



Ohio Revised Code

Section 323.73 Disposal of abandoned land at public auction.

Effective: April 9, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 497

(A) Except as provided in division (G) of this section or section 323.78 of the Revised Code, a parcel of abandoned land that is to be disposed of under this section shall be disposed of at a public auction scheduled and conducted as described in this section. At least twenty-one days prior to the date of the public auction, the clerk of court or sheriff of the county shall advertise the public auction using at least one of the following methods:

- (1) In the print or digital edition of a newspaper of general circulation that meets the requirements of section 7.12 of the Revised Code in the county in which the land is located;
- (2) On the official public notice web site established under section 125.182 of the Revised Code;
- (3) On the web site and social media account of the county.

The advertisement shall include the date, time, and place of the auction, the permanent parcel number of the land if a permanent parcel number system is in effect in the county as provided in section 319.28 of the Revised Code or, if a permanent parcel number system is not in effect, any other means of identifying the parcel, and a notice stating that the abandoned land is to be sold subject to the terms of sections 323.65 to 323.79 of the Revised Code.

(B) The sheriff of the county or a designee of the sheriff shall conduct the public auction at which the abandoned land will be offered for sale. To qualify as a bidder, a person shall file with the sheriff on a form provided by the sheriff a written acknowledgment that the abandoned land being offered for sale is to be conveyed in fee simple to the successful bidder. At the auction, the sheriff of the county or a designee of the sheriff shall begin the bidding at an amount equal to the total of the impositions against the abandoned land, plus the costs apportioned to the land under section 323.75 of the Revised Code. The abandoned land shall be sold to the highest bidder. The county sheriff or designee may reject any and all bids not meeting the minimum bid requirements specified in this division.



(C) Except as otherwise permitted under section 323.74 of the Revised Code, the successful bidder at a public auction conducted under this section shall pay the sheriff of the county or a designee of the sheriff a deposit of at least ten per cent of the purchase price in cash, or by bank draft or official bank check, at the time of the public auction, and shall pay the balance of the purchase price within thirty days after the day on which the auction was held. At the time of the public auction and before the successful bidder pays the deposit, the sheriff or a designee of the sheriff may provide notice to the successful bidder that failure to pay the balance of the purchase price within the prescribed period shall be considered a default under the terms of the sale and shall result in retention of the deposit as payment for the costs associated with advertising and offering the abandoned land for sale at a future public auction. If such a notice is provided to the successful bidder and the bidder fails to pay the balance of the purchase price within the prescribed period, the sale shall be deemed rejected by the county board of revision due to default, and the sheriff shall retain the full amount of the deposit. In such a case, rejection of the sale shall occur automatically without any action necessary on the part of the sheriff, county prosecuting attorney, or board. If the amount retained by the sheriff is less than the total costs of advertising and offering the abandoned land for sale at a future public auction, the sheriff or county prosecuting attorney may initiate an action to recover the amount of any deficiency from the bidder in the court of common pleas of the county or in a municipal court with jurisdiction.

Following a default and rejection of sale under this division, the abandoned land involved in the rejected sale shall be disposed of in accordance with sections 323.65 to 323.79 of the Revised Code or as otherwise prescribed by law. The defaulting bidder, any member of the bidder's immediate family, any person with a power of attorney granted by the bidder, and any pass-through entity, trust, corporation, association, or other entity directly or indirectly owned or controlled by the bidder or a member of the defaulting bidder's immediate family shall be prohibited from bidding on the abandoned land at any future public auction for five years from the date of the bidder's default.

Notwithstanding section 321.261 of the Revised Code, with respect to any proceedings initiated pursuant to sections 323.65 to 323.79 of the Revised Code, from the total proceeds arising from the sale, transfer, or redemption of abandoned land, twenty per cent of such proceeds shall be deposited to the credit of the county treasurer's delinquent tax and assessment collection fund to reimburse the fund for costs paid from the fund for the transfer, redemption, or sale of abandoned land at public auction. Not more than one-half of the twenty per cent may be used by the treasurer for community



development, nuisance abatement, foreclosure prevention, demolition, and related services or distributed by the treasurer to a land reutilization corporation. The balance of the proceeds, if any, shall be distributed to the appropriate political subdivisions and other taxing units in proportion to their respective claims for taxes, assessments, interest, and penalties on the land. Upon the sale of foreclosed lands, the clerk of court shall hold any surplus proceeds in excess of the impositions until the clerk receives an order of priority and amount of distribution of the surplus that are adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction or receives a certified copy of an agreement between the parties entitled to a share of the surplus providing for the priority and distribution of the surplus. Any party to the action claiming a right to distribution of surplus shall have a separate cause of action in the county or municipal court of the jurisdiction in which the land reposes, provided the board confirms the transfer or regularity of the sale. Any dispute over the distribution of the surplus shall not affect or revive the equity of redemption after the board confirms the transfer or sale.

(D) Upon the confirmation of sale or transfer of abandoned land pursuant to this section, the owner's fee simple interest in the land shall be conveyed to the purchaser. A conveyance under this division is free and clear of any liens and encumbrances of the parties named in the complaint for foreclosure attaching before the sale or transfer, and free and clear of any liens for taxes, except for federal tax liens and covenants and easements of record attaching before the sale.

(E) The county board of revision shall reject the sale of abandoned land to any person if it is shown by a preponderance of the evidence that the person is delinquent in the payment of taxes levied by or pursuant to Chapter 307., 322., 5737., 5739., 5741., or 5743. of the Revised Code or any real property taxing provision of the Revised Code. The board also shall reject the sale of abandoned land to any person if it is shown by a preponderance of the evidence that the person is delinquent in the payment of property taxes on any parcel in the county, or to a member of any of the following classes of parties connected to that person:

- (1) A member of that person's immediate family;
- (2) Any other person with a power of attorney appointed by that person;
- (3) A sole proprietorship owned by that person or a member of that person's immediate family;



(4) A partnership, trust, business trust, corporation, association, or other entity in which that person or a member of that person's immediate family owns or controls directly or indirectly any beneficial or legal interest.

(F) If the purchase of abandoned land sold pursuant to this section or section 323.74 of the Revised Code is for less than the sum of the impositions against the abandoned land and the costs apportioned to the land under division (A) of section 323.75 of the Revised Code, then, upon the sale or transfer, all liens for taxes due at the time the deed of the property is conveyed to the purchaser following the sale or transfer, and liens subordinate to liens for taxes, shall be deemed satisfied and discharged.

(G) If the county board of revision finds that the total of the impositions against the abandoned land are greater than the fair market value of the abandoned land as determined by the auditor's then-current valuation of that land, the board, at any final hearing under section 323.70 of the Revised Code, may order the property foreclosed and, without an appraisal or public auction, order the sheriff to execute a deed to the certificate holder or county land reutilization corporation that filed a complaint under section 323.69 of the Revised Code, or to a community development organization, school district, municipal corporation, county, or township, whichever is applicable, as provided in section 323.74 of the Revised Code. Upon a transfer under this division, all liens for taxes due at the time the deed of the property is transferred to the certificate holder, community development organization, school district, municipal corporation, county, or township following the conveyance, and liens subordinate to liens for taxes, shall be deemed satisfied and discharged.