

CHECKLIST · OHIO

Moving to Ohio Checklist: The First 90 Days

What to do in order, when it is due and where to do it. Print it and tick the boxes.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to the address reporting rule, report your new address to USCIS within 10 days. Then write one date on your calendar: residency in Ohio begins **the day you take a job, sign a lease, buy a home or enroll a child in school**, and from that day you have **30 days** to move your license, your vehicle title and your registration to Ohio. But the most expensive decision on this list is made before you sign the lease: in Ohio **a city line is a tax line**, and the two sides of one street do not pay the same tax.

The first 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS	Ten days after you move. The only exemptions are holders of A and G visas and visitors on the visa waiver. USCIS explicitly prefers the online report over the paper AR-11: the online report satisfies the obligation and updates its systems almost immediately, while a mailed AR-11 satisfies the obligation but does not update the systems automatically. uscis.gov/addresschange
☐ Update the address on a pending case separately	The AR-11 obligation and updating the address on a pending application are not the same thing . Do both; if a biometrics notice or a request for evidence goes to the old address you miss the deadline
☐ If you have a court case, report it there too	Mail that never arrives is the most common cause of an in absentia order. If you work with an attorney, tell them about the move as well
☐ If you have an ICE reporting obligation	Ohio has no ICE field office of its own; the state is covered by Detroit . Go to the office named in your own reporting instructions and keep that document

A CITY LINE IS A TAX LINE

- Ohio has **88 counties, more than 250 cities, more than 650 villages and 1,308 townships**, and they do not stack neatly, they sit side by side. The number of local governments with taxing authority is roughly **2,300**.
- **There are three income taxes and their logics differ.** The state income tax levies 0% on the first \$26,050 and, from tax year 2026, a flat **2.75%** above that. The **municipal income tax is normally withheld where you work** and filed on a separate city return; Columbus levies 2.5% and gives full credit up to 2.5% for tax paid to another municipality. The **school district income tax looks only at where you live** and exists in **210 Ohio school districts**.
- **This is where the address trap sits:** Columbus City School District has no school district income tax, but neighboring districts do. Westerville **started a new 0.75% tax on January 1, 2026**; Bexley is 0.75%, Canal Winchester 0.75%, Reynoldsburg 0.50% and Pickerington 1.00%. Moving a few streets over creates a tax that did not exist at your old address.
- **A township address normally pays no municipal income tax at all**, because the municipal income tax is a city or village tax; in return, services come from the township and the county. The school district tax still applies in a township, because it follows residence.
- **The city name on your mailing address does not tell you any of this.** The official answer comes from the Ohio Department of Taxation's **The Finder** address lookup: before you sign a lease, enter your full address and see for yourself which municipality, which school district and which taxing district you are in. One example: Columbus is not only in Franklin County; parts of the city extend into Fairfield and Delaware counties.

The first week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity and gas accounts	Separate the distribution utility from the supplier: the distribution utility never changes, and only the generation portion of the bill can come from another company. The state regulator caps a new customer deposit at \$175 between October 12, 2026 and April 16, 2027 , and the regulator's Natural Gas Customer Bill of Rights lists the ways to establish credit without naming a Social Security number ; AEP Ohio also states in writing that an SSN is optional
☐ Choose a supplier from the official table	The state's own comparison is the Apples to Apples table: price per kWh, contract length, fixed or variable, monthly fees and early termination fees in one place. Use that table rather than an offer at your door or on the phone. Complaint line (800) 686-7826
☐ You may be enrolled in aggregation automatically	Ohio law lets local governments pool residents and enroll eligible residents automatically ; anyone who wants out opts out, and anyone who does nothing stays in. The Columbus program is Clean Energy Columbus , with a supply rate of 10.01 cents per kWh for June 2026 to May 2027; program line 866-856-5654
☐ Library card	The Columbus Metropolitan Library policy asks for no SSN and no proof of address , and the accepted IDs include a passport and a consular ID. For a newcomer it is the official door that asks for the least

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Enroll the children in school	The tuberculosis test must have been given in the United States; a report from Türkiye is not accepted. For immunizations you have 14 days from the start of school. There is no written Turkish support, but free telephone interpretation is available
☐ If you rent, give a forwarding address in writing	Ohio sets no cap on the size of a deposit; the portion above one month's rent or \$50 earns 5% a year if you stay six months or more, and the deposit is returned within 30 days with an itemized written statement. But the tenant must give the landlord a forwarding address in writing or lose the right to sue. Wrongful withholding costs the landlord double damages plus attorney fees

The 30-day clock: license and vehicle

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Know what started the clock	Taking a job, signing a lease, buying a home or enrolling a child in school. All four start the 30 days
☐ Be ready for the status and SSN requirement	Both card tiers require proof of legal presence and proof of an SSN; status is checked through the federal SAVE system and Ohio issues no license to a person without lawful status. Someone whose lawful stay is limited gets a card that is limited term, non-renewable and non-transferable
☐ Line up your interpreter for the test	The test comes in nine languages and Turkish is not one; but a proctored test with your own interpreter is a published right, booked at a driver exam station. The requirement to read traffic signs in English does not go away
☐ Take the first attempt seriously	Over 21, failing the maneuverability or road portion makes a 4-hour classroom plus 4-hour behind-the-wheel course mandatory before the second attempt
☐ Go to three bodies separately	Tests: a driver exam station. Card, plates and registration: a deputy registrar. The vehicle title: the county clerk of courts
☐ If you shipped a car, use the six-month rule	A vehicle bought at least six months before the move is exempt from Ohio sales tax; ask for the CV exemption code by name at titling. Otherwise Franklin County applies 8.00% , which is roughly \$1,200 on a \$15,000 car
☐ Never let the insurance lapse for a day	The minimums are \$25,000 / \$50,000 / \$25,000. Ohio runs a random selection verification program and suspends the license of a driver who cannot show coverage
☐ Emissions testing depends on your county	E-Check applies only in seven northeast counties (Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Summit). Franklin County and the whole Columbus area are outside it

WITHOUT INSURANCE: FREE HOSPITAL CARE IS A LEGAL DUTY, NOT A KINDNESS

- The program is the **Hospital Care Assurance Program (HCAP)**. Every hospital that takes money from the state program, which in practice is every general hospital in Ohio, **must provide basic, medically necessary hospital-level services free of charge** to a person who lives in Ohio, is not on Medicaid, and has income at or below **100% of the federal poverty level**. The definition covers people residing temporarily as well: students, seasonal workers and people staying temporarily with relatives.
- But it does not happen by itself: **a signed application is required**. Go to the billing office and **ask for the HCAP application by name**, and ask separately about the hospital's own financial assistance policy; the two are different things.
- **For emergencies there is NCEMA**. Non-Citizen Emergency Medical Assistance covers treatment of an emergency medical condition for people who do not meet the citizenship or satisfactory immigration status test; the applicant **does not have to verify a Social Security number and does not have to verify citizenship or immigration status**, and once approved, eligibility stays open for **twelve months** from the month of application. Ask the hospital's financial counselor or your county Job and Family Services office for it by name.
- **We leave one question open**: no Ohio state page says whether HCAP applies regardless of immigration status. The pages we read impose no immigration status condition, but they do not say status is irrelevant either. Put that question directly to the billing office when you apply.
- Ordinary Medicaid is separate: Ohio expanded adult Medicaid (ages 19 to 64, at or below 138% of the federal poverty level), but **immigration status matters there** and a **five-year wait** applies to people granted qualified status, with refugees, asylees and certain other groups outside the wait. Apply at benefits.ohio.gov. **Ohio has no state exchange of its own**; individual coverage is bought through healthcare.gov.

Within 60 to 90 days and after

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Write down how many returns you owe	Federal (1040), state (IT 1040), a city return (IR-25 in Columbus) and SD 100 if your school district levies a tax. You can settle all four at once in The Finder
☐ Find out who collects your city return	There are three possibilities: cities that run their own tax office (Columbus is one, at 90 West Broad Street, 614-645-7370 , due April 15), RITA , or CCA . The question to ask is not what is my city's rate but does my city collect its own, or is it RITA or CCA
☐ You pay the credit difference yourself	If you live in Columbus and work in a lower-rate suburb, nobody withholds the difference; you pay it on the IR-25. If you will owe \$200 or more for the year, Columbus requires quarterly estimated payments : April 15, June 15, September 15 and January 15
☐ Do not skip the school district return	The SD 100 goes to the same agency as the state return but is a separate form . If an employer withheld it by mistake, you still have to file the SD 100 to get the money back

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ An ITIN if you cannot get an SSN	Form W-7. Ohio has a real advantage here: nine Ohio IRS offices authenticate ITIN documents (Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Lima, Toledo, Youngstown), so you need not put your passport in the mail . An appointment is required at 844-545-5640 , and the IRS says getting one can take several weeks, so call before tax season rather than during it
☐ Does the city form accept an ITIN?	We cannot answer this. Nothing on the Columbus Income Tax Division pages we read states whether an ITIN is accepted on the IR-25. One phone call: 614-645-7370 , and note what you are told with the date
☐ Turkish military registration	For men born in 2007 the deadline is December 31, 2026. Through the Consulate General in Chicago or through e-Devlet

Set your transport expectations at the start

- **Columbus has no rail transit of any kind:** no subway, no light rail, no commuter rail, no streetcar, no airport train. The only city in the state with a rail system is Cleveland.
- **Columbus is also one of the largest American metropolitan areas with no Amtrak station.** The nearest stations are Cleveland and Cincinnati, both roughly two hours away, and the long-distance trains call there in the middle of the night.
- The Columbus agency is **COTA** and all 38 fixed routes are buses. A single ride is \$2.00, the 2-hour and day passes are \$4.50 and a 31-day pass is \$62.00; paying by app or Smartcard activates **fare capping**. Reduced fare eligibility is benefit-based, not status-based.
- **Two services you would assume work do not:** the free downtown circulator **CBUS is currently not in service**, and we **could not confirm that the airport bus AirConnect is a current service**. Do not count on an airport shuttle.
- **No Ohio airport has a nonstop flight to Istanbul.** The only international nonstops from Columbus (CMH) are Toronto, Montreal and Cancun; it has no transatlantic nonstop at all.

IF YOU ARE NOT A CITIZEN, REMEMBER

- Voter registration and voting are for citizens only. Registering or voting without citizenship is a federal crime.
- Talk to an immigration attorney before you apply for, or drop, any public benefit.
- **In Ohio a city cannot shield immigrants from federal enforcement.** ORC 9.63 has been in force since April 14, 2006 and bars a municipality from adopting any ordinance, policy, directive, rule or resolution that would materially hinder local employees from cooperating with immigration services. The sanction is not criminal: the municipality **loses its eligibility for state homeland security funding**. Our research also **found no Ohio law limiting** such cooperation.
- Check your I-94 record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov and keep a screenshot after you log in. A correction is made **by appointment with the port**, not by walking up to an airport counter: the Columbus port is at 6431 Alum Creek Drive Suite A, Groveport OH 43125, **+1 614-497-1865**. **Do not go to CBP to ask about status**; at a port CBP's job is entry and inspection.
- The official notice in your hand outranks any address on any web page. Your hearing notice names your court and your reporting instructions name your ICE office; photograph and keep both.

Deadlines, rates and fees change. Check the relevant agency's official page before you act. Information as of October 6, 2026.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN OHIO

Have a question about your immigration status?

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