
Ohio

Voter Registration & Voter List Maintenance Guide

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FOUNDATION

State Guide to Voter Registration & Voter List Maintenance Statutes

This is a guide to your state's laws relating to voter registration and voter list maintenance.

The statutes/codes cited in this guide may not be the most recent version. States may have more current or accurate information. We make no warranties or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information contained in the individual state guides or the information linked to on the state site.

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Who can I contact with election related questions?

[Link to Elections Official](#)

Chief Elections Office:	Frank LaRose, Secretary of State Elections Division
Physical Address:	22 North Fourth Street, 16th Floor Columbus, OH 43215
Mailing Address:	Office of the Secretary of State 22 N 4th St Columbus, OH 43215-3668
Phone Number:	614-466-2685
Online Contact:	https://sosforms.ohiosos.gov/forms/ContactUs/Elections
County Election Boards	https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/elections-officials/county-boards-of-elections-directory/

How do I register to vote?

[Link to Register](#)
[Link to Statutes](#)

[Section 3503.07 | Qualification for registration.](#)

Each person who will be of the age of eighteen years or more at the next ensuing November election, who is a citizen of the United States, and who, if he continues to reside in the precinct until the next election, will at that time have fulfilled all the requirements as to length of residence to qualify him as an elector shall, unless otherwise disqualified, be entitled to be registered as an elector in such precinct. When once registered, an elector shall not be required to register again unless his registration is canceled.

[Section 3503.21 | Occurrences resulting in cancellation of registration.](#)

(A) The registration of a registered elector shall be canceled upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- (4) The conviction of the registered elector of a felony under the laws of this state, any other state, or the United States as provided in section 2961.01 of the Revised Code;
- (5) The adjudication of incompetency of the registered elector for the purpose of voting as provided in section 5122.301 of the Revised Code;

How do I cancel my voter registration?

[Link to Form](#)
[Election Boards](#)

[Section 3503.21 | Occurrences resulting in cancellation of registration.](#)

(A) The registration of a registered elector shall be canceled upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- (1) The filing by a registered elector of a written request with a board of elections or the secretary of state, on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and signed by the elector, that the registration be canceled. The filing of such a request does not prohibit an otherwise qualified elector from reregistering to vote at any time.

How is voter list maintenance handled?

Section 3503.151 | Database maintenance.

(A) The secretary of state, through the office of data analytics and archives, and the boards of elections shall maintain the accuracy of the statewide voter registration database in accordance with this section.

(B)

- (1) State agencies, including, but not limited to, the department of health, the bureau of motor vehicles, the department of job and family services, the department of medicaid, and the department of rehabilitation and corrections, shall provide any information and data to the secretary of state that is collected in the course of normal business and that is necessary to register to vote, to update an elector's registration, or to maintain the statewide voter registration database, except where prohibited by federal law or regulation. The department of health, the bureau of motor vehicles, the department of job and family services, the department of medicaid, and the department of rehabilitation and corrections shall provide that information and data to the secretary of state not later than the last day of each month. The secretary of state shall ensure that any information or data provided to the secretary of state that is confidential in the possession of the entity providing the data remains confidential while in the possession of the secretary of state. No public office, and no public official or employee, shall sell that information or data or use that information or data for profit.
- (2) The secretary of state shall adopt rules under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code that establish, by mutual agreement with the bureau of motor vehicles, the content and format of the information and data the bureau of motor vehicles shall provide to the secretary of state under division (B)(1) of this section and the frequency with which the bureau shall provide that information and data.

(C)

- (1) The secretary of state shall enter into agreements to share information or data that is in the possession of the secretary of state with other states or groups of states, as the secretary of state considers necessary, in order to maintain the statewide voter registration database. Except as otherwise provided in division (C)(2) of this section, the secretary of state shall ensure that any information or data provided to the secretary of state that is confidential in the possession of the state providing the data remains confidential while in the possession of the secretary of state.
- (2) The secretary of state may provide such otherwise confidential information or data to persons or organizations that are engaging in legitimate governmental purposes related to the maintenance of the statewide voter registration database. The secretary of state shall adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code identifying the persons or organizations who may receive that information or data. The secretary of state shall not share that information or data with a person or organization not identified in those rules. The secretary of state shall ensure that a person or organization that receives confidential information or data under this division keeps the information or data confidential in the person's or organization's possession by, at a minimum, entering into a confidentiality agreement with the person or organization. Any confidentiality agreement entered into under this division shall include a requirement that the person or organization submit to the jurisdiction of this state in the event that the person or organization breaches the agreement.
- (3) No person or entity that receives information or data under division (C) of this section shall sell the information or data or use the information or data for profit.

(D) The secretary of state shall regularly transmit to the boards of elections, to the extent permitted by state and federal law, the information and data the secretary of state receives under divisions (B) and (C) of this section that is necessary to do the following, in order to ensure that the accuracy of the statewide voter registration database is maintained on a regular basis in accordance with applicable state and federal law:

- (1) Require the boards of elections to maintain the database in a manner that ensures that the name of each registered elector appears in the database, that only individuals who are not registered or eligible to vote are removed from the database, and that duplicate registrations are eliminated from the database;

Section 3503.151 , Cont.

- (1) Require the boards of elections to make a reasonable effort to remove individuals who are not eligible to vote from the database;
 - (2) Establish safeguards to ensure that eligible electors are not removed in error from the database.
- (E)
- (1) The secretary of state shall adopt rules under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code to establish a uniform method for addressing instances in which records contained in the statewide voter registration database do not conform with records maintained by an agency, state, or group of states described in division (B) or (C) of this section. That method shall prohibit an elector's voter registration from being canceled on the sole basis that the information in the registration record does not conform to records maintained by such an agency.
 - (2) Information provided under division (B) or (C) of this section for maintenance of the statewide voter registration database shall not be used to update the name or address of a registered elector. The name or address of a registered elector shall only be updated as a result of the elector's actions in filing a notice of change of name, change of address, or both.
 - (3) A board of elections shall contact a registered elector pursuant to the rules adopted under division (E)(1) of this section to verify the accuracy of the information in the statewide voter registration database regarding that elector if that information does not conform with information provided under division (B) or (C) of this section and the discrepancy would affect the elector's eligibility to cast a regular ballot.

Section 3503.152 | Review of database for noncitizens.

The secretary of state shall conduct an annual review of the statewide voter registration database to identify persons who appear not to be United States citizens, as follows:

(A) The secretary of state shall compare the information in the statewide voter registration database with the information the secretary of state obtains from the bureau of motor vehicles under section 3503.151 of the Revised Code to identify any person who does all of the following, in the following order:

- (1) Submits documentation to the bureau of motor vehicles that indicates that the person is not a United States citizen;
- (2) Registers to vote, submits a voter registration change of residence or change of name form, or votes in this state;
- (3) Submits documentation to the bureau of motor vehicles that indicates that the person is not a United States citizen.

(B) The secretary of state shall send a written notice to each person identified under division (A) of this section, instructing the person either to confirm that the person is a United States citizen or to submit a completed voter registration cancellation form to the secretary of state. The secretary of state shall include a blank voter registration cancellation form with the notice. If the person fails to respond to the secretary of state in the manner described in division (C) or (D) of this section not later than thirty days after the notice is sent, the secretary of state promptly shall send the person a second notice and form.

(C) If, not later than sixty days after the first notice is sent, a person who is sent a notice under division (B) of this section responds to the secretary of state, confirming that the person is a United States citizen, the secretary of state shall take no action concerning the person's voter registration.

(D) If, not later than sixty days after the first notice was sent, a person who receives a notice under division (B) of this section sends a completed voter registration cancellation form to the secretary of state, the secretary of state shall instruct the board of elections of the county in which the person is registered to cancel the person's registration.

(E) If a person who is sent a second notice under division (B) of this section fails to respond to the secretary of state in the manner described in division (C) or (D) of this section not later than thirty days after the second notice is sent, the secretary of state shall refer the matter to the attorney general for further investigation and possible prosecution under section 3599.11, 3599.12, 3599.13, or any other applicable section of the Revised Code. If, after the thirtieth day after the second notice is sent, the person sends a completed voter registration cancellation form to the secretary of state, the secretary of state shall instruct the board of elections of the county in which the person is registered to cancel the person's registration and shall notify the attorney general of the cancellation.

Section 3503.18 | Cancellation of registration.

- (A)
- (1) Not later than the last day of each month, the director of health shall file with the secretary of state the names, social security numbers, dates of birth, dates of death, and residences of all persons, over eighteen years of age, who have died within this state or another state during the period beginning on the date of the most recent filing and ending on the day before the date of the current filing. If the director is notified of the death of such a person after the director has filed the report for the period during which the person died, the director shall file with the secretary of state a supplemental report containing that information concerning the person not later than one month after the director is notified of the person's death.
 - (2) The secretary of state and the director of health shall jointly establish a secure electronic system through which they shall exchange the information described in division (A)(1) of this section regarding the death of a registered elector.
- (B) At least once each month, each probate judge in this state shall file with the board of elections the names and residence addresses of all persons over eighteen years of age who have been adjudicated incompetent for the purpose of voting, as provided in section 5122.301 of the Revised Code.
- (C) At least once each month the clerk of the court of common pleas shall file with the board the names and residence addresses of all persons who have been convicted during the previous month of crimes that would disfranchise such persons under existing laws of the state. Reports of conviction of crimes under the laws of the United States that would disfranchise an elector and that are provided to the secretary of state by any United States attorney shall be forwarded by the secretary of state to the appropriate board of elections.
- (D) Upon receiving a report required by this section, the board of elections shall promptly cancel the registration of each elector named in the report in accordance with section 3503.21 of the Revised Code. If the report contains a residence address of an elector in a county other than the county in which the board of elections is located, the director shall promptly send a copy of the report to the appropriate board of elections, which shall cancel the registration in accordance with that section.

Section 3503.19 | Methods of registration or change of registration.

- (C)(1) A board of elections that receives a voter registration application and is satisfied as to the truth of the statements made in the registration form shall register the applicant not later than twenty business days after receiving the application, unless that application is received during the thirty days immediately preceding the day of an election. The board shall promptly notify the applicant in writing of each of the following:
- (a) The applicant's registration;
 - (b) The precinct in which the applicant is to vote;
 - (c) In bold type as follows:
"Voters must bring photo identification to the polls in order to verify identity. Voters who do not provide photo identification will still be able to vote by casting a provisional ballot."
The notification shall be by nonforwardable mail. If the mail is returned to the board, it shall investigate and cause the notification to be delivered to the correct address.
- (2) If, after investigating as required under division (C)(1) of this section, the board is unable to verify the voter's correct address, it shall cause the voter's name in the official registration list and in the poll list or signature pollbook to be marked to indicate that the voter's notification was returned to the board.
- At the first election at which a voter whose name has been so marked appears to vote, the voter shall be required to vote by provisional ballot under section 3505.181 of the Revised Code. If the provisional ballot is counted pursuant to division (B)(3) of section 3505.183 of the Revised Code, the board shall correct that voter's registration, if needed, and shall remove the indication that the voter's notification was returned from that voter's name on the official registration list and on the poll list or signature pollbook. If the provisional ballot is not counted pursuant to division (B)(4)(a)(i), (v), or (vi) of section 3505.183 of the Revised Code, the voter's registration shall be canceled. The board shall notify the voter by United States mail of the cancellation.

Section 3503.19 | Cont.

- (3) If a notice of the disposition of an otherwise valid registration application is sent by nonforwardable mail and is returned undelivered, the person shall be registered as provided in division (C)(2) of this section and sent a confirmation notice by forwardable mail. If the person fails to respond to the confirmation notice, update the person's registration, or vote by provisional ballot as provided in division (C)(2) of this section in any election during the period of two federal elections subsequent to the mailing of the confirmation notice, the person's registration shall be canceled.

Section 3503.21 | Occurrences resulting in cancellation of registration.

- (A) The registration of a registered elector shall be canceled upon the occurrence of any of the following:
 - (1) The filing by a registered elector of a written request with a board of elections or the secretary of state, on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and signed by the elector, that the registration be canceled. The filing of such a request does not prohibit an otherwise qualified elector from reregistering to vote at any time.
 - (2) The filing of a notice of the death of a registered elector as provided in section 3503.18 of the Revised Code;
 - (3) The filing with the board of elections of a certified copy of the death certificate of a registered elector by the deceased elector's spouse, parent, or child, by the administrator of the deceased elector's estate, or by the executor of the deceased elector's will;
 - (4) The conviction of the registered elector of a felony under the laws of this state, any other state, or the United States as provided in section 2961.01 of the Revised Code;
 - (5) The adjudication of incompetency of the registered elector for the purpose of voting as provided in section 5122.301 of the Revised Code;
 - (6) The change of residence of the registered elector to a location outside the county of registration in accordance with division (B) of this section;
 - (7) The failure of the registered elector, after having been mailed a confirmation notice, to do either of the following:
 - (a) Respond to such a notice and vote at least once during a period of four consecutive years, which period shall include two general federal elections;
 - (b) Update the elector's registration and vote at least once during a period of four consecutive years, which period shall include two general federal elections.
 - (8) The receipt by the board of elections of a cancellation notice or request pursuant to section 111.44 of the Revised Code.
- (B)
 - (1) The secretary of state shall prescribe procedures to identify and cancel the registration in a prior county of residence of any registrant who changes the registrant's voting residence to a location outside the registrant's current county of registration. Any procedures prescribed in this division shall be uniform and nondiscriminatory, and shall comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The secretary of state may prescribe procedures under this division that include the use of the national change of address service provided by the United States postal system through its licensees. Any program so prescribed shall be completed not later than ninety days prior to the date of any primary or general election for federal office.
 - (2) The registration of any elector identified as having changed the elector's voting residence to a location outside the elector's current county of registration shall not be canceled unless the registrant is sent a confirmation notice on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and the registrant fails to respond to the confirmation notice or otherwise update the registration and fails to vote in any election during the period of two federal elections subsequent to the mailing of the confirmation notice.
- (C) The registration of a registered elector shall not be canceled except as provided in this section, section 111.44 of the Revised Code, division (Q) of section 3501.05 of the Revised Code, division (C)(2) of section 3503.19 of the Revised Code, or division (C) of section 3503.24 of the Revised Code.

Section 3503.21 Cont.

(D) Boards of elections shall send their voter registration information to the secretary of state as required under section 3503.15 of the Revised Code. The secretary of state may prescribe by rule adopted pursuant to section 111.15 of the Revised Code the format in which the boards of elections must send that information to the secretary of state. In the first quarter of each year, the secretary of state shall send the information to the national change of address service described in division (B) of this section and request that service to provide the secretary of state with a list of any voters sent by the secretary of state who have moved within the last twelve months. The secretary of state shall transmit to each appropriate board of elections whatever lists the secretary of state receives from that service. The board shall send a notice to each person on the list transmitted by the secretary of state requesting confirmation of the person's change of address, together with a postage prepaid, preaddressed return envelope containing a form on which the voter may verify or correct the change of address information.

(E) The registration of a registered elector described in division (A)(7) or (B)(2) of this section shall be canceled not later than one hundred twenty days after the date of the second general federal election in which the elector fails to vote or not later than one hundred twenty days after the expiration of the four-year period in which the elector fails to vote or respond to a confirmation notice, whichever is later.

- (F)
- (1) When a registration is canceled pursuant to division (A)(2) or (3) of this section, the applicable board of elections shall send a written notice, on a form prescribed by the secretary of state, to the address at which the elector was registered, informing the recipient that the elector's registration has been canceled, of the reason for the cancellation, and that if the cancellation was made in error, the elector may contact the board of elections to correct the error.
 - (2) If the elector's registration is canceled pursuant to division (A)(2) or (3) of this section in error, it shall be restored and treated as though it were never canceled.

Section 3503.24 | Application for correction of precinct registration list or challenge of right to vote.

(A) Application for the correction of any precinct registration list or a challenge of the right to vote of any registered elector may be made by any qualified elector at the office of the board of elections not later than the thirtieth day before the day of the election. The applications or challenges, with the reasons for the application or challenge, shall be filed with the board in person or by mail on a form prescribed by the secretary of state and shall be signed under penalty of election falsification.

(B) On receiving an application or challenge filed under this section, the board of elections promptly shall review the board's records. If the board is able to determine that an application or challenge should be granted or denied solely on the basis of the records maintained by the board, the board immediately shall vote to grant or deny that application or challenge.

If the board is not able to determine whether an application or challenge should be granted or denied solely on the basis of the records maintained by the board, the director shall promptly set a time and date for a hearing before the board. The hearing shall be held, and the application or challenge shall be decided, no later than ten days after the board receives the application or challenge. The director shall send written notice to any elector whose right to vote is challenged and to any person whose name is alleged to have been omitted from a registration list. The notice shall inform the person of the time and date of the hearing, and of the person's right to appear and testify, call witnesses, and be represented by counsel.

The notice shall be sent by first class mail no later than three days before the day of any scheduled hearing. Except as otherwise provided in division (D) of this section, the director shall also provide the person who filed the application or challenge with such written notice of the date and time of the hearing.

At the request of either party or any member of the board, the board shall issue subpoenas to witnesses to appear and testify before the board at a hearing held under this section. All witnesses shall testify under oath. The board shall reach a decision on all applications and challenges immediately after hearing.

Section 3503.24 Cont.

(C) If the board decides that any such person is not entitled to have the person's name on the registration list, the person's name shall be removed from the list and the person's registration forms canceled. If the board decides that the name of any such person should appear on the registration list, it shall be added to the list, and the person's registration forms placed in the proper registration files. All such corrections and additions shall be made on a copy of the precinct lists, which shall constitute the poll lists, to be furnished to the respective precincts with other election supplies on the day preceding the election, to be used by the election officials in receiving the signatures of voters and in checking against the registration forms.

(D) If an elector who is the subject of an application or challenge hearing has a confidential voter registration record, as described in section 111.44 of the Revised Code, all of the following apply:

- (1) If the elector's right to vote has been challenged, the person who filed the challenge shall not receive notice of the date and time of any hearing held concerning the challenge, shall not be permitted to attend the hearing, and shall not receive notice of the disposition of the challenge.
- (2) If the elector is the subject of an application for the correction of the precinct registration list and the elector is not the person who filed the application, the person who filed the application shall not receive notice of the date and time of any hearing held concerning the application, shall not be permitted to attend the hearing, and shall not receive notice of the disposition of the application.
- (3) Notwithstanding section 121.22 of the Revised Code, any hearing held concerning the application or challenge shall not be open to the public.
- (4) Any records created as a result of the application or challenge that include the elector's residence address or precinct shall not be open to public inspection.

Section 3503.25 | Investigations regarding the registration.

The board of elections may conduct investigations, summon witnesses, and take testimony under oath regarding the registration of any voter or as to the accuracy of the registration lists in any precinct.

Section 3503.30 | Correction of registration form.

When by mistake a qualified elector has caused himself to be registered in a precinct which was not his place of residence, the board of elections, on full and satisfactory proof that such error was committed by mistake, may, on his personal application and proof of his true residence, correct his registration form. The board may correct all errors occurring in the registration of electors when it finds that the errors subject to correction were not of fraudulent intent.

Section 3503.33 | Prior registration in another county or state - cancellation authorization

If an elector applying for registration is already registered in another state or in another county within this state, the elector shall declare this fact to the registration officer and shall sign an authorization to cancel the previous registration on a form prescribed by the secretary of state.

The director of the board of elections shall mail all such authorizations to the board of elections or comparable agency of the proper state and county. Upon the receipt of this authorization from the forwarding county, the director of a board of elections in Ohio, upon a comparison of the elector's signature with the elector's signature as it appears on the registration files, shall remove the elector's registration from the files, and place it with the cancellation authorization in a separate file which shall be kept for a period of two calendar years. The board shall notify the elector at the present address as shown on the cancellation authorization that his registration has been canceled.

[The National Voter Registration Act of 1993](#)

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the “NVRA” and the “Motor Voter Act”), to enhance voting opportunities for every American. The Act has made it easier for all Americans to register to vote and to maintain their registration. Section 8 of the NVRA contains requirements with respect to the administration of voter registration by States and requires States to implement procedures to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists.

For more information about the NVRA, please visit the [Department of Justice website](#).

List of voter registration statuses and their definitions

Registration Statuses

Active - The “active” status code is assigned to any voter not assigned an “inactive” or “cancelled” voter status code. Because the voter is not in “active-confirmation” status, the “active” status is also known as “active-active” status;

Confirmation - The “inactive” or “active-confirmation” voter status code is assigned to a voter whenever the board has issued a confirmation notice to that voter, and the voter has not responded to the board of elections either to confirm the information on file with the board or to provide to the board of elections with updated information. Like a voter with an “active” status code, a voter with an “inactive” or “active-confirmation” voter status code is a fully qualified elector and eligible to engage in the activities of a registered voter

Canceled - Voter registration has been canceled and the voter may not vote. An otherwise qualified elector may reregister at any time. [Section 3503.21](#)

How do I file a HAVA complaint?

[Link to HAVA Complaint Process](#)

[Link to Form](#)

Any person who believes that there is a violation of any provision of Title III of HAVA, including a violation that has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur, may file a complaint with the Secretary of State's office.

the complaint must be in writing and notarized, and signed and sworn to by the person filing the complaint. The complaint must list each alleged violation of Title III of HAVA, including a clear and concise description of each alleged violation. The complaint may name witnesses to the alleged violation and may include documentary evidence. The complaint must be either mailed or hand-delivered to the Secretary of State's office. The complaint may not be faxed or emailed.

How do I file a non-HAVA election complaint?

[Link to Statutes](#)

[Link to Complaint Form](#)

Public Integrity Division: the office's current investigative functions, including campaign finance reporting, voting system certification, voter registration integrity, election law violations, data retention & transparency, and cybersecurity protocols

[File a Complaint Link](#)

Who can I contact regarding an election related complaint?

Secretary of State's Office—Public Integrity Division	
Physical Address:	22 North Fourth Street, 16th Floor Columbus, OH 43215
Mailing Address:	Office of the Secretary of State Public Integrity Division 22 N 4th St Columbus, OH 43215-3668
Phone Number:	614-466-0064
Email Webform:	https://sosforms.ohiosos.gov/forms/ContactUs/Contact-Us-Agency
Website:	https://www.ohiosos.gov/publicintegrity/