



☆ Individuals with disabilities have the right to vote privately and independently, just like everyone else. Some voters may have trouble reading ballots or use voting machines on their own. Others might find it hard to get to polling stations. Assistive technology (AT) can help by providing accessible voting machines or online platforms with screen readers and different ways to input information.

AT is any device or service that helps people do things that might be hard or impossible otherwise. Checking your voting place to address barriers can help make sure everyone has easy access to voting. This guide shows some common AT items requested by polling places to help with accessibility. These items can be borrowed for free during the election without needing to be purchased.



☆ **AT for physically accessing the polling place**

Outdoor mat for over gravel/broken sidewalks:

Laying outdoor mats over gravel or uneven sidewalks at polling places is an easy way to make the location more accessible. These durable mats provide a smooth and stable surface, making it easier for individuals with mobility impairments to get into the polling place.

Forearm door opener: Forearm door openers in polling places can make it easier for individuals with mobility impairments or those who use wheelchairs or crutches. These devices let individuals open doors using their forearms instead of their hands, which can be helpful for those with limited hand strength. Installing forearm door openers makes polling places more welcoming and user-friendly for everyone, not just those with disabilities.

Ramps: Polling places can use different types of ramps to make it easier to get from outside to inside the building. Ramps can be placed at entrances and steps to make it easier for voters using wheelchairs, walkers or other mobility aids to access the area.

- **Threshold ramp:** These ramps help keep polling places accessible by providing smooth transitions over raised thresholds, steps or curbs.
- **Folding portable ramp:** These ramps can be stored upright and easily rolled to where they are needed to address barriers like steps or raised thresholds. These come in different lengths to fit the space or stairs where they are being used.



★ **AT for casting a ballot**

In-person voting is the most universally accessible way to vote because every state and territory must have at least one accessible voting machine per polling location. This is required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which ensures that voters with disabilities can independently and privately mark, cast and verify their ballots using accessible voting machines.

Tactile ballots: Tactile ballots have raised markings or braille text to help voters with visual impairments mark their choices independently.

Audio ballot system: Audio ballot systems provide spoken instructions and let voters listen to candidate names and ballot measures, helping those with visual impairments vote on their own.

Sip and Puff device: Assistive devices that help individuals with limited mobility in their limbs navigate the ballot and make selections using their breath.

Touchscreen voting machines: User-friendly machines with adjustable fonts, color contrast and touch sensitivity settings to help voters with visual or cognitive impairments.

Sign Language interpreters: Trained professionals who help election officials and voters who are deaf or hard of hearing communicate.

Braille keyboard: Keyboards with Braille labels or tactile markings to help voters with visual impairments use electronic voting machines.

Adjustable height tables: Tables that can be raised or lowered to accommodate voters who use wheelchairs or have other mobility limitations.



★ **The West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS)** can help decide which tools may be able to help people vote at their polling place. Contact WVATS at **800-841-8436** or wwats@hsc.wvu.edu for more information. You can also visit our website, wwats.cedwvu.org/ and sign up for our quarterly newsletter to stay up to date on new assistive technology and WVATS services.

The Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED) is designated as the state's lead agency for assistive technology services. All printed materials are available in braille, electronic format and large print. The project described was supported by Grant Number 90AG0011 from the Administration for Community Living. WVU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution.



West Virginia University

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DISABILITIES
WEST VIRGINIA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM