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## VOTING RIGHTS: Frequently Asked Questions

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This fact sheet will answer frequently asked questions about the rights of individuals with disabilities when trying to vote. You can find general information about voting on the Ohio Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Voters.aspx](http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Voters.aspx).

### Who can I call if I have a disability-related voting concern?

Disability Rights Ohio operates a voter hotline every Election Day while polls are open. On every other business day, our intake department is open from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., though you can leave a message 24 hours a day and someone will return your call. You can reach both lines by calling 800-282-9181.

### Can I get help with my ballot at the voting booth?

Yes. If you need assistance because of your disability (for example, you are unable to read or to physically mark your ballot), you may bring someone with you to help you vote. You may ask anyone to help you vote, except your employer, an agent of your employer, an agent of your union, or a candidate on the ballot.

You also may ask for assistance from two precinct election officials from each of the major political parties. No one who helps you vote can tell you how you must vote or provide information to others about how you voted.

### Is my voting location accessible for people with disabilities?

Voting locations must be free of barriers to enter and exit and must have ramps, wide doors, and accessible parking for people with disabilities. At any location that is exempt from accessibility requirements, curbside voting must be offered to people with disabilities who are unable to enter the polling location. That means two election officials from each of the major political parties will bring a ballot to the individual.

Also, voting machines must be accessible to people who are blind. If your voting location is not accessible, contact Disability Rights Ohio.

## **Am I allowed to vote even though I have a guardian?**

Yes, having a guardian does not mean you cannot vote. Before your right to vote is taken away a probate court must declare that you are incompetent for voting purposes.

## **What are the different ways I can vote?**

You can vote in person at your polling location between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. You need to make sure you are at the correct precinct and polling location, which is based on your current address; otherwise, your vote will not be counted. You should bring current and valid photo identification (driver's license or state identification card).

You can also request an absentee ballot to be sent to you by mail. You must return your ballot in person by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day or mail it so it is postmarked the day before Election Day.

There is also a period of time in the weeks before Election Day in which you can vote early. Contact your county board of elections for information about hours and locations.

## **Can I vote if I live in a nursing home, hospital or other facility?**

Yes. You can vote in person or by absentee ballot, as described above. Alternatively, you can send a form requesting assistance with your ballot. This form is available on the website of the Ohio Secretary of State, and on this form you must describe the nature of your illness or disability and your inability to travel to the voting location on Election Day. Requests for absentee ballots must be returned by close of business 7 days before the election. See <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/absentee-ballot/> for more information. Two elected officials of different political parties from the county board of elections will then deliver a ballot to you and return it to the board of elections.

If you need to register to vote first, you can talk to the client rights advocate, social worker, or patient representative to request a registration form, which must be submitted to the county board of elections at least 30 days before Election Day.

## **Can I vote if I am unexpectedly in the hospital on Election Day?**

If you are unable to vote in person on Election Day because you or your minor child are confined in a hospital as a result of an accident or unforeseeable medical emergency, you may apply to the county board of elections to vote by absentee ballot. You must submit this written absentee request by 3 p.m. on Election Day. You can request that a family member deliver the absentee ballot to you, or you can have two county board of election officials from each of the major political parties deliver the ballot to you and return it to the board of elections.

If you are hospitalized in a different county than the one in which you are registered to vote and there is not enough time to mail you your ballot, you can request that your home county board of elections fax or email your absentee ballot to the county board of elections where you are hospitalized as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. If this happens, contact Disability Rights Ohio immediately.