

## Protecting Residents and Staff from Outside Groups

It is important for residential directors to take steps to protect residents from outside groups that want to assist residents with either ballot applications/requests and/or submissions. It is equally important to protect your staff members from outside groups that offer financial compensation for ballot trafficking.

Staff should be educated about possible pressures from outside groups and the penalties for violating the law.

It is a fifth-degree felony to “willfully and with fraudulent intent make any mark or alteration on any ballot” or to, “with intent to defraud or deceive, [] write or sign the name of another person to any document.” Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §§ 3599.28; 3599.33.

To protect residents, outside groups or third-party organizations should not be allowed in the care facilities to assist residents with ballot applications/requests, for marking the ballot and/or for delivery of the ballot to the election authorities.

CVV recommends utilizing your county election officials for obtaining voter education materials, forms for ballot applications/requests and for marking the ballot of those qualifying disabled residents who have requested assistance.

Sometimes outside or third-party organizations will mail voter registration and ballot application forms to residents. It is important to know the difference between official election mail and partisan mail. All official election mail, including balloting materials, voter registration cards, absentee applications, polling place notifications, and voter reply mail will have a official mail election logo on the envelope, which looks like this:



It is imperative the residential directors take the necessary steps to protect both their residents and staff.

The Ohio voting assistance legal guide can be requested (no cost) by emailing [Laura.Williams@centerforvulnerablevoters.org](mailto:Laura.Williams@centerforvulnerablevoters.org). Additional training materials are available at [www.centerforvulnerablevoters.org](http://www.centerforvulnerablevoters.org) and the Center also provides in-person training upon request.

## Early In Person Voting For Residents

Many residents enjoy going to the polls to cast their vote. Early in person voting at the polls is a great way to help maintain the privacy of the residents' vote and ensure that any questions the residents may have are answered accurately by trained poll workers.

According to the Ohio SOS website, early voting begins Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, including the two Saturdays and Sundays before Election Day. To obtain specific information on locations and times, contact your local county board of elections at: [County Boards of Elections Directory - Ohio Secretary of State \(ohiosos.gov\)](https://www.ohiosos.gov/county-boards-of-elections)

Per Federal and State laws, polling places must be handicapped accessible and include assistive devices such as:

- Handicapped parking
- 75 years or older and/or disabled may move to the front of the line
- Seated and wheelchair accessible booths
- Accessible voting machines for visual and hearing deficits
- Magnifiers
- Curb-side voting
- Trained poll workers, one from each political party may assist per voter request

Also, early voting often has shorter wait times for residents.

Planning ahead is key when transporting residents to early voting polling places. Transportation to the polls can be a challenge. It is important to ensure activist organizations are not transporting residents with the intent to influence their vote.

It is important to always verify information with your local County Board of Elections office, as sometimes rules and laws change.

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