delegate to a convention shall not be considered a party office; (8) the Team member is not an owner, manager, director, or employee of a covered facility where a resident requests assistance; (9) the Team member is not a registered sex offender in North Carolina or any other state; and (10) the Team member understands that submitting fraudulent or falsely completed declarations and documents associated with absentee voting is a Class I felony under Chapter 163 of the General Statutes, and that submitting or assisting in preparing a fraudulent or falsely completed document associated with absentee voting may constitute other criminal violations.

(c) Upon completion of training and the declaration, the County Board of Elections shall certify the Team member. Only certified Team members may provide assistance to voters. The certification shall be good for two years, or until the State Board of Elections requires additional training, whichever occurs first.

3.1 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Prior to certification, each recruited team member must receive training on the following:

- Rules for Multipartisan Assistance Teams
- Method of requesting an absentee ballot
- Issuance of absentee ballots and the absentee application
- Certain felony acts related to absentee voting
- Voting an absentee ballot and transmitting them to the county board of elections

3.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION: FOLLOWING THE LAW

In order to be a MAT member or participate in MAT duties, team members must be familiar with, understand, and act pursuant to the following:

- absentee voting election laws;
- that submitting fraudulent or falsely completed declarations and documents associated with absentee voting is a Class I felony under Chapter 163 of the General Statutes; and
- that submitting, or assisting in preparation of, a fraudulent or falsely completed document associated with absentee voting may constitute other criminal violations.

3.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Further, team members must follow these general guidelines when engaging in MAT activities:

- carry out the duties of the MAT objectively and do not attempt to influence any decision of a voter to whom you are providing MAT assistance;
- do not wear any clothing or pins with political messages while assisting voters;
- refer any question that you are unable to answer to county board of elections staff;
- do not use, reproduce, or communicate to unauthorized persons any confidential information or document, including the voting choices of a voter and confidential voter registration information;
- do not accept payment or travel reimbursement by any political party or candidate for work as a MAT member

3.4 REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION: PROHIBITIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Lastly, team members are prohibited from the following:

- holding any elective office under the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of this State;
- being a candidate for nomination or election;
- holding any office in a State, congressional district, or county political party or organization
- serving as a manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party;
- being an owner, manager, director, or employee of a covered facility where a resident requests assistance;
- being a registered sex offender in this State or any other state

3.5 OFFICIAL CERTIFICATION

Once training is completed, team members must confirm in writing that they have reviewed and understand the content of the training. The member must sign the *Multipartisan Assistance Team Member Declaration* that serves to confirm they have received MAT training and to acknowledge the MAT certification requirements. Upon completion of training and the declaration, the County Board of Elections shall certify the team member and provide documentation of this certification. The certification will be good for two years (or until new training materials are provided by the State Board, whichever occurs first) and is subject to the provisions of NCAC 16 .0105 ("Removal of Team Members"). If applicable laws or rules change, Team members will be contacted by the relevant county board of elections office and provided updated information.

3.6 REVOCATION OF MAT MEMBER CERTIFICATION

The certification of a MAT member may be revoked for any of the following:

- a violation of North Carolina elections laws
- a violation of the administrative rules established for multipartisan assistance teams
- engaging in partisan political activity while performing MAT duties
- failure to respond to directives from the County Board of Elections
- failure to maintain MAT certification

4 ABSENTEE VOTING AND VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

4.1 BALLOT AVAILABILITY

Absentee ballots will be available according to the following schedule based on the type of election event (primary, second primary, general election, runoff or special election). Once absentee ballots become available, county boards of elections will issue absentee ballots as soon as practical.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Even-Year Elections | Statewide Primary | 50 days before date of the election |
| | Second Primary | May be no later than 45 days, before date of the election if federal contest is on the ballot As soon as practical if no federal contest requires a second primary |
| | Statewide General Election | 60 days before date of the election |
| Odd-Year Elections | Municipal Election | 30 days before date of the election |
| | County Bond Election | 50 days before date of the election |
| | School Board Election | 50 days before date of the election |

4.2 ABSENTEE DEADLINES

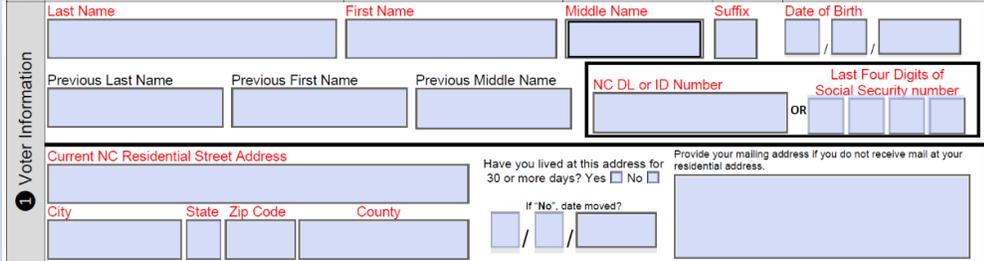
The following are deadlines applicable to absentee voting and voter registration activity.

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Voter Registration | Date/time to register to vote or update a voter's name, address, or party affiliation. A voter's name and address may still be updated after the deadline using the <i>State Absentee Ballot Request Form</i> . | 25 days before Election Day |
| Absentee Request | Date/time by which a request for an absentee ballot must be received by the county board of elections. | By 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before Election Day |
| Ballot Return | Date/time by which absentee ballots may be personally delivered to the county board of elections office. | No later than 5:00 pm on Election Day. |
| Ballot Return | Date/time by which mailed voter absentee ballots must be received by the county board of elections office. | Ballots that are postmarked by the day of the election and are received by the county board of elections no later than 5:00pm three days after the election. |

Exceptions: Under certain circumstances federal law may intervene to overcome statutorily established deadlines.

4.3 REQUESTING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

A voter must use the **State Absentee Ballot Request Form (Appendix A)** to request an absentee ballot. The request form is designed to capture the following information for a voter:

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Voter Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name - the voter’s name and residential address (always required) • Date of birth - the voter’s date of birth (always required) • Identification number - one of the following: (1) the voter’s driver license number; (2) the voter’s DMV-issued special identification card for nonoperators number, or (3) the last four digits of the voter’s social security number. (always required)  |
| Absentee Voting Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Event Date - the date of the election for which the absentee ballot is being requested. (always required) <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Select the date of the election event for which a by-mail absentee ballot is being requested. You may only request one election per request form.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">▶ Election Date (select one)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> 3/3/2020 <input type="checkbox"/> 11/3/2020</p> </div> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">A voter may only request an absentee ballot for a single election, unless the voter qualifies for an exception to due sickness or physical disability that is expected to last for the remainder of the calendar year. With this exception, the voter may request a ballot for all elections in which the voter is eligible for the remainder of the year.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Check if you would like to request absentee ballots for all elections held during this calendar year in which you are eligible to vote due to <u>continued or expected illness or disability</u>.</p> </div> |

- **Absentee Mailing Address** - the address where the ballot should be mailed (always required)

Absentee Mailing Address (where you would like your ballot sent)

Mailing City State Zip Code

_____ _____ _____

Absentee
Voting
Information
(cont.)

- **Partisan Primary Preference** - the voter’s partisan ballot choice, if the voter is *Unaffiliated* and the absentee ballot is for a partisan primary. **Note:** Unaffiliated voters may not select a primary ballot for the Green Party or Constitution Party.

If you are requesting an absentee ballot for a *partisan primary*, and you are not affiliated with a political party (*Unaffiliated*), select a primary ballot preference.

Democratic
 Libertarian
 Republican
 Nonpartisan

- **Near Relative Request** - the name, address and relationship to the voter of a near relative or verifiable legal guardian if that individual is requesting a ballot on a voter’s behalf.

Near Relative or Legal Guardian Request: If you are requesting an absentee ballot on behalf of a near relative or for someone for whom you are the legal guardian, provide your name, relationship to the voter (see instructions), address and contact information.

Near Relative or Legal Guardian's Name Your Relationship to Voter

_____ _____

Address City State Zip Code

_____ _____ _____ _____

Please provide your email address or a telephone number in case we have a question concerning this request.

- **Voter Assistance** - the name and address of another person who has given assistance to the voter in completing the absentee request if a voter is in need of assistance completing the written request form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write and there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist the voter.

Voter Assistance: If the voter received assistance completing this form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write and no near relative or legal guardian of the voter was available, list the name and address of the person assisting the voter with completing this form.

Voter Assistant's Name

Address City State Zip Code

- **Request for MAT Visit** - the name and address of the hospital, clinic, nursing home or other healthcare facility if the voter is a patient and wants assistance with voting. This is a request for a MAT visit.

If **Yes**, what is the name and address of the hospital or facility?

Requestor's Signature

- **Signature** - the signature of the voter or of the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian if that individual is making the request (always required)

If an absentee request form does not contain the fields that are *always required*, the request form is invalid and the county board of elections may not issue a ballot to the voter. The county board must contact the voter or the person requesting a ballot on behalf of the voter to let the voter know of their options, which may be different depending on how close to the absentee request deadline the request form is received.

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| <p>Acceptable method to transmit the request form</p> | <p>The absentee request form may only be <u>mailed</u> or <u>delivered in-person</u> to a county board of elections.</p> |
| <p>Unacceptable method to transmit the request form</p> | <p>The form may <u>not</u> be transmitted electronically (fax, email, etc.).</p> <p><i>Note: This is not a policy created by the State Board, but rather this is dictated by a new state law which provides that an absentee request form is not valid if it is returned to the county board by someone other than the voter, the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, or a MAT member, the US Postal Service, or a designated delivery service (DHL, FedEx, or UPS). Because of this requirement, there is no way for the State Board or a county board to determine who returned the request form if it is transmitted by email or fax.</i></p> |

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| <p>Who can deliver the request form to the board of elections</p> | <p>The form may only be transmitted to a county board of elections by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the voter ▪ the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, a member of a multipartisan assistance team ▪ the US Postal Service, or ▪ a designated delivery service (DHL, FedEx, or UPS). |
| <p>Who cannot deliver the request form</p> | <p>The form may not be transmitted to a county board of elections by anyone other than a person identified above, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ neighbor ▪ friend ▪ candidate ▪ voter drive organizer |

4.4 ISSUANCE OF ABSENTEE BALLOT AND APPLICATION

Upon the timely receipt of a valid absentee request, the county board of elections shall, within the time set out by law, mail the following balloting materials to the voter:

1. Official Ballot - the voter's appropriate ballot style.
2. Civilian Absentee Voting Instructions
3. Ballot Container-Return Envelope – this is the envelope the voter will use to return the absentee ballot to the county board of elections. The Absentee Application and Certificate is printed on the container-return envelope. See **Appendix C**.

4.5 RETURNING THE ABSENTEE BALLOT AND APPLICATION

The voter must return the absentee ballot according to the absentee instructions. The voter must mark the ballot and seal it inside the ballot container-return envelope. This must be done in the presence of two witnesses who are at least 18 years of age and who are not otherwise disqualified from serving as a witness, or in the presence of one witness who is a notary. The voter must then return the container-return envelope to the county board with the completed absentee application and voted ballot.

In order for their ballot to be counted, voters must ensure their balloting materials meet the following requirements:

1. The ballot must be sealed in the ballot envelope.
2. The voter must sign the Voter's Certification on the back of the ballot envelope.
3. The voter's absentee witness(es) must provide their address and sign the Witnesses' Certification on the back of the ballot envelope. Failure to list a ZIP code does not invalidate the application and certificate.
4. If a person assisted the voter with marking the absentee ballot or will be responsible for mailing the absentee ballot, that person must provide their address and sign the Voter Assistant Certification on the back of the ballot envelope.

5. All ballots issued must be transmitted as follows:
 - mailed to the county board of elections office by the voter or the voter’s near relative or legal guardian, except if the voter has a disability.
 - if the voter has a disability, mailed to the county board of elections by any person who is not otherwise disqualified from assisting the voter. The person must place the ballot in the closest U.S. Mail depository or mailbox.
 - delivered in person to the county board of elections by the voter.
 - delivered in person to the county board of elections by the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian.
 - delivered to an election official in person by the voter or the voter’s near relative or verifiable legal guardian at a one-stop voting site during any time that site is open for voting.

4.6 VOTER REGISTRATION

| | |
|---|--|
| How to Register to Vote (New Registration) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to register to vote in North Carolina, a person must meet the legal qualifications to vote and complete a voter registration application. ▪ When completing the application, applicants must provide: their full name, residential address, date of birth, and citizenship status. In addition, the application must be signed pen to paper (electronic signatures do not count). Failure to complete a required field on the form will delay the processing of the application. ▪ After completion, the application should be mailed (or delivered) to the board of elections office in the county in which the applicant resides. ▪ If the application is complete and the applicant meets all qualifications to vote, the county board of elections will mail a voter registration card to the applicant to provide notice of the registration. This mailing is non-forwardable and also serves to verify the applicant’s address. If a voter card is returned by the postal service as undeliverable, then a second mailing will be sent to the voter. In the event that the second mailing is also returned as undeliverable, the applicant’s voter registration may subsequently be denied. ▪ Voter registration applicants who have met the voter registration deadline should expect to receive their voter card within 1 to 2 weeks. The applicant must have transmitted the registration application by the registration deadline; otherwise, the voter card will not be mailed until after the completion of the election. |
| Voter Registration Qualifications | <p>To register to vote in North Carolina, a voter registration applicant must meet all of the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be a citizen of the United States. ▪ Live in the county of his/her registration and have resided there for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election. ▪ Be at least 18 years old. A prospective voter can submit a registration form up to two years before his/her 18th birthday, if and only if he/she will be 18 at the time of the next general election. |

- Not be serving a sentence for a felony conviction (including probation or parole). If a prospective voter has previously been convicted of a felony, his/her citizenship rights must be restored in order to register.

5 MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAM VISITS

08 NCAC 16 .0104 VISITS BY MULTIPARTISAN ASSISTANCE TEAMS

(a) The State Board shall provide annual notice regarding availability of Teams in each county. The notice shall provide information for covered facilities, or patients or residents of the facilities, to contact the county board of elections to arrange a Team visit.

(b) If a facility, or a patient or resident of a facility, requests a visit by the Team, the county board of elections shall notify the Team and schedule the visit(s) within seven calendar days if it is able to do so. If the county board of elections is unable to schedule the visit within seven calendar days, the voter may obtain such assistance from any person other than: (1) an owner, manager, director, employee of the hospital, clinic, nursing home, or rest home in which the voter is a patient or resident; (2) an individual who holds any elective office under the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of this State; (3) an individual who is a candidate for nomination or election to such office; or (4) an individual who holds any office in a State, congressional district, county, or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party; provided that a delegate to a convention shall not be considered a party office. None of the persons listed in Subparagraphs (1) through (4) of this Paragraph may sign the application or certificate as a witness for the patient.

(c) On a facility visit, the composition of the visiting Team members shall comply with the requirements of Rule .0102(a)(1) or (a)(2) of this Section.

(d) All Team members shall remain within the presence of each other while visiting or assisting patients or residents.

(e) At each facility visit, the Team shall provide the following assistance to patients or residents who request it:

(1) Assistance in requesting a mail-in absentee ballot: The Team shall collect any request forms submitted by voters and deliver those request forms to the county board of elections office upon leaving the facility. Upon the voter's request, the Team may also: (A) Assist the voter in completing the request form, provided that the voter signs or, if unable to sign, makes his or her mark or directs that his or her mark to be placed on the form; and (B) Coordinate a return visit to assist the voter in completing the absentee ballot. (2) Assistance in casting a mail-in absentee ballot: Before providing assistance in voting by mail-in absentee ballot, a Team member shall be in the presence of another Team member whose registration is not affiliated with the same political party. Team members shall sign the return envelope as witnesses to the marking of the mail-in absentee ballot. If the Team members provide assistance in marking the mail-in absentee ballot, the Team members shall also sign the voter's return envelope to indicate that they provided assistance in marking the ballot. (f) The Team shall make and keep a record containing the names of all voters who received assistance or cast an absentee ballot during a visit as directed by the county board of elections, and submit that record to the county board of elections.

(g) The Team shall assist patients or residents physically located in the Team's county, regardless of the voter's county of registration. If a patient or resident is registered to vote in another county, the county board of elections in the county where the voter is registered shall communicate any request for assistance to the county board of elections in the county where the voter is physically located.

5.1 SCHEDULING A MAT VISIT

Facility staff or residents will contact the county board of elections office to request a MAT visit. The county board of elections must arrange a facility visit with the MAT members. Again, at least two team members of different political affiliations must attend a facility visit.

- MAT members must know the current start and end dates for the absentee voting period, which is the time within which facility visits will be scheduled.

- MAT members must communicate with your county board of elections office about your availability. The office must be able to arrange visits when at least two team members of different party affiliations are available.
- MAT members may not schedule and or conduct any visits without coordinating these visits with their county board of elections.

5.2 MAT VISIT MATERIALS

The county board of elections office will furnish members with the following materials:

- Certification document for each team member on the visit
- MAT Activity Log
- State Absentee Ballot Request Form
- Voter registration forms or informational materials from the county board of elections office
- Incident Forms
- Pen and notepaper
- Clipboard
- Magnifier, to help voters who have visual impairments
- Envelope to collect completed materials
- Name of facility staff who arranged the visit, and/or name of residents who requested the visit
- Phone number of the county board of elections office

5.3 IMPERMISSIBLE MATERIALS

As a team member, you are representing the county board of elections. Remember your duty to carry out MAT tasks impartially.

- Do not bring items or clothing that communicate anything partisan, or bear messages that may be construed as advocating for or against any candidate or ballot item.
- Maintain a strictly professional appearance.
- Do not wear cologne, perfume, or other heavily scented products.

5.4 PROPER PROTOCOL AT THE FACILITY

The team must communicate with responsible persons at the facility to ensure facility staff is aware of the MAT visit. Plan for contingencies on the chance that an issue arises, whether it be the need to contact the county board office or to exit in an emergency.

- Upon arriving, check in with appropriate personnel (ideally the facility contact person who arranged the visit) or the person at the front desk.
- If the team does not have a cell phone, or if the area does not have reliable cell phone service, ask about access to a phone.
- Always remain in the immediate presence of fellow team members during the visit (except for bathroom breaks).
- Be familiar with emergency exits, location of staff, etc. in case there is a fire or other emergency during your visit.
- When it is time to leave, follow the facility's check-out procedures and let facility staff know the team is leaving.

5.5 INTERACTING WITH VOTERS AND OTHER FACILITY PATIENTS OR RESIDENTS

You should expect to interact with persons who have different types of disabilities. You should also expect that as a guest in the facility and a representative of the board of elections, your demeanor will be scrutinized. This section offers tips about how to conduct yourself when assisting people with different types of disabilities.

Good intentions are not sufficient to avoid misunderstandings in communication or interaction. Patience, flexibility, and, above all, a willingness to listen and learn, are as important to your task as your knowledge of the law.

Communication: Communication may be achieved through a variety of means. The law does not require that every voter be able to enunciate words or even use words. A voter might hand a team member a piece of paper bearing a request for assistance, or a voter might use hand gestures to indicate help is wanted. If a voter appears to need help, team members should inquire whether help is wanted. If it appears to the team that the voter has understood and responded affirmatively, the team must assist.

There are various types of disabilities: A physical disability may be apparent by a person's bearing or movement, but physical disablement does not indicate mental impairment. Other disabilities affect certain senses or mental functions without manifesting obvious impairment. Striking the balance between making helpful assumptions about what a person needs and not over-reaching based on appearance or other cues can be tricky.

- **Persons with mobility impairment:** Mobility impairments cover a wide range of difficulties, from slight imbalance to the need for a walker, crutch, or cane.

| DO | DO NOT |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ Be aware of the likely limit of reach of persons in a bed or wheelchair.☞ When communicating with a voter restricted to a bed or wheelchair, position yourself as best you can so that you are at or near the eye-level of the voter. In some instances, this is best achieved by standing at a slight distance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ Lean over or across someone in a bed or wheelchair.☞ Push a person's bed or wheelchair without permission. |

- **Visual impairments:** Many people with visual impairments have learned how to manage independently. Do not assume that a person with a visual impairment needs assistance.

| DO |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">☞ Be prepared to assist when asked.☞ Identify yourself before making physical contact.☞ Face the person you are addressing.☞ If someone needs guidance, <u>offer</u> your arm – but don't <u>take</u> an arm☞ When giving directions or leading someone, state aloud any obstacles in the path, particularly if the object is not part of the regular furnishing of the room.☞ Before leaving the company of the person, say that you are doing so.☞ Offer to read aloud any written information.☞ If a person indicates he or she would be able to read with a magnifier, provide it.☞ If the person has a guide dog, stay on the opposite side of a person from the guide dog. Do not touch or ask to pet the dog. |

- **Hearing impairments:** Many people with hearing impairments rely on amplification, some can read a speaker’s lips, and others communicate by writing, sign language, or a combination of these methods.

DO

- 👉 Make sure you have the person’s attention before speaking.
- 👉 Maintain eye contact and speak directly to the person.
- 👉 Speak clearly, but do not shout.
- 👉 If the person does not understand what you are saying and you have repeated once to adjust for volume or tone, try rephrasing instead of continuing to repeat your statement or questions.

- **Speech impairments:** There are varying causes and degrees of speech disabilities. Do not assume that a person’s difficulty with speech reflects cognitive impairment.

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| DO | DO NOT |
|-----------|---------------|

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Give the person your full attention. 👉 If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat or to write it. 👉 For verification, repeat back to the person what you understood him or her to say. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Appear hurried. 👉 Interrupt or try to finish the speaker’s sentence for him or her. |
|--|--|

- **General guidelines for facility visits:** There are many variations of the types of impairments listed above. Below are guidelines applicable to most circumstances.

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| DO | DO NOT |
|-----------|---------------|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Get the facts before reacting. Ask facility staff for assistance or context if necessary. 👉 Think before speaking and treat each person as an individual. 👉 Accommodate the person’s needs or requests whenever possible. 👉 Maintain eye contact – pay attention. 👉 Be patient. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Do not raise your voice in response to meeting a person with a disability unless the person is hearing impaired, and in such case, do not shout. |
|---|--|

6 PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO VOTERS

MATs are authorized to help voters with the following:

- Requesting an absentee ballot
- Casting the absentee ballot
- Completing a voter registration application

| Multipartisan Assistance Team Activity Log | | | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|---|---|---|--|
| Date | Voter Name | Facility Name | Assisted with Voter Registration Form | Assisted with Absentee Request Form | Assisted with Casting Absentee Ballot | MAT Member |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee witness <input type="checkbox"/> Sealing ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee application <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing ballot | MAT Member 1 _____ MAT Member 2 _____ |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee witness <input type="checkbox"/> Sealing ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee application <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing ballot | MAT Member 1 _____ MAT Member 2 _____ |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee witness <input type="checkbox"/> Sealing ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee application <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing ballot | MAT Member 1 _____ MAT Member 2 _____ |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee witness <input type="checkbox"/> Sealing ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee application <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing ballot | MAT Member 1 _____ MAT Member 2 _____ |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Completing Form <input type="checkbox"/> Returning Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Marking ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee witness <input type="checkbox"/> Sealing ballot <input type="checkbox"/> Absentee application <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing ballot | MAT Member 1 _____ MAT Member 2 _____ |

When performing these functions, MAT members must use a *MAT Activity Log* to document the assistance they provided with each voter.

6.1 ASSIST WITH REQUESTING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

The MAT members may assist facility voters with requesting an absentee ballot as follows:

- Providing blank *Absentee Ballot Request Forms*
- Assisting voters with completing an absentee request form (except for voter's signature). If assistance is provided, the MAT member must complete the Voter Assistance section on the form.

Nonpartisan

Near Relative or Legal Guardian Request: If you are requesting an absentee ballot on behalf of a near relative or for someone for whom you are the legal guardian, provide your name, relationship to the voter (see instructions), address and contact information.

Near Relative or Legal Guardian's Name Your Relationship to Voter

Address City State Zip Code

Please provide your email address or a telephone number in case we have a question concerning this request.

2 Voter Assistance: If the voter received assistance completing this form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write and no near relative or legal guardian of the voter was available, list the name and address of the person assisting the voter with completing this form.

Voter Assistant's Name

Address City State Zip Code

If voter is a patient in a hospital, clinic, nursing home or rest home, does voter need assistance with voting and returning the ballot? Yes No

If Yes, what is the name and address of the hospital or facility?

- Delivering the completed request forms back to the county board of elections office, using chain-of-custody procedures established by the county board of elections.

6.2 ASSIST WITH CASTING THE ABSENTEE BALLOT

A MAT visit will be scheduled once it is clear that residents within a facility have received their absentee ballot.

6.2.1 Review the Balloting Materials with the Voter

The team members should review the absentee balloting materials with the voter before assisting the voter with marking their ballot.

6.2.2 Serve as an Absentee Witness

Absentee voters must cast their absentee ballot in the presence of two persons who are over the age of 18 years of age (or a single witness if the witness is a notary) and who are not otherwise disqualified from serving as a witness. MAT members may assist facility voters by serving as their absentee witness under the following guidelines:

- Two witnesses are required. Although it is possible for a notary public to serve as a single witness to the voter marking the ballot, team members should always sign as TWO witnesses even if one team member is a notary, because at least two members of different party affiliation should remain in each other's presence during the visit.
- The voter's witnesses are not intended to observe how the voter marks their ballot but must be able to see that the voter is marking the ballot with their own intent. This is the general rule, but an exception is permitted if the voter requests assistance with marking the ballot.

6.2.3 Assist with Marking the Absentee Ballot

If the voter requests assistance with marking the ballot, a team member may help under the following guidelines:

- The team member may not make comments or gestures that might be construed as political or partisan.
- The team member is permitted to read the balloting instructions and the contest items and choices to the voter.
- The team member must advise the voter of the "Vote For" number for individual contest items.
- A team member must await the voter's response before marking the ballot for any contest choice(s).
- If the voter fails to provide a response for any contest item or does indicate enough choices for a single contest, the team member must leave the contest blank (undervote).
- The member may only mark a voter's ballot in the presence of another team member who is of a different party affiliation.

6.2.4 Assist with Sealing the Ballot and Completing the Absentee Application & Certificate

Once the ballot has been voted, the MAT members must assist the facility voter with ensuring the ballot is sealed inside the ballot-return envelope and that the *Absentee Application and Certificate* on the back of the ballot envelope is properly completed. The following guidelines must be followed:

- The voted ballot must be placed into the container-return envelope provided for the ballot and the envelope must be sealed.
- No other document may be placed inside the container-return envelope provided for the ballot.

- The voter must sign the **Voter’s Certification** section of the *Absentee Application and Certificate*. If the voter is unable to sign their name, they may make a mark. They may also use the space provided to make a name correction.

Voter’s Certification (Required)

I attest that I am currently registered to vote in this county and I will have resided at the address on this application for 30 days immediately prior to this election. I am a United States citizen and I am at least 18 years old, or will be by the date of the general election. I understand that it is a felony to vote more than one time in an election. I have not been convicted of a felony, or if I have been convicted of a felony, I have completed my sentence, including any probation or parole.

I further certify that I marked the enclosed ballot (or it was marked for me according to my instructions) in the presence of:

two (2) witnesses who are at least 18 years of age and who are not disqualified by law to witness the casting of my absentee ballot (the witnesses must complete **Option 1** of the *Witness Certification*)

OR

a notary public (the notary must complete **Option 2** of the *Witness Certification*)

X

Signature of Voter (Required) Date

Name Correction (if applicable)

- Two multipartisan team members must complete the **Witness Certification** section by providing their addresses, signatures and the date they witnessed the voter cast their ballot.

Witness Certification

Option 1: Two (2) Witnesses
(Required Unless a Notary Public is the Witness)

I certify that: • I am at least 18 years old • I am not disqualified from witnessing the ballot as described in the WARNING on the flap of this envelope • The Voter marked the enclosed ballot in my presence, or caused it to be marked in the Voter’s presence according to his/her instruction • The Voter signed this *Absentee Application and Certificate*, or caused it to be signed • I respected the secrecy of the ballot and the Voter’s privacy, unless I assisted the Voter at his/her request [complete *Voter Assistant Certification* section].

| Witness #1 | Witness #2 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | |
| Signature (Required) | Signature (Required) |
| Street Address (Required) | Street Address (Required) |
| City, State and Zip (Required) | City, State and Zip (Required) |
| _____ Date | _____ Date |

- If a team member assisted the voter with marking the ballot or completing the *Absentee Application & Certificate*, the team member must sign and check the appropriate checkbox in the **Voter Assistant Certification** section.

Voter Assistant Certification (if applicable)

I certify that: • the Voter requested my assistance • I assisted by marking the ballot and/or the Absentee Application and Certificate according to the Voter's instruction only • I assisted only while in the Voter's presence • I am the Voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, or I am providing assistance because a near relative or legal guardian is unavailable to assist the voter and I am not disqualified from assisting the Voter under G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(c).

I certify that: • Due to a disability the Voter requested my assistance placing the sealed absentee return envelope in the closest U.S. Mail depository or mailbox • I mailed the ballot as directed by the Voter • I am not disqualified from assisting the Voter under G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(c).

Name of Assistant _____ Address of Assistant _____

X _____

Assistant's Signature _____ Date _____

An absentee voter may request an absentee ballot for any potential second primary or runoff election using space provided on the *Absentee Application and Certificate*.

Second Primary Request or Runoff Request

In the event that a Second Primary (or Runoff Election) is called, I request that an absentee application and ballot be issued to me and mailed to me.

Signature of Voter (if applicable) _____ Date _____

Address where application and ballots should be mailed _____

6.2.5 Assist with Returning the Absentee Ballot

- Only a voter, the voter's near relative, or the voter's legal guardian may personally return the voted absentee ballot in the sealed container-return envelope with the voted ballot back to the county board of elections office. MAT members cannot personally deliver to the county board of elections sealed ballot-return envelopes containing voted ballots.
- The voter, the voter's near relative, or the voter's verifiable legal guardian may mail the voted ballot sealed in the container-return envelope via U.S. mail or commercial courier service (at the voter's expense). There is an exception for voters who have a disability.
- A MAT member may, upon request by a voter who needs assistance because of a disability, take an executed absentee ballot, sealed in its return envelope, directly to the closest U.S. mail depository or mailbox. The member shall mark the space on the return envelope provided for the assistor to indicate

she or he provided the assistance. The member is not permitted to make any stops or detours along the way and is required by law to choose the mail depository or mailbox closest in proximity to the voter. If the MAT member assists in this manner, the team member must sign and check the appropriate checkbox in the *Voter Assistant Certification* section. If the voter does not have adequate postage, the MAT member should not take possession of the ballot-return envelope.

- MAT members must be mindful of the deadline for a voter to return their absentee ballot to the board of elections. This deadline is on a voter's absentee instructions and the information should be pointed out to the voter.

6.3 ASSIST WITH VOTER REGISTRATION

On occasion, a resident in facility may not be registered to vote. MAT members may distribute voter registration applications and assist voters with completing the forms. They may also collect the forms and immediately return them to the board of elections office. The form may be used to register to vote or to update a voter's name, address, or party affiliation. The voter registration deadline is 25 days prior to the date of an election. MAT members must allow a resident to complete a voter registration application within this period even though the deadline has passed. The MAT member should inform the voter that they may or may not be eligible for the upcoming elections and the county board of elections staff will communicate with the resident if there is any question as to the person's eligibility to participate in an upcoming election event.

If a resident simply needs to update their address within the county of their current voter registration, the voter may use the State Absentee Ballot Request Form to change their address. A voter's residence is based on their individual circumstances and their intent. A facility resident may claim the facility as their legal voting residence or may believe the facility is a temporary residence and may claim another residence as their permanent home. MAT members must refer questions about voter residency to the county board of elections.

6.4 GENERAL INQUIRIES ABOUT THE VOTING PROCESS

The team member may answer questions asked by voters. If a question arises that a team member cannot answer, the county board of elections office should be contacted for assistance.

7 RETURNING MAT MATERIALS TO THE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS OFFICE

Before leaving the facility and returning to the county board of elections office, team members should ensure that no materials are left behind, the log sheet is complete, and all completed materials are secure according to chain-of-custody procedures.

- If applicable, sealed ballot-return envelopes must be immediately taken to the closest post office or mail receptacle and mailed. The MAT member must ensure that proper postage is on the return envelope. MAT members cannot personally deliver to the county board of elections sealed ballot-return envelopes containing voted ballots.
- All other materials must be placed in an envelope and sealed before leaving the facility. The sealed envelope must remain the presence of at least two team members of different party affiliation while they are being transported back to the county board of elections office and until they are handed to a county board of elections staff person.

Items to go into the envelope:

1. MAT Activity Log
 2. Completed absentee ballot request forms
 3. Completed voter registration applications
 4. Any other completed forms received by the team
- Team members must comply with any additional chain-of-custody procedures established by the county board of elections.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

State Absentee Ballot Request Form

2020 STATE ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST FORM - INSTRUCTIONS

To request an absentee ballot, a registered voter or voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian must complete and sign this form. If you are not registered to vote in your county of residence, you must register to vote no later than 25 days prior to the date of the election. You can submit a voter registration form with this request. Prior to completing the form, review the instructions below.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------|---------------|------------|--|--------|-------|---------------|------------|--|
| 1 | Voter Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide your full legal name. • Provide your date of birth. • Provide <u>one</u> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Carolina driver license number or non-operator identification card number; or ▪ last four digits of your Social Security number • Provide your current residential address. (Your North Carolina residential address is required so you get the correct ballot.) <p><i>Note: This form will be used to update the above information if it is different from your voter record.</i></p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Absentee Voting Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate the election you are requesting an absentee ballot for and the address where you would like your ballot mailed. Also, indicate if you would like to request absentee ballots for all elections held during this calendar year in which you are eligible to vote due to continued or expected illness or disability. • Partisan Primary Requests: If you are requesting a by-mail ballot for a partisan primary and you are not affiliated with a political party, provide your primary ballot preference. You may select a ballot of one of the recognized political parties that allow unaffiliated voters to participate in their primary or a nonpartisan ballot style. In a given primary, not all ballot choices may be available. Contact your county board of elections to determine available ballot options. <p style="text-align: center;">Information on Who Can Assist You in Completing this Request Form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All voters: All voters are entitled to assistance from their near relative or verifiable legal guardian. If you are a near relative or verifiable legal guardian requesting an absentee ballot on behalf of the voter, you must list your name and address. A <i>near relative</i> is defined as the voter's: <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td>spouse</td> <td>parent</td> <td>grandchild</td> <td>daughter-in-law</td> <td>stepchild</td> </tr> <tr> <td>brother</td> <td>grandparent</td> <td>mother-in-law</td> <td>son-in-law</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>sister</td> <td>child</td> <td>father-in-law</td> <td>stepparent</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> • Voters Who Are Blind, Disabled, or Unable to Read or Write: If a voter needs assistance in completing the written request form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write and there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist that voter, the voter may request some other person give assistance. If another person assists in completing the written request form, that person's name and address must be listed on this form. • Voters Who Are Patients in any Hospital, Clinic, Nursing Home, or Rest Home ("Facility"): If a registered voter is a patient in a Facility in North Carolina, a member of a Multipartisan Assistance Team (MAT) authorized by the county board of elections can assist the voter in completing the request form. Please contact the county board of elections to request assistance from a MAT. It is unlawful for any owner, manager, director, or employee of the Facility OTHER than the voter's near relative, verifiable legal guardian, or member of a MAT to request an absentee ballot on behalf of the voter. If neither the voter's near relative nor verifiable legal guardian is available, and a MAT is not available within seven calendar days of a telephonic request for assistance, the voter may obtain assistance from anyone who is not (1) an owner, manager, director, or employee of the Facility; (2) an elected official; (3) a candidate; or (4) an officeholder in a political party or a campaign manager or treasurer for a candidate or political party. | spouse | parent | grandchild | daughter-in-law | stepchild | brother | grandparent | mother-in-law | son-in-law | | sister | child | father-in-law | stepparent | |
| spouse | parent | grandchild | daughter-in-law | stepchild | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| brother | grandparent | mother-in-law | son-in-law | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| sister | child | father-in-law | stepparent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Military & Overseas Requests | <p>Complete this section if you are requesting an absentee ballot because you are uniformed services personnel or a dependent or spouse of uniformed services personnel and you are absent from your North Carolina county of residence due to military service. You are also eligible to complete this section if you are a civilian and can claim North Carolina as your state of residence and you are currently outside of the United States.</p> <p>Special Note: Military and Overseas voters may email (absentee@ncsbe.gov) or fax (919) 715-0351 a signed copy of this form.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | How to return this form | <p>This form must be signed by either the voter or the voter's near relative/legal guardian. Absentee request forms may only be returned by the voter, the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian or a MAT. The form must be delivered in person or by the U.S. Postal Service or other designated delivery service (DHL, FedEx, or UPS) to the voter's county board of elections. Forms may not be faxed or emailed. A completed absentee request form must be received by the county board of elections not later than 5:00 P.M. on the Tuesday before the election.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | <p>Mail to:</p> <p>Your county board of elections. Locate the address on page three of this form.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

Guidelines on the Official Ballot

Factors Affecting a Voter's Ballot Style

1. **Voter's legal voting residence** – this is the address where the voter will have lived for 30 or more days as of election day and this address determines the voter's correct contest jurisdictions for which the voter is eligible.
2. **Voter's age** – a person must be at least 18 years of age to vote in a general election; however, if a voter is 17, they are only eligible to vote for partisan or non-partisan primary contests, provided the voter will be 18 on or before the date of the general election. A 17-year-old voter may not vote for a general election contest or constitutional questions or referenda.
3. **Voter's party affiliation** – if the absentee ballot is for a partisan primary, the ballot style available to the voter will be determined by the voter's affiliation with a political party.
4. **Voter's primary ballot preference** – in a partisan primary, if a voter is Unaffiliated, the voter's proper ballot will be based on their preference indicated on the request form.

APPENDIX C

Absentee Application and Certificate (back of ballot container-return envelope)

Absentee Application and Certificate

Fraudulently or Falsely completing this form is a Class I felony under Chapter 163 of the N.C. General Statutes
The following people are PROHIBITED from signing the Witness Certification:
For all voters: a candidate, UNLESS the candidate is the voter's near relative;
For voters who are patients or residents of a hospital, clinic, nursing home, or adult care home: (1) an owner, manager, director, or employee of that facility; (2) an individual who holds any federal, State, or local elective office; and (3) an individual who holds office in a State, congressional district, county or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party.

Voter's Certification (Required)
 I attest that I am currently registered to vote in this county and I will have resided at the address on this application for 30 days immediately prior to this election. I am a United States citizen and I am at least 18 years old, or will be by the date of the general election. I understand that it is a felony to vote more than one time in an election. I have not been convicted of a felony, or if I have been convicted of a felony, I have completed my sentence, including any probation or parole. I further certify that I marked the enclosed ballot (or it was marked for me according to my instructions) in the presence of:

two (2) witnesses who are at least 18 years of age and who are not disqualified by law to witness the casting of my absentee ballot (the witnesses must complete Option 1 of the Witness Certification) **OR**

a notary public (the notary must complete Option 2 of the Witness Certification)

Signature of Voter (Required) _____ Date _____

Name Correction (if applicable) _____

Voter Assistant Certification (if applicable)
 I certify that: • the Voter requested my assistance • I assisted by marking the ballot and/or the Absentee Application and Certificate according to the Voter's instruction only • I assisted only while in the Voter's presence • I am the Voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, or I am providing assistance because a near relative or legal guardian is unavailable to assist the voter and I am not disqualified from assisting the Voter under G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(c).
 I certify that: • Due to a disability the Voter requested my assistance placing the sealed absentee return envelope in the closest U.S. Mail depository or mailbox • I mailed the ballot as directed by the Voter • I am not disqualified from assisting the Voter under G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(c).

Name of Assistant _____ Address of Assistant _____
 Assistant's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Certification

Option 1: Two (2) Witnesses
 (Required Unless a Notary Public is the Witness)
 I certify that: • I am at least 18 years old • I am not disqualified from witnessing the ballot as described in the WARNING on the flap of this envelope • The Voter marked the enclosed ballot in my presence, or caused it to be marked in the Voter's presence according to his/her instruction • The Voter signed this Absentee Application and Certificate, or caused it to be signed • I respected the secrecy of the ballot and the Voter's privacy, unless I assisted the Voter at his/her request [complete Voter Assistant Certification section].

| Witness #1 | Witness #2 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Signature (Required) | Signature (Required) |
| Street Address (Required) | Street Address (Required) |
| City, State and Zip (Required) | City, State and Zip (Required) |
| Date | Date |

Option 2: Notary Public as Witness
 (Required Unless Two Witnesses Provided)
 I certify that: on the _____ day of _____, 20____, the Voter: identified and in my presence, the Voter marked the enclosed ballot, or caused it to be marked in the Voter's presence according to his/her instruction • The Voter signed this Absentee Application and Certificate, or caused it to be signed • I am at least 18 years old • I am not disqualified for witnessing the ballot as described in the WARNING on the flap of this envelope • I respected the secrecy of the ballot and the privacy of the Voter, unless I assisted the Voter at his/her request [complete Voter Assistant Certification section].

NOTE: A notary may not charge any fee for witnessing and affixing a notarial seal to an absentee ballot application or certificate. (G.S. § 10B-30)

STATE OF _____
 COUNTY OF _____
 Notary Public
 Commission Expiration Date _____

Affix NON-BARCODE Label HERE

Affix BARCODE Label HERE

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Date Ballot Received | Voter Certification Signed | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Receipt Method | Witness Certification Signed | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Board Meeting Date | CSE Reviewer Initials | |
| Board Signature | Board Approval Date | |

Second Primary Request or Runoff Request
 In the event that a Second Primary (or Runoff Election) is called, I request that an absentee application and ballot be issued to me and mailed to me.

Signature of Voter (if applicable) _____ Date _____

Address where application and ballots should be mailed _____

APPENDIX D
Relevant Statutes

§ 163-226. Who may vote an absentee ballot.

(As amended by Section 1.2.(a) of Session Law 2019-239)

(a) Who May Vote Absentee Ballot; Generally. – Any qualified voter of the State may vote by absentee ballot in a statewide primary, general, or special election on constitutional amendments, referenda or bond proposals, and any qualified voter of a county is authorized to vote by absentee ballot in any primary or election conducted by the county board of elections, in the manner provided in this Article.

(b) Annual Request by Person With Sickness or Physical Disability. – If the applicant reports that the voter has a sickness or physical disability that is expected to last the remainder of the calendar year, the voter may request to vote by mail-in absentee ballot for all of the primaries and elections held during the calendar year when the completed written request under G.S. 163-230.1 is received.

(c) Absentee Ballots; Exceptions. – Notwithstanding the authority contained in G.S. 163-226(a), absentee ballots shall not be permitted in fire district elections.

(d) The Term "Election". – As used in this Article, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the term "election" includes a general, primary, second primary, runoff election, bond election, referendum, or special election.

(e) The Term "Verifiable Legal Guardian." – An individual appointed guardian under Chapter 35A of the General Statutes. For a corporation appointed as a guardian under that Chapter, the corporation may submit a list of 10 named individuals to the State Board of Elections who may act for that corporation under this Article.

(f) For the purpose of this Article, "near relative" means spouse, brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild.

§ 163-226.3. Certain acts declared felonies.

(a) Any person who shall, in connection with absentee voting in any election held in this State, do any of the acts or things declared in this section to be unlawful, shall be guilty of a Class I felony. It shall be unlawful:

- (1) For any person except the voter's near relative or the voter's verifiable legal guardian to assist the voter to vote an absentee ballot when the voter is voting an absentee ballot other than under the procedure described in G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6; provided that if there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist the voter, the voter may request some other person to give assistance.
- (2) For any person to assist a voter to vote an absentee ballot under the absentee voting procedure authorized by G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6 except as provided in that section.
- (3) For a voter who votes an absentee ballot under the procedures authorized by G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6 to vote that voter's absentee ballot outside of the voting booth or private room provided to the voter for that purpose in or adjacent to the office of the county board of elections or at the additional site provided by G.S. 163-227.2, or to receive assistance except as provided in G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6.

- (4) For any owner, manager, director, employee, or other person, other than the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, to (i) make a written request pursuant to G.S. 163-230.1 or (ii) sign an application or certificate as a witness, on behalf of a registered voter, who is a patient in any hospital, clinic, nursing home or rest home in this State or for any owner, manager, director, employee, or other person other than the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, to mark the voter's absentee ballot or assist such a voter in marking an absentee ballot. This subdivision does not apply to members, employees, or volunteers of the county board of elections, if those members, employees, or volunteers are working as part of a multipartisan team trained and authorized by the county board of elections to assist voters with absentee ballots. Each county board of elections shall train and authorize such teams, pursuant to procedures which shall be adopted by the State Board of Elections. If neither the voter's near relative nor a verifiable legal guardian is available to assist the voter, and a multipartisan team is not available to assist the voter within seven calendar days of a telephonic request to the county board of elections, the voter may obtain such assistance from any person other than (i) an owner, manager, director, employee of the hospital, clinic, nursing home, or rest home in which the voter is a patient or resident; (ii) an individual who holds any elective office under the United States, this State, or any political subdivision of this State; (iii) an individual who is a candidate for nomination or election to such office; or (iv) an individual who holds any office in a State, congressional district, county, or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party; provided that a delegate to a convention shall not be considered a party office. None of the persons listed in (i) through (iv) of this subdivision may sign the application or certificate as a witness for the patient.
- (5) For any person to take into that person's possession for delivery to a voter or for return to a county board of elections the absentee ballot of any voter, provided, however, that this prohibition shall not apply to a voter's near relative or the voter's verifiable legal guardian.
- (6) Except as provided in subsections (1), (2), (3) and (4) of this section, G.S. 163-231(a), and G.S. 163-227.2(e), for any voter to permit another person to assist the voter in marking that voter's absentee ballot, to be in the voter's presence when a voter votes an absentee ballot, or to observe the voter mark that voter's absentee ballot.

(b) The State Board of Elections or a county board of elections, upon receipt of a sworn affidavit from any qualified voter of the State or the county, as the case may be, attesting to first-person knowledge of any violation of subsection (a) of this section, shall transmit that affidavit to the appropriate district attorney, who shall investigate and prosecute any person violating subsection (a).

§ 163-230.1. Simultaneous issuance of absentee ballots with application.

(As amended by Section 1.2.(b) of Session Law 2019-239 – see *Important Note* below.)

(a) **Written Request.** – A qualified voter who is eligible to vote by absentee ballot under G.S. 163-226, or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, shall complete a request form for an absentee application and absentee ballots so that the county board of elections receives that completed request form not later than 5:00 P.M. on the Tuesday before the election. That completed written request form shall be in compliance with G.S. 163-230.2. The county board of elections shall enter in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots issued the information required in G.S. 163-228 as soon as each item of that information becomes available. Upon receiving the completed request form, the county board of elections shall cause to be mailed to that voter a single package that includes all of the following:

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- (1) The official ballots the voter is entitled to vote.
- (2) A container-return envelope for the ballots, printed in accordance with G.S. 163-229.
- (3) An instruction sheet.

(a1) Mailing of Application and Ballots. – The ballots, envelope, and instructions shall be mailed to the voter by the county board's chair, member, officer, or employee as determined by the board and entered in the register as provided by this Article.

(b) Absence for Sickness or Physical Disability. – Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if a voter expects to be unable to go to the voting place to vote in person on election day because of that voter's sickness or other physical disability, that voter or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian may make the request for absentee ballots in person to the board of elections of the county in which the voter is registered after 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election but not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election. The county board of elections shall treat that completed request form in the same manner as a request under subsection (a) of this section but may personally deliver the application and ballots to the voter or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian, and shall enter in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots issued the information required in G.S. 163-228 as soon as each item of that information becomes available. The county board of elections shall personally deliver to the requester in a single package:

- (1) The official ballots the voter is entitled to vote.
- (2) A container-return envelope for the ballots, printed in accordance with G.S. 163-229.
- (3) An instruction sheet.

(c) Delivery of Absentee Ballots and Container-Return Envelope to Applicant. – When the county board of elections receives a completed request form for applications and absentee ballots from the voter, or the near relative or the verifiable legal guardian of that voter, the county board shall promptly issue and transmit them to the voter in accordance with the following instructions:

- (1) On the top margin of each ballot the applicant is entitled to vote, the chair, a member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall write or type the words "Absentee Ballot No. ____" or an abbreviation approved by the State Board and insert in the blank space the number assigned the applicant's application in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots issued. That person shall not write, type, or print any other matter upon the ballots transmitted to the absentee voter. Alternatively, the board of elections may cause to be barcoded on the ballot the voter's application number, if that barcoding system is approved by the State Board.
- (2) The chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall fold and place the ballots (identified in accordance with the preceding instruction) in a container-return envelope and write or type in the appropriate blanks thereon, in accordance with the terms of G.S. 163-229(b), the absentee voter's name, the absentee voter's application number, and the designation of the precinct in which the voter is registered. If the ballot is barcoded under this section, the envelope may be barcoded rather than having the actual number appear. The person placing the ballots in the envelopes shall leave the container-return envelope holding the ballots unsealed.
- (3) The chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections shall then place the unsealed container-return envelope holding the ballots together with printed instructions for voting and returning the ballots, in an envelope addressed to the voter at the post office address stated in the request, seal the envelope, and mail it at the expense of the county board of elections: Provided, that in case of a request received after 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election under the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, in lieu of transmitting the ballots to the voter in person or by mail, the chair, member, officer, or employee of the board of elections may deliver the sealed envelope containing the instruction sheet and the

container-return envelope holding the ballots to a near relative or verifiable legal guardian of the voter.

The county board of elections may receive completed written request forms for applications at any time prior to the election but shall not mail applications and ballots to the voter or issue applications and ballots in person earlier than 60 days prior to the statewide general election in an even-numbered year, or earlier than 50 days prior to any other election, except as provided in G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6. No election official shall issue applications for absentee ballots except in compliance with this Article.

(d) Voter to Complete. – The application shall be completed and signed by the voter personally, the ballots marked, the ballots sealed in the container-return envelope, and the certificate completed as provided in G.S. 163-231.

(e) Approval of Applications. – At its next official meeting after return of the completed container-return envelope with the voter's ballots, the county board of elections shall determine whether the container-return envelope has been properly executed. If the board determines that the container-return envelope has been properly executed, it shall approve the application and deposit the container-return envelope with other container-return envelopes for the envelope to be opened and the ballots counted at the same time as all other container-return envelopes and absentee ballots.

(f) Required Meeting of County Board of Elections. – During the period commencing on the third Tuesday before an election, in which absentee ballots are authorized, the county board of elections shall hold one or more public meetings each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of action on applications for absentee ballots. At these meetings, the county board of elections shall pass upon applications for absentee ballots.

If the county board of elections changes the time of holding its meetings or provides for additional meetings in accordance with the terms of this subsection, notice of the change in hour and notice of the schedule of additional meetings, if any, shall be published in a newspaper circulated in the county at least 30 days prior to the election.

At the time the county board of elections makes its decision on an application for absentee ballots, the board shall enter in the appropriate column in the register of absentee requests, applications, and ballots issued opposite the name of the applicant a notation of whether the applicant's application was "Approved" or "Disapproved".

The decision of the board on the validity of an application for absentee ballots shall be final subject only to such review as may be necessary in the event of an election contest. The county board of elections shall constitute the proper official body to pass upon the validity of all applications for absentee ballots received in the county; this function shall not be performed by the chair or any other member of the board individually.

(g) Rules. – The State Board, by rule or by instruction to the county board of elections, shall establish procedures to provide appropriate safeguards in the implementation of this section.

Important Note: Portions of this statute regarding photo ID requirements have been deleted. Voters will not be required to show photo ID in order to vote in the 2020 primary election. In a December 31 order, a federal district court blocked North Carolina's voter photo ID requirement from taking effect. The injunction will remain in place until further order of the court.

§ 163-230.2. Method of requesting absentee ballots.

(As amended by Section 1.3.(a) of Session Law 2019-239)

(a) Valid Types of Written Requests. – A completed written request form for absentee ballots as required by G.S. 163-230.1 is valid only if it is on a form created by the State Board and signed by the voter requesting absentee ballots or that voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian. The State Board shall make the form

available at its offices, online, and in each county board of elections office, and that form may be reproduced. The request form created by the State Board shall require at least the following information:

- (1) The name and address of the residence of the voter.
- (2) The name and address of the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian if that individual is making the request.
- (3) The address of the voter to which the application and absentee ballots are to be mailed if different from the residence address of the voter.
- (4) One of the following:
 - a. The number of the applicant's North Carolina drivers license issued under Article 2 of Chapter 20 of the General Statutes, including a learner's permit or a provisional license.
 - b. The number of the applicant's special identification card for nonoperators issued under G.S. 20-37.7.
 - c. The last four digits of the applicant's social security number.
- (5) The voter's date of birth.
- (6) The signature of the voter or of the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian if that individual is making the request.
- (7) A clear indicator of the date the election generating the request is to be held, except for annual calendar year requests in accordance with G.S. 163-226(b).

(b) Request to Update Voter Registration. – A completed request form for absentee ballots shall be deemed a request to update the official record of voter registration for that voter and shall be confirmed in writing in accordance with G.S. 163-82.14(d).

(c) Return of Request – The completed request form for absentee ballots shall be delivered to the county board of elections only by any of the following:

- (1) The voter.
- (2) The voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian.
- (3) A member of a multipartisan team trained and authorized by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-226.3.

(d) Confirmation of Voter Registration. – Upon receiving a completed request form for absentee ballots, the county board shall confirm that voter's registration. If that voter is confirmed as a registered voter of the county, the absentee ballots and certification form shall be mailed to the voter, unless personally delivered in accordance with G.S. 163-230.1(b). If the voter's official record of voter registration conflicts with the completed request form for absentee ballots or cannot be confirmed, the voter shall be so notified. If the county board cannot resolve the differences, no application or absentee ballots shall be issued.

(e) Invalid Types of Written Requests. –If a county board of elections receives a request for absentee ballots that does not comply with this subsection or with subsection (a) of this section, the board shall not issue an application and ballots under G.S. 163-230.1. A request for absentee ballots is not valid if any of the following apply:

- (1) The completed written request is not on a form created by the State Board.
- (2) The completed written request is completed, partially or in whole, or signed by anyone other than the voter, or the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian. A member of a multipartisan team trained

and authorized by the county board of elections pursuant to G.S. 163-226.3 may assist in completion of the request.

- (3) The written request does not contain all of the information required by subsection (a) of this section.
- (4) The completed written request is returned to the county board by someone other than a person listed in subsection (c) of this section, the United States Postal Service, or a designated delivery service authorized pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 7502(f)(2).

(e1) Assistance by Others. – If a voter is in need of assistance completing the written request form due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write and there is not a near relative or legal guardian available to assist that voter, the voter may request some other person to give assistance, notwithstanding any other provision of this section. If another person gives assistance in completing the written request form, that person's name and address shall be disclosed on the written request form in addition to the information listed in subsection (a) of this section.

(f) Rules by State Board. – The State Board shall adopt rules for the enforcement of this section.

§ 163-231. Voting absentee ballots and transmitting them to the county board of elections.

(a) Procedure for Voting Absentee Ballots. – In the presence of two persons who are at least 18 years of age, and who are not disqualified by G.S. 163-226.3(a)(4) or G.S. 163-237(b1), the voter shall do all of the following:

- (1) Mark the voter's ballots, or cause them to be marked by that person in the voter's presence according to the voter's instruction.
- (2) Fold each ballot separately, or cause each of them to be folded in the voter's presence.
- (3) Place the folded ballots in the container-return envelope and securely seal it, or have this done in the voter's presence.
- (4) Make the application printed on the container-return envelope according to the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b) and make the certificate printed on the container-return envelope according to the provisions of G.S. 163-229(b).
- (5) Require those two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballots to sign the application and certificate as witnesses and to indicate those persons' addresses. Failure to list a ZIP code does not invalidate the application and certificate.
- (6) Do one of the following:
 - a. Have the application notarized. The notary public may be the person in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballot.
 - b. Have the two persons in whose presence the voter marked that voter's ballots to certify that the voter is the registered voter submitting the marked ballots.

Alternatively to the prior paragraph of this subsection, any requirement for two witnesses shall be satisfied if witnessed by one notary public, who shall comply with all the other requirements of that paragraph. The notary shall affix a valid notarial seal to the envelope, and include the word "Notary Public" below his or her signature.

The persons in whose presence the ballot is marked shall at all times respect the secrecy of the ballot and the privacy of the absentee voter, unless the voter requests assistance and that person is otherwise authorized by law to give assistance. When thus executed, the sealed container-return envelope, with the ballots enclosed,

shall be transmitted in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section to the county board of elections which issued the ballots.

(b) Transmitting Executed Absentee Ballots to County Board of Elections. – The sealed container-return envelope in which executed absentee ballots have been placed shall be transmitted to the county board of elections who issued those ballots as follows:

- (1) All ballots issued under the provisions of this Article and Article 21A of this Chapter shall be transmitted by mail or by commercial courier service, at the voter's expense, or delivered in person, or by the voter's near relative or verifiable legal guardian and received by the county board not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election. Ballots issued under the provisions of Article 21A of this Chapter may also be electronically transmitted.
- (2) If ballots are received later than the hour stated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, those ballots shall not be accepted unless one of the following applies:
 - a. Federal law so requires.
 - b. The ballots issued under this Article are postmarked and that postmark is dated on or before the day of the statewide primary or general election or county bond election and are received by the county board of elections not later than three days after the election by 5:00 p.m.
 - c. The ballots issued under Article 21A of this Chapter are received by the county board of elections not later than the end of business on the business day before the canvass conducted by the county board of elections held pursuant to G.S. 163-182.5.

(c) For purposes of this section, "Delivered in person" includes delivering the ballot to an election official at a one-stop voting site under G.S. 163-227.2, 163-227.5, and 163-227.6 during any time that site is open for voting. The ballots shall be kept securely and delivered by election officials at that site to the county board of elections office for processing.

§ 163.237. Certain violations of absentee ballot law made criminal offenses.

(As amended by Section 1.5.(a) of Session Law 2019-239)

(a) False Statements under Oath Made Class 1 Misdemeanor. – If any person shall willfully and falsely make any affidavit or statement, under oath, which affidavit or statement under oath, is required to be made by the provisions of this Article, that person shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) False Statements Not under Oath Made Class 1 Misdemeanor. – Except as provided by G.S. 163-275(16), if any person, for the purpose of obtaining or voting any official ballot under the provisions of this Article, shall willfully sign any printed or written false statement which does not purport to be under oath, or which, if it purports to be under oath, was not duly sworn to, that person shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Candidate Witnessing Absentee Ballots of Nonrelative Made Class 1 Misdemeanor. – A person is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor if that person acts as a witness under G.S. 163-231(a) in any primary or election in which the person is a candidate for nomination or election, unless the voter is the candidate's near relative as defined in G.S. 163-226(f).

(d) Fraud in Connection with Absentee Vote; Forgery. – Any person attempting to aid and abet fraud in connection with any absentee vote cast or to be cast, under the provisions of this Article, shall be guilty of a

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misdemeanor. Attempting to vote by fraudulently signing the name of a regularly qualified voter is a Class G felony.

(d1) Sell or Attempt to Sell Completed Absentee Ballot. – Any person who sells or attempts to sell, or purchases or agrees to purchase, a completed written request, a completed application for absentee ballots, or voted absentee ballots, shall be guilty of a Class I felony.

(d2) Destruction of Absentee Ballot. – Any person who intentionally, with the intent of obstructing a vote by a registered voter, fails to deliver or intentionally destroys a completed written request, a completed application for absentee ballots, or voted absentee ballots, shall be guilty of a Class G felony.

(d3) Copies or Retention of Identifying Information. – Any person, other than the voter or near relative or verifiable legal guardian of that voter, who copies or otherwise retains the request for absentee ballots, a completed application for absentee ballots, or any identifying information, as defined in G.S. 14-113.20, disclosed in a request or application, shall be guilty of a Class G felony.

(d4) Compensation Based on Requests. – Any person who compensates another, or who accepts compensation, based on the number of returned written requests for absentee ballots under G.S. 163-230.2, shall be guilty of a Class I felony.

(d5) Intent to Unlawfully Influence. – Any person who commits, attempts to commit, or conspires to commit a crime identified in G.S. 163-82.6(b), 163-226.3(a), 163-274, 163-275, or this section with the intent to unlawfully influence or interfere with a primary or election, or to otherwise unlawfully gain, shall be guilty of a Class F felony.

(d6) Disclosure of Register of Absentee Ballot Requests. – Notwithstanding G.S. 132-3(a), any person who steals, releases, or possesses the official register of absentee requests for mail-in absentee ballots as provided in G.S. 163-228 prior to the opening of the voting place in accordance with G.S. 163-166.01, for a purpose other than the conduct of business at the county board of elections, shall be guilty of a Class G felony.

(e) Violations Not Otherwise Provided for Made Class 1 Misdemeanors. – If any person shall willfully violate any of the provisions of this Article, or willfully fail to comply with any of the provisions thereof, for which no other punishment is herein provided, that person shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.