

Suggestions for facilities to help their residents VOTE!

Much like a home in any neighborhood, each facility has its own style, routine, and personality. These suggestions should be adapted to fit the individual facility.

Texas offers Early Voting beginning the 17th day before an election and ending on the 4th day before an election. There are two ways to vote early, in person at a special polling location, or by mail in ballot. Residents should be encouraged to vote during the Early Voting period. All Early Voting locations are wheel chair accessible and have special eSlates called DAUs (Disabled Access Unit) for people with disabilities.

For all residents:

1. Provide a voter registration card to new residents at the time of admission. These are available at no charge by calling the Voter Registration Department of the Harris County Tax Office at 713-368-2200.
2. Encourage residents to renew their driver's license, or apply for a state id card.
3. Offer to hold the resident's voter registration card, or copy of the card, to prevent loss.
4. Maintain a Voter Summary Log and review on a regular basis. (Attachment A)
5. Have a resident selected to be "Resident Election Coordinator". They can assist other residents with voter registration cards. Consider having this person become an official Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar. (Attachment B)
6. Hold training sessions on how to use the eSlate for those residents who want to go to the poll. Call 713-500-9931 for additional information. Include staff members in the training.
7. Hold training sessions on how to vote using Ballot by Mail for those residents who want to use the mail in ballots. Include staff members in the training.
8. Invite non-partisan organizations such as the League of Women Voters to give educational presentations on candidates, issues and amendments on

the ballot. The League of Women Voters publishes a Voter's Guide for each General Election. These are available at no charge from the League office.

9. It can be confusing for residents if elections for Resident Council officers, or any other facility elections are held close to the same time as a general election.

For residents wishing to vote their ballot by mail:

1. Residents must request a ballot by mail for each election.
2. Provide a pre-filled application for ballot form for residents who wish to vote their ballot by mail. (Attachment C) This will save time when filling out the paperwork and make the applications easier to read.
3. Make sure that the residents know where to put their completed applications and completed ballots to be mailed.
4. Assist residents with the completion of their applications for ballot by mail and their ballots by mail. Please be aware of the difference between assisting and witnessing. There are many definitions of "assisting" and "witnessing". The definitions listed below are the ones provided by the Harris County Elections office.
 - A. Assisting a resident means that you assist them verbally. A person can assist many voters during an election cycle.
 - B. Witnessing a ballot means that you mark the ballot for the voter in some way. A person who is not related to the voter, can only witness one ballot per election cycle. If you witness a ballot, don't forget to mark the outside of the carrier envelope and add your name and address where indicated.
5. The 2008 ballot will be a long one and can be intimidating. It is not necessary to vote every race on the ballot. When assisting a resident, make certain that they vote all the races that they want. They can vote a Straight Party Ballot or individual races.
6. If a resident begins a ballot but does not complete it, put it in the appropriate envelope and return it to the County Elections Department. Each ballot is tracked and needs to be returned. Don't just throw it away.

7. Offer to hold the mail in ballot when it comes in to the facility, so that the resident can deal with it at a time that is appropriate for them. This will help prevent loss.
8. If a ballot arrives for a person who is no longer a resident, the envelope should be marked "No longer at this address" and returned to the County Elections Department. Ballots cannot be forwarded to another address.
9. Pay postage for return of applications for ballots by mail if necessary, and ballots by mail.

For residents wishing to vote at an early polling location:

1. Identify the closest Early Voting location. There are over 30 locations all around Harris County.
2. Assist those residents who wish to go to the poll during early voting with transportation.
3. Voting early will require that the voter present their voter registration card and/or photo identification at the poll. Help the resident make sure they have these forms of identification with them.
4. Allow sufficient time. If voters require special assistance because of visual impairment, there are a limited number of Disabled Access Units available at each polling location.

Calendar for 2008 General Election

Begin facility voter registration drive	July 4, 2008
a. Post signs reminding residents to register and vote early.	
b. Make announcements during Resident Council meetings, Family Council meetings and facility in-service meetings reminding residents, family and staff to register and vote.	
Begin collecting Resident Voter Summary information	August 2008
First day to apply for Mail in Ballot	September 5, 2008
Last day to register to vote	October 6, 2008
First day of Early Voting	October 20, 2008
Last day to apply for Mail in Ballot	October 28, 2008
Last day of Early Voting	October 31, 2008
General Election	November 4, 2008

Section A (Cont)

Instructions for Voter Summary

This is an example, please feel free to modify it for your needs.

Start with a census list of all residents and interview each resident.

- a. Will their family be assisting them to vote?
- b. Is the person registered in Harris County?
 - i. If "no" then ask if they want to register or submit a change of address
 - ii. If "yes" then ask if they have their voter registration card
 1. If they have their card, then write in their registration number
 2. If they do not have their card, call 713-368-VOTE to get the number.
- c. Enter their voter registration number
- d. Ask if they wish to vote using ballot by mail or do they want to vote early at the polls?
- e. Do they want the ballot by mail delivered to the facility, or to another address?
- f. If they want to vote using ballot by mail using the facility address, do they want the facility to hold the ballot when it comes in until the resident is ready complete the ballot, or do they want the ballot delivered immediately?
- g. If they want to vote early at the poll, what is their source of transportation?
- h. Date application for ballot by mail was sent.
- i. Date ballot was returned by mail.

Attachment B

Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar

What do volunteer deputy registrars do?

- ◆ A volunteer deputy registrar may accept applications for voter registration from residents of Harris County who are not already registered to vote.
- ◆ A volunteer deputy registrar may accept change forms from registered voters who wish to change information on their voter registration certificates.
- ◆ A volunteer deputy registrar may hand out applications for requesting replacements of missing voter registration certificates.
- ◆ A volunteer deputy registrar may assist persons in filling out forms.
- ◆ A volunteer deputy registrar may fill out the application or change form for anyone who requests assistance if the person cannot read or has a physical disability.

Who may serve as a volunteer deputy registrar?

- ◆ A person who is at least 18 years of age.

Who may NOT become a volunteer deputy registrar:

- ◆ A person who has not reached the age of 18 years of age or a person who has been finally convicted of failing to deliver an application to the voter registrar.

For more information, call the Voter Registration Department of the Harris County Tax Office at 713-368-2200, or e-mail tax_office@hctx.net.

From the Harris County Tax Office, Community Outreach web page.

<http://www.tax.co.harris.tx.us/voter/outreach.asp#deputy>

Attachment C

This form is available on the internet at www.harrisvotes.com

APPLICATION FOR BALLOT BY MAIL FROM HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS - PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE
 READ INSTRUCTIONS VERY CAREFULLY AND PROVIDE ALL REQUIRED INFORMATION.
 (SOLICITUD DE UNA PAPELETA ELECTORAL DEL CONDADO DE HARRIS, TEXAS - USANDO LETRAS DE MOLDE O A MAQUINA, LEA TODOS LAS INSTRUCCIONES AL PIE DE LA LETRA Y PROCURE PROPORCIONAR TODA LA INFORMACION NECESARIA.)

NAME (As registered to vote) (NOMBRE (Como registrado para votar))		YEAR OF BIRTH (OPTIONAL) (AÑO DE NACIMIENTO) (OPCIONAL)
ADDRESS AS REGISTERED TO VOTE (Dirección de inscripción como votante)		TYPE AND DATE OF ELECTION (TIPO Y FECHA DE ELECCIÓN) General Election November 6, 2007
NUMBER (Número)	STREET (Calle)	
CITY (Ciudad)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check here for ballots for both the main election and runoff if applicable. (Haga un "X" aquí para boletas para la elección principal y elección decisiva.) PARTY PREFERENCE PRIMARY ELECTION ONLY (PARTIDO POLÍTICO) (Solo en cuanto a las comicios primarias)
STATE (Estado)		
ZIP (Zona Postal)		
MAIL MY BALLOT TO: (if different from above) (The mailing address must be the voter registration mailing address or record address indicated under REASON FOR VOTING.) (ENVÍASE ENVIAR MI BOLETA A LA SIGUIENTE DIRECCIÓN: (si es distinto a la anterior) (Solo si se es un domicilio distinto al indicado arriba, la dirección postal tiene que ser la misma dirección indicada cuando se inscribió como votante o la dirección indicada bajo RAZÓN DE SOLICITAR UNA PAPELETA ELECTORAL.) Pleasant Meadows Health and Rehab Center 12345 Pleasant Meadows Drive Houston, Texas 77000		
VOTING PRECINCT NUMBER* (NÚMERO DE PRECINTO DE VOTACIÓN) 225	VOTER REGISTRATION NUMBER* (NÚMERO DE REGISTRO DE VOTANTE) *Optional (Opcional)	TELEPHONE NUMBER* (NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO*)
LANGUAGE PREFERENCE (select type of ballot you wish to receive): (Preferencia de idioma (seleccione el tipo de boleta que desea recibir)) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English/Spanish (Inglés/Español) <input type="checkbox"/> English/Vietnamese (Inglés/Vietnamita)		
YOU MUST CHECK THE REASON YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A BALLOT BY MAIL. (DEBE QUE INDICAR POR QUÉ ESTA SOLICITANDO UNA PAPELETA ELECTORAL POR ADELANTADA.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. 65 years of age or older. (65 años de edad o más.) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Disability (Incapacidad) You must indicate the type of address where you are having your ballot mailed, if you are having your ballot mailed to an address other than your address of record. Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> a hospital, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a nursing home or long-term care facility, <input type="checkbox"/> a retirement center or <input type="checkbox"/> a relative. Indicate the relationship of the relative. SEE INSTRUCTION #3 FOR CLARIFICATION. (Si cualquiera de estas razones aplican a su caso indique cuál de las siguientes excepciones también es cierta. PARA MÁS INFORMACION LEA INSTRUCCIONES ESPECIALES: He solicitado que mi papeleta electoral sea enviada a un domicilio distinto al que de cuando me inscribí como votante. He solicitado que se envíe a <input type="checkbox"/> un hospital, <input type="checkbox"/> un centro de enfermería o de cuidados médicos a largo plazo, <input type="checkbox"/> un hogar de jubilados o <input type="checkbox"/> el domicilio de un familiar. Indique el parentesco que tiene con este paciente.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Confinement in jail. (Está encarcelado.) Check one. (Marque uno.) My ballot is being mailed to the address of the jail or <input type="checkbox"/> a relative. Indicate relationship of relative. SEE INSTRUCTION #3 FOR CLARIFICATION. (Solicito que mi papeleta sea enviada a la siguiente dirección: <input type="checkbox"/> la cárcel o <input type="checkbox"/> un familiar. Indique el parentesco que tiene con este familiar.)		
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Expected absence from county on election day and during clerk's regular office hours for the remainder of the early voting period. Application must be submitted from outside county if submitted after early voting in person has begun. YOUR BALLOT MUST BE MAILED TO AN ADDRESS OUTSIDE THE COUNTY. (Para aquellos que anticipan estar fuera del condado el día de las elecciones y durante las horas de trabajo de la Oficina de la Secretaría por el resto del período. Si el período de votación por adelantado ya ha comenzado, esta solicitud tiene que haberse enviado desde fuera del condado. EL DOMICILIO AL CUAL SOLICITA QUE SE LE ENVÍE SU PAPELETA ELECTORAL NO PUEDE ESTAR UBICADO DENTRO DE ESTE CONDADO.) If 4 is checked, give date you can receive mail at the address given. (Si se marca el no. 4, indique a partir de qué fecha podrá recibir correo en esa dirección.)		
I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THIS APPLICATION IS TRUE, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT GIVING FALSE INFORMATION IN THIS APPLICATION IS A CRIME. (CERTIFICO QUE LA INFORMACIÓN INDICADA EN ESTA SOLICITUD ES VERDADERA Y ENTIENDO QUE ES UN DELITO DAR INFORMACIÓN FALSA EN ESTA SOLICITUD.)		
SIGN HERE (FIRME AQUÍ)		SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (FIRMA DEL SOLICITANTE)
FOR WITNESS and/or ASSISTANT (PARA TESTIGO y/o ASISTENTE) Applicant, if unable to sign, shall make mark in presence of witness. If applicant is unable to make mark, the witness shall check here <input type="checkbox"/> . (PARA EL TESTIGO: Si el solicitante no puede firmar, debe hacer una marca en presencia del testigo. Si el solicitante no puede hacer una marca, el testigo debe señalar aquí <input type="checkbox"/> .) Failure to complete this information if signature was witnessed or applicant was assisted in completing the application is a Class A misdemeanor. (Es un delito menor Class A omitir esta información si la firma fue atestigüada, o si el solicitante recibió ayuda para llenar esta solicitud.)		
Signature of Witness/Assistant (Firma del Testigo/Asistente)	Print Full Name of Witness/Assistant (Escriba el nombre completo del Testigo/Asistente)	
Residence Address of Witness/Assistant or Title of Witness/Assistant if an Election Official (Dirección de residencia del Testigo/Asistente o puesto del Testigo/Asistente si es un Oficial de la Elección)		
X RELATIONSHIP OF WITNESS/ASSISTANT TO APPLICANT: CHECK ONE: <input type="checkbox"/> parent, <input type="checkbox"/> grandparent, <input type="checkbox"/> spouse, <input type="checkbox"/> child, <input type="checkbox"/> sibling, <input type="checkbox"/> other, <input type="checkbox"/> reside at same address as applicant (X RELACIÓN DEL TESTIGO/ASISTENTE CON EL SOLICITANTE: SEÑALE UNA: <input type="checkbox"/> Padre, <input type="checkbox"/> Abuelo, <input type="checkbox"/> Cónyuge, <input type="checkbox"/> Hijo, <input type="checkbox"/> Hermano, <input type="checkbox"/> Otro, <input type="checkbox"/> reside en la misma dirección que el solicitante.)		

Complete the application and mail to:

 Harris County Clerk
 P.O. Box 1525
 Houston, TX
 77251-1525

Attachment C

Voting on the eSlate Disabled Access Unit (DAU)

The eSlate electronic voting system has features that allow voters to cast their votes privately, securely, and without assistance.

Voters who are visually impaired or blind may use headphones to hear the ballot, making their selections on the same voting system as all other voters. Voters who have difficulty reading can also use the headphones.

People who have limited upper-body movement or control may wish to use special switches or their own “sip and puff” device (allowing voters with severe physical limitations to cast their ballot using only their breath).

Voters Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

- A voter may choose to use headphones in order to hear the ballot read aloud.
- An election worker should offer to guide the voter to the eSlate DAU booth and offer an orientation to the eSlate before handing the headphones to the voter.
- On the eSlate, the voter will become oriented to the SELECT wheel, ENTER button, and the HELP button as well as other features such as the Next and Previous buttons that allow the voter to move forward and back through the ballot, and the CAST BALLOT button, which is the final button that a voter presses to send the ballot to the electronic voting box.
- The headphones attached to the eSlate come with built-in volume control located on the wire. Sliding the control lever up or down raises or lowers the volume.
- The Select wheel is a trigger for the audio. One “click” clockwise moves through the eSlate options, one line at a time. Turning the wheel counter-clockwise will repeat what the voter just heard. The voter does not have to listen to all options, if he or she chooses not to.
- A voter will receive a 4-digit access code that the voter can enter independently. This code brings up the correct ballot style, according to the voter’s home precinct.
- The HELP button can alert a poll worker at any time that help is needed.

Voters with Limited Dexterity

A voter with limited dexterity or limited upper body mobility may vote by using the tactile input switches.

When using the tactile input switches the voter must start and finish with the tactile input switches. It is not possible to switch back and forth between the switches and SELECT wheel.

1. A voter who chooses to use tactile input switches to cast a ballot may choose to vote sitting or standing. If the voter prefers to sit, a chair will be available near the eSlate DAU booth.

2. An election worker should provide verbal instructions on the use of the tactile input switches and should position the tactile input switches in a comfortable location that the voter specifies.

The RED switch functions like the SELECT wheel.

The GREEN switch functions like the ENTER wheel.

- The RED switch moves the highlight bar through the options.
- The GREEN switch enters the voter's choice.
- After the reading the ballot instructions, press the GREEN switch to move to the first contest.
- To skip a contest, press the GREEN switch while the contest's title bar is highlighted.
- When the voter reaches the end of the ballot, s/he is given a choice to review the ballot by returning to the first page, or to cast the ballot. The voter will not see the summary screen.

3. The HELP button is not available to a voter using the tactile input switches, so an election worker will be nearby in case assistance is needed.

Curbside Voting

A voter with disabilities may request the option of "curbside voting." This option involves bringing the eSlate Disabled Access Unit (DAU) to a vehicle to enable a voter to cast a ballot outside the polling place.

1. First, the election judge must determine that the voter is eligible to vote and mark the voter as "VOTED" on the Voter Registration List.
2. The judge will ask the voter's preferred language, and determine if s/he needs the tactile input switches and/or headphones.
3. The judge will also print an Access Code for the voter and enter that code prior to leaving the polling place.
4. The eSlate is disconnected from the booth and operates on batteries while the voter is casting the ballot curbside.
5. The eSlate and an instruction sheet will be brought to the voter.
6. The voter will be asked to sign a signature roster.
7. An election worker will instruct the voter on how to use the eSlate.

Attachment E

Disabilities Rights Information

Federal and State Laws of Special Importance to Disabled and Elderly Voters

- [Voting Rights Act of 1965](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/overview.htm#vra) (www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/overview.htm#vra) – Any voter requiring assistance may receive it from a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.
- [Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, 1984](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm) (www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm) – Promotes the fundamental right to vote by requiring "access for elderly and disabled individuals to registration facilities and polling places in federal elections."
- [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm) (www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm) – Requires public entities to provide program access, reasonable modification of policy, and auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in and enjoy the benefits of service, program or activity conducted by a public entity.
- [Help America Vote Act of 2002 \(HAVA\)](http://www.fec.gov/hava/hava.htm) (www.fec.gov/hava/hava.htm) – New federal legislation enabling greater opportunity for access and participation in the election process, including provisions regarding accessible voting technologies in polling places by 2006.
- [Texas Election Code, Section 43.034](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/EL/content/htm/el.004.00.000043.00.htm#43.034.00) (www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/docs/EL/content/htm/el.004.00.000043.00.htm#43.034.00) – Accessibility of Polling Place to the Elderly and Persons with Physical Disabilities – This section of the election code sets forth specific requirements for buildings to be used as polling locations to ensure that they meet certain accessibility standards.

Examples:

Voter Registration Form

Application for Mail in Ballot (1)

Application for Mail in Ballot (2)

Sample Mail in Ballot

Sample Voter Guide from League of Women Voters.