

An Election Worker's Guide to Serving Voters with Disabilities

General tips

- Assume competence and treat every voter with respect.
- Be patient to those who need extra time to communicate or cast their ballot.
- Offer assistance, but don't begin to assist someone before asking if they want help.
- If you don't know what type of assistance someone needs, just ask.
- Inform people of right to use an accessible machine.
- Allow voters with disabilities to receive assistance from any person of their choice (besides their employer or union representative).
- Remember that some disabilities are invisible.
- Don't question a person about their disability.
- Offer curbside voting to someone having trouble getting into polling place.

Serving voters who use wheelchairs or have mobility limitations

- Don't start pushing a wheelchair without first asking if assistance is needed.
- Sit while talking to someone in a wheelchair, so they don't have to look up.
- Don't lean or hang on someone's wheelchair.
- Don't offer to carry someone up stairs or into an inaccessible space.
- Provide a place to sit or line preference for individuals who cannot stand for a long time.

Serving voters who are blind or have low vision

- Don't touch, pet or distract an assistive animal.
- Greet the person by telling them who and where you are.
- Provide a guiding device such as a ruler or card for signing forms.
- Offer to explain how the accessible machines work.
- If the voter needs assistance getting to the voting booth, guide them by voice or by offering your arm. Do not touch the individual without asking.
- Offer assistance, but allow individuals to cast votes independently if they prefer.

Serving voters who are deaf or have hearing impairments

- Don't shout at a person who is deaf.
- Some voters read lips. Keep good eye contact and don't chew gum.
- Keep pen and paper for voters who may be able to communicate by passing notes.
- Understand that some voters will require a sign language interpreter.
- If voter is using a sign language interpreter, maintain eye contact with the voter directly, not their interpreter.

Serving voters with speech impairments

- Ask someone you don't understand to repeat what they said.
- Don't pretend to understand what someone says or complete someone's sentences.

For help, call Disability Rights Texas' Voting Hotline at 1-888-796-VOTE (8683)