

# Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail FAQ

- **What is “Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail” (RAVBM)?**

RAVBM is an online tool that allows all voters to access their ballot online and read and mark their ballot using a web browser on their computer or other device. As a result, it allows voters with disabilities to read and mark a ballot privately and independently using their assistive technologies. RAVBM is NOT Internet voting. Although you access and mark your ballot online, you still have to print and return a physical ballot to your county elections officials.

- **How does RAVBM work?**

Every county administers RAVBM slightly differently. However, the five steps below generally describe how RAVBM works in California:

1. *Find or request an RAVBM access link from your county.*

[Contact your county's Elections Office](#) by phone, email, or visit your county's elections website to locate or request a RAVBM access link.

2. *Follow the link to access instructions and mark your ballot.*

The access link should take you to a certification page. After verifying your identity, you will be able to review your RAVBM instructions. Continue to, and mark your ballot on your own computer or device, with your own assistive technology if needed. Disability Rights California published a [video demonstration of a RAVBM system](#).

3. *Review and print your RAVBM ballot.*

Check your ballot and make any necessary corrections. Once you're done, follow the instructions for printing the ballot.

4. *Place your RAVBM ballot in an envelope. Sign and seal the envelope.*

If you received a physical ballot in the mail, it should have come with an official return envelope. You can use that envelope to return your printed RAVBM ballot. Don't forget to sign the back of the envelope and to seal the envelope. Sign between the 2 punched holes.

**Note:** If you do not have an official return envelope, contact [your county's Elections Office](#) and request a replacement return envelope. If there is not enough time before Election Day to receive a replacement return envelope, check the return instructions on how to return your RAVBM ballot without an official return envelope. Counties allow voters to return their RAVBM ballots using a standard, unofficial envelope, but you may need to print a portion of that

envelope (or a “declaration”) from the materials you downloaded when accessing RAVBM.

5. *Return your RAVBM ballot in the signed and sealed envelope.*

Return your RAVBM ballot (1) in the mail, (2) at any ballot drop-box in your county, (3) at any polling place or vote center in your county, or (4) at [your county’s Elections Office](#). If someone is returning your ballot for you, remember to include their name, relationship (to you), and signature on the envelope. Check the return instructions or call your county’s Elections Office if you are unsure of how to return your RAVBM ballot.

- **When can I access my RAVBM ballot?**

Generally, counties allow eligible voters to access their RAVBM ballots up to up to 29 days before Election Day. [Check your county’s elections website](#) for the best guidance on when your RAVBM ballot will be available.

- **What’s the deadline for returning my marked RAVBM ballot?**

Like regular vote-by-mail ballots, RAVBM ballots must be received by county elections officials by the close of polls (8:00 p.m.) on Elections Day. However, late RAVBM ballots will still be counted even if received up to seven days after Election Day, so long as the envelope containing the RAVBM ballot is postmarked on or before Election Day.

- **Do all counties use the same RAVBM system?**

No. Currently, the California Secretary of State has certified several RAVBM systems.

[Consult the Secretary of State’s Certified Voting Technologies Used by Counties, Check your county’s elections website or contact your county elections officials](#) to see which RAVBM system your county uses.

- **What if I’m out of state, out of the country, or just outside my county?**

You can still vote using RAVBM. Remember, RAVBM was designed in part to allow military and overseas voters to vote from distant locations. So long as you follow the five steps discussed above, and your county elections officials receive your RAVBM ballot by the third day after the election (with a postmark on Election Day or earlier), your ballot will be counted.

- **Can I still use RAVBM if I cannot sign the envelope (or declaration)?**

Yes. If you are a voter with a disability who has difficulty signing their name on any type of vote-by-mail envelope or declaration, you can make a “mark” or use an approved signature stamp on the signature line and have someone “witness” your mark.

Your mark can be as simple as an “X”. The person helping you should then print your name next to your mark, also on the signature line. They should then write their name on the nearby “Witness” line. If your envelope or declaration is missing a “Witness” line, the person helping you should write “Witness:” somewhere near the signature line and print their name next to it (just make sure their writing does not overlap with any other text or barcodes). This “mark-witness” procedure is still required even if your RAVBM envelope or declaration asks you to fill out your name and address on separate lines.

If you have a signature stamp, you can use it to place your signature on your RAVBM envelope or declaration if you (a) used it at the Department of Motor Vehicles; or (b) registered to vote using your signature stamp in the presence of a county elections official. When using the stamp on your RAVBM envelope or declaration, remember to have someone “witness” your stamp as described above (i.e., as if the stamp were your “mark”). Disability Rights California published a publication regarding [signing the return ballot envelope using a “mark” or a signature stamp](#).

- **What happens if my county rejects my signature, “mark”, or stamp?**

If your signature is rejected, your county elections officials must send you notice and materials to verify your signature within one to two weeks. A written declaration should be included in those materials. Sign the declaration (follow the same “witness” procedure described above) and return it to your county officials. This will “cure” your signature mismatch.

**Note:** You can track your RAVBM ballot like a regular vote-by-mail ballot using [BallotTrax](#). In addition to notifying you when your ballot has been received by your county officials, this online service will notify you via text, email or phone if your ballot has been rejected for a signature mismatch. You can [contact your county elections officials](#) and request the materials to “cure” your mismatch instead of waiting for the signature rejection notice and declaration in the mail.

- **I can’t find my RAVBM ballot link or the link is not working. Who should I contact for help?**

Your best chance of resolving a RAVBM access issue is to [contact your county elections officials](#) for troubleshooting. You can also call Disability Rights California’s Voting Hotline at (888) 569-7955.

- **I’d like to practice using RAVBM. Is there a way to do that?**

Yes. Many counties offer sample RAVBM ballots for voters who want to practice using RAVBM. [Check your county’s elections website or contact your county elections officials](#) to see whether your county offers sample RAVBM ballots.