

Voting in New York State



**Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council**

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Getting Started

As a citizen living in New York State, it is important that you know about voting.

Some people think voting is hard or can be a challenge, but it doesn't need to be that way.

This guide will show you all the steps to help you participate in elections if you want to.

Why Voting Is Important



It is your right to vote.



It allows elected officials to learn about the thoughts of the voters.



It helps elected officials learn about barriers and challenges in the system and in communities that you face.



It provides an opportunity to be a part of ones community, interact with community members, and also engage with community policies.

You Can Vote in New York if You:

- ✓ Are a United States citizen
- ✓ Are 18 years old or older
- ✓ Are not considered unable to vote by a court

If these all describe you, continue to the next page to learn how to register to vote!



Did you know?

If your eligibility is questioned on election day at the polls you have the right to fill out a Provisional Ballot (also known as paper ballot or affidavit.) Just ask the person working at the polling station for a paper ballot.

Register to Vote

Before you can vote, you must register. This lets the State know you can and want to vote.

You Can Register:

In person



- ➔ At your county board of elections. You can find yours by visiting the board of elections website: <http://www.elections.ny.gov/>
- ➔ At a New York State Agency (Ex. OPWDD)

By phone or



online



- ➔ Call 1-800-FOR-VOTE (1-800-367-8683) and request an application to register.
- ➔ Get a copy of the registration form at the board of elections website.
 - ➔ Mail this form to your county board of elections.

Forms must be mailed **no later than 25 days** before an election.

Not sure if you are registered? Check at the board of elections website.



Find Your Polling Place



A polling place is the location where you are assigned to vote.

After you register to vote, you will need to find your polling place.

Its location will be based on your home address. To find your polling place, choose from the options below:

-  **Online:** NYS Voter Registration Search
-  **Call:** 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)

If you move, you must update your address at **least 30 days** before an election. This will change your assigned polling place.

Polling places are required to be accessible.

If yours is not you can request to be moved to an accessible polling place by contacting the Board of Elections. This must be done **at least 2 weeks** prior to the election.

Voting Machines

At your polling place you will use a voting machine to vote. Accessible voting machines are available if you need one. Just ask the poll worker when you arrive at your polling place.

Some of the accessible options include:

- ➔ **Paddle Device:** Navigate the machine and cast your vote using “yes” or “no” controls.
- ➔ **Sip-N-Puff:** Use a straw to sip or puff and navigate the voting machine and cast a vote.
- ➔ **Key Pad:** A touch pad that allows the user to navigate the voting machine with directional arrows.



Worried about using these Devices?

You can watch videos about the machines at the Board of elections website or visit your local board of elections to try them out!

First Time Voter?

Here are a few helpful tips for your first time at the polls:

1. Make sure you bring your ID (driver's license, other current photo ID, or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other governmental document that shows your name and address) with you to the polls.
2. If possible, visit your polling place prior to election day to know where it is and check to make sure it will be accessible to you.
3. If needed, arrange for transportation for the day of the elections.

Need Language Assistance?

Voting laws require certain NY counties to provide voting materials, instructions, and assistance in other languages. For more information about language access and voting, please contact your county Board of Elections or the Civil Rights Bureau of the New York State Attorney General's Office.

Can't Vote in Person?

Absentee voting allows you to submit your vote through the mail.

You can vote Absentee if:

- ✓ You are away from your county or State during the time of the elections
- ✓ You are unable to go to the polls due to temporary or permanent illness or disability;
- ✓ You are a patient in a Veterans' Administration

You can Apply for an Absentee Ballot:

In Person



Applications are available at your county board of elections.



Online






Download a PDF version of the Application Form on the board of elections website.

Applications must be mailed to the county board **no later than 7 days** before the election.

Ready to Vote?

Visit the [Board of Elections Website](#) for the most up to date list of:

-  Upcoming elections
-  Registration deadlines; and
-  Absentee form deadlines

Don't forget to learn about the candidates and the issues on the ballot before voting.

Having Problems on Election Day?

If you or someone you know is facing difficulties on election day and wish to report them, contact:

- **Disability Rights New York** by, email: mail@DRNY.org **OR** call (518) 432-7861
- **NYS Board of Elections** by, email: enforcement@elections.ny.gov. **OR** call (518) 486-7858.

To report a potential violation of the Voting Rights Act , please contact:

- **Civil Rights Bureau of the NYS Attorney General's Office** by, email: civil.rights@ag.ny.gov **OR** call (212) 416-8250

Common Questions

Q: I have an intellectual and/or developmental disability. Can I vote?

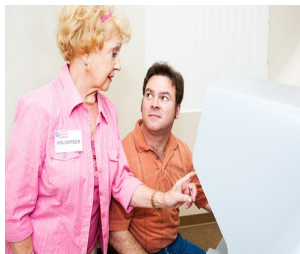
A: Yes! The Americans with Disabilities Act guarantees your right to vote.

Q: Can I vote if I have a guardian?

A: You can register and vote if you have a guardian, unless guardianship is accompanied by an order of incompetence from a judge. A person with a guardian can ask the court at any time to restore their right to vote, if it was taken away.

Q: Can I have someone help me at the polls?

A: Yes! You may ask poll workers to assist you or you can get help from someone else (friend, relative, staff), as long as they are not your employer or union representative.



Voter Checklist

- Register to vote or confirm registration, and make sure all personal information (address, name, and political party) are up to date no later than 25 days before an election.
- Decide if you will be voting using an absentee ballot – if so submit the application no later than 7 days before the election.
- Figure out the Voter ID requirements and know what you need to bring to the polling places.
- Figure out your polling place, where it is and the hours that it is open.
- Learn about accessible voting machine options – NYS Board of Elections website
- Learn about candidates and the issues on the ballot.
- Vote!



Check Out Our Other Guides!



Using Over-The-Counter



Using Over-The-Counter Pain Reliever Medications

Find them on our website <http://ddpc.ny.gov/>

Follow us on:  Facebook  Twitter

DISCLAIMER

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