

Voting tech for people with disabilities has expanded — but more is still needed | Marketplace

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There are an estimated 38 million disabled eligible voters in the U.S., but many of them face unique obstacles when trying to cast their ballots.

Federal and state laws require polling stations provide in-person accommodations, like machines with larger screen displays or text-to-speech interfaces inside voter booths. But individual polling places don't always make it easy, says Mark Lindeman, Policy and Strategy Director with the nonpartisan organization Verified Voting.

"Sometimes the voting machines aren't even set up," says Lindeman, "or the poll workers lack basic training on how to support them."

Which is why providing different, early voting options has helped boost turnout among disabled voters in recent elections.

A study from Rutgers University and the Election Assistance Commission found that nearly 17.7 million disabled people voted in the 2020 election, compared to 16 million in the previous presidential election. Options like vote-by-mail and curbside drop-offs helped increase turnout.

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