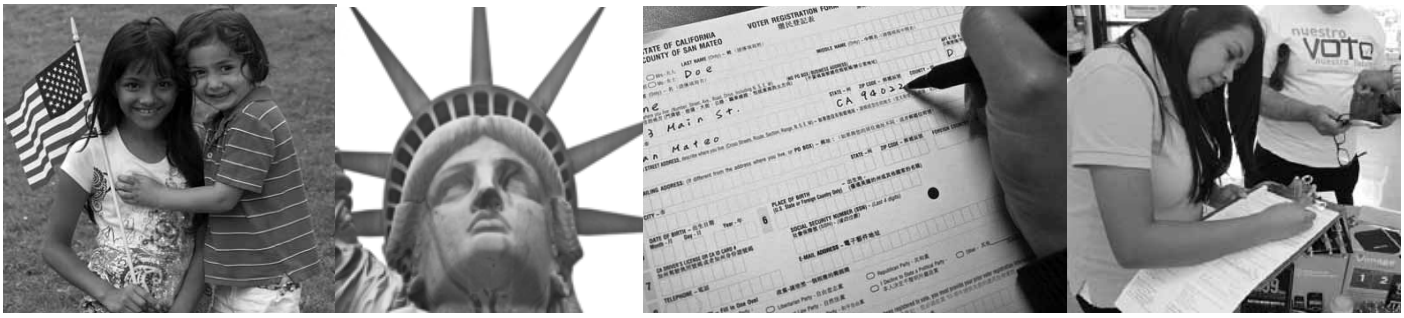

How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act

A Toolkit for: Agency Staff, NVRA Coordinators, and Elections Officials

California Voting Rights Project

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How to Comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

A Toolkit for Agency Staff, NVRA Coordinators, and Elections Officials

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How to Use this Resource Manual

Thank you for using the NVRA Toolkit. Answer the questions below to determine which sections of the Toolkit are right for you.

1. **Do you help people**
   (a) Fill out applications for benefits or services...
   (b) Recertify benefits or services... or
   (c) Submit a change of address...

   ...at any of the following programs or in any of the following offices?

   - CalFresh
   - CalWORKs
   - Medi-Cal
   - Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
   - In-Home Supportive Services
   - Covered California, California's health benefit exchange
   - Department of Rehabilitation - Vocational Services
   - Independent Living Centers
   - Department of Developmental Services Regional Centers
   - Offices contracting with the Office of Deaf Access
   - State and county mental and behavioral health departments, and private practitioners providing services under contract with those departments.

   If so, **you have an obligation to provide voter registration to clients** under state and federal law. This toolkit will tell you how. Please read all content for agency staff (pages 6 - 12).

2. **Every office subject to the NVRA is required to identify one person who ensures compliance** with the office's voter registration responsibilities. Are you that person?

   You are an "NVRA coordinator." Please read the section titled, "When & How to Provide Voter Registration Services" (page 6) and all content for NVRA coordinators (pages 13-19).

3. **Do you handle NVRA compliance for your county elections office?** Do you handle requests from agencies asking for voter registration cards? Do you prepare reports for the state on voter registration card returns?

   You are the NVRA coordinator for the county elections office. Please read all content for elections officials (pages 20-29).

For Agency Staff

When & How to Provide Voter Registration Services

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) was passed more than 20 years ago to increase the political participation of populations that have historically been underrepresented in our democracy. When you meet the terms of the NVRA, **you are often providing someone the first opportunity of their lifetime to take part in the political process** that governs their benefits, their services, and in many ways, their everyday lives.

The NVRA requires you to provide voter registration services every time a person:

- Applies for benefits or services,
- Renews or recertifies benefits or services, or
- Submits a change of name or address.

Voter registration services also apply to remote transactions, such as those conducted by mail, by phone, or by internet. Voter registration services must be provided to adults applying for benefits or services on behalf of a minor.

What does "voter registration services" mean?

During transactions that require voter registration services you need to:

1) **Provide the voter preference form.**
   The voter preference form asks clients if they would like to register to vote, and makes clear that their benefits and services will not be affected by their answer. Completed voter preference forms must remain on file in your office for two years.

2) **Provide the voter registration card.**
   Offer assistance in filling out the voter registration card unless the client declines to register to vote in writing on the voter preference form. You must provide assistance with registering to vote to the same degree you provide assistance with your agency's own forms. You must also accept completed voter registration cards and mail them on behalf of the client. Voter registration cards are pre-addressed and postage paid, and should be mailed daily.

- Your office may be required by law to have voter preference forms and voter registration cards in **languages other than English**. Ask your office's NVRA coordinator what your "required" languages are, or consult page 16 of this document. If a client interacts with you in one of the required languages, provide forms in that language.
- **You do not play any role in screening your clients for eligibility to vote**. Provide voter registration opportunities to all clients; it is the client's responsibility to familiarize himself or herself with eligibility criteria, which is on the voter registration card. Additionally, county elections offices work to ensure that only those who are eligible to vote join the voter rolls.

If you suspect a client is a non-citizen, you may say, "You must be an American citizen 18 years of age or older to vote" when handing the client the voter preference form and voter registration card.

Remember that by law you are **not allowed to influence clients' political party preference** when providing voter registration assistance. You are also **not allowed, by law, to discourage clients from registering to vote**. You can, however, encourage clients to register.

NVRA Implementation in California

Offices offering public assistance and offices primarily serving people with disabilities have a responsibility under the NVRA to provide voter registration opportunities to clients. These are known as "NVRA agencies." NVRA agencies in California include:

- **Public assistance agencies**, including:
  - ▶ County offices that accept applications and administer benefits for the:
    - **CalFresh** program;
    - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (**CalWORKs**) program;
    - **Medi-Cal** program; and
    - **In-Home Supportive Services** (IHSS) program;
  - ▶ All offices, public and private, that accept applications and administer benefits for the Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**) nutrition program;
  - ▶ Individuals and organizations accepting applications for **Covered California**, California's health benefit exchange.
- **State-Funded Agencies Primarily Serving Persons with Disabilities**, including:
  - ▶ Offices of the State Department of Rehabilitation that provide vocational rehabilitation services;
  - ▶ Independent Living Centers;
  - ▶ Department of Developmental Services Regional Centers;
  - ▶ State and county mental health and behavioral health departments and their contractors.
- **Armed Forces Recruitment Offices.**
- District offices of the **Franchise Tax Board** and the **State Board of Equalization**.

SB 35 Writes NVRA Best Practices into State Law

To ensure that California agencies fully comply with the NVRA, the state legislature passed **Senate Bill 35** (Padilla, 2012), which writes NVRA best practices into state law and is making the state a leader in NVRA implementation.

Under SB 35, NVRA agencies in California must:

- Notify county elections offices of each office or site in the county so that voter registration cards can be provided to those sites and properly tracked;
- Designate state and local NVRA coordinators;
- Provide an annual training for every employee who provides voter registration services;
- Offer forms in languages other than English as required by Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act; and
- Offer applicants an online voter preference form and a link to California Online Voter Registration if the agency offers enrollment, renewal, or change of address transactions online.

For Agency Staff

Commonly Held Misconceptions

There are many common misconceptions about registering to vote and voting. Here is the truth:

- People with disabilities often decline to register because they believe they will not be able to cast a ballot on Election Day. People with disabilities have the same right to vote as any other citizen. Federal law requires that every polling place be accessible to people with disabilities. Resources will always be on hand to assist people with visual impairments.
- People do not need to speak English in order to register to vote.
- People who have been convicted of crimes often think they are ineligible to vote. Most of the time, this is simply not true. **A misdemeanor never affects your right to vote.** If an individual is on probation in California, he or she can vote. If an individual has served time in prison, but is now out of prison and off parole, he or she can vote.
- People do not need to be able to read or write in order to register to vote.
- People should re-register if they have moved or changed their name.
- People often do not remember if they are registered to vote. When in doubt, register! There is no penalty for re-registering.

Remember, your responsibility is to provide voter preference forms and voter registration cards. You do not need to screen your clients for eligibility to vote. If you have questions, there are resources available. You can always contact your office's NVRA coordinator or the California Secretary of State's office.

Mailing Completed VRCs Close to an Election

The law requires you to mail completed voter registration cards within 10 days of receipt and within 5 days of receipt if close to a voter registration deadline. It is the **best practice (and easy!) to mail them every day**. Voter registration cards are pre-addressed and postage is prepaid.

The voter registration deadline for an election is 15 days before Election Day. **If a client submits a completed voter registration card to your agency before the voter registration deadline, it is considered timely.** When the voter registration deadline nears, voter registration cards should be mailed daily in an envelope with a note that identifies your agency and explains that the registration included is timely.

Voter Registration Checklist

Once a client has filled out a voter registration card ("VRC"), ask yourself:

- ❑ **Does the registrant want to vote by mail?**
  Question 15 gives each registrant the option of becoming a **permanent vote-by-mail voter.** Vote-by-mail voters receive their ballots in the mail and can then return them by mail any time before the election. This gives voters an opportunity to study the ballot ahead of time and to seek assistance with filling it out if need be. If registrants want to vote at a polling location near their house on Election Day, they should leave question 15 blank.

- ❑ **Does the registrant need to answer Question 16 on the VRC?**
  Question 16 is *optional*. If registrants know the address, city, or county where they previously registered, they can answer this question. If they do not, they can leave it blank.

- ❑ **Does the registrant have a language preference other than English?**
  In the "Optional" section of the VRC, **registrants can choose their language preference.** If the registrant chooses one, he or she will receive a state voter guide before Election Day in that language. If the registrant does not choose one, he or she will receive a guide in English.

- ❑ **Did the registrant sign the form?**
  Registrants must sign the VRC to finalize their registration. However, if the registrant cannot or does not have a signature, any mark will count. If the registrant uses a mark instead of a signature, you must write the registrant's name next to the mark and then sign your name as well. The registrant may also sign his or her name with a signature stamp that is registered with the DMV.

- ❑ **Did the registrant detach the reciept?**
  The bottom third of the VRC is a receipt for the registrant.

- ❑ **Did I fill out the form for the registrant?**
  If you filled out the VRC on behalf of the applicant **then you need to sign** on the right side where it says, "Did someone help you fill out or deliver this form?" If you only checked the VRC to make sure it was complete, or just answered questions from the registrant, then you do not need to sign the form.

- ❑ **Did I get the VRC in the mail on time?**
  The easiest way to ensure that VRCs are always mailed on time is to place them in the mail on a daily basis. Voter registration cards are self-addressed with prepaid postage and can be placed with your outgoing mail.

  The voter registration deadline is 15 days before an election. When the registration deadline nears, VRCs should be mailed daily in an envelope with a cover letter or note in the envelope that identifies your agency and explains that the registration included is timely.

Frequently Asked Questions

You should be prepared to answer the following FAQs about voting:

"What if I don't have a driver license, a state-issued ID, or Social Security number?"

You can register to vote even if you do not have a California ID or Social Security number as long as you meet the other eligibility requirements. Just leave those fields blank.

"Will I need an ID when I vote?"

California does not have a voter ID requirement. However, if you are voting for the first time and you did not provide your driver license number, California ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security number when you registered to vote, you may be asked to show proof of residence when you go to the polls on Election Day. A number of documents, such as a utility bill, suffice as proof of residence. If you don't have a government-issued ID, check with the county elections office before Election Day to determine what to bring to the polls.

"Do I need to re-register if I have moved or changed my name?"

Yes. If you have moved since you last registered, your election materials (sample ballot, etc.) will go to the wrong address and you may encounter problems at the polling location on Election Day. If you have changed your name, you should re-register with your new name in order to avoid problems on Election Day. If you wish to change your political party, you should also re-register.

"What if I don't know if I was previously registered to vote?"

If you are unsure if you are registered to vote, simply register to vote. If you are unsure where you are registered to vote, simply register again at your current address.

"Can I be registered to vote in two counties at the same time?"

Yes. There is no penalty for being registered in two counties at the same time. If you can call the elections office in your former county of residence to cancel your registration, please do so. If you are registered to vote in two counties, you may only vote in one. Voting twice is a felony.

"What if I need a voter registration card in a language that is not available in this office?"

You can register to vote online in ten different languages at www.registertovote.ca.gov and find printable voter registration cards in those ten languages at sos.ca.gov. You may also contact your county elections office to see if they have a voter registration card in the language you need.

"Do I have to choose a political party?"

No. If you do not wish to register with a party, you should choose "No Party Preference."

- more -

Frequently Asked Questions, cont.

"Will my polling location be accessible to people with disabilities?"

All polling locations are required by law to be accessible to people with disabilities. Additionally, all polling locations are required by law to have at least one accessible voting machine for people with disabilities. A guide to voting with a disability is available from Disability Rights California at: http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/541201.pdf.

"I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?"

Only people who are currently serving a sentence for certain felony convictions are ineligible to vote. Please read the eligibility information under question 18 on the voter registration card. **A person's right to vote is automatically reinstated when they have completed their sentence**—re-registration is necessary, however. If you wish to know more visit the Secretary of State's website here: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sharing-ideas/voting-rights-californians.htm.

"Will registering to vote put me in the jury pool?"

Yes. But if you are on file with the DMV for any reason, you are already in the jury pool.

"Do I need an address to register to vote?"

No. Question 6 on the voter registration card allows you to describe where you live if you do not have a formal address. You may use a P.O. box as your mailing address, but not as your home address.

"Will I get information about what is going to be on the ballot?"

Yes. You will be mailed a voter guide by your county elections office prior to Election Day. It will give you information about all of the candidates and ballot initiatives you will be voting on.

"Do I have to vote for everything?"

No. You can vote for as much or as little as you'd like on the ballot.

"Is there a penalty for not voting?"

No. It is your right to not take part in the democratic process.

For Agency Staff

Additional Resources

There are a variety of resources that can help you learn about the NVRA and your voter registration responsibilities.

This Toolkit is available at:
www.aclusandiego.org/NVRA-toolkit/

Disability Rights California (Information for voters with disabilities)**:**
http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/PublicationsVoting.htm

Secretary of State's Guide to Voting Rights of People with Disabilities:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_dis.htm

Secretary of State's Guide to Voting Rights of People with Criminal Convictions:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sharing-ideas/voting-rights-californians.htm

Secretary of State's Elections Hotline
(800) 345 - VOTE (8683)

By providing voter registration assistance, you are giving many people their first opportunity to participate in California's democracy!

President Lyndon Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

For NVRA Coordinators

Responsibilities for NVRA Coordinators

An important part of your agency's ability to fulfill its voter registration requirements is designating an employee responsible for the agency's compliance with the NVRA and SB 35. This employee is known as the "NVRA coordinator."

Luckily, being an NVRA coordinator does not require adding more hours to the clock. Your responsibilities can be easily managed through regular communication with your county elections office, putting systems in place at your workplace, and training employees on how to follow those systems.

Your responsibilities as an NVRA coordinator are to:

- **Confirm that the county elections office knows you are an NVRA agency** and has your agency's name correct in its files.
- **Inform your county elections office** of all offices and sites in the county where your agency distributes voter registration cards.
  - The county elections office is not required to identify agencies with voter registration responsibilities under the NVRA; this responsibility falls on you.
  - The county elections office needs to know all the offices and sites within your agency so that it can track the number of completed voter registrations that come from each. The California Secretary of State collects all of that data and puts it into one monthly report, which can be found here: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/reports/sb35-nvra-monthly-reports.htm.
- **Order voter registration cards** from your county elections office ***only***. Your county elections office should have its own NVRA coordinator that can inform you about the best way to order cards, whether by phone, email, or an online form.
- **Have on hand** both required forms—voter preference forms, which ask an applicant if he or she would like to register to vote and contain mandatory disclaimer language, and voter registration cards—in all languages determined by a formula in the Voting Rights Act. When in doubt about your language requirements, check page 16 of this toolkit or contact your county elections office.
- **Keep in mind that the languages required for voter registration may be different** from the languages required by Medi-Cal and other state programs.
- **Determine a system** for how voter registration cards received from applicants will be mailed to the county elections office. Please see below for further instructions.

Best Practices Tip

Establish a relationship with the NVRA coordinator at your county elections office. Open lines of communication will make NVRA compliance much easier.

Best Practices Tip

The California Secretary of State recommends mailing completed registration cards daily in order to avoid confusion and compliance concerns.

For NVRA Coordinators

Best Practices Tip

Many people don't know that they must re-register when they move or change their name in order to avoid problems on Election Day. Train your staff so they are prepared to inform clients of this little known fact.

Responsibilities for NVRA Coordinator, cont.

- **Every year, train every employee** who provides voter registration opportunities to clients on the NVRA and SB 35. Training materials are available from the Secretary of State here: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/training/.
- **Make sure to train new employees** as they come on board. New employees may use a self-guided training.
- **Provide an online voter preference form** and the opportunity to register to vote online if you provide the opportunity to apply for benefits or services online, recertify benefits or services online, or submit a change of address online. If the client does not answer the voter preference form question, you **must** mail the client a voter registration card.

Best Practices Tip

Draft an internal NVRA policy so staff always know your office's practices and have a document to refer to when they have questions.

Ordering VRCs and Submitting Completed VRCs

Order VRCs from County Elections Office *Only*

Voter registration cards ordered from your county elections office carry a **unique serial number** on the bottom right side. Your county elections office uses this number to track the voter registration cards that have been sent to each NVRA office or site. When a completed voter registration card is mailed back to the county elections office, no matter who mails the card or where it is mailed from, the county elections office can use the serial number to know which NVRA office or site to **give "credit"** to for the registration.

Do *not* order voter registration cards from the California Secretary of State or distribute the federal voter registration card.

Best Practices Tip

Each county elections office has a different process for ordering voter registration cards. Some have online order forms; others require you to send an email directly to a designated staffer in their office. Ask your county elections office to explain its procedure.

Getting "Credit" for Your Office's Registrations

Many NVRA agencies order voter registration cards at a central location and then distribute them to a network of satellite sites. This results in all registrations from all sites being credited to only the central location.

You must coordinate with your county elections office to make sure it can track the voter registration cards going to each site. There are multiple ways to do this. For example, you can order cards to a central location, distribute them to your sites as needed, and then inform the elections office which cards have gone to which sites. Or some agencies have each site order cards directly from the elections office. Ask your county elections office for its preference.

Best Practices Tip

Remember, languages required by the Voting Rights Act may be different from the languages required by Medi-Cal and other state programs.

Submit completed registrations on time

When a client hands your office a completed voter registration card, you have ten days to mail it to the county elections office. A completed voter registration card is easy to mail. Voter registration cards in California are postage-paid and require no envelopes. Simply tear off the bottom third as the registrant's receipt, fold the card in half, seal it, and drop it in the mail.

In order to vote in an election, a voter must register to vote 15 days before Election Day. When an election is getting close and it is just five days or less until the voter registration deadline, you are responsible for mailing the completed voter registration cards within five days—rather than the normal ten days—of receiving them. Since it can get confusing to have to constantly determine if a voter registration card should be mailed within five days or ten days, the Secretary of State recommends that offices drop completed voter registration cards in the mail daily.

Languages Other than English Under the Voting Rights Act

NVRA agencies may be required to have voter registration materials available in languages other than English. All NVRA agencies should take the following steps to ensure they are in compliance with the law.

Step 1: Determine the language requirements for your county.

The federal **Voting Rights Act (VRA) sets a formula** used by the Census Bureau to determine which counties must provide voting materials in which languages. Ask your county elections office what your required languages are, or **consult the table on page 16**. Note that the language requirements required by the VRA may be different than the languages required by Medi-Cal and other state programs.

Step 2: Ensure all of your agency's offices or sites have both voter preference forms and voter registration cards available in the languages required for your county.

Agencies must always stock voter preference forms and voter registration cards in the required languages even if they do not normally receive applications from language minorities.

For NVRA Coordinators

- Voter registration cards will be available in all required languages from your county elections office. This is not the case for voter preference forms; those must be printed out in all required languages, and are available on the Secretary of State's website: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/training/voter-preference-forms.htm.

Step 3: Provide translated voter registration materials whenever a client requests services in languages other than English required for your county.

NVRA agencies should provide a translated voter preference form and voter registration card **whenever a client requests services in a required language**. If a client requests assistance in a language that is not required by your county, remember that the client can register to vote online in ten languages at the Secretary of State's website at www.RegisterToVote.ca.gov. Your agency can also print a VRC in one of the ten languages from the Secretary of State's website.

Best Practices Tip

Check the NVRA/SB 35 reports on the Secretary of State's website monthly to see how many voters your office registered. If you think there are discrepancies, contact the NVRA coordinator at your county elections office.

Language Requirements by County

COUNTY	LANGUAGES REQUIRED
Alameda	Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Spanish
Colusa	Spanish
Contra Costa	Spanish
Fresno	Spanish
Glenn	Spanish
Imperial	Spanish
Kern	Spanish
Kings	Spanish
Los Angeles	Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian,* and Other Asian*
Madera	Spanish
Merced	Spanish
Monterey	Spanish
Napa	Spanish
Orange	Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese
Riverside	Spanish
Sacramento	Chinese, Spanish
San Benito	Spanish
San Bernardino	Spanish
San Diego	Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Vietnamese
San Francisco	Chinese, Spanish
San Joaquin	Spanish
San Mateo	Chinese, Spanish
Santa Barbara	Spanish
Santa Clara	Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Vietnamese
Stanislaus	Spanish
Tulare	Spanish
Ventura	Spanish

* Pursuant to the requirement to provide materials in "Asian Indian" and "Other Asian," Los Angeles County provides voting materials and assistance in Hindi, Cambodian/Khmer, and Thai.

Summary of How NVRA/SB 35 Tracking Works

The system for tracking NVRA voter registration cards created by SB 35 is the only way to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the NVRA in California. It helps make sure that your agency's clients are being offered the opportunities to register to vote that they are owed.

Step 1: Offices accepting applications for public benefits programs and offices serving people with disabilities are called "**NVRA agencies**." Each NVRA agency chooses a staff member to serve as an "**NVRA coordinator**." If an agency has multiple sites or offices, each site or office should have its own NVRA coordinator. **NVRA coordinators contact the county elections office to order voter registration cards in all required languages**.

Step 2: The **county elections office sends blank voter registration cards** (VRCs) to NVRA agencies. These cards have tracking numbers on them so the county elections office will know how many completed registrations each NVRA agency is responsible for.

Step 3: **NVRA agencies give VRCs to clients**, and help clients fill them out when they wish to register to vote. NVRA agencies then mail completed VRCs back to the county elections office. VRCs are postage-paid.

Step 4: Each county elections office counts the number of registrations from each NVRA agency in its county and **sends a monthly report** to the California Secretary of State.

Step 5: The Secretary of State is California's chief elections officer and is responsible for California's compliance with the NVRA. The **Secretary of State compiles all county NVRA reports and publishes a statewide report on its website**. Each month, the public can see the number of completed voter registrations generated by each NVRA agency in the state.

For NVRA Coordinators

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample Email to be Sent Close to an Election

FROM: NVRA Coordinators at NVRA Agencies
TO: All Staff at NVRA Agencies

To all caseworkers and staff who provide voter registration opportunities to members of the public:

In order to vote in an election, a voter must register to vote 15 days before Election Day. By law, a voter registration is **considered timely if it reaches an NVRA agency** before that deadline.

Under normal circumstances, federal law requires you to mail a completed voter registration card to the county elections office within 10 days of receiving it. However, **close to an election** the law is different: within 5 days of a voter registration deadline (i.e. within 20 days of an election), you must mail a completed voter registration card within 5 days. You can help the county elections office avoid confusion close to a voter registration deadline by submitting each completed card with a date stamp and note stating that the registration is timely.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: In order to avoid having to constantly determine if a voter registration card should be mailed within 5 days or 10 days, simply drop completed voter registration cards in the mail daily. This eliminates all compliance concerns in this area.

For NVRA Coordinators

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a variety of resources that can help you learn about the NVRA and your voter registration responsibilities.

NVRA Section of the Secretary of State's website:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra

This Toolkit is available at:
www.aclusandiego.org/NVRA-toolkit/

Chapter 4 of the Secretary of State's NVRA Manual:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/laws-standards/pdf/chapter-four.pdf

Secretary of State's Guide to Voting Rights of People with Disabilities:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_dis.htm

Disability Rights California (Information for voters with disabilities)**:**
http://www.disabilityrightsca.org/pubs/PublicationsVoting.htm

Secretary of State's Guide to Voting Rights of People with Criminal Convictions:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sharing-ideas/voting-rights-californians.htm

Secretary of State's Elections Hotline
(800) 345 - VOTE (8683)

For Elections Officials

Roles & Responsibilities Created for All Relevant Parties by SB 35: A Guide for Elections Officials

SB 35 (Padilla) was signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2012 and took effect on January 1, 2013. The bill codifies into state law many requirements of Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and makes required a number of best practices that will modernize and improve the implementation of the NVRA in California.

The purpose of **this section is to outline all roles and responsibilities** created by SB 35 and the NVRA for NVRA agencies, county elections officials, and the Secretary of State.

The NVRA requires the Secretary of State to designate as "NVRA agencies" all (1) "public assistance" offices, (2) "state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities," (3) armed forces recruiting offices, and (4) other offices as chosen by the Secretary of State. (42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-5.)

NVRA agencies must:

- **Provide clients with a voter preference form and voter registration card** upon every application for benefits or services, renewal of benefits or services, and change of address. Unless a client declines to register to vote on the voter preference form, the NVRA agency must provide the same level of assistance in filling out the voter registration card that it provides for filling out its other forms.
- **Identify an employee who is responsible** for the agency's compliance with the NVRA and SB 35, commonly known as an "NVRA coordinator." The Secretary of State recommends that an agency with multiple sites in a county designate an NVRA coordinator at each site.
- **Inform their county elections official** of all offices and sites within the county that accept applications for benefits or services, renewals of benefits or services, and changes of address.
  - ▶ County elections officials are not required by law to identify all NVRA agencies in their counties; this responsibility falls on the NVRA agencies themselves. County elections officials may be proactive in this regard if they wish to bring their county into full NVRA compliance more quickly.
- **Order voter registration cards** from their county elections office.
- Have voter preference forms and voter registration cards on hand **in all languages** determined by a formula in Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.
- **Mail all completed voter registration cards** to their county elections officials within 10 days of receiving them. When close to a voter registration deadline—that is, within 15 days before Election Day—mail all completed voter registration cards within five days. To avoid confusion, the Secretary of State recommends that voter registration cards be mailed daily.
- **Train every employee annually** who provides voter registration opportunities to clients on NVRA and SB 35 requirements.
- Provide the **opportunity for clients to register to vote online** if the agency provides the opportunity to apply for benefits or services online, recertify benefits or services online, or submit change of address online.

For Elections Officials

County elections offices must:

- **Designate an NVRA coordinator** responsible for coordinating with the Secretary of State and with NVRA agencies in the county to administer voter registration responsibilities under the NVRA.
- **Provide voter registration cards** to NVRA agencies upon request.
- **Maintain a record** of the number of voter registration cards provided to and received from each office/site in each NVRA agency in the county.
- **Report** the number of voter registration cards received from each office/site in each NVRA agency in the county, itemized by office or site, to the Secretary of State within 10 days of the start of each month.
- **Submit a second report** grouping all registrations into one of five categories to the Secretary of State, which the Secretary of State compiles in a biennial report to the federal Elections Assistance Commission.
  - ▶ The five categories are: public assistance agencies, state-funded agencies serving people with disabilities, armed forces recruitment offices, other agencies designated by the State under the NVRA, and an "unable to distinguish" category.
- **Assist** NVRA agencies with training, upon request.
- **Protect the confidentiality** of the NVRA agency through which a voter registered to vote and ensure its identity is not disclosed to the public.
- **Accept as timely any completed registration** that is received by an NVRA agency on or before the 15-day voter registration deadline.

Secretary of State must:

- **Ensure that California follows the NVRA**.
  - ▶ The Secretary of State is California's statewide NVRA coordinator and is ultimately responsible for California's compliance with the NVRA.
- **Prepare training materials** that describe the responsibilities of county elections officials and NVRA agencies, and communicate to relevant parties best practices for complying with SB 35 and the NVRA. (Available at: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/.)
- **Contact NVRA agencies that are not complying** with the requirements of SB 35.
- **Post monthly reports online** detailing the number of registrations produced by each office/site in each NVRA agency in California. (Available at: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/reports/sb35-nvra-monthly-reports.htm.) The Secretary of State is also required to **report data to the federal Election Assistance Commission.**

For Elections Officials

Best Practices for Tracking NVRA Registrations

This section **identifies best practices for establishing and operating a system that can track voter registration cards** received from NVRA agencies.

Best Practices for Operating an SB 35 Tracking System

- To reduce workload for county elections staff, **county elections offices can create online forms** that enable NVRA agencies to easily and quickly order voter registration cards in all required languages. Orange County has a highly effective online form, displayed on page 23.
- To reduce workload for county elections staff and to streamline NVRA compliance, county elections offices should **utilize the full power of their voter databases** when tracking voter registration cards sent to NVRA agencies. See San Bernardino County as an example, explained in detail on pages 24-27.
- County elections offices should **maintain lists of all NVRA coordinators** (i.e. the voter registration point people at NVRA agencies) in their counties, along with their contact information. Periodically contact the NVRA agencies in your county to keep the list of coordinators current.
  - While the law requires NVRA agencies to make themselves known to county elections officials, in practice this often does not happen. **Many county elections offices research NVRA agencies in their counties** (see pages 28-29) and do proactive outreach.
- County elections offices should **host annual workshops** on NVRA compliance. A single workshop can be held for all NVRA coordinators in the county, or separate workshops can be held by agency type to better address specific needs and concerns.
- Many NVRA agencies have a central office with a network of satellite sites. County elections offices **must track the voter registration cards that go to each satellite site**. This can be done in one of several ways:
  - By having an NVRA coordinator at each site request voter registration cards for their site;
  - By having an NVRA coordinator at a central office order cards for all sites, distribute them to individual offices/sites as needed, then inform the county elections office which cards were sent to which sites;
  - By having an NVRA coordinator at a central office order cards for all sites, distribute them to individual offices/sites as needed, and then have the individual offices/sites inform the county elections office of which cards they have received (as in San Bernardino County, illustrated on pages 24-27).
- NVRA agencies have slightly different responsibilities when close to an election. County elections offices should send a notice to the NVRA agencies in their counties informing them of election deadlines for regular and special elections as they approach.

Example: Orange County Voter Registration Card Order Form

The Orange County Registrar of Voters office hosts an order form for voter registration cards on its website. The form allows for users to order voter registration cards in all required languages in Orange County without submitting multiple requests. The form can be used by any member of the public, but requires NVRA agencies to identify themselves to make NVRA tracking easier for the Registrar.

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

English | 中文 | 한국어 | Español | Tiếng Việt

Registration | Voting | Results | Data | Media | Community | Volunteer | About

Home > Registration > *NVRA Registration Order Form*

Registration Links
- Voter Registration Info
- Register to Vote
- Keeping Your Registration Up-to-Date
- Verify Your Voter Registration
- Confirm Your Voter Registration
- Request Certified Copy of Voter Registration
- Military and Overseas Voter Registration
- Confidential Voter Registration
- Voter Registration Basics
- First Time Voters
- View Current Voter Registration Data
- Purchase Voter Registration Data
- Maintaining an Accurate Voter List
- Assistance
- **NVRA Registration Order Form**
  - National Voter Registration Act Information

NVRA Voter Registration Order Form

Full name:
Email:
Address:
City:
Zip:
Representing (Name of Organization Distributing Cards):
Address (Organization Distributing Cards):
City:
Zip:
Quantity of English Forms:
Quantity of English/Chinese Forms:
Quantity of English/Korean Forms:
Quantity of English/Spanish Forms:
Quantity of English/Vietnamese Forms:
Will you pick this up from our office, or would you like it mailed? (Orders of 250 or more require to be picked up at our office): ○ I will pick it up at the Registrar's office ○ Please mail it to me
Statement of Distribution Plans:
Are you an NVRA agency as defined in the National Voter Registration Act?: ○ Yes ○ No

Offices indicate that they are NVRA agencies.

Click here for more important information and printable documents for the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

ANY MAILING OF VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH **ELECTIONS CODE § 2158(b)(3)**. The code is on the next page.

If you are collecting completed affidavits of registration, you must return completed affidavits of registration in your possession within three days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and state holidays to the Registrar of Voters office. **(Elections Code § 18103)**

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT I WILL TAKE REASONABLE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT:

(1) The person or persons distributing registration cards will give a registration card to any elector requesting one; and **(Elections Code §§ 2158(b)(2), 18107)**

(2) The persons distributing registration cards will be fully advised that state law imposes **PENALTIES OF IMPRISONMENT** for anyone who knowingly and willfully completes affidavits of registration for **NON-CITIZENS, NON-EXISTENT OR FICTITIOUS PERSONS, OR ANY INELIGIBLE ELECTOR** ; and **(Elections Code §§ 18100, 18101, and 18102)**

(3) The voter registration cards will not be defaced or changed in any way; and (**Elections Code §§ 2162(b), §18106)**

(4) The voter registration cards will not be partially or fully filled in by anyone other than the registrant or the person assisting the registrant in completing the form; **(Elections Code § 2162[c])**

(5) Persons entrusted with distribution or subsequent collection of completed registration forms will be fully advised of the legal requirements outlined on the reverse side of this statement. **(Elections Code § 2159.5[a])**

Any person who knowingly misrepresents himself or herself as having helped register another to vote on a registration form is guilty of a misdemeanor. (Elections Code §§ 18108.1, 2159[b])

☐ I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE ELECTIONS CODE SECTIONS. I HAVE RECEIVED, READ AND UNDERSTAND THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING REGISTRATION FORMS.

Submit

Example: San Bernardino County NVRA Tracking & Data Management System

The San Bernardino County Elections Office operates its database of voters using the **DIMS system**. With minimal effort, San Bernardino County uses DIMS to track the voter registration cards sent to each site or office in an NVRA agency, how many have been returned, and when each NVRA agency in the county is running low and in need of replenishment.

The San Bernardino County Elections Office gets from DIMS a **monthly report of NVRA registrations in the county** and, because of careful planning by the Elections Office's IT department, this report is generated in exactly the same format as the monthly report the Elections Office must submit to the Secretary of State. The submission of that report is simply a matter of copying and pasting by the Elections Office's internal NVRA coordinator. The San Bernardino County Elections Office estimates that tracking NVRA registrations across the county takes 90 minutes per month.

The screenshots below illustrate how San Bernardino County's NVRA tracking system works. Contact information for the San Bernardino County Elections Office is at the bottom of page 27. Its staff is happy to field questions and requests for assistance.

Find Affidavit Inventory

Sort by Inventory ID Sort by Status

#	STATUS	TYPE	QTY	AFF FROM	AFF TO	QTY/BOX	LTD	QTY LEFT
1	ORDRD	STATE	8000	36N802000	36N810000	1000	08/09/2002	2000
2	CNTR	STATE	2000	36N800000	36N801999	1000	08/09/2002	
3	WARE	MLING	5000	36O005001	36O010000	1000	04/14/2003	4320
4	ORDRD	MLING	10000	36O00001	36O10000	1000	04/14/2003	-51520
5	ORDRD	MLING	0	36000000	36002000	0	04/14/2003	
6	ORDRD	REG	1	1000000	1000000	0	04/14/2003	
7	CNTR	MLING	5000	36O000001	36O005000	1000	04/14/2003	4000
8	CNTR	REG	1000	1000001	1001000	0	04/14/2003	
9	CNTR	MLING	10000	36000	45000	25	04/14/2003	-20629944
10	WARE	STATE	999999	60ZP000000	60ZP999999	1000	12/12/2011	972675
11	WARE	REG	1000000	36M000000	36M999999	0	12/15/2005	512353
12	WARE	REG	1000000	36N000000	36N999999	1000	12/16/2005	548765
13	WARE	REG	32000	36P653001	36P703000	1000	12/12/2011	-5437
14	WARE	REG	50000	36P685001	36P735000	1000	06/02/2011	6943
15	WARE	REG	50000	36P735001	36P785000	1000	09/28/2011	20611
16	WARE	REG	50000	36P785001	36P835000	1000	12/12/2011	1301
17	WARE	STATE	15000	60Z163001	60Z178000	1000	02/21/2012	
18	WARE	REG	100000	36P835001	36P935000	1000	04/02/2012	17440
19	WARE	REG	84000	36Q016001	36Q100000	1000	07/06/2012	18447
20	WARE	STATE	20000	60ZK073001	60ZK093000	1000	09/24/2012	
21	WARE	REG	120000	36S000001	36S120000	1000	01/04/2013	29107
22	WARE	REG	120000	36S240001	36S360000	1000	07/18/2013	114000
23	WARE	REG	50000	36S480001	36S530000	1000	07/30/2013	
24	WARE	REG	0	36S480001	36S480000	1000	11/07/2013	
25	DIST	REG	120000	36S360001	36S480000	1000	11/07/2013	97000
26	WARE	REG	0	36S240001	36S240000	1000	11/08/2013	
27	DIST	REG	120000	36S120001	36S240000	1000	11/08/2013	41000
28	WARE	REG	0			0	11/08/2013	
29	WARE	STATE	0	60ZK481001	60ZK481000	1000	11/08/2013	
30	DIST	STATE	50000	60ZK431001	60ZK481000	1000	11/08/2013	35389

Select Cancel

Voter Registration Card Inventory

This screenshot shows the San Bernardino County Elections Office's inventory of blank voter registration cards. Line 25 contains the following information:

- the Office has distributed 120,000 voter registration cards (see column 3)
- carrying serial numbers 36S360001 through 36S480000 (see columns 4 and 5),
- in boxes of 1,000 voter registration cards each (see column 6),
- on November 7, 2013 (see column 7).

(The San Bernardino County Elections Office notes that some dates displayed here are in the process of being corrected.)

Column 8 is an automatically updating number. Precisely 120,000 cards were distributed to a central warehouse of San Bernardino's social services agency, which oversees a variety of social services programs. Whenever an individual office or site within the agency receives a box of cards from the central warehouse, it sends the San Bernardino County Elections Office a form (see Voter Registration Card Received Form, page 27) indicating the serial numbers of the cards now in its possession. The San Bernardino County Elections Office notes in its NVRA tracking system that the cards are now possessed by an individual office or site, and an equivalent number of cards is automatically deducted from column 8 on this screen.

Thus, column 8 of line 25 indicates that the social services agency warehouse still has 97,000 cards, and has distributed 23,000 to individual offices and sites around the county.

For Elections Officials

Find Account Holder

By Name | **By Account Group** | By Affidavit Number

Pick the Account Holder's Group

Group: NVRA (PA)

#	S	NAME 1	NAME 2	CONTACT	PHONE 1	ID
24	A	TAD	SAN BERNARDINO	RAMONA	(000) -	8789
25	A	TAD - ADELANTO,	RANCHO RD - DIST 48	DEBBIE WEBER	(760) 530-2986	8279
26	A	TAD - BARSTOW,	E MAIN - DIST 6		(760) 256-4204	8117
27	A	TAD - COLTON,	MOUNT VERNON		(909) 422-0488	8025
28	A	TAD - COLTON,	WOODPINE AVE - DI...	JORGE LEDESMA	(909) 421-3225	8123
29	A	TAD - FONTANA,	ARROW BLVD - DIST 39		(909) 854-4000	8124
30	A	TAD - FONTANA,	SIERRA AVE - DIST 9	SHERILYN MERRIDA	(000) -	8278
31	A	TAD - HESPERIA ,	9TH AVE - DIST 8	JOANNE ARMENDARIZ	(000) -	8282
32	A	TAD - NEEDLES,	BAILEY AVE - DIST 10	SUE	(760) 326-9261	8283
33	A	TAD - ONTARIO	1637 E HOLT - DIST 15	MICHELLE MCCLAIN	(000) -	10252
34	A	TAD - ONTARIO	E HOLT BLVD - DIST 75	SUZANNA ZARAGOZA	(909) 933-5743	8082
35	A	TAD - RANCHO CUCAMONGA,	ARROW RTE - DIST 25	FAWN WOLFINGTON	(909) 945-0999	8285
36	A	TAD - REDLANDS,	REDLANDS BLVD - DI...		(909) 335-3206	8090
37	A	TAD - RIALTO	FOOTHILL - DIST 39		(000) -	10238
38	A	TAD - SAN BERNARDINO	DEL ROSA - DIST 7	CHEIRE LAUB	(000) -	8779
39	A	TAD - SAN BERNARDINO,	4TH ST - DIST 1	JOANNE MARTINEZ	(000) -	8275
40	A	TAD - SAN BERNARDINO,	MASS AVE - DIST 2	KRISTY DOMAN	(909) 475-2022	8276
41	A	TAD - SAN BERNARDINO,	N E ST		(909) 387-5040	8099
42	A	TAD - TWENTYNINE PALMS ,	SUN VALLEY DR - DIS...	SHERYL HINSON	(000) -	8287
43	A	TAD - VICTORVILLE	PALMDALE - DIST 18	JOYCE FISHER	(000) -	10239
44	A	TAD - VICTORVILLE,	2ND ST		(619) 955-3683	8118
45	A	TAD - VICTORVILLE,	VICTOR ST		(760) 243-8400	8075
46	A	TAD - YUCCA VALLEY ,	PIMA TRL - DIST 3		(760) 228-5229	8109
47	A	TAD- SAN BERNARDINO	S LENA RD	DIRECTOR - NANCY S...	(909) 388-0245	9613

List of "Account Holders" (i.e. NVRA Offices)

Elsewhere in DIMS, the San Bernardino County Elections Office can access a list of all NVRA offices or sites in the county, along with contact information for the name of each NVRA coordinator.

Account Holder - TAD - SAN BERNARDINO, MASS AVE - DIST 2

Account Holder Details | Attributes/Flags/History | Affidavit Ranges

ID and Status

Find Existing | ID: 8276

Status: ACTIVE

Group: NVRA (PA)

☑ Registration Distribution Site?

Name 1: TAD - SAN BERNARDINO,

Name 2: MASS AVE - DIST 2

Contact: KRISTY DOMAN

Name

Find Voter

Prefix:

First:

Middle:

Last: TAD - SAN BERNARDINO

Suffix:

Location

House#: 2050 Frac: _/_ Dir: N

Street: MASSACHUSETTS Type: AVE

Post Dir: Bldg: Apt:

City: SAN BERNARDINO Zip: 92408

Precinct: NONE Manual ☐

Mailing

Care of:

Street/Bx:

Mail City:

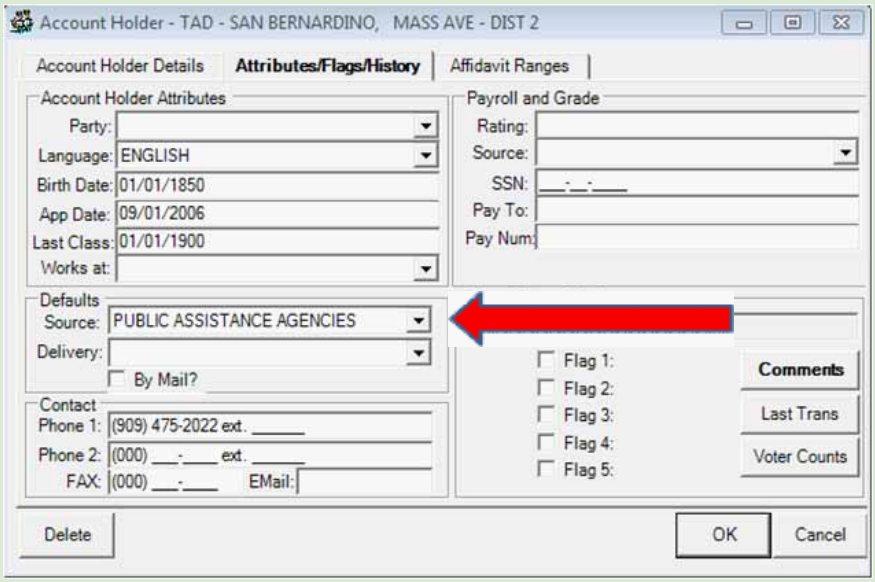
Mail ST: MZip:

Country:

Delete | OK | Cancel

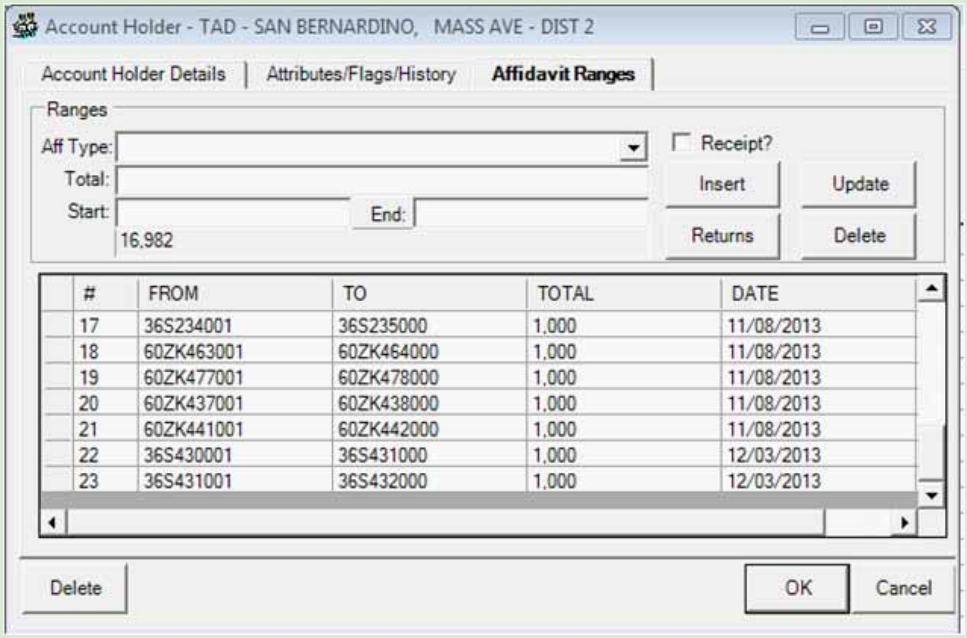
Individual "Account Holder" Profile (Tab 1: "Account Holder" Details)

Each line in the list of "Account Holders," i.e. NVRA offices or sites, can be clicked to open up an in-depth profile of the "Account Holder." Each account profile has three tabs at the top. The first tab stores contact information.



Individual "Account Holder" Profile (Tab 2: Attributes/Flags/History)

The second tab identifies the type of agency. The drop-down options are: public assistance, disability, armed forces, or other. These options track with the monthly report that must be submitted to the Secretary of State, enabling the monthly report to be automatically generated.



#	FROM	TO	TOTAL	DATE
17	36S234001	36S235000	1,000	11/08/2013
18	60ZK463001	60ZK464000	1,000	11/08/2013
19	60ZK477001	60ZK478000	1,000	11/08/2013
20	60ZK437001	60ZK438000	1,000	11/08/2013
21	60ZK441001	60ZK442000	1,000	11/08/2013
22	36S430001	36S431000	1,000	12/03/2013
23	36S431001	36S432000	1,000	12/03/2013

Individual "Account Holder" Profile (Tab 3: Affidavit Ranges)

When the San Bernardino County Elections Office receives notice that an individual NVRA office or site has received a box of voter registration cards from a central location, the NVRA coordinator at the San Bernardino County Elections Office clicks on the third tab of the "Account Holder" profile and enters the range of serial numbers the individual NVRA office or site has received. If the numbers entered are a duplicate of numbers entered for another office, the system will produce an error message.

The screenshot to the left indicates that the Mass Ave. location of the San Bernardino social services agency received 2,000 cards on 12/03/2013 and 5,000 cards on 11/08/2013.

Once a certain number of voter registration cards are entered in an "Account Holder" profile like this one, the corresponding line in column 8 on the screenshot shown on page 24 will automatically decrease by an equal number.

For Elections Officials

Voter Registration Card Log

TAD District: San Bernardino (District 02) Month/Year: Dec 2013

Voter Registration Cards (SBDNOES) come in boxes of 1,000, please list each box separately.

Date Received	Voter Registration Card Number Range		Office Assistant (OA) Name
	From	To	
11/19/13	36 S 431001	36 S 432000	Kristy Doman
11/19/13	36 S 430001	36 S 431000	Kristy Doman

On the **first working day of the month** designated staff will email the log for the previous month to the:

- Registrar of Voters (ROV) at voterregistrations@sbcountyelections.com, and
- District Primary and Back Up contacts.

Voter Registration Card Received Form

The NVRA coordinators at all social services offices and sites have been trained to submit the form at left to the San Bernardino County Elections Office whenever they receive blank voter registration cards from their central office.

On November 19, 2013, the social services office in District 02 received two boxes of 1,000 blank voter registration cards from the social services centralized warehouse. The form below was filled out by the NVRA coordinator in the office, and then emailed to voterregistrations@sbcountyelections.com.

NVRA Agency Registration Activity

For 12/1/2013 through 12/12/2013

Does not include DMV.

Dec-13	Public Assistance (PA), Disability Agency (DA), Armed Forces (AF), Other (O)	Office Name, Office ID Number	Number of VRC's received
	AFR	ARMY NATIONAL GUARD APPLE VALLEY	0
	AFR	ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ONTARIO	0
	AFR	ARMY NATIONAL GUARD REDLANDS	0
	AFR	ARMY NATIONAL GUARD, STATE OF CALIFORNIA SAN BERNARDINO	0
	AFR	CAPTAIN KATRINA GLAVAN (CAFB) VICTORVILLE	0
	AFR	FORT IRWIN, HUMAN RESOURCES FORT IRWIN	0
	AFR	GEORGE AIR FORCE BASE VICTORVILLE	0
	AFR	LT BIGGS (VOTING OFFICER)	0
	AFR	MARINE CORPS LOGISTICS BASE BARSTOW	0
	AFR	MARINE CORPS PERSONNEL SUPPORT BARSTOW	0
	AFR	NORTON AIR FORCE BASE	0
	AFR	US ARMED FORCES RECRUITING BARSTOW	0
	AFR	US ARMY DEPARTMENT SAN BERNARDINO	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING APPLE VALLEY	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING CHINO	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING HESPERIA	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING ONTARIO	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING RANCHO CUCAMONGA	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING REDLANDS - ARIZONA ST	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING REDLANDS - 3ND PARK AVE	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING REDLANDS - ORANGE ST	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING REDLANDS - ORANGE TREE LN	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING REDLANDS - REDLANDS BLVD	0
	AFR	US ARMY RECRUITING CENTER LOMA LINDA	0

Automatically Generated Monthly Reports

DIMS automatically generates a monthly report for San Bernardino County detailing how many completed voter registrations have been received from each NVRA office or site. (Screenshot from that report, left.) This report is generated in the same format that the Secretary of State requires for its monthly report; as a result, submitting the SOS report is simply a matter of copying, pasting, and emailing.

If a generic voter registration card is received by the San Bernardino County Elections Office (i.e. it has no serial number), but the NVRA coordinator in the San Bernardino County Elections Office knows the NVRA office from which the card came, the NVRA coordinator attaches a sticker with a new serial number and credit is given to the appropriate office.

Effectively Tracking NVRA/SB 35 Registrations Can Take Very Little Time

The San Bernardino County Elections Office reports that tracking NVRA voter registrations, using the system described here, takes less than 90 minutes per month. Depending on the number of blank voter registration cards being distributed in any particular month, data entry into DIMS takes 15 to 60 minutes per month. Generating a monthly report, copying and pasting it into the Secretary of State's spreadsheet, and emailing it to the Secretary of State takes 15-20 minutes per month.

The San Bernardino County Elections Office would be happy to field questions about its system. For more information, contact the internal NVRA coordinator, who developed and operates the system described here. Contact:
Terry D. Kouba, Chief Deputy Registrar for Operations, (909) 387-2101, tkouba@rov.sbcounty.gov.

NVRA Agencies: How They Are Organized and How to Find Them

SB 35 (Padilla, 2012) requires county elections officials to maintain a record of voter registration cards sent to and received from agencies designated as NVRA agencies. This document outlines which agencies, offices, service providers, and nonprofit entities qualify as NVRA agencies.

While it is the legal responsibility of NVRA agencies to make themselves known to their county elections office, the Secretary of State recommends that county elections offices proactively identify and reach out to the NVRA agencies that exist within their counties.

Federal Law

The NVRA places voter registration responsibilities on (1) government "public assistance" agencies/offices, (2) government agencies/offices "providing services to persons with disabilities," (3) armed services recruitment offices, and (4) other agencies/offices as designated by the Secretary of State. (42 U.S.C. § 1973gg-5.) In California, the fourth category includes district offices of the Franchise Tax Board and the Board of Equalization.

State law

California state law mandates that any entity "under contract" with an NVRA agency with voter registration responsibilities also shares those responsibilities. (Cal. Elec. Code. § 2401(b)(2).) Most frequently, this impacts nonprofits, community groups, and individual practitioners that provide mental health services or alcohol/drug programming under contract with county departments, and nonprofits and community groups that administer Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs. This also applies to Regional Centers and Independent Living Centers.

Definitions

"Public assistance" agencies are:

- County offices that accept applications and administer benefits for:
  - **CalFresh** program;
  - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (**CalWORKs**) program;
  - **Medi-Cal** program; and
  - **In-Home Supportive Services** (IHSS) program;
- All offices, public and private, that accept applications and administer benefits for the Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**) nutrition program;
- Individuals and organizations accepting applications for **Covered California**, California's health benefit exchange.

Agencies "providing services to persons with disabilities" are defined as:

- Offices of the State Department of Rehabilitation
- Independent Living Centers
- Regional Centers
- Dept. of Social Services, Office of Deaf Access
- State and County Mental Health Providers

For Elections Officials

These agencies may have different names depending on what county they are located in. For example, public assistance services are provided at the county level by departments variously named Human Services, Social Services, Transitional Assistance, and other titles. Mental health services are often provided through Behavioral Health departments. In-Home Supportive Services can be housed at a department called Aging and Independence Services or Adult Protective Services, or at a generalized social services department. WIC programs are often run by hospitals, nonprofits and community groups, colleges, and community health centers, all of which have the same NVRA responsibilities of an office run directly by county government.

There are a number of ways to identify the NVRA agencies in your county.

Start by looking at your existing list of NVRA agencies. Try emailing or sending a letter to those agencies, addressed to the NVRA coordinators, asking them to confirm where they have sites in the county and who their current NVRA coordinator is.

Local agencies can also be found online. Most of these agencies have a centralized office whose website has a locator tool to find service providers in the 58 counties in California. For example, a search of the Department for Developmental Services website will yield a "Lookup Regional Centers by County" tool [http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/RCLookup.cfm]. If you find agencies that you believe are NVRA agencies that are not having their registrations tracked by site, try sending a letter or email addressed to the NVRA coordinator at the office.

Once you have identified the offices in your county who you believe are NVRA agencies, consider hosting a training or workshop for those agencies' NVRA coordinators. This way you can train all of the NVRA coordinators at once, and give the agencies the information they need to properly register voters. Contact the Secretary of State's NVRA coordinator [www.sos.ca.gov/elections/nvra/contact.htm] or the ACLU [voting@acluca.org] for more information on how to host an NVRA workshop.

In Conclusion: Thank you!

Thank you for all your hard work to ensure full and accurate NVRA compliance in your county. This is an excellent means of maintaining accurate and up-to-date voter rolls and a cost effective way to expand voter registration!

Photo Attributions

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The ACLU of California's NVRA Implementation Project works with public assistance offices and offices serving people with disabilities, county elections offices, and the Secretary of State to improve implementation of the NVRA across California.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like assistance in implementing the NVRA at your agency or in your county, please contact us.

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