

Know Your Voting Rights

A Comprehensive Guide



**ELECTION
EARTH**

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Your Voting Rights	3
Make Your Voting Plan	4
Accessibility for All	5
Immigrant Voters + Mixed-Status Families	6
Language Assistance for Voters	7
Tribal + Native American Voters	8
Young Voters	9
LGBTQIA+ Voting Rights	10
Restoration of Voting Rights	11
Persons Experiencing Homelessness	12
Understanding Voter Suppression	13
Deception, Intimidation, and AI	14
Reporting Voter Intimidation	16



Protect Your Vote, Protect Our Planet!

Dear Voter,

Your vote matters. And your right to vote must be protected.

In a time when voting rights and voter protections are facing growing pressure, understanding and exercising your rights is more crucial than ever. Every ballot has the power to shape the future of our communities, our democracy, and our planet. **This guide is designed to help you navigate the voting process with confidence, protect your rights and the rights of others, and ensure every eligible voice is heard.**

Voting is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for change. **By participating in elections, you help shape the policies, priorities, and leaders that determine the health, safety, and future of our communities.** As we face urgent challenges, from climate change to public health to justice and equity, every eligible voter deserves the information and support needed to participate freely and safely.

This guide is your ally. It will help you understand your rights, prepare to vote, recognize barriers or intimidation, and know what to do if something goes wrong. By staying informed, you protect your own voting rights and help strengthen a fair, accessible, and just electoral process for all.

Remember, your vote is your voice. **Use it to stand up for the people, places, and future you care about, and help others do the same by sharing this guide and Election Earth resources as widely as possible.** Together, we can help build a more sustainable, equitable, and thriving future.

With determination and hope,

Ashley Lane

Senior Director, Network Activation
ecoAmerica

electionearth.org

Your Voting Rights

Every eligible voter has the right to cast a ballot, have that ballot counted, and participate without intimidation, discrimination, or unnecessary barriers.

- ✓ In the U.S. you have a right to vote if you are a citizen, at least 18 years of age on or before Election Day, a resident of the state in which you are voting, and are properly registered.
- ✓ You have the right to cast a ballot without threats, harassment, discrimination, or unnecessary barriers.
- ✓ If your name is missing from the voter roll or your eligibility is questioned, ask for a provisional ballot before leaving the polling place.
- ✓ If you need help reading, marking, or casting your ballot, you may be able to receive assistance from a person of your choice, with some limits under federal law.
- ✓ You have the right to vote privately and independently wherever accessible voting systems are available.
- ✓ If you are in line when polls close, stay in line. You have the right to cast your vote.
- ✓ If you make an error on your ballot, ask for a replacement ballot so your vote reflects your choices.
- ✓ If voting machines are down, ask for a paper ballot or another available option so you can still vote.



MAKE YOUR Voting Plan

- ✓ **Verify your voter registration** to make sure your name is on the voter roll for your state and your information is current. If you are not registered, [register today](#).
- ✓ **Find and confirm your polling place and hours** *before* Election Day so there are no surprises.
- ✓ **Choose how you will vote.** If voting in person feels difficult or unsafe, [check your state's rules](#) for other options, including early voting, vote by mail, or official ballot drop boxes, and make a plan that works for you.
- ✓ **Plan ahead for mail voting.** If voting by mail, send your ballot at least 7 days before Election Day. Starting in 2026, the USPS postmarks ballots when scanned, not when dropped off, which can take days. Check your [state's receipt deadline](#) and act early.
- ✓ **Research before you go.** [Preview your ballot](#), and use the [Candidate + Ballot Measure Tool](#) to make informed choices that align with your climate values.
- ✓ **Prepare for the polls.** If voting in person, allow extra time in your schedule in case of long lines, bring [ID if your state requires it](#), and pack water, snacks, and comfort items such as a hat, umbrella, fan, or folding chair.
- ✓ **Explore voting access programs** that can help make voting easier. Depending on where you live, options may include free or reduced-cost scooter and bike rides through [Lime to the Polls](#) in select cities, or free rides to the polls through [VoteRun](#). Availability varies, so check what is available in your area.
- ✓ **Share your plan.** Tell your friends, family, and neighbors what you learned while making your voting plan and encourage them to make their own.
- ✓ **Support safe and fair elections.** Serve as a poll worker through [Power the Polls](#), support [election protection efforts](#), or serve as a nonpartisan [election observer](#) or [voting chaplain](#) to keep elections safe and accessible for everyone.
- ✓ **Vote and help others vote.** Cast your ballot and let your voice be heard, then help others show up by sharing [Election Earth](#) resources, offering reminders, or coordinating a carpool to the polls. Protecting our democracy is essential to building the climate future we need.

[Download in English](#)

[Download in Spanish](#)

Accessibility for All

Denying reasonable accommodations is illegal. Voters with disabilities cannot be required to vote curbside or separately if they choose not to. Poll workers must respect a voter's stated needs without questioning or delay.

- ★ **Accessible Polling Places:** Federal laws require polling places to be accessible and equipped with at least one voting system that allows voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.
- ★ **Assistance at the Polls:** You may receive help from a person of your choice, as long as that person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union.
- ★ **Communicate Your Needs:** Inform election officials of your specific needs to ensure a comfortable voting experience. For example, if it's hard for you to stand, you are entitled to a chair or a place to sit while you wait. If the crowds or noise are hard for you, election officials can find a quiet place for you to wait until it's your turn to vote.
- ★ **Curbside Assistance:** If you cannot access your polling place, ask whether curbside voting or another accessible option is available. You cannot be required to vote separately if you choose to vote inside and can do so safely.
- ★ **Respect and Privacy:** Poll workers should respect your stated needs without unnecessary questioning, delay, or denial.

Where to Learn More:

- Find a protection and advocacy agency in your state through the [National Disability Rights Network](#).
- [Vote.gov](#) offers a guide to voting for people with disabilities.
- The [Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law](#) offers voting rights information for voters with disabilities.
- The [Autistic Self Advocacy Network](#) provides a voting toolkit for people with disabilities.
- [SignVote](#) offers voting information in American Sign Language.
- [Rocky Mountain ADA Center](#) offers training on polling place accessibility requirements.

Immigrant Voters + Mixed-Status Families

Many eligible voters live in immigrant or mixed-status families. If you are eligible to vote, your right to participate is protected by law regardless of the immigration status of your family members.

- ★ **Citizenship:** Naturalized citizens have the same voting rights as all other U.S. citizens. No one has the authority to question or challenge your right to vote based on where you were born, your name, your accent, or your family's immigration status.
- ★ **Family Status:** If you are a U.S. citizen and registered to vote, you have the right to vote regardless of your family's immigration status.
- ★ **Misinformation:** False claims about noncitizen voting, immigration consequences, public benefits, or voter eligibility are often used to spread fear and discourage eligible voters, especially naturalized citizens and voters in immigrant or mixed-status families. If you are a U.S. citizen and eligible to vote, voting does not affect your immigration status, future applications, your family's immigration status, or public benefits eligibility.
- ★ **Privacy at the Polls:** Poll workers are not allowed to ask about your family's immigration status at the polls.
- ★ **Intimidation:** Threats of deportation, law enforcement action, or immigration consequences related to voting are illegal voter intimidation. *See the Deception, Intimidation, and AI section of this guide for more details on what to watch for and what to do next.*

Where to Learn More:

- [National Immigration Law Center](#) explains voting rights for naturalized citizens and counters false claims about noncitizen voting.
- [Voting as a Naturalized Citizen: What You Need to Know](#) provides guidance on voter ID, registration, and state-specific rules.
- [Migration Policy Institute](#) explains how voter eligibility is verified and why widespread claims about noncitizen voting are false.

Language Assistance for Voters

Voters who need language assistance have federal protections and may be able to receive help understanding election materials and casting their ballot.

- ★ **Assistance at the Polls:** Voters who need help because of limited English proficiency may receive assistance from a person of their choice, as long as that person is not their employer, an agent of their employer, or an officer or agent of their union.
- ★ **Translated Materials:** Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, certain jurisdictions must provide bilingual election materials and language assistance for covered language groups.
- ★ **Hotlines for Language Help:** Election Protection offers voting help in multiple languages through its national hotlines.
 - English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683
 - Spanish: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA / 1-888-839-8682
 - Arabic: 1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287
 - For Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese: 1-888-API-VOTE / 1-888-274-8683
- ★ **Ask for Help:** If you need language assistance, ask a poll worker or call Election Protection before leaving the polling place.

Where to Learn More:

- [Voto Latino](#) offers voter education and civic engagement resources for Latinx voters.
- [TurboVote](#) helps voters register, check deadlines, and prepare to vote, including Spanish-language tools.
- [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) offers multilingual voting rights resources and support for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander voters.

Tribal + Native American Voters

Native American and Alaska Native voters have the right to vote in federal, state, and local elections. Federal law protects Tribal citizens from voting practices that create unfair barriers, including for voters living on Tribal lands.

- ★ **Tribal ID:** Many states accept Tribal identification cards as valid voter ID. Rules vary by state, so check your state or local election office to confirm what forms of ID are accepted.
- ★ **Nontraditional Addresses:** Many states allow voters living on Tribal lands to use a descriptive address, such as a Tribal community name or nearby landmark. If your address is questioned, ask for a provisional ballot and call Election Protection.
- ★ **Equal Access:** You have the right to fair access to polling places, early voting, absentee voting, and voter assistance where available.
- ★ **Native Language Access:** In certain jurisdictions, federal law requires election materials and assistance to be provided in covered Native languages. This may include translated voting information and bilingual election workers.
 - **Covered languages may include:** Alabama-Coushatta, Aleut, Apache, Choctaw, Ho-Chunk, Hopi, Iñupiaq, Keres, Kickapoo, Navajo, Nez Perce, Paiute, Seminole, Shoshone, Tewa, Tiwa, Towa, Ute, Yup'ik, Zuni.

Where to Learn More:

- The [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) provides state-by-state information on voter ID requirements, including accepted forms of identification.
- [Native American Rights Fund](#) offers tools to help Native and Tribal voters register, vote, report barriers, and advocate for fair access.
- NARF's [Native Language Voting Resources guide](#) explains Section 203 language assistance and voting protections for Native language speakers.
- [NCAI's Native Vote](#) provides nonpartisan resources to support Native voter education, mobilization, and civic participation.
- [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) offers case studies and best practices for improving voting access in Native communities.

Young Voters

Young voters have the right to participate as soon as they are eligible. State rules vary, so check your state's requirements early and make a plan before Election Day.

- ★ **Voting Age:** Some states allow 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they will be 18 by the general election.
- ★ **Pre-Registration:** Many states allow 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register so they are automatically eligible to vote when they turn 18.
- ★ **Student Voters:** Students may be able to vote at their campus address or home address, depending on their situation and state rules.
- ★ **Moved Recently:** If you moved, even within the same state, update your voter registration before the deadline.
- ★ **First-Time Voters:** Check whether your state requires ID or additional documentation the first time you vote.

Where to Learn More:

- [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) provides state-by-state information on pre-registration and voting age rules.
- [Rock the Vote](#) and [TurboVote](#) offer registration and pre-registration tools for young voters.
- [Campus Vote Project](#) provides state guides to help students understand whether to vote at home or at their campus address.
- Too young to vote? [Pledge to register](#) and get a text reminder on your 18th birthday.

LGBTQIA+ Voting Rights

Every eligible voter in the United States, including LGBTQIA+ voters, has the right to vote in federal, state, and local elections without discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or unnecessary barriers based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, appearance, name, or how they present themselves.

- ★ **Appearance and Expression:** You cannot be turned away from voting because of your clothing, hairstyle, voice, body, or gender presentation.
- ★ **Name or Gender Marker:** In many states, voters can cast a ballot even if the name or gender marker on their ID does not match their current identity. State rules vary, so check your local election office ahead of time.
- ★ **Privacy and Respect:** Poll workers may not question your gender or identity or challenge you based on how you present yourself.
- ★ **Harassment:** Misgendering, ridicule, harassment, or intimidation by poll workers or others is not acceptable and should be reported.
- ★ **Provisional Ballot:** If there is a question about your ID, registration, or eligibility, ask for a provisional ballot before leaving the polling place.

Where to Learn More:

- [Advocates for Trans Equality](#) offers voting resources and guidance on voting while trans and preparing for voter ID laws.
- [All In To Vote](#) provides comprehensive resources for transgender and gender-diverse voters.
- [Lambda Legal](#) offers information about LGBTQIA+ voting rights, registration, and ID rules.
- The [Task Force's Queer the Vote Guide](#) provides voter information for LGBTQIA+ communities.

Restoration of Voting Rights

Voting rights for people with felony convictions vary by state. In many states, people can vote after release, while others require completion of parole, probation, payment of certain legal financial obligations, or an individual rights restoration process. Do not assume you cannot vote. Check your eligibility before registering or casting a ballot.

- ★ **Eligibility:** Many people with past felony convictions are eligible to vote, but the rules depend on where you live and your current status, including whether you are incarcerated, on parole, on probation, or have completed your sentence.
- ★ **Jail and Pretrial Detention:** In many states, people held in jail while awaiting trial, people convicted of misdemeanors, and people detained for reasons other than a felony conviction may still be eligible to vote. Rules vary by state.
- ★ **Registration:** If your voting rights have been restored, you may still need to register or re-register before you can vote. Check your state's registration rules and deadlines.
- ★ **Provisional Ballot:** If your eligibility is questioned at the polls, ask for a provisional ballot and contact Election Protection or a voting rights organization for support.

Where to Learn More:

- [Campaign Legal Center's Restore Your Vote campaign](#) helps people with past convictions understand and restore their voting rights through direct support, community education, and clear guidance that challenges the false belief that a felony conviction always means you cannot vote.
- [Brennan Center for Justice](#) offers a state-by-state map explaining criminal disenfranchisement laws, when voting rights may be restored, and why eligibility rules can vary widely by state.
- [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) provides an overview of state restoration laws and recent changes to felony voting rights policies.

Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Lack of a permanent address cannot be used to deny your right to vote. People experiencing homelessness can register and vote in all 50 states. Shelters, service providers, and outreach workers may help you register, receive election mail, or make a voting plan, but they cannot coerce, pressure, or influence your vote.

- ★ **Voting Address:** Depending on state rules, voters may be able to use a shelter, service provider, street corner, park, cross street, or another descriptive location as their voting address.
- ★ **Mailing Address:** Your voting address and mailing address may be different. You may be able to use a shelter, religious center, P.O. box, general delivery, or the address of a trusted friend or family member to receive election mail.
- ★ **ID and Documents:** Voter ID rules vary by state. If you do not have an ID, check your state's rules or contact your local election office. Some states offer free or reduced-cost ID options for people experiencing homelessness.
- ★ **Residency Rules:** Some states require voters to live in a state, county, or precinct for a certain number of days before registering. Check your local rules before Election Day.
- ★ **Voting Support:** Local shelters, service providers, libraries, election offices, and community groups may be able to help with registration, mail ballot requests, transportation, and finding your polling place.

Where to Learn More:

- [Vote.gov's Voting While Unhoused](#) guide explains how to register, what addresses you may be able to use, how to receive election mail, and where to find voting support.
- [Nonprofit VOTE](#) provides information on how people experiencing homelessness can register and vote, including guidance on shelter addresses and state residency rules.
- The [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#) offers a [Voting Rights Toolkit](#) to help people experiencing homelessness overcome common voting barriers and navigate the registration process.

Understanding Voter Suppression

Voter suppression is any action, policy, or practice that interferes with an eligible person's ability to register, vote, or have their vote counted. Suppression does not only happen through laws. It also happens through fear, confusion, intimidation, and deliberate efforts to make voting feel unsafe or inaccessible.

Since 2020, more than 500 voter suppression bills have been introduced across state legislatures. **These measures include strict voter ID requirements, reduced access to early and mail voting, polling place closures, voter roll purges, and financial barriers to restoring voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals.** These actions disproportionately impact communities of color, Tribal citizens and Native communities, young adults, people with disabilities, low-income and immigrant communities, LGBTQIA+, and people experiencing housing instability.

Voter suppression often appears alongside systemic failures such as fewer polling locations, longer voting lines, delayed poll openings, malfunctioning voting machines, and last-minute changes to voting locations. In the current environment, visible enforcement actions and heightened public fear are also being exploited through misinformation and intimidation that falsely suggest voting could carry legal or personal risk.

No eligible voter should be prevented from voting because of fear, identity, family status, language, housing status, disability, or misinformation.

How to Help Stop Voter Suppression

- Know your rights and educate others.
- Report voter suppression immediately by calling the Election Protection Hotline at **1-866-OUR-VOTE** / 1-866-687-8683.
- Consider becoming a poll worker through [Power the Polls](#).
- Where permitted, consider serving as a [poll watcher](#), [voting chaplain](#), or trained [nonpartisan election observer](#).

Deception, Intimidation, and AI

Deception and intimidation are deliberate efforts to discourage people from voting or to interfere with their participation. **Providing false information about voting eligibility, consequences, or risks is illegal.**

Common Deception and Intimidation Tactics

- ★ **False Consequences:** Claiming that voting could lead to arrest, deportation, loss of benefits, debt collection, eviction, immigration consequences, or other legal risks for eligible voters.
- ★ **False Voting Information:** Spreading wrong election dates, polling locations, registration rules, mail ballot deadlines, ballot return options, voter ID requirements, or claims that polling places are closed.
- ★ **Fake Official Messages:** Sending misleading texts, emails, robocalls, flyers, social posts, or mailers that appear to come from election offices, law enforcement agencies, campaigns, community groups, or trusted leaders.
- ★ **Impersonation:** Pretending to be an election official, poll worker, law enforcement officer, or immigration agent.
- ★ **Aggressive Questioning:** Challenging voters about citizenship, criminal record, address, disability, language, identity, or other qualifications in a way meant to scare, delay, or deter them.
- ★ **Surveillance or Harassment:** Filming, photographing, following, confronting, blocking, or closely watching voters in an intimidating way at polling places, ballot drop boxes, election offices, or voter registration events can be voter intimidation.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence:

- ★ **Verified Sources:** Rely on official state and local election offices, verified .gov websites, trusted nonpartisan voting resources, and Election Protection.
- ★ **Deepfakes and Impersonation:** AI can create fake videos, images, voice recordings, robocalls, or messages that appear to come from trusted officials, election workers, community leaders, or people you know.
- ★ **False Alerts:** AI-generated content can spread fabricated claims about polling place closures, safety threats, long lines, machine failures, or changes to voting procedures.
- ★ **False Digital Sources:** AI can create fake election websites, chatbots, or social media accounts that mimic official sources and provide incorrect information.
- ★ **Rapid Spread:** AI can make misinformation faster, more convincing, and harder to identify.

Where to Learn More:

- [Democracy Docket](#) offers information on how to recognize and respond to voter intimidation.
- The [Brennan Center for Justice's article on AI-backed voter suppression](#) explains how AI can intensify voter suppression through deepfakes, robocalls, targeted misinformation, and mass voter challenges.
- The [Brennan Center for Justice's policy agenda on democracy and AI](#) outlines solutions for protecting elections, voting rights, and democratic participation from AI-related harms.
- [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace offers a report](#) on AI and democracy that explores how AI affects elections, public trust, governance, and civic participation.

If you see suspected AI-generated voting misinformation, take a screenshot, save the message or link, and report it immediately to Election Protection or your local election office.

If You Experience a Voting Problem

- ★ **Immediate Danger:** If you fear imminent violence, call 9-1-1.
- ★ **Ask for Help:** Do not leave the polling place without voting if you are eligible. Ask to speak with the chief election official at your polling place.
- ★ **Ask for a Provisional Ballot:** If your ID, address, registration, or eligibility is questioned, ask for a provisional ballot before leaving the polling place.
- ★ **Request Assistance:** Ask for language assistance, accessibility accommodations, or help from a person of your choice if you need it.
- ★ **Document What Happened:** Write down what occurred, where and when it happened, who was involved, and whether voters were deterred.
- ★ **Call Election Protection:**
 - English: 1-866-OUR-VOTE / 1-866-687-8683
 - Spanish: 1-888-VE-Y-VOTA / 1-888-839-8682
 - Arabic: 1-844-YALLA-US / 1-844-925-5287
 - For Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, or Vietnamese: 1-888-API-VOTE / 1-888-274-8683

[Election Earth](#) is a program of [ecoAmerica](#), a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We do not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office. This information is provided to empower individuals to exercise their right to vote and make informed voting decisions.