



**MUNICIPAL CLERK ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY UPDATE
FOR THE ANCHORAGE VOTE CENTERS
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

PRESS RELEASE

March 23, 2020

Anchorage Municipal Clerk Barbara Jones announces today that because of the COVID-19 pandemic she will be exercising the emergency powers of the Clerk and declining to open five of the six Anchorage Accessible Vote Centers on March 30; Jones encourages Anchorage voters to vote at home because of the COVID-19 emergency. The eighteen secure drop boxes placed throughout Anchorage will still be open and voters are encouraged to return their voted ballots to a secure drop box.

Jones indicated that upon review of guidance from the Anchorage Health Department (AHD), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and in light of public facility closures as well as discussions with the Assembly Leadership, the following Anchorage Vote Centers will not open on March 30:

- Muldoon Mall
- O'Malley's on the Green
- MOA Election Center
- Loussac Library (location is closed by Emergency Order through March 31), and
- Eagle River Town Center (location is closed by Emergency Order through March 31).

The City Hall Accessible Vote Center is planning to open on Monday, March 30 as scheduled. Even so, with the ever-changing dynamics of the COVID-19 crisis, voters are encouraged to plan ahead and vote at home as soon as possible.

If voters have any questions, need a replacement ballot, or didn't receive a ballot, voters should call the Voter Hotline at 243-VOTE (8683). The Call Center Team is standing by Monday-Friday, from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and can provide as many options as possible for voters to vote without risking their health, the health of Election Workers, or our community by going to a potentially crowded location.

Jones indicated the decision was difficult but necessary considering that over 75% of the Accessible Vote Center Election Workers, with hundreds of years of election experience, have declined to work in the 2020 Election because they are at higher risk for COVID-19. The decision also considered the fact that several Accessible Vote Centers were planned for facilities that are already closed due to the COVID-19

emergency. In addition, Jones expressed concern that Accessible Vote Centers have in the past been locations where lines and crowds have formed, when guidance and orders from municipal, state, and federal officials require social distancing and avoiding crowds.

Anchorage's existing Vote-By-Mail/Vote-At-Home system is much better suited to protecting the public health during this pandemic than a poll-based election. The MOA Elections Team encourages voters to vote their mailed ballots as soon as possible: place the ballots in the security envelope and the ballot return envelope and save money by returning to one of the 18 secure drop boxes across Anchorage. Secure drop box locations can be found on the drop box map [HERE](#). The other option to return your voted ballot is through the USPS, which will cost 70 cents in 2020.

The Municipal Clerk's Office and MOA Elections Team thank our community and remind voters to "Stay Safe and Vote at Home!"

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