



HOW TO VOTE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A Quick Guide for People with Disabilities

Note: Washington, D.C. does not have any known elections in 2023. To find out about upcoming elections, contact the [Washington, D.C. Election office](#).

There are lots of different words and phrases used in voting and elections. We explain some of these words and phrases in this guide. Other definitions and examples can be found in our [Voting Language Resource](#).



REGISTERING TO VOTE

- **How can I register to vote?**
 - You can find out if you are already registered by visiting vote411.org.
 - Register to vote online at Washington, D.C.'s [online voter registration website](#).
 - Register to vote by downloading, filling out, and returning the Washington, D.C. [voter registration form](#).
- **When do I need to register?** The voter registration deadline is 21 days before Election Day if you register online or by mail. The voter registration deadline if you register to vote in person is Election Day.
- **Do I need an identification (ID) to register?** You will need a driver's license or a non-driver Washington, D.C. ID to register to vote. You can

use your Social Security number if you don't have a driver's license or non-driver Washington, D.C. ID.

- **Can I vote if I have a disability?** Yes! People with disabilities who are 18 years old or older have the right to vote. Your vote matters and is protected by laws to make sure voting is accessible, independent, and private.
- **Can I vote if I have a guardian?** In Washington, D.C., just having a guardian does not automatically take away your right to vote. However, sometimes a court may decide that you cannot vote. If you are not sure, you can check your guardianship order. If your guardianship order does not say anything about voting, this means you can still vote! Your right has only been taken away if your order directly says that. For help understanding your right to vote and guardianship, contact the local [Protection and Advocacy Agency \(P&A\)](#).
- **Can I vote if I have gone to jail or prison?** If you have gone to jail or prison, you should check to see if you are allowed to vote. Some states take away your right to vote if you have gone to jail or prison. Learn about voting rights for people who have [gone to jail or prison](#). You can also learn more from the [Campaign Legal Center](#) or [contact the local P&A](#).



LEARNING ABOUT THE ISSUES

- **What is a ballot?** A ballot is a list of who and what you are voting for. Your ballot will list candidates who are running for different offices, such as School Board members, City Council members, or State Representatives. You vote by marking your choice on the ballot. If you are voting by marking a paper ballot, and not using a voting machine, make sure to look at both sides of the ballot. Sometimes, your ballot has choices on both sides.

- **What is a ballot measure?** Sometimes, your ballot will have ballot measures. A ballot measure is a law, issue, or question that you can vote on. Voters get to decide if they agree or disagree with the ballot measure by voting yes to agree or no to disagree. [Learn about ballot measures](#) on our resource page.
- **Can I look at my ballot before I go to vote?** Enter your home address in [Ballotpedia's Sample Ballot Lookup](#). This tool will give you a "sample ballot," which will show you what will be on your ballot when you vote.



VOTING IN PERSON

- **Where do I need to go to vote?** The place where you go to vote in person is called a vote center. You can find your local vote center through the Washington, D.C. Board of Elections website. [Find your vote center.](#)
- **Do I need an ID to vote in person?** Washington D.C. only requires voters who registered to vote by mail or online and who are voting for the first time to show an ID when voting in person. [Learn about voter ID.](#)
- **What if I need help with filling out my ballot?** You are allowed to have someone help you fill out your ballot.
- **Who can help me with filling out my ballot?** You may choose someone you know to help you vote or ask for help from a poll worker at the vote center. Your boss cannot help you vote. If you are part of a labor union at work, the person who helps you vote cannot be your labor union representative. [Learn about labor unions](#) on our resource page.
- **Can I vote before Election Day?** Washington, D.C. allows any voter to vote in person before Election Day during the Early Voting Period. The early voting period starts 12 days before Election Day and ends the Saturday before Election Day. Vote early and avoid lines on Election Day!

- **Can I vote outside of the vote center if it is inaccessible?** Washington, D.C. allows voters to vote outside the vote center if it is inaccessible. This is called curbside voting. Contact the [Washington, D.C. Board of Elections](#) for more information about curbside voting.



VOTING BY MAIL

- **Can I vote by mail?** Any voter in Washington, D.C. can vote by mail-in ballot. (If a vote center is not accessible to people with disabilities, this is another way for you to vote.)
- **Do I need an ID to vote by mail?** No, you do not need an ID when voting by mail unless you are voting for the first time in Washington, D.C. and registered by mail or online.
- **How do I request a mail-in ballot?** If you are registered to vote, Washington, D.C. will automatically send you a mail-in ballot. Be sure to register by the voter registration deadline to vote by mail.
- **Can I get an electronic mail-in ballot?** Washington, D.C. allows some voters with disabilities to request an electronic ballot that they can fill out and return electronically. Contact the [Washington, D.C. Board of Elections](#) to find out if you can request an electronic ballot to vote in local elections in 2023.
- **What if I need help with filling out my ballot?** You are allowed to have someone help you fill out your ballot. You will need to fill out the Attestation Form for Assistance that comes with your ballot.
- **Do I need to sign my ballot envelope?** Be sure to sign your envelope when asked. Your vote will not be counted if your signature is missing. If you need help with writing your signature, you must fill out a form called the "Attestation Form for Signature Assistance." This form comes with your ballot.

- **How do I return my ballot?** You can return your ballot by mail to the Washington, D.C. Board of Elections office. You can also deliver your ballot to vote centers or to a ballot drop box during Early Voting and on Election Day. If you are returning your ballot by mail, it must be postmarked by Election Day, and received no later than 10 days after Election Day. If you are delivering your ballot, it must be received by Election Day.
- **Can someone return my ballot for me?** Yes, you may choose to have someone return your ballot for you.
- **Can I track my ballot?** Yes, you can track your ballot online to see if the local election office has received it. You can do this on the Washington, D.C. Board of Elections website. [Track your ballot.](#)



MORE VOTING HELP

- **Where can I find more information on how to vote?** Check out the [Washington, D.C. Board of Elections website](#). Learn about [voting assistance for voters with disabilities](#).
- **What if I am having trouble voting or registering to vote?** If you have any trouble voting, [contact the local P&A](#). If you need help, the phone number is 202-547-0198.
- **What if I have more questions?** Check out these resources:
 - [America Votes: Local Election Office Directory](#)
 - [Guardianship and Voting Laws](#)
 - [Resources for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Voters](#)
 - [Resources for Blind and Low Vision Voters](#)
 - [Easy Read and Plain Language Voting Resources](#)
 - [Campaign Legal Center: Restore Your Vote](#)
 - [VoteRiders: Voter ID Help](#)
 - [ASL Hotline](#): 301-818-VOTE (301-818-8683)

- Please note: the ASL Hotline is only available for November 2023 Elections
- [Election Protection Hotline](tel:866-OUR-VOTE): 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683)



The 2023 State Voting Guides for Disabled Voters are made by the REV UP Voting Campaign at the American Association of People with Disabilities. This project was led by Sarah Blahovec. A plain language review was done by Hannah Brecher, Plain Language Consultant and Self-Advocate; Latisha Martin, Plain Language Consultant and Self-Advocate; Liz Weintraub, Senior Advocacy Specialist, Association of University Centers on Disabilities.