



## Who are the people impacted by this issue?

Voters with disabilities are a diverse group and include people with sensory disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health disabilities, complex medical needs, chronic health conditions, and disabilities related to aging. Approximately 26% of American adult have (1 in 4) have some type of disabling conditions according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and may experience disability related barriers to registering to vote and casting a ballot.

Although the disability vote is potentially large, people with disabilities are underrepresented at the polls. The *Rutgers University Fact Sheet on Disability and Voter Turnout in the 2018 Elections* notes a 10.4% gap in Wisconsin voter turnout between citizens with and without disabilities. Survival Coalition is committed to addressing barriers that create the gap in voter turnout for people with disabilities.

## Why is equal access to voting important?

Voting is one of the most fundamental rights of our democracy. It is important that people with disabilities have a voice in choosing their elected officials, because once elected, they will make decisions about programs and services that impact their lives and independence.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and other [federal](#) and [state](#) laws are intended to protect the rights of voters with disabilities, but many still experiences barriers to exercising their constitutional right to cast a ballot. These include polling place accessibility issues, limited access to transportation, lack of photo ID, health or disability related concerns that may make it difficult to vote, and lack of access to disability related accommodations due to discrimination or limited training for poll workers. In addition, often people with disabilities are not aware of their [right to accommodations](#) or may be confused by the frequent changes to voting law in Wisconsin.

Absentee voting is especially important to many disabled voters because so many are non-drivers and may not be able to count on transportation to vote or to obtain a photo ID.

The disability community wants to work with policy makers to ensure our elections are more accessible and inclusive and provide equal access for voters with disabilities. See our recommendations [here](#).

