

VOTER REGISTRATION FOR HOMELESS FRIENDS

Are you and your family homeless?

You still have the right to vote.



Voting While Homeless FAQ

Do homeless people have any special registration requirements?

Homeless people do have a right to vote, and can use the address of a shelter where they stay or where they receive mail to register. They will have to vote in the precinct closest to where they receive mail. So, if the individual registers and receives mail at the shelter, they need to vote at the precinct near the shelter.

What about IDs?

To vote on election day, there is an ID requirement. Ohio accepts the following documents for voter ID purposes:

- Driver's license or state ID card with voter's name and photo issued by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, which cannot be expired, but may have an old address
- U.S. Military ID with voter's name and photo
- A government ID with voter's name, current address, and photo
- An original or copy of one of the following documents that shows the voter's name and current address:
 - Utility bill, including cell phone bill
 - Bank statement
 - Pay stub
 - Government check
 - "Other government document"

There may be confusion at the polls if a voter's state ID address does not match their registration address - however, this should not prevent someone from voting. A state ID

cannot be expired, but the address does NOT have to be current or match the registration address.

Because it may be difficult for homeless voters to access ID with an address, we encourage homeless voters to vote early at the Board of Elections or by mail. There is no ID requirement for using either of these options, and only the last 4 digits of the Social Security Number are required.

Can I really register using a “Park Bench” for my address?

Legally, yes. A person is free to register using a park bench if they choose, but their mail will be “returned to sender,” and they will likely be declared inactive. It is not a big deal if your registration is “inactive.” You can still vote and will not get kicked off the list. The Board could manually input those registration forms with odd locations, but it makes it difficult to stay on the voting rolls. It is likely that you would have to vote with a provisional ballot when you show up to vote. Many homeless people use addresses of where they lived previously (i.e. family or friend’s homes) where they might still get mail.

Is it possible for homeless people to vote at the Board of Elections main office on Election Day no matter where they are registered?

No. Ohio operates on a precinct-based voting system so you must vote in the precinct in which you are registered. If you show up at the wrong precinct, they will direct you to the correct precinct to vote, and will not offer or allow you to vote on a provisional ballot.

What is the Advantage of Voting by Mail?

You now have the opportunity to vote by mail by completing an absentee ballot request form. Vote by Mail starts 35 days before the Election Day. Ballots must make it to the Board by Election Day to be counted in the Mail. You can also hand deliver an absentee ballot to the main office of the Board of Elections until close of the polls at that office. You can also vote by absentee ballot in person at the main Board of Elections office up until the Friday before Election Day.

If you think that you are in the correct precinct, but the voting officials cannot find your name in the book as a registered voter, you will be given a provisional ballot. The provisional ballots are then investigated to see if the person was in fact a legal voter. If the person votes in the wrong precinct on a provisional ballot, their entire ballot is voided unless the poll worker directed the individual to the wrong precinct or they made a mistake on the ballot. In some cases, you can return to the Board of Elections and prove your identity or your address is correct within 5 days of the election after casting a provisional ballot. The election workers should give you a 1-800 number to verify that your provisional ballot was counted.

How does the ID requirement impact homeless people who show up at the polls on Election Day?

Most voting rights groups recommend early voting or vote by mail as better options for homeless people voting in Ohio. All of the items that will pass as identification involve a place that the individual lives (utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or other government document showing your name and current address), or government-issued current ID showing your current or former address. Homeless people understandably have a hard time keeping identification current, and not losing their ID, so this is a hardship.

The definition of "other government document" includes, but is not limited to: a document that is issued by a government office and that bears the name and current address of the voter presenting it for identification. The name and address of the voter that appears on the government document must match the voter's name and address in the record of the board of elections, including the poll list or signature poll book and must be current as defined in this directive. "Government office" includes any local (including county, city, township, and village governments), state, or federal (United States) government office, branch, agency, department, division, or other similar component, including a board, commission, public college or university or public community college, whether or not in Ohio. By way of example, this may include, but is not limited to, letters; bills for taxes and other similar obligations; hunting, fishing and marine equipment operator's licenses; license renewal notices and other notices; filing receipts; court papers; grade reports; or transcripts.

Note: Mail from the Board of Elections does not count as identification and is specifically barred from being ID in the law.

Another potential problem is that some poll workers may be confused if a person's address on their identification does not match their address in the poll book. *No matter what happens*, the individual who shows up to vote should not leave without having voted, at least with a provisional ballot.

Absentee ballot and voting by mail do not require a physical ID, so we encourage all homeless people to register and then request an absentee ballot and mail it in or return it in person at the main office of the Board of Elections before Election Day.



Homeless people have the right to vote.
Register and then make your voice heard!