

# **Power UP**

**To Use Your  
Voice To  
Vote**

# Meet the Team

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# What's To Come

What voting is and why it's important



Why people don't vote



How to vote



Ashley's Voting Story



Your Voting Story

# What is Voting?

A usually **formal expression**  
of opinion or will

in response to a  
**proposed decision**

especially one given as an indication of  
**approval or disapproval**

of a proposal, motion, or **candidate for office**

~ Merriam-Webster Dictionary

## VOTING IS...

- ✓ Our Power
- ✓ Our Right
- ✓ Our Hope





In the U.S.

**no one  
is required**

by law  
to vote

# Voting is a Right



Freedom of  
Choice and  
Customs



To Select  
Decision Makers



Election  
Outcome

# Why Is It Important To Vote?



“Vote as if your life depended on it, because it does.”

Justin Dart,  
the Father of the  
Americans with Disabilities Act

History has shown that the people who vote in elections

**have the most influence**

in the policies that are made.

# What Voting Accomplishes



We select leaders  
to run our communities  
how we believe they  
should be run

**Healthcare**  
(including Medicaid)

**Education**

**Employment**

**Inclusive Community Living**

Elected  
officials  
give more  
attention  
and more  
resources to  
individuals  
and  
communities  
that vote

# Who Votes Matters

## The Power in Community

### **Disability Community**

We can learn about the  
diverse needs within our  
own community and  
advocate together

### **Fellow Minority Communities**

Minority communities  
can work together to  
advocate for shared and  
unique needs.

### **Intersectional Identities**

People with Disability  
**who also**  
belong to other  
minority communities



# Why Don't People Vote?

"We need to step up and say **'Hey, this is why people don't vote'.**"

~Ashley

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Not interested

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An obstacle is in the way

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Haven't been asked to register

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**53%** of  
nonvoters  
**don't**  
**believe**  
**it matters**  
who wins

## Not Interested

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Don't think it will make a difference

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Not interested available candidates

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Not interested in the current issues

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Feel purposefully excluded

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Feel unsafe

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Don't understand the government

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# Some Obstacles to Voting

“Let’s  
**remove  
obstacles**  
when we  
can.”

~Ashley

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Don’t have transportation

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Don’t know who to vote for

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Don't know how to vote

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**62%**  
of the  
people  
surveyed  
who aren't  
registered

**have  
never  
been  
invited**  
to register  
or vote

# Have You Been Asked to Register?

## Who invited me to register?

Government Office

Friend or Family Member

School

Civic Organization

Political Group

Religious Group



Source: Pew Voting Frequency Survey

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**To Register**  
you need  
**2** pieces of  
identification

**Examples:**

Illinois State  
Driver's License

Illinois State  
ID card

Medicaid Card

# Who's Eligible To Register & Vote?

**To vote in an election, you must be registered to vote**

**To register to vote you must:**

- Be a United States citizen
- Be **at least 18 years old** by Election Day, or 17 years old to vote in a Primary, if you will be 18 as of the following General Election
- Have lived in your election precinct at least 30 days before Election Day.



**Even if you have a guardian, you have a right to vote!**

## Ways to register:

In person

By mail

Online

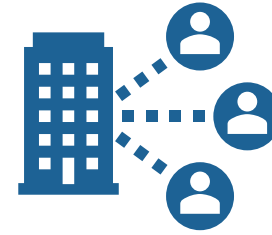
There are **lots** of places you can register

# How and Where Can I Register to Vote?

## In person at your local:

- Election Authority Office
- City, Village and Township Offices
- Schools
- Public Libraries
- Driver's license facility

when you apply for services including renewing your license



## Trivia Question:



Where's the most likely place a person will be invited to register to vote?

## Answer:

A government office

# Other State Agencies to Register

## In person



- The Department on Aging (DOA)
- The Department of Healthcare and Family Services (DHFS)
- The Department of Public Health (DPH)
- The Department of Human Services (DHS)  
for the Divisions of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services.

# What Other Ways Can I Register to Vote?

You can  
register  
to vote  
**all year**  
including  
**on**  
Election Day!

## By mail

1. Fill out a voter registration form
2. Mail it to your local election authority

Get this form from several places, including

- your local election authority, or
- download it from the  
Illinois State Board of Elections' website:  
[www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)





## Make Your Plan



Register if needed



Decide where you will cast your ballot

# What Other Ways Can I Register to Vote?

## Online

You can also register to vote online at:

<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

To do this, you must:

- have a valid email address
- provide a valid driver's license number or state ID card number.





For detailed information, visit The Arc of Illinois presentation:

"The Five W's of Voter Registration and Voting"

# How Do We Vote?

- **Before** Election Day by going to an **early voting location**
- **On** Election Day by going to **your polling place**
- **By using a vote by mail ballot** - no reason or excuse needed

You may request an application for a vote by mail ballot by mail, in person, or online from your local election authority

Fill out the application and return it to the local election authority in person or by mail. You will receive your ballot by mail



REMINDER

**If it's Election Day and you haven't registered to vote yet, go to your local election authority to register and vote right there**

# Every Vote Matters

People ask,

"Does every  
vote **really**  
count?"

**"Yes!"**

~Ashley



## **2008** Minnesota Senate Race

Nearly 3 million people voted  
Senator Al Franken won by **312 votes**



## **2009** Affordable Healthcare Act

Al Franken voted for the ACA  
It passed by **one vote**

# Every Local Vote Matters

"Local  
Elections  
Directly  
Effect  
Your  
Everyday  
Life"

~Nonprofit  
VOTE



## 2018 County Sheriff

Leanne Mull and husband moved to Decatur, Illinois one month before elections Sheriff Brown won by **one vote**



## 2020 County Board

Jennifer Sands' family of 7 researched county board candidates at the last minute. Val, their preferred candidate, won by **8 votes**

# Registering ... Again

“The 2024 election was important to me.

I had the right to vote and wanted to use my right.”

~Ashley

I had gone with my parents a few times and was registered in my old home.

When I moved into my own home, I had to register at my new address.

I received a post card in the mail telling me where my new polling place was.



## How to Learn About Candidates

Watch  
Debates

Illinois Voter  
Guide

Vote 411

Vote Smart

Ballotpedia

Ballot Ready

# Learning About The Candidates

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Find out what's on the ballot

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Research the issues

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Learn where the candidates are on disability issues  
(& other other issues important to you)

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"You can go to **vote.org** for support to register, vote by mail, and get election reminders."

~Ashley

# Preparing to vote

## It's good to consider all your options



I watched the presidential debate on TV



I found it interesting and took notes



I looked at both the main parties and considered the 3rd party candidates, too

Our Direct Support Workers had to fill out paperwork to help us vote.

**That was a process!**

~Ashley

# Casting My Ballot

Our polling place was at our library

I went with my two roommates and our direct support workers

I was confident on the way over



"I want to help others speak up and out for what they want and need, so we can all be treated as equal."

~Ashley

# Warming Cold Feet

It was a little scary. I didn't know how I'd fill it out.

I was like, "oh no what have I gotten myself into."

**I didn't want to vote.**

**I calmed myself down with my faith**

Once I was reading who I was voting for, it started to click.

My supporter helped go over the ballot with me. Summarized it.

**I filled in the circle for who I wanted!!!**

"APIA Vote  
(Asian &  
Pacific  
Islander  
American  
Vote)

has a great  
template  
to help you  
make your  
plan."

~Ashley

# Your Voting Story



Do you want to  
vote? Or are you still  
considering it?



Why do you want  
to vote?



What is stopping  
you from voting?



What questions do  
you have?

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# Resources

- Illinois State Board of Elections  
<https://www.elections.il.gov/>
- Registration Lookup – to see if you're registered  
<https://ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx>
- Illinois Online Voter Application  
<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>
- Polling Place Lookup  
<https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlace>
- Find My Officials  
<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx> Lookup.aspx
- Voting by Mail Application  
<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMailAgreement.aspx>
- Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Box Locations  
<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/VoteByMailBallotDropBoxLocations.aspx>

# Resources

- The Arc: The Five W's of Voting  
<https://www.thearcofil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/02.29.24-Five-Ws-of-Voting-FINAL.pdf>
- Illinois Voter Guide  
<https://illinoisvoterguide.org/>
- Vote 411 - Illinois  
<https://www.vote411.org/Illinois>
- Vote Smart  
<https://justfacts.votesmart.org/>

# Resources

- Vote.org: Everything You Need to Vote  
<https://www.vote.org/>
- APIA Vote: Plan to Vote Template  
<https://apiavote.org/wp-content/uploads/template-plan-to-vote.pdf>
- Ballotpedia  
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<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/16/947182471/why-people-dont-vote>
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<https://inkstickmedia.com/why-americans-are-too-scared-to-vote>



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<https://voting.socialwork.uconn.edu/why-voting-matters/>
- Why Is It Important To Vote?  
<https://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/assets/documents/why-is-it-important-to-vote-831.pdf>
- The Power of One Vote  
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-power-of-one-vote/>
- Local Elections: Small Margins, BIG Consequences  
<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/local-elections-small-margins-big-consequences/>