These resources are current as of 6/12/2019. We do our best to periodically update these resources and welcome any comments or questions regarding new developments in the law.

Please email us at advocacy@afj.org.

This guide summarizes key aspects of laws governing voter registration on the state level. It is not intended to provide legal advice or to serve as a substitute for legal advice.

In some jurisdictions, city and/or county regulations may also apply to certain political activities. Check with the appropriate local jurisdiction before undertaking any activity.
DEADLINES FOR REGISTRATION

□ Deadline for registering:
  o The effective voter registration deadline is 29 days before the election.
    ▪ Ohio has a 30-day voter registration requirement (Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.01(A)), but if the voter registration deadline falls on a Sunday or legal holiday, then the deadline is extended to the next day that is not a Sunday or legal holiday. See: https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/voters/register/#deadline
    ▪ For elections occurring on a Tuesday, the 30th day before the election will always be a Sunday, resulting in the voter registration deadline being extended to the next day, i.e. the 29th day before the election.

□ Does Ohio allow in-person registration?
  o Yes. Ohioans may obtain a voter registration form and register to vote in person at any of the following locations:
    ▪ The office of the Ohio Secretary of State;
    ▪ The office of any of the 88 county boards of elections;
    ▪ The office of the registrar or any deputy registrar of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles;
    ▪ Public libraries;
    ▪ Public high schools or vocational schools
    ▪ County treasurers' offices; or
    ▪ Offices of designated agencies, including:
      • 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; or
      • The office of any state-assisted college or university responsible for providing assistance to students with disabilities.
  o In-person voter registration forms must be received by the voter registration deadline.
The offices of the 88 county boards of elections will remain open until 9 p.m. on the voter registration deadline for general and primary elections. Ohio Rev. Code § 3501.10(B).

Does Ohio allow online registration?
- Yes. Ohioans can register to vote or update their voter registration address online at: https://olvr.sos.state.oh.us/
- Online voter registrations will be accepted until midnight on the night of the voter registration deadline.

Does Ohio allow by-mail registration?
- Yes. Ohioans can register to vote by mailing in a voter registration form, a copy of which is available on the Ohio Secretary of State’s website at: https://www.sos.state.oh.us/publications/#vrf
- Voters can mail registration forms either to the Ohio Secretary of State (180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215) or to their county board of elections office. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.19(A). The Ohio Secretary of State maintains a directory of the county boards of elections: https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/elections-officials/county-boards-of-elections-directory/
- A voter registration application submitted by mail must either be postmarked by the voter registration deadline or, if not containing a postmark, received by elections officials no later than the 25th day prior to the election. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.19(A).

Does Ohio offer Election Day registration?
- No, voters must be registered to vote by the voter registration deadline.
- However, a registered voter can update their voter registration address after the voter registration deadline, including on Election Day.
  - A voter who moves within their precinct may update their voter registration address after the voter registration deadline by going to their assigned polling place on Election Day, completing and signing a notice of change of residence, showing identification with their name and current address, and casting a regular ballot. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.16(B)(1)(a).
A voter who moves from one precinct to another in the same county may update their voter registration address after the voter registration deadline either by going to their county board of elections office on or prior to Election Day or by going to the polling location for their new address on Election Day. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.16(B)(2).

A voter who moves from one Ohio county to another may update their voter registration address after the voter registration deadline by going to their new county’s board of elections office prior to or on Election Day. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.16(C).

How can I check on my voter registration status?
- You may check your voter information online by performing a voter information search on the Ohio Secretary of State’s website: https://voterlookup.sos.state.oh.us/voterlookup.aspx
  - Some county boards of elections provide similar online search tools on their websites.
- You may also check your voter information by contacting your county board of elections. The Ohio Secretary of State maintains a directory of the county boards of elections: https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/elections-officials/county-boards-of-elections-directory/

May an Ohioan register before turning 18?
- Yes. Any person who will be 18 years old prior to the date of a general election can register to vote if they are otherwise qualified. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.07.
- Additionally, any qualified elector who will be 18 years old by the date of a general election and desires to participate in a political party’s primary election may cast a ballot at the primary election. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.011.
VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS

- **Required for registration?**
  - A voter must provide one of the following forms of identification when registering to vote or updating their voter registration:
    - An Ohio Driver’s License number;
    - The last four digits of their Social Security number; or
    - A copy of a current and valid photo identification, military identification, or a current (within the last 12 months) utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document (other than a notice of voter registration mailed by a board of elections) that shows the voter’s name and current address.

- **Required to vote in-person?**
  - Yes, though it does not have to be a photo identification. Ohio Rev. Code § 3505.18.
  - The forms of identification that may be used by a voter include:
    - An unexpired Ohio driver’s license or state identification card with present or former address so long as the voter’s present residential address is printed in the official list of registered voters for that precinct;
    - A military identification;
    - A photo identification that was issued by the United States government or the State of Ohio, that contains the voter’s name and current address and that has an expiration date that has not passed;
    - An original or copy of a current (within the last 12 months) utility bill with the voter’s name and present address;
    - An original or copy of a current (within the last 12 months) bank statement with the voter’s name and present address;
    - An original or copy of a current (within the last 12 months) government check with the voter’s name and present address;
    - An original or copy of a current (within the last 12 months) paycheck with the voter’s name and present address; or
- An original or copy of a current (within the last 12 months) other government document (other than a notice of voter registration mailed by a board of elections) that shows the voter’s name and present address.
  - Voters who do not provide any of these documents are able to vote by provisional ballot if they provide their driver’s license number, state identification number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

**Required to vote by mail?**
- Yes. Ohio Rev. Code § 3509.03.
- Voters who request to vote by mail must provide one of the following forms of identification when registering to vote or updating their voter registration:
  - An Ohio Driver’s License number;
  - The last four digits of their Social Security number; or
  - A copy of a current and valid photo identification, military identification, or a current (within the last 12 months) utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document (other than a notice of voter registration mailed by a board of elections) that shows the voter’s name and current address.

**Requirement to provide proof of citizenship to register and/or vote?**
- No.
**VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES**

- **Does Ohio accept the national voter registration form?**
  - Yes, the forms shall meet the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.14.
    - Note that a person registering to vote with the national form must still satisfy Ohio’s identification requirement in Box 6, as described above.

- **May groups “cage” completed registration forms (i.e. asks voters to mail them back to the group, which will then send them to the appropriate elections registrar(s))? If so, may they copy the forms or any of the data included on them? If so, any deadlines for sending the completed forms to the state or to local officials?**
  - A group that collects completed applications may either copy data included on the completed forms or copy the forms themselves. (Provisions which prevented caging were enjoined by *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F.Supp.2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006)).
  - Completed registration forms must be forwarded to the Ohio Secretary of State’s office or the appropriate board of elections office within either 10 days of receipt or by the voter registration deadline if the registration form has been signed more than 24 hours before the registration deadline for the next upcoming election, whichever is earlier. Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.11(B)(2)(a).

- **May a group “pre-fill” some or all of the form (e.g. name, address) before sending/giving it to a would-be registrant?**
  - There is no requirement that the group and/or the person pre-filling or assisting must sign the form or attest to its veracity. See *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F.Supp.2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006).

- **May voter registration drive workers assist a voter in completing their registration form?**
  - There is no requirement that the group and/or the person pre-filling or assisting must sign the form or attest to its veracity.
(Provisions which required the signature of registration drive workers were enjoined by *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F.Supp.2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006)).

- **Does state require training of voter registration workers?**
  - No. There was a law that required such training (Ohio Rev. Code § 3503.29), but its enforcement was enjoined by *Project Vote v. Blackwell*, 455 F.Supp.2d 694 (N.D. Ohio 2006).

- **Does state require registration of voter registration drives?**
  - No.

- **Any requirement that group must provide information to voters about how they may contact the group to determine the status of their registration?**

- **May group pay voter registration drive workers? If so, is it permissible to pay on a per-voter-registered basis?**
  - Yes. Groups may also pay workers on a per-voter-registered basis. Although a state statute, O.R.C. 3599.111, prohibited per signature payment, the provisions was held unconstitutional by *Citizens for Tax Reform v. Deters*, 462 F.Supp.2d 827 (S.D. Ohio 2006).
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Ohio Secretary of State

180 East Broad Street, 16th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 466-2655
Fax: (614) 644-0649

Website:  http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections.aspx
Website:  www.YourVoteCountsOhio.org

Ohio Secretary of State, Elections Division

Phone: (614) 466-2585

Contact information for Ohio County Boards of Elections:
http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/elections/electionsofficials/boeDirectory.aspx#dir

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For assistance regarding these resources or for more information about federal law, please contact our attorney

One-on-one counseling service:

Email: Advocacy@afi.org
Telephone: 1-866-NPLOBBY (675-6229)

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