

# Eliminating Annual Requests for Ballot by Mail Applications

## Problem

Sending Ballots by Mail for the entire calendar year increases the chance that someone other than the voter such as a family member, roommate, neighbor, or anyone with access to the voter's mail could gain access to the voter's ballot.

A full year is also a long period for voters who typically qualify for Ballots by Mail. Circumstances can change, for example, a voter may:

- become incapacitated,
- move in with a relative,
- move to an assisted living facility or another location, or
- pass away.

In these circumstances, a change of address is usually not required.

**In Nueces County, most Ballots by Mail are sent for the whole calendar year.**

As per the Texas Election code **86.0015** Annual Ballots by Mail

**(a)** This section applies only to an application for a ballot to be voted by mail that:

**(1)**

indicates the ground of eligibility is age or disability; **and**

**(2)**

does not specify the election for which a ballot is requested or has been marked by the applicant as an application for more than one election.

**(b)**

An application described by Subsection (a) is considered to be an application for a ballot for **each election, including any ensuing runoff**:

## Solution

Section 86.0015(b) requires the election official processing the voter's request to consider the Ballot by Mail application is for the whole year, even if the voter doesn't check the "annual" box. Instead, require a separate Ballot by Mail request for each election (including any runoff). - Submitting a request signals an intent to vote in that specific election, but it does not necessarily mean the applicant wants to vote by mail in **all** elections that year.

This approach also helps ensure the request remains appropriate if the voters eligibility or living situation changes over time.