

October 6, 2020

Facilitating Voting by Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Participants

The Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) supports the right of all eligible Pennsylvanians to vote in the 2020 general election. This is a unique election, in that it is occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic, and any qualified voter has the option to vote by mail-in ballot. HCBS participants face unique challenges in exercising their right to vote in this election due to health risks associated with the pandemic. As such, OLTL encourages all Service Coordinators working with Community HealthChoices (CHC) and OBRA waiver participants to develop plans for facilitating voting by their participants.

Plans for facilitating voting by HCBS participants should consider the challenges they may encounter and should consider addressing:

- Supporting participants who wish to register to vote in the upcoming election or update their registration. If a participant would like to register to vote, they can [register online](#) or [download a blank voter registration](#) form at www.votespa.com. If a resident needs to [update their registration](#), they can do so at www.votespa.com. October 19, 2020 is the last day to register to vote in the 2020 general election.
- Supporting participants in requesting mail-in or absentee ballots and planning for how they will receive assistance with voting. Participants may [request a mail-in or absentee ballot](#) at www.votespa.com. Please note that completed applications for a mail-in ballot must be received in the [county election office](#) by 5 p.m. on October 27, 2020. The mail-in ballot must be postmarked by 8 p.m. on November 3, 2020 and received by the county election office by 5 p.m. on November 6, 2020 to be counted. If returning a mail-in ballot in person, the mail-in ballot must be received by the county election office or other designated location by 8 p.m. on November 3, 2020. More [information on voting by mail-in and absentee ballot](#) is available at www.votespa.com
- Informing participants that they can designate whomever they wish to assist them in voting, with only narrow restrictions as allowed by the Voting Rights Act. (i.e. the designated person cannot be the individual's employer or an agent of their employer, or an officer or agent of the individual's union.) Participants may require assistance using technology to complete a digital ballot.
- Assisting participants who prefer to vote in person with arranging for access to non-medical transportation and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

With your help, we can ensure that our HCBS participants have every opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

Jamie F. Buchenauer

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