

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?

- 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.
- Provide the Voter Registration Card (VRC).
- 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.
- Accept completed VRCs and forward them to the county elections office. VRCs 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 NVRA, please visit: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/nvra/training/>

BASICS FOR COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS (VRCs)

Item 1: Voter declaration. The applicant must mark “yes” or “no” to the question of whether or not he or she is a United States citizen and if he or she will be 18 years old on or before Election Day. To pre-register to vote in California the applicant must mark the box indicating that he or she is 16 or 17 years old and otherwise meets the eligibility requirements to vote.

Items 2, 3 and 4: First name, middle name (or initial), last name, suffix (optional), and title (optional).

- Should match CA driver license (CDL)/CA identification card (ID Card).

Items 5 and 6: Home address, city, zip code, and county name. This should be their “Residential” address.

- Residence: Place in which the applicant’s habitation is fixed and where the intention is to stay. For voting purposes, a person can have only ONE residence.
- P.O. Boxes & business addresses are NOT valid here.

Item 7: If the applicant does not have a street address, they can give an exact description of where they live in this field.

- Cross streets, route, box, bridges, or other landmarks can be used.
- Mostly used for applicants living in rural areas with non-specific street addresses. Also used for applicants who are homeless.

Items 8 and 9: Mailing address. Applicants complete this section if they want to receive election mail at a different address other than their residential addresses. This is typically a P.O. Box or business address.

Items 10 and 11: Date of birth and U.S. state or foreign country (not county) of birth.

Item 12: CA driver license/ID card number or last four of Social Security Number

- If the applicant has been issued a CA driver license or an identification card, they MUST list the number.
- If they do not have either, they MUST list the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number.
- If they do not have any of the above, they can still register to vote. Just leave the field blank.

Items 13 and 14: E-mail address and phone number. These are optional, but recommended.

Item 15: Political party. Mark box to “prefer” any of the political parties listed. If the applicant does not want to disclose a political party preference, mark the “No Party Preference” box.

- There can be only ONE mark in Item 15 with NO CORRECTIONS or ALTERATIONS. A new VRC must be filled out if an error is made.

Item 16: To become a permanent vote-by-mail voter, initial on the line provided. This can be left blank if the applicant wants to vote at a polling location.

Item 17: If the applicant was previously registered and changed his or her address, surname, or political party preference complete this section. If the applicant cannot recall his or her previous address, it can be left blank.

Item 18: This item MUST contain the signature/mark/signature stamp of the applicant. Please include the date of signing.

Optional Survey:

- This area is to request information to serve as a poll worker.
- To receive state materials in another language, mark the language preference box. If no box is checked, voter materials will be provided in English.

Green Box: If you helped fill out the VRC on behalf of the applicant (put pen to paper), complete the box. If you only answered questions or checked if the VRC was complete, do not complete the box.