

Precinct Election Official

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

For the November 3, General Election

(Place County Information Sticker Here)

This guide contains the basic information all precinct election officials need to know about Ohio election law and voting. Your board of elections may provide you with additional instructions that are specific to your county's operations. You should contact your local board of elections office with questions.

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Board of Elections Directory

ADAMS	937-544-2633	HAMILTON	513-946-8500	NOBLE	740-732-2057
ALLEN	419-223-8530	HANCOCK	419-422-3245	OTTAWA	419-898-3071
ASHLAND	419-282-4224	HARDIN	419-674-2211	PAULDING	419-399-8230
ASHTABULA	440-576-6915	HARRISON	740-942-8866	PERRY	740-342-2134
ATHENS	740-592-3201	HENRY	419-592-7956	PICKAWAY	740-474-1100
AUGLAIZE	419-739-6720	HIGHLAND	937-393-9961	PIKE	740-947-4512
BELMONT	740-526-0188	HOCKING	740-380-8683	PORTAGE	330-297-3511
BROWN	937-378-3008	HOLMES	330-674-5921	PREBLE	937-456-8117
BUTLER	513-887-3700	HURON	419-668-8238	PUTNAM	419-538-6850
CARROLL	330-627-2610	JACKSON	740-286-2905	RICHLAND	419-774-5530
CHAMPAIGN	937-484-1575	JEFFERSON	740-283-8522	ROSS	740-775-2350
CLARK	937-521-2120	KNOX	740-393-6716	SANDUSKY	419-334-6180
CLERMONT	513-732-7275	LAKE	440-350-2700	SCIOTO	740-353-4178
COLUMBIA	937-382-3537	LAWRENCE	740-532-0444	SENECA	419-447-4424
COLUMBIANA	330-424-1448	LICKING	740-670-5080	SHELBY	937-498-7207
COSHOCTON	740-622-1117	LOGAN	937-599-7255	STARK	330-451-8683
CRAWFORD	419-562-8721	LORAIN	440-326-5900	SUMMIT	330-643-5200
CUYAHOGA	216-443-8683	LUCAS	419-213-4001	TRUMBULL	330-369-4050
DARKE	937-548-1835	MADISON	740-852-9424	TUSCARAWAS	330-343-8819
DEFIANCE	419-782-8543	MAHONING	330-783-2474	UNION	937-642-2836
DELAWARE	740-833-2080	MARION	740-223-4090	VAN WERT	419-238-4192
ERIE	419-627-7601	MEDINA	330-722-9278	VINTON	740-596-5855
FAIRFIELD	740-652-7000	MEIGS	740-992-2697	WARREN	513-695-1358
FAYETTE	740-335-1190	MERCER	419-586-2215	WASHINGTON	740-374-6828
FRANKLIN	614-525-3100	MIAMI	937-440-3900	WAYNE	330-287-5480
FULTON	419-335-6841	MONROE	740-472-0929	WILLIAMS	419-636-1854
GALLIA	740-446-1600	MONTGOMERY	937-225-5656	WOOD	419-354-9120
GEAUGA	440-279-2030	MORGAN	740-962-3116	WYANDOT	419-294-1226
GREENE	937-562-6170	MORROW	419-946-4026		
GUERNSEY	740-432-2680	MUSKINGUM	740-455-7120		

(Current as of 01/2026)

Precinct Election Official Conduct

Precinct election officials (PEOs) must make sure elections are run according to the law. Precinct election officials must act professionally, and their conduct must not distract voters from their business at the polls.

Precinct Election Officials Must Not:

- Campaign at the polling location or wear any campaign clothing or items (see “Campaigning”).
- Use personal phones, laptops, or other devices or items that might distract them from managing the polls.
- Solicit contributions for raffle tickets or sell anything at the polling location.
- Put food or drink on the check-in table or near voting equipment or supplies.
- Engage in illegal or unacceptable activities according to the board of elections, the Secretary of State, or state or federal law.
- Refuse to enforce election laws, especially the laws that apply to a precinct and/or polling location (R.C. 3501.33, R.C. 3501.35).

Opening the Polls - Checklist

- ☐ Take the oath, sign the oath statement (R.C. 3501.31), and sign payroll documentation.
- ☐ Create an Election Day work plan, including work assignments, and lunch and break schedules, taking care to maintain bipartisan coverage, if the board didn't provide one.
- ☐ Review any special instructions or recent changes to instructions.
- ☐ Arrange the polling location and set up the voting machines so that:
 - All areas are visible to election officials.
 - Voters, including people with disabilities, can move easily through the voting process and location.
 - Voter privacy is protected.
 - Directional signs are posted so voters can find their way from the entrance.
 - Flags are placed, one large one at the entrance and two small flags 100 feet from the entrance, marking the neutral zone.
 - All required signs and the Official Precinct Voter Registration List are posted inside and easily visible; and
 - Tables and materials are organized efficiently.
- ☐ Break the seals on the election supply containers and confirm that the supplies and ballots are the correct ones for your location.
- ☐ Follow all board instructions for placing ballots. Some precincts contain splits, which means that certain voters in the precinct will receive a specific ballot corresponding to the precinct split in which the voter resides.
- ☐ Ensure all campaigners and campaign materials are outside the neutral zone marked by the U.S. flags and not within 10 feet of any voter in line outside the neutral zone (R.C. 3501.30).

Security at the Polling Location

Necessary Security Procedures

- ☐ Inspect voting machines and equipment (e.g., electronic pollbooks) for damage and check seals, seal numbers, and security wires. Make sure seal numbers match the information on the chain-of-custody forms. Be sure no seals have been removed, tampered with, or replaced.
- ☐ Maintain control over all voting machines, materials, and supplies.
- ☐ Protect memory card slots from unauthorized use or tampering before the start of voting and throughout Election Day (if applicable).
- ☐ Keep a record and tally of all voters who enter the polling location and all ballots issued.
- ☐ Document any incident that may affect the election results, such as machine problems, voters who signed the pollbook but left the polling location without voting, delays in opening the polling location, and any other incidents that could have an impact on the election, especially on tallying the votes or reconciling voting materials, equipment, or supplies.

- ☐ Report any suspicious activity to the voting location manager who will contact the board of elections.
- ☐ Follow the chain-of-custody procedures for voting materials.
- ☐ Return materials and all ballots to the board of elections's office or other assigned location on Election Night.

PROBLEMS WITH CONDUCT AT A POLLING LOCATION

Precinct election officials must contact the board of elections office and/or the appropriate law enforcement official immediately if they experience a problem with the conduct of ANY person at a polling location.

General Guidelines for Assisting Voters With Disabilities

- Always speak directly to the voter with a disability.
- If a voter with a disability has an assistant or interpreter with them, poll workers should directly address the voter, not the assistant or interpreter.
- Face the voter while speaking clearly in a normal tone.
- Always identify yourself as a precinct election official.
- If assistance by two precinct election officials of different political parties is requested, listen and wait for instructions from the voter. Allow the voting process to be private.
- Treat adults as adults; do not talk down to a voter with a disability.
- Never distract a service animal.

NOTE: The best advice for assisting a voter with a disability is to do for that person what you would want done for you and to treat that person as you would want to be treated.

People Allowed in the Polling Location

Only the following people are allowed in the polling location:

- an election official (as defined in R.C. 3501.01(U))
- a police officer or law enforcement officer
- a person reviewing the 6:30 a.m., 11 a.m., or 4 p.m. Official Precinct Voter Registration List
- a voter
- a voter's child, who is not yet of voting age
- a person assisting another person to vote
- an observer bearing a certificate of appointment, and
- journalists

Persons Checking the Official Precinct Voter Registration List

Anyone can come into the polling location to check copies of the Official Precinct Voter Registration List and take notes, but they cannot wear campaign-related clothing or items, cannot disrupt voting, and may not remove the list.

Persons Assisting Voters

- Voters may ask for assistance in marking the ballot because of a disability or illiteracy.
- Voters who require assistance:
 - May choose to have two precinct election officials — each from a different political party — assist them, or
 - May choose anyone they want to assist, as long as it **is not**:
 - The voter's employer,
 - An agent of the voter's employer,
 - An officer or agent of the voter's union (if the voter is a member of one),
 - Any candidate whose name appears on the ballot (R.C. 3505.24),
 - A single precinct election official.
- The voter may designate an attorney-in-fact before Election Day. The attorney-in-fact can sign all election-related documents on behalf of the voter, provided the voter is present. This is not the same as a general power of attorney.
 - If such an attorney-in-fact is on file with the board, it must be noted in the pollbook or on the poll list (R.C. 3501.382(B)(2)).
- Anyone assisting a voter in marking the ballot is forbidden by law from providing information on how they voted.

Observers

Observers may be appointed by political parties or groups of candidates at least 11 days before Election Day to observe the conduct of the election in the polling location (R.C. 3505.21(C)).

What should a Precinct Election Official do if an observer arrives at their polling location?

- Verify the observer's Certificate of Appointment of Observer (Form 215-B, Form 216-B, or Form 220).
- Administer the following oath to an observer:

"You do solemnly swear that you will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties as an official observer, assigned by law; that you will not cause any delay to persons offering to vote; and that you will not disclose or communicate to any person how any elector has voted at such election."

Observers are permitted to:

- Be in the polling location before, during, and after the hours of voting.
- Move freely about the polling location to which they are duly appointed.

- Use communication devices and audio/video devices in and about the polling location, subject to the following conditions:
 - The devices must produce no noise (low-volume vibration settings are permitted).
 - No photographs, videos, or recordings are allowed.
 - No audible conversations inside the polling location using a communications device or audio/video device.
 - The observer may send and receive text messages, emails, instant messages, and similar other nonverbal, electronic communication using a communication device, or audio/video device.
 - The observer may not use the communication device or audio/video device in any way that creates a disruption or disturbance within the polling location.

Observers are NOT permitted to:

- Disrupt an election, intimidate voters in any way, or risk voter privacy.
- Use any communication device to discuss the election or a perceived problem with the administration of the election within the polling location.
- Interfere with PEOs doing their jobs, slow the operation of the polling location, or interact with voters in a manner that interferes with or disrupts an election.

Contact the board for further clarification and instructions if this situation arises.

Journalists and Media

The media is granted reasonable access to polling locations during elections. However, they can't interfere with PEO activities, the election, or voters as they cast their votes.

Contact the county board of elections if the media plans to visit your polling location. Do not provide an interview.

Pollsters

Pollsters conducting exit polling are allowed OUTSIDE the polling location (within 100 feet) but are not allowed INSIDE the polling location. However, they should not interfere with or disrupt the election, nor should they violate the law in any other way. Exit pollsters cannot wear any campaign clothing or items (See "Campaigning").

Each polling location and its surrounding area is a neutral zone.

Campaigning Prohibitions

Campaigning is prohibited:

- Within each polling location;
- Within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling location; or
- Within 10 feet of voters waiting in line if the line extends past the 100-foot boundary.

Wearing Campaign Paraphernalia

No one, including precinct election officials, should attempt to promote or oppose a candidate or ballot issue while in the polling location. The following three types of attire and paraphernalia are prohibited in a polling location and its surrounding neutral zone:

1. Clothing or items displaying the name of a political party;
2. Clothing or items displaying the name of a candidate; and
3. Clothing or items in support of or opposition to a ballot question or issue.

However, voters may wear clothing or items with slogans indirectly related to political issues, without specific advocacy.

Anyone in a polling location or the neutral zone must remove or cover the campaign items described above. A voter who refuses to remove or cover a campaign item must be allowed to vote if they are entitled to do so (R.C. 3501.33). However, you must report any such incident to the board of elections.

Collecting Signatures at a Polling Location

- No one is allowed to collect signatures on petitions inside a polling location or within the neutral zone.
- Collecting signatures is allowed outside the neutral zone.

Distributing Food and Campaigning Inside a Polling Location

- Campaigning or displaying campaign material inside the neutral zone of a polling location is prohibited.
- Campaigning or distributing food outside the neutral zone or beyond 10 feet from any voter waiting in line to vote is allowed. Some establishments serving as polling locations may sell food on-site that does not influence or interfere with elections. For example: The church putting on a bake sale in the lobby of a church on Election Day, is acceptable.
- Ohio law prohibits offering "money or other valuable thing" to influence voting (R.C. 3599.01). Food, discounts, and other similar items are considered "things of value" for purposes of the election law statutes on bribery.

Challenging Voters

On Election Day, voters may be challenged **ONLY** by a PEO or voting location manager and only for the following reasons:

- The voter is not a resident of the precinct;
- The voter is not a resident of Ohio;
- The voter is not a U.S. citizen, or the ID presented contains a “NONCITIZEN” identifier; or
- The voter is not of legal voting age.

If challenged, the prospective voter should:

- Complete the Affidavit-Oath-Examination of Person Challenged (Form 10-U). Only persons whose ID says “NONCITIZEN” or with an otherwise unauthorized form of photo ID are required to present additional proof of citizenship. PEOs can reference the *Secure the Vote* poster and direct voters to that as a source of information, if needed. (See “Proof of Citizenship” in Voter Identification Requirements.)
- If the voter completes Form 10-U and a majority of the precinct election officials determine that the voter is eligible to cast a ballot, the voter must be given a regular ballot.
- If the voter refuses to complete the Form 10-U, they must vote a provisional ballot. Make a note of this as instructed by the board of elections (i.e., Problems and Corrections document, Precinct Election Official Notes, etc.).
- If a majority of the precinct election officials can’t determine the person’s eligibility to vote, give a provisional ballot to the person.

Voter Identification Requirements

Photo Identification

(All examples of the IDs pictured here can also be found on the *Identification Requirements* poster in your polling location.)

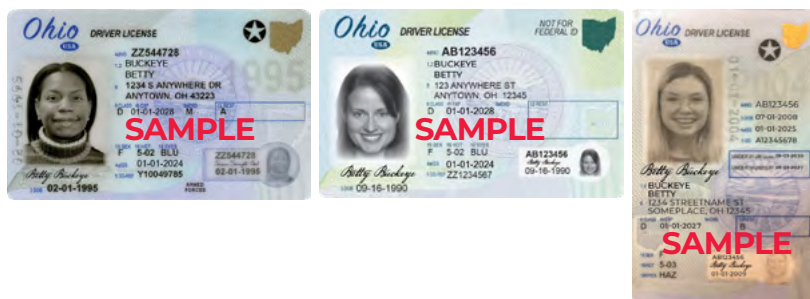
To vote, voters must show a valid form of photo identification (ID) that has the **voter’s name and photograph**, and the identification **must not be expired**.

Acceptable Forms of Identification

Acceptable forms of photo ID under Ohio law are:

1. Ohio driver license, State of Ohio ID card, or interim ID form issued by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV).
2. A United States (U.S.) passport or U.S. passport card.
3. A U.S. military ID card, U.S. military dependent ID card, Ohio National Guard ID card, or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ID card.

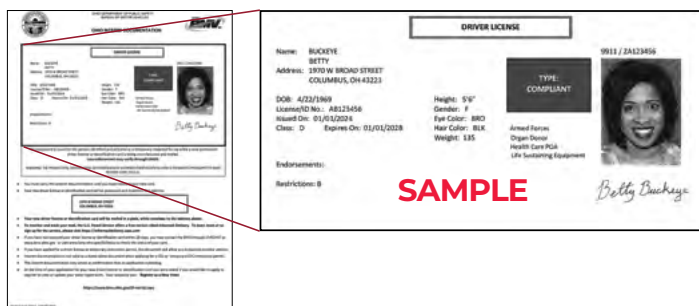
Driver License



State ID



Interim ID



U.S. Passport and U.S. Passport Card



U.S. Military ID, National Guard ID, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ID, or U.S. Military Dependent ID



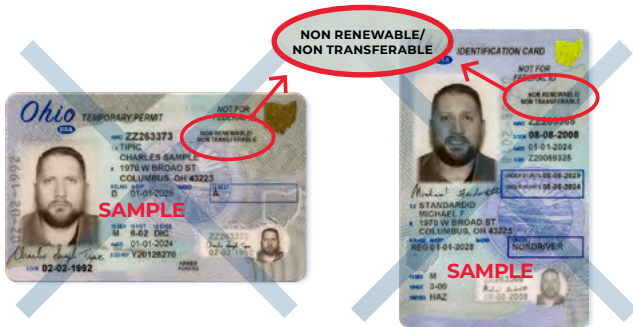
NOTE: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs issues Veteran ID Cards ("VIC") and Veteran Health Identification Cards ("VHIC"), both of which include a name and photograph. Generally, an in-person voter must present a photo ID in physical form. As of September 2022, physical VIC were no longer issued and instead the department issues only digital VIC. Precinct election officials must accept the digital VIC if the voter presents it.

Unacceptable Types of Identification

Ohio law prohibits acceptance of the following as forms of ID:

- Utility bill;
- Bank statement;
- Government check;
- Paycheck;
- Other government document (other than acceptable forms listed above), such as a Social Security card or birth certificate;
- Driver license or photo identification card issued by a state other than Ohio;
- Ohio NON RENEWABLE/NON TRANSFERABLE ID;
- Driver license or photo identification that contains a "NONCITIZEN" identifier may be used **only in conjunction with additional proof of citizenship** (see below). Follow the photo identification review process set out in the previous section;
- Ohio Mobile ID;
- Insurance card; or
- Any registration acknowledgment notice from the county board of elections.

Non Renewable/Non Transferable Credential



Ohio Mobile ID



Proof of Citizenship

"Proof of citizenship" means verifying that a voter is a U.S. citizen. Acceptable forms of proof include:

- A current Ohio driver license or state ID that doesn't indicate noncitizen status.
- Birth certificate, report of birth certification, or consular report of birth abroad.
- A current U.S. passport, passport card, or copies of their identification pages.
- Certificate of naturalization or citizenship, or a copy thereof.
- I-797 Notice of Action for Form N-565, showing an approved application to replace a naturalization document.

These requirements and examples of the types of acceptable proof are displayed on the *Identifications Requirements* poster.

Noncitizen Identifier (on the back)



If the license or ID contains a "NONCITIZEN" identifier (on the back), the identification requires additional proof of citizenship.

Common Issues to Spot

Look out for irregularities in U.S. citizenship documents, such as spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, and unusual alterations or tampering.

Certificate of Naturalization

- Most common.
- Issued to lawful permanent residents who become U.S. citizens through naturalization.
- This is one of the most frequently presented proof-of-citizenship documents for adults.
- Authentic certificates of naturalization **must** contain the person's full name, date of birth, country of former nationality, signature, and photograph.



Birth Certificate

Authentic birth certificates **must** list the person's full name, parents' birth names, and the person's date and place of birth, must contain a seal or stamp of the issuing city, county, or state, and must show the signature of the registrar.



Certificate of Citizenship

- Issued to people who automatically acquired or derived U.S. citizenship (often through U.S. citizen parents) but were not born in the U.S.
- Common but less so than naturalization certificates.
- Authentic certificates of citizenship **must** contain the person's full name, date of birth, country of birth, signature, and photograph.



Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) / Certification of Report of Birth

- Issued to individuals born abroad to U.S. citizen parents.
- Common in specific situations but overall less frequently used than the three previously mentioned certificates.



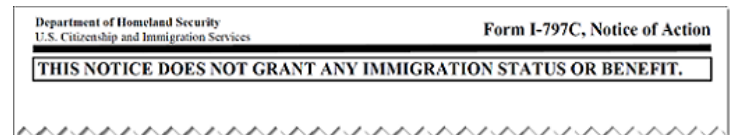
Form I-797 Notice of Action for Form N-565

- Least common as a primary document.
- This is a receipt or approval notice for replacing a lost or damaged certificate.

Before April 2, 2012



After April 2, 2012



Other Identification Considerations

Change of Name

If the voter changed their name and:

- provides proof of the legal name change **and**
- completes and signs Form 10-L **and**
- is registered within the precinct, the voter's name as it appears on the photo ID may or may not be the voter's reported change of name.

They are eligible for a regular ballot.

If the voter does not have proof of the legal name change, they must vote a provisional ballot.

No Photo Identification

If a voter is unable to provide photo identification, they must be provided with a provisional ballot. In order for the provisional ballot to be counted, the voter must present one of the acceptable forms of identification to the board office within four days after Election Day.

Religious Objection

If a voter does not have a photo ID because of a religious objection to being photographed, give the voter an Affidavit of Religious Objection (Form 12-O). This may occur either when the voter casts the provisional ballot or at the office of the board by the fourth day after Election Day. PEOs must attach the affidavit to the provisional ballot affirmation.

Photo Identification Review Process (See also "Processing Voters")

- If a registered voter appears in the pollbook, ask for their valid form of photo ID.
- Check to be sure it is not expired.
- If an Ohio driver license or State of Ohio ID is presented, confirm the voter's name and photograph.
- If the license or ID contains a "NON RENEWABLE/NON TRANSFERABLE" identifier (on the front), the identification is not valid.
- If the license or ID contains a "NONCITIZEN" identifier (on the back), the identification requires additional proof of citizenship.
 - If the ID contains a "NONCITIZEN" identifier (even if otherwise valid and unexpired), use Form 10-U to verify the voter's citizenship qualifications.
 - If the voter completes Form 10-U and has provided a valid photo ID and acceptable proof of citizenship, they may vote a regular ballot.
 - If the voter completes Form 10-U but has not provided a valid photo ID and acceptable proof of citizenship, they must vote a provisional ballot.
 - Acceptable proof of citizenship information is displayed on the *Voter ID Requirements (acceptable, unacceptable, and proof of citizenship)* poster.

Processing Voters

See the flowchart for more detail for each step.

*For more instructions on issuing a ballot in a primary election, refer to "Primary Election Information."

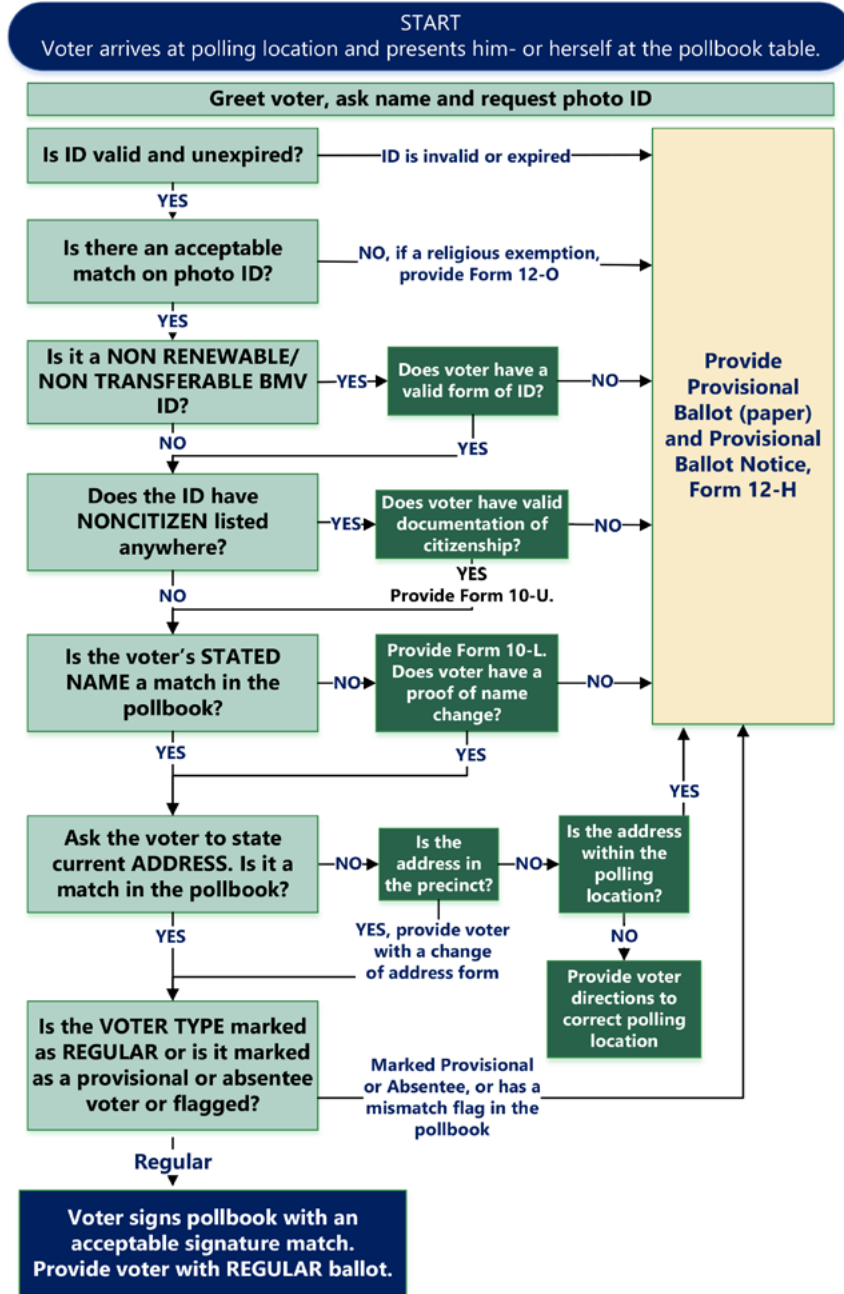
Step 1: Greet the voter and ask them to state their name.

Step 2: Ask the voter to provide a valid form of photo ID. See "Voter Identification Requirements" for more information.

- **Voter Presents a Valid ID with an acceptable photo match — Continue to Step 3.**
- **Voter does not have an ID with a photo. If the reason is religious, provide the voter a Form 12-O. Give the voter a provisional ballot.**

Step 3: Check the front of the ID for "non renewable," "non transferable" identifiers, or check the back of the ID for "noncitizen" identifier.

- **Voter's ID does not contain these identifiers — Continue to Step 4.**
- **Voter presents ID with "non renewable" or "non transferable" identifier:**
 - ID is not valid. The voter must be asked to present a valid ID. If no valid ID is presented, the voter must vote provisionally.
- Voter presents ID with "noncitizen" identifier:
 - **If voter has documentation to prove citizenship, provide 10-U, and continue to Step 5.**
 - **If not able to prove citizenship, voter must vote provisionally.**



Step 4: Locate the voter's name in the pollbook by scanning the voter's ID or looking up the voter's stated name.

- **Stated Name Matches ID and Pollbook — Continue to Step 5**
- **Stated Name is not an Acceptable Match to the Pollbook — Same Precinct**
- If a voter has changed their name and provides proof (like a marriage license or court order showing both names), they can complete a Notice of Change of Name (Form 10-L) to cast a regular ballot — and proceed to **Step 5**. Note that the identification provided may not reflect the name change.
 - If the voter changed their name and does not have proof of the legal name change, they must cast a provisional ballot.

NOTE: If the voter changed their name and provides proof of the legal name change (e.g., a marriage license or a court order that includes the voter's current and prior names, or other proof of legal name change that includes both the voter's former and current name), the voter may complete and sign a Notice of Change of Name (Form 10-L) and cast a regular ballot, as long as the voter is registered to vote in that precinct.

The voter's form of identification provided may or may not contain the voter's reported change of name.

Name Not Found

If the voter's name is **not** located in the pollbook after performing a secondary search (see "Electronic Pollbook Searches" below), use the address information provided by the voter to direct them to the proper location to cast their ballot.

Electronic Pollbook Searches and Supplemental Voter Lists

If a driver license or state identification card is scanned or swiped to locate the voter's name in the electronic pollbook and their name is not found, try a secondary, manual search. For example, typing in the first few characters of the voter's last name and/or house number should populate a list that can be used to determine if and where the voter is registered to vote.

If, at the time the electronic pollbooks are loaded with data or at the time the paper pollbook is printed, a complete list of eligible voters is unavailable, the board of elections might produce a Supplemental Voter List. If the board of elections provided a Supplemental Voter List, use it in addition to the pollbook when searching for a voter's name.

Step 5: Ask the voter to state their current address and compare the address provided to the address listed in the pollbook next to the voter's name.

- **Address Matches — Continue to Step 6**
- **Address Different — Same Precinct**

If the address provided by the voter is different than the address in the pollbook, determine if the address provided by the voter is still within the precinct in which they are registered to vote. If the voter's address is within the same precinct, **continue to Step 6**.

NOTE: A voter who has moved within the same precinct may vote a regular ballot. Voters who move within the same precinct must be provided with a voter registration update form to complete. Additionally, a voter who moves within the precinct (and completes a Voter Registration Form) or provides proof of a legal name change (and completes Form 10-L) is eligible to vote a regular ballot.

- **Address Different — Same County, Different Precinct**

If the address provided by the voter is in a different precinct within the county, determine where the voter should be directed to cast a ballot. Refer to “Directing Voters to the Correct Precinct.”

- **Address Different — Different County in Ohio**

If the address provided by the voter is in a different county, direct the voter to contact the board of elections in that county for more information (a list of county board of elections phone numbers may be found in this Quick Reference Guide).

Directing Voters to the Correct Precinct

If the voter’s address is outside a precinct within the polling location, use the electronic pollbook or the county street directory to find the correct precinct. Direct the voter there.

Explain to the voter that a provisional ballot cast in the wrong precinct cannot be counted. Give them the telephone number of the board of elections in case they have questions.

If they insist on voting in the incorrect precinct after being directed to the correct precinct or polling location, the voter must cast a provisional ballot.

Suppose the voter is in the correct polling location but in the wrong precinct and insists on voting in the wrong precinct. In that case, the precinct election official must complete the Provisional Voter Precinct Verification (Form 12-D) and attach it to the voter’s provisional ballot envelope. This form shows that the PEO directed the voter to the correct precinct and that the voter refused to go there to vote.

Step 6: Check the pollbook for any flags, marks, or notations instructing PEOs to provide the voter with a provisional ballot. If the voter’s name is flagged or marked in the pollbook, the voter must be provided with a provisional ballot. If there are no notations or instructions that instruct precinct election officials to provide a provisional ballot, **continue to Step 7.**

If there are notations present, notify the voter why they must vote provisionally, and give the voter a provisional ballot.

Reasons for Flags/Notations

- The voter was challenged before the election, a hearing was held, and the board of elections found the challenge to have merit.
- The voter is marked (flagged) absentee or provisional in the pollbook, which indicates the voter may have already received a ballot before Election Day.
- The voter is marked (flagged) in the pollbook because a Notice of Registration Acknowledgment Notice (Form 10-J) sent to the voter was returned as undeliverable.
- The board was unable to verify the voter’s residence address.
- The voter’s date of birth, Ohio driver license, state identification card number, or the last four digits of the voter’s Social Security number must be verified.

Step 7: Ask the voter to sign the pollbook. Compare their signature with the signature provided in the pollbook.

- ***Signature Matches the Signature in Pollbook***

If the signature provided by the voter matches the signature already on file in the pollbook, **continue to Step 8.**

- ***Voter Cannot Sign — Has Assistive Technology or Signature Stamp***

Generally, signing or affixing a signature to an election-related document requires a person's written, cursive-style legal mark written in that person's own hand. However, a voter with a disability may personally affix their signature using a reasonable accommodation, including the use of assistive technology or an augmentative device such as a signature stamp. A voter using assistive technology or an augmentative device may affix their signature in the backup paper pollbook. **Continue to Step 8.**

- ***Voter Cannot Sign — Has Attorney-in-Fact on File with Board of Elections***

1. The voter must have an attorney-in-fact designation on file with the board before Election Day (Form 10-F or Form 10-G).
2. If that voter has an attorney-in-fact on file with the board of elections, the attorney-in-fact's signature will be on file, and it will be noted in the pollbook or on the poll list.
3. The attorney-in-fact must accompany the voter to the polling location.
4. The attorney-in-fact should be allowed to sign the voter's name in the pollbook, in the presence and at the direction of the voter.
5. The signature of the attorney-in-fact should be examined, and if it matches the attorney-in-fact's signature already on file in the pollbook (R.C. 3505.18(B)), **Continue to Step 8.**

An **attorney-in-fact** is different from a power of attorney. For a person with power of attorney to sign election forms for another person, a valid appointment as an attorney-in-fact must be on file with the county board of elections.

- ***Voter Cannot Sign – Voter Can Provide Legal Mark***

If the voter is able, they should make their legal mark, such as an "X," on the signature line in the pollbook. A PEO shall record the name of the elector at the proper place in the pollbook following the elector's mark.

The precinct election official shall attest to the making of the mark by signing the precinct election official's name on the poll list or pollbook as a witness to the mark (R.C.3505.18(B)). **Continue to Step 8.**

- ***Signature Does Not Match***

If, in the opinion of the majority of precinct election officials, the signature does not substantially conform to the signature in the pollbook, the voter must cast a **provisional ballot**.

Step 8: Provide the voter with a regular ballot or the appropriate ballot permission slip for the correct ballot for their precinct, based on the voter's residence address. Direct the voter to the proper voting booth or voting machine.

If a voter is unable to mark their ballot, they may use the accessible voting machine. See "Persons Assisting Voters" for more information on who may assist a voter.

Step 9: Ensure the voter casts ballot according to BOE instructions and provide “I Voted” sticker, and “Future Voter” sticker to kids.

Primary Election Information

Voters’ Party Affiliation

- By voting for a political party’s ballot, the voter becomes affiliated with that political party. This affiliation can only be changed by voting for a different political party’s ballot at the next partisan primary election.
- Always mark which political party’s ballot a voter votes, whether or not there is a change in party affiliation.

At the end of the day, complete the bottom portion of Form 10-X (Statement of Persons Challenged as to Party Affiliation) for any pages that were not filled in earlier in the day.

Issuing a Ballot as Part of the Voting Process During a Primary Election

Use the following additional procedures when issuing a ballot. Please refer to the more detailed instructions under “Processing Voters.”

Step 1: Ask the voter: “Which ballot would you like — a political party ballot or an issues-only ballot?”

- Most voters will know which type of political party ballot they will want. But, if a voter asks, “What are my choices?” then explain the political party ballot choices, if any exist.

Step 2: Record the voter’s choice of ballot in the pollbook by marking either:

- Which political party ballot the voter requested, or
- That the voter requested an issues-only ballot.

Step 3: Provide the voter with the proper ballot or an appropriate ballot permission slip/device.

Step 4: Direct the voter to the appropriate voting location in the polling place.

Challenging a Voter — Party Affiliation

If a precinct election official has personal knowledge that a voter is not affiliated with or a member of the political party whose ballot they have requested, the PEO may challenge the voter and ask them to complete the Statement of Person Challenged as to Party Affiliation (Form 10-W or Form 10-X).

- Personal knowledge requires more than just a notation of party affiliation in a board record, such as a pollbook. PEOs must have further information to challenge an elector’s party affiliation.
- Such challenges will be rare.
- A voter is required to complete Form 10-W or Form 10-X only if they are challenged.
- If the challenged voter completes the Statement of Person Challenged as to Party Affiliation (Form 10-W or Form 10-X), add their choice of ballot in the pollbook. The voter is then given a regular ballot or an appropriate ballot permission slip for the political party ballot of their choice.
- If the challenged voter refuses to complete the Statement of Person Challenged as to Party Affiliation (Form 10-W or Form 10-X), then they **MUST** vote provisionally. In such a case, provide the voter with a provisional ballot for their preferred political party.

17-Year-Old Voters

A 17-year-old, registered voter who will be 18 on or before the date of the next general election may vote in a primary election, including for presidential delegates.

However, they are not permitted to vote on any of the following:

- State Party Central Committee;
- County Party Central Committee; and
- Questions and Issues, such as a school tax levy, charter amendment, or local liquor option.

Seventeen-year-old voters will be identified in the pollbook. Give them the 17-Year-Old Voter Instructions before giving the 17-year-old voter their ballot or ballot permission slip/device.

If the county board of elections does NOT provide a unique ballot for 17-year-old voters, give them:

- A regular paper ballot;
 - Instructions on how to mark and return the ballot (i.e., the 17-Year-Old Voter Instructions); and
 - An envelope into which the voted ballot can be placed.
- Keep these ballots separate from the other regular ballots so that the board can review the ballot to be sure that no votes for which the 17-year-old voter is ineligible to cast are counted.

Provisional Ballots

Key Point: A provisional ballot allows a voter to cast a ballot when required information is missing or cannot be verified at the polling place. It protects the voter's right to vote and allows election officials to review the voter's eligibility after Election Day. One of your responsibilities is to explain the process to the voter clearly and neutrally.

Reasons for Issuing a Provisional Ballot

If a voter meets **ONE** or **MORE** of the following criteria, the voter must be provided a provisional ballot:

- The voter's name does not appear in the pollbook or the Supplemental Voter List.
- The voter does not provide or is unable to provide valid photo identification.
- The voter is marked (flagged) absentee or provisional in the pollbook, which indicates they may have already received a ballot before Election Day.
- The voter is marked (flagged) in the pollbook because a Notice of Registration Acknowledgment Notice (Form 10-J) sent to the voter was returned as undeliverable.
- The voter changed their name and did not provide proof of a legal name change and complete Form 10-L.
- The voter moved from one Ohio precinct to another without updating their voter registration by the registration deadline (30 days before the election).
- The voter changed their name and moved from one Ohio precinct to another without updating their voter registration by the registration deadline (30 days before the election).

- The voter's eligibility to cast a ballot has been challenged by the precinct election officials, and the voter refused to complete the Affidavit-Oath-Examination of Person Challenged (Form 10-U).
- The voter's signature, in the opinion of the majority of precinct election officials, does not substantially conform to the signature in the pollbook.
- The voter is marked (flagged) that they were challenged before the election, and the hearing was postponed until after the day of the election.
- The Board was unable to verify the voter's residence address.
- The voter is marked (flagged) because the voter's date of birth, Ohio driver license, state identification card number, or the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number must be verified.

Processing Provisional Voters Due to Data Mismatch

Poll workers and voting location managers should be prepared to clearly explain to a registered voter the new requirement for correcting a mismatched registration record. Suggested step-by-step instructions for poll workers who may encounter situations requiring the correction of a voter registration record mismatch are as follows:

Step 1: Check the pollbook and identify the issue

- When the voter states their name and address, locate their record.
- If the pollbook shows the voter has an unresolved registration issue (and is flagged to vote provisional), continue to Step 2.

Step 2: Explain the situation in plain terms

We suggest you say something like this to the voter: *"Your registration record has an issue that hasn't been corrected yet, and a new state law requires us to get that corrected so your ballot can be counted. This is an effort to make sure Ohio has accurate voter rolls, and by fixing that now, we make sure you won't have problems in the future. In order to do that, you are required to vote a provisional ballot, and as long as your information is verified your vote can still count."*

Step 3: Provide the provisional ballot materials

- Issue the voter a provisional ballot and the required provisional ballot paperwork per your precinct supplies.

Step 4: Give the voter Form 12-B

- Provide Form 12-B Provisional Ballot Affirmation.
- Instruct the voter to complete it fully and accurately.

Step 5: Ask the voter to provide the needed information on Form 12-B.

- Tell the voter to include the information required to correct their registration (for example, updated address/name information or other required details shown by the pollbook flag)
- If your procedures allow poll workers to review for completeness, do a quick check for missing sections without coaching the voter on what to write.

Step 6: If the voter has supporting documents with them, follow site procedures.

- If the voter offers documents/info at the polling place, follow your board's instructions on what can be accepted/recorded at the polling location.
- If the voter does not have the information or documents with them, proceed to **Step 7**.

Step 7: Clearly explain the “4-day deadline”.

- Tell the voter: “If you don’t provide the required information today, you must provide it to the board of elections within four days after Election Day or your provisional ballot may not count.”
- Provide any written handouts your board supplies, including Updated Form 12-H, and point the voter to where/how to contact the board (address, phone, hours).

Step 8: Ensure the provisional ballot is properly completed and secured.

- Confirm the voter has completed Form 12-B and placed their voted ballot in the correct envelope.
- Secure the ballot and forms according to the chain of custody instructions.

Step 9: Mark the pollbook correctly.

- Record that the voter cast a provisional ballot, following your pollbook/poll pad steps.

Step 10: Escalate if anything is unclear.

- If the pollbook flag is confusing, the voter’s status is ambiguous, or the voter disputes the requirement, contact the Voting Location Manager or the board immediately and follow their direction.

Processing Other Provisional Voters

Before providing a voter with a provisional ballot, make sure the voter’s address is in the polling location. If not, direct the voter to the correct precinct and polling location.

Step 1: Provide the voter with an Identification Envelope - Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B), along with the correct ballot for the voter’s precinct, based on the voter’s residence address.

Step 2: The voter must complete the Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B). To be eligible to be counted, a provisional ballot affirmation must include the voter’s printed name, valid signature, date of birth, current address, acceptable photo identification, and any additional information needed to cure the ballot.

If the voter presents an Ohio driver license or state ID card, the voter must check the box and print their driver license or state ID card number.

The completed Identification Envelope - Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B) may serve as a voter registration update form for the provisional voter ensuring that the voter’s residential address will be printed in the pollbook for future elections. Precinct election officials should encourage voters to complete the registration update section of the form.

Step 3: If the voter did not provide identification due to a religious objection to being photographed, the PEO must provide the voter with an Affidavit of Religious Objection (Form 12-O). The completed form must be attached to the Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B).

Step 4: Provide the provisional voter a copy of the Provisional Ballot Notice (Form 12-H) when the voter casts the provisional ballot.

Step 5: After the voter marks their ballot, they must place the voted ballot inside the Identification Envelope – Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B). They then must place the envelope in a secure ballot box or bag provided by the board of elections.

Under no circumstances shall a provisional ballot be placed into a ballot scanner or ballot box used by voters to cast regular ballots.

De-Escalation

Key Point: You're an agent of calmness. How you conduct yourself sets the tone for the entire polling location. Most conflicts can be prevented or resolved with calm, respectful communication.

Look for early warning signs such as raised voices, confrontational language, or groups forming to complain. Stay calm and neutral and use a phrase like "Let's talk this through together." Handle challenges with respect and clarity. Acknowledge concerns or frustration and explain options with a response like "I hear your frustration and want to help. Here's what we can do next". Set clear and firm boundaries and know when and how to escalate when a person refuses to comply.

Misinformation

The Ohio Secretary of State's VerifyOhio messaging platform will be used throughout the 2026 election cycle to fact-check rumors, answer common questions, and provide a "rapid response" resource to help dispel misinformation. This tool helps build confidence in the integrity of elections by addressing false claims head-on, verifying accurate information, and helping educate citizens. You can follow @VerifyOhio on X, Facebook, or Instagram. You can also refer to the Elections Are Secure poster displayed at your polling location.

Write-In Candidates

The board of elections will provide a list of names of candidates who are officially eligible as write-in candidates.

These candidates' names do not appear on the ballot.

Voters may request the list and write in names from this list if they choose.

This list is not posted, but must be shown to voters if they request to see it.

Time Limits

The permissible time limit for a voter to occupy a voting compartment or use a voting machine is 10 minutes. However, voters should be given a reasonable amount of time to mark and verify their ballots. The 10-minute time limit does not apply to any voter with a disability requiring the use of an accessible voting machine.

If a voter appears to be taking an unusually long time in the voting booth, two poll workers of different political parties may ask politely if the voter requires assistance.

Replacement Ballots (Applies to Paper Ballots ONLY)

If a voter tears, spoils, defaces, or erroneously marks a ballot, they may return it to a PEO, and a second ballot must be issued to the voter. The voter must fold the returned ballot to conceal any marks they made.

If they damage the second ballot, the voter may return it to the PEO, and a third ballot must be issued to the voter.

Never issue more than three ballots to a voter.

When a returned torn, spoiled, defaced, or erroneously marked ballot is returned, write "Defaced" on the back of the ballot and place the stub and the ballot in the separate containers provided by the board of elections for that purpose.

No voter using a paper ballot may leave the polling location until they have returned every ballot issued to them, regardless of whether the voter made any marks on the ballot.

Fleeing Voters

If a voter is issued a ballot but abandons the ballot without depositing it into a ballot scanner or ballot storage container, that ballot cannot be counted. Place the abandoned ballot in an envelope for spoiled and defaced ballots, and a PEO should record the event.

Court Orders

If there is a court order to keep the polling location open past 7:30 p.m., precinct election officials must identify who the last person in line was at 7:30 p.m. and then make sure of the following:

- Voters who were already in line at 7:30 p.m. get to vote a regular ballot.
- All voters who arrive between 7:30 p.m. and the court-ordered closing of the polling location must vote a provisional ballot.
- Keep these provisional ballots separate from other provisional ballots voted during the regular voting hours in case the court decision is later overturned.

Write "After Close of Polls by Order of the Court" on each Identification Envelope — Provisional Ballot Affirmation (Form 12-B) cast after 7:30 p.m.

Closing the Polls

At 7:30 p.m., the official closing time, the voting location manager should loudly declare, "The polls are closed!" People waiting in line to vote at closing time must be permitted to vote. PEOs should:

- Move the line inside the locked door of the polling location, if possible; or
- Place a PEO after the last person who is in line at 7:30 p.m. to prevent additional people from joining the line.

After the Voters Have Left the Polling Location

To properly close the polling location, all the following tasks must be completed using the documents provided by the board of elections:

- ☐ Record all ballot statistics (e.g., regular, provisional, spoiled, defaced, and unused ballots) on the balance/reconciliation sheet provided by the board.
- ☐ Count and/or record the total number of signatures in the pollbook following the instructions provided by the board.
- ☐ Post precinct results at the polling location as directed by the board.
- ☐ Double-check ballot statistics and sign the closing certificate and balance/reconciliation sheet.
- ☐ Bring in the flags and take down signs inside and outside the polling location.
- ☐ Close out and pack up the voting equipment following the board's directions.
- ☐ Securely pack ballots and supplies and immediately return them to the board of elections or the designated drop-off location.

Transportation of Ballots and Election Supplies

The ballots and all required voting materials and supplies must be transported to the board of elections by a voting location manager accompanied by a precinct election official, employee, or appointee of the board to whom an oath has been given and who is a member of a different political party than the voting location manager.

Please refer to the specific transport instructions provided by your board for more details.



Dear Precinct Election Official,

As election officials, we share a common goal: ensuring Ohio's elections are secure, accurate, and accessible. By serving at a polling location on Election Day, you are doing your part to contribute to our state's thriving democracy.

This Quick Reference Guide highlights the policies and procedures for polling locations on Election Day. I encourage you to become familiar with the guide as you prepare to serve Ohio voters. Your work will go a long way in making sure Ohioans have a positive experience as they cast their ballots.

Our democratic process relies on building and earning trust in our elections. To give voters the confidence they deserve, we need you to be well-informed, prepared, and excited to provide the customer service expected of an election official.

If you have any questions, please contact your county board of elections. On behalf of Ohio's voters, thank you for your hard work.

Yours in service,

Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State



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