



Voting in North Carolina: Your Questions Answered

A guide for voters with disabilities | November 3, 2026 General Election

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Last checked: September 25, 2026, against NC State Board of Elections (NCSBE) guidance. Rules can change close to an election, so check the links before relying on a detail.

How to use this guide

1. **Check the key dates** so you don't miss a deadline.
2. **Get ready:** make sure you are registered and know what ID to bring.
3. **Choose how you will vote:** early, on Election Day, by mail, online (blind and low-vision voters), or from a care facility.
4. **Know your rights to help and accommodations.**
5. **Know what to do if something goes wrong.**

1. Key dates

Date	What happens
Friday, Oct. 9 5:00 PM	Last day to register to vote the regular way (online, by mail, or in person).
Thursday, Oct. 15	Early voting starts. Vote at any early voting site in your county. You can register and vote the same day.
Tuesday, Oct. 20 5:00 PM	Last day to ask for a mail-in (absentee) ballot. Ask sooner if you can.
Saturday, Oct. 31 3:00 PM	Early voting ends. Last chance to register and vote the same day. Last chance to get a free voter ID.

Date	What happens
Tuesday, Nov. 3 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM	Election Day. Vote at your assigned polling place. Mail-in ballots must be received by your county board of elections by 7:30 PM. A postmark is not enough.

Source: [NCSBE Upcoming Election](#)

2. Get ready to vote

Where can I check my registration and find my voting place?

Use **Voter Search** to check that you are registered, find your polling place, and see your sample ballot: vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup

For questions about your county, [find your county board of elections](#).

How do I find out what's on my ballot?

Short answer: Look up your own **sample ballot**. It shows every candidate, constitutional amendment, and ballot measure you will vote on.

1. Go to [Voter Search](#) and enter your first and last name.
2. Click your name to open your voter record.
3. Scroll down to **Your Sample Ballot** and open it.

Tip: Print your sample ballot, mark your choices, and bring it with you to the polls to use as a guide. You can also practice marking your choices with **Option 4** in the [NC Absentee Ballot Portal](#). Sample ballots appear once they are finalized for the election.

More: [Sample Ballot](#)

I missed the October 9 deadline. Can I still vote?

Short answer: Yes, during early voting (October 15–31). You cannot register on Election Day.

1. Go to any early voting site in your county.
2. Fill out a registration form. You must have lived in the county at least 30 days before Election Day.
3. Show **proof of where you live** with your current name and address: an NC driver's license or other government photo ID, or a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document.
4. Show a photo ID when you check in to vote. It can be the same card if it is an accepted voter ID.

5. Vote the same day.

More: [Register in Person During Early Voting](#)

My child is in college in another part of the state. Can they vote where they go to school?

Short answer: Yes, in most cases. They choose **one** place to vote: school or home.

If your student...	They should...
Does not plan to move back home after graduation	Register and vote at their school address.
Isn't sure where they will go after college	Choose either their school address or their home address.
Plans to move back home after graduation	Stay registered at home. They can vote by mail (ask by October 20) or come home to vote.

- They must live in the county for at least 30 days before Election Day.
- Missed the October 9 deadline? They can still register and vote at the same time during early voting. Students who live on campus can use a document from the school showing their name and campus housing address as proof of residence.
- Many college student IDs are accepted as voter ID. Check the approved list on the [Voter ID](#) page.

Important: A person can have only **one** voting address. Registering at school cancels a registration in another county. Voting more than once in the same election is a felony.

More: [Registering as a College Student](#)

What ID do I need?

Short answer: A photo ID — but you can still vote without one.

How you vote	What to do about ID
In person	Show a photo ID at check-in: driver's license, NC DMV ID, U.S. passport, military or veterans ID, some approved student and employee IDs, or a free voter ID. The address does not have to match your registration.

How you vote	What to do about ID
By mail	Put a photocopy of your ID in the clear sleeve on the ballot envelope. Black and white is fine if it is readable.
Online (blind and low-vision voters)	Upload a copy of your ID in the portal.
No ID	Fill out a Photo ID Exception Form . Reasons include disability or illness, no transportation, or a lost or stolen ID. In person, you vote a provisional ballot.

More: [Voter ID](#) and [Voter ID FAQ](#)

Can I get a free ID at early voting or on Election Day?

Short answer: Yes during early voting. No on Election Day.

- Go to your **county board of elections office** during business hours. It must be the county where you are registered.
- Bring nothing. Give your name, date of birth, and the last four digits of your Social Security number. They take your photo, and most people get the ID on the spot.
- The NC DMV also gives free state ID cards.

Important: Free voter IDs are **not** given out from 3:00 PM on October 31 through Election Day. On Election Day, use the Photo ID Exception Form instead.

More: [Get a Free Voter Photo ID](#)

I have a guardian. Can I still vote?

Short answer: Yes.

The NC Judicial Branch says adults a court has found incompetent still have the right to vote. A guardian cannot vote for you, but can help you ask for or return a mail-in ballot.

Tip: If anyone tells you that you can't vote because you have a guardian, contact **Disability Rights NC:** disabilityrightsn.org

Source: [NC Judicial Branch — Guardianship](#)

3. Choose how you will vote

Way to vote	When	Good to know
Early voting in person	Oct. 15 – Oct. 31 (ends 3 PM)	Any site in your county, so pick the easiest one to get into. Same-day registration and free ID available. Curbside voting at every site.
Election Day in person	Nov. 3, 6:30 AM – 7:30 PM	Only at your assigned polling place. No same-day registration. Curbside voting at every site.
By mail	Ask by Oct. 20, 5 PM. Must arrive by Nov. 3, 7:30 PM.	Needs two witnesses (or a notary) and a copy of your ID. Return early.
Online accessible ballot	Ask by Oct. 20, 5 PM	For blind and low-vision voters. Works with screen readers. Needs two witnesses.
From a care facility	Ask by Oct. 20, 5 PM. Schedule help now.	A MAT (Multipartisan Assistance Team) from your county can help you ask for, fill out, and seal your ballot.

How do I vote by mail?

Short answer: Any registered voter can vote by mail. You do not need a reason.

- 1. Ask for your ballot by 5:00 PM, October 20.** Use the [NC Absentee Ballot Portal](#) (Option 1) or a paper form. If you have a long-term illness or disability, say so on the form to get ballots for every election this year.
- 2. Mark your ballot in front of two adult witnesses or one notary.** They sign the envelope and print their names and addresses. If someone helped you mark it, they also sign as your assistant.
- 3. Add your ID.** Put a copy of your photo ID, or the yellow Photo ID Exception Form, in the clear sleeve.
- 4. Seal the ballot envelope.**
- 5. Return it early.** Mail it (\$1.98 postage — three Forever stamps), or hand it in at your county board of elections office or any early voting site in your county. You **cannot** drop it off at an Election Day polling place.

Track your ballot with **BallotTrax**: northcarolina.ballottrax.net/voter

More: [Detailed Instructions to Vote By Mail](#)

What could get my mail-in ballot rejected?

Important: The State Board changed the rules on September 4, 2026, the day ballots started going out. These problems now mean your ballot is canceled and a new one is sent — if there is time.

Problem	What happens
Envelope not sealed	Ballot is canceled and replaced, unless you bring it in and seal it in front of election staff.
Witness signatures missing	Ballot is canceled and replaced.
Dropped off by someone not allowed	Only you, a near relative, or your legal guardian may drop it off. If you need help because of a disability, you may choose someone else. Otherwise the ballot is canceled and replaced.
More than one ballot in an envelope	Ballot is canceled and replaced.
Arrives after 7:30 PM, Nov. 3	Not counted. A postmark does not help.
Missing your signature or an ID problem	Usually can be fixed without a new ballot. Your county will contact you.

Tip: Return your ballot early so there is time to fix a problem. If your ballot hasn't arrived close to Election Day, you can vote in person instead.

More: [FAQ: Voting By Mail](#) | Background: [Daily Tar Heel, Sept. 7, 2026](#)

Can blind or low-vision voters vote online?

Short answer: Yes. The accessible ballot works with screen readers and accepts a digital or typed signature.

1. **Ask for your ballot by 5:00 PM, October 20** in the [NC Absentee Ballot Portal](#) (Option 1). Choose the accessible ballot.
2. **Watch for an email** saying your ballot is ready. Open it from the link or with Option 3 in the portal.
3. **Upload a copy of your photo ID** or fill out the Photo ID Exception Form.
4. **Have two witnesses with you while you mark your ballot.** They stay nearby but can't see how you vote. They type their information and sign.
5. **Submit.** The last screen confirms your ballot was sent.

Tip: A person helping you can also be one of your witnesses, and a blind witness can type their signature. Practice first with the NC Absentee Demo Ballot Portal. For portal help, contact the NCSBE ADA Coordinator: ADACoordinator@ncsbe.gov or (919) 814-0705.

More: [Accessible Absentee Voting](#)

I live in a nursing home or will be in the hospital. How do I vote?

Short answer: Vote by mail, with help from a **MAT Team** or someone you choose.

- 1. Call your county board of elections now to schedule a Multipartisan Assistance Team (MAT).** A MAT Team is at least two people from different political parties. They keep your choices private.
- 2. First visit:** they help you register (if needed) and ask for your ballot by October 20.
- 3. Second visit:** once your ballot arrives, they help you mark it (if you want), act as your witnesses, and seal it.
- 4. Return the ballot:** mail it, or have it dropped off by you, a near relative, or your legal guardian. If you need help because of a disability, you may choose someone else.

Who can help me?	Rule
If you need help because of a disability	Anyone you choose , including facility staff, family, friends, or other residents. You don't have to use facility staff.
If you don't need help because of a disability	Facility owners, managers, and staff may not help, unless they are your near relative or guardian. Use a MAT Team, a near relative, or your guardian.

Tip: Got sick or disabled **after** October 20 and can't get to the polls? You, a near relative, or your guardian can ask your county board of elections about an emergency absentee ballot, up to 5:00 PM the day before Election Day. Call to confirm the hours.

More: [Assistance for Voters in Care Facilities](#)

4. Get the help you need

What accommodations can I use?

Accommodation	What it means for you
Accessible voting machine	At every voting site. It can read the ballot aloud through headphones so you can vote privately.
Curbside voting	Vote from your car at every voting site. See below.
A helper you choose	Someone can read or mark your ballot for you, in person or by mail.
Any early voting site	During early voting, pick the site in your county that is easiest for you.
Online accessible ballot	For blind and low-vision voters.
MAT Teams	For people in nursing homes, hospitals, and other care facilities.
Photo ID Exception Form	If a disability or illness keeps you from getting an ID.

More: [Help for Voters with Disabilities](#)

Who can help me mark my ballot?

Short answer: Anyone you choose, with two exceptions.

- You can choose a family member, friend, support worker, or poll worker.
- **Not allowed:** your employer (or someone acting for them), or an officer or agent of your labor union.
- A near relative (spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, stepparent, or stepchild) can always help.
- Tell the poll worker who you want to help you. Your helper must keep your choices private.

Can someone read the ballot to me (for example, if I have dyslexia)?

Short answer: Yes. You don't have to ask ahead of time to vote in person.

- **In person:** tell the poll worker at check-in. Bring someone you choose, ask a poll worker, or use the accessible machine's audio ballot.
- **By mail:** the person you choose reads the ballot to you and marks it how you tell them. They sign the envelope as your assistant.
- **In a care facility:** schedule a MAT Team as soon as possible.

Tip: Look up your sample ballot ahead of time in [Voter Search](#) so you know what's on it.

How does curbside voting work?

Short answer: If age or disability keeps you from going inside, you can vote from your car or right outside the building — at every early voting site and Election Day polling place.

1. Look for the **curbside voting sign**. Call the phone number on it, or have someone go inside and ask.
2. Sign a short form saying you are registered and can't go inside.
3. Poll workers bring your ballot out to you. You get the same privacy and the same right to help as any voter.

Important: You do **not** have to prove your disability or explain it to anyone.

Disability Rights NC is running a curbside voting monitoring program for this election. Trained teams will watch curbside voting to protect voters' rights.

5. If something goes wrong

1. **Ask for the chief judge** at your voting site. They are in charge.
2. **Ask for a provisional ballot** if anyone questions whether you can vote. It counts if you are eligible.
3. **Call 1-888-OUR-VOTE (1-888-687-8683)** for free, nonpartisan help. Year-round hours are Monday–Friday, 9 AM–5 PM.
4. **Tell your county board of elections** what happened.

Important: You have the right to an accessible voting place and an accessible voting machine. If your Election Day polling place is hard to get into, ask for curbside voting, or vote early at the most accessible site in your county.

6. More information and resources

Resource	Link
NC State Board of Elections	ncsbe.gov
Voter Search (registration, polling place, sample ballot)	vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup
Find your county board of elections	vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo
Help for Voters with Disabilities (NCSBE)	ncsbe.gov/voting/help-voters-disabilities

Resource	Link
Disability Rights NC — voting resources	disabilityrightsn.org
Disability Rights NC — mail-in ballots	Absentee "Mail-In" Ballots
ASAN, <i>Your Vote Counts</i> (plain language, 2026)	autisticadvocacy.org (PDF)
Autism Grown Up — voting for autistic adults	autismgrownup.com
American Bar Association voting toolkits	americanbar.org
Vote411 — make your voting plan	vote411.org/make-your-plan
Voter hotline	1-888-OUR-VOTE (1-888-687-8683)