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 & Declinations
• 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. Public library 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?

Public library voter registration assists in reaching those populations that are least registered:

- Low Income
- People with Disabilities
- Youth
- Populations with high residential mobility
The Goal?

Voter registration through public agencies encourage...

An increase in voter registration

An increase in VOTER PARTICIPATION!
Public Library Responsibilities
OFFERING VOTER REGISTRATION
Responsibilities

Each voter public library must:

• offer voter registration applications to all persons applying in person for library services (TEC §20.009(a));
• provide the same degree of assistance that you provide to a patron completing library forms, including bilingual assistance (TEC §20.009);
• if a voter declines a voter registration application, you do not have to keep or supply a declination form. (TEC § 20.093)
Voter Registration

APPLICATIONS
Voter Registration Applications

• Libraries may use the Secretary of State prescribed voter registration application form or one that the library has created. (TEC § 20.002)
• All library created forms must be approved by the SOS.
• 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 more voter application forms.
Application Submission
COLLECTING AND DELIVERING APPLICATIONS
Collection & Delivery

**TEC § 20.035(b)**

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

- deliver 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.
Library Implementation
OFFERING VOTER REGISTRATION
Each library **must**:  
- Prepare a plan to implement voter registration procedures;  
- Designate a point of contact and provide all necessary contact information to the SOS; **and**  
- Conduct training for library employees in voter registration procedures. 

**Note:** Public agencies designed under Chapter 20 of the Texas Election Code as voter registration agencies are not required to obtain certification as voter registrars.
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
Office of the Secretary of State

Elections Division
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Austin, Texas 78711
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512.463.7552 - fax
www.sos.texas.gov

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