

Excused Absence- Voting & Nonpartisan Volunteer

BACKGROUND

The Federal Government has a longstanding policy to grant employees adequate time off from work, without charge to their personal leave, to vote. Employees should have ample time to vote in Federal, State, county or municipal elections, or in referendums on any civic matter in their community to the extent that such time off does not seriously interfere with an organization's operations. Additionally, agencies are being encouraged to permit Federal employees to use available workplace flexibilities to volunteer to serve as a nonpartisan poll worker.

EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR VOTING

Tuesday, November 3, 2020, is an election day. Where the polls are not open at least three hours either before or after an employee's regular hours (determined by reference to the time of day the employee normally arrives and departs from work, or core time for an employee on a flexible work schedule), leave-approving officials may approve a limited amount of excused absence to vote. Employees may be granted enough time to permit them to report for work up to three hours after the polls open or leave work up to three hours before the polls close, whichever requires less time off.

The following is a list of times that polling places will be open.

Virginia 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

District of Columbia 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Maryland 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

North Carolina 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Montana 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

If you live and vote outside any of the locations above, please check with your county Board of Elections office for times polling places will be open.

EXTENDED COMMUTING DISTANCE

In addition, if an employee's voting place is beyond normal commuting distance and vote by absentee ballot is not permitted, the employee may be granted sufficient time off (not to exceed one day) in order to be able to make the trip to the voting place to cast a ballot. If more than one day is needed, the employee may request annual leave or leave without pay for the additional period of absence.

EARLY VOTING

An increasing number of jurisdictions offer a period prior to the day of the election during which voters may cast ballots early. Some employees, such as those on alternative work schedules, may find it convenient to vote during these early voting periods. Excused absence for early voting will be granted only when (1) the employee will be unable to vote on the day of the election because of activities directly related to the agency's mission (such as travel) and cannot vote by absentee ballot, or (2) early voting hours are the same as, or exceed, voting hours on the day of the election, in which case the information provided under "Excused Absence for Voting" applies.

If an employee chooses to vote earlier, but the hours in which polling places are open are shorter than on Election Day, the employee is not eligible for excused absence because the employee has opted to vote at that time. Also, an agency should not grant excused absence if an employee's non-workday on his or her compressed or other alternative work schedule falls on a day that his or her polling place is open for voting.

NONPARTISAN VOLUNTEER

Where local jurisdictions are in need, the expertise of Federal employees in interacting with citizens and dutifully carrying out nonpartisan activity can be a welcome resource. Additional support from Federal employees who volunteer as nonpartisan poll workers could support expanded capacity and reduce waiting times and lines for citizens as they vote on Election Day, and support strengthened election security.

An employee who requests time off to train and serve as a nonpartisan election official to assist in the proper and orderly voting and procedures at polling stations on November 3, 2020, may be granted excused absence to the maximum extent possible while being sure to account for the responsibilities and duties to carry out the agency and IC mission.

Employees must provide their supervisor with a signed certification attesting that they will be serving as a nonpartisan election official along with their excused absence request.

If you have questions regarding the above, please contact workflex@mail.nih.gov.