

ORGANIZATION NEWS

Information/Education Page

Voting Is My Superpower! Voting Tips for People Living With Disabilities



Why vote?

- Voting gives you a voice in what happens in your city, county, state, and country.
- In general, people with disabilities vote less often than people without disabilities.¹⁻³ When this happens, people with disabilities have less of a voice.
- Your vote matters! If you do not vote, you are letting other people make decisions for you. Some of these decisions may affect your rights and access.
- Voting is both a privilege and responsibility that goes along with being a United States citizen.
- Voting is your superpower! (fig 1)

How do I prepare to vote?

- Make a plan!
- Register and remember to vote.
 - Write important dates on your calendar or ask someone to remind you as the dates approach.
 - Important dates include voter registration, absentee ballot request and due date, and dates for early voting and Election Day.
- Decide which election contests matter to you.
- Become informed. See suggestions below.
- Make notes and take your notes with you when you vote.
- Check on your state election board website to find out if you need identification to vote.
- Request an absentee ballot if that is how you plan to vote. Follow the directions that come with the ballot to complete it and turn it in.
- Find out which polling place is your assigned voting location.
- Arrange for transportation to the polls if needed.

Where can I register to vote?

Voter registration locations and processes vary by state. Check before you go to make sure that the location is doing

voter registration and to confirm what documents you need to bring.

- Online (visit <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/>). This online portal walks you through the process for all states or you can check your county or state board of elections website.
- County board of elections office.
- Public libraries.
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices.
- Social Services offices.
- Post offices.
- Town halls.

How do I become an informed voter?

- Decide what strengths you're looking for in a candidate.
- Learn about the issues and the candidates' positions and leadership skills.
 - Read newspapers, listen to the radio, watch televised debates, and talk to other people.
 - Visit candidates' websites where their positions on various topics may be listed.
 - Obtain voter guides. Many newspapers and issue-specific organizations, such as the League of Women Voters (<https://www.lwv.org/>) create voter guides.
- Learn how candidates and others may distort information.
 - See the Guide to Informed Voting (<https://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/VotingResources/InformedVoting.pdf>).
- Know who is running and what issues are on the ballot.
 - Obtain a sample ballot.
 - Sample ballots are often available from your county board of elections office, election precincts, early voting sites, libraries, or online.

Where do I cast my vote?

Choose the process that is best for you

- Your assigned polling place on Election Day.
- Curbside at the polling site or your local Elections Office. If you cannot get out of your car and into the polling place, a poll worker can bring your ballot to your car. You will have to have

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Fig 1 Voting is my superpower!

a friend or family member go into the voting place and inform the poll workers that you need curbside voting.

- A location that offers one-stop, no-excuses early voting (often starts 2-4 weeks before Election Day).
- Absentee ballot allowing you to vote without leaving home. You must request the ballot before the election and you must follow the directions provided to submit the ballot.

What if I need a ride to the polls?

- Take public transportation to the polling place.
- Ask a family member, friend, neighbor, or someone else you trust about riding with them to the polling place.
- Contact the Party Headquarters (eg, Democratic, Republican, or other) in your county. Remember, the parties and candidates want you to vote!

What if I need help voting?

- You can ask poll workers for the help you need. Poll workers cannot approach you to ask you if you need help, but you can ask them for the help. You can ask the poll worker to help with reading the ballot and using the voting machine.
- Someone can go with you and ask the poll worker for assistance on your behalf.
- Someone can also go with you to the polling place and into the voting booth to help you.

How can family, friends, and care partners help me vote?

- Consider the possible obstacles to voting and think about how you could use help to overcome these obstacles.

- Examples of obstacles include a lack of initiation, fatigue, a desire to avoid crowds, memory challenges, inability to drive, and difficulty with moving around or communicating.
- Mention to others that you are interested in registering and voting.
- Ask for help, if needed, with remembering important dates (registration, absentee ballot request).
- Discuss current events, political issues, and candidates with others.
- Ask for assistance with voting as needed. “I would like your help with...”
 - Registering to vote.
 - Remembering deadlines.
 - Gathering information.
 - Learning about the candidates.
 - Getting a sample ballot.
 - Making sure I have the right identification to vote.
 - Requesting or submitting an absentee ballot.
 - Getting a ride to the polls.
 - Getting into the polling place.
 - Reading the ballot.
 - Someone else can read the ballot and the choices and ask you to pick one of the choices. They cannot pick for you.

What are your rights?

- You have the right to vote.
- You have the right to ask for assistance in voting.
- You have the right to bring a friend or family member with you to help you vote.
- You have the right to have your disability fully accommodated.
- You have the right to ask the poll worker to explain how to use the voting machine.
- You have the right to ask for an accessible voting machine.
- You have the right to ask for a seat while you are waiting.
- You have the right to take your time while voting.
- You have the right to use curbside voting if you need it.
- You have the right to be treated with respect.
- You have the right to advocate for yourself.

What are your responsibilities?

- You may have to ask for the specific help you need.
- You have the responsibility to become fully informed before voting.

Where can I get more information?

- National Disability Rights Network
 - <https://www.ndrn.org/issues/voting/>
- American Association for People with Disabilities Voter Resource Center
 - <https://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/voter-resource-center/>
 - Online portal for registration, absentee ballots, election dates, and other information
 - <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/>
- Election Protection toll free at (866) 687-8683 or online at www.866ourvote.org
- USA.gov

- www.usa.gov/register-to-vote
- www.usa.gov/voting
- Guide to Informed Voting
- <https://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/VotingResources/InformedVoting.pdf>
- US Election Assistance Commission
- Resources for Voters with Disabilities: <https://www.eac.gov/voters/resources-for-voters-with-disabilities/>
- Voter's Guide to Federal Elections: <https://www.eac.gov/voters/voters-guide-to-federal-elections/>

Authorship

This page was developed by Flora M. Hammond, MD, FACRM (e-mail address: flora.hammond@rhin.com); Mark A. Hirsch, PhD, FACRM; Christine S. Davis, PhD; Julia Nelson Snow, MA; Martha Kropf, PhD; and Jason Karlawish, MD.

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