



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



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National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)



NVRA History

- Also known as the “Motor Voter Law”
- **Federal** statute passed by Congress in 1993
- 44 states, **including Texas**, were required to implement the NVRA by January 1, 1995
- Designated government entities as Voter Registration Agencies (VRAs)
- State agencies, including libraries that provide public assistance and certain other public entities **are required** to offer the opportunity to register to vote to their clients.
 - Individuals can register while getting their driver's license
 - Individuals can register through the mail
 - Individuals can register at Voter Registration Agencies



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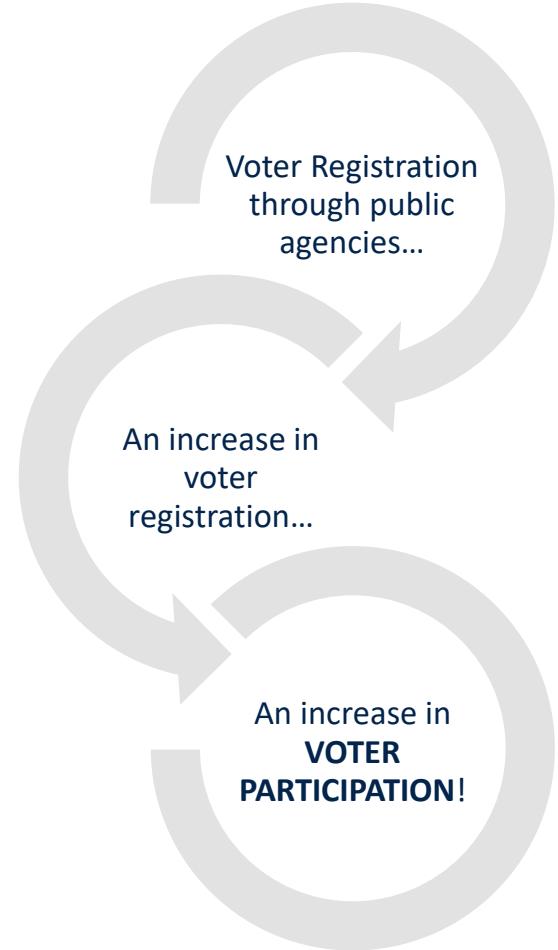


Goals of the NVRA

Increasing Voter Registration by making the process more accessible and convenient, especially through high-demand government agencies like the DPS and social services offices.

Enhancing Voter Participation in the electoral process by encouraging more eligible citizens to register and vote.

Protecting the Integrity of the Electoral Process by establishing fair standards for maintaining accurate and up to date voter registration rolls.





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Public Libraries As Voter Registration Agencies



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Each public library, including any branch or other service outlet, is designated as a voter registration agency. A public library under the Texas 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.



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Why Are Public Libraries Used?

A public library assists in voter registration by reaching populations that are among the least registered.

Low Income individuals are often among the least registered due to barriers such as:

- Lack of access
- Frequent moves
- Time constraints
- Lack of information

People with disabilities are often among the least registered due to challenges such as:

- Physical accessibility barriers
- Lack of accessible information
- Transportation issues
- Low outreach

Youth are often the least registered due to a combination of structural and social factors such as:

- Lack of awareness
- First-time process
- Mobility and life transitions
- Low outreach

Populations with high residential mobility are often among the least registered because frequent moves create challenges such as:

- Registration updates
- Lack of stability
- Missing deadlines
- Mail issues



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Public Library Responsibilities

Offering Voter Registration



Responsibilities

Each public library **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)**



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Voter Registration Applications



Acquiring Voter Registration Applications

Public libraries must use the Secretary of State's prescribed voter registration application.

Public libraries can request applications via the Secretary of State's online Order Form free of charge.



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Application Submission Collecting and Delivering Applications



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Once collected by library personnel, the agency must:

(TEC §20.035)

- 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 serves citizens in more than one county it is recommended the voter registration application(s) be delivered to the appropriate county.



Library Implementation - Offering Voter Registration



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Each public library must:

Prepare and submit a plan to implement voter registration procedures to the SOS office;

Designate a point of contact and provide all necessary contact information to the SOS;
and

Conduct training for agency employees in voter registration procedures.

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.



Best Practices to Ensure Compliance

Employee training on voter registration responsibilities under the NVRA/Texas Election Code should occur **frequently**.

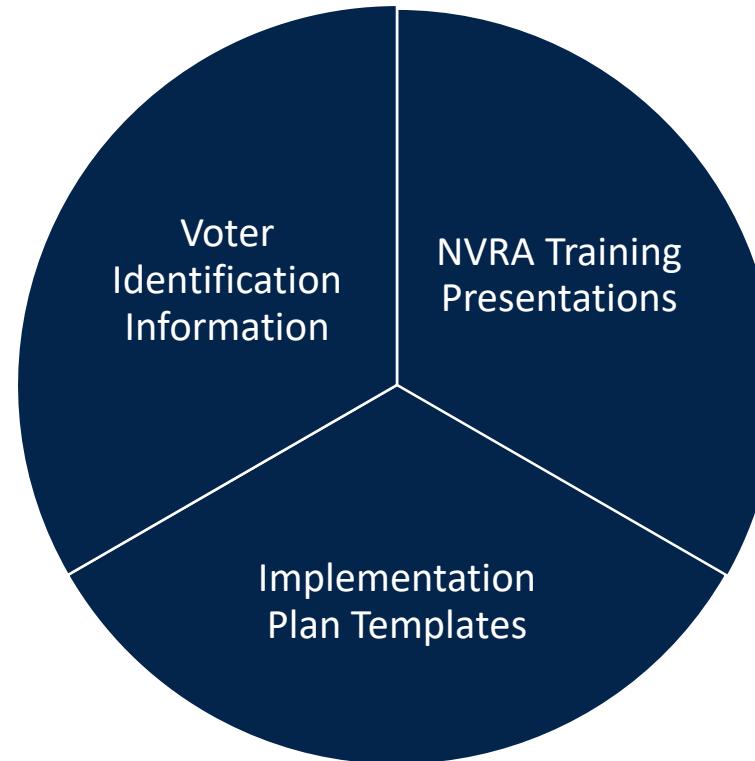
Employee training should occur **before** contact with clients.

Each public 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 of 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.





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Available Support



WEBINARS



TRAINING



RESOURCES

elections@sos.texas.gov

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

sos.texas.gov