

Know Your Rights: Accessibility and Voting



NAMI's #Vote4MentalHealth campaign encourages every American to use their voice by casting a ballot this election. But what if you require an accommodation to vote? Or what if you face challenges at your polling place? It's important to know your rights.

- All polling places and ballot drop boxes must be accessible to voters with disabilities, in accordance with [the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). This includes federal, state, and local elections. And it includes all parts of voting, like voter registration, selecting a location for polling places, and voting, whether on Election Day or during the early or absentee voting process.
- You may bring someone to help you vote. If you require assistance voting due to blindness, disability, inability to read or write, or any other reason, you may bring a friend or family member or ask an official election worker to help you.
- You can choose almost anyone to help you vote with these notable exceptions: your employer and/or anyone who represents your workers' union may not assist you.
- Whoever you choose to help you vote must respect your choices and assist you in the exact way you request.
- You do not have to pass any kind of test to be able to vote. This includes a reading test: you do not have to prove that you can read or write in order to vote.
- If your ability to vote is questioned, you still have the right to cast a provisional ballot, which lets you choose your candidates, just like a regular ballot. The provisional ballot will be set aside until election officials or a judge make a final decision on your vote.
- Some states have laws concerning the right to vote for people with psychiatric disabilities who are under guardianship. [Learn more from the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#).
- Additionally, there are differing laws state-by-state concerning the right to vote following someone who is convicted of a crime. [The U.S. Department of Justice has a guide on its website to learn more about your state's laws](#).
- If someone denies you your right to vote or to register to vote, you have the right to file a complaint and have that complaint heard in court. In most cases, a judge is the only person who can make a final decision on your ability to vote.

What to know about registering to vote

In order to #Vote4MentalHealth, you must first register to vote! [Find your state's registration deadline here \(Link\)](#). When registering to vote, keep in mind that you have many rights as a voter.

In addition to registering to vote with your state's board of elections, you can register to vote when you apply for a driver's license or when you go to a government office for public support or disability benefits. This includes offices that run food stamp programs (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP and SNAP for Women Infants and Children or WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Vocational Rehabilitation, and Medicaid, to name a few. If you receive in-home services from your state Medicaid program, your service provider can help you register to vote at home.

Questions or Facing Issues?

Don't give up! If you are unable to cast your ballot at your polling place due to denied accommodations, you may contact the Election Protection Hotline:

ENGLISH: 866-OUR-VOTE / 866-687-8683

SPANISH/ENGLISH: 888-VE-Y-VOTA / 888-839-8682

ASIAN LANGUAGES/ENGLISH: 888-API-VOTE / 888-274-8683

ARABIC/ENGLISH: 844-YALLA-US / 844-925-5287

ONLINE: 866ourvote.org [\(link\)](#).

About #Vote4MentalHealth

#Vote4MentalHealth is a campaign led by NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, to promote nonpartisan voter participation and elevate discussions about mental health policy during the elections. Please note, we do not endorse, represent or warrant the accuracy or reliability of any of the information obtained from third party sources. Your decision whether or not to vote is 100% voluntary and NAMI is in no way seeking to influence your political affiliations or beliefs.



www.vote4mentalhealth.org