

VOTE! You Have Choices In Addition To Those on Your Ballot

This is an exciting year for voters with disabilities in Colorado and across the country. For the first time in our history, all polling places for federal elections are required to be accessible for voters with disabilities. Colorado law also requires full accessibility for every polling place used in state and coordinated elections. This includes the path of travel, parking and entrance to polling places, as well as the voting areas inside. Most important, every polling place is required to provide a voting system that allows voters with all types of disabilities to vote in private and without assistance.

Please contact **The Legal Center** if you find that your polling place is not accessible. We will work with you and your county election officials to solve the problem.

A Choice in Where and When to Vote

This year, Colorado voters will have three choices of how to exercise the right to vote:

- 1) On Election Day (November 7) you can vote at your precinct polling place or, in some counties, at any “vote center.”
- 2) You can choose early voting at any of your county’s early voting sites.
- 3) You can vote by absentee ballot.

What’s new about this? Many voters with disabilities have had to vote by absentee ballot because their polling place and voting system were not accessible. This is the first year that voters will truly have a choice.

Are You Registered?

Prior to Election Day, all registered voters should receive polling place information from their county election office in the mail. If you believe that you are currently registered to vote and you do not receive this information, contact your county election office to verify your registration. The last day to register to vote for the November 7 election is October 10. You can find your county’s election office at <http://www.elections.colorado.gov/> or call **The Legal Center** for information.

Vote Centers

A significant change for Colorado voters is the move to vote centers or “super precincts.” Successfully pioneered in Larimer County in 2004, vote centers are located throughout the county and any registered voter in that county can vote in any vote center. So far at least 20 counties have joined Larimer County in using this model:

Adams	Delta	Larimer	Otero
Archuleta	Denver	Lincoln	Park
Bent	Douglas	Mesa	Routt
Broomfield	Eagle	Moffat	Washington
Chaffee	Grand	Morgan	Weld

The Legal Center generally supports the vote center model which has, in part, been driven by the new accessibility requirements. This model should significantly reduce the

Call for Election Judges

Some counties are still recruiting election judges for the November election. The hours are long and the pay is relatively low, but this is important work and a way to demonstrate that people with disabilities play a vital role in civic life. If you are interested, please contact your county clerk and recorder’s office.

need for provisional ballots related to “out-of-precinct” voting. A concern, however, is the fact that many voters will have to travel farther to get to a polling place. It is a good idea to plan your Election Day transportation in advance by deciding which vote center you will use.

Contact **The Legal Center** if you need assistance with your transportation plan.

The New Machines

Currently there are four accessible electronic voting systems or direct recording electronic (DRE) systems certified for use in Colorado. These DRE systems use adaptive and assistive technology to facilitate voting and casting a ballot independently and privately. While not universally accessible, (for instance, voters who have vision or other print disabilities, and are also hard of hearing or deaf, will not be able to use the audio feature for independent access) most citizens with disabilities can enjoy the same right to a private ballot as the rest of the voting population. Approximately two thirds of the counties will be using the Hart InterCivic eSlate machine. The VOTE! Program believes that this system is *generally* the most accessible of the state certified systems in that it provides dual ports permitting simultaneous use of headphones for private audio access, and an adaptive switch, or sip and puff device (bring your own), for independent access for voters with limited use of their hands.

- ***The Paper Trail***—Because of significant concerns about the security and reliability of DRE voting systems, the Legislature passed a bill during the 2005 legislative session requiring that every DRE purchased after July 2005 provide a voter verifiable paper audit record or VVPAR. Therefore, all of the new machines will print a paper record of each voter’s selections which must be reviewed for accuracy prior to actually casting the ballot (completing the voting process). Voters who have print disabilities can use the audio interface feature to review what is being sent to the printer. The Legal Center expects that non-visual access to the VVPAR itself will improve for the 2008 elections.
- ***Provisional Ballots***—Currently, the new voting machines are not certified for provisional ballots, resulting in the likelihood that some voters with disabilities whose qualification to vote is questioned due to lack of acceptable ID or voting in the wrong jurisdiction, will require some type of assistance to cast their provisional ballot. *If this happens to you or someone you know, **The Legal Center** would like to be informed.*
- ***Machine Demonstrations***—Many county election officials are interested in working with the disability community to provide opportunities for demonstrations of the new, more accessible voting machines prior to the November General Election. *If you are interested in participating please contact your county clerk and recorder’s office or **Faith Gross at The Legal Center.***

Be Seen Voting!

The VOTE! Program encourages voters with visible disabilities to vote at a polling place, either on Election Day or during early voting. It is important that the rest of the

community see that people with disabilities vote and are active, participating members of their communities.

The bottom line is no matter what method of voting you choose, make sure to vote!

Checklist: What you need to know for trouble-free voting

- Last day to register to vote for the November 7, 2006 General Election is October 10, 2006.
- If you believe you are already registered, but don't receive information on your polling place from your county election office by October 6, 2006, contact your county clerk to verify your registration.
- Plan in advance if you choose to vote at a polling place on Election Day or during early voting and you need accessible transportation.
- Remember to take your ID with you when you go to vote. If you do not have a photo ID, other acceptable forms of identification are: a current Medicaid or Medicare card, certified copy of your birth certificate, other government document showing your name and current address, or a copy of a current utility bill with your name and address.
- If you are a new voter or are voting for the first time in a different county, and voting an absentee ballot, you must mail a copy of your ID with your ballot.
- Although the law now requires that voters be able to vote privately and without assistance, voters with disabilities and those who are unable to read may request and receive assistance.

Contact The Legal Center if...

- You would like assistance with registering to vote and applying for absentee ballots.
- You would like us to conduct voter registration activities at your gathering or event of voting age people with disabilities.
- You would like information on the November 7 ballot issues.
- You need assistance with transportation to go vote.
- Your polling place is not accessible.
- You encounter any problems casting a private vote—such as a problem with the voting machine.