

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. 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?



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

Implementation Planning

TEC §20.004

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

AW-12-9 Prescribed by Secretary of State - Section 12.024, Texas Election Code (12.024)

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 who a disability may apply with the secret vote requiring 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 present an acceptable form of photo identification or follow the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls because of certain national disaster 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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