

# Where Can You Drop Off Your Ballot? A 50 State Analysis

October 10, 2020

The 2020 general election has [officially begun](#), and voters around the country are beginning to receive absentee ballots. Some voters will mail their completed ballots back to election officials (ideally by [October 27](#), according to U.S. Postal Service Guidelines). Other voters will drop off their ballots at secure [ballot drop boxes](#), which many states have expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still other voters will opt to hand their ballot directly to election officials, drop it off at an early voting center or polling place on Election Day, or even ask a family member or other agent to drop it off on their behalf. Yet fifty states have fifty sets of rules, and different options are available to voters depending on the election rules that govern them.

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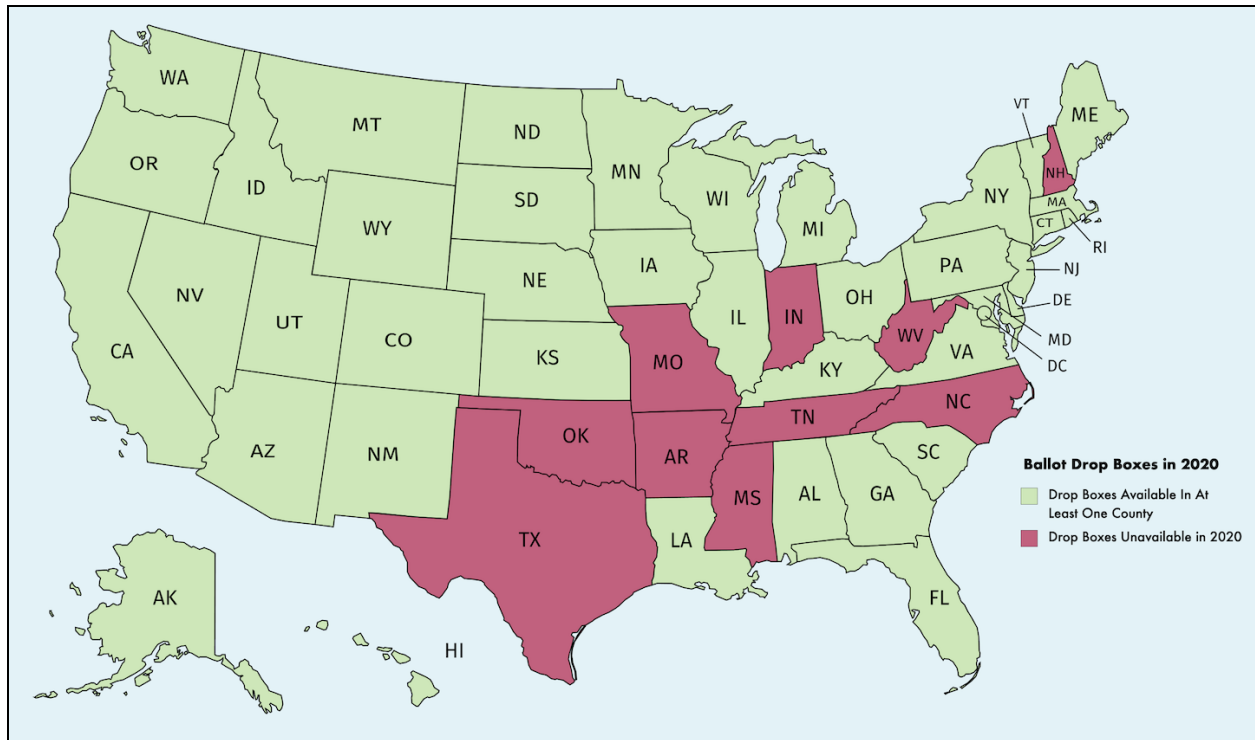
## I. Introduction

Given the complexity of America's state-based voting laws, the [Stanford-MIT Healthy Election Project](#) has compiled information on all 50 states (and Washington, D.C.) to help voters understand where they can legally drop off their ballot. Our analysis uses Secretary of State websites, other official government documents, phone calls and emails to election officials, and local media reports to answer the following four questions for each state:

- Does the state have ballot drop boxes available?
- Can voters drop off completed ballots at in-person early voting sites?
- Can voters drop off completed ballots at polling places on Election Day?
- Can voters drop off completed ballots at other locations (including election offices, court houses, and so on)?

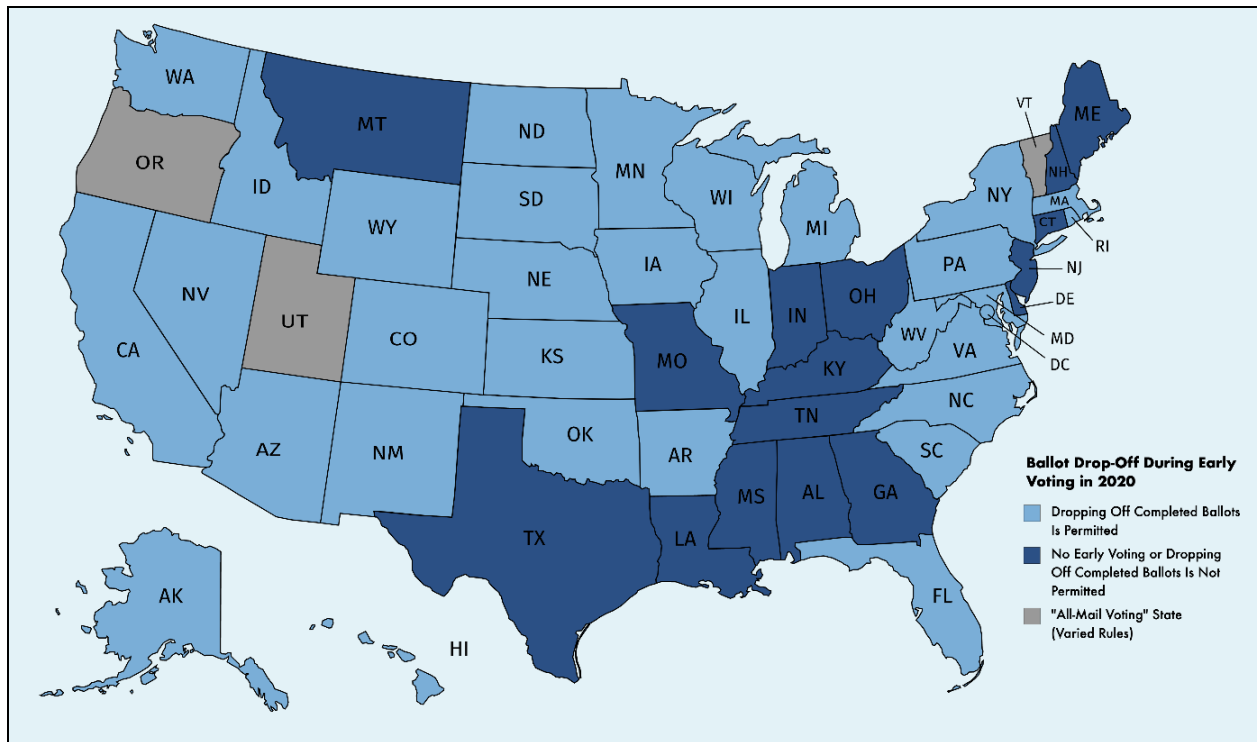
For more information, please see our full analysis spreadsheet [here](#).

## II. Ballot Drop Box Availability



Only eight states—Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington state—have [explicit language](#) about ballot drop boxes written into their laws. However, many more states provide ballot drop boxes or otherwise permit counties and other election officials to place ballot drop boxes for voters to use. All told, **40 states** (and Washington, D.C.) will have ballot drop boxes available in one or more locations in 2020, while just **ten states** will not have drop boxes. In fact, due to the response to COVID-19, the use of ballot drop boxes during the 2020 general election will likely be [the largest in American history](#).

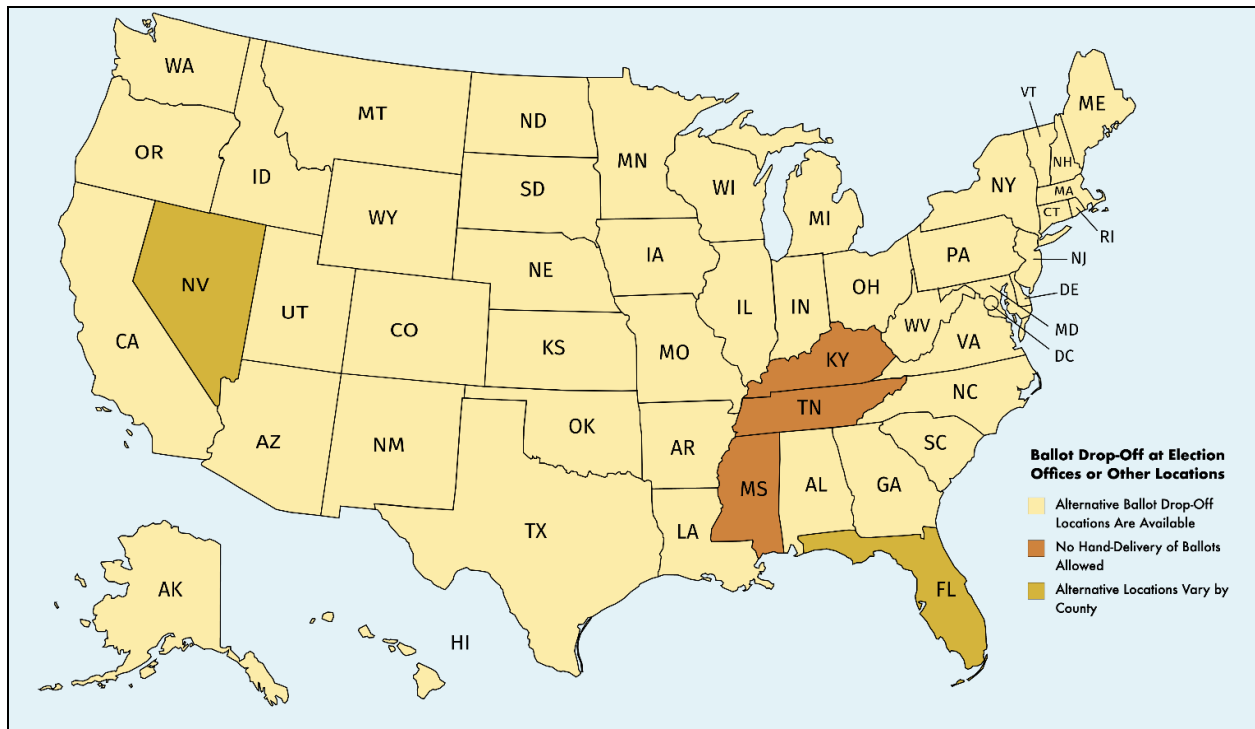
### III. Ballot Drop-Off During Early Voting



**31 states** (and Washington, D.C.) have an in-person early voting period and allow voters to return completed absentee ballots to early voting locations. **16 states** do not have early voting at all or do not permit voters to drop off completed absentee ballots at early voting locations. In Texas, for example, voters can [vote early](#) in person, but completed absentee ballots must be returned by mail or to the county clerk’s office [with a valid ID](#). **Three states** have varied options for ballot drop-off; they are a subset of “[all-mail voting](#)” states, meaning that mail-in ballots will be sent automatically to all registered voters in the general election. The full list of “all-mail voting” states in 2020 include Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Vermont, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C. Please see our full report for more information.



## V. Ballot Drop-Off at Election Offices or Other Locations



**45 states** (and Washington, D.C.) allow voters to drop off completed absentee ballots to an alternative location, often any time between the start of early voting (or upon receipt of the absentee ballot) and Election Day itself. The most common alternative drop-off location is the county’s election office or county clerk, but other acceptable locations or include the county absentee election manager’s office (in [Alabama](#)), the Town Clerk’s office (in [Connecticut](#)), and at a voter’s Town Hall or City Hall (in [Massachusetts](#)), among other locations. In **three states**, [Kentucky](#), [Mississippi](#), and [Tennessee](#), voters are not permitted to hand-deliver completed ballots at all. In **two states**, Florida and Nevada, alternative locations vary by county.

For more information about your state’s drop-off policies, please see our full analysis spreadsheet [here](#).