

# Voting and You

A presentation of the National Youth  
Leadership Network

Voting is a very important right.

If you are 18 years old and a citizen of the United States, you have a right to vote.

You should use that right!

# Laws That Make Voting Accessible

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Help America Vote Act of 2002 helped make voting accessible for people with disabilities.

# If your polling place is inaccessible...

you should contact your Secretary of State. This person works for your state government and is responsible for the voting process in your state.

You can get more information about voting accessibility at:

- Federal Election Commission

- [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)

- U.S. Department of Justice

- <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/hava/hava.html>

- ADA Technical Assistance

- <http://www.ada.gov/taprogram.htm>

- American Association of People with Disabilities

- <http://www.aapd-dc.org/dvpmain/elreform/havadispro.html>

# Registering to Vote

Before you can vote, you need to register. You need to be at least 18 years old on election day. You can register with your County Clerk. Every state has a rule: you have to register before the election. The deadline to register is different for every state. Before the deadline, you have to fill out a voter registration form. Then you have to mail it to your County Clerk. That mailing address is usually listed on the back of the registration form.

# For More Information About Registering to Vote:

- List of deadlines by state:  
<http://www.rockthevote.com/voting-is-easy/important-dates/>
- Contact Information for Secretaries of State:  
<http://www.rockthevote.com/voting-is-easy/the-voting-process/contact-sos/>
- Voter Registration Information by State:  
[http://www.votesmart.org/voter registration resource s.php](http://www.votesmart.org/voter_registration_resource_s.php)
- Contact information for your County Clerk and Secretary of State can also be found at the front of your local phonebook.

# Methods of Voting

There are many different ways to vote. The way that you vote may depend on what state you live in. Not every state has every method of voting.



# Voting at the Polls

If you are voting at the polls, you will be voting on election day. You need to go to your assigned polling place. This can usually be found on your voter registration card. Once you are at your polling place, you may or may not be asked to show identification (I.D.). Different states have different rules. You should check with your state.

# Voting at the Polls

Once you are at the polls and check-in, you will may be handed a ballot or shown to a booth. If you are handed a ballot, follow the directions to fill it out. If you are shown into a booth, you may be voting electronically.

# Electronic Voting

If you're voting electronically, you will be asked to either touch a screen or pull a lever after looking at each candidate or issue on the screen.

Electronic voting machines are not all the same. It is important to follow the directions to make sure your vote is counted.

# Mail-In or Absentee Ballot

Absentee or mail-in ballots always have to be requested ahead of time. Different states have different rules about this, so always check with your county clerk if you want to vote that way. Once you get your ballot, you will need to mark a box or complete an arrow next to your choice.

# Mail-In or Absentee Ballot

It is o.k. to have someone help you fill out your ballot. The person who helps you may have to sign his or her name on the ballot saying they helped you. If your state requires your helper to sign your ballot, there will be a special place on the ballot for their signature.

# Finding Information About Candidates (people running for office)

It's always important to know what you're voting on. You can find out more information by visiting candidates' websites. Many candidates also hold debates, town halls, and other sessions where they meet voters and share their views.

Most of these events are free.

# Finding Information About Issues

In addition to voting for candidates, you may also be asked to vote on certain issues. It is also important to be informed about these issues.

Most states produce a non-partisan (not for either side) guide that explains the arguments for and against each of the issues on the ballot.

These books are usually sent to every home in the state. If you need one in an accessible format, you may have to contact the Secretary of State's Office.

Remember that voting is an important part of  
having your voice heard!

Even though the process may seem scary at first, it  
gets easier the more you do it!

See you at the polls in November!