

Implementing the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA): Public Libraries



Overview

- National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)
- NVRA: Goals & Objectives
- Voter Registration Agency Responsibilities
- Applications
- Application Submission
- Agency Implementation

National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)

- **Federal** statute passed by Congress in 1993
- 44 states, **including Texas**, were required to implement the NVRA by January 1, 1995
- State agencies, including public libraries, that provide public assistance and certain other public entities **are required** to offer the opportunity to register to vote to their clients.

Goals of the NVRA

- Increase Voter Registration
- Enhance Voter Participation
- Protect the Integrity of the Electoral Process

Public Libraries as Voter Registration Agencies

Texas Election Code (TEC) § 20.001

Each public library, including any branch or other service outlet, is designated as a voter registration agency. A public library under the Election Code refers to a library that:

- Is regularly open for business for more than 30 hours a week;
- Is operated by a single public agency or board;
- Is open without charge to all persons under identical conditions; and
- Receives its financial support wholly or partly from public funds.

Why Public Libraries?

A public library assists in voter registration by reaching those populations that **are least registered**:

- Low Income
- People with Disabilities
- Youth
- Populations with high residential mobility
- Rural areas



The Goal?





Public Library Responsibilities

OFFERING VOTER REGISTRATION

Responsibilities

Each public library defined under the Election Code **must**:

- offer to each person of voting age who applies in person for an original or renewal of a library card an opportunity to complete a voter registration application form. (TEC §20.092);
- provide the same degree of assistance that a library would provide to a patron completing library forms, including bilingual assistance (TEC §20.005);
- *if a voter declines a voter registration application, a library does not have to keep or supply a declination form. (TEC § 20.093)*



Voter Registration

APPLICATIONS

Voter Registration Applications

- A public library shall use the official form prescribed by the Secretary of State (SOS). (TEC § 20.092(b)) A library may use their own form **if** approved by the SOS. (TEC § 20.002)
- Printing formats and specifications can be provided by the SOS. However, public libraries are encouraged to contact the Office of the Secretary of State to order voter registration application forms free of charge.



Application Submission

COLLECTING AND DELIVERING APPLICATIONS



Collection & Delivery

TEC § 20.035(b)

Once collected by library personnel, the library **must**:

- deliver **in person** all completed registration applications submitted to agency employees to the **voter registrar of the county** in which the library is located; and
- deliver to the appropriate state election official **no later than the 5th day** after the application is submitted to a library employee.
- If a library services citizens in more than one county it is recommended that the voter registration application(s) be delivered to the appropriate county.



Library Implementation

OFFERING VOTER REGISTRATION

Implementation Planning

TEC §20.004

Each library **must**:

- Prepare a plan to implement and distribute voter registration applications;
- Designate a point of contact and provide all necessary contact information including the days and hours of the library to the SOS; *and*
- Conduct training for library employees in distributing and accepting voter registration applications.
- Either email the plan to elections@sos.texas.gov, fax the plan to 512-463-7552, or mail to P.O. Box 12060, Austin, TX 78711.

Note: Public agencies designated under Chapter 20 of the Texas Election Code as voter registration agencies are not required to obtain certification as voter registrars.



NVRA Implementation Plan

(Agency Name)

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Implementation Plan

1. Agency Coordinator(s): *(Include the name and contact information for the agency coordinator.)*
2. *(Place agency name here)* has been designated by the Secretary of State (SOS) to provide voter registration services through the following agency divisions and/or services:
 - *(List all divisions/services providing voter registration opportunities.)*
3. Basic overview of procedures: *(Include agency voter registration procedures.)*
 - a. **Distribution:** *(Agency will need to include voter registration program procedures including location, method, and frequency of application distribution; forms and materials used; inventory ordering procedures; completed delivery procedures; implementation tracking; and additional assistance provided to applicants.)*
 - b. **Change of Address:** *(Agency will need to include procedures for a voter registration change of address.)*
 - c. **Mail/Telephone Services:** *(Agency will need to include procedures for the provision of voter registration by mail and telephone.)*
4. **Training:** *(Agency will need to include a training plan for agency personnel including frequency of training, content of training, and identified/ongoing training needs related to the provision of voter registration services.)*
5. **Date of Implementation:** *(Agency will need to state date that the agency began providing voter registration services.)*
6. **Hours/Locations of Service:** *(Agency will need to include office locations and hours of operations for all locations providing voter registration services.)*
7. **Agency Contact Information:** *(Agency must provide contact information including phone number and email address for issues related to voter registration and coordination with the SOS.)*

Best Practices to Ensure Compliance

- Employee training on voter registration responsibilities under the NVRA/Texas Election Code should occur **frequently**;
- Employee training should occur **before** contact with clients; and
- Each library must be stocked with an adequate supply of voter registration application forms. An adequate supply is the number of forms needed to distribute with each covered transaction for a period not less than two months.

Voter Registration Resources

Please visit our website for additional training material and voter education resources at www.sos.texas.gov.

- NVRA Training Presentations
- NVRA Handbooks
- Voter Identification Information
- Posters & Pamphlets

AWA 9 Prescribed by Secretary of State - Section 62.004, Texas Election Code (01/2018)

ID required for Texas Voters

If you possess one of the following forms of acceptable photo ID, you must present it when voting in person:^{*}


- ★ Texas Driver License issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- ★ Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS
- ★ Texas Personal Identification Card issued by DPS
- ★ Texas Handgun License issued by DPS
- ★ United States Military Identification Card containing your photograph
- ★ United States Citizenship Certificate containing your photograph
- ★ United States Passport (book or card)

Do not possess and cannot reasonably obtain one of these IDs? Fill out a declaration at the polls describing a reasonable impediment to obtaining it, and show a copy or original of one of the following supporting forms of ID:

- ★ A government document that shows your name and an address, including your voter registration certificate;
- ★ Current utility bill;
- ★ Bank statement;
- ★ Government check;
- ★ Paycheck; or
- ★ (a) A certified domestic (from a U.S. state or territory) birth certificate or (b) a document confirming birth admissible in a court of law which establishes your identity (which may include a foreign birth document).

^{*} With the exception of the U.S. Citizenship Certificate, for voters aged 18-64, the acceptable forms of photo identification must be current or have expired no more than 4 years before being presented for voter qualification at the polling place. A person 70 years of age or older may use a form of acceptable photo identification that has expired if the identification is otherwise valid.
Exemptions: Voters with a disability may apply with the correct name request for a permanent exemption to showing acceptable photo ID or follow the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls. Voters with a religious objection to being photographed or voters who do not possess an acceptable form of photo identification or follow the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls because of certain natural disasters may apply for a temporary exemption to showing an acceptable form of photo identification or following the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls. Please contact your voter registrar for more details.

VOTETEXAS.GOV



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