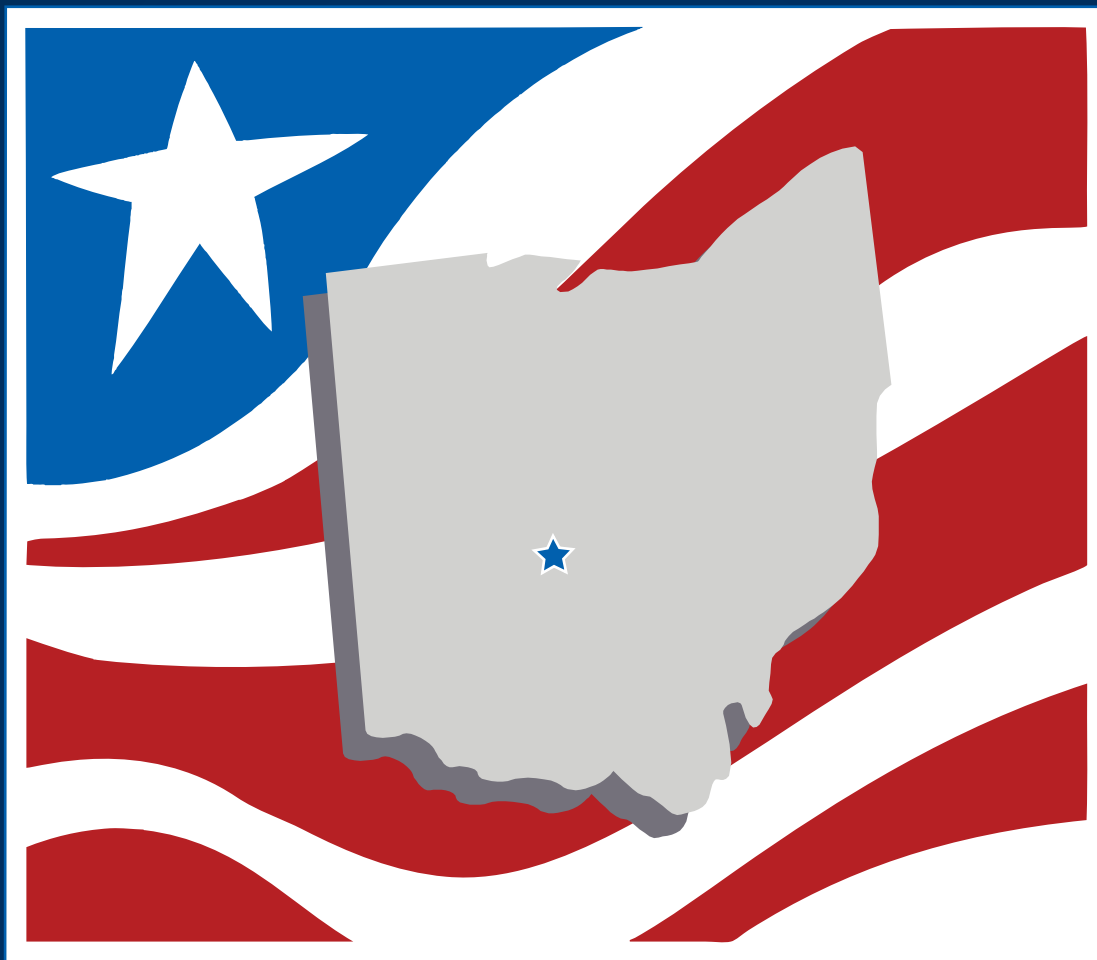


# Ohio Votes: Civic Engagement in the Buckeye State, 2002-2006



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# Acknowledgments

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The author owes a great deal of thanks to many people for their help on this project. I would especially like to thank Estelle Rogers for her thoughtful comments and advice.

# Executive Summary

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Ohio Votes: Civic Engagement in the Buckeye State, 2002–2006 provides a concise review of the population and voter participation of various demographic groups in the November 2006 elections. The report is based largely on the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). Key findings include:

- The Ohio electorate does not accurately reflect the state's general population. Young adults, lower-income citizens and people of color are underrepresented in Ohio's electorate.
- Ohio's 2002–06 population grew at a much slower rate compared to the U.S. as a whole: 1 percent compared with 4 percent between 2002 and 2006.
- Ohio's population became more diverse from 2002 to 2006, in part because of a net decline in the White population and in part because the Latino and Asian populations grew by 14 and 17 percent, respectively.
- Ohio's White and Black voting-eligible populations declined by more than 100,000 between 2002 and 2006.
- A greater percentage of Ohioans of all races were registered in 2004 than in 2000; a greater percentage of eligible White and Black Ohioans were registered in 2006 than in 2002.
- The disparity in registration rates between White and Black eligible Ohioans was more pronounced in non-presidential election years, 2002 and 2006.
- Ohioans were more likely to have voted in the 2006 election than were Americans as a whole.
- Older voters make up a larger share of the electorate than their share of the voting-eligible population merits.
- The disparity in voting rates between racial and ethnic groups in Ohio widened between 2002 and 2006.

# Introduction

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This report examines Ohio's population and rates of electoral participation between 2002 and 2006, and compares them to the United States as a whole. The report's major focal points include rates of eligibility, registration and voter turnout by race or ethnicity, age and income.

The largest survey of voting behavior is the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS and Population Estimates Program are the primary sources of data for this report, which presents frequency tables generated from responses to the November 2006 CPS. Some cross-tabulations are provided to show how those responses interact with race, income and age.

This report is organized in three major sections: population, registration and voting. In the first section, we describe the size and demographic composition of Ohio's overall population and voting-eligible population. Next, we examine the racial (and ethnic), age and income characteristics of the state's registered population. We conclude by describing some of the disparities in the composition of the registered and voting populations.

The data show that Ohioans who are White, those who are older and those who are more affluent are more likely to register to vote and turn out at the polls.

**Summary Table: Percent of Ohio Population Eligible to Vote, Voting, and Not Voting, by Demographic Characteristics, 2006**

Demographic Category	Voter Eligible	Registered	Voters	Non-Voters
<b>RACE</b>				
White	85%	86%	87%	82%
Non-White	15%	14%	14%	18%
Black	11%	10%	10%	12%
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>				
Less than \$25,000	21%	17%	15%	31%
\$25,000 - \$74,999	52%	52%	54%	57%
More than \$75,000	27%	30%	32%	10%
<b>AGE GROUP</b>				
Under 30	22%	18%	13%	32%
30 to 64	62%	63%	65%	57%
65 and Over	16%	19%	21%	11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

## Population

There was not a significant population change in Ohio between 2002 and 2006. Ohio's population topped 11.4 million in 2002. A growth rate of 1 percent resulted in a 2006 population of approximately 11,478,000. Table 1 shows Ohio and U. S. population growth.

**Table 1. Ohio and U.S. Population Change, 2002 – 2006**

	2002	2006	Change	Percentage Change
Ohio	11,415	11,478	63	1%
United States	288,126	299,398	11,272	4%

*Numbers in the thousands*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006*

Ohio's population is less racially and ethnically diverse than the U.S. as a whole. People of color make up 17 percent of Ohio's population but 34 percent of the U.S. population. Compared to the national population, Ohio's Latino population is also very small. Approximately 2 percent of Ohio's population is Latino, whereas Latinos make up close to 15 percent of the nation's population.

Table 2 contrasts Ohio's racial and ethnic diversity with that of the U.S. population.

**Table 2: Ohio and U.S. Racial/Ethnic Diversity, 2006**

	Ohio	United States
White	83%	66%
Non-White	17%	34%
Black	12%	12%
Latino	2%	15%
Asian	2%	5%
Other	1%	3%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2006*

There is significant variation in the growth rates of Ohio's racial and ethnic groups. Ohio's non-White population groups grew by more than 100,000 people between 2002 and 2006, a 6 percent growth rate. The Asian and Latino populations grew the fastest among all racial and ethnic groups, at 17 and 14 percent, respectively.

Ohio experienced a net decline in the White population — 41,000 fewer Whites lived in Ohio in 2006 than did in 2002. Table 3 shows Ohio's population and population change by race from 2002 to 2006.

**Table 3: Ohio Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2002 and 2006**

	2002		2006		2002 – 2006	
	Total	Percent Total	Total	Percent Total	Numeric Population Change	Percent Population Change
White	9,555	84%	9,514	83%	-41	-0%
Non-White	1,860	16%	1,964	17%	104	6%
Black	1,326	12%	1,357	12%	31	2%
Latino	236	2%	268	2%	32	14%
Asian	149	1%	175	2%	26	17%
Total	11,415		11,478		63	1%

Numbers in thousands

Source: US Census Bureau, Estimates of the Population by Selected Groups for the United States and States, 2002 and 2006

While Ohio's population grew by 1 percent, Ohio's voting-eligible population declined from 8.4 million to 8.3 million. Table 4 shows the respective population changes in the Ohio and U.S. voting-eligible populations between 2002 and 2006.

**Table 4: Ohio and U.S. Voting Eligible Population Change, 2002 and 2006**

	2002		2006		2002 – 2006	
	VEP	Percent VEP of Population	VEP	Percent VEP of Population	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Ohio	8,382	73%	8,319	73%	-63	-1%
United States	192,656	67%	201,000	68%	8,344	4%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Despite a growth in Ohio's overall population, the voting-eligible population declined; the White and Black voting-eligible populations declined significantly. However, the non-White voting-eligible population overall expanded, suggesting significant growth in other (non-Black) minority voting-eligible populations.

This report is unable to present registration and voting data on Asians and Latinos because the CPS's sample sizes for Ohio's Asian and Latino populations were too small to be accurate. Table 5 shows significant non-White and non-Black growth in Ohio's voting-eligible population from 2002 to 2006.

**Table 5: Ohio Voting Eligible Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2002 – 2006**

Race/Ethnicity	2002	2006	Numeric Change	Percent Change
White	7,214	7,105	-109	-2%
Non-White	1,168	1,214	46	4%
Black	974	873	-101	-10%
Total	8,382	8,319	-63	-1%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Of Ohio's voting-eligible population reporting income in 2006, 21 percent earned less than \$25,000; 19 percent earned between \$25,000 and \$39,999; 22 percent earned between \$40,000 and \$59,999; 24 percent earned between \$60,000 and \$99,999; and 14 percent earned more than \$100,000.

Table 6 shows the composition of Ohio's voting-eligible population by income.

**Table 6: Ohio Voting Eligible Population by Income, 2006**

	VEP	Percent of Total VEP
Less than \$25,000	1,401	21%
\$25,000 – 39,999	1,257	19%
\$40,000 – 59,999	1,459	22%
\$60,000 – 99,999	1,602	24%
\$100,000 & over	914	14%
Total Reporting Income	6,633	–

*Numbers in thousands*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006*

In terms of age groups, the greatest population change was in the 30-to-64 age group: a 184,000-person decline. Table 7 shows that Ohio's under-30 voting-eligible group increased at a greater rate than the overall Ohio voting-eligible populations and older age groups.

**Table 7: Ohio Voting Eligible Population by Age, 2002 – 2006**

	2002	2006	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Under 30	1,736	1,839	103	6%
30 to 64	5,300	5,116	-184	-4%
65 & over	1,346	1,364	18	1%
Total	8,382	8,319	-63	-1%

*Numbers in thousands*

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006*

## Voter Registration

Black and White registration rates reached near-parity in 2004 but widened significantly in 2006, to the disadvantage of Blacks. Overall, Ohioans' 2004 and 2006 registration rates set a record within the last decade. A greater percentage of Ohioans of all races were registered in 2004 than in 2000; a greater percentage of eligible White and Black Ohioans were registered in 2006 than in 2002. Table 8 shows Ohio's registration as a percent of voting-eligible populations by race between 1998 and 2006.

**Table 8: Ohio Registration as a Percent of Voting Eligible Population by Race, 1998 to 2006**

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
White	65%	69%	67%	73%	72%
Black	65%	66%	61%	72%	66%
Total	65%	68%	66%	72%	71%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

Among voting-eligible Ohioans reporting income less than \$25,000, 62 percent were registered to vote in the 2006 election. That number was greater for each increase in income bracket. Of those voting-eligible Ohioans earning more than \$100,000, 88 percent were registered to vote.

Table 9 shows how disparities in registration rates result in an Ohio electorate that does not accurately reflect Ohio's voting-eligible population.

**Table 9: Ohio Registration by Income, 2006**

	Registered	Registered as Percent of VEP
Less than \$25,000	864	62%
\$25,000 – 39,999	925	74%
\$40,000 – 59,999	1,103	76%
\$60,000 – 99,999	1,279	80%
\$100,000 & over	805	88%
Reporting Total	4,976	

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Ohioans under 30 showed a marked improvement in their registration rate — an increase from 48 percent to 59 percent — between 2002 and 2006. Still, voting-eligible Ohioans under age 30 are much less likely to be registered than their older counterparts: the 30–64 and 65-and-over age groups are both registered to vote at a much greater rate.

While almost 4 of 5 older Ohioans were registered to vote, less than 3 of 5 Ohioans under 30 were registered. Table 10 shows how Ohio's registered voters did not reflect the larger voting-eligible



populations because of the disparity in registration rates by age.

**Table 10: Ohio Registration as a Percent of Voting Eligible Population by Age, 2002 – 2006**

	2002	2006
Under 30	48%	59%
30 to 64	68%	73%
65 & over	77%	79%
Total	66%	71%

*Numbers in thousands*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

## Voter Turnout

The existence of racial disparities in voting is well known. In Ohio, the disparity in voter turnout by race was more pronounced in 2006 than in 2002. Whites' voting rate increased from 45 percent to 55 percent of their voting-eligible population. In contrast, non-Whites' voting rate started at a low percentage of their voting-eligible population (37 percent) and increased by less than Whites' (to 43 percent).

Table II shows the modest increase in each racial group's voting rate.

**Table II: Ohio Voter Turnout by Race, 2002 – 2006**

	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
White	67%	45%	76%	55%
Non-White	65%	37%	65%	43%
Black	66%	40%	68%	45%
Total	67%	44%	75%	53%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November Supplements

Ohioans were more likely to turn out to vote in 2006 than Americans as a whole. Blacks in Ohio voted at a greater rate than the national rate for Black Americans.

Table 12 shows the relatively low rates of non-White voting participation as compared to White voting on the national level; it also shows the relatively higher voting rates among each Ohio racial group as compared to its national counterpart.

**Table 12: Ohio and U.S. Voter Turnout, 2006**

	U.S. Percent Eligible Voting	Ohio Percent Eligible Voting
White	51%	55%
Non-White	41%	43%
Black	32%	45%
Total	48%	53%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Table 13 shows Ohio's voter turnout by income. Ohioans earning less than \$25,000 were less likely to vote — only 39 percent did so — than Ohioans in the next highest income bracket. Fifty-four percent of Ohioans earning \$25,000 to \$39,999 voted. Each subsequently higher income bracket has higher turnout rates than the next lower bracket.

Table 13 shows the voter turnout by income group for 2006.

**Table 13: Ohio Voter Turnout by Income, 2006**

	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
Less than \$25,000	63%	39%
\$25,000 – 39,999	73%	54%
\$40,000 – 59,999	78%	59%
\$60,000 – 99,999	77%	62%
\$100,000 & over	79%	70%
Total Reporting	74%	56%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2006

Table 14 shows the registration and voting rates of Ohio's voting-eligible population by age.

**Table 14: Ohio Voter Turnout by Age, 2002 and 2006**

	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP	Voted as % of Registered	Voted as % of VEP
Under 30	43%	21%	53%	31%
30 to 64	68%	47%	77%	56%
65 & over	79%	61%	88%	69%
Total	67%	44%	75%	53%

Numbers in thousands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, November 2002 and 2006

# Conclusion

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The strongest disparities in participation are associated with age: 69 percent of eligible Ohioans over 65 voted, compared with 31 percent of eligible Ohioans under 30. Ohio also shows extreme disparities in voting by income level, with 70 percent of eligible persons earning more than \$100,000 voting, compared with 39 percent of eligible persons earning less than \$25,000.

Though both Blacks and Whites added voters between 2002 and 2006, the gap between these two groups' participation in both registration and voting widened during that period.

Figures 1–5 present the extent to which lower-income Ohioans, young adults and racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in the Ohio electorate.

**Figure 1: Ohio Income Composition of Voter Eligible Population and Electorate, 2006**

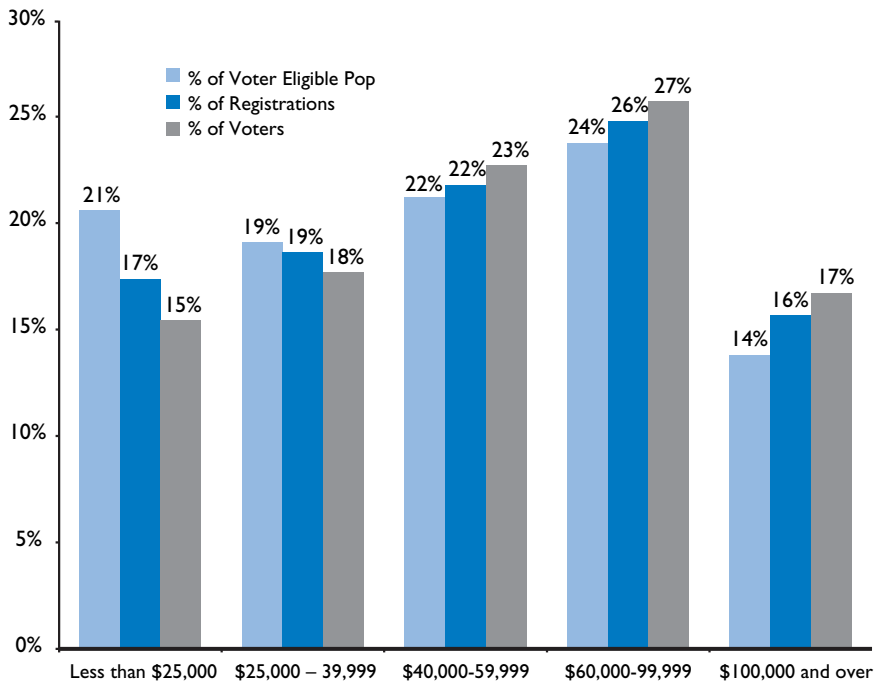


Figure 2: Ohio Age Composition Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006

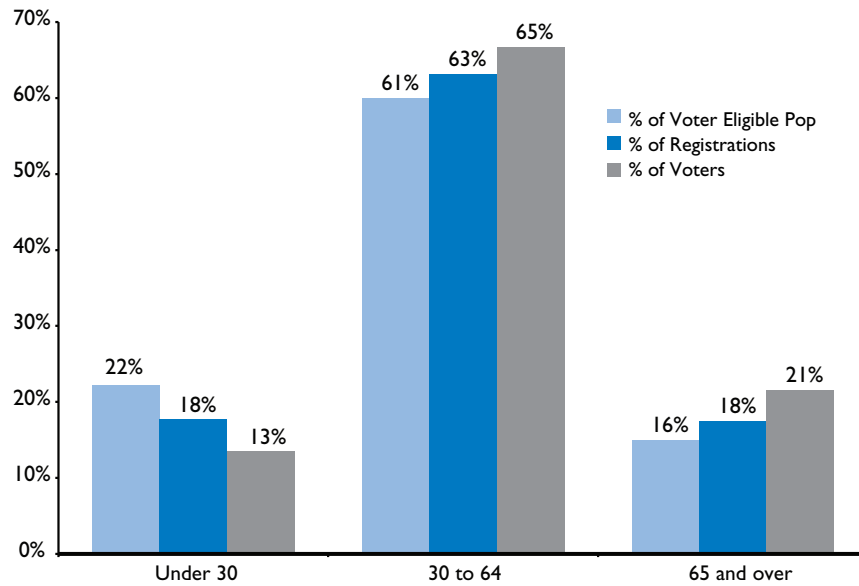


Figure 3: Ohio Racial/Ethnic Composition of Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006

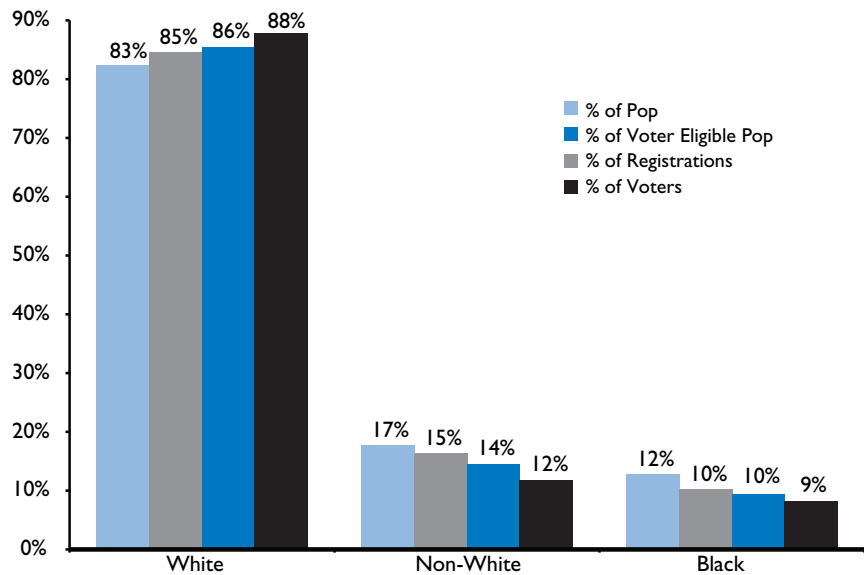


Figure 4: Ohio Education Composition of Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006

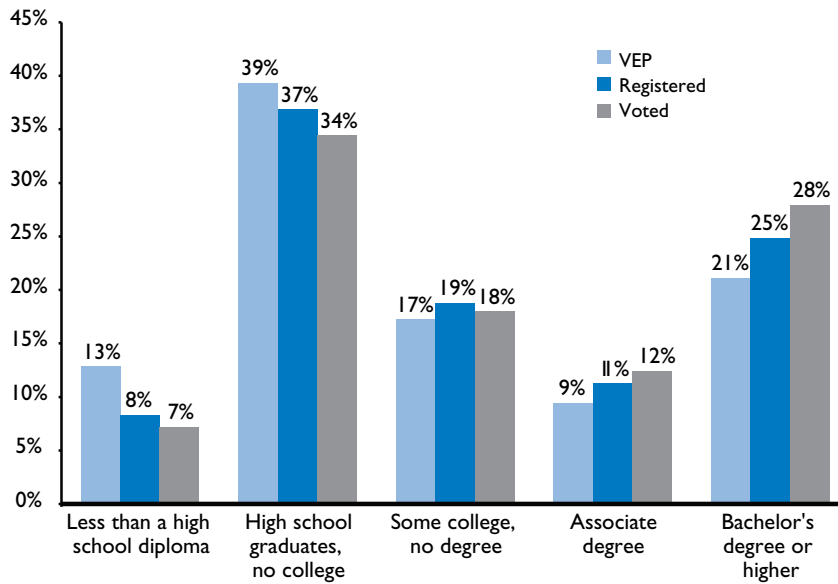
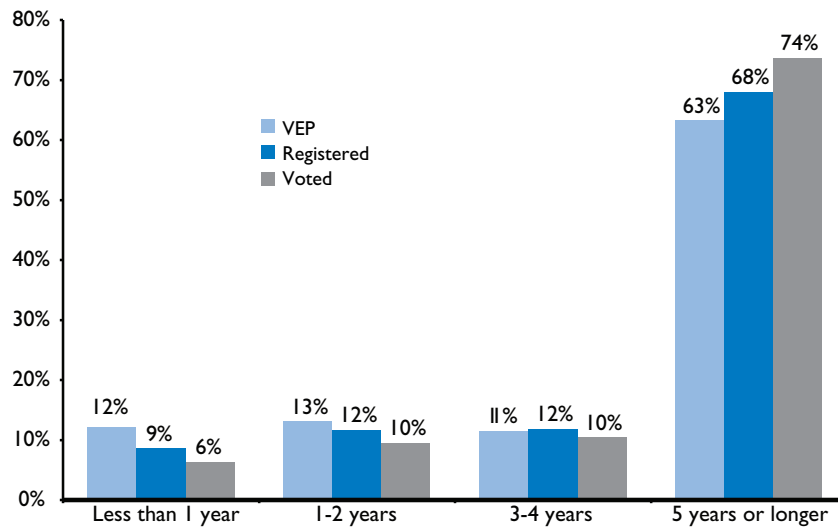


Figure 5: Ohio Residency Composition of Voter Eligible Population, Registered Voters, and Voters, 2006



## About Project Vote

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Since its founding in 1982, Project Vote has been a leading provider of strategic and management services to the voter engagement and civic participation community.

## About the Author

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Ben Spears has been a research assistant with Project Vote since September 2006. He graduated in 2005 from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, where he was active on hunger and homelessness issues. While in the nation's capital, Ben interned with Congressman John Lewis (GA-5) and participated in dialogues with other student leaders as part of the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. Before joining Project Vote, Ben served as researcher and project assistant at multiple international humanitarian organizations in Atlanta, Georgia, including CARE USA.



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