

New York State Board of Elections

Agency-Based Voter Registration

Agency Employee Quick Reference Guide

“...to establish new procedures that will enhance and increase the number of opportunities for eligible citizens to register to vote, and remain registered...”

- The **N**ational **V**oter **R**egistration **A**ct

Updated 7/24

Thank you for participating in the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) agency-based voter registration program. By offering the opportunity to register to vote, your agency is providing an important service to the public. Many of your clients will be registering to vote for the first time and will appreciate your service.

This guide is designed to serve as a quick reference on the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act.

Employee Responsibilities

Offering the Opportunity to Vote

Your main responsibility as a NVRA site is to offer the opportunity to register to vote when a client applies for services from your agency.

This is done by offering clients the opportunity to fill out an Agency-Based Voter Registration Form (See example to the right) that should be included among other forms or paperwork your agency offers to clients.

Please be advised that under the NVRA law that registering or declining to register to vote should never affect or interfere with the level of assistance or benefits provided by your agency. Also, all information gathered from your clients will be used for registration purposes only and should remain confidential.

The image shows two forms. The top form is the 'NYS Agency-Based Voter Registration Form'. It includes a header with the NYS logo and the title. Below the header, there are instructions and a 'Voter Registration Application' section with numbered questions (1-11) regarding citizenship, age, address, and political party affiliation. It also includes a signature line and a date field. The bottom form is an 'Optional Register to donate your organs and tissues' form, which includes a 'DONATE LIFE' logo and a section for providing personal information and a signature.

Completion of the Agency-Based Voter Registration form

(For detailed instruction on how to fill out each question on an Agency-Based Voter Registration form, please click on following link [HERE](#))

The agency-based voter registration form is used for:

1. Registering to vote
2. Changing your name and/or address
3. Enrolling in a political party or changing your political enrollment

To offer the opportunity to register to vote, simply say to a client, “If you are not registered where you live now, would you like to register to vote here today?”

There are four possible ways to respond to this question:

1. **RESPONSE #1: Client says “YES”**

Ask the client to fill in the YES box, date and sign if they want to register to vote. You can then direct their attention to the application portion of the Agency-Based Voter Registration form.

“If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register here today?”

YES If you checked **YES**, please complete the **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION** below

NO because I choose not to register **OR**

I am already registered at my current address **OR**

I asked for and received a mail registration form

If you do not check any box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

_____/_____/_____
Signature Date

Please Print Name

If the client chooses to register, say: “If you need help filling out the form, I can assist you”. You should offer the same level of assistance you provide when handling your own agency’s applications. Employees should be able to answer basic questions about each section (**How to “Fill out a Registration Form”**) of the form and assist the applicant in completing the form if necessary.

Also, sites should check forms that are filled out for completeness.

What to look for in a correctly completed Agency-Based Voter Registration form:

1. The client checked the U.S. Citizen box.
2. The client checked the “18 years old on or before election day” box.
3. The Last Name and First Name of client are filled in clearly.
4. The physical address where a client lives is listed.

5. Clients should fill out clearly if they have a mailing address or P.O. Box different than the physical address provided.
6. The client completes the Date of Birth box.
7. The client checked the applicable ID Number box or checked “did not have either of those numbers.”
8. The client selected only one box in the party enrollment area.
9. The client understood, signed, and dated the affidavit section.

Organ Donor Application

The organ donor application is optional. Sites should not detach the organ donor section from the rest of the application unless the client chooses to be an organ donor but declines to register to vote. County Board of Elections will forward completed organ donor applications to the NYS Donate Life Registry.

Collect Forms

Completed voter registration applications should be collected and stored in a secure place at your site until you send them to the appropriate County Board of Elections in your weekly transmittals every 7-10 days.

(By law, Agency-Based Registration forms, along with corresponding Transmittal Forms, must be sent from your site to the appropriate County Board of Election every 10 days, although the State Board of Elections recommends every 7 days. See more below.)

Declinations

A declination means that a client has decided **NOT** to register to vote on the agency-based voter registration form after you verbally asked the question, “If you are not registered where you live now, would you like to register to vote here today?”

RESPONSE #2: Client says “NO” or leaves the form BLANK

If client says **“NO”** or leaves the form **BLANK**, they should be asked to check the NO box and sign and date the declination.

"If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register here today?"

YES If you checked **YES**, please complete the **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION** below

NO because I choose not to register **OR**

I am already registered at my current address **OR**

I asked for and received a mail registration form

If you do not check any box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

_____/_____/_____
Signature Date

Please Print Name

If the client checks the box, signs and dates the declination, sites are required to keep the signed declination in their records for 24 months in a separate folder with the 24th month date on the outside of the folder. After 24 months, the declinations can be discarded. Also, be sure to tally the number of declinations for a week on a transmittal form (see more on Transmittal Forms below).

If the client checks the box but does NOT sign the declination, count this transaction as a NO. Do not keep the form but tally the transaction for the Transmittal Form.

If the client does not make any marks on the form, count this transaction as a **BLANK**. Do not keep the form but tally the transaction as a **BLANK** on the Transmittal Form.

(See page below for more information on **"What is considered a BLANK?"**)

RESPONSE #3: Client declines because they indicate they are "Already Registered."

If a client indicates they are already registered, you should ask them to check the "Already Registered" box and then sign and date the declination.

"If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register here today?"

YES If you checked **YES**, please complete the **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION** below

NO because I choose not to register **OR**

I am already registered at my current address **OR**

I asked for and received a mail registration form

If you do not check any box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

_____/_____/_____
Signature Date

Please Print Name

If the client checks the "Already Registered" box, signs and dates the declination, keep the signed declination for your records for 24 months. Also, be sure to tally the transaction in the appropriate section on the Transmittal Form.

If the client checks the box but will NOT sign the declination, do not keep the form but tally the transaction for the Transmittal Form.

RESPONSE #4: Client declines but requests and receives a mail registration form (Blue Dot Form).

In this scenario, the staff member requests the client to check the "I asked for and received a mail registration form" box and then signs and dates the declination.

"If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register here today?"

YES If you checked **YES**, please complete the **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION** below

NO because I choose not to register **OR**

I am already registered at my current address **OR**

I asked for and received a mail registration form

If you do not check any box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

_____/_____/_____
Signature Date

Please Print Name

If the clients check the “I asked for and received a mail registration form” box, signs and dates the declination, keep the signed declination in your records for 24 months. As is the case with other declinations, be sure to tally this transaction for the Transmittal form.

If the client checks the box but will **NOT** sign the declination, do not keep the form but tally the transaction for the Transmittal Form.

Also, be sure to give a client a mail registration form (See Mail-In “Blue Dot” Registration forms below) and explain to the client that once the form is completed, the client should mail it to their LOCAL/COUNTY Board of Elections. The address for all local Boards of Elections is on the back of that form.

Inform the client that they will receive a notice from their County Board of Elections after their registration is approved.

Mail-In “Blue Dot” Registration forms


If a client would prefer to fill out a registration form at home and then mail it in, an employee at one of the participating NVRA sites should then give that client a special BLUE DOT Mail-In Registration form. These blue dots forms help the County Board of Elections to keep track of the NVRA application when they are received and processed at the county level.

Address and stamp this section

Your address

OFFICIAL
ELECTION MAIL
Approved by the U.S. Postal Service

Place
First-Class
Stamp
Here



**Before mailing,
fold and seal
closed**

Your County Board of Elections address (select from below)

Blue Dot Mail-In Registration forms do not look like the Agency-Based Registration forms that are handed out by the NVRA sites. Instead, Blue Dot Mail-In registration forms are longer, in blue ink, and have an identifiable large Blue Dot in the address portion on the back of the application. (see example above)

The number of Blue Dot mail-in registration forms given out to clients should also be recorded weekly under the "Declinations" section in section 1 of the transmittal forms (See below for more on Transmittal Forms).

Transmittal forms

Under the NVRA law, state agencies are required to record and track every response given by each customer/client when voter registration is discussed.

Sites do this by filling out transmittal forms which are the basis for all NVRA data tracking. By law, transmittal forms (see example below) must be sent, bundled along with corresponding registration forms, from your sites to the appropriate County Board of Elections every ten days of receipt by your agency. The State Board of Elections recommends sending weekly (every 7 days!) transmittals.

SITES SHOULD NEVER HOLD ONTO NEW REGISTRATION FORMS OR FILLED OUT TRANSMITTAL FORMS FOR MORE THAN TEN DAYS

Agency-Based Voter Registration Transmittal Form	
SECTION I. [To be completed by agency site coordinator]	
NVRA 6-digit Site Code Number	
Date of Transmittal	
Applications [Number who registered to vote, changed address, name or party enrollment]	
Number of voter registration APPLICATIONS contained in this transmittal	
Declinations [Number received since last transmittal broken down into the following categories]	
Enter the number who checked the NO box on the agency-based form OR left the form BLANK	
Enter the number who checked the ALREADY REGISTERED box on the agency-based form	
Enter the number who checked the REQUESTED AND RECEIVED A MAIL REGISTRATION FORM box on the agency-based form	
Other Applications [Individuals who did NOT appear at your agency office]	
Enter the number (if any) of voter registration forms SENT to individuals.	
SECTION II. [To be completed by county board of elections]	
Number of <i>new registrations</i> contained in this batch	
Number of <i>address changes</i> contained in this batch	
Number of <i>enrollment changes</i> contained in this batch	
Number of <i>name changes</i> contained in this batch	
Number of <i>duplicate registrations</i> contained in this batch	
Number of <i>incomplete forms</i> contained in this batch	
Number of forms <i>forwarded</i> to other county boards of elections, if any	
Please use the space below to alert the NYS Board of Elections of any issues relating to this site.	
QUESTIONS? - Please call the NYS Board of Elections at (518) 474-1953 NVRA-03 10/98	
Please mail the WHITE and YELLOW copies of this form to your county board of elections, retain the pink copy for your records.	

The forms are broken up into two sections. The first section is the responsibility of the sites to fill out and send. The second is to be completed by the County Board of Elections ONLY.

On the top section (See example below) of the Transmittal form, sites should include the 6-digit site code assigned to their site, the date of transmittal, and the number of new registration applications attached.

SECTION I. [To be completed by agency site coordinator]	
NVRA 6-digit Site Code Number	<input type="text"/>
Date of Transmittal	<input type="text"/>
Applications [Number who registered to vote, changed address, name or party enrollment]	
Number of voter registration APPLICATIONS contained in this transmittal	<input type="text"/>

Also included on the forms should be the number of declinations which include the number of clients who checked “no” on the application or left blank, the number of people who indicated they are “already registered” and the number of clients who requested a mail-in registration form (see more on mail-in forms below).

SECTION I. [To be completed by agency site coordinator]	
NVRA 6-digit Site Code Number	<input type="text"/>
Date of Transmittal	<input type="text"/>
Applications [Number who registered to vote, changed address, name or party enrollment]	
Number of voter registration APPLICATIONS contained in this transmittal	<input type="text"/>
Declinations [Number received since last transmittal broken down into the following categories]	
Enter the number who checked the <u>NO</u> box on the agency-based form OR left the form <u>BLANK</u>	<input type="text"/>
Enter the number who checked the <u>ALREADY REGISTERED</u> box on the agency-based form	<input type="text"/>
Enter the number who checked the <u>REQUESTED AND RECEIVED A MAIL REGISTRATION FORM</u> box on the agency-based form	<input type="text"/>
Other Applications [Individuals who did NOT appear at your agency office]	
Enter the number (if any) of voter registration forms SENT to individuals.	<input type="text"/>

If a person declines the opportunity to register, ask them to check the appropriate box on the registration form and date the declination. Do not force anyone to sign. If the client chooses not to sign the declination, sites should tally and report all **BLANK** declinations on the transmittal forms.

What is considered a BLANK?

- Applicant neglects to make any marks on the agency-based registration form;
- Applicant is unable to respond to voter registration question;
- Applicant is not a US citizen;
- Applicant places multiple checkmarks in declination area.

Transmittal Form Storage and Retention Requirements

Transmittal forms are separated with an original copy (WHITE copy) and two carbon copies (YELLOW and PINK).

Once Section 1 of the transmittal form is filled out by the site, they should mail the WHITE and YELLOW copies of the transmittal form (with corresponding agency-based voter registration applications) to the appropriate County Board of Elections and keep the PINK copy for the site's records for 24 months.

Again, it is a requirement under the NVRA law that sites keep transmittal records for 24 months. After 24 months, the sites transmittal copies can be discarded.

SUPPLY ORDER FORMS

[*Click here to download a Supply Order Form*](#)

Under the NVRA law, sites are responsible for ensuring that the agency has a sufficient supply of materials that are necessary to conduct voter registration services.

Things like the NVRA registration forms, blue dot registration forms, transmittal forms, envelopes, posters, etc. are all important to help sign up new clients or promote the program, and are required under NVRA guidelines.

Registration forms, posters and mail-in Blue Dot Mail-In Registration forms are also available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Bengali and Korean. Depending on where your site is located in the state, you may be required to keep forms in multiple languages.

If sites do not have supply order forms, they can reach out to the State Board of Election's NVRA coordinator to get more or you can download them via this link [HERE](#).