

City of Cleveland Domestic Partnership Registry: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Domestic Partnership Registry?

A domestic partner registry creates a uniform system through which individuals in committed and caring relationships can record their partnerships, making it easier for private and public institutions to recognize such couples for purposes such as:

- Hospital and jail visitation
- Employers' health insurance benefits
- Authorization to pick up children from school
- Access to recreational facilities

Who may register as Domestic Partners?

Cleveland's registry is open to same- and different-sex couples. Couples need not be permanent residents of Cleveland. Prospective domestic partners must be two adults who are not married to, or registered with, anyone else, and must:

- Share a common residence (although they need not own it, and do not cease to share a common residence if one leaves but intends to return)
- Affirm they have an intimate relationship and share responsibility for each other's common welfare
- File a notarized form with the city

Why is a Domestic Partnership Registry important to families?

- It makes it easier for institutions and businesses to give non-marital families important benefits
- It encourages all families to feel welcome and valued in Cleveland
- It gives widowed seniors certain benefits without remarrying, which could put them at risk of losing benefits from Social Security or a deceased spouse's pension

Why is a Registry important to local businesses and institutions?

- It makes it easier to create family-friendly policies for all customers and patrons
- It removes the administrative burden to define and verify the existence of intimate and family relationships
- It helps local employers attract a talented, diverse workforce and forge new businesses relationships

Does Ohio's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage prohibit Domestic Partnership Registries in Ohio?

No. Local governments in Ohio have long had the power to keep lists and registries of citizens. Ohio's marriage amendment did not take away that power. Cleveland's domestic partnership registry:

- Does not create a legal status, as defined by Ohio law
- Does not approximate marriage

How much will the Domestic Partnership Registry cost taxpayers?

Nothing. Registrants pay the full administrative costs of the registry as a fee when they sign up.