People with Disabilities VOTE!

Voting Rights Guide 2022

Disability issues matter. I vote.

Disability Rights Maine

Advancing the Rights of Maine Citizens with Disabilities Since 1977

800.452.1948

https://www.drme.org
This guide is intended to provide a simple and informative overview of voting rights of individuals with disabilities. This guide is not a substitute for legal advice. If you have specific questions or need assistance with a particular issue, please contact Disability Rights Maine (DRM).

Upon request, this guide is available in alternative formats.

Disability Rights Maine is supported by grants from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the Center for Mental Health Services, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Social Security Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, the State of Maine, Acadia Hospital, the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund Commission, the Maine Health Access Foundation, and private donations.

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Disability Rights Maine is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.
Donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.
YES! You can always vote. Your disability does not affect your right to vote.

**Does the polling place have to be accessible to me?**

★ Yes. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that every polling place be accessible.

★ All polling places must have:

- Accessible parking spaces;
- At least one accessible entrance that is connected to an accessible entrance route;
- An accessible voting area; and
- An Accessible Voting System.

★ If your polling place is not accessible to you on Election Day, call Disability Rights Maine at 800.452.1948. You can also call the Elections Division of the Secretary of State’s Office at 207.624.7650.

**Does my guardian have to come with me to the voting place to help me vote?**

★ Under the Help America Vote Act, you have the right to vote by yourself. Your guardian does not need to be with you when you vote.

★ If you are told that you may not vote alone, contact Disability Rights Maine at 800.452.1948. You can also contact the Elections Division of the Secretary of State’s Office at 207.624.7650.
You are eligible to register to vote in Maine if you:

- Are a citizen of the United States;
- Are a resident of Maine and the county where you plan to register;
- Are at least 17 years old at the time you register; and
- Will be at least 18 years old before the next general election.

Your disability does not affect your right to vote.

Can I Find Out If I Am Already Registered to Vote?

Yes. To find out if you are already registered to vote, you can contact your town or city clerk. To find the contact information for your town or city clerk, visit this website: [http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.html](http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.html) and search for your town or city.

How Do I Register to Vote?

You can register to vote in person at your town office or city hall, or at your local Bureau of Motor Vehicle office. You can also register to vote by mail.

- **In person:** you may show your Maine Driver’s License, Maine State ID or provide your Social Security Number.

- **By mail:** You can contact your town clerk to have a voter registration card mailed to you. You will need to provide one of the following forms of identification:
  - A copy of your Maine Driver’s License or valid photo ID;
  - A utility bill;
  - A bank statement;
  - A paycheck; or
  - A current government document that shows your name and address.

To learn more about how to register to vote, visit [https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/voterguide.html](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/voterguide.html).

Is There a Deadline to Register to Vote?

- It is never too late to register to vote! If you register to vote in person, you may register on Election Day.

- If you choose to register by mail, you must register by the close of business 21 days before Election Day. For the November 8, 2022 Election, the deadline to register by mail is **Tuesday, October 18, 2022**.
What to Expect on Election Day

When Can I Vote on Election Day?

- Most polling places in Maine are open from 8 am until 8 pm.
- Depending on how many people live in your town, however, your polling place may open as early as 6 am or as late as 10 am. Call your town office to check the hours.

Where Do I Go to Vote?

- On Election Day, you must go to your polling place to cast your vote. Your polling place depends on where you live.
- If you do not know where your polling place is, you call your town or city clerk and they will tell you where to vote.
  - You can also find your polling place by visiting this website: https://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter_lookup.php.

Do I Need to Bring Anything with Me When I Go Vote?

- If you are registered to vote on Election Day, you do not need to bring anything with you to the polling place.
- If you are not registered to vote on Election Day, you must bring a form of ID with you to the polling place in order to vote.
  - If you forget your ID, you can cast a provisional ballot. You may be asked to show your ID after the election in order to make sure your vote counts.
**WHAT TO EXPECT ON ELECTION DAY**

**HOW DO I MARK MY BALLOT?**

★ Each ballot will explain how to mark your choices.

★ If you have any questions, you may ask for help from an election official.

★ If you make a mistake, you may fold your ballot, give it to an election official and ask for a new ballot.

**DOES MY GUARDIAN HAVE TO COME WITH ME TO THE VOTING PLACE TO HELP ME VOTE?**

★ Under the Help America Vote Act, you have the right to vote by yourself. Your guardian does not need to be with you when you vote.

★ If you are told that you may not vote alone, contact Disability Rights Maine at 800.452.1948. You can also contact the Elections Division of the Secretary of State’s Office at 207.624.7650.

**CAN I BRING MY SERVICE ANIMAL WITH ME TO THE POLLING PLACE WHEN I VOTE?**

★ Under the ADA, individuals with disabilities may bring their service animal with them to the polling place.

★ A service animal is defined as a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks that are directly related to the person’s disability ([https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html](https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html)).
**ABSENTEE VOTING**

**WHAT IS ABSENTEE VOTING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- Absentee voting allows you to cast your ballot without having to go to your polling place on Election Day.
- Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot.
- You do not need to have a specific reason for requesting an absentee ballot.

**HOW DO I GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

- Request a ballot online at [https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl](https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl).
- You may call your town or city clerk to request a ballot and they will mail one to you.
  - Visit [https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.html](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.html) to learn how to contact your city or town clerk.

**DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT FOR EACH ELECTION?**

- Yes, you must apply for an absentee ballot for each election in which you want to vote absentee.

**WHEN CAN I REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?**

- You may apply for an absentee ballot as early as three months before Election Day.
- For the November 2022 Election, absentee ballots became available on **August 8, 2022**.

**WHAT IS IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING?**

- This is when you cast an absentee ballot at your town clerk’s office any time prior to Election Day.
MORE ABOUT ABSENTEE VOTING

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

★ For the 2022 General Election, the deadline to request an absentee ballot is 5 pm on Thursday, November 3, 2022.

★ However, there is an exception to this deadline for people who have special circumstances, which include having a physical disability, or where you are unable to leave home or a treatment facility due to incapacity or illness.

IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO RECEIVE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

★ You may make a written request for a third person (someone other than you or an immediate family member) to obtain and hand-deliver an absentee ballot.

○ To learn more about special circumstances voting and how to request a third person absentee ballot, visit https://drme.org/voting.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR RETURNING MY ABSENTEE BALLOT?

★ Absentee ballots must be received by your town or city clerk by 8 pm on Election Day.

Tip: Make sure to request an absentee ballot early enough so you have time to return it to your town or city clerk by the deadline.
What to know about Accessible Voting in Maine

★ Federal and state laws require that the voting process to be accessible to all.
★ All polling places in Maine must be physically accessible.
★ If you need help reading or marking your ballot, you can bring a relative or friend to help. An election official can also help you.
★ If you want to vote privately and independently, you can use Maine’s Accessible Voting System.
★ Maine also offers accessible absentee ballots.

What is Maine’s Accessible Voting System?
★ Maine has ExpressVote as its Accessible Voting System (AVS). The ExpressVote:
  ✓ Is a ballot-marking device that allows individuals with disabilities to vote with privacy and independence;
  ✓ Allows you to choose between a touch screen and a keyboard with audio; and
  ✓ Prints your completed ballot.

What are Accessible Absentee Ballots?
★ If you want to cast an absentee ballot and have a disability that makes it difficult to use a paper ballot, you can request an accessible absentee ballot.
  ○ Visit https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/AbsenteeBallot/index.pl to request an accessible absentee ballot.
  ✓ You may apply for an absentee ballot as early as three months before Election Day.
  ○ To learn more about accessible voting in Maine, visit https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter-info/accessiblevoting.html.
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