

This Voter's Guide was developed by The Arc of Western Wayne County, a local, non-profit, non-partisan organization on intellectual and other developmental disabilities.



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# A Guide for Participatory Democracy



## Supporting the rights of all people!



A Public Awareness Project of  
The Arc of Western Wayne County

Funded by The Arc Michigan and  
The Detroit Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency



## Your Right To Vote

The United States Constitution guarantees the right to vote to all citizens. It is our civic responsibility as citizens to participate in the democratic process of electing our governmental officials. However, people with disabilities do not have as many opportunities to register to vote as most citizens. Federal law has established important protections against disability-based discrimination.

**The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)** provided federal funds to states to ensure polling places are accessible to voters with disabilities. The law requires one accessible voting machine (or system) in every polling place by January 1, 2006, and covered all related costs. HAVA also provided federal funds to make polling places physically accessible.

**The National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter)** signed into law in 1993, requires all public and private agencies serving people with disabilities to offer voter registration to their consumers at in-take, recertification, and change of address. If the individual declines to register to vote, the agency must obtain the individual's signature on a declination form and keep the form on file for 22 months. Most disability agencies are in violation of the National Voter Registration Act.

**Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** requires that all public entities make "reasonable modifications to rules, policies, and practices" to avoid disability-based discrimination in programs, services, and activities of state and local governments.

**The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984** guarantees the right to vote in federal elections, but defines persons with disabilities narrowly, as persons with a "temporary or permanent physical disability." Such individuals must be provided with auxiliary aids (defined as "instructions, printed in large type..." and "information by telecommunications device for the deaf").

**The Voting Rights Act of 1965** requires that individuals who are blind, or have other disabilities "may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or agent of the voter's union."



*This guide was developed as a resource tool for citizens with disabilities and their families, friends, support staff and professionals.*

## Voting Resources

### On the Web:

**Michigan Voter Information Center:**

<https://services2.sos.state.mi.us.mivote/>

**Vote411.org:**

<http://www.vote411.org>

**National Organization on Disability:**

<http://www.nod.org>

**Be A Voter:**

<http://www.beavoter.com>

### By Telephone:

**Michigan Secretary of State:**

888.767.6424

**The League of Women's Voters**

517.484.5383






**The Arc Michigan**

800.292.7851



*In 1868, **one vote** saved President Andrew Johnson from Impeachment!*

## Before You Go Vote Checklist

-  Did you register?
-  Do you know where you should go to vote? Contact your county clerk to double check your polling location.
-  Did you call to see if your election site is accessible to you? Ask about entrances, doorways and voting booths to be sure they are accessible too. If it is not, they should provide you with the location of an accessible poll!
-  Did you call ahead and request special assistance?
-  Did you review the candidates and their views?

## What if something goes wrong?

If you forget your identification or know that you are registered, but your name is not on the list of eligible voters, **YOU CAN STILL VOTE!**

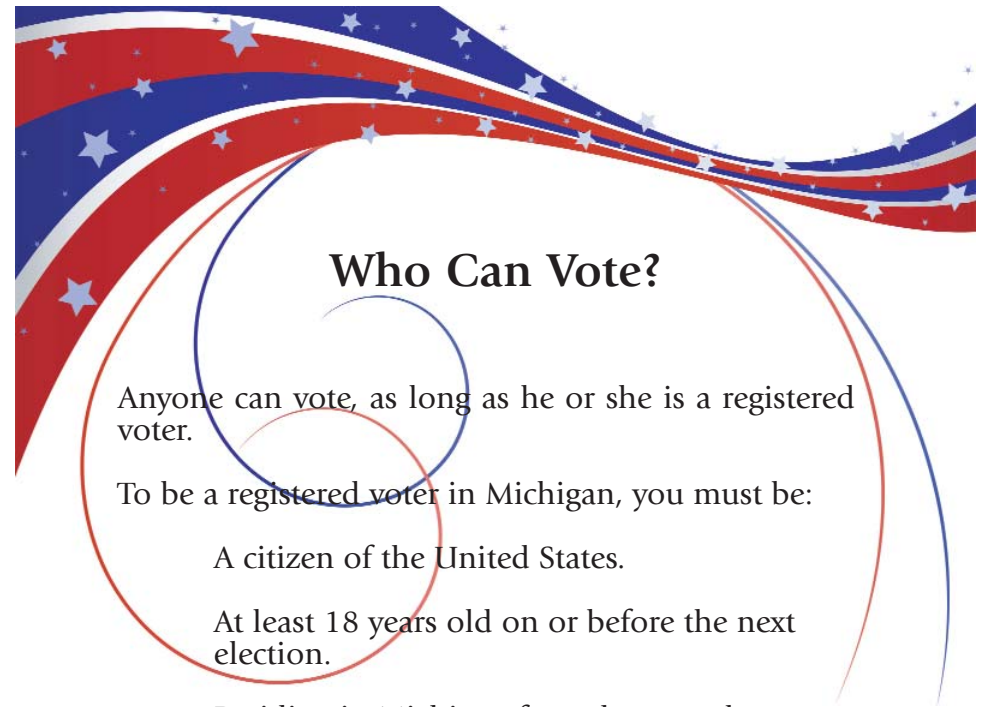
Just ask for a provisional ballot. You will need to sign an affidavit regarding your voter information.

In Michigan, provisional and regular ballots are exactly the same. If a poll site has ballots - they have provisional ballots, too. The provisional ballot will be placed in a special envelope and counted after the election.

If you forgot your identification and use a provisional ballot, you must provide your local city or township clerk with your identification or voter registration card **no later than six days** after the election. You can go there in person, fax a copy or mail a copy to your clerk. If you fail to do this, your provisional ballot won't count. Your clerk should provide you with contact information in order to find out if your vote was allowed.



In 1845, *one vote* brought Texas into the Union!



## Who Can Vote?

Anyone can vote, as long as he or she is a registered voter.

To be a registered voter in Michigan, you must be:

A citizen of the United States.

At least 18 years old on or before the next election.

Residing in Michigan for at least 30 days before the election in which you are voting.

Not confined in a jail after being convicted of a crime and sentenced.



In 1933, *one vote* gave Adolf Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party!

# How to Register to Vote

## In Person:

You can register to vote in person at your local Secretary of State office. If you do not know where that is, call 888.767.6424 to find out.

## By Mail:

You can request a mail in registration form from your local Secretary of State office or your County Election office. They will also send you the rules and regulations for using a mail-in registration form.

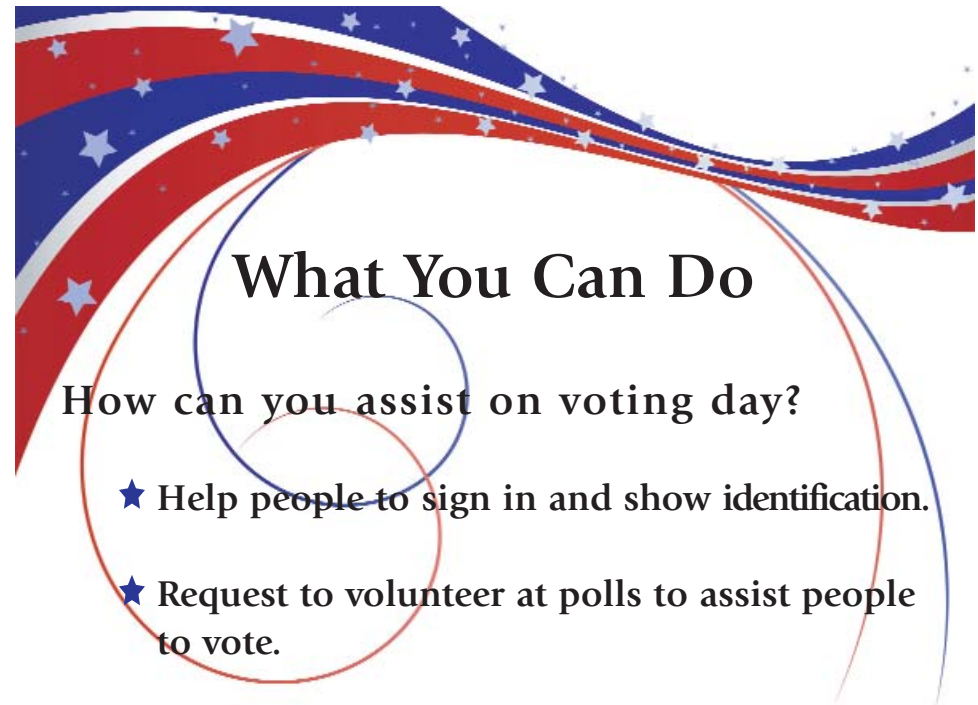
## On the Web:

<https://services2.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>

[www.beavoter.com](http://www.beavoter.com)



In 1776, *one vote* gave America the English Language instead of German!



## What You Can Do

### How can you assist on voting day?

- ★ Help people to sign in and show identification.
- ★ Request to volunteer at polls to assist people to vote.
- ★ Volunteer at polls to show people how to use the punch card or fill-in ballot.

### How can you show someone that their vote made a difference?

- ★ Follow through the next day.
- ★ Read the paper and watch the news to see what happened with the candidates and issues.

In 1649, *one vote* caused Charles I of England to be executed!

# What You Can Do

## Who can help?

Family, friends, support staff or other professionals can provide general information on voting.

## How can you help?

Explain what voting is.

Discuss the rights and responsibilities that go along with voting.

Explain how to vote and what happens at the poll.

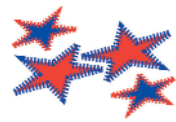
Explain what the person will need to do.

Explain information about the candidates and the offices they are running for.

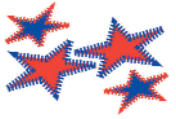
Ask if they want to register to vote.

Discuss what kind of assistance the person may need at the polls.

Discuss transportation options. Contact your local Arc office, Office on Aging or Center for Independent Living for suggestions.



# When to Register



You must register to vote  
**30 days before** the election date.

## What information is needed to register?

### In Person:

You will need to provide one of the following:

Driver's license or Michigan State Identification card.

Social Security Card.

Certified copy of your birth certificate.

### By Mail:

To complete the State Mail-In Application, you will need to provide your driver's license or Michigan State Identification card number. You will sign a verification statement of your age, citizenship, and living situation.



*In 1878, **one vote** gave Rutherford B. Hayes the Presidency of the United States!*



*In 1865, **one vote** gave Oliver Cromwell control of England!*

# How To Become More Involved

## Conduct a Voter Registration Drive

Contact your local chapter of the League of Women's Voters. Tell them about your voter registration drive and ask for their cooperation and advice. In most communities, they are the best source of information on local election laws.

Contact other disability related groups in your community and ask them to work with you. Form an advisory committee to develop a plan for registering individuals with disabilities.

Conduct an ongoing educational campaign. Include articles in your newsletter. Use your local media. Develop press releases and public service announcements (year long).

Contact your local election office for a voting machine demonstration(3 month countdown).

Identify coordinators for outreach campaign to locate unregistered individuals with disabilities (2 month countdown).

## Plan or participate in a Town Meeting

Cover election issues and public policies affecting people with disabilities.

Have available candidate's positions on issues relative to people with disabilities.

Develop a candidate's questionnaire.

## Host a Candidate's Forum

Invite all candidates.

Introduce yourself to new candidates running for office.

Share what people with disabilities need ... good health care, housing, education, support services, transportation, etc.

## Conduct a Direct Mail and Telephone Campaign

Contact agencies that provide mental health services for their support.

## On Election Day.....

Provide support services such as transportation and special needs.

*In 1941, **one vote** saved selective service just weeks before Pearl Harbor was attacked!*