

“How To” Register to Vote

In order to participate in the elections process, you must be registered to vote.

How can I obtain an Ohio voter registration application?

You may obtain a form in person, and register in person, at any of the following locations:

- The office of the Secretary of State or any of the 88 county boards of elections.
- The office of any deputy registrar of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.
- Offices of designated agencies that provide public assistance or disability programs.
- Public libraries.
- Public high schools or vocational schools.
- County treasurers' offices.

You also may ask a county board of elections or the Secretary of State's office to mail a registration form to you. If you have Internet access, you may download a form from the Secretary of State's Web site: www.sos.state.oh.us.

Where can I register to vote?

You can register to vote in person at the locations listed above.

When must I register?

Ohio has a 30-day voter registration requirement. If you register to vote by mail, your properly completed and signed registration application may be mailed to any of the aforementioned locations, except the offices of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or its deputy registrars, and must be postmarked not later than the 30th day before the first election in which you want to vote.

If you do not submit your registration application by mail, you must deliver the form to a county board of elections, the office of the Secretary of State, a public library, high school or vocational school, county treasurer's office or designated agency not later than the registration deadline for the first election in which you want to vote. If you are entrusting the delivery of your completed form to another person, that person must deliver your registration form to a county board of elections or the Secretary of State's office.

What if I am unable to sign my voter registration form or other election documents?

Ohio law requires a person to sign or affix a signature to the voter registration application. “Sign” or “signature” means your written, cursive-style legal mark written in your own handwriting.

However, if you do not use a cursive-style legal mark in your regular business and legal affairs, “sign” or “signature” means your other legal mark that you use in your regular business and legal affairs that is written in your own handwriting.

- If you are unable to sign your own name, make an “X,” if possible, on the application signature line and have the person who witnessed your making that mark place his/her name and address beneath the signature line.
- If you are unable to make an “X,” you must indicate in some manner that you want to register to vote. The person registering you must sign the form and attest that you indicated that you wanted to register to vote.
- If (a) by reason of disability you are unable to physically sign your name or affix your mark to the application, and (b) you have appointed an attorney-in-fact pursuant to section 3501.382 of the Revised Code of Ohio, your attorney-in-fact may sign it on your behalf, at your direction and in your presence.

What if I change my address or name after registering to vote in Ohio?

If you are an Ohio voter who has moved within this state and/or changed your name, you must report the change by delivering a properly completed form, prescribed by the Secretary of State, to any of the following offices: the Secretary of State, any board of elections, a public high school or vocational school, a public library, the office of the county treasurer, any office of the registrar or deputy registrar of motor vehicles, or the state or local office of a designated agency.

You may obtain a change of residence and/or name form from the offices listed above, and from the probate court and the court of common pleas of any Ohio county.

Your completed form may be delivered in person to any of the offices listed above by yourself or by someone else on your behalf. If you return your completed form **by mail**, state law requires that you send it **only** to: the Secretary of State, a board of elections, a public high school or vocational school, public library, a county treasurer’s office, or an office of a designated agency.

If your change of name and/or address form is completed properly, the board of elections will update your registration and send you a notice. If the form is incomplete, the board will send you a notice of the information necessary to update your registration. If your valid change form is received or postmarked at least 29 days before an election, you will be eligible to vote a regular (rather than a provisional) ballot at that election, either absentee or at your assigned precinct polling place.

You also may update your registration by filing a change of residence and/or name form during the 28 days immediately before, or on the day of, an election. This procedure is discussed under “Voting by Provisional Ballot” in the “Voting Procedures” section of this publication.

Do I declare my political party affiliation when I register?

No. Under Ohio law, your political party affiliation is determined by the ballot you cast in a partisan primary election.

May I vote if I have been convicted of a crime?

As noted under “Voter Registration,” a person currently serving time in prison for a felony conviction cannot register to vote or vote. Additionally, a person who has twice been convicted of a violation of the elections laws is permanently barred from voting in Ohio. An otherwise qualified person convicted of a misdemeanor may vote, and one convicted of a felony may register and vote while on probation or parole or after completing his or her sentence.

What happens after I submit my voter registration application?

If the board of elections accepts your voter registration application, the board must register you to vote not later than 20 business days after receiving your application and promptly mail a notice to your voting residence address confirming that you are registered to vote, identifying your voting precinct and the location of your precinct polling place, and stating the identification requirements for voting.

If the board does not accept your registration application, it will immediately mail you a notice stating why your application was rejected and requesting you to provide whatever information or verification is necessary to complete your application.

If you do not receive a notice that your registration was accepted or rejected, contact your county board of elections before Election Day to determine if the board received your application.

Can I check my voter information online?

Yes. You may check your voter information at www.sos.state.oh.us. If you perform a Voter Information search and the information you registered is returned, then your voter registration form has been processed by your county board of elections. If your information is not returned in the search, you may want to contact your county board of elections to check on the status of your registration. You may also be able to check through your [county board of elections' Web site](#), although not all county boards have a link to the registration files.

If I am being compensated to assist a person to register to vote, must I notify anyone prior to providing assistance?

A recent federal court case now prohibits certain provisions of Am. Sub. HB 3 as enacted by the Ohio legislature from being applied to persons who are compensated for assisting with voter registration.