



2026 CAREGIVER'S GUIDE TO VOTING

LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP OTHERS EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE

Voting is an important right for citizens. Caregivers can play a key role in helping people you support understand their options, prepare to vote, and cast their ballot independently. Every eligible voter deserves the opportunity to participate in democracy. As a caregiver, your role is to:

- Support the voter in making a plan to vote
- Assist with finding and understanding the candidates and issues in the coming election
- Assist with accessibility needs
- Respect the voter's choices and independence

WHY VOTING MATTERS

VOTING HELPS PEOPLE:

- Protect their rights as citizens
- Have a voice on important issues and services (like healthcare, housing, transportation, and schools)
- Help choose leaders and policies
- Actively shape their own community



WHO CAN VOTE IN OHIO?

An individual is eligible to vote in Ohio if they:

1. Are a citizen of the United States
2. Will be at least 18 years old on or before the day of the election
3. Will be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the election
4. Are not currently incarcerated (in jail or prison) for a felony conviction
5. Have not been declared incompetent for voting purposes by a probate court

REGISTERING TO VOTE:

How You Can Help Someone Register to Vote

Registration options:

Individuals can register to vote three different ways. As a caregiver, you can help them understand their registration choices and work with the individual to complete their registration submission. Registration options include:

1.  Online through the Ohio Secretary of State website:
[Ohio Online Voter Registration](#)
2. By mail using the official voter registration form (which can be found online or at one of the organizations below)
3. In person at:
 - Summit County Board of Elections
 - Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) offices
 - Local library branches
 - Summit DD administrative office

Registration documentation requirements:

1. Ohio driver's license or
2. Valid military ID or
3. Ohio state ID card or
4. If the individual does not have either a driver's license or an Ohio state ID card, they can use the last 4 digits of their Social Security number
 - *New: If a person does have a current driver's license or state ID card, they must record that number on the voter registration form. If the person does not have a current Ohio driver's license or state ID card, then they are able to use the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number.

Registration Assistance:

You may help a prospective voter complete their registration form if the person:

1. Is legally blind or
2. Has a disability or
3. Cannot read or write independently



IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT ASSISTING AN INDIVIDUAL WITH REGISTRATION:

1. Caregivers should complete and sign the attestation (certification) section if helping to fill out the form
2. Individuals who are unable to sign are permitted to:
 - Make an "X" or
 - Use a signature stamp or
 - Use assistive technology

REGISTRATION DEADLINES: It's important to return voter registration applications by the deadlines on the Summit County Board of Elections website. You can find election and registration deadlines on the Summit County Board of Elections website at boe.ohio.gov/summit/

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS FOR THE 2026 GENERAL ELECTION

MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS BY OCTOBER 6, 2026

Voter registration forms should be returned to the Board of Elections within ten days after being signed. After registering, the voter will receive information directly from the Board of Elections about their voting precinct and polling location. Caregivers should review this information with the voter to ensure that all information is accurate and help them understand important dates and locations for the upcoming election.

REMEMBER: Before submitting the registration application, check the information carefully for accuracy.

VOTING:

How You Can Help Someone Exercise their Right to Vote

Prepare: Help individuals learn about the upcoming ballot

Learning about the candidates and issues before an election is an important part of voting. There are many places to find election information, but nonpartisan, factual resources can help voters make informed decisions without political bias or persuasion. (Caution: information on social media tends to have a bias one way or another. Voters and caregivers are urged to use caution when using social media as an information source.) Helpful factual resources include:

-  [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org) Nonpartisan information about candidates and issues from the League of Women Voters
-  [Summit County Board of Elections Website](https://www.summitcountyohio.gov/elections) Find sample ballots, with candidate and ballot language for upcoming elections

TIP: Planning ahead helps make voting easier and less stressful for voters and their caregivers.

VOTING OPTIONS:

Three ways to help voters cast their vote

There are three options available to cast a ballot in Ohio: vote by mail; early in-person voting; or vote at a polling location on election day. Helping individuals understand each of these options gives people the opportunity to choose which method works best for their needs, schedule, and comfort level.

Before election day, it is helpful to decide:

- which voting option works best for the person in your life needing assistance
- any transportation needs they may have
- any accessibility or assistance needs they may have, and
- what materials they want to bring with them to help make their selections

OPTION 1: VOTE BY MAIL (ABSENTEE VOTING)

Any registered Ohio voter may vote by mail during the designated dates leading up to an election (visit the Summit County Board of Elections website for dates and deadlines: boe.ohio.gov/summit/).

Benefits to voting by mail (Absentee Voting)

- Vote from home
- Flexible and convenient

Step 1: Request your Absentee Ballot: If you would like to vote by mail, you must request an absentee ballot. Absentee ballot application requests must arrive at the Summit County

Board of Elections by October 27, 2026. (Please note that completed ballots must be received by the Summit County Board of Elections no later than 7:30pm on Nov. 3, 2026, to be counted in the 2026 General Election.)

- Apply online: [Ohio Absentee Voting Information](#)
- OR complete a paper application

When requesting an absentee ballot, the registered voter will need ONE of the following:

- Last 4 digits of Social Security number or
- Ohio driver's license or state ID number or
- Copy of an approved photo ID

Step 2: Submit the Application. Mail or deliver the application to:

Summit County Board of Elections
1050 East Tallmadge Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44310

Step 3: Complete the Ballot When the ballot arrives, caregivers are permitted to help a voter with a disability, if requested. A caregiver should make sure the voter votes for no more than the number of choices indicated for each race or issue. However, it's important to remember that you are NOT permitted to tell them how to vote.

Step 4: Return the Ballot The voter's completed ballot must arrive to the Board of Elections by 7:30pm on November 3, 2026 to be counted in the 2026 general election.

Ballots may be:

- Mailed
- Delivered to the Board of Elections: Ballots can be hand-delivered by the voter or a near relative to the Board of Elections office (see the Board of Elections website for more information about "near relatives*" and requirements.)

*Near relative includes the voter's spouse or the voter's father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece (R.C. 3509.05).



Step 5: Track the ballot: You can assist the voter with tracking their ballot. Visit the [Summit County Board of Elections to track their ballot after it's been submitted.](#)

OPTION 2: EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING

Early voting begins: October 7, 2026 for the 2026 general election. Voters must bring their valid government-issued photo ID to vote. (Valid IDs include: Ohio driver's license, Ohio state ID, U.S. passport, and Military ID)

Benefits: Flexibility – the voter chooses the date and time during early voting that works best for them during Early Voting, allowing them to schedule any necessary supports like transportation.

EARLY VOTING LOCATION.

See the Board of Election website dates and times.

Summit County Board of Elections
1050 East Tallmadge Avenue
Akron, Ohio 44310

Accessibility Options. Summit County BOE offers:

- Accessible entrances
- Curbside voting
- Accessible voting machines

CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE RULES.

You may assist the voter if requested, unless you are:

- A candidate on the ballot
- The voter's employer
- A union representative

You may:

- Read instructions/ballot
- Help mark the ballot
- Assist physically
- Make sure the voter votes for no more than the number of choices indicated for each race or issue.

You may NOT:

- Influence the voter
- Tell someone who to vote for





OPTION 3: VOTE IN PERSON ON ELECTION DAY

Election Day: The 2026 General Election will be held on Tuesday, **November 3, 2026** between **6:30am – 7:30pm**. Voters must bring their valid government-issued photo ID to vote. (Valid IDs include: Ohio driver's license, Ohio state ID, U.S. passport, and Military ID)

Benefits:

- Polling location is typically closer to your home than the County Board of Elections
- Voting with your community on election day



Find Your Polling Place with [Summit County polling place lookup](#).

- Confirm your polling location before election day. (Voters who vote on election day must cast their ballot at their assigned precinct during election hours.)

Be Prepared

- Bring a Valid Photo ID
- See “caregiver assistance rules” above



REMEMBER: IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW DATES AND DEADLINES

regarding ballots and elections. To avoid missing deadlines, please visit BOE.Ohio.gov/summit/ to review important deadlines and voting information for the 2026 general election.