Voter Assistance

Illinois State Board of Elections

10 ILCS 5/7-47.1, 7-48, 11-7, 17-13, 17-13.5, 17-14, 17-23, 18-6, 24-9

What Does It Mean to Give a Voter Assistance?

"Assistance" is aiding a specified voter, up to and including marking and casting a vote, in the privacy of a voting booth during in-person early voting or on Election Day. Those giving assistance must vote as directed by the voter.

Who May Be Given Assistance?

Illinois law provides that the following persons may receive assistance:

- Blind voters
- Voters with physical disabilities
- Voters with an inability to read, write, or speak the English language

Who Can Provide Assistance?

If the voter who needs assistance does not specify a person to assist them in voting, then the voter can be assisted by two election judges, one from each political party. A voter may not be assisted by an officer or agent of the voter's employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

How Is Assistance Given?

Assistance can only be given upon the voter's request and only after the voter completes the appropriate affidavit.

In every instance of assistance, both the voter receiving the assistance and the person(s) giving the assistance must sign the affidavit. Also, the voter's Application for Ballot must be marked by an election judge to show that the voter requested assistance.

Assistance is always given in the privacy of the voting booth. Anyone giving assistance must cast the vote as directed by the voter and must not give anyone information as to how the vote was cast.

What if a Voter Needs Instruction?

Any instruction that might be needed should be given before the voter enters the booth and in view of the entire polling place. A specimen ballot, not the voter's official ballot, must be used during instruction. An affidavit is required for assistance but it is not required for instruction.

Polling Place Accessibility

An accessible polling place facility describes the combination of the various elements of the building structure which allows for entrance to and exit from, and use of polling place facilities, by elderly voters and voters with disabilities. In instances where an elderly or disabled voter has received prior approval to vote outside the polling place due to the structural features of the building, a ballot shall be delivered to the voter. After it is determined that the voter is qualified to vote, two election judges deliver a ballot, a marking device, and a portable voting booth (or other enclosure that will allow secrecy in marking the ballot) to the voter and allow the voter to vote in secrecy. In no case shall such voting take place more than 50 feet from the entrance to the polling place. Pollwatchers shall be permitted to accompany the judges and observe the procedure.

Curbside Voting

Election authorities may establish curbside voting for individuals to cast a ballot during early voting or on Election Day. An election authority's curbside voting program shall designate at least 2 election judges from opposite parties per vehicle and the individual shall have the opportunity to mark the ballot without interference from the election judges. Pollwatchers are permitted to accompany the election judges to observe.