



GREAT PROVIDER PLAYBOOK

Insights you can act on from OPRA **Their Voice. Their Vote.**

Voting is more than casting a ballot. It is an opportunity to make choices, participate in the community, and have a voice in decisions that affect our lives. People with developmental disabilities have the same fundamental right to participate in the voting process as well as other eligible Ohioans. Providers play an important role in ensuring that individuals understand their voting rights, have access to appropriate resources and accommodations, and receive the support they need to participate without influencing how, or whether, the individual votes.

Disability Does Not Mean Ineligibility	Did you know that in Ohio, having an intellectual or developmental disability DOES NOT make someone ineligible to vote? Having a guardian also does not automatically remove the right to vote. According to both the Ohio Secretary of State and Disability Rights Ohio, a person with a guardian may vote unless a probate court has specifically determined the person incompetent for voting purposes. • Disability Rights Ohio • Ohio Secretary of State • Register to Vote
Different Ways to Vote	Voters may cast their ballot in-person through early in-person voting or on Election Day at their local county Board of Elections office. Election Day voting is open from 6:30am – 7:30pm. For early voting, please refer to your local county Board of Elections schedule. Additionally, Ohio offers curbside voting to individuals with disabilities, if they are physically unable to enter their polling location. The deadline to request an Absentee Ballot is October 27, 2026, and may be done through your local Board of Elections office. The completed ballot then must be received by the county Board of Elections by 7:30pm on Election Day. Additionally, the Secretary of State requires any person assisting a voter with a disability in returning their absentee ballot must sign an attestation and return the absentee ballot inside their local county Board of Elections office.
Help to Make a Plan	Before the election, talk with each individual who is eligible to vote about whether they would like to participate and what support, if any, they need. Consider the following: • Is the individual registered to vote, and is their address current? • How does the person want to vote? In-person on Election Day, early in-person, or by absentee ballot? • Does the individual need transportation, assistance, or an accessibility accommodation? • Does the individual want help learning what candidates and issues will appear on their ballot? • Does the individual understand that the choices on the ballot are theirs to make?
Ohio's 2026 Election Dates	• Voter registration deadline: October 5, 2026 • Absentee Voting by mail begins: October 6, 2026 • Early in-person voting begins: October 6, 2026 • Absentee ballot application deadline: October 28, 2006 • Election Day: November 3, 2026 (Polls open 6:30am – 7:30pm)

The Provider's Role in the Voting Process

Provider Do's	• Check whether the individual wants to vote; • Do assist with checking their registration; • Do provide neutral information; • Do support and assist with transportation to and from voting precinct; • Do help identify any accessibility needs; • Do respect the privacy and choice of the individual voting.
Provider Don'ts	• Don't tell someone who to vote for; • Don't complete a ballot based on what <i>you think</i> the person wants; • Don't pressure someone to vote or not vote; • Don't share how a person voted; • Don't assume someone cannot vote because of their disability or guardianship.
OPRA's Advocacy Army	Want to get more involved in state advocacy? Join OPRA for our Advocacy Army training. Learn the core parts of what it takes to be an effective advocate for Ohio's I/DD service system. This members-only training is designed for providers, their non-profit board members, and the people and families they support. Training consists of two in-person trainings (9/11/26 and 9/28/26) and an Advocacy Day at the Ohio Statehouse on September 29, 2026. CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!!



For more information on voting resources, please contact Rachel Hayes, Director of Residential Resources, at rhayes@opra.org.

The OPRA Advantage



OPRA membership gives you access to the tools, training, and support providers need to stay compliant and deliver high-quality services. From the Great Provider Playbook to expert policy guidance and a strong provider network, OPRA helps you stay focused on what matters most—supporting people with IDD. To learn more about becoming a member of OPRA, please contact Sonya Summers, Member Communication Manager, at ssummers@opra.org.



- Community • Advocacy • Resources • Experiences •
- Training • Support • Peer Networking •
- Quality • Leadership •