



Vote Like a Pro: ACS' Top 10 Tips for Navigating the Polls

Voting is fundamental to the democratic process; it puts power into the hands of U.S. citizens to control how the government is run, which officials are elected, what policies and laws will be enacted that can personally affect your life—whether that includes taxes, healthcare, education, (the list goes on), and which people you are entrusting to make those decisions on your behalf.

To help make navigating the voting process easier, ACS put together our Top 10 Tips for Navigating the Polls. Be prepared before you head to the polls—no matter where you live in the United States.

1. **Know Your Rights**

- ▶ You have the right to vote without intimidation or coercion. Federal law prohibits any kind of voter intimidation, such as disrupting voting lines or blocking polling entrances.
- ▶ If poll workers cannot find your name in the system, you still have the right to vote using a provisional ballot. Election officials will verify your registration and count your ballot if you are qualified.
- ▶ If you're in line when the polls close, stay in line. You still have the right to vote.
- ▶ If polling machines malfunction, request a paper ballot.
- ▶ If you make a mistake on your ballot, ask for a new one.
- ▶ If you have limited English proficiency, you have the right to bring someone with you to help at the polling place.
- ▶ Voters with disabilities have the right to accessible polling places and assistance as needed.

2. **Check Your Voter Registration Status**

- ▶ [Confirm that your voter registration is up to date](#), especially if you've moved, changed your name, or haven't voted recently.
- ▶ Be aware of your state's [voter registration deadlines](#) to ensure you're eligible to vote in upcoming elections.

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3. Understand Your State's Voting Options

- ▶ Familiarize yourself with your state's voting methods, including early voting, absentee voting, and mail-in ballots. Each state has specific rules and deadlines. [Find yours here.](#)

4. Research Candidates and Ballot Measures

- ▶ Educate yourself about the candidates and issues on the ballot. Nonpartisan resources like your local [League of Women Voters](#) chapters offer unbiased information on levies, constitutional amendments, candidates, and more.

5. Locate Your Polling Place

- ▶ [Know where your polling place is located](#), its hours of operation, and any identification requirements. This information can prevent confusion on Election Day.

6. Plan Your Voting Time

- ▶ Decide in advance when you'll vote, considering factors like work schedules, transportation, and potential wait times. Early voting or voting during off-peak hours can reduce waiting.

7. Bring Necessary Identification

- ▶ Some states require specific forms of ID to vote. [Check your state's requirements](#) and ensure you have the appropriate identification with you.

8. Be Prepared for Election Day

- ▶ [Review a sample ballot](#) ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the layout and content. This preparation can expedite the voting process.

9. Understand Assistance Availability

- ▶ If you require assistance due to [language barriers or disabilities](#), know that you have the right to bring someone to help you vote, as long as they are not your employer or union representative (see tip #1).

10. Report Any Issues

- ▶ If you experience any issues at your polling place—such as voter intimidation or problems with accessibility—report them right away to election officials or contact the [Election Protection Hotline online](#) or call or text them at 866-687-8683.

By following these tips, you can navigate the voting process with confidence and ensure that your voice is heard in the democratic process.