

# Voting Electronically: A New Possibility in Utah

Heather Hansen

11/08/2023



Individuals in Utah with a print disability may qualify to vote electronically- a significant step towards accommodating accessibility needs.

For individuals with a print disability, voting can be a more strenuous and time-consuming process compared to those without a disability. In the past, voters could only submit their ballots by mail or at vote centers equipped with accessible machines. For the first time in Utah history, however, this year individuals may qualify to submit their ballot online--but qualifying voters should request this accommodation from their county clerk before November 10.

"This is something that the NFB of Utah and myself have worked really hard to make happen here in Utah," said Everett Bacon, NFB-Utah president. "We're so excited to work with Lieutenant Governor's office and the director of elections on making this happen.

"Utah went to a mail ballot system where everyone is mailed a ballot. Well, that ballot is all in print. And while that is very useful for much of the public, for those of us who are not able to see print, and write in print, that is a problem for us. There has been and still are accessible voting machines at the polling locations that are available for early voting or on the day of elections. But but getting to those polling locations is definitely a problem for for many people who are blind or have low vision. And so we lot we worked with the the director of elections and lieutenant governor's office and all of the county clerks across the state of Utah, on bringing an electronic mail ballot system to Utah."

According to the Disability Law Center, "If you have a print disability that prevents you from reading or marking a ballot independently, you may qualify to vote electronically.

A ballot can be sent to your device. You may mark it using the equipment that you are familiar with and return it electronically. Contact your county clerk's office for information about how to sign up for this accommodation." These accommodations are not available to all voters, however, and the registration process may have some extra steps. Sher Newton, a voting-rights specialist at the DLC, said this option "is available state-wide for voters with print disabilities as well as military and overseas. Voters should request the accommodation prior to the voter registration deadline, which is November 10<sup>th</sup>. When a voter uses this voting method, the county sends them a link to their ballot in an e-mail. The email also includes a 4-digit code. The ballot can then be completed on the voter's personal device such as a smartphone, tablet or computer."

## Additional resources:

[Vote.utah.gov](https://vote.utah.gov) offers information on voting and voter registration in Utah.

Disability voting rights, accommodations and accessibility are described on the [Disability Law Center website](#).

*Pictured: National Federation of the Blind-Utah President Everett Bacon holds up a phone, which can now serve as a voting device for people with print disabilities.*