



### ✓ Who can vote?

If you want to vote in Ohio, the most important requirements are:

#### **Your citizenship.**

To vote, you must have been born in the United States or you must have been naturalized (received your citizenship). Only citizens of the U.S. can vote in elections, even local ones.

#### **Your age.**

You must be at least 18 years old by the day of the general election to vote. If you're 17, you can vote in a primary election if you will be 18 by the day of the general election.

#### **Where you live.**

You must have lived in Ohio at least 30 days in order to vote in an election within the state.

#### **Your registration.**

You must register to vote. That means you have proved all of the above factors before voting. Make sure to register far enough in advance of the election so you can participate.



### Who and what can I vote for?

You may know that you can vote for major offices, like the president of the United States or the governor of Ohio. But there are many more people and things to vote on!

In federal elections, along with the president, you can vote for senators and representatives to represent you in Congress.

In state elections, you can vote for members of all three branches of government: legislative (state senators and representatives), executive (governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, state auditor and state treasurer), and judicial (state supreme court justices, court of appeals judges and trial judges).

You can also vote in city, county, township and school board elections depending on where you live.

**You don't have to vote only for people.** You can also vote for things like state constitutional amendments and new statutes that have been proposed by citizens (these are usually called "issues" on your ballot) and new taxes (usually called levies).

Your voice is important in determining how our state and country are governed! Make sure you do your homework in determining what issues or candidates you support.



# What Are My Voting Rights



## How do I register to vote?

To register to vote, you will need:

- Your name and date of birth.
- Your address.
- Your signature.
- Your driver's license number, state identification card number or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

There are **three ways to register** to vote in Ohio:

**Online:** The Ohio secretary of state operates an online voter registration system at [olvr.ohiosos.gov](http://olvr.ohiosos.gov). Follow the steps outlined on the webpage to register.

**By mail:** Acquire a voter registration form at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov). Fill it out, sign it and mail it to your local board of elections. Find the address of your board of elections via the directory at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

**In person:** Acquire a voter registration form at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov). Fill it out, sign it and deliver it to any of the following locations: The office of the secretary of state, the office of your local board of elections, the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, public libraries and high schools, your local county treasurer's office and any of the following designated agencies:

- The Department of Job and Family Services.
- The Department of Health (including the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program).
- The Department of Mental Health.
- The Department of Developmental Disabilities.
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.
- The office of any state-assisted college or university responsible for providing assistance to students with disabilities.

Registering as early as possible is important.

Typically, **you must register at least 30 days before an election.**



## How do I vote?

Once you're registered to vote in Ohio, you can vote in one of three ways.

### In person on Election Day

After you register to vote, you should receive your polling location (the place where you can vote on Election Day) in the mail. You can also find your polling location online at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

Once you have accessed this webpage, select the county where you live and then type in your address. Your polling location should show up if you're registered to vote.



On Election Day, simply go to your polling location between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Poll workers will be present and they will be able to direct you where to go and show you how to use your voting machine.

**Be sure to bring your ID!** In Ohio, you must provide a photo identification in order to vote. Find a list of acceptable forms of photo ID at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

### Voting before Election Day

All registered Ohio voters have options to vote prior to Election Day – by voting early, in person or by requesting an absentee ballot which allows you to fill out a ballot at home and return it at your convenience, in person or via mail.

Early, in-person and absentee voting begins the day after the deadline to register to vote, which is typically 30 days prior to the upcoming election. View Ohio's voting schedule at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

### Voting early in person

To vote early in person, you must go to your county board of elections in the county where you are registered to vote. Find your local board of elections via the directory at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

Board of elections hours are usually regular business hours, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday to Friday for the first two weeks of early voting. After that, early voting hours typically expand to earlier in the morning and later in the evening, with weekend hours available on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the election. The Sunday prior to the election is the last day you can vote early in person. View Ohio's voting schedule at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

You will still need to bring your photo ID with you to the board of elections.

### Absentee voting

Absentee voting means that you are voting remotely, or that you're absent. To vote absentee, you must first request an absentee ballot at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov) or at your local board of elections.

Fill out the online application, print it out, sign it and mail it in. This is your request for a ballot. You will need to provide one of the following with your application:

- The last four digits of your Social Security number.
- Your driver's license or state ID number.
- A copy of a different form of photo ID.

You can request an absentee ballot up to 90 days before an election. The latest you can request one is seven days prior to the election.

# What Are My Voting Rights

After your request is received, you will receive a ballot in the mail. Once you've done your research, fill out your ballot and complete the information on the ballot envelope that comes with it to prepare to return it.

If you mail your ballot back, ***it must be postmarked by the day before the election and received by your board of elections within four days.*** Since elections typically fall on Tuesdays, this means mailed absentee ballots must be received by the following Monday.

You can also return your absentee ballot in person by dropping it off to your local county board of elections by the time polls close on Election Day.

The safest thing to do is to request your ballot early and get it back as soon as possible to make sure your vote is counted. You can also track your absentee ballot request and your ballot via [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov).

## How do I know who and what to vote for?

Who and what you vote for is your decision and your decision alone. ***No one can tell you how to vote!***

But it is important to educate yourself about what will be on your ballot and to make an informed vote. There is no right or wrong way to research your issues or your candidates.

You can access a sample ballot at [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov) so you can see everything that you will be voting for and know what to research before you vote.

Your ballot will usually contain summaries of issues and levies if you have them.

You may see campaigns urging you to vote one way or another on an issue prior to an election. You may visit campaign websites and learn more about the groups behind them prior to an election.

Candidates and political parties may also have their own websites for you to access and learn more about their opinions on certain topics. If you read, watch or listen to your local news, you could learn about local candidate forums or issue debates.

You may also want to tune in to televised debates if the candidates on your ballot are taking part in them. Debates are often held for offices at different levels of government, including presidential office, governor's races, mayor and even among city council candidates.

Some offices may not have a political party associated with them, like some judicial offices. You can visit [judicialvotescount.org](http://judicialvotescount.org) to learn about your local candidates for judge, if you have them.

Whatever you do and regardless of who you vote for, make sure you research your choices and get out and vote!

## Can I bring my research with me when I vote?

If you're voting in person, either on Election Day or early at your board of elections, you can bring any research or notes with you into your voting booth and you can reference them while you vote. You can also fill out your sample ballot and bring it with you on Election Day so that you can remember the choices you would like to make.

## What if I'm told I have to submit a provisional ballot?

You may be asked to submit a provisional ballot on Election Day or at your board of elections. Usually, this happens if elections officials are unable to verify that you're eligible to vote in the election. A provisional ballot is no different from a regular ballot, but it is cast "provisionally" until election officials can verify your eligibility to vote.

Some examples of when this would happen include:

- You requested an absentee ballot but then show up to vote in person.
- You're unable to provide a photo ID at the time that you vote.
- You moved and did not update your voter registration with your new address.
- Your signature does not match the signature on your voter registration form.

In some cases, like if you can't provide a photo ID, you'll have to cast a provisional ballot and then provide your missing information later, usually within four days after the election. In other scenarios, you don't have to do anything after you cast your ballot and as the board of elections verifies your information.

Like any other ballot, you can track your provisional ballot via [voteohio.gov](http://voteohio.gov) to make sure your vote is counted.

## My Ohio Rights is brought to you by:

