

Absentee Voting

Absentee voting is a process completely separate from in-person voting in our Township, starting with the August election. We established an Absent Voter Counting Board (AVCB) for processing Absentee ballots only. Previously, they were tabulated within each precinct.

Valid Absentee Ballots are always counted on Election Day; regardless of what you may have heard!

Absentee Ballot Applications:

The Township mails an Absentee Ballot Application to every voter who is listed on the Permanent Absentee Ballot List. Any voter can be put on this list to automatically receive the Absentee Ballot Application. If you are on the Permanent List, you always have the choice to vote absentee or in-person. To vote in-person, you just do not send the application back to us and go to the polls on Election Day instead.

You may receive more than one application. Only one will come from the Township, however political parties, voter organizations, and others may send one to you. You need only fill out one application and return it to the Township. Even if you accidentally return more than one application, you will only receive one ballot, as the Qualified Voter File (QVF) will not allow more than one. You can check whether or not we have an Absentee Ballot Application for you by going to this website: <https://michigan.gov/vote>.

Vote and Return Your Ballot:

Please vote your ballot as soon as possible after you receive it. Sending it back sooner rather than later helps us by allowing us more time to verify your signature and contact you with any issues we may have with your ballot. Please provide us with your phone number or email address on your application so we have a way to contact you. Contrary to popular assumption, the voter file does not interact with the tax files or any other Township department.

Please use one of our two secure drop boxes to return your ballot. They are checked quite frequently so they don't fill up. We know sometimes you must use postal mail because you are out of the area; please allow plenty of time for your ballot to reach us. Post marks do not matter; it must be in our hands by 8 p.m. on Election Day for it to be counted.

The Process for Absentee Ballots

- Ballots come back to us via mail or one of our two secure drop boxes. Each ballot is date stamped and then entered into the Qualified Voter File (QVF) where we compare the signature on the envelope with the signature in QVF. We also check to make sure the ballot number on the envelope is consistent with the number we assigned to that voter initially.
- Once received into QVF, the ballot is stored in a secure room within the Township office, where they stay until Election Day. On Election Day, they are given to the AVCB to process. There is a prescribed method for processing Absentee ballots that includes Election Inspectors working in pairs (a combination of two different parties), ballots being separated from their envelopes in batches (to ensure voter privacy), and ballots

being counted by being fed into a tabulator (again by two different political parties). An AVCB Chairperson oversees the entire process and the entire AVCB is sequestered for the duration of the process. In their closing process they have to account for each and every ballot to ensure every ballot that should have been counted was counted.

Transparency:

- Voting in Michigan and in Williamstown Township is conducted according to law (MCL 168.1 - 168.992) as directed by the Michigan Bureau of Elections. Anyone can go to the Bureau of Elections website to see what the process and procedures are leading up to and including Election Day. Additionally, anyone can call the Bureau of Elections to ask questions. We encourage Township voters to go to the [Michigan Bureau of Elections website](#) to become familiar with the processes related to voting and the laws surrounding voting.

It is our aim that every eligible voter in Williamstown Township has the opportunity to exercise their right to vote! If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Clerk's office, but during this busy time, we encourage to read the related materials on our website first. Thanks for voting!