2024 Maryland Elections Disability Voting Guide

In this guide, The Arc Maryland will walk you through these important parts of voting for people with disabilities in Maryland:

This guide is meant to help with basic information for people to understand their rights in voting. The Arc Maryland is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that does not provide any information in representation or support of any particular political party or views. This guide is not offered as legal advice and should not be used as a substitute for seeking professional legal advice or information. For more information about voting, visit the Maryland Elections page here.

Why Do You Vote?

Voting is an important right for Americans. Voting is a way for people to say what they want.

One important way to vote is when **you decide who the leaders are in government**. You get to vote for people like the President, Senators, Representatives, Governors, Mayors, and council members. These are elected officials.

Elected officials make decisions that affect the lives of you, your friends, and family members. **Some decisions they make affect people with disabilities** and programs that support people with disabilities to live and work in the community.

Voting happens in Maryland on Election Day. The General Election is on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

Who Can Vote?

To register to vote in Maryland, you need to make sure the checklist below is true for you. **If you can check off everything on the list, then you are eligible to register to vote in Maryland.**

- You are a United States Citizen
- You live in Maryland
- You are 18 years old or older
- You are not in jail right now finishing your sentence for a felony crime.
  - If you are incarcerated for a misdemeanor, you do not lose the right to vote. (Source: **https://www.usvotefoundation.org/voting-rights-restoration/maryland**)
- You were not previously convicted of buying or selling votes
- You are not under a guardianship order that restricts your right to vote

Registering to Vote

If you are eligible to vote, **there are steps you have to take to be included in voting**. The first step is to **register** to vote!

When you register to vote, you are allowed to vote in elections. You can go to a voting center or get a voting ballot in the mail.

Checking Your Voter Registration

If you have voted in Maryland before, then you are likely already registered. **You can check if you are registered by clicking this link for Maryland's voter lookup**.

On the website, you need to type in your first name, your last name, the day you were born, and the zip code for where you live. When you finish typing that in, click the search button!

If the website says you are registered to vote, you do not need to register!

If the website says you are not registered to vote, **you can follow the steps below to get registered.**

Getting Registered

There are many ways that you can register to vote. You can do it:

Online　　　　　**In Person**　　　　　**By Mail**

If you need help registering, ask a friend or family member that you trust.

Registering to Vote Online

One way that you can register to vote is on the website for the Maryland Board of Elections. **If you click this link to their website, you can follow the steps to get registered.**

Registering to Vote In Person

If you want to have some help registering to vote, you can go to one of the places below. You only have to go to one to get registered. If you go to their websites, you can find a place to go to register in person close to where you live.

- Local board of elections – **Click here**

- State board of elections – **Click here**

- Local Department of Health office – **Click here**

- The Maryland Department of Human Services local offices – **Click here**

- The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration offices – **Click here**

- Local Area Agency on Aging office – **Click here**

- The MTA Paratransit Certification Office – **Click here**

Deadline for Registering to Vote

The deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration online or by mail is October 15, 2024. If you miss this deadline, don't worry. You can still register the same day you vote at your local polling place.

Registering to Vote By Mail

If you want to register to vote by mail, you need to:

- **Download the form by clicking this link.**

- Have access to a printer.

- Have a stamp to use.

When you download the form, print it out and fill it out with a pen. When you finish, you need to find out where to mail the form. The last page (page 4) of the form has the addresses of where you can mail it. On page 4, find the address for the county where you live. Write down that address on page 3 under "County Board of Elections." Add your address and a stamp and you are ready to mail the form.

Finishing Your Registration

After you register, you should get a Voter Notification Card in the mail. If you do not get it after 3 weeks of registering, you should **check the voter lookup website by clicking here**. If the website still does not show you as registered, call your local board of elections. **You can find the phone number for your county by clicking this link.**

Ways to Vote

When you are registered to vote, your next step is to **plan how you will vote**! Having a plan makes voting quicker and easier for you. **You can choose a plan that works best for you.**

There are two ways that you can vote:

- **Voting in Person**

- **Voting By Mail-In Ballot** (This is also called Absentee Ballot voting)

Voting in Person

If you choose to vote in person, you will have to find out where your voting place is. **Click the website link here and type in your address.**
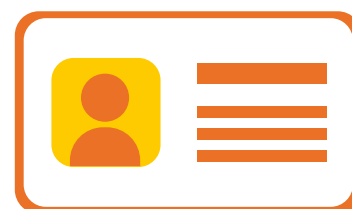
When you finish, the website will show you the address of where you need to travel to. It also shows you what day you need to go to vote and when the voting center is open. When you plan your trip to vote, make sure to go during that day and time.

If you registered to vote by mail AND you have not voted before, you need to bring 1 ID with you.

This ID could be:

- A Maryland Driver's License

- A state or federal ID card

- An MVA ID card

- A student, employee, or military ID

- A current bill, bank statement, government check paycheck, or government document with your name and address. If you choose this, make sure it is from the last 3 months.

If you have voted in Maryland before, OR you registered to vote in-person, you do not need to bring an ID with you.

◆ *Accessible Voting*

If you need accommodations to vote, these options are available at every voting center:

- **Large print and high contrast**
- **Paper Ballot**
- **Using a headset and keypad**

When you get there, tell an election judge what you need to vote.

Help with Voting

You can bring someone with you if you need help voting. The person helping you has to sign a Voter Assistance Form. You can also have 2 election judges help you.

If people at the voting center will not help you, or if they tell you that you cannot vote, this may be considered discrimination. If this happens, or if you have any questions or concerns about the way you were treated, you should **contact the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights here online**.

Voting by Mail-In Ballot

If you want to vote by Mail-In Ballot, you have to ask for it before the election. You can ask for a mail-in ballot in a few different ways:

- **Online**
- **By Mail**
- **Going to your local board of elections**

Requesting a Mail-In Ballot Online

To request your mail-in ballot online, click this link here. Follow the steps on the website to request the ballot. You need a Maryland driver's license or another MVA ID card to do it this way.

Requesting a Mail-In Ballot by Mail

To request your mail-in ballot by mail, download the form by clicking here. Print out the form and fill it out with a pen.

When you finish the form, you need to send it to your local board of elections. You can send it to the Board of Elections in a few ways:

- **By Mail:** Find your county on the sheet and mail it to the address for your county.

- **By Email:** Find your county on the sheet and send it to the email address for your county.

Requesting a Mail-In Ballot in Person

You can request your mail-in ballot in person by visiting your local board of elections. **You can find out where your local board of elections is by clicking the link here.**

Submitting a Mail-In Ballot

When you get your mail-in ballot, you have a few options on how to submit it:

- **By Mail:** Mail your finished ballot by the end of Election Day to your local board of elections.

- **In Person:** Bring your finished ballot on Election Day to the voting location.

- **At a Ballot Drop Off Box:** Bring your finished ballot to a ballot drop off box near you. **Click the link here to find out ballot drop off box locations near you.**

Parties and General Elections

What are "Parties" in Politics

A political party is a group of people with the same political goals and opinions. A political party works to vote candidates they like into government. In the U.S., we have two main political parties. These are Republicans and Democrats.

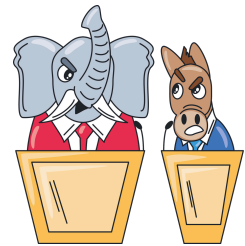There are also a few other Political Parties.

In Maryland, the following Parties are recognized, according to the Board of Elections website:
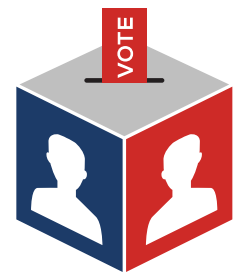Democrat
Republican
Libertarian
No Labels Maryland

What is a General Election?

The General Election is an election where candidates are elected to offices. The winners of Primary Elections from each party are the candidates that will be on the ballot for the general election.

Can I Vote In a General Election?

As long as you are registered to vote, you can vote in a General Election. **If you are unsure about whether you are registered to vote, you can check your status by clicking here.**

Important Dates to Know

Tuesday, October 15, 2024: Deadline to Register to Vote Online or by Mail

*Remember, if you miss this deadline you can still register the same day you vote at your voting location. Make sure you bring a document that proves where you live. To prove where you live, bring your Maryland Driver's License or Maryland (MVA Issued) ID Card, or change of address card from MVA, a paycheck that has your address and name on it, a bank statement, utility bill, or other government issued document that has your name and address on it.

Thursday, October 24, 2024 to Thursday October 31, 2024: Early Voting

You have the opportunity to vote before election day at an early voting center. At the early voting center, polls are open from 7 AM to 8 PM. **Click here to find your local early voting location.**

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 : Deadline to Request a Mail-In Ballot to be Delivered to You by Mail

If you want a ballot sent by mail to your house, your request for a mail-in ballot must have been received by the Board of Elections by October 29, 2024, not just mailed.

Friday, November 1, 2024: Deadline to Request a Mail-In Ballot to be Delivered to You Online

You can request to receive your mail-in ballot by email if you have a way to print it out. If this is what you choose, complete your request for an emailed mail-in ballot online no later than 11:59 PM on November 1, 2024. **You can request a mail-in ballot by following the steps after clicking this link.**

Tuesday, November 5, 2024: Deadline to Return Your Mail-in Ballot

To vote with the mail-in ballot you received, you can either return your vote by mail, or by hand.

To return your ballot by mail, you must mail it by November 5, 2024. You may also hand-deliver your completed mail-in ballot to a drop box or to your local board of elections by 8 PM on election day.

Tuesday, November 5, 2024: General Election Day

This is the final day you can vote in the General Elections. Polls are open on this day from 7 AM to 8 PM. As long as you are in line by 8 PM, you will be able to vote. **You can find your voting location here.**

Preparing Myself for the Vote

Learning About Candidates Or Issues To Vote On

Once you find out what you can vote on, it is important to make sure to learn about candidates and issues.
You can learn more about candidates and issues in many ways:

- **Visit webpages** about candidates or issues.

- **Visit or follow candidates' social media pages.**

- **Read articles** or watch local TV stations about candidates or issues.
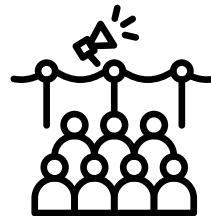
- Watch or go to debates that candidates have.

  - Debates are when candidates discuss what they want to do and their ideas. They will talk about why they believe their ideas are better than the ideas of other candidates.

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- **Check out how candidates answer questions** about important issues.

  - **Visit FactCheck.org here** to keep track of candidates' statements about issues.

    - FactCheck is nonpartisan. Nonpartisan means that they do not favor one candidate or party over the other. They provide accurate information.

- **Attend campaign events** like rallies or town hall meetings. These events are ways you can show support and learn more about a candidate in person.

- **Invite candidates** to visit your local self-advocacy group.

- **Visit candidates' offices** and ask questions.

  - Candidates will have an office in each state or area.

- **Contact groups you trust** to learn more about candidates and issues that matter to you. Try to contact groups that are nonpartisan and that do not have a bias toward one candidate or another.