

NVRA BASICS FOR NVRA AGENCY STAFF

Requirements

The NVRA requires agency staff to provide “voter registration services” every time a client:

- Applies for benefits or services,
- Renews or recertifies benefits or services, or
- Requests a change of name or address.

What does “voter registration services” mean?

1. **Provide the voter preference form.** The voter preference form asks clients if they would like to register to vote and makes clear that their benefits and services will not be affected by their answer. Completed voter preference forms must remain on file in your office for two years.
2. **Provide the voter registration card.**
3. **Help the client register to vote**, unless the client declines to register. Provide the same level of assistance you would provide with your agency’s own forms.
4. **Accept completed voter registration cards and forward them to the county elections office.** Voter registration cards are pre-addressed and postage paid and should be forwarded daily.

Reminders

- Offer voter registration for all required transactions whether they occur in person or by mail, phone, or online.
- When the client is a minor, provide voter registration to the adult applying on behalf of the child.
- The federal Voting Rights Act requires election materials to be available in Spanish and English in all California counties. Check with your county elections office on additional languages that may be required.
- Do not screen applicants for eligibility to vote or discourage voter registration. County elections officials carefully verify eligibility before a voter is placed on the rolls.
- Encourage applicants to register, but do **not** discuss or influence an applicant’s political party preference.

Common Misconceptions

- People with disabilities may initially decline to register to vote, because they are not sure they will be able to cast a ballot on Election Day. Federal law requires that every polling place be accessible to people with disabilities. In California, each polling place has at least one accessible voting machine.
- People do not need to be able to read, write, or speak English in order to register to vote.
- People may not remember if they are registered to vote. When in doubt, register to vote! There is no penalty for re-registering.

Resources

For information on the National Voter Registration Act, please visit: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/nvra/training/>