

New Mexico Tribal Leaders Guide

How to Request an Alternate Voting Location on Your Tribal Lands



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Native Americans living on reservations and pueblos in New Mexico **face obstacles** to registering and casting their ballots that other New Mexicans do not. These include:

Distance. Native people living on tribal lands in New Mexico may face long journeys to their nearest elections office, polling location or ballot drop box.

Unreliable Mail Service. Postal service to and from reservations can be slow and unreliable, making vote-by-mail an inadequate alternative to voting in person or depositing one's ballot in a drop box. This problem is compounded where voters lack standard residential addresses.

Lack of Opportunities to Register. In New Mexico, voters may register by mail, in person, online, or via same-day registration on election day. Despite these options, Native voters may be less able to use these methods due to lack of Internet access, long trips to the nearest registration office, and other barriers.

Language Barriers.

The good news: New Mexico specifically permits any tribe, pueblo, or nation to request that its county clerk establish an alternate voting location within tribal lands. N.M. Code R. §1.10.30.

An alternate voting location offers two important services:

- **In-person early voting.** Alternate voting locations may offer in-person early voting as early as the third Saturday preceding an election through the last Saturday preceding an election
- **Same-day registration services.** Same-day registration services allow a voter to register or update their registration and cast their ballot in one visit to their alternate voting location.

When an alternate voting location is available on tribal lands, it can substantially improve turnout and registration rates in the surrounding Native community. Simply put, people are more likely to register and vote when they can do so close to home and in a place where they feel comfortable. An alternate voting site in an already-familiar tribal building is a much more inviting and convenient prospect for many Native voters than an elections office located in the county seat.

This Guide provides an overview of New Mexico's Tribal request process. However, additional support is available. If you have questions not addressed here or would like further assistance or advice, please contact vote@narf.org or delisle@narf.org. Any help NARF provides will be free of charge.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON DEADLINES: The New Mexico statute that specially provides for alternate voting locations on tribal lands requires any Indian nation, tribe, or pueblo to submit its request by November of the year preceding an election. For an alternate voting site for the upcoming 2022 elections, this deadline passed in November 2021.

However, if your community would benefit from an on-reservation voting site, you can and should submit a request anyway. First, New Mexico law provides that a county clerk can set alternate voting locations as late as 90 days before an election. N.M. Stat. § 1-6-5.7(C). That means your county clerk could establish an alternate voting location on your tribal lands for the November 8, 2022 general election as late as August 10, 2022. Second, even if your county clerk is unable to provide a voting site on your tribal lands in time for the 2022 elections, sending a request now can help to open a conversation about voter services in your community and about improving access in 2024 and beyond.

HOW TO REQUEST AN ALTERNATE VOTING LOCATION ON YOUR TRIBAL LANDS:

Each county's clerk is responsible for establishing alternate voting locations, setting the locations' hours, and determining whether the locations will offer same-day registration. To request an alternate voting location on your tribal lands, you will have to send a letter to your county clerk.

Before drafting this letter, you will need to...

(1) Identify an appropriate on-reservation building to serve as an alternate voting site. NM Stat § 1-6-5.7.

The location you pick should:

- have a broadband internet connection
- have enough space for at least five voters to mark their ballots in private
- include a secure area for storage of pre-printed ballots or for storage of a paper ballot stock and a system designed to print ballots at a polling location **and**
- meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If there is no building on your reservation that meets all these requirements, you may still apply for an alternate voting site.

- If the building is not ADA accessible, this requirement can be met by providing alternative methods by which physically disabled voters may cast their ballots (such as curbside voting).
- New Mexico law also provides that a county clerk can apply for written waiver from the Secretary of State exempting a particular alternate voting location from any or all of these requirements.

If you would like to request an alternate voting site but are unable to identify a suitable building on your tribal lands, please contact NARF at vote@narf.org or delisle@narf.org for assistance.

(2) Identify appropriate points of contact at your Tribe with whom your county clerk should communicate.

Ideally, this would include:

- Someone within your Tribal government or on your Tribal council who has previously communicated with the county **and**
- Someone with access to and control over the building you have selected as a proposed alternate voting location (such as a facilities manager).

(3) Determine what hours and days you'd like the alternate voting site to be available.

Although you should not hesitate to ask for as many days of alternate voting site services as you think your tribe, pueblo, or nation could use, your county may not be able to provide services at your alternate voting site every day of the early voting period. In proposing an alternate voting site schedule, you might consider questions like:

- Are voters in your community more likely to utilize weekend or weekday voting?
- Do voters in your community generally vote on or close to Election Day, or would a broader range of dates be more helpful?

Once you've completed ***the three steps above***, you're ready to draft your request letter. This letter should include...

- A reference to N.M. Code R. §1.10.30, the New Mexico statute that permits tribes, pueblos, and Indian nations to request an alternative voting site.
- The location and address of your proposed alternative voting site.
- A statement that your proposed site meets the requirements outlined above.
- A proposed schedule for alternate voting site services.
- A request that same-day registration services be made available when the voting site is open.
- The names and email addresses and/or phone numbers of your points-of-contact.
- A specific date by which you would like the county to respond to your letter.



Finally, you should send your request letter to the county clerk of the county where your proposed alternate voting site is located.

- If you are unsure, please consult the chart below to identify your county and contact information for your county clerk.
- We also strongly recommend that you provide a copy of your request letter to the New Mexico Secretary of State's office and, where applicable, your local Native American Elections Information Program (NAEIP) liaison as listed below. This will help ensure that state as well as local authorities are aware of your request and that state officials can provide any oversight that may be needed.

TRIBE	COUNTY	CONTACT INFORMATION	
Taos Pueblo	Taos	Valerie Rael-Montoya 105 Albright St., Suite D Taos, NM 87571 (575) 737-6380 valerie.montoya@taoscounty.org	
Picuris Pueblo	Taos		
Ohkay Owingeh	Rio Arriba	Linda J. Padilla Tierra Amarilla Court House P.O. Box 158 Tierra Amarilla, NM 87575 (575) 588-7724 ljpadilla@rio-arriba.org AND elections@rio-arriba.org	
Santa Clara Pueblo	Rio Arriba		
Jicarilla Apache Nation	Rio Arriba		
San Ildefonso Pueblo	Santa Fe	Katharine E. Clark 100 Catron Street Box 1985 Santa Fe, NM 87501 (505) 986-6280 clerk@santafecountynm.gov AND elections@santafecountynm.gov	Santa Fe NAEIP coordinator: Hutch Miller (505) 986-6279 hmiller@co.santa-fe.nm.us
Nambe Pueblo	Santa Fe		
Pojoaque Pueblo	Santa Fe		
Tesuque Pueblo	Santa Fe		

Cochiti Pueblo	Sandoval	Anne Brady-Romero P.O. Box 40 Bernalillo, NM 87004 (505) 867-7572 clerk@sandovalcountynm.gov AND sandovalelectionboe@sandovalcountynm.gov		
Santo Domingo Pueblo	Sandoval			
San Felipe Pueblo	Sandoval			
Santa Ana Pueblo	Sandoval			
Sandia Pueblo	Sandoval			
Zia Pueblo	Sandoval			
Jemez Pueblo	Sandoval		Jemez Pueblo NAEIP coordinator: Peter Madalena 505.934.8826 naeipmadalena@yahoo.com	
Isleta Pueblo	Bernalillo & Valencia	Bernalillo: Linda Stover 415 Silver Ave SW, 2nd Floor Albuquerque, NM 87102 (505) 468-1290 clerk@bernco.gov	Bernalillo NAEIP coordinator: Shirlee Smith (505) 468-1228 ssmith@bernco.gov	Valencia: Michael Milam P.O. Box 969 Los Lunas, NM 87031 (505) 866-2080 mike.milam@co.valencia.nm.us
Acoma Pueblo	Cibola	Michelle E. Dominguez 700 East Roosevelt Ste. 50 Grants, NM 87020 (505) 285-2535 mdominguez@co.cibola.nm.us AND elections@co.cibola.nm.us		
Laguna Pueblo	Cibola			
Zuni Pueblo	McKinley	Jacqueline Katherine Sloan 207 West Hill Street Gallup, NM 87301 (505) 863-6866 clerk@co.mckinley.nm.us AND elections@co.mckinley.nm.us		

