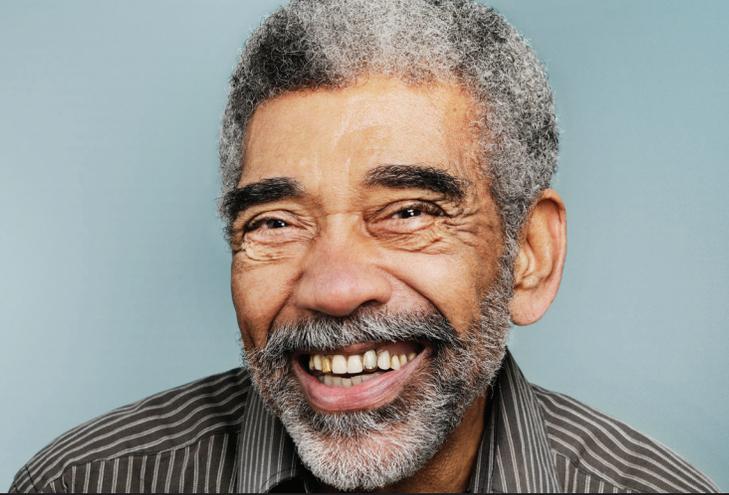


DISABILITY & AGING RIGHTS



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DISCRIMINATION

Exercising Your Right to Vote

Voting is a fundamental right for all citizens. This fact sheet is designed to give people with disabilities, including older Americans with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments, useful information on exercising their right to vote. Topics include voter registration, grace period registration, early voting, voting by mail, voting while living in a nursing home, voting if you are admitted to a health care facility* within 14 days of an election, curbside voting, and assistance in voting.

* Health care facility means hospital, nursing home or rehabilitation center.

Voter registration

To vote in an election, you must be registered to vote.

Voter registration requirements

- You must be a United States citizen
- You must be 18 years old before the date of the general election
- You must live in your election precinct at least 30 days before Election Day

You must register to vote if

- You have never registered before
- You have recently moved
- You have changed your name

Voter registration is available all year except for the 27-day period just before an election and during the two-day period after each election (one day after in Chicago).

Identification

When you register to vote, you must bring at least two pieces of identification, with at least one that has your current address. Examples of forms of identification are:

- Driver's license
- Illinois state ID card
- Public assistance ID card (including Medicaid card)
- Social Security card
- Library card
- Recent utility bill
- Credit card
- Birth certificate



You can register to vote in a variety of ways, including in person at

- Your local election authority office
- City and village offices
- Township offices
- Schools
- Public libraries

When applying for service at

- Driver's license facilities (including when you renew your license)
- Department on Aging offices
- Department of Healthcare and Family Services offices
- Department of Public Health offices
- Department of Human Services offices for the Divisions of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services

By mail

You may fill out a voter registration form and mail or take it to your local election authority. You can obtain this form from a variety of places, including from your local election authority or by downloading it from www.elections.il.gov.

REMEMBER: If you register by mail, you must vote in person the first time and show identification, unless you have provided sufficient proof of identity (such as a copy of your driver's license or state ID) that has been double-checked by the Election Authority.

On the internet

You may register to vote online at ovr.elections.il.gov. To use this system, you must have a valid email address. You must also provide a valid driver's license number or state ID card number.

You can check on your voter registration status on the Internet at www.elections.il.gov by clicking on the link called "Registration and Polling Place Information."

You may consider yourself registered to vote when you receive a voter ID card in the mail. If you do not receive an ID card within three weeks after you registered, contact your local election authority.

Grace period registration and voting/Election Day registration and voting

If you miss the deadline for registering to vote, you may still register and vote by using grace period registration.

Grace period registration allows you to register to vote or update your address through Election Day. Grace period registration is offered at the local election authority's office, at early voting sites and at certain polling places on Election Day. To verify locations and hours for grace period registration, you should contact your local election authority.

To register to vote using this process, you must go in person to the election authority's office or another location designated by the election authority, AND you must vote at the same time.

You will have to bring two forms of identification with you, with at least one that has your current address. Examples of types of identification are listed on page 2.

Early voting

Registered voters can vote before Election Day by going to an early voting location.

Early voting begins 40 days before an election and continues until the day before Election Day. Before you vote, it is important to check hours and locations for early voting. By law, all early voting locations must be physically accessible.

You should contact your local election authority to find out the hours and locations for early voting. By law, early voting locations shall be open during the 15 days before Election Day from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., on weekdays. During the 8 days before Election Day, early voting locations shall be open from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., or 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays and holidays, and 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.



Absentee voting/ Vote by mail

Absentee voting is also known as voting by mail. Anyone can vote using an absentee ballot for any reason.

You have to request an application for absentee ballot by mail, in person, or online from your local election authority. You have to fill out the application and return it to the local election authority in person or by mail. You can request an absentee ballot 90 days before the election up until one day before the election if you do it in person, or five days before the election if you do it by mail or online.

If you apply in person, you may immediately vote your absentee ballot in your local election office. If you apply by mail or online, you will receive a ballot in the mail. You must fill out the ballot and return it to the local election authority either by mail or in person. You must use the envelope given to you, and you must sign and seal it as instructed. If you return it by mail, it must be postmarked no later than midnight on the night before the election.

You may receive help marking your absentee ballot. If you return your completed ballot by mail, the person helping you must sign the envelope, stating that they assisted you.

Voting in a nursing home

If you are a resident of a nursing home (and have lived there for more than 14 days before the election), you may request an absentee ballot. In some instances, in-person absentee voting at the nursing home will be arranged.

If that happens, at least two election judges, one from each political party, will come to the nursing home the Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday before Election Day and supervise the voting. The hours and days for this voting must be posted in a place in the nursing home that is easily seen.

You will vote using an absentee ballot, and the election judges must return the ballots to be counted.

Voting when you are admitted to a health care facility* less than 14 days before an election

If you are registered to vote and are admitted to a hospital, nursing home or rehabilitation center less than 14 days before the election, you can still vote.

You must obtain an “Application for Ballot for Qualified Voter Admitted to Hospital, Nursing Home or Rehabilitation Center” from your local election authority and fill it out.

Your doctor must fill out a section of the application and sign the form, too.

A legal relative or a registered voter who lives in the same precinct as you can go in person to the election authority’s office to hand in the form. They will be given an absentee ballot to deliver to you.

You can then vote the absentee ballot and place it in the envelope given to you.

You may receive help marking your absentee ballot. The person helping you must sign the envelope, stating that they assisted you.

The same person who obtained the ballot for you must then return it to the local election authority before 7 p.m. on Election Day.

* Health care facility means hospital, nursing home or rehabilitation center.

Curbside voting

If you vote on Election Day, but cannot enter the polling place because it is not accessible or because you have limited mobility to enter the polling place, you may request curbside voting.

Two election judges, one from each political party, will bring the ballot out to you. You must be within 50 feet of the polling place. You will then mark the ballot and give it back to the election judges, who will make sure it is counted inside the polling place.

You should call your local election authority to request curbside voting at least one day before Election Day. This is the best way to make sure that you will be able to vote using curbside voting. It may be possible to arrange for curbside voting on the day of the election, but you should call the election authority to ask.



Assistance with voting

If you need help voting, you can receive help from any person you choose, as long as that person is not your employer or an officer of a union in which you are a member. You also cannot receive help from a candidate whose name appears on the ballot, unless the candidate is your spouse, parent, child, brother or sister.

The person helping you is not allowed to try to influence you to vote in a certain way. That person will have to sign a paper saying that he or she assisted you.

You may also ask the election judges for help. Two election judges, one from each political party, must assist you in the voting booth. You will have to sign a paper stating that you have requested assistance.

Each polling place should also have other things to help you, including:

- Instructions, printed in large type, displayed at each registration facility and each polling place
- A magnifying lens to place over the booklet
- Sample ballots in large type
- A large-handled stylus, if needed
- Information by telecommunications devices for the deaf
- At least one electronic voting machine equipped with accessibility features, including audio mode for people with visual disabilities ■

For more information:

The Illinois State Board of Elections: www.elections.il.gov/InfoForVoters.aspx, a public website, contains voting information, lists of Illinois counties and addresses, and phone numbers and websites for various county election authorities.

Equip for Equality's information for voters with disabilities:
www.equipforequality.org/issues/voting



Equip for Equality
20 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 300
Chicago, IL 60602

www.equipforequality.org
1-800-537-2632
1-800-610-2779 (TTY)

Illinois Department on Aging
One Natural Resources Way
Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

Senior HelpLine:
1-800-252-8966
1-888-206-1327 (TTY)
www.illinois.gov/aging

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel like you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).