



Disability Rights  
FLORIDA



# Voting Guide

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE!**

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## Language Disclaimer

Language is a powerful tool that shapes meaning and understanding. This report uses person-first and identity-first language interchangeably to reflect the diverse ways the disability community identifies. People's first language places the person before their disability. Identity-first language embraces disability as a fundamental aspect of one's identity and places identity first. For more information about combating ableism through language, we recommend the following:

### **National Disability Rights Network: Communicating About People with Disabilities**

Available at: <https://www.ndrn.org/resource/communicating-about-people-with-disabilities/>

### **National Center on Disability and Journalism: Disability Language Style Guide**

Available at: <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

### **Autistic Self-Advocacy Network: Identity-First Language**

Available at: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>



## Why Does Voting Matter?

Voting is how we make our voices heard.

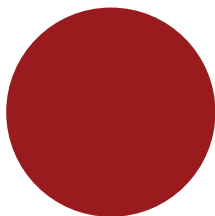
In the United States, voting gives each of us the power to help make decisions about our lives, our communities, and our future.

When you vote, you choose leaders called candidates, who will represent you in government. These leaders make important decisions about health care, housing, transportation, education, and programs that support people with disabilities.

Election Day is when we vote for the candidates we believe will do the best job. Once they're chosen, those candidates become our elected officials. Elected officials include the President, Senators, Representatives, Governors, Mayors, and local council members.

These are the people who make decisions about the laws and services that impact your life. That's why it's so important for every eligible adult to vote, including people with disabilities.

Your vote is your voice. Use it to speak up for yourself and your community.



## Who Can Vote?

In the United States, you can vote in elections if:

- You are a U.S. citizen
- You will be 18 years old or older on or before Election Day
- You live in the state where you want to register to vote
- You register by Florida's deadline - 29 days before Election Day

A deadline is the last day you can take action, like registering to vote. If you miss the deadline, you won't be able to vote in that election.

Sometimes, people wrongly believe that individuals with disabilities cannot vote. That is not true. People with disabilities can vote and do vote every election.

You have the right to vote and to get help if you need it.

## Who Cannot Vote?

Most adults in the U.S. can vote but there are a few exceptions:

- People who live in the U.S. but are not U.S. citizens, such as permanent residents (green card holders), cannot vote in federal or state elections.
- Some people who have been convicted of certain crimes **may not be able to vote right now**, depending on their situation.



## What If I Have a Past Conviction?

If you've been convicted of a crime, you may still be able to vote, but it depends on your case. Florida law sets the rules for restoring voting rights. These rules are in the Florida Constitution and Florida Statutes.

To check your eligibility, visit the official Florida Division of Elections page.

Available at: <https://dos.fl.gov/elections/for-voters/voter-registration/felon-voting-rights>

## I Have a Guardian. Can I Vote?

In Florida, having a guardian does not automatically mean you cannot vote. Whether or not you can vote depends on the type of guardianship you have and what your guardianship papers say.

## Still Not Sure If You Can Vote?

Call Disability Rights Florida's nonpartisan voting hotline at 877-352-7337.

We're here to help you understand your rights.



## How Do I Register to Vote?

Registering to vote is the first step in making your voice heard. There are many places where you can register in Florida so you can choose what works best for you:

- Public assistance offices
- State-funded programs that support people with disabilities
- Armed Forces recruitment offices
- Centers for Independent Living
- Public libraries
- Your local Supervisor of Elections (SOE) office
- With help from a nonpartisan voter registration group
- Online at [registertovoteflorida.gov](https://registertovoteflorida.gov)

## What is Most Important?

To make sure your vote counts in Florida, remember these two key steps:

- Follow the voting rules in Florida
- Register to vote before the deadline



### REMEMBER:

Florida's voter registration deadline is **29 days before Election Day.**



## What Do I Need to Register to Vote in Florida?

To register to vote in Florida, you'll need to share some basic information and have a valid ID. Florida law requires voters to show a valid form of ID when voting in person.

You can use any of the following:

- U.S. Passport
- Florida Driver's License
- Florida State ID (issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles)
- Public Assistance ID
- Military ID
- Student ID
- Neighborhood Association ID
- Retirement Center ID
- Debit or Credit Card
- License to Carry a Concealed Weapon or Firearm
- Veteran Health ID (from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)



## Do I Have to Choose a Political Party When I Register?

When you register to vote in Florida, you can choose a political party, but you don't have to. A political party is a group of people who share similar views and work together to support candidates for public office.

In the U.S., there are two major political parties:

- The Democratic Party
- The Republican Party

Choosing a party may matter if you want to vote in certain elections, like closed primary elections in Florida. If you're not sure, you can always update your registration later.



## Not Sure If You're Registered to Vote in Florida?

You can check your voter registration status here: [registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus](https://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus)

## Want to Make Sure Your Information is Correct?

You can check your voter registration status here: [registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus](https://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus)

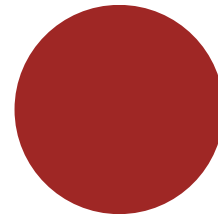
## Have You Moved, Changed Your Name, or Want to Update Your Political Party?

You can update your voter registration before Florida's deadline. To do this, you'll need to fill out a new registration form, but the good news is, you can do it online here: [registertovoteflorida.gov/eligibilityreactive](https://registertovoteflorida.gov/eligibilityreactive)

If you're registered to vote in Florida, you can vote at your local polling place on Election Day.

These are often located at:

- Schools
- Public libraries
- Places of worship
- Community centers



To find your polling place, visit: [dos.fl.gov/elections/for-voters/check-your-voter-status-and-polling-place/voter-precinct-lookup](https://dos.fl.gov/elections/for-voters/check-your-voter-status-and-polling-place/voter-precinct-lookup)



## Early Voting

In Florida, you don't have to wait until Election Day to vote. You have options!

One option is Early Voting. If you are registered to vote, you can vote early in person at any early voting site in your county. You will vote using the same ballot and voting machines used on Election Day.

Early voting happens before Election Day. In Florida, it must last at least 8 days. It starts at least 10 days before Election Day and ends 3 days before Election Day.



### REMEMBER:

Check with your local Supervisor of Elections for early voting dates, times, and locations in your county.

## Why Vote Early?

- It may be less crowded
- You may have more time
- It may be easier for you or your support person



## **Vote by Mail (Absentee Voting)**

If you cannot or prefer not to vote in person, you can vote by mail. This is also called absentee voting.

### **Here's How Voting By Mail Works:**

- Request your vote-by-mail ballot from your local election office.
- Fill out your ballot at home carefully, following all instructions.
- Return your completed ballot by mail or drop it off in person at an approved location before the deadline.

Vote-by-mail gives you time and space to vote at your own pace. Be sure to follow all the instructions so your vote counts.

### **How Do I Request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot in Florida?**

If you want to vote by mail in Florida, you must request a ballot from your County Supervisor of Elections.

### **You Can Request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot in These Ways:**

- Complete and sign Form DS-DE 160 (Vote-by-Mail Request Form)
- By mail, online, fax, or email (as a scanned attachment)
- In person at your Supervisor of Elections office
- By calling your county Supervisor of Elections



Find your county's information here:

<https://dos.fl.gov/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections>

### **What You'll Need to Request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot**

- Your full name
- Your date of birth
- Your residential address
- A valid Florida driver license, Florida ID card, or last four digits of your Social Security number (if on file)
- If your address is different from what's on file, a signed request may be required (some exceptions apply)
- Your signature (if submitting in writing)

### **Accessible Vote-by-Mail Ballot (Remote Access Voting)**

Florida offers an accessible vote-by-mail option for voters who are blind, print-impaired, or have disabilities that make reading or marking a paper ballot difficult.

### **Accessible Vote-by-Mail Ballot Allows You To:**

- Vote privately and independently at home
- Mark your ballot using a computer
- Print and return your completed ballot by mail or in person



## Steps to Request an Accessible Ballot

- Be sure you're registered to vote
- Contact your county Supervisor of Elections
- Ask for a remote access vote-by-mail ballot
  - You will receive:
    - A regular paper ballot sent to your postal address.
    - An accessible electronic ballot delivered to your email inbox.

Fill out the accessible ballot on your computer, print it, and return it just like any other vote-by-mail ballot.



### **REMEMBER:**

We recommend making your request more than 12 days before Election Day to make sure you have enough time.

Learn more about early voting, vote-by-mail and accessible vote-by-mail ballots at:

<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/>



## Who and What Can I Vote For?

On Election Day, voters choose leaders and decide on important issues. Here's what you may vote on:

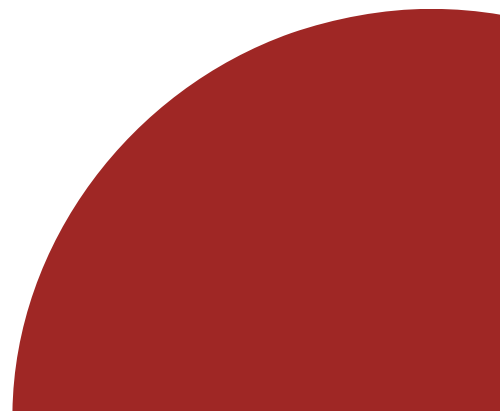
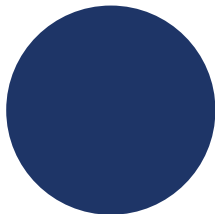
### Elected Officials

- President – leads the country (every 4 years)
- U.S. Senators – represent the whole state in the Senate (every 6 years)
- U.S. Representatives – represent parts of the state in the House (every 2 years)
- Florida Governor – leads the state (every 4 years)
- State Senators and State Representatives – serve in the Florida Legislature (every 2 years)
- Local officials – like mayors, school board members, or city council members (every 2 or 4 years)

### Ballot Issues (Amendments and More)

- How government money should be spent
- Whether to change a law or the state constitution

Changes to the constitution are called amendments. They can be small or large changes to how laws or state rules work. What you vote on depends on where you live—your state, county, or city.



## How Do I Know What is on the Ballot?

Before you vote, it helps to know what will be on your ballot. That way, you can make informed choices about the candidates and issues that matter to you.

You can look up your ballot early by visiting:  
[vote411.org/ballot](https://vote411.org/ballot)

This site will show you what's on your ballot about two months before Election Day.

You'll see information from your state and local elections office, including:

- Candidates running for office
- Amendments or local measures
- Questions you may be asked to vote on

## How Can I Learn About Candidates and Issues?

Once you know what's on your ballot, it's important to learn more about the candidates and the issues you'll be voting on. There are many ways to find out what each candidate believes and what different issues mean for your community.



## Ways To Learn More About Candidates and Issues

- Visit candidate or issue websites
- Follow candidates on social media
- Watch debates to hear candidates explain their ideas and what makes them different
- Read articles or watch local news stories about the election
- Attend campaign events like rallies, town halls, or community meetings
- Visit a candidate's campaign office and ask questions
- Invite candidates to speak with your self-advocacy group or local organization
- Ask questions and learn how candidates plan to support people with disabilities

## Find Trusted Sources

Look for nonpartisan groups that give you facts, not opinions. Nonpartisan means they do not support one candidate or party over another. You can also talk with trusted organizations or community groups that support your values.

The more you learn, the more confident you'll feel when you vote.



## What If the Information is Hard to Understand?

It's okay to have questions. Sometimes, the information about candidates or issues isn't clear.

If something is confusing, here's what you can do:

- Reach out to a trusted group or organization
  - Ask them to explain the issue in a way that's easier to understand.
- Talk with a person you trust
  - This might be a friend, family member, support worker, or self-advocate. They can help you understand the differences between candidates or what each issue means.



### **REMEMBER:**

Other people may share their opinion, but you get to make your own decision. You have the right to vote in the way that feels right to you.



## How Does Voting on Election Day Work?

Voting on Election Day is a chance to make your voice heard. Here's what to expect and how to prepare.

### Before You Leave Home:

- Bring a valid photo ID. Florida law requires one. This can be:
  - A Florida driver's license
  - A Florida state ID or Real ID
  - A U.S. passport
- Know where your polling place is.
  - You can look it up at [dos.fl.gov](https://dos.fl.gov)
- Bring a support person if you want or need help.
  - You have the right to get assistance when voting.
- Bring notes to help you remember who or what you want to vote for.
  - Written reminders are allowed.
- Do not wear clothing, hats, or buttons that show support for a candidate or party.
  - Some polling places may not let you enter if you wear political items.



## Outside the Polling Place:

- You may see signs for candidates or people handing out flyers. You can accept the information or choose not to. It's up to you.
- You do not have to tell anyone who you are voting for.
- You may need to wait in line, even in bad weather. Be prepared to wait patiently.

## Inside the Polling Place:

- Stay quiet about your vote. Do not talk about who you're voting for.
- Do not ask others who they are voting for, and you don't have to answer if someone asks you.
- Poll workers are there to help. If you have questions or need help using the voting machine, ask a poll worker.
- You can also bring your support person in with you if you need assistance.



### **REMEMBER:**

This is your vote and your voice. You have the right to vote privately, safely, and with support if needed.



## How Do I Vote at My Polling Place?

Voting in person is a step-by-step process. Poll workers are there to help you if you need support.

### When You Arrive

- You will see poll workers. These are trained people who help voters.
- A poll worker will ask for your name and address.
- They will also ask to see your photo ID (like a driver's license or passport).
- Florida requires you to show a valid photo ID to vote.

Make sure you are registered to vote before going to your polling place.

### Getting Your Ballot

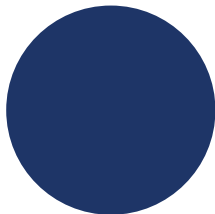
Once your registration is confirmed, you will get a ballot. A ballot is a form that lists:

- The **candidates** you can vote for
- The **issues or questions** you can vote on

### Marking Your Ballot

You will be asked to fill in a dot, select a name, or choose an option to cast your vote. Ballots can be:

- On paper
- On a touchscreen or accessible voting machine



## If You Need Help at the Polling Place

- It's okay to ask for help. You can ask a poll worker or bring someone you trust.
- You have the right to accessible voting and support with your ballot.
- If the ballot is hard to read or understand, ask for assistance. Help is available so you can vote with confidence.

## Voting Accessibility Machines and Your Rights

Everyone has the right to vote privately, safely, and in a way that works for them. At your polling place, accessible voting machines are available to support voters with disabilities.

### What Do Accessible Voting Machines Do?

- Show the ballot on a screen
- Read the ballot out loud using headphones
- Allow you to vote using Braille or other assistive technology
- Let you vote privately and independently

You have the right to request a private space that works for your needs completing forms. Only you can choose who or what to vote for.



### **REMEMBER:**

Your support person or poll worker can read or explain the ballot to you, help you use the voting machine, and assist you in casting your vote.



## After You Vote

- Let a poll worker know when you are done
- Ask them to help you make sure your ballot is submitted correctly

You have the right to know that your vote was counted.

## Your Vote is Private

After you vote, it's up to you how much you want to share. You do not have to tell anyone who you voted for.

## If You Believe Your Rights Were Denied

Contact your state's Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization. These organizations provide free legal help to people with disabilities. In Florida, that organization is

### **Disability Rights Florida.**

Visit: [disabilityrightsflorida.org](https://disabilityrightsflorida.org)

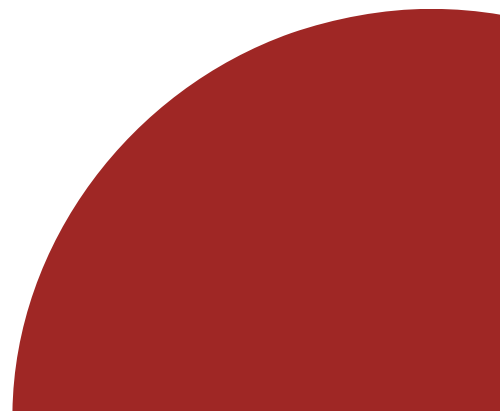
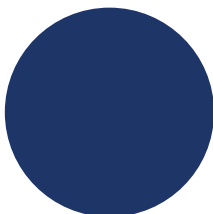
Call the nonpartisan voting hotline at 877-352-7337

## When to Call

- Before Election Day (for questions or help getting ready)
- On Election Day (if you face barriers or problems)
- After Election Day (if your rights were denied or you need help filing a complaint)

## Disability Rights Florida Can Help You

- Understand your voting rights
- Report a problem or file a complaint
- Get support so your voice is heard



## Need More Help? You're Not Alone.

If you're unsure who to talk to about a voting issue, there are many organizations that can help you. These groups support people with disabilities and can connect you to the right resources.

### Organizations That Can Help:

#### Independent Living Centers in Florida

- These centers support people with disabilities in living and participating fully in their communities.
  - <https://floridacils.org>

#### Florida Self-Advocates Network'D (FL SAND)

- A statewide network of self-advocacy groups led by and for people with developmental disabilities.
  - <https://www.flsand.org>

#### Access the Vote Florida Coalition

- A nonpartisan group working to make voting accessible to people with disabilities in Florida.
  - <https://www.accessthevote.org>

### These Groups Can:

- Answer questions about your rights
- Help you understand voting options
- Connect you to legal help or election offices
- Support your right to vote safely and privately



## How Can I Help Other People Vote?

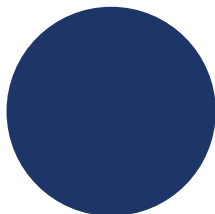
You have the power to make a difference, not just by voting, but by helping others vote, too. There are many ways you can support voters in your community, especially voters with disabilities.

### Ways to Help:

- Share voting information with your friends, family, and community
- Talk about voting rights and access with local self-advocacy groups and disability organizations
- Share this Voting Guide so others know how to register, vote, and get support
- Join your local REV UP Coalition to help build disability voting power:
  - [aapd.com/building-state-revup-disability-voting-coalitions](http://aapd.com/building-state-revup-disability-voting-coalitions)

### Get Involved in Your Community:

- Volunteer with local organizations that help people register and vote
- Reach out to disability advocacy groups and ask how you can support voter education
- Offer to help lead or attend voter trainings for people with disabilities
- Connect with your local election office to ask how you can support accessibility efforts
- Volunteer at a polling place to make sure it's welcoming and accessible to everyone



## Our Commitment to You

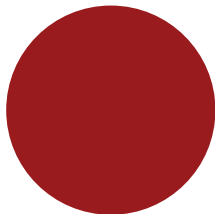
At Disability Rights Florida, we believe in the power of every voice, especially the voices too often left out of the conversation. This Voter Guide: Your Right to Vote was created by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities, to support and empower our community as we navigate the voting process together.

We believe the next generation of leaders, advocates, and change-makers is already rising, and that includes you. Your lived experience, your perspective, and your vote all matter.

**Your voice counts.**

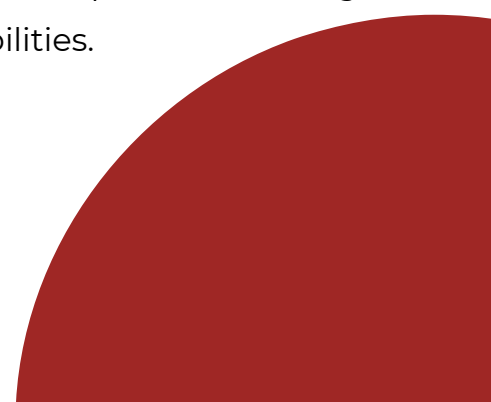
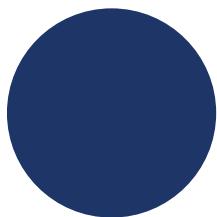
**Your vote has power.**

Use it to shape the future you deserve.



## Glossary of Terms

Ballot	A form used to make your voting choices. Ballots may be paper or electronic.
Candidate	A person who is running for elected office.
Closed Primary	An election where only voters who choose a political party can vote in that party's race.
Election Day	The official day when most people vote.
Early Voting	Voting that takes place before Election Day at specific polling places.
ID (Identification)	A document that proves who you are, like a driver's license or passport. Florida law requires photo ID to vote.
Polling Place	A location in your community where you go to vote.
Poll Worker	A person trained to help voters at polling places.
Political Party	A group of people with similar political ideas. Examples include the Democratic and Republican parties.
Provisional Ballot	A ballot used when there are questions about a voter's eligibility that must be resolved before the vote is counted.
Protection and Advocacy (P&A)	Organizations that provide legal help and support for people with disabilities in every state and territory.
REV UP	A national campaign that stands for Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power. It promotes voting access for people with disabilities.



## Glossary of Terms

Self-Advocate	A person who speaks up for their own rights and needs.
Supervisor of Elections	The local office responsible for managing elections in your county.
Vote-by-Mail (Absentee Voting)	A way to vote without going to a polling place. You receive and return your ballot by mail.
Voting Accessibility Machine	A voting device that supports people with disabilities by offering features like audio ballots, Braille access, or touchscreen input.
Voting Rights	Legal protections that give eligible people the right to vote in a fair and accessible way.

