

Long-Term Care Resident's Voter Guide



Election season is an exciting time that offers a renewed opportunity to shape public policy. If you live in a nursing home, federal nursing home regulations emphasize that you have the same rights as any other citizen of the United States – **this includes your right to vote!**




What do the Federal Regulations say?

§483.10(b) Exercise of Rights. The resident has the right to exercise his or her rights as a resident of the facility and as a citizen or resident of the United States.

§483.10(b)(1) The facility must ensure that the resident can exercise his or her rights without interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal from the facility.

§483.10(b)(2) The resident has the right to be free of interference, coercion, discrimination, and reprisal from the facility in exercising his or her rights and to be supported by the facility in the exercise of his or her rights as required under this subpart.

Additionally, federal laws state that:

-  All aspects of voter registration must be accessible to people with disabilities,
-  Voters with disabilities can receive assistance from a person of their choice,
-  Polling places must be accessible and if they are not, voters must be provided with an alternative means to vote on election day.

Preparing to Vote

Long-term care facilities should have a plan to ensure residents can exercise their right to vote. This could include providing direct support to residents and/or coordinating with state programs that provide assistance to those living in residential facilities. However, you should have a plan for voting too.

Consider the following when creating your plan:

Are you registered?

Your state may have a registration deadline, which could be up to 30 days before the election.



Visit this website to see if you are registered to vote and if you need to update your address: usa.gov/confirm-voter-registration

If you need help, ask your social worker or activities director to help you get registered or change your address. Ask what the plan is for making sure all residents are registered at the correct address. Encourage the resident council to hold a voter registration drive to help make sure other residents' voter registration is up to date.

What are the important deadlines in your state?







Check deadlines for applying for and returning absentee and mail in ballots as well as deadlines for early voting: usa.gov/how-to-vote

Your facility should make sure all residents are aware of important deadlines. Reach out to your activities' director or social worker if this isn't happening. Consider working with your facility or the resident council to set up a calendar with important dates and deadlines in a common area so all residents and visitors can keep track.

How will you vote?

Options for voting may include:

-  Absentee ballot
-  Mail in voting
-  Early voting
-  Voting in person on Election Day

Assistance with registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot, or filling out your ballot, can be obtained from a person of your choice, including a family member, a staff person, or someone else. Residents should be able to choose the method of voting that they prefer and that is easiest for them.



Visit this website to see your state's voting options and requirements: usa.gov/how-to-vote

Supporting a resident in the exercise of their right to vote includes transporting residents, or arranging transportation, to polling locations or ballot drop-boxes. For those unable or

choosing not to vote in person, it means ensuring residents can send their ballots via U.S. Postal Service, or other authorized option. A number of states request or require voters to show some form of identification at the polls. Know your state's requirements beforehand, so you can be prepared when going to cast your ballot.



If the facility does not have a plan to help residents vote and is not working to create one, reach out to your long-term care ombudsman office, theconsumervoice.org/get_help, or your protection and advocacy office ndrn.org/about/ndrn-member-agencies/ to ask for assistance.

How will you be informed about issues and candidates in the election?

There are different ways to learn about the issues and candidates that will be on the ballot this election cycle. Encourage your facility or resident council to invite candidates to visit and have discussions with residents about the issues. Work with your activities director to share information on the upcoming election, including participating in or watching town hall assemblies or debates. Share online forums that residents can join or websites that provide information about the candidates. Check local news sources, such as newspapers for candidate overviews and information. Work with your resident council and activities director to discuss these issues in meetings or plan events and activities to inform people about the issues on the ballot.

Remember residents may have different views so make sure, when information is being shared in your facility, there is access to information on all candidates and issues.



For more information on what candidates and issues are on the ballot where you live visit: vote411.org/ballot

How Long-Term Care Facilities Should Support Your Right to Vote

Nursing homes are required to support you in exercising your right to vote, this means they should:

- Connect and coordinate with community-based voter assistance programs.
- Reach out and ask residents about voting and help any resident who expresses a desire to vote. Ensure the staff does not make their own determinations about who is eligible to vote.

- 🇺🇸 Support you in obtaining assistance to vote if needed.
- 🇺🇸 Assist with voter identification requirements, including helping you obtain an acceptable form of identification if necessary.
- 🇺🇸 Stay on top of voting deadlines in your state.
- 🇺🇸 Help you determine if you are registered to vote, and your voter registration is up to date, including with the correct address.
- 🇺🇸 Provide and assist with your mail in voting or absentee ballot request forms and ballots if you are not planning to vote in person.
- 🇺🇸 Provide stamps, envelopes, and other materials you may need if you're submitting a mail in or absentee ballot.
- 🇺🇸 Arrange transportation to your polling sites if you choose to vote in person.
- 🇺🇸 Make information on candidates and ballot initiatives accessible to you.

Need Help?

Nursing home residents or their representatives who believe their rights have been violated can file a complaint with the State Survey Agency:

- [cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/Downloads/Complaintcontacts.pdf](https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/Downloads/Complaintcontacts.pdf)

Or with their Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:

- theconsumervoice.org/get_help



We didn't check our will, our dignity, our rights at the door when we checked into these nursing homes, and people keep forgetting that. We continue to have a voice.

Maurice, a nursing home resident



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