

**I-866-OUR-VOTE
(1-866-687-8683)****Disclaimer:**

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VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**1) Where can voter registration forms be obtained?**

There are several ways to get a voter registration form. The form can be downloaded from the Secretary of State website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/voter/RegfisteringToVote.aspx> or obtained by submitting a request by mail to the Secretary of State. Voter registration forms are also available at the office of the Secretary of State, any of the 88 county boards of elections, and each of the following locations:

- The office of any Deputy Registrar of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles;
- Public libraries;
- Public high schools or vocational schools;
- County treasurers' offices;
- The Department of Job and Family Services;
- The Department of Health – Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program;
- The Department of Mental Health;
- The Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities;
- The Rehabilitation Services Commission; or
- Any state-assisted college or university that provides assistance to disabled students.

For more information on obtaining a voter registration form call 1-877-767-6446.

2) Are there restrictions on registering to vote using a photocopied voter registration form?

No. Ohio law does not prohibit individuals or groups from copying blank voter registration forms for use in voter registration drives. There is no provision expressly prohibiting groups from copying completed forms prior to submission.

3) Are there restrictions on the use of the National Voter Registration Form?

No. Either the National Mail Voter Registration Form or the Ohio Voter Registration Form can be used to register a person to vote in Ohio. National Forms that are printed on regular paper, signed by the applicant, and mailed in an envelope with first class postage are accepted. If using the National Form in Ohio, the political party affiliation and race/ethnicity fields may be left blank.

For more information or to obtain a National Form visit the United States Elections Assistance Commission at <http://www.eac.gov/voter/Register%20to%20Vote>.

4) Are there restrictions on obtaining registration form information?

Yes. After a form has been completed and submitted, names and addresses of voters can only be copied in the county board of elections office during normal business hours. However, this information may not be available from 21 days before an election to 11 days after an election if the board of elections feels that copying the information will interfere with election administration.

5) Are there restrictions regarding pre-filling information on registration forms?

No. Ohio law does not have any restrictions regarding pre-filling information on registration forms. However, while an applicant may use a registration form with pre-filled information, any inconsistent information, such as an incorrect county or zip code, may delay the registration process. See **Question 11**.

COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

6) How long must you live in a county before you are eligible to register to vote?

An individual must have been a resident of the Ohio county for at least 30 days prior to the election to be eligible to register to vote.

7) Are there any restrictions on registering to vote using a P.O. Box, college campus, or dorm address?

An individual may register to vote using any address he or she considers to be his or her legal residence. A residence is any place where a person lives with the intent of staying. A college or dorm address may be used if the applicant lives at that address, and when they leave—for any length of time— they have the intention of returning. A post office box is not a residence.

Students with a campus P.O. Box should fill in their dorm name and room number in the House Number and Street box (4) on the Ohio form, or the Home Address box (2) on the National form, and then enter their P.O. Box number in the Additional Rural or Mailing address box (7) on the Ohio form or Address Where You Get Your Mail box (3) on the National form.

If you do not have a fixed place of habitation, but you are a consistent or regular inhabitant of a shelter or other location to which you intend to return, you may use that shelter or other location as your residence for purposes of registering to vote.

8) If I am in the state because of work or school, can I register to vote??

Yes, use of a college address for voting registration purposes is permissible provided that the individual considers his or her college address to be his or her legal residence. See **Question 7**. Each person is allowed one voting residence, and therefore can vote in only one location. If a student considers his or her college address to be his or her residence, and therefore registers to vote at that location, the student cannot also register to vote at the home of his or her parents. If a college student feels that the address where his or her parents live or the address she lived before going to school is her residence, she can register to vote there and vote by absentee ballot. This provision

applies even if the person must leave the state for work or school, so long as there is a valid registration. See **Question 19**.

Students who want to vote are protected by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This means that they cannot be treated differently than any other citizen when it comes to voting. Specifically, students should neither be forced to fill out additional information that non-students do not have to fill out nor can election officials require students fulfill additional obligations that non-students do not have to satisfy.

9) Are there any identification requirements to register to vote?

In order to register to vote in Ohio, an applicant may provide a copy of a current and valid photo ID, but is not required to do so. The registration form requires the voter provide one or more of the following:

- The applicant's driver's license number;
- The last four digits of the applicant's social security number;
- A copy of a current and valid photo ID;
- A copy of a military ID that shows the voter's name and current address;
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the applicant's name and address, other than a notice of election or notice of voter registration.

10) Are there any identification requirements in order to vote?

Identification is required in order to vote. All voters must bring ID to the polls in order to verify identity, regardless of form of identification provided at the time of registration. Acceptable forms of identification include the following:

- A current and valid photo ID;
- A military ID that shows the voter's name and current address;
- A current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the applicant's name and address, other than a notice of election or notice of voter registration.

A current utility bill issued to a college student at his or her college address is also sufficient evidence to establish voter registration. For more information, visit:

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/Directives/2008%20Memoranda/2-25-2008.aspx>.

Voters who do not provide one of the above forms of identification may still be able to vote by casting a provisional ballot. A voter may cast a provisional ballot by providing the last four digits of the voter's social security number or, if the voter does not have a social security number, by signing a form swearing to the voter's identity.

11) What are the rules regarding missing or illegible information on registration forms?

If the form is incomplete or illegible, the board of elections will send the applicant notice of the information that is missing so that the form can be updated. If the change form is received or postmarked at least 29 days before an election, the applicant will be able to vote in that election. The board of elections will only allow for corrections if it believes that the errors were not made with the intent to defraud.

After an individual submits her voter registration form, the board of elections must register the person to vote within 20 days and mail the voter a written notification confirming registration. An applicant may check registration status online at:
<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/voterquery.aspx?page=361>.

12) How does a person whose name has changed since registering to vote change her registration information?

An individual who has already registered to vote may change his or her name by completing a change of name form. The form may be submitted in person at any state or local office of a designated agency, at the office of any deputy registrar of motor vehicles, at any public high school or vocational school, at a public library, at the office of a county treasurer, or at any office of a board of elections. The form may also be mailed to the office of the Secretary of State or to any office of a board of elections.

A change of name form can also be completed on Election Day at the polling place in the precinct in which the registered voter resides or at the office board of elections.

REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE

13) What are the laws regarding third-party registration?

a) What people have to do in order to receive compensation

The Ohio law that requires individuals who expect to receive compensation for assisting others with voter registration forms must first (1) register with the Secretary of State, (2) complete an online training program, and (3) sign an affirmation is no longer enforceable. *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F. Supp. 2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006).

In *Project Vote*, the District Court for the Northern District of Ohio declared that the Ohio law (Ohio Revised Code § 3503.29(C)) was both preempted by federal law and unconstitutional. The court held that the above requirements were in conflict with, and preempted by, the National Voting Rights Act. Additionally, the court held that the pre-registration, training, and affirmation requirements amounted to unconstitutional discrimination against those who receive compensation for assisting others with voter registration because those who do not receive compensation do not have the same requirements. The court later issued a permanent injunction against the enforcement of these requirements. *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, No. 06-1628, slip op. at 4 (N.D. Ohio. Feb. 11, 2008).

b) Methods of payment for people who register others to vote

The Ohio law that prohibits any individual who assists others with voter registration forms from receiving compensation in any form other than on a time-worked basis is no longer enforceable. *Citizens for Tax Reform v. Deters*, 462 F. Supp. 2d 827 (S.D. Ohio 2006), affirmed 518 F.3d 375 (6th Cir. 2008).

In *Citizens for Tax Reform*, the District Court for the Southern District of Ohio declared the Ohio law (Ohio Revised Code § 3599.111(D)) unconstitutional. The court held that the restriction to only one form of compensation (time-worked basis) presented an unconstitutional burden on political speech. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals recently affirmed the decision.

14) Are there any laws regarding submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation?

Yes. An individual entrusted to submit another person's voter registration form must do so, personally or through another person or organization, no later than the 10th day after the form has been completed, or before the 30th day before the election, whichever is earlier. If the individual entrusted to submit another person's registration form receives the form on the 31st day before the election, it must be submitted within 10 days. Voter registration forms submitted on behalf of others must be mailed or delivered to either a board of elections office or the Secretary of State's office.

The requirement that an individual entrusted to submit another person's registration form must personally submit it, by mailing it or delivering it to either a board of elections office or the Secretary of State's office, is no longer enforceable. *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F. Supp. 2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006).

In *Project Vote*, the court declared that Ohio's "direct return" requirement was both preempted by federal law and unconstitutional. The court held that an individual entrusted to submit another person's registration form is not required to directly (or personally) mail or deliver it to a board of elections office or the Secretary of State's office. Instead, the individual can give it to another person or organization for submission.

15) Is training required for voter registration drives?

No. No training is required if those planning or assisting with a voter registration drive do not expect to receive compensation. The same is true for those who do expect to receive compensation after the court's decision in *Project Vote v. Blackwell*. See **Question 13**.

16) Are volunteers or staff members of voter registration drives required to be county or state residents?

No. There are no such prohibitions for registering voters. However, Ohio law does require individuals who are circulating initiatives or referendums to be residents of the state.

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

17) What is the deadline to register to vote?

Ohio has a 30-day voter registration requirement. Registration forms must be completed, signed, and either postmarked or submitted by the 30th day before the election in which the individual intends to vote.

18) Is Election Day registration allowed?

Individuals who register to vote on Election Day will not be permitted to vote in that election. For the registration deadline, see **Question 17**.

19) Does Ohio election law allow for absentee or early voting?

Yes. A registered voter may vote early in an Ohio election by submitting an absentee ballot. The voter does not have to state a reason why he or she wishes to vote by absentee ballot. Absentee

voting begins 25 days before primary elections and 35 days before general elections and, except for hospitalized voters, ends the day before the election.

Voters may submit an absentee ballot in person at the county board of elections office or by mail. To vote early in person, voters may go to the board of elections office during regular business hours after absentee ballots are available but no later than the day before the election.

To obtain an absentee ballot by mail, voters must apply in writing or complete an Ohio Secretary of State Form 11-A. The form must be submitted to the board of elections of the county in which the voter's residence is located. To obtain a form and for more information, visit:

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/voterInformation/absentee.aspx>.

VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION

20) Is there any pending legislation that affects voter registration? If so, where is it in the legislative process?

Senate Bill 2007 OH S.B. 299 proposes to rename absentee voting to early voting. It has been introduced in the Senate.

House Bill 2007 OH H.B. 336 proposes to permit absentee ballots postmarked prior to Election Day to be counted if they are received within ten days after Election Day. It has been introduced in the House.

21) Which statutes are applicable to voter registration?

The following sections of the Ohio Revised Code are relevant:

- § 3503.01 on qualifications to vote;
- § 3503.06 on residency requirements;
- § 3503.19 on registration procedures;
- § 3503.28 on voter information brochure and ID requirements;
- § 3503.30 on mistakes in registration forms; and
- § 3509 on information on absentee ballots.

22) Are there any helpful elections official contacts?

For more information, contact the Secretary of State's office at:

Ohio Secretary of State
180 E. Broad Street, 15th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 466-2585
Toll free: 1-877-767-6446

23) What web resources are available?

The Ohio Secretary of State has a website dedicated to providing information on the voter registration process: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/voter.aspx>. This site includes resources such as frequently asked questions, absentee ballots, and special provisions for military officers. Additionally, you can go to the Secretary of State website and look under voting information:

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/voterInformation.aspx>.

Other resources include the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission:

<http://www.eac.gov/voter/Register%20to%20Vote>

and the National Campaign for Fair Elections:

<http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/pages/ohio>