

2018 JAIL VOTER REGISTRATION: A COMPARISON



DIRECT VOLUNTEER-VOTER CONTACT RESULTED IN FAR GREATER VOTER REGISTRATION/BALLOT CASTING NUMBERS

In Ohio many people in jail retain the right to vote. Ohio only bars from voting individuals currently incarcerated on a felony conviction; individuals in jail pretrial on any charge or serving a misdemeanor sentence may vote. In 2018 Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates (NOVA) and All Voting is Local registered jailed voters in three Northeast Ohio counties. Registering individuals in jail to vote and helping them cast an absentee ballot is an important way to maintain connections with the outside world. **But the success of the registration depends greatly on volunteer's ability to speak directly with jailed voters.**

THE TAKEAWAY:

Contact with incarcerated voters is vital. Participation among voters increased problems with forms were minimized when volunteers were able to speak directly with incarcerated people and walk them through the process of completing the forms, and answer any questions about the election process. When this engagement was not available to voters, registration and voting rates were extremely low.

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► DIRECT VOLUNTEER-VOTER CONTACT: IN-PERSON VOTER REGISTRATION AND ABSENTEE BALLOT DRIVE

CUYAHOGA COUNTY JAILS: TURNOUT RATE 79%

In 2018, NOVA assisted 365 voters at the Cuyahoga, Bedford, and Euclid Jails. Due to delayed delivery of ballots, 145 (54%) of those requesting a Vote-at-Jail ballot received a ballot in jail, while 120 (45%) did not. Of the NOVA Vote-at-Jail applicants who did receive ballots, the turnout rate was 79%, compared to 34% age-adjusted precinct turnout.

LAKE COUNTY JAILS: TURNOUT RATE 62%

In October 2018, All Voting is Local conducted a voter registration and absentee ballot drive at the Lake County Jail (LCJ). The average daily population of the LCJ in 2018 was 349. Overall, All Voting is Local volunteers interacted with 77 incarcerated voters, helping them complete voter registration and/or absentee ballot request forms. Of these 77 incarcerated voters, 48 went on to successfully cast a ballot, for a turnout rate of 62%.

► NO VOLUNTEER-VOTER CONTACT: DROPPING OFF FORMS FOR JAILED VOTERS TO COMPLETE ON THEIR OWN

In 2018 jail voter registration at the following jails was limited to volunteers dropping off voter registration and absentee ballot request forms.

FRANKLIN COUNTY JAIL:
FOUR REQUESTS WITH ZERO COMPLETED

LORAIN COUNTY JAIL:
JUST ONE VOTER REGISTRATION/BALLOT REQUEST

While direct volunteer-voter contact resulted in *high voter turnout rates* at the Cuyahoga County and Lake County jails, conversely, simply dropping off forms at Franklin County and Lorain County jails resulted in *zero and one ballots cast*, respectively.