



Homeless in Ohio

Voting Rights

Voting Requirements for Homeless

- Sheltered residents can vote
- Unsheltered residents can vote by giving a short description of place of residence
- A place of residency is required in order to determine a place to vote. A shelter address is a typical address that can be used. YMCA and YWCA can be used as an address.
- Mailing address is not required
- When filling out registration form, an unexpired Ohio driver's license OR last four numbers of Social Security is required
- To register online, an Ohio driver's license or Ohio ID card is required in addition to the last four digits of one's social security number.
- If voting in person on election day or during early voting, an unexpired photo ID is required. The address on the ID does not need to match the voter's current address.
- Criteria for a valid photo id: OH driver's license or BMV issues state ID; US military, Ohio National Guard or US Dept of Veterans Affairs ID Card; or US Passport Book/Card.
- Photo ID is NOT required for voting by mail.
- Registration is required 30 days prior to election
- Registration and voting are free

Voting Expectations for the Homeless

In general, the homeless are no less frequent voters than anyone else. If someone is not inclined to vote, these are some typical words of encouragement:

- Public policy is decided at the polls. Take a position on housing, healthcare, wages and other issues affecting your life
- Every person can have an impact on the decisions affecting their life, so we all should vote.
- Budget cuts are often on the ballot or proposed by one of the candidates. Cuts will reduce the services provided by an agency that you depend on. If you care about housing and other social services, register to vote today.
- A sample ballot can be useful in discussing issues to be voted on

Chronic Homelessness vs Newly/Recently Homelessness

Chronically Homeless

- Unemployed for over 1 year
- Frequently in and out of shelters
- Unlikely to have a current driver's license or other qualifying photo id (i.e. passport)
- Encourage to register to vote
- Encourage to early vote or absentee vote because one only needs the last 4 digits of the individual's SS# to vote

Newly/Recently Homeless

- Unexpected job loss
- Divorce
- Abuse victim
- 1st time eviction
- Likely to have current driver's license
- Encourage to register online when discharged from a shelter to a permanent address and register with new address.
- Encourage to early vote or absentee vote

Frequent problems and issues

- **Homeless people may not have the appropriate photo id to vote in person.** VoteRiders is an organization that helps individuals acquire and pay for ids. 866-ID-2-VOTE.
- **Homeless people may have a lack of resources to educate themselves about candidates.** A sample ballot is useful when discussing issues on the current ballot. The library has information on the election. The League of Women Voters has information on both candidates and issues on the ballot at Vote411.org.
- **The voter may not speak English well.** If there is a language barrier, the voter may take to the voting booth a literate and registered person who can assist in the voting process, but not actually vote for the individual
- **Verification and validation of registration.** Registration is not final unless and until you get a voter notification card in the mail from the county. If you do not receive the notification card, call your board of elections i.e. Franklin County BOE (614) 525-3100
- **What if a person moves between registration and Election Day?** They may still vote by returning to your former precinct or by requesting a vote-by-mail ballot
- **Can a person register for someone else?** No. The voter must register for himself or herself. However, another person may help others fill out the form, but, the voter must sign the form.
- **Several addresses that can be used by the homeless population:**
YMCA - Downtown, 40 W. Long St, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 389-4477
YWCA, 65 4th St, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 224-9121
Open Shelter, 61 E Mound St, Columbus, OH 43215 (614) 222-2885