



National Voter Registration Act of 1993

**Voter Registration Training for
Agencies that Serve
People with Disabilities**

**Presented by:
Secretary of State**

Why NVRA?

NVRA Training

The National Voter Registration Act Of 1993

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to:

- enhance voting opportunities for every American;
- remove the vestiges of discrimination.

Historically, we have lower voter registration rates among minority groups, including people with disabilities.

Provisions of NVRA

NVRA Training

Agency-based Voter Registration

Designated agencies must offer voter registration to each person who applies for new benefits or services, for renewal, or for an address change.

- Designated agencies include:
 - All offices that provide public assistance;
 - All offices that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to people with disabilities;
 - DDS-Regional Centers.

42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-5 (“Section 5” agencies)

Provisions of NVRA *(continued)*

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The NVRA requires agencies to offer voter registration services each time a person requests:

- New services or benefits; or
- Renewal or recertification; or
- A change of address.

“Voter registration services” means:

- Distribute a voter registration card (VRC);
- Distribute an NVRA voter preference form (preference form);
- Assist with filling out the VRC;
- Accept and transmit completed VRCs to elections officials; and
- Accept and retain completed preference forms on file for two years.

Special Issues for Regional Centers

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- 1. IPP Review:**
1-3 years; triggers NVRA services.
- 2. Population Mobility:**
Ask if the consumer has moved; provide a VRC to re-register.
- 3. Literacy:**
Not a prerequisite to register or to vote; voting machines have accessibility features; the SOS produces voting materials in accessible formats.
- 4. In-home Assistance:**
Always offer to assist consumers in filling out VRC, regardless of location of NVRA-covered transaction.
- 5. Age:**
17 or older; CA law allows pre-registration.

★ **Special Issues for Regional Centers** *(continued)* ★

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6. **Conservatorship:**
Doesn't disqualify; eligible unless: "adjudged mentally incompetent."
7. **Signature:**
California law allows person to make a mark or use a signature stamp.
8. **Plain Language:**
VRC now has fifth grade reading level; revised NVRA Preference Form.
9. **Agency Staff Training:**
How to comply with NVRA; how to help fill out the VRC.
10. **Neutrality:**
Don't influence choice to register or party preference.

Voter Registration Card (VRC)

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CALIFORNIA VOTER REGISTRATION FORM
SOS

Fill out this form if you are a new voter, have moved or changed your name, or want to change your political party preference. You must be a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old by the next election to use this form. Use blue or black ink. Print clearly.

Your legal name: First name _____ Middle name _____

① _____

Last name _____ *Optional* ③ Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss

Home address – not a P.O. Box or business address – (Number, Street, Ave., Drive, etc. Include N, S, E, W) _____ Apt or unit # _____

④ _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ California county _____

⑤ _____ **C A**

If you do not have a street address, describe where you live (Cross streets, Route, N, S, E, W) _____

⑥ _____

Mailing address – if different from above, or P.O. Box _____

⑦ _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ foreign country _____

⑧ _____

Date of birth _____ U.S. state or foreign country of birth _____

⑨ MM DD 1 9 YY ⑩ _____

CA driver's license or CA ID card # _____ If you do not have a CA driver's license or ID card, list the SSN (last 4 numbers) _____ Phone numbers are posted at polling places on election day.

⑪ _____ If you do not have a CA driver's license or ID card, list the last 4 numbers of your Social Security Number, if you have one. ••••➔

Email (optional) _____ Phone number (optional) _____

⑫ _____ ⑬ _____

14 Do you want to choose a political party preference?
 No Party Preference. No, I do not want to choose a political party preference. (If you check this box, you may not be able to vote for some parties' candidates at a primary election for U.S. President or party committee.)
 Yes, my political party preference is (check one):
 American Independent Party Democratic Party Green Party
 Libertarian Party Peace and Freedom Party Republican Party
 Other (specify): _____

15 To receive a vote-by-mail ballot in all elections, initial here: _____

16 If you were registered to vote before, fill out below:
 First name _____ Middle initial _____ Last name _____
 Previous address where you were registered _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ Previous county _____ Previous political party preference (if any) _____

17 Are you a U.S. citizen? Yes No
 Will you be 18 or older by the next election? Yes No ➔ A "No" answer to either question means you CANNOT register to vote.

18 **Read and sign below.**
 I am a U.S. citizen and will be at least 18 years old on election day. I am not in prison or on parole for a felony. I understand that it is a crime to intentionally provide incorrect information on this form. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the information on this form is true and correct.

▶ _____
 Voter Signature _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
 59 BS _____ 140001 _____

Important! To vote in the next election, you must mail or deliver this card at least 15 days before the next election. New voters who register by mail may have to show their ID at the polling place the first time they vote.

⚡ Tear here and fold. Moisten edge to seal. Do not staple or tape. The bottom part is your receipt. ⚡
 Keep it until you receive a Voter Notification Card in the mail.

As a registered voter, you may vote for any candidate for state or congressional office, regardless of the party preference or lack of party preference chosen by you or the candidate.

Optional
 A Check here if you can be a poll worker.
 (If bilingual, indicate language: _____)
 Check here if you can provide a polling place on election day.
 B. Your ethnicity/race: _____
 C. Check your language preference: English Spanish Spanish
 Chinese Vietnamese Korean Tagalog Japanese
 中文 Việt ngữ 한국어 Tagalog 日本語

Did someone help you fill out or deliver this form?
 If yes, the person who helped you must fill out and sign both parts of this green box.
 Signature _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
 Name, address, and tel.: _____
 Org. name and tel. (if any): _____
 (This part is the voter's receipt.)
 Signature _____ Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
 Name, address, and tel.: _____
 Org. name and tel. (if any): _____

NVRA Voter Preference Form

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Would You Like to Register to Vote?

You may register to vote in California if:

1. You are a United States citizen.
2. You are a resident of California.
3. You are at least 18 years of age (or will be by the date of the next election).
4. You are not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction.
5. You have not been judged by a court to be mentally incompetent.

Important Notices

1. Applying to register or declining to register to vote will **not** affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency.
2. If you would like help in filling out the voter registration application form, we will help you. The decision whether to seek or accept help is yours. You may fill out the application form in private.
3. If you decline to register to vote here today, that information is confidential and may not be used for any purpose other than voter registration. If you register to vote here today, the agency or office at which you are registering is confidential.
4. If you believe that someone has interfered with your right to register or to decline to register to vote, your right to privacy in deciding whether to register or in applying to register to vote, or your right to choose your own political party preference or other political preference, you may file a complaint with the Secretary of State by calling toll-free (800) 345-VOTE (8683) or you may write to: Secretary of State, 1500 - 11th Street, Sacramento, CA, 95814. For more information on elections and voting, please visit the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.ca.gov.
5. If you move to a new address, or if you change your name or want to change your political party preference, you must fill out a new voter registration card.
6. We will retain this Voter Preference Form with this agency. If you choose to register today, we will send your completed voter registration card to the county elections office.

If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today? (Check One)

- Already registered. I am registered to vote at my current residence address.
- Yes. I would like to register to vote. (Please fill out the attached voter registration card.)
- No. I do not want to register to vote.

NOTE: IF YOU DO NOT CHECK A BOX, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO REGISTER TO VOTE AT THIS TIME.

Applicant Name _____

Date _____

Voter Registration Services

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Technology Upgrades

- **Ensure upgrades include the NVRA voter registration process.**

In-Person/Mail

- **Include VRC and preference form in packets.**
- **Offer assistance with completing the VRC.**
- **Follow up once if the forms don't come back.**

Interacting with the Consumer

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Phone

- Ask “If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to register today?”
- Note name and response (yes/no/already registered) on a paper or electronic preference form.
- If the applicant says “yes” then send a VRC or send a link to the online fillable VRC: sos.ca.gov/nvrc/fedform/

Interacting with the Consumer

NVRA Training

Email and Internet Transactions

- **Send preference form and VRC:**
 - Either mail the forms after the online application is complete, or
 - Provide an electronic preference form and a link to the online fillable VRC: www.sos.ca.gov/nvrc/fedform.
- **Coordinate with the Secretary of State and the county elections office to ensure tracking.**

Beyond the NVRA Minimum

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- **Add the Secretary of State's "Register to Vote" button to the agency's Internet homepage.**
- **Keep a supply of VRCs on public counters.**
- **Display voter educational materials; SOS has audio materials.**
- **Order posters, DVDs, and brochures from the Secretary of State NVRA Coordinator:
(916) 657-2166 or nvra@sos.ca.gov.**

HAVA Requirements

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SSN or DL

Federal law requires people registering to vote to fill in either their California DMV Driver License or Identification number or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

Alternative: county elections assigns a unique ID

If an applicant does not have either of these, they will still be registered to vote and will be given a unique identifying number by their county elections official.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Qualifications:

You may register to vote in California if:

1. You are a United States citizen.
2. You are a resident of California.
3. You are at least 18 years of age (or will be by the date of the next election).
4. Not in prison, on parole, serving a state prison sentence in county jail, serving a sentence for a felony pursuant to subdivision (h) of Penal Code section 1170, or on post release community supervision (for more information on the rights of people who have been incarcerated, please see the Secretary of State's Voting Guide for Currently or Formerly Incarcerated Californians).
5. ★ You have not been judged by a court to be mentally incompetent.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Who May Register?

Any Person who: Is a United States Citizen.

If a person is not yet a United States citizen, the person may not register to vote. However, a person who becomes a citizen after the 15th day before the election, and no later than the 7th day before the election, may register and vote by showing proof of citizenship to their local county elections official [CA Elections Code §§ 3500, 3501].

If a person is not a U.S. citizen, he or she should be asked to check the “No” box on the NVRA voter preference form and advised that voter registration assistance is available at the agency should he or she become a naturalized citizen.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Who May Register?

Any person who: Is a resident of California.

A person who lives in California with the intention of remaining. A person who has come to California for temporary purposes and intends to return to another state is not considered a resident for voting purposes. If applicants are uncertain about residency, refer them to their county elections office.

- **Military and Overseas voters:** Federal law permits U.S. citizens to register and vote in federal elections using vote-by-mail procedures. In order to vote in a California federal election, the applicant must have been a California resident immediately prior to his or her departure from the U.S.
- **College students:** The applicant's voter registration should always reflect his or her current residence. However, if he or she has moved into a temporary residence that the applicant does not intend to use as his or her permanent residence, the applicant may continue to use his or her prior residence where he or she was previously registered to vote.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Who May Register?

Any Person who: Is at least 18 years old.

If a person is not yet 18, but will turn 18 by the next election, the person may register any time before the next election [CA Elections Code § 2000].

Note: Any person who is 17 years old will be eligible to pre-register to vote as soon as the VoteCal Statewide Voter Registration System Project ("VoteCal") is completed and certified by the Secretary of State. VoteCal is scheduled for completion in 2015.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Who May Register?

Any Person who: Is not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction.

A person may register to vote if he or she:

- Is awaiting trial or is currently on trial and has not yet been convicted of a felony;
- Has completed parole for a felony conviction; or,
- Is on probation.

Voter Registration Eligibility Requirements

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Who May Register?

Any Person who: Has not been judged by a court to be mentally incompetent.

- Conservatorship alone does not mean a person can't vote. A judge must make an additional finding that a person is "not capable of completing an affidavit of voter registration." [CA Elections Code § 2208].

★ Completing the Voter Registration Card

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Personal Information:

Name: Legal name required

Home Address: This must be the address of residence.

- Include apartment number or space number.
- No business addresses or P.O. Boxes.
- If homeless, the consumer must provide a physical location.

Mailing Address: Must be provided only if different than residence address.

Date of Birth

U.S. State or Foreign Country of Birth

★ Completing the Voter Registration Card

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Political Party Preference:

Check one (1) only: Optional*

If the consumer does not want to choose a political party preference, they are not required to do so. They can mark “No Party Preference. No, I do not want to choose a political party preference.”

*By choosing no party preference, a voter may not be able to vote for some parties' candidates at a primary election for U.S. President or party committee.

★ Completing the Voter Registration Card

NVRA Training

Previously Registered: If previously registered and changing personal information, complete this section in addition to the personal information section.

The consumer can change their political party preference at any time. However, if they change their party preference before an election, the change must be sent to the county elections office and postmarked no later than the 15th day before the date of the election.

The consumer must include their California DMV Driver License/ID or their Social Security number if they have moved to a new county. If an applicant does not have either of these, they will still be registered to vote and will be given a unique identifying number by their county elections official.

★ Completing the Voter Registration Card

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Sign and Date the Form:

- Unsigned forms will be rejected by the county elections official.
- If a person is unable to sign:
 - Make a mark; a witness 18 or over must write the voter's name next to the mark.
 - Use a signature stamp; the voter must stamp and submit the VRC in front of an elections official. [CA Elections Code § 354.5].
- A power of attorney **CANNOT** be used for voter registration.

★ Completing the Voter Registration Card

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What Can Be on the Signature Stamp:

The actual signature of the person with a disability.

A mark or symbol adopted by the person with a disability.

A signature of the name of a person with a disability that is made by another person and is adopted by the person with the disability.

Who Can Use a Signature Stamp:

A person with a disability who, by reason of that disability, is unable to write and owns a signature stamp.

A person using the signature stamp on behalf of the owner of the stamp may only use the stamp in the presence of the owner with the owner's consent.

Processing Completed VR Cards

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Agency staff should:

- Review each card to ensure it is complete and legible;
- Give the consumer the VRC receipt.

Review:

- Elector has answered Yes or No to the following questions:

1. Are you a U.S. citizen?
2. Will you be 18 or older by the next election?

- Name and address of elector
- Date of birth
- U.S. state or foreign country of birth
- Elector completed Driver License/Identification or Social Security number
- Elector signed the registration card

If the agency assists the consumer with completing or returning the VRC, the agency must sign and date the VRC in the space provided.

Processing Completed VR Cards

NVRA Training

Eligibility Questions

Forward all completed VRCs to the county elections office.

- Do **NOT** destroy any completed cards;
- Do **NOT** mark completed VRCs (no “flagging”).

Equal Assistance

Each person must be provided the same degree of assistance as is provided to complete agency forms, unless the person refuses such assistance [42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-5 (a)(4)].

Processing Completed VR Cards

NVRA Training

The agency must keep the voter preference form in their files for 2 years. DO NOT mail them to the SOS or the county elections office.

Date stamping VRCs:

- Date stamp completed VRCs the same day.
- Stamp (or write) the date on the card below the postage area on the addressed side of the card.
- VRCs submitted to an agency on the last day to register (15th day before an election) are timely under the NVRA, even if the elections office doesn't receive the VRCs until after the deadline.

Deadlines

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Send completed voter registration cards to the county elections office in which the agency is located within 10 days of receipt.

If the application is received within 5 days of the voter registration deadline, it must be sent within 5 days of receipt.

Voter Registration Verification

NVRA Training

How does a consumer know if their registration was accepted?

Voter Notification Card (VNC)

- Mailed by the county elections office.
- Should be received within approximately 30 days of submitting voter registration card.
 - If the consumer does not receive a VNC in the mail, the consumer should contact their county elections office.
 - Many county elections offices have a website where voters can check their voter registration status.

★ Agency Voter Registration Reporting

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The Secretary of State posts monthly reporting data at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/sos-reports.htm> and reports biennially to the Election Assistance Commission.

42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-5(a)(5)

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An employee who provides persons with an opportunity to register to vote shall not:

- Seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration;
- Display any political preference or party allegiance;
- Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant from registering to vote; or,
- Make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

Non-Compliance Consequences

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Agencies that fail to comply with NVRA face the following:

- Lawsuits from the United States Department of Justice.
- Lawsuits from people who did not receive the opportunity to vote as required by the NVRA.
- Lawsuits from nonprofit voting rights organizations.

Voting Registration Supplies

NVRA Training

Agencies should only obtain voter registration cards from their county elections office. This will ensure proper tracking and reporting of completed registrations and help attribute registrations to the correct agency.

While the federal voter registration form is valid and accepted in California, agencies should not print the form from the website, unless they set up an NVRA tracking and reporting plan with their county elections office to track the registrations completed on the federal form.

Voter preference forms may be downloaded from the Secretary of State website at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/declination-forms.htm>.

Additional Information

NVRA Training

What Is the Deadline to Register?

The voter registration card must be submitted to the agency at least 15 days prior to the first election in which the registrant would like to vote. Once registered in a county, voters may update their registrations (change address, name, etc.) at any time.

Best Practices to Ensure Full NVRA Compliance

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1. Include a voter registration card (VRC) and an NVRA voter preference form as a standard part of each new application, renewal, recertification or notification of address or name change packet.
2. Review the VRC and NVRA voter preference form as part of the benefits enrollment, renewal, and change of address process.
3. Keep completed NVRA voter preference forms for 2 years.
4. Forward completed VRCs to the county elections office daily.
5. Always get supplies of blank VRCs from the county elections office.
6. Arrange for an annual NVRA training session for staff.
7. Appoint an NVRA Coordinator.

Additional Information

NVRA Training

A Guide to Voting in California:

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/Outreach/a-guide-to-voting.pdf>

Secretary of State NVRA Website:

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/>

Voter Information: www.sos.ca.gov

Call (800) 345-VOTE (8683)

TDD Only: (800) 833-8683

County Elections Offices:

http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm

NVRA Contact Information:

Phone: (916) 657-2166

Fax: (916) 653-3214

Email: nvra@sos.ca.gov