

FAQ: Governor and Lieutenant Governor



What is the Governor and Lieutenant Governor?

The Governor serves as the chief executive officer of Ohio's state government, and the [Lieutenant Governor](#) serves as the second ranking officer. Both roles are part of Ohio's executive branch, which also includes the Attorney General, Auditor of State, Secretary of State, Treasurer of State, State Board of Education, the Governor's cabinet, and boards and commissions whose members are appointed by the Governor. The Lieutenant Governor is also first officer in line to succeed the Governor of Ohio.

How long is a Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's term? Are there term limits?

Ohio Governors and Lieutenant Governors are elected together to a four-year term. Yes, there are term limits, as Governors and Lieutenant Governors can only be elected for two consecutive terms.

Are the Governor and Lieutenant Governor political actors?

Yes, they are partisan officials. Candidates have their party affiliation listed on the ballot.

What are the responsibilities of the Governor?

- **State Budget:** The Governor is responsible for proposing the biannual state budget during every odd-numbered year. After presenting his budget in what is called the "Blue Book," the Ohio General Assembly then uses the first half of the year to review Governor's proposed budget and create their own version for the Governor to sign and put into effect. The Governor does have the ability to strike out portions of the revised budget bill without approving the rest of it. However, he cannot add to or change the bill specifically through line-item vetoes. Ohio's operating budget for 2021-2022 totaled nearly \$75 billion. Historically, three fourths of Ohio's budget is used to pay for our K-12 schools, Medicaid, and our prison and jail system.
- **Redistricting Commission:** The Governor serves on Ohio's [Redistricting Commission](#) alongside six other members. Together, they are tasked with redrawing both state and congressional districts every ten years.
- **Appointment Power:** The Governor makes important [appointments](#) of directors to the State of Ohio [Cabinet Offices](#), which include a spectrum of agencies from the Department of Commerce and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to the Department of Public Safety and Department of Transportation.
- **Legislative Duties:** The Governor has the ability to sign legislation into law, as well as veto new bills passed by the General Assembly. However, if there is a supermajority of one political party in the state legislature, the General Assembly can override a gubernatorial veto through a three-fifths vote from both the Ohio House and the Ohio Senate.
- **Executive Orders:** Governors have the power to make [Executive Orders](#), which are formal orders issued specifically to cabinet departments requiring certain actions to be taken.
- **Clemency Authority:** Under Article III, Section 11 of the Ohio Constitution, the Governor has the power to issue reprieves (a temporary delay of a scheduled execution), commutations (a reduction in the inmate's sentence), and pardons (which forgive entirely the remaining prison sentence). These powers are known collectively as clemency powers.

What are the responsibilities of the Lieutenant Governor?

- **Succession Duties:** The main role of the Lieutenant Governor is to assume the role as Governor in the event that the Governor leaves office either temporarily or permanently.
- **Department Involvement:** The Ohio Governor makes important [appointments](#) of directors to the State of Ohio [Cabinet Offices](#), which include a spectrum of agencies. The Lieutenant Governor can be appointed to serve as the director of one of these agencies within the Governor's cabinet, as well as serve in an advisory capacity to any non-elective board, agency, committee, or commission in the executive department.
- **Governor Representation:** The Lieutenant Governor may attend any board, agency, committee, or commission as the Governor's representative. The Lieutenant Governor can also be appointed by the Governor to any special assignment that is considered of interest to the state.

What are the requirements for running for Governor or Lieutenant Governor?

- Candidates [must](#) be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old, and be a resident in the state of Ohio.
- To obtain a spot on the ballot, gubernatorial candidates must file a [petition](#) signed by at least 1,000 qualified voters who are members of the same political party as the candidate or joint candidates.
- Candidates for Governor must run as a joint candidate alongside the Lieutenant Governor and file a joint petition. A petition for the office of Governor, alone, or the office of Lieutenant Governor, alone, cannot be accepted.

Questions for Gubernatorial Candidates?

If you have the opportunity to speak with gubernatorial candidates, whether at a campaign event, meet and greet, or rally, here are a few examples of important questions to ask to get to know.

- Do you support abolition of the death penalty, and would you use your clemency authority to commute the sentences of death row inmates?
- Do you oppose partisan gerrymandering? What will you do to advocate for fair districts, especially within your role on the Ohio Redistricting Commission?
- How will you address racial, socioeconomic, gender, and/or regional disparities in the criminal legal system?
 - Will you choose individuals to lead your cabinet offices who also align with this important mission?
- Would you support a statewide law to protect LGBTQ Ohioans from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations? Why or why not?
 - Will you choose individuals to lead your cabinet offices who also align with this important mission?
 - Are you open to working with politicians from both sides of the aisle to ensure Ohio is a safe, equitable place to live for all individuals?