



HOW TO VOTE IN MASSACHUSETTS

A Guide for People with Disabilities Voting in the Presidential Election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Note: There are lots of different words and phrases used in voting and elections. We explain some of these words and phrases in this guide. Other definitions and examples can be found in our [Voting Language Resource](#).

There are also phrases that might change based on where you live. For example, in this guide, we use the term "local election office." In some cities and towns, this office might have a different name. Your local election office might be called the county clerk, county election commission, board of elections, or something else. You can find that information by clicking on the links for each state that we have included in the guide.



GETTING READY TO VOTE

You can follow the sections in this guide to learn about voting in your state. Then you can create your plan to vote by using the [2024 My Plan to Vote worksheet](#). Making a plan to vote can help you feel more confident and prepared to vote.

- **Step 1: Register to vote.** Read the "Register to Vote" section below to learn how.
- **Step 2: Learn about what's on your ballot.** Read the "Learning About The Issues" section below to learn how.

- **Step 3: Decide how you want to vote.**
 - Do you want to vote in-person at the polling place? If so, read the section “Voting In Person.”
 - Do you want to vote by mail or absentee ballot? If so, read the section “Vote By Mail.”
- **Step 4: Make your plan to vote.** To make your plan your vote, consider how you will vote, think about what support you may need, and arrange transportation. You can use the [2024 My Plan to Vote worksheet](#) to help you make your plan.



REGISTERING TO VOTE

- **How can I register to vote?**
 - You can find out if you are already registered to vote by visiting [vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org).
 - If you are not registered to vote, you have two options. You only need to complete one option to register to vote:
 - Option 1: register to vote online at Massachusetts’s [online voter registration website](#).
 - Option 2: register to vote by downloading, filling out, and returning the Massachusetts [mail-in registration form](#).
- **When do I need to register?** The voter registration deadline is Saturday, October 26. Be sure to register on or before this date. In this state, voters cannot register after the deadline or on Election Day.
- **Do I need an identification (ID) to register?** You will need a driver’s license or non-driver state ID to register to vote. You can use your Social Security number if you don’t have a state ID or driver’s license.
- **Can I vote if I have a disability?** Yes! People with disabilities who are 18 years old or older have the right to vote. Your vote matters and is protected by laws to make sure voting is accessible, independent, and private.

- **Can I vote if I have a guardian?** In this state, most people with guardians are allowed to vote. However, sometimes a judge may decide that you cannot vote. If you are not sure, you can check your guardianship order. If your guardianship order does not say anything about voting, this means you can still vote! Your right has only been taken away if your order directly says that. For help understanding or getting back your right to vote, contact your local [Protection and Advocacy Agency \(P&A\)](#).
- **Can I vote if I have gone to jail or prison?** If you have gone to jail or prison, you should check to see if you are allowed to vote. Some states take away your right to vote if you have gone to jail or prison. Learn about voting rights for people who have [gone to jail or prison](#). You can also learn more from the [Campaign Legal Center](#) or [contact the local P&A](#).



LEARNING ABOUT THE ISSUES

- **What is a ballot?** A ballot is a list of who and what you are voting for. Your ballot will list candidates who are running for different offices, such as President, Congressperson, and Senator. You vote by marking your choice on the ballot. If you are voting by marking a paper ballot and not using a voting machine, make sure to look at both sides of the ballot. Sometimes, your ballot has choices on both sides.
- **What is a ballot measure?** Sometimes, your ballot will have ballot measures. A ballot measure is a law, issue, or question that you can vote on. Voters get to decide if they agree or disagree with the ballot measure by voting yes to agree or no to disagree. [Learn about ballot measures](#) on our resource page.
- **Can I look at my ballot before I go to vote?** Enter your address on [BallotReady](#). This tool will give you a “sample ballot,” which will show

you what will be on your ballot when you vote. On BallotReady, you can learn more about the candidates you can vote for.



VOTING IN PERSON

- **Where do I need to go to vote?** The place where you go to vote in person is called a polling place. If you are registered to vote, you can find your local polling place through the Massachusetts election website. [Find your polling place.](#)
- **Do I need an ID to vote in person?** This state only requires voters to show an ID at their polling place if it is their first time voting in a federal election in Massachusetts. A federal election is when you vote for President, Congressional Representative, or U.S. Senator. The November 5, 2024 election is a federal election. [Learn about federal elections](#) on our resource page. If it is your first time voting in a federal election, you may be asked to show an unexpired photo ID, such as a driver's license, non-driver state ID, credit card, student ID, or insurance card. [Learn about voter ID.](#)
- **What if I need help with filling out my ballot?** You are allowed to have someone help you fill out your ballot.
- **Who can help me with filling out my ballot?** You may choose someone you know to help you vote or ask for help from a poll worker at the polling place. Your boss cannot help you vote. If you are part of a labor union at work, the person who helps you vote cannot be your labor union representative. [Learn about labor unions](#) on our resource page.
- **Can I vote before Election Day?** This state allows any voter to vote in person before Election Day during the Early Voting period. The early voting period is set by the local election office, but generally starts on Saturday, October 19 and ends on Friday, November 1. Contact the [local election office](#) for Early Voting locations and hours.

- **Can I vote outside of the polling place if it is inaccessible?** This state does not usually allow people to vote outside the polling place if it is inaccessible. You can contact the [local election office](#) to see if they will make this accommodation. You can also contact the [Secretary of State's office](#) for assistance or vote by mail.
- **How can I mark and cast my ballot in person?** Every polling place is required to have at least one accessible voting machine. Sometimes the machine is called a ballot marking device. Every voter is allowed to use the accessible voting machine. The poll workers at your voting site will teach you how to use the machine. In many polling places, you can also vote by marking a paper ballot with a pen. You can choose if you want to vote using a machine or using a paper and pen.
- **How can an accessible voting machine help me vote?**
 - You can use a touch screen or tactile keypad to click through each question and mark your choices. Some accessible machines also allow you to plug in a sip-and-puff device.
 - You can make the font bigger and change the colors to make the ballot easier to read.
 - The voting machine also has headphones. The machine can read your ballot out loud to you, so you can listen to the questions.
 - You can go back through your ballot choices and make sure you selected the right ones before printing your ballot and casting your vote.



VOTING BY MAIL

- **Can I vote by mail?** Any voter in this state can vote by mail. (If a polling place is not accessible to people with disabilities, this is another way for you to vote.)
- **Do I need an ID to vote by mail-in ballot?** This state only requires voters to include an ID when voting by mail if it is their first time voting in a federal election in Massachusetts. A federal election is when you vote for President, Congressional Representative, or U.S. Senator. The November 5, 2024 election is a federal election. [Learn about federal elections](#) on our resource page. If it is your first time voting in a federal election, [learn about ID requirements for first-time voters](#).
- **How do I request mail-in ballot?** You must request your ballot online or by mail, fax, or email from the local election office. [Request your ballot](#).
- **Can I get an electronic mail-in ballot?** This state allows some voters with disabilities to request an electronic absentee ballot. They must be blind, have low vision, have a physical disability, or have a learning disability that makes it difficult to read or mark a paper ballot. They can fill out the ballot and return it electronically. This is called an accessible vote by mail ballot. To request an accessible vote by mail ballot, check the box at the bottom of the vote by mail application form for the accessible ballot and write down your email address. [Request an accessible vote by mail ballot](#).
- **What is the deadline for requesting my ballot?** The last day to request a mail-in ballot is Tuesday, October 29. Request your ballot as soon as possible to make sure that you receive your ballot on time.
- **What if I need help with filling out my ballot?** You are allowed to have someone help you fill out your ballot. The person who helps you may need to complete a form called an affidavit to be returned with the ballot. An affidavit is a written statement. When someone signs an affidavit, they promise that they are telling the truth.

- **Do I need to sign my ballot envelope?** Follow the instructions on the envelope to sign your envelope when asked. This state requires this signature to match the signature on your mail-in ballot application.
- **How do I return my ballot?** You can return your ballot by mail or deliver it to the local election office, an early voting location, or a ballot drop box. Voters with disabilities who received an electronic vote by mail ballot may be able to return their ballot by email. If you are returning your ballot by mail, it must be postmarked by Election Day, Tuesday, November 5 and received by Friday, November 8. If you are delivering your ballot, it must be received by Election Day, Tuesday, November 5.
- **Can someone return my ballot for me?** You may have a family member return your ballot for you.
- **Can I track my ballot?** Yes, you can track your ballot online to see if the local election office has received it. You can do this on the Massachusetts election website. [Track your ballot.](#)



MORE VOTING HELP

- **Where can I find more info on how to vote?** Check out the Massachusetts [state election website](#). Learn about [voting assistance for voters with disabilities](#).
- **What if I am having trouble voting or registering to vote?** If you have any trouble voting, [contact your local P&A](#). If you need help, the phone number for voters with disabilities is 617-723-8455.
- **What if I have more questions?** Check out these resources:
 - [America Votes: Local Election Office Directory](#)
 - [Guardianship and Voting Laws](#)
 - [Resources for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Voters](#)
 - [Resources for Blind and Low Vision Voters](#)
 - [Easy Read and Plain Language Voting Resources](#)

- [Campaign Legal Center: Restore Your Vote](#)
- [VoteRiders: Voter ID Help](#)
- [ASL Hotline](#): 301-818-VOTE (301-818-8683)
- [Election Protection Hotline](#): 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683)



The 2024 State Voting Guides for Disabled Voters are made by the REV UP Voting Campaign at the American Association of People with Disabilities. This project was led by Sarah Blahovec and included plain language review from Regina Bowie, Latisha Martin, Hannah Brecher, and Lydia Wayman.