

# 2011-2013



**National Voter Registration Act of 1993  
Implementation Guide for Agency Personnel**  
*For Agencies that Provide Assistance and/or Serve  
Persons with Disabilities*

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## THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT OF 1993

### The Act

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The intent of the National Voter Registration Act is to increase the number of citizens registered to vote and to establish safeguards that ensure citizens' right to vote. The Act is designed to increase the number of Americans registered to vote by requiring many public agencies to provide voter registration opportunities to their clients simultaneous with other services.

### When to Provide Persons an Opportunity to Register to Vote

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The Act **requires** that the opportunity to register to vote be provided with each application for assistance, renewal/recertification of assistance, or notification of change of address in agencies that serve persons with disabilities or that provide public assistance. For change of address, the opportunity to register to vote must be offered with agency change of address forms only. Agencies may choose to notify elections officials of change of address obtained through other means, but are not required to do so. Agency staff members **must** provide the same amount of assistance to a person completing a voter registration form as they would provide to fill out an agency's own forms.

The opportunity to register must be provided to the person who applies for assistance, but not to others on whose behalf the person might be applying. If the person is applying only on behalf of others, the opportunity to register need not be offered. **If** agency personnel are uncertain whether to offer the opportunity to register to vote, the opportunity should be offered.

### This Manual

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This document has been prepared by the Secretary of State, Elections Division to assist in the implementation of voter registration in social service agencies and provide ongoing procedural support. It is not meant to supersede federal or state laws or rules, nor does it have the force of law. To obtain copies of the National Voter Registration Act or other information about the contents of this reference manual, or to suggest modifications, you may contact:

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255 Capitol St NE Ste 501  
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To obtain answers to any questions that arise about voter registration, contact your county elections office. A list of offices with their phone numbers and addresses is printed on all voter registration forms.

## AGENCY VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

### The Agency Voter Registration Form (form SEL 503)

The agency voter registration form includes a declination, a voter registration card, and information about registering to vote.

Federal law requires a **declination**. It documents the interaction between an agency and the person completing the form. It must be retained at the agency for 24 months.

The **voter registration card** is the portion of the voter registration form that a citizen must fill out and send to a county elections office to register to vote.

### How to Complete the Declination

The person should answer the question, “If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to register here today?” by checking either “yes” or “no”. The person should sign and date in the space below the questions.

- ***If a person checks “yes” on the declination:*** the person should fill out and sign the voter registration card. The person may do so in private or may request help from the provider. The person may take the form home to complete or may complete it on-site. If they take the form home, the declination should be detached from the card, and they must be reminded of the HAVA ID requirements for mailing the card via United States Postal Service.

It is important that the person have the same opportunity to complete the declination and voter registration card as is given to complete agency forms.

- ***If a person checks “no” or does not fill out the declination:*** assume the person chooses not to register. Indicate on the declination that the client declined to register to vote. Retain the declination on file for 24 months. The declination documents, for audit purposes, the interaction between the agency and the client.

### How to Complete the Voter Registration Form

A person who chooses to fill out the voter registration form may do so in private or may request help from the provider. The person may take the form and/or card home to complete or may complete it on-site. The person must be provided the same degree of assistance as is provided to complete agency forms, unless the person refuses such assistance.

Registrants must fill in all requested information on the registration form. The provider should review the form to ensure that it is complete and legible.

**IMPORTANT!** Providers unsure if a card is complete should forward the card per normal procedure to the county elections office. Do not destroy any cards that have been completed or that indicate in any way that the individual attempted to register to vote.

The following instructions will help providers answer questions about filling out the card.

<b>Instructions to Complete Voter Registration Card</b>
<p><b>Indicate U.S. citizenship.</b> Only U.S. citizens, that are Oregon residents, may register to vote.</p>
<p><b>Indicate if age is 17 or older.</b> An individual must be 17 years of age or older to register to vote. A ballot will not be sent until an election occurs on or after the individuals 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.</p>
<p><b>Name.</b> Required.</p>
<p><b>Date of Birth.</b> Required.</p>
<p><b>Phone Number.</b> Optional.</p>
<p><b>Home Address.</b> (Where the person lives.) This must be the address of residence. Include apartment number, space number, etc. It cannot be a business address or a mailing address (for example, a post office box). If the person does not have a traditional address (for example, homeless) then the person must describe in detail the residence location. Determining residence sometimes can be difficult. In unusual cases, refer persons to the county elections office.</p>
<p><b>Mailing Address.</b> Must be provided only if different than residence address. The mailing address of a homeless person may be the office of the county clerk.</p>
<p><b>Political Party.</b> Check <u>one</u> (1) only. If a person does not want to affiliate with any party, mark the circle "Not a member of a party."  Some parties select their candidates at a primary election. Unless the party allows otherwise, only party members may help choose the party's candidates.  Choice of party affiliation cannot be changed in the 21 days prior to the Primary Election.</p>
<p><b>Identification.</b> People must provide identifying information to register to vote. A person who has a current, valid Oregon DMV Driver's License/ID, must provide that number. A suspended Driver's License is valid a revoked Driver's License is not. If a person does not have a current, valid Oregon DMV Driver's License/ID they must provide the last four digits of their Social Security Number.  A person who does not have a current, valid Oregon DMV Driver's License/ID or a SocialSecurity number, must affirm this by marking the boxes in sections 4 and 4a, and if registering by mail, must provide a copy of one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• valid photo identification</li> <li>• a paycheck stub</li> <li>• a utility bill</li> <li>• a bank statement</li> <li>• a government document</li> <li>• proof of eligibility under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee</li> </ul>

Voting Act (UOCAVA) or the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (VAEH)
<p><b>Sign and date the form.</b></p> <p><u>Unsigned forms will be rejected.</u></p> <p>A person who cannot sign must make a mark. The provider may then write, “(His/Her Mark)” next to it.</p> <p>A person with a disability who is unable because of a disability to sign the voter registration card may use a signature stamp or other indicator of the person’s signature. A person who desires to use a signature stamp or other indicator of their person’s signature shall attest that the person needs to use the stamp or indicator due to a disability. The attestation shall be made at the time the person registers to vote or updates a registration and shall be made on a form designed and supplied by the Secretary of State, form SEL 540.</p> <p>Power of attorney <b>cannot</b> be used for voter registration.</p>
<p><b>Previously registered.</b> If a person was previously registered to vote and is changing information, they must complete this section.</p>

### About HAVA—Why Identification Is Required

Congress passed the Help America Vote Act in October 2002 to make sweeping reforms to the nation’s voting process. HAVA addresses improvements to correct problems with voting systems and voter access that were identified following the 2000 Presidential Election. There are two main components to the act—overall improvements to elections administration, which can be done at the discretion of each state as funding allows, and specific mandates.

One of those mandates effective January 1, 2006, was to require individuals wanting to register to vote for the first time to provide either a current driver’s license/ identification number or if they do not have one the last four of the Social Security number. For individuals who have neither a current license/ ID number or Social Security number and are registering by mail they must provide sufficient identification such as valid photo identification, a paycheck stub, a utility bill, a bank statement, a government document or proof of eligibility under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) or the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (VAEH).

### What to Do with Complete Voter Registration Forms

- **Separate the voter registration card** from the declination.
- **Date stamp** each completed card the **same day** they are received. **This information is critical to ensure timely registration.** If the card is complete the agency date stamp determines when a person becomes eligible to vote. Stamp the card to the right of the bar code. **Do not** stamp or write any information over the signature of the person registering to vote. If a date stamp is unavailable, the date should be written by hand.
- **Keep the declination** in your files for 24 months. **Do not** mail them to the county elections office or to the office of the Secretary of State.

- **Send completed voter registration cards to the county elections office in which the agency is located within 5 calendar days of receipt.** Oregon Revised Statutes **require a 5-day turnaround**. The office of the Secretary of State has the authority to hold agency staff in violation. The Elections Division recommends that cards be mailed on the last business day of each week, if the **5-day** turnaround can be met.
- **If it is a registration cutoff day prior to an election**, send the cards in that same day. The Secretary of State, Elections Division publishes a newsletter, “*The NVRA Connection*”, that is sent to all appropriate agencies. This newsletter includes election dates and registration cutoff dates.
- **Count the number of completed cards** received by the agency **and record them on form SEL 504 “Agency Voter Registration Reporting Form”** provided by the Elections Division (the Elections Division must report statewide totals to the Federal Election Commission). This report should be sent in weekly, but may be sent at the end of each month as long as it accurately reflects the number of voter registrations forwarded to the county in that month.
- **Mail or submit by electronic mail the COMPLETED Agency Voter Registration Reporting Form** to the Elections Division and voter registration cards to the county at the same time (**DO NOT** mail the agency reporting form to the county elections office or the cards to the Elections Division).
- **Use the special envelopes provided by your agency coordinator to mail voter registration cards.** Agencies must use the U.S. Postal Service unless they have made other arrangements with the county elections office.

### **Influencing Persons**

Agency employees shall not influence or attempt to influence persons to choose or not choose a particular political party preference, or to register or vote in any particular manner. Thus, pursuant to ORS 247.208(3), employees who offer persons an opportunity to register to vote shall not display anything that suggests a political preference or party allegiance.

While offering the opportunity to register to vote, employees shall not wear or display material that:

- Identifies past, present, or future seekers or holders of partisan elective office;
- Contains logos or other graphics that might be identified with a political party or preference; and/or
- Would reasonably be understood to be associated with a political party or political preference.

### **Voter Registration Supplies**

Additional blank agency voter registration forms, agency voter registration reporting forms and special envelopes may be obtained through normal agency channels.

## Contact Information

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Each agency will notify the Elections Division, in writing, of the name of an agency-wide coordinator and the location of each agency registration site. Changes in agency site address or site coordinator should be reported to the Elections Division within 10 days of the change.

In addition, each agency will provide, to the appropriate county election official, a list of agency registration sites in the county and the name of a contact person for each site. Agencies must provide this information within 30 days of request or selection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT REGISTERING TO VOTE

*The information contained in this section is included for those providers who want to be able to answer general questions about voter registration, should such questions arise.*

### Who May Register?

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Any person who is:

- **A resident of Oregon**  
A person who lives in Oregon with the intention of making Oregon their home. A person who has come to Oregon 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.
- **At least 17 years old**  
If a person is not yet 18 but will turn 18 by the next election, the person may register any time after their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. ORS 247.016.
- **A United States citizen**  
If a person is not yet a United States citizen but will be by Election Day, the person may register to vote. However, the person must contact their county elections office to obtain the procedures pertaining to this type of a situation. If a person is not a U.S. citizen, there is no need to offer an opportunity to register.

### What Is the Deadline to Register?

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The card must contain either a date stamp, or a postmark, at least 21 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. However, if they change their party affiliation before the Primary Election the change must be received in the county elections office no later than the 21<sup>st</sup> day before the date of the Primary Election. **Postmarks do not count.**

Four elections are scheduled each year, not including special elections. However, not every county will conduct an election on each of these dates. County elections officials will notify the agency sites in their counties of registration deadlines as necessary.

### **How Often Should One Register?**

Anytime information on the card has changed since the last registration was submitted. This includes changes of name, home address, mailing address or political party designation. If a person is unsure if they are already registered to vote, the person should fill out a new card.

### **How To Complete The Voter Registration Card**

See pages 3 and 4 for instructions.

### **How Will A Person know if the Registration Was Accepted?**

The county elections office will mail a voter notification card to let the voter know that the registration was accepted. If a voter notification card is not received within 30 days after the voter registration card was turned in, the person should contact their county elections office. Also, the person can call their county elections office and confirm their voter registration.

## **VOTING IN OREGON**

### **How and When Do I Receive My Ballot?**

All elections in Oregon are held by mail. Approximately 14 days before the election the county elections office will automatically mail a ballot to each registered voter who is eligible to vote in that election.

### **How Does A Voter Know Where To Send Their Ballot?**

After completing the ballot, and signing the return identification envelope, a voter may mail their ballot with the appropriate postage, drop the ballot off at a designated “drop site” or take their ballot to their county elections office. Locations of the drop sites are designated by the county elections official. The location of drop sites may be printed in your state or county voters’ pamphlet or you may contact your county elections office to find the nearest drop site to you.

## **HELPFUL RESOURCES**

**Voter Information:** [www.oregonvotes.org](http://www.oregonvotes.org)

Call 1.866.ORE VOTE (1.866.673.8683)/ TTY 1.800.735.2900

**County Elections Offices:** <http://www.oregonvotes.org/pages/voterresources/clerk.html>

**NVRA E-mail Address:** [elec-reports.sos@state.or.us](mailto:elec-reports.sos@state.or.us)