

# People with Disabilities

## *How to Vote and Your Rights in the Voting Process*



### Accessible Voting

***Does my disability affect my right to vote?***

NO, your disability does NOT affect your right to vote unless a judge has taken away your right to vote.

***Does the polling place have to be accessible?***

Yes, every polling place must comply with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

This includes having:

- ✓ Accessible parking spaces (if parking is provided)
- ✓ At least one accessible entrance connected to an accessible route
- ✓ An accessible voting area

In addition, all polling locations should be equipped with a Vote-By-Phone system, as part of Maine's accessible voting solution.

***What is the Vote-By- Phone system?***

The Vote-By- Phone system was designed to help people with disabilities to vote privately and independently. If you are interested in voting by this system on Election Day and would like more information, visit:

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava/accessible.html>

You can even practice casting your vote using this system before Election Day! If you would like to try it out, just visit the website and click on the "AVS Preview & Practice" link. Practice as many times as you like!

***If I cannot go to the polling place, are there other ways that I can vote?***

Yes, you may take advantage of:

- Absentee voting (see p. 4)
- Third person absentee voting (see p. 4)
- In-person absentee voting (see p. 3)

***Can someone assist me in voting?***

Yes! See page 3 for details.

***Can I bring my service animal to the polling place?***

Yes, you have the right to bring your service animal with you into your polling place.

***What do I do if I know that my polling place is not accessible to me?***

Call your town or city clerk and ask them to modify the location to be in compliance with the regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

If the necessary adjustment cannot be made to your polling location by Election Day, then you may call your town or city clerk and request to vote at another site.

***What if my polling place isn't accessible on voting day?***

Please call the Election Division of the Secretary of State's office at (207) 624-7650. Also, call the Disability Rights Center at 1-800-452-1948, or fill out the attached survey.



**Advocating for Maine Citizens  
with Disabilities Since 1977**

**1-800-452-1948**

# Registering To Vote

## Answers to Your Questions

### ***Am I eligible to register to vote?***

In order to be eligible to vote, you must be:

- ✓ A citizen of the United States
- ✓ A resident of Maine and the county where you register
- ✓ At least 17 years old and 18 before the next general election

### ***How can I find out if I am already registered to vote?***

To find out if you are already registered to vote, contact your town or city clerk. To find contact information, visit the website:

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/munic.shtml>  
and search for your town or city.

### ***How do I register to vote?***

You need to fill out a voter registration card and provide valid identification. You can do this in person or by mail. In person, you can show your Maine driver's license, Maine State ID or give your social security number. If registering by mail, you must submit one of the following forms of ID:

- ✓ Copy of your Maine driver's license
- ✓ Copy of another valid photo ID
- ✓ Utility bill
- ✓ Bank statement
- ✓ Paycheck
- ✓ A current government document that shows your name and address

### ***Where can I get the registration form, if I plan to register by mail? Where do I mail it?***

You can call your town or city clerk and a Registration card will be mailed to you.

Or, you can find it on the website:

<http://www.fvap.gov/resources/media/nvra-form.pdf>

Return your completed registration card, in person or by mail, to your town office or city hall, or the Secretary of State's Office in Augusta.

The Secretary of State's Office address:

Elections Division  
Bureau of Corporations  
Elections and Commissions  
101 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0101

### ***Where can I register to vote in person?***

- Your Town Office or City Hall
- Motor vehicle branch offices
- Most state and federal social service agencies
- Voter registration drives

### ***When is the deadline to register to vote?***

It is never too late to register to vote! If you register in person, you can register on Election Day at your town office or city hall. If you choose to register by mail, the deadline is the close of business on the 21<sup>st</sup> day before the election.

### ***Who do I ask if I need help?***

- Visit the website:  
<http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/votguid06.htm>
- Call or visit your town or city clerk
- Call the Division of Elections of the Secretary of State's office:  
(207) 624-7650

# On Voting Day

## Answers to Your Questions

### ***Is there another day I can vote?***

Yes, you may take advantage of in-person absentee voting.

### ***What is in-person absentee voting and how does it work?***

In-person absentee voting is when you visit your town office or city hall and fill out an absentee ballot there. You can cast an in-person absentee ballot as soon as your town office or city hall has ballots available. Ballots should be available 30-45 days before Election Day. Call your town or city clerk to find out if they have received ballots yet.

### ***Where do I vote?***

You must vote at **your** polling place. Your polling place depends on where you live. To find out where your polling place is, call your town or city clerk, or visit the website:  
[http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/lookup\\_polling\\_place.php](http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/lookup_polling_place.php)

All polling places open on Election Day from 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., and many from 6:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

### ***What if I cannot get to my polling place to vote due to a medical condition or a disability?***

Then you may request an absentee ballot. You will find more information on absentee ballots on page 4.

### ***What do I need to bring?***

If you registered in person or if you registered by mail and provided valid identification you do not need to bring anything with you. However, if you register on Election Day or if you registered by mail and did not send any valid form of identification in with your

Registration card, then you must bring one of the forms of identification listed on page 2.

### ***What happens if I do not bring the required documentation?***

You will be able to cast a provisional ballot, which means you will mark a ballot but your vote will not be counted until your eligibility has been determined.

### ***How do I mark a ballot?***

Different polling places may have different types of voting systems. However, each ballot will explain how to mark your choices. If you have any questions or need help you may ask an election official. If you make a mistake on your ballot, you can just fold it and give it to an election official and he or she will give you another ballot. If you would like to check what type of system your location will use, you may call your town or city clerk.

### ***Can I have help voting?***

Yes! You may have your friend or relative come with you to help you read and/or fill out your ballot. When selecting your helper you may choose almost anyone you would like to have come with you, your helper does not have to be registered to vote or even old enough to vote. However, your employer or union official may not help you vote. If you do not bring somebody with you, but you would like to have help, an election official can also assist you throughout the voting process.

### ***Is there anything else that can make voting easier?***

You can call your town or city clerk before Election Day to make sure that you are registered and know where your polling place is.

# Absentee Voting

## Answers to Your Questions

### ***What is absentee voting and how does it work?***

Absentee voting allows you to cast your ballot without having to travel to your polling place. In order to cast your vote, you simply fill out your absentee ballot and mail it to your town or city clerk.

### ***Will I have to apply for an absentee ballot every election?***

Yes, you will.

### ***Who may use absentee voting?***

Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot instead of voting in person. You do not need a reason to use absentee voting

### ***What do I need to do to vote by absentee ballot?***

1. Apply for an absentee ballot
2. Fill out the ballot when it arrives in the mail.
3. Mail or deliver the ballot back to your town or city clerk.

### ***How do I apply for an absentee ballot?***

**Telephone:** You may request a ballot for yourself by calling your town or city clerk, and a ballot will be mailed to you.

**Mail:** You may make a written request to your town or city clerk for a ballot for yourself or an immediate family member, by filling out an absentee ballot application. You can get an absentee ballot application from your town or city clerk or online at:

[www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter\\_absenteeform.html](http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter_absenteeform.html)

**E-mail:** Some towns and cities allow you to request an absentee ballot for yourself by e-mail. To see if your town or city has this option, visit: [www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter\\_absenteeform.html](http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter_absenteeform.html)

### ***When can I request an absentee ballot?***

You may request an absentee ballot as early as 3 months before Election Day. When voting by absentee ballot, it is important to remember to request your ballot early enough to allow time for your ballot to be mailed to you.

### ***When must I complete my absentee ballot?***

Your absentee ballot must arrive at your town office or city hall by Election Day.

### ***What is in-person absentee voting?***

For information on in-person absentee voting, see page 3.

### ***How do I vote in the case of an emergency if it is too late to apply for an absentee ballot?***

You may use third person absentee voting. This is when somebody obtains and returns your absentee ballot for you.

### ***How do I use “third person” absentee voting?***

1. You must make a written request for a third person (anyone other than yourself or your immediate family) to obtain and hand-deliver an absentee ballot.
2. That person will take your written request to your town office or city hall, where they will be given an absentee ballot.
3. He or she will hand deliver the ballot to you.
4. You will fill out the ballot. You must have two witnesses watch you do this; the “third person” may count as one of your witnesses.
5. The third person brings the completed ballot back to your town office or city hall.

Only the person you designate as the “third person” may handle your absentee ballot.

# Voting From State Hospitals

## Answers to Your Questions

### *Can I vote if I am at one of the state psychiatric hospitals?*

Yes, you have the right to vote if you are in a psychiatric hospital unless a judge has taken away your right to vote.

### *What address do I use to register to vote?*

If you have a residence out of the hospital, you can use that address as your physical residence on the registration form and the absentee ballot. However, for the current mailing address, you should list the hospital's address so you will be able to receive any applications or forms right at the hospital. If you do not have a separate

residence from the hospital, you can list the hospital's address for both your physical residence and current mailing address. The hospital's addresses are listed below.

If you have any questions or need any assistance, you should ask your social worker.

### *Who do I contact if I am unable to get the help I need to vote?*

You may contact:

- Your hospital's patient advocate (information listed below); or
- Disability Rights Center of Maine: 1-800-452-1948

### **Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center**

#### *Patient Advocate:*

Katherine Griffin: (207) 941-4180

#### *Hospital Address:*

Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center  
(Include your unit/ room number)  
P.O. Box 926  
656 State Street  
Bangor, Maine 04402-0926

### **Riverview Psychiatric Center**

#### *Patient Advocate:*

J. Harper and Amy Waterbury: (207) 624  
4663

#### *Hospital Address:*

Riverview Psychiatric Center  
(Include your unit/ room number)  
250 Arsenal Street  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04332-0011

### **Additional Contacts**

United States Election Assistance Commission    [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov)    1- 866- 747-1471 (toll- free)

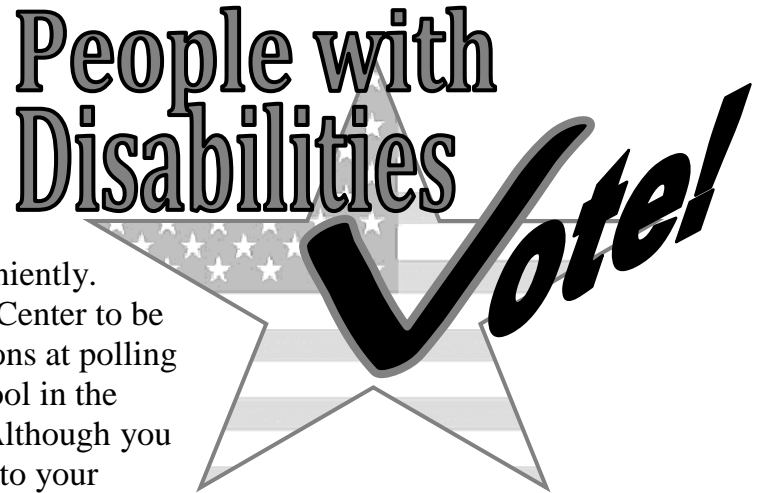
Maine Secretary of State's Voting Website    [www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter\\_info/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter_info/index.html)

Disability Rights Center of Maine    [www.drcme.org](http://www.drcme.org)    1-800-452-1948 (toll- free)

## Polling Place Accessibility Survey

The Disability Rights Center of Maine would like to know if your polling place is accessible. Providing information on the accessibility of your polling place will help us ensure that you and other individuals with disabilities will be able to vote privately, independently, and conveniently.

It would be a great help to the Disability Rights Center to be able to have photographs of accessibility violations at polling locations. Photographs can be a very powerful tool in the negotiation process of getting violations fixed. Although you do not have to, if you are able to bring a camera to your polling location and take pictures of any inaccessible features of your polling location, it would be much appreciated and would greatly assist in our efforts to help you. You may also provide your contact information so that the Disability Rights Center may contact you with further questions about the accessibility of your polling place, but again this is optional.



**Please return this survey by:**

*Mail to: Disability Rights Center*

*P.O. Box 2007*

*Augusta, Maine 04338;*

*E-mail: [advocate@drcme.org](mailto:advocate@drcme.org);*

*Fax: 1-207-621-1419; or*

*Telephone: 1-800-452-1948*

*Thank you for your help in  
making Maine more  
accessible!*

**Acknowledgments:**

Special Thanks to the West Virginia Advocates and the Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service for the use of their "People with Disabilities Vote" newsletter and the use of their polling place accessibility survey, as well as for their commitment and efforts in protecting the rights of Americans with disabilities. Another special thanks to the Maine Secretary of State's Office for their supply of information and assistance, as well as to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and Administration on Developmental Disabilities for providing the funding for this project.



***Advocating for Maine Citizens with  
Disabilities Since 1977***