
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Voter Education Services section of the Ohio Secretary of State:

Voter Education Services
Ohio Secretary of State
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 728-5639 (voice)
(614) 752-4360 (fax)
www.state.oh.us/sos

If the Ohio Secretary of State is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Ohio?

If you are a resident of Ohio, you cannot vote while you are incarcerated as the result of a felony conviction.

If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Ohio, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

Your right to vote is automatically restored upon final release from your sentence. In addition, under Ohio law, you may vote while on probation, parole, judicial release, or when you have been

released on a conditional pardon or under a post-release control sanction. In order to vote, all you need to do is register.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

If you are a resident of Ohio, the same rules apply whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

These rules apply for Ohio voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are Ohio's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in Ohio, you must be:

- a citizen of the United States
- at least 18 years old (if you are not yet 18 but will be on or before the day of the general election, you may vote in the primary election for candidates, but not for issues)
- a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days before the election
- registered to vote at least 30 days before the election

When do I need to register to vote?

Registration is available year-round in Ohio, but in order to vote in an election, you must be registered at least 30 days before the date of the election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in Ohio, including:

- any county board of elections
- Secretary of State's office
- branch registration offices
- any public high school or vocational school
- any office of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- public libraries
- county treasurers' offices

Registration may also be available at other state service agencies. Contact the County Board of Elections office near you to find out which service agencies provide voter registration.