

Voting Programs for Voters with Disabilities, Senior Citizens, and Nursing Home Residents



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Nursing Home Early Voting Program

Registered voters may enroll in a special program to vote early at their nursing home. You can enroll in the program if you live in a nursing home and you are unable to vote in person at the polls on election day due to a physical disability. The Louisiana Election Code defines “nursing homes” to include veterans’ homes and hospitals where voters may live for an extended stay because of a physical disability.

If you qualify for this program, the registrar of voters will visit your nursing home at least one week before early voting begins to allow you to vote early.

Registering to Vote Before Enrolling in the Nursing Home Program

If you live in a nursing home and would like to register to vote:

- You can submit a voter registration application by mail,
- Contact your parish [Registrar of Voters Office](#) or call the Secretary of State’s Office at 800.883.2805 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, for assistance in registering to vote. A relative, friend, or employee of the facility may also help you fill out a voter registration application.
- If you claim a homestead exemption for your home, you may choose to register at the address where you have a homestead exemption or the address of the nursing home, but not both.
- In order to enroll in the special program for residents of a nursing home, you must be registered to vote in the parish in which the nursing home is located.
- See the [Voting in Louisiana Booklet](#) for more information on registering to vote.

Enrolling in the Nursing Home Program

New participants may apply to enroll in the program by completing the *General Application for Absentee by Mail Ballot*, checking that you are a resident of a nursing home, and signing the bottom of the application to certify that you are a resident of a nursing home.

You may submit this application online through the Voter Portal at www.GeauxVote.com. You can also download the application and mail it to your parish registrar of voters.

Your application must be received by the registrar of voters at least 30 days before the election.

You will remain in the program until you no longer reside at the home or cancel your participation in the program. You may contact your parish registrar of voters to cancel your participation in the program.

Voting in the Nursing Home Program

Once you are enrolled in the program, the registrar of voters will mail you a letter before each election, notifying you when they will be going to your nursing home for early voting.

When you receive this letter, you may call a family member or friend to let them know when you will be voting if you need their assistance. Otherwise, you may either cast your vote in private or receive assistance from the registrar of voters or deputy registrar. You cannot receive assistance from the nursing home owner, operator, administrator, or employees.

Automatic Absentee Ballot Program for Senior Citizens and Voters with Disabilities

Senior citizens (voters age 65 and older) and voters with disabilities can vote by mail for all elections by enrolling in the automatic absentee ballot program. They may also apply to vote by mail for just one election.

If a voter chooses to enroll in the automatic absentee ballot program, they will remain in the program until an absentee by mail ballot is returned to the Registrar of Voters Office as undeliverable or they request to be removed from the program.

Registering to Vote Before Enrolling in the Automatic Ballot Program

You may register to vote in person at your parish Registrar of Voters Office, when you renew your driver's license at any Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles, or when applying for state public assistance or disability services.

You may also submit a voter registration application by mail, online at www.GeauxVote.com, in public libraries, or through voter registration drives.

See the [Voting in Louisiana Booklet](#) for additional information on how to register to vote.

Voters with Disabilities: Enrolling in the Automatic Ballot Program

Voters with disabilities may apply for the program by submitting a *Disabled Application for Absentee by Mail Ballot*. You have the option of choosing whether to receive an absentee by mail ballot only for one election or for all future elections.

The Registrar of Voters must receive this application by 4:30 p.m. on the fourth day before election day.

First-time enrollees must also send proof of disability to the parish [registrar of voters](#) to join the program. Proof of disability may include one of the following:

- A. A copy of your current mobility impairment identification card bearing your photograph and the international symbol of accessibility issued by the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections;
- B. Current proof of disability from a physician; or
- C. A copy of current documentation (letter or card) showing eligibility for one of the following:
 - 1. Social security disability benefits;
 - 2. Veteran's disability benefits;
 - 3. Paratransit services;
 - 4. Benefits from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities; or
 - 5. Benefits from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

If proof of disability is submitted to the registrar of voters by mail, it must also include a copy of your Louisiana driver's license or special ID card, or other generally recognized picture ID that contains your name and signature.

If you are a new registrant and voting for the first time, you must submit a doctor's letter certifying that you are not able to appear in person to vote. If you do not do this, you must vote in person one time before you can enroll in the Program.

Voters with disabilities may request to receive their ballots electronically (by email); however, they may not return the ballot by email.

Senior Citizens: Enrolling in the Automatic Ballot Program

Senior citizens (voters 65 years of age or older) may apply for the program simply by completing the *General Application for Absentee by Mail Ballot* and checking that you are a senior citizen on the application. You have the option of choosing whether to receive an absentee by mail ballot only for one election or for all future elections.

The deadline to submit this application is 4:30 p.m. on the fourth day before election day.

Voting in the Automatic Ballot Program

If you receive an absentee by mail ballot but want to vote in person either during early voting or on election day, simply do not vote your absentee by mail ballot for that

election. You may vote in person during early voting *or* on election day. If you vote in person, be sure to dispose of your absentee by mail ballot.

Once you have voted and mailed your absentee by mail ballot, you cannot vote in person during early voting or on election day; however, if you voted in person at the polls on election day for a specific election, you will continue to receive your absentee ballot automatically for all future elections.

Voting Privately and Independently

We know that it is important that you are able to vote privately and independently and that your vote is confidential. No one should direct you how to vote. You do not have to answer questions or prove that you are capable of voting, either mentally or physically.

If you are entitled to receive assistance in voting, you may choose anyone to assist you, including a family member, friend, registrar, deputy registrar, or poll commissioner. If you are voting absentee by mail, the person who assists you must sign the absentee by mail ballot envelope. If you are voting in person, the person assisting you must sign the early voting register (during early voting) or the precinct register (on election day.)

If you require assistance in voting at the polls on election day or during early voting, you can provide one of the following documents to the registrar of voters before election day:

- Doctor's certificate;
- Current mobility impairment ID card;
- Documentation of government disability benefits; or a
- Completed and signed voter registration application attesting that the voter has a disability and needs assistance.

After you provide the required documentation, you will be marked in the early voting register and the precinct register as requiring assistance. If you are not already marked in the early voting register or precinct register as requiring assistance, you may still receive assistance during early voting or on election day after completing a *Voter Assistance Form*.

You cannot be assisted by any of the following:

1. A commissioner-in-charge at the polling place;
2. An employer or his agent;
3. A union official;
4. A candidate on the current ballot to be voted on; or
5. A staff member from a state-owned developmental center.

If you have a visible physical disability or possess a current mobility impairment identification card, you will be allowed to go to the front of the line to vote when you vote in person during early voting or on election day.

Accommodations to Assist You in Voting In-Person

If you want to vote in person during early voting or on election day, there are many accommodations available to all voters:

- A. Adjusting the voting machine if you use a wheelchair or prefer to sit while voting;
- B. Voting machines are audio accessible and anyone may use the audio voting keypad to vote. You should inform the registrar or poll commissioner before you begin voting that you want to use the audio voting keypad;
- C. You may bring personal headphones to use with the audio voting keypad;
- D. You may request a 2X magnifier to use in voting. The magnifier is available in every polling place and during early voting at the [Registrar of Voters Office](#). The early voting machines also allow you to adjust the screen text size.
- E. You may bring your own flashlight if you need additional lighting in the voting machine;
- F. You may bring your own signature tool to assist you in signing your name; and
- G. You may use the Braille Voting Instructions available at each Registrar of Voters' Office and in each polling place.

State law allows voters three minutes to vote; however, if you need assistance in voting or you will be using the audio voting keypad, you will have 20 minutes to vote.

View the [Voting in Louisiana Booklet](#) for more election information, like using the GeauxVote Mobile app to view and mark your sample ballot on your electronic device so that you may prepare before voting!

Accessible Polling Places

Louisiana requires that all polling places be accessible in the following manner:

- A. The doors should be wide enough for a wheelchair;
- B. There should be ramps or elevators if there are steps; and
- C. There must be reserved accessible parking and all walkways must be accessible and free of obstacles.

If your polling place is not accessible, please notify a commissioner at the polling place or call your parish Clerk of Court's Office so that they can correct the accessibility problem immediately on election day. You may also contact the Secretary of State's Office toll-free at 800.883.2805.

Requesting Transportation to Polls

If you need a ride to a polling place, consider asking your friends, family, church group or other community group. Group home staff may also be able to arrange transportation for you to vote in person during early voting or on election day. Otherwise, consider joining one of the programs described in this guide.

Poll Commissioners

Louisiana relies on its dedicated citizens to perform a public service by working at a polling place on election day. If you are interested in serving, please contact your parish Clerk of Court's Office. Commissioners-in-charge have worked as commissioners in prior elections and are responsible for presiding over the election and commissioners in their precincts, printing official election results reports, and delivering the election results to the Clerk of Court's Office on election night. Commissioners are responsible for conducting all election day duties at their assigned precinct, enforcing election laws, maintaining order at the polling place during the election, and posting results. You must attend the required course(s) of instruction given by your parish Clerk of Court's Office and pass a test that is given at the end of the commissioner school to become a certified commissioner.

Important Things to Remember

Here are list of things as a voter you should keep in mind:

1. If you are a person with a disability, you have the right to vote, unless a court has issued a judgement declaring that you cannot vote;
2. Voting is your decision;
3. No one can tell you how to vote;
4. Your vote is private. You do not have to tell anyone how you voted;
5. The polling place must be accessible to you; and
6. You may ask for help in understanding how to register to vote or how to operate a voting machine.

Election Dates

For upcoming election dates, visit the secretary of state's website at www.GeauxVote.com or call toll-free at 800.883.2805.

Elections Compliance Unit

The Secretary of State's Office has an Elections Compliance Unit that is responsible for investigating complaints of election irregularities, including voter fraud and abuse, vote buying and threats to disrupt or inhibit the election process. Contact the Election Compliance Unit toll-free at 800.722.5305.

Complaints

Voters may file a complaint regarding elections by calling the Secretary of State's Office toll-free at 800.883.2805. In addition, voters may send complaints in writing to the Secretary of State's Office at P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125.

For complaints under the Help America Vote Act, which sets minimum requirements for voting systems, provisional voting, and statewide computerized voter registration lists, the complaint must be submitted in writing on the HAVA complaint form (available at <http://www.sos.la.gov/ElectionsAndVoting/PublishedDocuments/HAVAComplaintForm.pdf>), sworn under oath, notarized and must be filed within 90 days after the final certification of the federal election. If you are having problems with this process, call the Secretary of State's Office at 800.883.2805.

For Additional Information

If you should have any questions or concerns, please call:

Secretary of State's Office
800.883.2805
225.922.0900
elections@sos.la.gov

Advocacy Center
800.960.7705
advocacycenter@advocacyla.org