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## Chicago Board of Elections Releases New Accessibility Tiers for Polling Places Ahead of Election Day on Feb. 28th

*Tiers Include Categories of Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act: High, Medium, Low to No, and Unknown/Survey Pending*

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CHICAGO, IL – Ahead of the February 28, 2023 Municipal Election, the Chicago Board of Elections released [new accessibility tiers for all precinct polling places in Chicago](#). To minimize the confusion caused by prior vague designations for polling place accessibility, each polling place is now designated with one of four tiers to communicate all known data: High, Medium, Low to No, or Unknown/Survey Pending. *More information on these tiers is below.*

**Full List of Feb 28<sup>th</sup> Precinct Polling Places:** [PDF Version](#); [Excel Version](#)

The Chicago Board of Elections continues to work with the U.S. Department of Justice on efforts to designate polling places that meet all the latest standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As of 2023, this work remains a work in progress at physical polling places as all layers of government work to catch up after the devastating and ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Work towards improving and fixing accessibility issues at public parks and school buildings are undergoing a multi-year remediation process in the City of Chicago.

Year round, the Board works with [Equip for Equality](#) and the U.S. Department of Justice to survey the physical accessibility of in-precinct polling places and Early Voting sites. This includes inspecting entrances and routes for steps, measuring ramps and doorway widths, and evaluating other aspects of sites that might have one or more barriers that could impede the access for a voter who uses a wheelchair or who has another type of mobility impairment.

This survey data is now included into four levels of polling place accessibility for voters with mobility impairments. These ratings are based on a voter with a mobility impairment's ability to use the polling place independently. Surveys are ongoing, and the polling place list will be updated as new tiers are assigned.

"This is a temporary system to classify the accessibility of polling places until we reach 100% ADA compliance for all voting sites in Chicago. Previously, polling places in Chicago were either categorized as either ADA Compliant or Inaccessible. As the important work of upgrading our public places continues, this new system will better communicate to voters the current state of accessibility of each polling place on Election Day," said Max Bever, Director of Public Information, Chicago Board of Elections.

The [accessibility tiers](#) include:



**Low to No Accessibility** – voter-used areas have at least one feature that is substantially out of compliance with ADA Standards for New Construction and is likely to exclude many people with mobility impairments, including: voters must use 1 or more steps, exterior or interior, in order to get to voting stations; voters must use walkways or ramps that have excessive slopes, substantially out of compliance with ADA; or voters must use one or more doorways or routes that are too narrow or that may lack sufficient maneuvering clearance for many people with mobility impairments.

**Medium Accessibility** – voter-used areas do not have steps but may contain another type of obstacle that would impede some voters with mobility impairments but not others, for instance: an entrance doorway that is just shy of the ADA-minimum width but that is wide enough to accommodate people who use smaller wheelchairs and many others with mobility impairments; an entrance that lacks a large enough flat landing area at its top or bottom; or a sloped corridor that may be too steep for some.

**High Accessibility** – voter-used areas are fully compliant with all ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

**Unknown (At This Time)** - the site is survey pending or the CBOE does not have sufficient information at this time to assess this polling place's accessibility to voters with disabilities.

Please note: These ratings do not include the accessibility of parking, passenger drop-offs, or restrooms. These ratings also do not include evaluation of architectural barriers for people who are blind or low vision; all protruding objects will have, at a minimum, temporary cane-detectable features (usually orange cones) on Election Days.

#### **Tier Totals for Physical Polling Places:**

- High/Fully ADA Compliant: 302
- Medium: 143
- Low or No: 327
  - Low or No with Steps: 50
- Unknown: 111
- No Steps, but otherwise permanent features Unknown: 47

All Early Voting sites in Chicago are fully ADA compliant and will also be open as vote centers on Election Day (Feb 28). Any voter in Chicago can vote at any of these sites, no matter where they live in the city. [Click here for more information on Early Voting and Vote Centers.](#)

Chicago voters may also use an Accessible Vote By Mail option that uses an online ballot marking system. This program allows voters to read and mark their ballots privately and independently, and then print out their ballots and mail in those ballots. Voters can use the [online VBM application](#) to pick this option.

For more information on Voting Accessibility in Chicago, [please click here](#). If any voter has any question about polling place accessibility, please call 312-269-7976 or email [cboe@chicagoelections.gov](mailto:cboe@chicagoelections.gov).