2022 Gubernatorial Primary Toolkit

A 2022 Communications Plan to Support the Gubernatorial Elections

Social Media & Communications Toolkit

Social Media & Communications for Maryland 2022 Gubernatorial Elections

1. **Introduction**
2. **Tagline**
3. **Website and Social Media Accounts**
    a. Social Media Policy
    b. Getting Started
    c. Hashtag
    d. Fielding questions
    e. Website
        i. Website Integration
    f. Facebook
        i. Images and Reach
        ii. Facebook Events
        iii. Page Optimization
    g. Twitter
        i. Images
        ii. Character Limit
        iii. Scheduling Tweets
        iv. Timing Considerations
    h. YouTube
    i. Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Pinterest, Flickr, TikTok, and Vine
4. **Timeline**
    a. Now through the 2022 Gubernatorial General Election
    b. Sample Messages and Images

Introduction

This document provides resources to communicate with Maryland's electorate and those eligible to become registered voters. These resources will uniformly guide voter information across channels of communication in accordance with the election calendar of events.

In addition to this plan, please incorporate voter communications tailored to your unique voting populaces. Clear, ongoing, and effective voter communication and education is proven to optimize voter registration records, enhance voter preparation, help prevent long lines, boost election judge recruitment, promote the efficient and effective functioning of voting locations, and facilitate overall voter understanding of election and voting processes and procedures.

Tagline

2022 is a gubernatorial election year following decennial redistricting in which voters will need to be prepared to successfully and independently exercise their voting rights and participate in Maryland elections safely and successfully. Redistricting means new state and congressional district lines based on current census data, which determines who appears on your ballot, where you can vote, and how our communities are represented. Uniformly communicating how **#MDvotes** is critical to the successful, safe operation of our polling places and vote centers during early voting and on election days, as well as supporting Marylanders voting by mail to successfully request and return their ballot.

Website and Social Media Accounts

An organization's online presence sets the tone for its brand and offers the most significant opportunity to shape public perception, inform and engage customers, maintain relevancy, and enhance confidence. Digital communications are among the most powerful channels for informing the electorate and gaining voter confidence. Online platforms provide optimal visibility to cost-effectively reach maximal people compared to traditional communications methods. Therefore, curating these web-based platforms is an ongoing public communications and voter education priority.

- Social media accounts typically have slow organic growth and need to be consistently curated with content followers perceive as valuable.
- Cross-promote social accounts by asking Twitter followers for Facebook page and Instagram account likes and asking Facebook fans to be Twitter and Instagram followers, and vice versa, to gain a larger audience.
- Use Facebook's "Invite friends to like this Page" feature to ask your friends to like the page to gain more likes.

- Updates including images and/or video perform significantly better than those that do not, so use relevant media when posting online. Forums, newsworthy developments, election information, and voter outreach events are all opportunities to take and share images and videos. Otherwise, relevant graphics, memes, or gifs may be culturally appropriate to incorporate into posts. There is no limit to how visually compelling imagery or graphics may be creatively utilized to attract attention and to engage followers.
- Image sizes matter when posting online, and social media sites are always adjusting layouts and dimensions, which affects how images display. Make sure to stay current with the social media platform's recommendations concerning image sizes and dimensions.
- Incorporate calls to action instructing your audience to act now, usually using an imperative verb or call-to-action such as "register now", "learn more", "vote early today", etc.
- For best results, monitor the performance of each update and adjust for continuous improvement while following the rules and best practices of all social accounts utilized. Generally, lunch breaks and peak commuting hours are good times of day for users to see your updates. Use each platform's insights and analytics to see when your fans or followers are typically online. Scheduling posts in advance utilizing a social aggregator is a convenient way for your account to deploy timely updates on schedule throughout the busy election cycle.
- Social media platforms and website functionality are ever-evolving with current digital communications and social trends. New applications and trends are constantly emerging, while existing top social media application providers are continuously updating their services and algorithms resulting in numerous noteworthy changes for social media users each year. Sites like Social Media Today help you stay current with breaking social trends and updates.

Getting Started

Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram all have comprehensive help centers with all the information you need to get started with social media:

Twitter: support.twitter.com

Facebook: facebook.com/help

Instagram: help.instagram.com

Hashtag

The official Maryland election hashtag is-- **#MDvotes –** please utilize it throughout social media posts. Hashtags are used to identify messages on a specific topic, which helps to enter larger

conversations beyond account followers to garner greater visibility. The hashtag is short, concise, and is intended to inclusively inform voters on all Maryland election-related matters.

Fielding Questions

It is important to monitor comments regularly on social platforms to make sure that there isn't a reoccurring question or misunderstanding that needs to be addressed. Engaging in answering questions is valuable, but it is not advisable to engage in arguments or negative comments unless there is a neutral, fact-based response. For direct messages, link to resources or scripted responses for frequently asked questions.

Website Resources

The SBE website is a great resource for upcoming election news and dates. You can utilize specific links that include Voter Services where an individual can verify registration, register to vote, and check polling locations. You can also locate the 2022 election calendar and a list of filed candidates, vote by mail (absentee voting) information with access to the ballot application as well as UOCAVA information.

For reference, the SBE election information website is:
elections.maryland.gov/2022

Facebook

Use Facebook to engage users by making them aware of resources and activities leading up to election day milestones. Facebook allows page administrators to share text, pictures, videos, live streams, website links, events, live coverage, and other content.

Page Optimization
Optimal times to post on Facebook:

- Early afternoon to get the most shares
- Midafternoon to get the most clicks
- Peak days are Thursday and Friday
- Anytime between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. is considered a decent time to post for engagement purposes

Monitor your page's insights to track the performance of your posts and adjust to enhance performance.

The first step in engaging with us is to "like" SBE's page and LBEs' Facebook pages. The SBE Facebook page is:
facebook.com/MarylandStateBoardofElections

Twitter

With over 330 million monthly active users, Twitter is one of the social media networks that will most often be used to discuss a brand. Tweets can contain images, gifs, live streams, and polls. Twitter is the birthplace of hashtags, which are now used throughout the most prominent social networks. The registered Maryland election hashtag, **#MDvotes**, engages the public in conversations about election information, thereby promoting increased social media activity to educate Marylanders.

Images
For gaining more engagement, clicks, retweets, and replies, Twitter images work. You can include up to 4 images per tweet. Uploaded photos will appear in your followers' streams and the streams of their followers (if retweeted). Note that Twitter may collapse your image into a smaller version to fit into a user's stream. Make sure Twitter displays the portion of the image you want followers to see by setting the width of your image to fit minimum requirements. Also, horizontally center your content to avoid cropping.

Character Limit
Media attachments (images, GIFs, videos, polls, etc.) and quoted tweets do not count toward the 280-character limit. The extra room for text gives users more flexibility in composing messages.

When sharing links, you can utilize short URLs (Uniform Resource Locators: the unique address for each webpage) created through a URL shortener to keep tweets within the 280-character Twitter limit.

Scheduling Tweets

A free option for scheduling tweets is tweetdeck.twitter.com. To schedule tweets via TweetDeck, sign in with your Twitter account.

Timing Considerations

- Early afternoon is when tweets generally receive the most clicks
- Evenings and late at night are the times when tweets receive the most favorites and retweets, on average
- The most convenient and popular times to tweet during the day are not necessarily the best times to tweet for engagement
- Twitter engagement is generally higher on weekends

It's helpful to monitor tweet activity and to experiment to find the times of peak engagement with your followers. Check the account analytics for performance insights.

Follow SBE's and LBEs' Twitter accounts. The SBE Twitter handle is:
@md_sbe

twitter.com/md_sbe

YouTube

SBE has a YouTube account to host videos; the channel can be accessed here.

If you use YouTube, subscribe to SBE's account to stay current.

Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Pinterest, Flickr, TikTok, and Vine

SBE does not maintain accounts on Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Pinterest, Flickr, TikTok, or Vine. However, if you do utilize these platforms, we encourage you to share photo/video content with SBE so they can also be promoted through SBE's website and social accounts for wider reach. We also encourage you to incorporate **#MDvotes**.

Timeline

This timeline primarily features sample tweets, which can also serve as Facebook posts. Please note that while tweets often make suitable Facebook posts, not all Facebook posts make good tweets given Twitter's 280-character space limitation. Unless labeled as Facebook posts, the following suggested social media updates are crafted as tweets and can be posted on almost any social platform.

- The updates contain full URLs, but are designed so that you can insert a shortened URL that leads to the same webpage as the original URL.
- Image ideas are interspersed throughout this social timeline to inspire visually appealing, engaging content. To enlarge for better visibility, select an image and drag a corner.
- You can use your own shortened URLs or use the following to insert into your social media posts. Remember to always check the link for accuracy before posting.
    - **Online Voter Registration (OLVR):** vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs
    - **Mail-in Ballot Request**: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot
    - **Voter Lookup**: vote.md.gov/StatusSearch
    - **2022 Election Information:** vote.md.gov/MDvotes22
    - **Contact List of local election offices**: vote.md.gov/LBElist
    - **State Board of Elections (SBE) Home page**: vote.md.gov
    - **Rumor Control:** vote.md.gov/RealInfo

If you don't want to use the shortened URLs, here is a list of the original URLs below.

Online Voter Registration and Mail-in Ballot request (OLVR):
voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/InstructionsStep1

Mail-in Ballot Request (for those already registered to vote in MD):
voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/onlinemailinrequest/InstructionsStep1

Voter Lookup:
voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch

2022 Election Information:
elections.maryland.gov/elections/2022

Contact List of local election offices:
elections.maryland.gov/about/county_boards.html

State Board of Elections (SBE) Home page:
elections.maryland.gov

Rumor Control page:
elections.maryland.gov/press_room/rumor_control.html

2022 Timeline

It's time to prepare Marylanders for the gubernatorial elections, including promoting voter registration as well as vote-by-mail and in-person voting options. Suggested updates to inform the public about key dates and holidays of the election calendar in 2022 are as follows, along with inspiration for included images.

Key 2022 Election Dates and Holidays

Social media updates will serve to intensify voter engagement programs by disseminating information about voter registration and voting options. A few suggestions:

- Continue intensive voter participation efforts through key election milestones and registration deadlines.
- Create awareness and understanding of voting by mail versus in person.
- Patriotic holidays are relevant opportunities to post updates about celebrating our collective right to vote.
- Include voter education activities increasingly as election day approaches.
- Inform the voting public they can view MDCRIS to review campaign contributions and expenditures.
- Review, debrief and evaluate voter engagement efforts for continuous improvement.

Suggested updates pertaining to key dates and holidays on the 2022 election calendar are as follows:

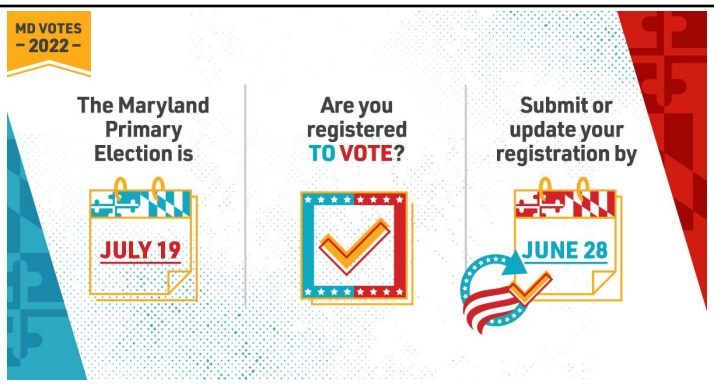
2022 Key Election Dates Sample Messages

Gubernatorial Elections: For the Gubernatorial Primary and General Elections held on July 19 and November 8, 2022, all registered voters will be sent a mail-in ballot application with a postage pre-paid envelope to return their application. Early voting centers will be available during early voting and voters will vote at their assigned polling place on election day. Voters also have the option of dropping off their ballot at an official drop box location. It is important to encourage voters to apply online for a mail-in ballot now, to help reduce the number of paper applications that will have to be processed.

Registering to Vote

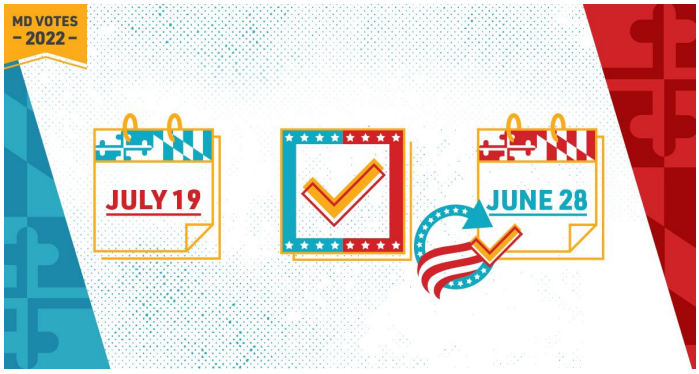
The deadline to register to vote for the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election is Tuesday, June 28.

- Are you registered to vote? You can register or update your registration information today using the online voter registration system: vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes



- Have you moved? If you have, don't forget to update your voter registration information! It's quick and easy to use the online system: vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes

- The election is on July 19th! Have you checked your voter registration info lately? It's important to make sure it's current! Check your info at vote.md.gov/StatusSearch and if it needs to be updated, update it at vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes



- Do you need to register to vote, update your voter registration information, or request a mail-in ballot? Text VBM to 77788 or apply online here: vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes

- #DYK the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election is on Tues, July 19th? Is your voter registration information current? Check it at vote.md.gov/StatusSearch and if not, update it at vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes

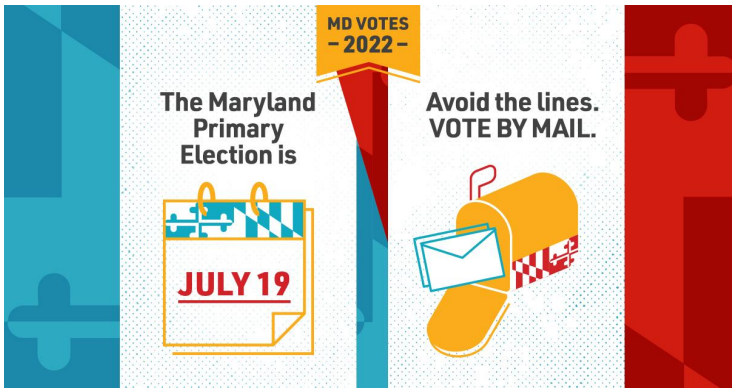
- Tues, 6/28 is the deadline to register to vote or update your registration info online or by paper application for the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election. You can register online or update your info here: vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes

- Tues, 6/28 is the deadline to register to vote or update your info online or by paper application. You can register to vote online or update your info here: vote.md.gov/VoterSvcs #MDvotes

Requesting A Mail-in Ballot:

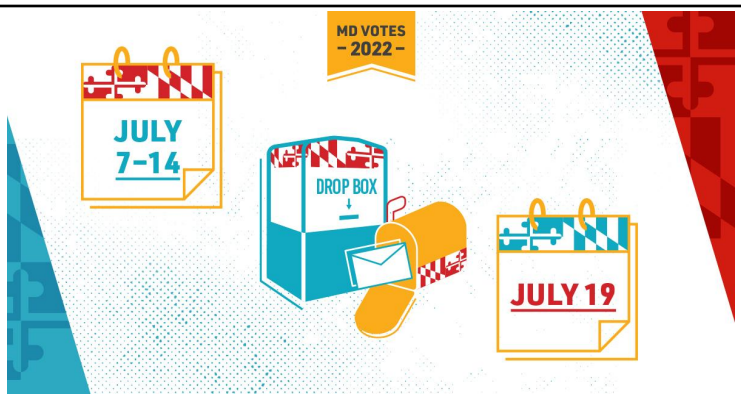
The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is Tuesday, July 12th. The application must be ***received*** *by July 12th. It is important to encourage voters to send their applications in order to be received in time, and if possible, request their ballot online to help reduce the number of paper applications that will need to be processed.*

- Want to vote from home? You can request to receive a mail-in ballot with this online application vote.md.gov/NeedBallot Or if you prefer, you can download an application here: vote.md.gov/BallotPlease #MDvotes



- Do you want to receive a mail-in ballot for the July 19th primary election? It's not too late to apply! You can apply online today here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

- Want to vote by mail for the July 19th primary election? You'll need to apply to receive a ballot. It's safe and secure. Apply online to receive your mail-in ballot today here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot or download an application here: vote.md.gov/BallotPlease #MDvotes



- Want to receive a mail-in ballot for the primary election on July 19th? You'll need to submit an application in order to receive a mail-in ballot. Apply here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

- Avoid waiting in line! You can vote safely from home by requesting a mail-in ballot. Apply online today at vote.md.gov/NeedBallot or you can download an application here vote.md.gov/BallotPlease #MDvotes

- Did you know you can request to receive your ballot by mail, fax, or internet delivery for the primary election? You can apply online here vote.md.gov/NeedBallot or download an application here: vote.md.gov/BallotPlease #MDvotes

- Want to stay safe and vote by mail for the primary election? Don't forget to request your ballot! You can submit an application to request a ballot online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes #TrustedInfo2022

- Did you know you can receive a ballot electronically and that it features an online ballot marking tool? Apply online here vote.md.gov/NeedBallot to receive it when ballots are ready. Note: The ballot still must be printed & mailed or dropped off. #MDvotes

- Social distancing? Vote safely and receive a mail-in ballot for the primary election. You'll need to submit an application to request a ballot. Request your ballot online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot We need to receive your request by 7/12! #MDvotes

- If you want to vote by mail and have submitted your application, you can check to see if it was received at our Voter Lookup site here: vote.md.gov/StatusSearch. Enter your info and select, 'Status of my Mail-in or Provisional Ballot'. #MDvotes

- What's the difference between a mail-in ballot and an absentee ballot? There's no difference! SBE & local election offices refer to absentee ballots as "mail-in ballots" & absentee voting as "mail-in voting." Learn more at vote.md.gov/2022 #MDvotes

- Did your local election office receive your mail-in ballot request? You can check! Go to vote.md.gov/StatusSearch. Enter your info and select 'Status of My Mail-in or Provisional Ballot'. A status of 'Application Received' means it has been processed. #MDvotes

- Don't want to wait in line at a vote center? You can request to receive a mail-in ballot instead. Apply online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot. Your request must be received by 7/12. #MDvotes

- The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is coming up! If you want a mail-in ballot, your request must be received by Tues, July 12th. You can request a mail-in ballot online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

- Heads up! If you want a mail-in ballot sent to you, then TOMORROW 7/12 is the deadline to request one. Your request must be RECEIVED by 7/12. You can apply online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

- TODAY 7/12 is the deadline to request a mail-in ballot. If you want a mail-in ballot sent to you, your request must be received today. You can submit your request online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot or download and return the application here: vote.md.gov/BallotPlease #MDvotes

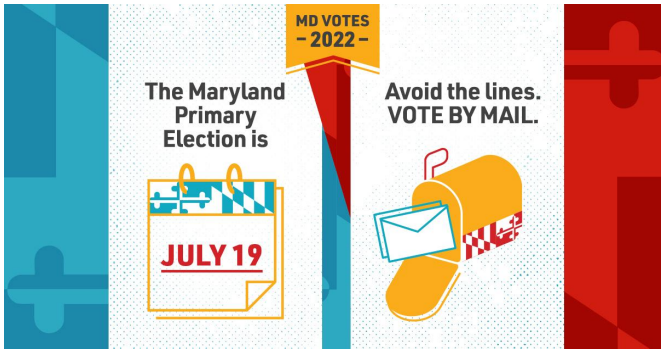
- You can vote in person for the primary election—but there might be lines. Want to avoid waiting? Request your mail-in ballot today. You can apply online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

- Would you like a mail-in ballot for the July 19th election? We strongly encourage that you complete the application sent to you, or you can apply online here: vote.md.gov/NeedBallot #MDvotes

Returning a Mail-in Ballot:

- Ready to return your mail-in ballot? Don't forget to sign the oath before you return your ballot! #MDvotes

- If you requested a mail-in ballot, remember that ballot can only be returned by mail or dropped off at an official drop-off location. If you return your ballot by email or fax, it will not count! Find a drop off location here: vote.md.gov/DropBoxes #MDvotes



- Ready to return your mail-in ballot? Don't forget to sign the oath! If you don't sign the oath, your ballot won't count. Your ballot must be postmarked or dropped off before 8 p.m. on 7/19. #MDvotes

- Plan to mail your voted ballot? It must be postmarked on or before 7/19 to be timely. Putting your ballot in the mail on 7/19 does NOT guarantee it will be postmarked on the same day. Once you get your ballot, we recommend you mail your ballot as soon as you can. #MDvotes

- Heads up! If you plan to mail your ballot, it must be postmarked on or before 7/19 to be timely. DYK depending on mail pick-up times, a ballot might not be postmarked the same day it's put in the mail. #MDvotes

- If you plan to return your ballot by mail, we recommend you mail it as soon as you can. Your ballot must be postmarked on or before 7/19 to be considered timely. Note: Putting a ballot in the mail on one day does not guarantee it will be postmarked on that same day. #MDvotes

- Has your ballot arrived at your local election office? Check at vote.md.gov/StatusSearch, enter your info, and select 'Status of My Mail-in or Provisional Ballot.' #MDvotes

- If you're returning a mail-in ballot, did you know you can drop it off? Ballot drop off locations are available until 8pm on 7/19. Just drop and go. You can find a list of drop off locations at vote.md.gov/DropBoxes #MDvotes

- There's another way to return your ballot— just drop it off! As a reminder, your mail-in ballot must be postmarked or dropped off by 8 p.m. on election day (7/19). Find a drop off location at vote.md.gov/DropBoxes #MDvotes

Recruiting Election Workers:

- Registered voters, want to be part of the election process? Sign up to serve as a judge! Most judges earn $160-300 per day! Learn more: vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes

- Become An Election Judge! Counties across Maryland are hiring election judges (also known as poll workers). This is a paid position and is also a great opportunity to help the community and support democracy. Most judges earn $160-300 per day! vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes

- Work with us! We need poll workers to help during early voting and on Election Day. Join our team and learn something new: vote.md.gov/JudgeApply Most judges earn $160-300 per day! #MDvotes

- Did you know you can be part of the election process? Help fellow voters by being an election worker. Without judges, there'd be no elections! Most judges earn $160-300 per day! vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes

- Meet your neighbors and work close to home by joining us to help voters during early voting and on election day! Most judges earn $160-300 per day! Learn more: vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes

- Looking for a summer side job that looks great on a resume? Try being an election judge during the primary election in July! Most judges earn $160-300 per day! vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDVotes

- Want to help? We need you! Here's how to sign up to be an election judge and how to otherwise get involved in Maryland elections: vote.md.gov/SBEjoin Most judges earn $160-300 per day! #MDvotes #HelpMDVote #HelpAmericaVote #HelpAmericaVote2022 #TrustedInfo2022

- #BeAHero and sign up to serve as an election judge today! Without judges, we wouldn't have elections. Gain experience, earn compensation, serve your community, and be a hero of democracy at vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes #ThankElectionHeroes #WeNeedYou #HeroesOfDemocracy

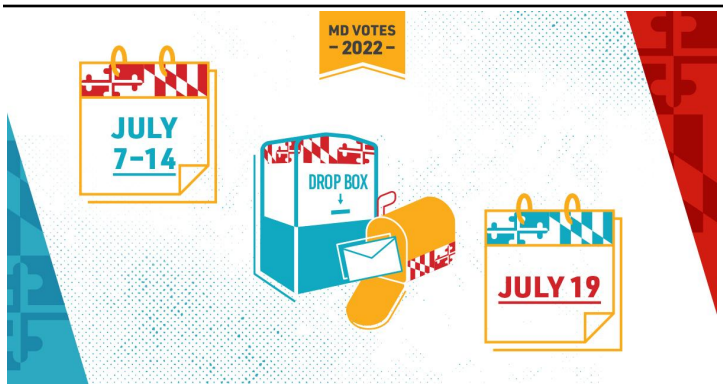
- #BeAHero and join our team! Without judges, we wouldn't have elections. Gain experience, earn compensation, serve your community, and be a hero of democracy at vote.md.gov/JudgeApply #MDvotes #ElectionHeroes #TrustedInfo2022 #WeNeedYou #HeroesOfDemocracy

Early Voting

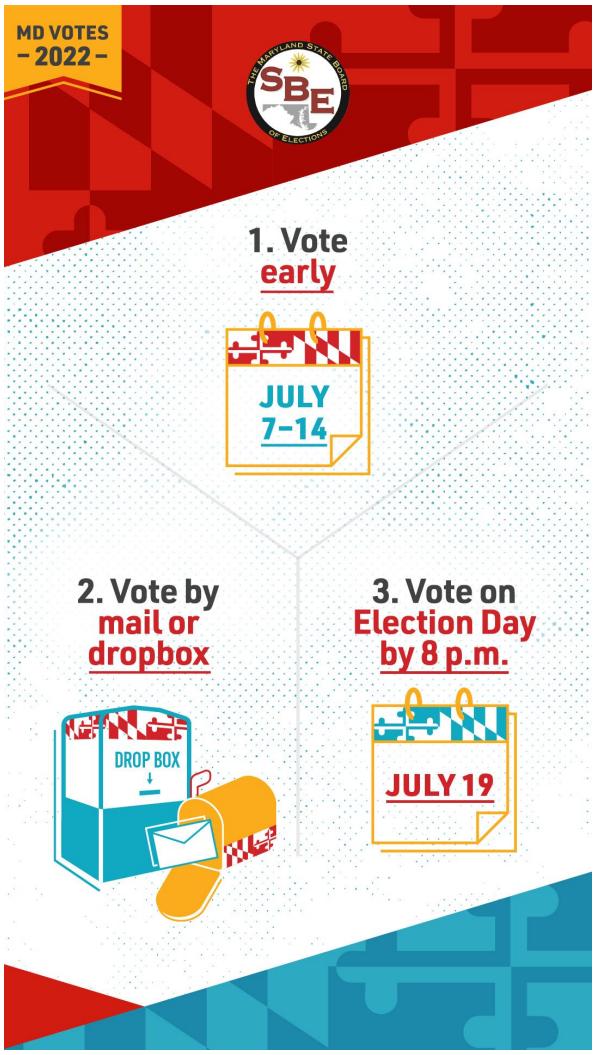
- Today is the first day of early voting for the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election. Early voting runs from 7am to 8pm, Thursday, July 7th to Thursday, July 14th - Saturday and Sunday too! Find a local early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes

- Early voting runs from 7am to 8pm, Thursday, July 7th to Thursday, July 14th - Saturday and Sunday too! Find a local early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes

- Don't want to wait in line? Try early voting! Early voting is from Thurs, 7/7 to Thurs, 7/14, 7am to 8pm — there is weekend voting as well! Find a local early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes



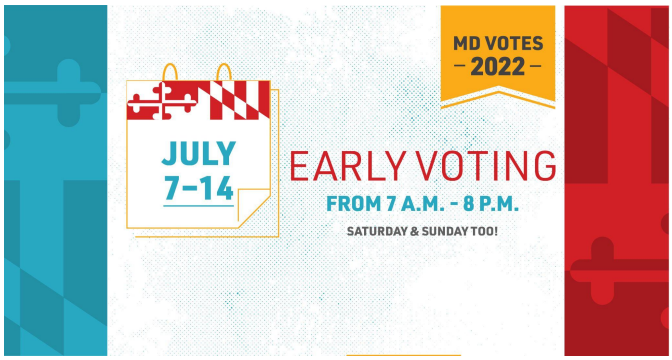
- Planning to exercise your right to vote? Take some time during the weekend and vote early! Early voting runs from 7am to 8pm, Thursday, July 7th to Thursday, July 14th - Saturday and Sunday too! Find a local early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes



- Not registered? No problem? You can register and vote at a local early voting center from Thurs, 7/7 to Thurs, 7/14, 7am – 8pm. Just bring a document proving where you live, like an MVA-issued driver's license or ID. Learn more at vote.md.gov/VoteEarly #MDvotes

- There's still time to vote early, but tomorrow, 7/14, is the last day. Find a local early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes

- No need to wait to vote on election day! Avoid lines by voting early. You can vote at a local early voting center from Thurs, 7/7 to Thurs, 7/14, 7am – 8pm. Find an early voting center here: vote.md.gov/EarlyVote #MDvotes



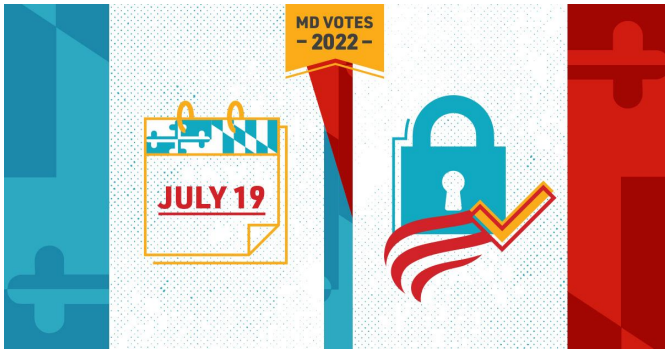
Election Day

- Tomorrow, 7/19 is election day! Are you ready? Vote centers will be open from 7am until 8pm. Do you know where your polling place is? Find it at vote.md.gov/PollingPlace #MDvotes

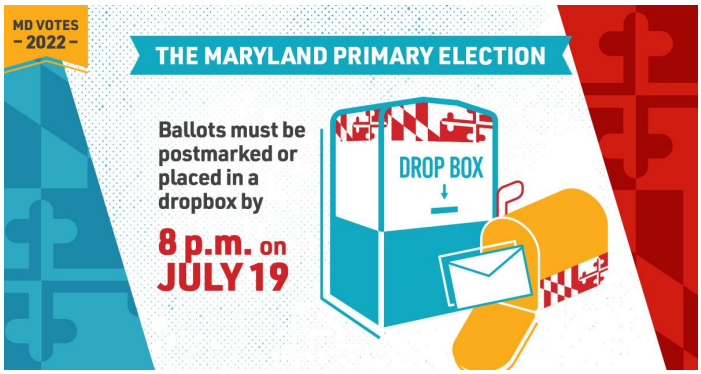
MD VOTES
– 2022 –
THIS ELECTION DAY,
KNOW WHERE TO VOTE
JULY 19, 2022

MD VOTES
– 2022 –
SBE
The Maryland Primary Election is
JULY 19
Vote safely.
Vote securely.

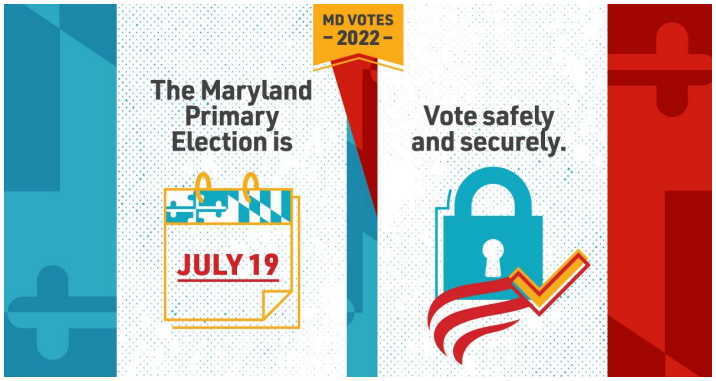
MD VOTES
– 2022 –
SBE
THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS
The Maryland
Primary Election is
JULY 19
Vote safely. Vote securely.


MD VOTES
– 2022 –
JULY 19

- Have you returned your mail-in ballot? Ballots must be postmarked or dropped off by 8pm tomorrow (7/19). Find a ballot drop off location here: vote.md.gov/DropBoxes #MDvotes



- It's election day! Polling places are open from 7am until 8pm. Do you know where your polling place is? Find it at vote.md.gov/PollingPlace #MDvotes



- Today is election day and the polls are open 7am-8pm. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked or placed in a ballot drop box by 8pm today. If you are mailing your ballot, it must be postmarked by today! #MDvotes
- Today is election day, do you plan to mail your ballot? Ballots must be postmarked today, 7/19- but putting it in a mailbox today does NOT guarantee it'll be postmarked today. We recommend you take your ballot to a post office before it closes to have it postmarked! #MDvotes
- If you are going to vote in person, the polls are open from 7am – 8pm. Help keep yourself and others safe! Please wear a mask & practice social distancing. Have a plan in case there is a line. Find your polling place at vote.md.gov/PollingPlace #MDvotes

- If you haven't returned your mail-in ballot yet, make sure to get it to the post office before they close today, or you can drop off your ballot by 8pm at an official drop off location here: vote.md.gov/DropBoxes #MDvotes

After Election Day

- Wondering if your mail-in ballot was accepted? You'll be able to check online after the election is certified at the following link. vote.md.gov/StatusSearch #MDvotes

- Over the next few weeks, local election offices will be counting mail-in and provisional ballots. Contact your local election office to view the live video feed of the canvass. #MDvotes

Holidays:

- June 14 - Flag Day
- June 20 - Juneteenth – SBE closed
- July 4 – Independence Day – SBE closed
- September 5 – Labor Day – SBE closed
- October 10 – Columbus Day – SBE closed
- November 11 – Veterans Day – SBE closed
- November 24 & 25 – Thanksgiving & Native American Heritage Day – SBE closed

Gubernatorial General Election Day (General)

- Maryland's gubernatorial general election day is on November 8th! You can vote by mail, during early voting, or on election day! Register or update your voter registration by October 18th! For more #TrustedInfo2022 on how #MDvotes and to find your local drop box, early voting center, or polling place, visit elections.maryland.gov or call 1-800-222-VOTE.