

Did you know you are able to register as an organ and tissue donor when you register to vote?

In 2009, New York became the first state to include an organ and tissue donor enrollment section on voter registration forms. Since inception, more than a quarter-million individuals have joined the New York State Donate Life Registry this way.

Transplantation is a remarkable success story. One organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation, and heal seventy-five more lives through tissue donation by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients, and preventing the loss of mobility and disability. However, the need for donated organs and tissues continues to grow. There are nearly 115,000 people in the U.S. waiting for organ transplants, and about 9,400 of those people are waiting right here in New York State. Sadly, each year, approximately 6,000 people in the U.S. die waiting for an organ transplant that would have given them a second chance at life with their families.

By enrolling in the New York State Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent to the donation of your organs and tissues in the event of your death. You are authorizing the State Department of Health and Donate Life New York State access to the information as needed for the administration of the Registry and to federally regulated organ procurement organizations, New York State licensed eye and tissue banks and entities formally approved by the Commissioner at or near the time of your death.

To learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation, visit donatelife.ny.gov.

Please Join Us

Membership is open to women and men. There are 48 local Leagues across NY state. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level: local, state and national. Membership enables you to support the League and receive publications from all three levels, and provides the opportunity to be involved in local, state and national issues.

Visit www.lwvny.org and click on JOIN LWVNYS.

To find a local League in your area, click on FIND A LOCAL LEAGUE.



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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

YOUR RIGHT TO

VOTE

IN NEW YORK STATE



Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities



This information is provided by
the League of Women Voters of NYS
and the New York State Bar Association
www.nysba.org ~ www.lwvny.org



YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE IN NEW YORK STATE

Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities

Do I have the right to vote if I have a mental health problem?

Yes. According to New York State election law, if you are otherwise eligible to vote, you are only prevented from voting if you have been adjudged incompetent or incapacitated to vote by order of a court. To be otherwise eligible to vote, you must:

- be a United States citizen
- be 18 years old by the date of the general, primary or other election in which you want to vote
- live at your present address at least 30 days before an election
- not be incarcerated for a felony conviction
- not be on parole for a felony unless you are on parole and received a conditional voting restoration pardon, or have been issued a Certificate of Relief from Disabilities or Certificate of Good Conduct
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere
- have registered to vote.

No person is prohibited from voting simply because he or she has been subjected to civil commitment. If you are not sure of your legal right to vote, the board of elections will check your status after you file your registration form and inform you of any considerations.

Will my benefits and services be affected by my registering to vote?

No, there is no relationship between registering to vote and your eligibility for benefits and services.

Why should I vote?

Each year, 44 million Americans will experience a diagnosable mental health problem. If even a fraction of these individuals were mobilized, they could form a powerful voting bloc. An educated, voting mental health constituency could help inform policy decisions in areas such as mental health funding, involuntary outpatient commitment laws, seclusion and restraint standards, privacy rights, employment rights, and much more. Without the backing of voters, many mental health advocacy efforts will not be successful.

How do I register to vote?

You need to fill out and submit a voter registration form. You may register in person at your local board of elections or at any state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act, on any business day throughout the year. You may also register by mail. Forms are available from your county board of elections, town and city halls, post offices, political parties, various state offices, and the League of Women Voters. Contact the League of Women Voters of New York State - 1-866-LWVNY1, the New York State Board of Elections - 1-800-FOR-VOTE, or your county board of elections to have a voter registration form sent to you. You may also download a voter registration form in New York State from www.elections.ny.gov. Complete, sign, and submit the form, either in person or by mail.

If I register to vote, will I be called for jury duty?

The rolls of prospective jurors are compiled from a number of sources, so registering to vote does not necessarily mean that you will be called. Similarly, not registering to vote does not necessarily mean that you will not be called for jury duty. If you are called and feel that you cannot serve, jurors can often be temporarily or permanently excused for a valid health reason.

To obtain a voter registration form or absentee ballot application form, or to find out dates for the elections, for registering, for filing absentee ballot applications and submitting ballots

- Call the NYS Board of Elections at 1-800-367-8683, or download the forms/calendar from the web site for the New York State Board of Elections (www.elections.ny.gov).
- Call, write to, or download forms/calendar from the web site for your local county board of elections. You can get their contact information from the NYS Board of Elections.
- Call your local League of Women Voters, or the League of Women Voters of New York State at 518-465-4162 or toll free at 1-866-598-6971, or go to our web site at <http://www.lwvny.org/>.

To check your voter registration status: You should receive in the mail before the election a card that informs you of your polling place. If you do not receive such a card, call your local board of elections and ask them:

1. Am I registered to vote?
2. Is my registration status "Active"? If not, what is it?
3. Will my name appear in the polling place roll book on Election Day?

If you are not on the rolls at your polling place

If you believe you are registered to vote and are not on the rolls, ask for an "affidavit" (paper) ballot, and ask the poll worker for advice about following up on your status. You are legally entitled to an affidavit ballot and must be given one.

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IN NEW YORK STATE