

# VOTING



*in Louisiana*



ADDITIONAL VOTING INFORMATION  
FOR DISABLED, SENIOR CITIZENS,  
AND/OR RESIDENTS OF A  
NURSING OR VETERANS' HOME





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## INTRODUCTION

In addition to the [Voting in Louisiana](#) guide, this information is intended to assist individuals that are disabled, senior citizens (over 65), and/or residents of a nursing or veterans' home.

## REGISTERING TO VOTE FOR RESIDENTS OF NURSING OR VETERANS' HOMES

If you live in a nursing home, veterans' home, assisted living facility, group home, developmental center, or hospital and would like to register to vote, contact your parish [registrar of voters](#) office or contact the secretary of state's office toll free at 1.800.883.2805 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday for assistance in registering to vote. You may also seek the assistance of a relative, friend or employee of the facility in completing a voter registration application.

If you are a resident of a nursing or veterans' home and claim a homestead exemption for a private residence, you may choose either to register in the parish where you have a homestead exemption or register in the parish where the nursing or veterans' home is located, but not both.

If you are a new registrant and voting for the first time, you will also be required to submit a doctor's letter certifying that you are not able to appear in person to vote; otherwise, you must vote in person the first time before starting the automatic voting under the Disability Program.

## REGISTERING TO VOTE FOR RESIDENTS OF STATE OWNED FACILITIES

If you are an individual with developmental disabilities and reside in a state-owned facility, you are eligible to register to vote; however, staff at the facility may not assist you in completing your voter registration form. A family member or friend may assist or you may contact your parish [registrar of voters](#) office or contact the secretary of state's office toll free at 1.800.883.2805 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday for assistance in registering to vote.

If you are a new registrant and voting for the first time, you will also be required to submit a doctor's letter certifying that you are not able to appear in person to vote; otherwise, you must vote in person the first time before starting the automatic voting under the Disability Program.

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

## **DISABILITY PROGRAM FOR DISABLED, SENIOR CITIZENS & RESIDENTS OF NURSING OR VETERANS' HOMES**

### **Act 436**

Act 436 of the 2009 Louisiana legislative session brought many new and improved changes to voting for the physically disabled, senior citizens and residents of nursing or veterans' homes.

### **Pre-Act 436 Participants**

If a person who lived at home or in a nursing home and who, prior to January 1, 2010, was approved by the parish board of election supervisors in their parish as being eligible to participate in the special program for disabled voters as such program existed prior to Act 436, they were grandfathered in to the new Disability Program.

### **Post-Act 436 Participants**

New participants that apply for the Disability Program who are disabled must send proof of disability to the parish [registrar of voters](#) to join the program. Proof of disability may include one (1) of the following:

- A. a copy of 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. a copy of a certificate of a medical doctor or optometrist certifying to the irremediable nature of the physical disability as proof of disability; or
- C. a copy of current documentation (letter or card) showing eligibility for one of the following:
  - 1. social security disability benefits;
  - 2. veterans' disability benefits;
  - 3. paratransit services;
  - 4. benefits from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities; or
  - 5. benefits from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

New participants who apply for the Disability Program who are senior citizens, 65 years of age or older, and who have previously voted in the parish may apply for the program simply by requesting an absentee-by-mail ballot and indicating that they are a senior citizen on the application.

New participants who apply for the Disability Program who live in a nursing or veterans' home may apply for the program by writing a letter to their parish register of voters, signed by the person or marked with one (1) witness to their mark, stating their name and the address of the nursing or veterans' home and their intent to apply for the program. The letter must include a doctor's certificate stating that the voter is a nursing or veterans' home resident and cannot vote in person either during early voting or on Election Day.

## **AUTOMATIC VOTING UNDER THE DISABILITY PROGRAM**

The benefit of the Disability Program is to allow the participant to either vote by mail for each election or to vote in the nursing or veterans' home for each election without having to reapply before each election.

### **Here's How It Works Once Approved for the Program**

If you are disabled or a senior citizen and have previously voted in the parish, you simply need to apply for an absentee-by-mail ballot and check that you are disabled or a senior citizen.

- A. You may apply for an absentee-by-mail ballot online or by downloading an application at [www.GeauxVote.com](http://www.GeauxVote.com). If you download an application you must complete and mail the application to your parish [registrar of voters](#); or you may send a letter to your parish registrar of voters requesting a mail ballot for the election for the reason that you are disabled or you are a senior citizen. If you send a letter you must sign and date the letter and mail it to your parish registrar of voters. The deadline for the registrar to receive an absentee-by-mail request is 4:30 p.m. on the 4th day before Election Day.
- B. Once you are approved for the program and you will receive an absentee-by-mail ballot automatically for each election. You will remain in the program until either your ballot is returned as undeliverable or you request to cancel your absentee-by-mail ballot. If voting at a nursing or veterans' home, 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.
- C. If you receive an absentee-by-mail ballot automatically each election 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. Either vote in person during early voting or Election Day. If you vote in person during early voting or on Election Day be sure to destroy your absentee-by-mail ballot after voting so no one can vote your absentee-by-mail ballot.
- D. Once you have voted and mailed your absentee-by-mail ballot, you will not be allowed to 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-by-mail ballot automatically for all future elections.

- E. If you are a new registrant and voting for the first time, you will also be required to submit a doctor's letter certifying that you are not able to appear in person to vote; otherwise, you must vote in person the first time before starting the automatic voting under the Disability Program.
  
- F. If you are in a nursing or veterans' home, you simply need to apply for an absentee-by-mail ballot and check that you are a nursing or veterans' home resident. You may apply for an absentee-by-mail ballot online or by downloading an application at [www.GeauxVote.com](http://www.GeauxVote.com). If you download an application you must complete it and mail the application to your parish [registrar of voters](#); or you may send a letter to your parish registrar of voters requesting to vote at your nursing or veterans' home for the election for the reason that you reside at a nursing or veterans' home. If you send a letter you must sign and date the letter and mail it to your parish registrar of voters at least thirty (30) days before the election so that they can prepare to come to the nursing or veterans' home to allow you to vote during the early voting period. The registrar of voters office will mail you a letter before each election telling you when they will be going to your residence 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 in voting.

## **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.

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

- A. If you are entitled to receive assistance in voting, you may choose anyone to assist you in voting including a family member, friend, registrar, deputy registrar or commissioner. You may not be assisted by any of the following:
  - 1. a commissioner-in-charge;
  - 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.

- B. The person who assists you in voting will be required to sign the absentee-by-mail ballot envelope to acknowledge that he assisted you in voting or will be required to sign the precinct register if assisting you during early voting or on Election Day.
- C. If you have a visible 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.
- D. To receive assistance in voting, you must provide one (1) type of proof of disability listed herein. If you have already submitted proof of disability to your parish registrar of voters, you will be listed as entitled to receive assistance in voting and do not need to continue to provide such proof for each election.

## **OTHER ACCOMODATIONS TO ASSIST YOU IN VOTING**

There are many additional accommodations that may assist you in voting, such as:

- A. adjusting of voting machines if you use a wheelchair or prefer to sit while voting on the Election Day voting machine;
- B. voting machines being audio accessible and anyone being able to use the audio voting keypad to vote. You should inform the registrar or commissioner before you begin voting that you want to vote using the audio voting keypad;
- C. being able to bring personal earplugs or headset to use with the audio voting keypad;
- D. requesting 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;
- E. being able to bring your own flashlight if you need additional lighting in the voting machine;
- F. being able to bring your own signature tool to assist you in signing your name; and
- G. use of the Braille Voting Instructions available at each registrar of voters office and in each polling place.

State laws allow voters three (3) 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](#) guide for election information, such as the GeauxVote smartphone or tablet app where you can view your sample ballot 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 inform the 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 1.800.883.2805.

## **REQUESTING TRANSPORTATION TO POLLS**

If you need a ride to a polling place, consider asking your friends, family, church group, or other community group. Many of these organizations may assist you with transportation to your polling place. Group home staff may also be able to help arrange transportation for you to vote early in person or vote in person at the polls on Election Day. Otherwise, consider joining the Disability Program as described in this guide to be able to vote by mail or in a nursing or veterans' home each election.

## **ELECTION COMMISSIONERS (POLL WORKERS)**

Louisiana relies on its dedicated citizens to perform a public service to the citizens of the state 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 the commissioners in their precincts, counting and tabulating votes, 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 ordered 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](http://www.GeauxVote.com) or call toll free at 1.800.883.2805.

## **ELECTIONS COMPLIANCE UNIT**

The secretary of state's office has an Elections Compliance Unit (ECU) 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 1.800.722.5305.

## **COMPLAINTS**

Voters may file a complaint regarding elections by calling the secretary of state's office toll free at 1.800.883.2805. In addition, voters may send complaints 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 (HAVA), 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 1.800.883.2805.

## **FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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

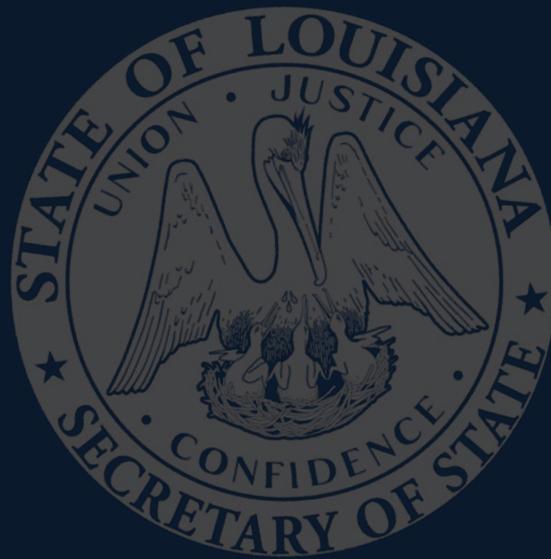
Secretary of State's Office  
1.800.883.2805(toll free voice)  
225.922.0900 (office)  
[elections@sos.la.gov](mailto:elections@sos.la.gov) (email)

or

Advocacy Center  
1.800.960.7705 (toll free voice)  
1.855.861.3577 (TTY)  
[advocacycenter@advocacyla.org](mailto:advocacycenter@advocacyla.org) (email)



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