

# **Expanding Access to Voter Registration in California**

## **New Resources for National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Compliance**

December 2014  
Secretary of State's Office  
Statewide Training Webinar



# NVRA in California: Goals

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County-by-county trainings in all counties. So far:

- ✓ Alameda County
- ✓ Contra Costa County
- ✓ Kern County
- ✓ Los Angeles County
- ✓ Orange County
- ✓ Riverside County
- ✓ Sacramento County
- ✓ San Bernardino County
- ✓ San Diego County
- ✓ San Francisco County

## NVRA Agency Website Updates

- ✓ Specialized “Register to Vote” links to California Online Voter Registration
- ✓ Secretary of State detailed tracking and reporting of online registrations
- ✓ Pre-population of California Online Voter Registration form for applicants

# NVRA Basics

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## NVRA Transactions:

- ✓ **Application** for services or benefits
- ✓ **Renewal** or recertification
- ✓ **Change** of name or address

## NVRA Services:

- ✓ Provide **voter registration card (VRC)** and **voter preference form (VPF)**
- ✓ Help the applicant register to vote
- ✓ Mail completed VRCs daily

# California Requirements (SB 35, 2012)

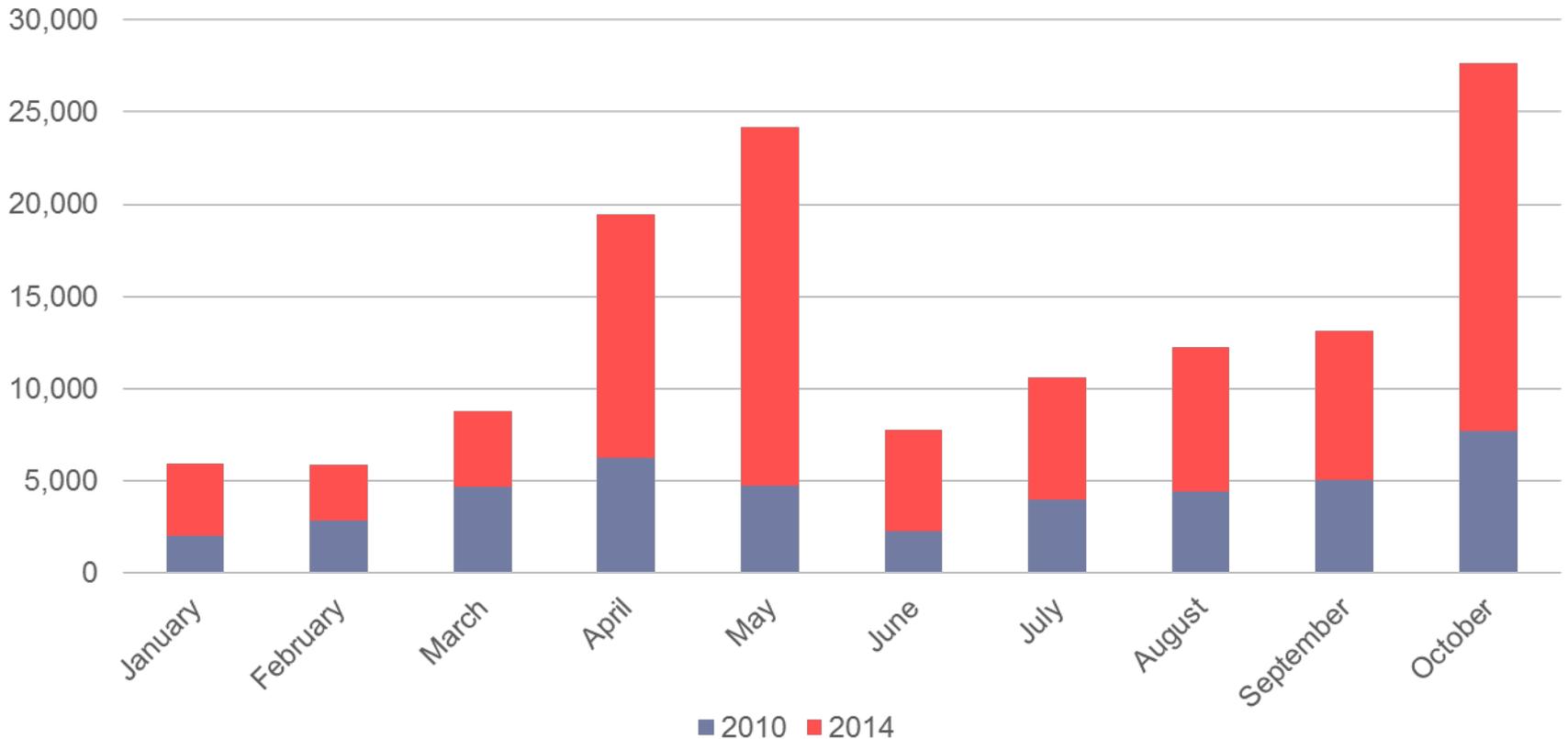
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Under California law, each NVRA agency must:

- ✓ **Designate** an NVRA coordinator
- ✓ **Train** agency staff annually
- ✓ **Order** voter registration cards in all required languages from county elections official
- ✓ **Keep** sufficient supplies of voter registration cards on hand at all sites
- ✓ **Link** to online voter registration if the agency offers online benefits enrollment

# Statewide Improvement on NVRA Compliance

NVRA agency voter registrations: 2010 vs. 2014



2010 Total: **43,873** registrations // 2014 Total: **91,618** registrations (Jan-Oct only)

# Secretary of State NVRA Resources

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1. New **NVRA Training Video**
2. New **“NVRA Basics” One-Page Document** for Agency Staff
3. New **NVRA FAQ**

# Secretary of State NVRA Resources

Training for NVRA Agencies - x

www-dev.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/training/

Secretary of State Administration **Elections** Business Programs Political Reform Archives Registries Other Services

**National Voter Registration Act**

NVRA Home

Requirements and Laws

Voter Registration Agencies

County Reporting Responsibilities

Training for Agencies

Reports

Secretary of State Correspondence

Frequently Asked Questions

Contact Information

Elections Home

## Training for Agencies

The Secretary of State provides National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) training materials for county elections officials. Elections officials use the materials to train other government officials in county offices that provide public assistance or serve people with disabilities.

Search

**Register to VOTE**

Home  
Contact Us  
Website Help

### Training for NVRA Agencies

**Slides:** Voter Registration Services for NVRA Public Assistance Agencies and Agencies Serving People with Disabilities ([ppt ~234KB](#) | [pdf ~60KB](#))

**Video:** NVRA Agency Training  
**Open Captioned-Audio Described** ([MP4 ~3.4GB](#)) | **Open Captioned** ([MP4 ~3.3GB](#))

**Handouts:** NVRA Basics ([pdf ~KB](#))  
NVRA Frequently Asked Questions ([pdf ~KB](#))

### Training for County Elections Officials

2014 CACEO NVRA Webinar: ([ppt ~1.1MB](#) | [pdf ~355KB](#))

### Other Resources

[2014 NVRA Implementation Workshop Materials](#)

[NVRA Voter Preference Form](#)

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# SOS NVRA Resources – Training Video

- ✓ <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/nvra/training/video/nvra-agency-training-oc.mp4>



# SOS NVRA Resources

## “NVRA Basics” One-Page Document

### 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 more information on the National Voter Registration Act, please visit [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/training](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/training)

# SOS NVRA Resources

## NVRA FAQ

- Voter Registration Basics
- NVRA Basics
- Clients With Disabilities
- Clients Under Age 18
- Remote Transactions
- Voter Eligibility
- Getting Additional Help

NVRA Frequently Asked Questions  
Updated December 8, 2014

### VOTER REGISTRATION BASICS

**How long before an election does a person need to register to vote?**

California's voter registration deadline is 15 days before Election Day. A registrant's paper application must be postmarked by the 15<sup>th</sup> day before the election or the registrant can register to vote at [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](http://RegisterToVote.ca.gov) until midnight on the 15<sup>th</sup> day before the election. The voter registration deadline will always be available on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov).

**How long does a person need to be a California resident in order to register to vote?**

A person is immediately eligible to vote after moving to California if he or she meets the other eligibility requirements. There is no waiting period.

**Does a person need a driver license, state identification, or a social security number in order to register to vote in California?**

No. California does not require a driver license, state identification, or a social security number to register to vote. If one of those three forms of identification is not provided on the voter registration application, the elections office in the registrant's county will contact the registrant. If the registrant cannot provide any of the three but is eligible to vote, the California Secretary of State will assign a unique identifier to the registrant. If a registrant does not provide one of the three forms of identification when registering to vote, he or she will be required to show proof of address when he or she votes for the first time.

**Can a client register to vote if he or she cannot read or write?**

Yes. Being able to read and write is not a requirement to register to vote or to vote in the United States. If the client wishes to register to vote, assist the client with the voter registration application to the same degree as you would assist the client with your agency's own forms.

**Can a client register to vote if he or she is homeless?**

Yes. Having a home is not a requirement to register to vote or to vote in the United States. If a client does not have a home, he or she can describe where he or she lives on the voter registration card. He or she must then provide a mailing address. The mailing address can be a post office box, church, shelter, or any other place where the client receives his or her mail.

**Many of my clients with criminal records assume they cannot vote. Is that true?**

In many cases in California, it is not true. The voter eligibility rules for people with prior criminal convictions are on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sharing-ideas/voting-rights-californians.htm](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sharing-ideas/voting-rights-californians.htm). Keep in mind that the NVRA requires you to offer voter registration to all clients. You cannot withhold voter registration from a client because you [believe](#) a criminal record keeps him or her from voting. If you have concerns or questions, contact your county elections office.

# ACLU Resource – NVRA Toolkit

<https://www.aclusandiego.org/NVRA-toolkit/>

The screenshot shows the ACLU website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ACLU logo (American Civil Liberties Union San Diego & Imperial Counties) and a search bar. Below the logo are menu items: Issues, News, About Us, Legal, Join, and Take Action Today. There are also buttons for 'Get Legal Assistance' and 'Donate Now'. The main content area features an article titled 'The ACLU's NVRA Toolkit: How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)' published on July 10, 2014. The article text states that the toolkit was developed for agency workers, NVRA coordinators, and county elections officials. Below the text are social media sharing options (Facebook, Twitter, +1, LinkedIn). To the right of the article is a section titled 'ADDITIONAL INFORMATION' with links to 'Read the full manual here', 'Manual for NVRA Coordinators', and 'Manual for Agency Staff'. Below that is a 'TOP NEWS' section with a 'GET UPDATES' button and three news items: 'ACLU Comment on Ferguson Grand Jury Decision' (November 25, 2014), 'Your Right to Protest' (November 20, 2014), and 'Arizona Residents Sue Border Patrol Over Right to Protest Checkpoint Operations' (November 7, 2014). At the bottom of the article, there is a call to action: 'If you have any questions or concerns, or would like assistance in implementing the NVRA at your agency or in your county, please contact us.' and a logo for 'California Voting Rights'.

Published July 10, 2014

## The ACLU's NVRA Toolkit: How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

The NVRA Toolkit was developed for use by agency workers, NVRA coordinators, and county elections officials.

Share: [f Share](#) [Tweet](#) [+1](#) [in Share](#)

The ACLU of California's NVRA Implementation Project works with public assistance offices and offices serving people with disabilities, county elections offices, and the Secretary of State to improve implementation of the NVRA across California. The NVRA Toolkit was developed for use by agency workers, NVRA coordinators, and county elections officials. The complete version of the toolkit can be downloaded [here](#).

**How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act**

A Toolkit for:  
**Agency Staff,  
NVRA Coordinators,  
and Elections Officials**

California Voting Rights

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Read the full manual here](#) PDF
- [Manual for NVRA Coordinators](#) PDF
- [Manual for Agency Staff](#) PDF

### TOP NEWS [GET UPDATES](#)

- November 25, 2014  
**ACLU Comment on Ferguson Grand Jury Decision**
- November 20, 2014  
**Your Right to Protest**
- November 7, 2014  
**Arizona Residents Sue Border Patrol Over Right to Protest Checkpoint Operations**

# ACLU Resource – NVRA Toolkit

▶ <https://www.aclusandiego.org/NVRA-toolkit/>



## How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act

A Toolkit for:  
**Agency Staff,  
NVRA Coordinators,  
and Elections Officials**



### How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

*A Toolkit for Agency Staff, NVRA Coordinators, and Elections Officials*

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# ACLU Resource – NVRA Toolkit

▶ <https://www.aclusandiego.org/NVRA-toolkit/>

## For Agency Staff

### When & How to Provide Voter Registration Services

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was passed more than 20 years ago to increase the political participation of populations that have historically been underrepresented in our democracy. When you meet the terms of the NVRA, **you are often providing someone the first opportunity of their lifetime to take part in the political process** that governs their benefits, their services, and in many ways, their everyday lives.

The NVRA requires you to provide voter registration services every time a person:

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

Voter registration services also apply to remote transactions, such as those conducted by mail, by phone, or by internet. Voter registration services must be provided to adults applying for benefits or services on behalf of a minor.

#### What does “voter registration services” mean?

During transactions that require voter registration services you need to:

#### 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.

Offer assistance in filling out the voter registration card unless the client declines to register to vote in writing on the voter preference form. You must provide assistance with registering to vote to the same degree you provide assistance with your agency's own forms. You must also accept completed voter registration cards and mail them on behalf of the client. Voter registration cards are pre-addressed and postage paid, and should be mailed daily.

- ▶ Your office may be required by law to have voter preference forms and voter registration cards in **languages other than English**. Ask your office's NVRA coordinator or what your “required” languages are, or consult page 14 of this document. If a client interacts with you in one of the required languages, provide forms in that language.
- ▶ **You do not play any role in screening your clients for eligibility to vote.** Provide voter registration opportunities to all clients; it is the client's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with eligibility criteria, which is on the voter registration card. Additionally, county elections offices work to ensure that only those who are eligible to vote join the voter rolls.



## For NVRA Coordinators

### Responsibilities for NVRA Coordinators

An important part of your agency's ability to fulfill its voter registration requirements is designating an employee responsible for the agency's compliance with the NVRA and SB 35. This employee is known as the “NVRA coordinator.”

Luckily, being an NVRA coordinator does not require adding more hours to the clock. Your responsibilities can be easily managed through regular communication with your county elections office, putting systems in place at your workplace, and training employees on how to follow those systems.

#### Your responsibilities as an NVRA coordinator are to:

- **Confirm that the county elections office knows you are an NVRA agency** and has your agency's name correct in its files.
- **Inform your county elections office** of all offices and sites in the county where your agency distributes voter registration cards.
  - ▶ The county elections office is not required to identify agencies with voter registration responsibilities under the NVRA; this responsibility falls on you.
  - ▶ The county elections office needs to know all the offices and sites within your agency so that it can track the number of completed voter registrations that come from each. The California Secretary of State collects all of that data and puts it into one monthly report, which can be found here: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/reports/sb35-nvra-monthly-reports.htm>.
- **Order voter registration cards** from your county elections office **only**. Your county elections office

#### Best Practices Tip

**Establish a relationship with the NVRA coordinator at your county elections office. Open lines of communication will make NVRA compliance much easier.**

should have its own NVRA coordinator that can inform you about the best way to order cards, whether by phone, email, or an online form.

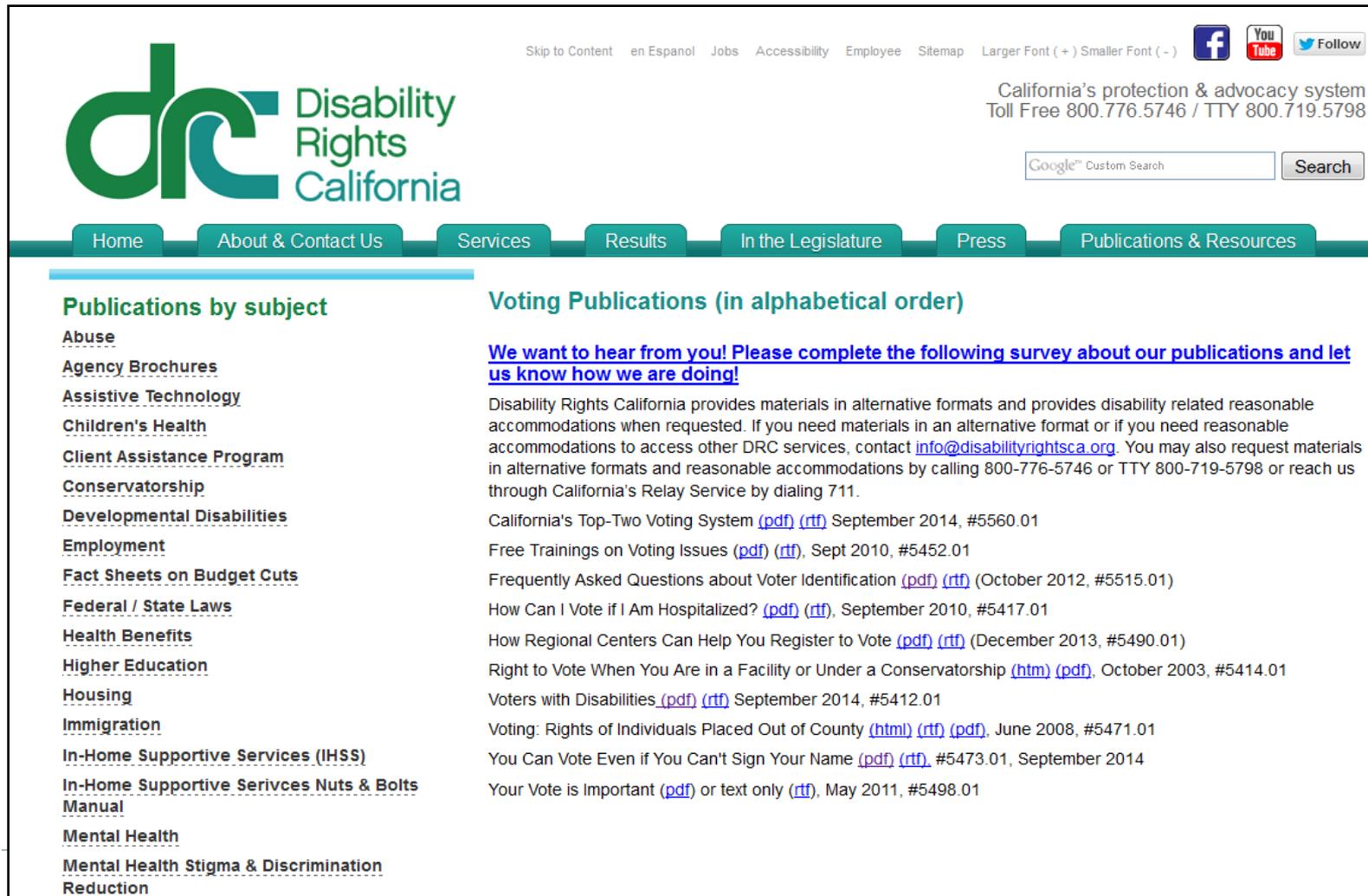
- **Have on hand** both required forms—voter preference forms, which ask an applicant if he or she would like to register to vote and contain mandatory disclaimer language, and voter registration cards—in all languages determined by a formula in the Voting Rights Act. When in doubt about your language requirements, check page 14 of this toolkit or contact your county elections office.
- **Keep in mind that the languages required for voter registration may be different** from the languages required by Medi-Cal and other state programs.
- **Determine a system** for how voter registration cards received from applicants will be mailed to the county elections office. Please see below for further instructions.

#### Best Practices Tip

**The California Secretary of State recommends mailing completed registration cards daily in order to avoid confusion and compliance concerns.**

# DRC Resources

▶ <http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/PublicationsVoting.htm>



The screenshot shows the Disability Rights California website. At the top left is the logo for Disability Rights California, consisting of the letters 'drc' in a stylized green font. To the right of the logo is the text 'Disability Rights California'. In the top right corner, there are links for 'Skip to Content', 'en Espanol', 'Jobs', 'Accessibility', 'Employee', and 'Sitemap'. There are also social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, along with a 'Follow' button. Below these is a search bar with the text 'Google™ Custom Search' and a 'Search' button. A navigation menu is located below the search bar, with 'Publications & Resources' highlighted. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Publications by subject' and lists various categories such as Abuse, Agency Brochures, Assistive Technology, Children's Health, Client Assistance Program, Conservatorship, Developmental Disabilities, Employment, Fact Sheets on Budget Cuts, Federal / State Laws, Health Benefits, Higher Education, Housing, Immigration, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), In-Home Supportive Services Nuts & Bolts Manual, Mental Health, and Mental Health Stigma & Discrimination Reduction. The right column is titled 'Voting Publications (in alphabetical order)' and contains a link to a survey: 'We want to hear from you! Please complete the following survey about our publications and let us know how we are doing!'. Below this link is a paragraph of text explaining that Disability Rights California provides materials in alternative formats and reasonable accommodations. It then lists several publications with their titles, formats (pdf, rtf, html), and dates: 'California's Top-Two Voting System (pdf) (rtf) September 2014, #5560.01', 'Free Trainings on Voting Issues (pdf) (rtf), Sept 2010, #5452.01', 'Frequently Asked Questions about Voter Identification (pdf) (rtf) (October 2012, #5515.01)', 'How Can I Vote if I Am Hospitalized? (pdf) (rtf), September 2010, #5417.01', 'How Regional Centers Can Help You Register to Vote (pdf) (rtf) (December 2013, #5490.01)', 'Right to Vote When You Are in a Facility or Under a Conservatorship (html) (pdf), October 2003, #5414.01', 'Voters with Disabilities (pdf) (rtf) September 2014, #5412.01', 'Voting: Rights of Individuals Placed Out of County (html) (rtf) (pdf), June 2008, #5471.01', 'You Can Vote Even if You Can't Sign Your Name (pdf) (rtf), #5473.01, September 2014', and 'Your Vote is Important (pdf) or text only (rtf), May 2011, #5498.01'.

# DRC Resources – “Your Vote Is Important”

▶ <http://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/pubs/549801.pdf>

## YOU CAN VOTE...

**Even if** you live in a group home or state developmental center



**Even if** you can't read or write



**Even if** you use a wheelchair or have other mobility disabilities

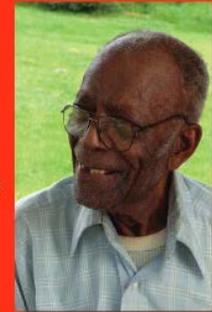


**Even if** you have visual impairment or you are deaf or hard of hearing

As long as you are old enough, a citizen, live in California, have not been told by a judge that you cannot vote, are not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction and have registered to vote

## OUR ISSUES

What are “our” issues?



Public transportation, regional center services, Medi-Cal, IHSS,

parks & recreation, fire fighters, schools.

Which issues are important to you?



Elected people influence issues.



People who vote -

**Like you and me** - chose elected people by voting.



# DRC Resources

## “How Regional Centers Can Help You Register to Vote”

▶ <http://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/pubs/549001.pdf>



California's Protection & Advocacy System  
Toll-Free (800) 776-5746

### How Regional Centers Can Help You Register to Vote

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*December 2013, Pub. #5490.01*

This publication gives information to people who receive services from the regional centers about their right to register to vote. This publication gives information in a question and answer format and explains who can register to vote and how regional centers can help.

1. I receive services from the regional center. Do I have the right to vote?

Yes. You can vote:

- Even if you receive services from the regional center and have a developmental or intellectual disability;
- Even if you live in a development center, group home, or other places where you receive care;
- Even if you have a conservator, unless a court has said that you cannot vote.

2. I want to vote, what do I have to do?

In order to vote, you have to first register. You do this by filling out a Voter Registration Card. If you need help to get and fill out a Voter Registration Card, the regional center can help you. Please see Questions 4-7.

# DRC Resources

## “You Can Vote Even if You Can't Sign Your Name”

▶ <http://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/pubs/547301.pdf>



*California's protection & advocacy system  
Toll-Free (800) 776-5746*

### You Can Vote Even If You Can't Sign Your Name CA Elections Code § 354.5

*September 2014, Pub. #5473.01*

#### **You can make a mark**

A mark must be accompanied by the written name of the person. The name must be written by a witness over the age of 18.

#### **You can use a signature stamp**

A signature stamp may be used as a signature if a witness over 18 years of age also hand writes your name. However, you must have either (1) registered to vote on line and have had your signature stamp approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and transmitted to the Secretary of State; or (2) used the stamp on an affidavit in the presence of a county official.

#### **What can be on a signature stamp?**

- A) The actual signature of the person with a disability.
- B) A mark or symbol adopted by the person with a disability.
- C) 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) A person with a disability who, by reason of that disability is unable to write and owns a signature stamp.
- B) A person using the signature stamp on behalf of the owner of the stamp, in the presence of the owner with the owner's consent.

**Thank you.**

**California Secretary of State  
ACLU of CA Voting Rights Project  
Disability Rights California**

**We are all available to assist you with  
NVRA implementation.**

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