

## Voter Registration Appendix

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (P. L. 103-31) requires each state's public assistance agency to provide the customer the opportunity to complete a Voter Registration Application at any time a request for assistance is made. This requirement became effective January 1, 1996.

Voter registration is not a part of program eligibility requirements. Therefore, an application for assistance will not be denied nor will a case be closed due to failure to complete any forms in relation to voter registration. No forms or other documents related to voter registration except for the DHS-131 and Voter Registration Change of Status will be filed in the customer's case record.

### DCO Employees will not:

1. Seek to influence a customer's political preference or party registration;
2. Display any such political preference or party allegiance;
3. Make any statement to a customer or take any action, the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the customer from registering to vote; or
4. Make any statement to a customer or take any action, the purpose or effect of which is, to lead the customer to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

### Explanation & Offer

Each customer must be offered an opportunity to apply to register to vote when visiting the county office for purposes of applying for assistance, recertification/reevaluation, or for reporting changes of name or address. If a customer is applying for more than one service and is interviewed by two or more Program Eligibility Specialists on the same day, the offer has to be made at least once. The County Office will put into place a procedure that will ensure that the offer has been made.

Subsequent visits to the County Office for the purpose of completing the application/recertification process (e.g., customer returns the next day to furnish check stubs) will be considered part of the same application. Therefore, it is not necessary to make another offer for voter registration.

### Who Can Make The Offer

The offer can be made by any employee or volunteer. If the offer is made by someone other than the Program Eligibility Specialist, a procedure must be in place to notify the worker that the offer was made to avoid duplication of effort during the program eligibility interview.

A Voter Registration Application form must be provided to anyone who requests one. If someone is not applying for DHS services but requests a Voter Registration Application form, the

worker will give him/her the form with instructions to mail it directly to the Secretary of State's office. A declaration form will not be given in this instance, nor will it count on the daily recap report.

## **Customer Acceptance**

If a customer states she/he wishes to register to vote, she/he will be given a Voter Registration Application to complete. The voter registration application can be completed at the county office and given back to the receptionist or the customer can take it with him or her and mail directly to the designated address. Assistance in completing the form will be provided if requested. It is a local decision as to whether the Agency-Based Declaration Statement will be completed. If it is completed, a copy may be given to the customer if requested. It is a local decision as to whether the "yes" declarations will be kept in the county office. Do not mail the declaration forms to the Secretary of State's Office. The customer will be advised that a decision on his/her Voter Registration Application will be provided by the County Clerk's Office. If there are other adult household members a Voter Registration Application may be given to the customer for the other adult(s) to complete. However, if the other adult(s) chooses not to register, a declination form is not needed.

The worker will put the agency code on the voter registration application that applies at the time it is being completed. For example, if the customer is applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at the time a voter registration application is being completed, the worker would use the SNAP code. If the customer is applying for several programs, just use one code (worker choice).

## **Telephone Interviews and Authorized Representatives**

Applicants who are interviewed by phone and indicate a desire to register to vote should be mailed a Voter Registration Application no later than the date that a determination (approval or denial) is made on the case. This applies to both initial applications and reevaluation/recertifications.

The Voter Registration Application form will be mailed to the applicant/recipient any time an authorized representative is interviewed on the customer's behalf.

If a customer makes a telephone request for a Voter registration Application form, one will be mailed to his/her mailing address.

## **Access Arkansas**

Applicants who apply through Access Arkansas may apply directly online by following a link to the Secretary of State's website to register to vote.

## **SNAP/MSP Annual Review**

Mail in applicants should be mailed an Arkansas Voter Registration Application no later than the date that a determination (approval or denial) is made on the case. This applies to both reevaluation/recertifications.

## **Customer Declination**

If the customer declines to register to vote, then she/he will be asked to make the declination by checking "no" on the Agency-Based Declaration Statement. She/he should also sign and date the statement. If the customer refuses to complete the form, the DCO employee will print the customer's name on the statement, date, and make a note of "refused to sign" in the comment section. A copy of the Agency-Based Declaration Statement may be provided to the customer if requested. A daily count of the declinations must be provided to the Secretary of State's office when completing the Agency Daily Recap Reporting Form. The Agency Based Declaration Statement will be kept for 2 years in the County Office in a chronological file by month and year.

## **Change of Address or Name Change**

If a customer reports a change of address or name change, a DCO-131, Voter Registration change of Status form and a Voter Registration Application will be sent to the customer advising that the change can be reported to the County Clerk's office for voter registration purposes or that she/he can register to vote. A declaration statement will not be completed in this instance.

## **Submitting Applications**

Completed Voter Registration Applications must be submitted by the customer. The customer must ensure that this timeframe is met. The customer may mail his/her application; the address is on the back of the application. An envelope is not needed. An Agency Daily Recap Reporting Form will be completed and sent with the voter registration application. This form advises the Secretary of State's Office of the number of declination and number of completed voter registration applications being submitted. A single report including all programs will be submitted. The County Office will retain a copy of the Daily Recap Reporting form for 24 months in a chronological file by month and year.

The County office must maintain a record of the number of Voter Registration applications mailed to the Secretary of State's Office each day. No later than the 10th calendar day of each month, the

county will report to the DCO Field Operations, via the DHS-132, Voter Registration Application Monthly Report, the number of voter registration applications and declinations submitted to the Secretary of State's office in the prior month.