

**About the Quick Start Guides:** The EAC's Quick Start Guides are intended to familiarize local election officials with various topics they will likely encounter in election administration. The guides are a starting point to identify areas of concern and give officials a broad idea of factors they should consider in approaching a given topic.

## Accessibility

As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. While some disabilities are visible, many are not, and people who do not identify as disabled may also benefit from accessible equipment and materials. It is estimated that voters with disabilities make up 1/6th of the American electorate.



## Know Your Responsibilities



- **Ensure** polling places are accessible to voters with disabilities.
- **Deploy** at least one (or more, if state law requires) accessible voting machine at each location.
- **Train** poll workers to set up and operate accessible voting equipment and interact with voters with disabilities to ensure their right to privately and independently vote or receive the assistance of a representative.
- **Serve** all people with disabilities, including those in the community and at nursing or residential care facilities.

## Have an Accessibility Strategy

**Make accessibility a key component of your office's strategy for managing the voting process:**

- **Use** common, easy-to-understand words (plain language). Avoid technical or specialized language.
- **Strategically** locate polling places and ballot drop boxes if permitted by law, so they are easily accessible to public transportation (where available). If possible, use the same locations for both early voting and Election Day.
- **Ask** area organizations that serve people with disabilities to identify accessible buildings or conduct accessibility surveys of polling places.
- **Give** poll workers a diagram of the interior and exterior setup requirements for each polling place. Include placement of signage required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and any applicable state laws. Post interior and exterior accessible voting diagrams on your office's website.
- **Post** videos with captions or American Sign Language on how to cast a ballot and use voting equipment. Use traditional and social media to promote your site. Link to online voter registration, the sample ballot, and accessible polling places. Encourage poll workers to view the videos so they can assist voters on Election Day.
- **Develop** a training module devoted to accessibility. Include setting up the polling place, managing lines, providing assistance to voters, using accessible voting devices, and setting up and using the voting equipment accessibility features.
- **Print** a reminder card for poll workers about accessibility. Encourage poll workers to use it on Election Day.

## Increase Community Outreach

**Make sure outreach activities reach all voters, including those with disabilities:**



- **Form** a committee of full-time and part-time staff and poll workers. Identify the various types of disabilities. Develop solutions for voters with different types of disabilities. Review every step in the voting process and critique your current practices.
- **Partner** with local organizations that serve people with disabilities. These organizations may be able to help distribute material and collect feedback.
- **Establish** a task force of election officials throughout your state, or develop a statewide outreach program to voters with disabilities.
- **Recruit** poll workers from local groups that serve people with disabilities.
- **Register** voters and provide Election Day services at assisted living and long-term care facilities.
- **Update** your website, tell voters how to request election material in alternative formats, and ask voters with disabilities to notify your office about their Election Day needs.

## Use Accessible Methods



- **Ensure** online accessibility of your website.
- **Seek** an outside review to ensure your website meets accessibility laws and requirements. Common problem areas are screen reader access, semantic organization, skip navigation, keyboard access, contrast, text sizing and scaling, and tab order.
- **Ask** local organizations that serve people with disabilities to review your website's usability and accessibility features.
- **Provide** accessible voter registration options, including online registration.
  - **Note:** All online forms should be readable, downloadable, and fillable online. A guide to Accessible Voter Registration can be found on the EAC website: <https://www.eac.gov/best-practices-accessible-voter-registration>.
- **Use** large print and braille voter registration forms.
- **Provide** a range of accessible voting options, including accessible voting equipment and accessible drop boxes for mail-in ballots if permitted by law.
- **Allow** voters to use curbside voting to mark, cast, and verify their ballots privately and independently if permitted by law.

## Drop Box Accessibility

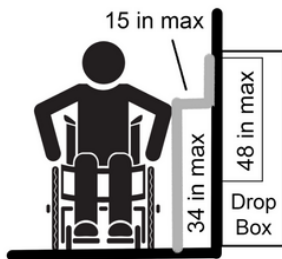
**Ballot drop boxes** can provide voters with a secure and convenient method to return their ballots if permitted by law. Here are some ways to make sure your drop box is accessible:

### Design:

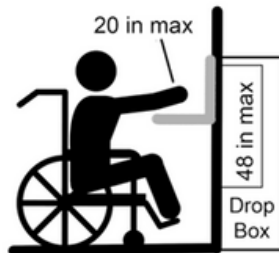
- The ballot slot should be no higher than 48 inches from the ground.
- The ballot slot should be within 15 inches of the voter.
- If there is a door (or cover) on the ballot slot, this should take no more than 5 lbs. of force to open.
- If there is a door (or cover) on the ballot slot, it should be able to be opened and closed with a closed fist (without grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist).
- All gaps and cracks in the drop box should be sealed.

### Signage:

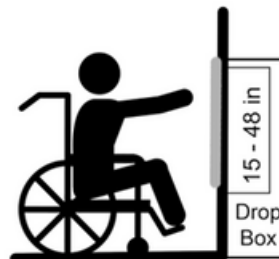
- Use tactile notifications, including raised lettering and braille.
- Provide sound indicators, including locator tones, auditory announcements, auditory locators.
- Use text with large characters and high contrast.



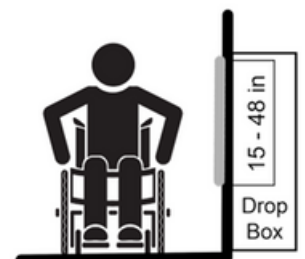
Obstructed High Side Reach



Obstructed High Forward Reach



Unobstructed Forward Reach



Unobstructed Side Reach