Your vote counts, so go out and vote!

Marlene Sallo, Executive Director
Disability Law Center
11 Beacon Street, Suite 925
Boston, MA 02108
July 16-20 is National Disability Voter Registration Week
What is voting?

Your right

Your voice

Your opportunity to create change
Voting “is a way for elected officials to know what their constituents want, what our country wants. The way to make your voice heard is by your vote.”

“It’s important to vote because it’s how we, as a nation, impact the laws that structure our society.”

Voting “is the most basic fundamental right that American citizens have, and it’s so incredibly important that people exercise it.”

- Congressman Joe Kennedy III
Types of Elections

**Primary Election**

- An election to choose the candidates that will represent their political party in the general election.

- This year in Massachusetts, the **Primary Election** will be held on Tuesday, **September 4, 2018**.

**General Election**

- A regular election for statewide or national offices.

- This year in Massachusetts, the **General Election** will be held on Tuesday, **November 6, 2018**.
Calendar

**August 15, 2018**  
(Wednesday)  
Registration deadline for the Massachusetts Primary Election

**September 4, 2018**  
(Tuesday)  
The Massachusetts Primary Election

**October 17, 2018**  
(Wednesday)  
Registration deadline for The Massachusetts General Election

**November 6, 2018**  
(Tuesday)  
The Massachusetts General Election
Who can vote?

You may vote in Massachusetts if:

You are a citizen of the United States; and

You are 18 years old; and

You are not currently incarcerated by reason of a felony conviction.

If you meet the above requirements, you may apply online, by mail, or in person.
Are people with disabilities allowed to vote?

Voting is a fundamental right of all American citizens.

“Massachusetts residents who are under guardianship are still eligible to register and vote under most circumstances. Unless a court specifically states that the person under guardianship is restricted from registering or voting, that person remains eligible to vote, as long as they meet all other requirements for voting.”

- Elections Division, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Know Your Rights

As a voter with a disability, you have the right to
• vote privately and independently
• have an accessible polling place with voting machines for voters with disabilities

You may either
• seek assistance from workers at the polling place who have been trained to use the accessible voting machines, or
• bring someone to help you vote

You may request your local election officials to tell you about any voting aids, voting assistance, and absentee ballot procedures that are available.

Commissioner Thomas Hicks, Chairman of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission
Getting Help with Voting

If you need help voting because of a disability, you have the right to get help from almost any person you choose:

- a family member
- a friend
- a supporter
- a poll worker

The two kinds of people who cannot help you vote are:

- your boss or someone working for your boss
- if you belong to a labor union, an officer or agent of that labor union

Anyone helping you vote must respect your choices and cannot assume he or she knows who you want to vote for.
Your Rights
When Someone Is Helping You Vote

• The helper must respect your privacy at all times.

• If you have a hard time reading the ballot, you may
  • ask for a voting machine that reads aloud the choices on
    the ballot
  • ask a helper to read aloud all the names on the ballot.

• If you have a hard time marking the ballot by yourself, you can tell the helper which person you want to vote for.
What You Can Expect from Officials When You Vote

• Election officials must help you vote if you ask for their help.
  • They must ensure that you can use all of their voting booths, ballots or other voting forms, voting machines, and any other voting equipment.

• Service providers and election officials must make reasonable changes to their policies in order to help you vote.

• The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) says that all disability service agencies are voter registration agencies.
  • They must give you voter registration forms, if you ask for them.
  • They must help you fill them out.
  • They must send the form to the appropriate agency for processing.
Accessible Polling Places

Accessible voting provides the same opportunity for access and participation to persons with disabilities as for other voters.

All polling places in Massachusetts must provide access on a permanent or temporary basis on Election Day.

Voting assistance and absentee voting offer options that persons with disabilities may use to vote, but are not considered substitutes for actual accessibility to the voting location.
Accessible Voting Equipment

Polling places must be equipped for voters with disabilities, allowing them to have the **same opportunity to vote privately and independently**. Every precinct must have at least one accessible voting machine available.

The **AutoMARK**:

- is a marking device that uses audio cue capacity for visually impaired voters
- has a feature that will greatly magnify the ballot or display the ballot high-contrast for voters that have limited visual impairment
- can produce an oral report to the voter of the choices selected prior to the voter printing the ballot.
Accessibility complaints?

The Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is committed to making voting as accessible for all voters.

Please let the Elections Division know how it can improve accessibility by calling 800-462-VOTE (8683) (toll free) or 617-727-2828.

You may also e-mail elections@sec.state.ma.us.
When is identification required?

If you are voting for the first time or have been an inactive voter, you may be asked to show identification.

Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote. Examples of acceptable identification include: a driver's license, state-issued ID card, recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, a copy of a voter registration affidavit, or any other printed identification which contains the voter's name and address.
How to register to vote

1) You may register to vote online.

• In order to register to vote online, you must have a signature on file with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

• If you currently have a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card, you may use the online voter registration application to register, update your address, or change your party affiliation.

• Voter registration forms submitted online must be submitted by midnight on the date of the voter registration deadline.

https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/
How to register to vote

2) You may register to vote by mail.

• If you do not qualify to register to vote online, or if you would prefer to register by mail, you may download the voter registration form available on the Elections Division webpage. (See the example on the next slide.)

• The form must be completed, signed, and delivered to your local election official.

• Voter registration forms submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than the voter registration deadline.

https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howreg.htm
# Sample Voter Registration Form

Print all information in black ink. Follow above instructions for proper delivery.

1. **Check one:** Are you a Citizen of the United States of America? □ Yes □ No  
   NOTE: If you checked “no,” do not complete this form.

2. **Full name:**
   - last name
   - first name
   - middle name or initial
   - Jr. Sr. II III IV (circle one if appropriate)

3. **Former name:**
   - last name
   - first name
   - middle name or initial
   - Jr. Sr. II III IV (circle one if appropriate)

4. **Address where you live now:** (street number / street name / rural route number & box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code):

5. **Address where you receive all your mail (if different from #4):**

6. **Date of birth:** month day year

7. **Identification #:** license # or last 4 digits of SSN

8. **Telephone (optional):** □ Check if unlisted

9. **Party enrollment or designation** (check one):
   - □ Democratic
   - □ Republican
   - □ Libertarian
   - □ No Party (unenrolled)
   - □ Political Designation (not a political party):

10. **Address at which you were last registered to vote:** (street number / street name / rural route number & box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code):

11. If the applicant is unable to sign this form, give the name, address and telephone number (optional) of the person helping the applicant:
   - name
   - address
   - telephone number (optional)

12. I hereby swear (affirm) that I am the person named above, that the above information is true, that I AM A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, that I am at least 16 years old and I understand that I must be 18 years old to be eligible to vote, that I am not a person under a guardianship which prohibits my registering to vote, that I am not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law from voting because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, that I am not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and that I consider this residence to be my home. Signed under the penalty of perjury.

13. **Today’s date:** month day year

14. **Signed:** Sign your name here.
How to register to vote

3) You may register to vote in person.

- If you would like to register in person, you may do so at any local election office, as well as the Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office (1 Ashburton Place, #1705, Boston, MA 02108).

- Voter registration is also available as part of every transaction at the Registry of Motor Vehicles and at certain public assistance agencies.

- Voter registration forms completed in person are valid as of the day that they are signed.
How do I find out where to vote?

Find my election information

To find your election information:

- Enter your residential address.
- This address must be in a city or town in Massachusetts.
- If you live in a village, view list of village names (opens in new window or tab) to find the city or town name for your village.
- Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*).

* Required: Enter your street address in 3 separate boxes

1. Your street number (numbers only):

2. Your street name:

3. Select street suffix:

* Required: Provide a city or town, or your zip code

Your city or town:

Or your zip code (numbers only):

http://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema/bal/MyElectionInfo.aspx
Sample Ballot Initiative Question
Absentee Ballot

In order to be eligible to vote by absentee ballot in Massachusetts, a voter must be prevented from voting at their polling place on Election Day, due to:

- Absence from the voter's city or town on Election Day
- Physical disability
- Religious belief
Contact information

Marlene Sallo, Executive Director
Disability Law Center
11 Beacon Street, Suite 925
Boston, MA 02108
msallo@dlc-ma.org

Julie Heffernan Heffernan@arcmass.org
Katerina Daley Daley@arcmass.org
Co-Coordinators, Get Out the Vote Campaign
The Arc of Massachusetts
217 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453
Resources


O’Malley, Debra. “A Get Out the Vote Project.” Received by Julie Heffernan, 19 June 2018.