

# **NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT AGENCY GUIDE AND TRAINING MANUAL**

**Prepared by the  
Mississippi Secretary of State's Office  
Updated 2021**

## OVERVIEW

Who is eligible: All Mississippians who apply for or receive services or benefits under one of the following agencies or programs:

Mississippi Department of Health  
Division of Medicaid  
Mississippi Department of Mental Health  
Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services  
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Services Provided: All Mississippians who apply or receive services from these agencies must be given the opportunity to register to vote or update their voter registration information. Employees at agencies must provide a voter registration application and a voter preference form or question to every person who applies for benefits, renews, or recertifies benefits, or reports a change of address in connection with benefits regardless of whether they conduct transactions in person or remotely such as by phone or internet.

Why: Pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act, these voter registration services are required by federal law. The purpose of the law is to make voter registration tools more accessible to all eligible voters. Voter registration services at all voter registration agencies in Mississippi are applicable to all elections, not just federal elections.

How: Agencies and their staff are required to offer the applicant the opportunity to register to vote and provide all necessary forms – voter registration applications and voter preference question. Agency staff must also provide the same level of assistance in completion of the voter registration forms as would be offered in the completion of agency forms unless the client declines such assistance. Completed voter registration forms must be transmitted by the agency within five (5) business days to the appropriate county circuit clerk.

## **I. PROCEDURES FOR VOTER REGISTRATION AT DESIGNATED AGENCIES**

Information contained in this section outlines the procedures for administering the agency voter registration program. Each subsection details the procedures for different situations. The term “client” in this manual refers to an applicant for or a client currently receiving services. It also refers to an adult applying for, or receiving services, on behalf of a child. The term “covered transaction” in this manual refers to the process by which a client applies for benefits, renews, or recertifies benefits, or reports a change of address in connection with benefits.

If after reading the information here you have questions, or if a situation occurs for which there are no guidelines printed here, please contact the Mississippi Secretary of State’s Office Elections Division at 1-800-829-6786 or visit our website at [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov).

### **A. How to Provide Voter Registration to Clients**

#### **(1) Agency Communication with Clients**

When an agency employee meets with or speaks by telephone with a client, he/she must verbally ask the voter preference question, which is:

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

#### **(2) Delivery of Voter Registration Application and Voter Preference Question/Form**

Whenever a client applies for, recertifies, or changes an address in connection with benefits, the agency must provide both a voter registration application and a voter preference question/form (discussed below) to the client. This must be done whether the transaction is conducted in person, over the telephone, or by internet. The agency must provide the same level of assistance to the client in completing the forms, just as he/she would with any other benefits form. It should be made clear that the voter registration questions are clearly separate from the benefit eligibility process. It should also be made clear to the client that a decision to complete an application to register, or to decline to register, will in no way affect the services or benefits provided by the agency.

#### **(3) How a Client Interacts with an Agency Does Not Alter Requirement to Provide Registration Opportunity**

Clients who initiate a covered transaction by picking up a form and taking it home, or requesting the delivery of forms by mail, or requesting a form to engage in a covered transaction by communicating with agency employees over the telephone, or by completing a covered transaction through the internet, must receive the voter registration application and voter preference question when other agency materials are sent or provided to the client. If the client is not completing the application in the office, the agency should provide the client with a pre-coded

form, provided by the Secretary of State's office, with the agency's designated code.

If a client initiates an application or recertification by mail, telephone, or internet but must come into the office for a face-to-face interview as part of the application or recertification process, voter registration services should also be provided as described above as well as in the interview. Similarly, if a client engages in an application, recertification, or change of address without coming into the office at any point, a voter registration application must be included in what is sent to the client. When a client completes a covered transaction through the internet, the agency must inform the client of the opportunity to register to vote and provide an opportunity for the client to download a voter registration application or request an application to be mailed to the client. The agency should always provide the agency's toll-free contact number any time when the client is informed of the opportunity to register to vote and given the opportunity to request or download a voter registration application online, so the client may call the agency if he/she has questions or needs help in completing the voter registration application.

Finally, a voter registration application *must* be mailed or made available online to a client who contacts the office via phone, mail, or internet to report a *change of address*. This is especially important because a change of address will often require the voter's registration address to be updated as well.

## **B. Voter Registration Question or Form**

Regardless of whether or not the client wishes to register, each client must be presented with and asked to complete a voter registration preference form or question provided as part of the agency's benefit application form. This question, whether a separate form or part of the agency's benefit application form(s), records whether a client wishes either to register or not register to vote. Agency staff should remind clients that this question is only for voter registration purposes and has no effect on the client's eligibility to receive benefits. This question requires the client's signature.

### Procedure for Completion of the Voter Preference Question

- The voter preference question may be part of the agency's benefit application form(s), or it may be a separate form.
- The client should check the box next to the appropriate answer to the question of whether he/she wishes to register to vote.
- The client should sign and date the form, if separate from the agency's benefit application form(s). It is also recommended that the client print his/her name beside his/her signature. If the client receives assistance from agency staff in completing the form, the staff person assisting should sign and date the form as well.
- If the client affirmatively declines to sign the voter preference form or answer the voter preference question, the agency employee processing the document should print the client's name and date the document. The staff person should check stating that the client declined to complete the form and initial the document. The agency employee is not required to complete the form in this matter where the client has been provided with the voter preference question through the internet or mail.

- The question must be stored in a central location or in the client’s file for 22 months.

### **C. Client Wishes to Complete a Voter Registration Application**

Please remember that agency staff should inform clients assistance is available and provide assistance upon request in completing the voter registration form to ensure the required information has been provided (including signature) if assistance is requested.

### **D. Client wishes to register, but does not want to complete form at the agency office**

If the client wants to register to vote but does not wish to complete the voter registration application at that time, offer the client the opportunity to take the application home to complete at a later time. Clients should not be discouraged from completing the form in the office and should be informed that the agency will deliver completed applications to the circuit clerk.

The agency should stamp the form with agency information before the client leaves. Clients who want to complete the form at home should be told that the application can be returned in any of the following ways:

- 1) Mail the completed application to the circuit clerk of the county where the voter resides. Date of registration is the date the application is postmarked;
- 2) Hand deliver the application to the circuit clerk of the county where the voter resides. Date of registration is date the application is received by circuit clerk; or
- 3) Return the application to the agency office for transmittal to the circuit clerk’s office. Date of registration is date the application is received by the NVRA agency.

### **E. Client is registered, but needs to update registration information**

The client may use the voter registration application to update name and address information. If the client is updating registration data, the “Previous Registration” section of the Voter Registration application should be completed with the old information. This section should be completed *in addition to all other sections* of the Voter Registration Application.

### **F. Posters**

All agency offices must prominently display posters announcing the availability of voter registration services at that location.

### **G. Completing the Voter Registration Application/Update Form**

Agency employees should use the information below to familiarize themselves with the voter registration application. Familiarity with the form will facilitate the application completion process for both the client and the agency.

Please note the registration agency is confidential, but the agency information should be disclosed on the “NVRA Agency Transmittal Form” which accompanies the applications to the

circuit clerk. The agency must stamp each application when received with the agency name or code and the date. The agency code must not be intelligible to a casual observer, but if it is, it must be redacted before any public inspection. This will allow the county circuit clerk to account for the source of the application, along with the proper date of registration (date of submission to the NVRA Agency). This information may only be used by the agency and the circuit clerk for purposes of tracking the source of the registration. *The source of the registration is considered to be confidential pursuant to NVRA, and it should never be disclosed pursuant to a public records request. Should a public records request be submitted to an agency, the agency source, even if the information has been left blank, must be redacted prior to disclosing the application.*

### **(1) Application to Register to Vote**

Clients should complete all information on the form. Please make sure the client checks the appropriate box indicating whether the registration is new or a change of information. If the client does not check “yes” for both questions regarding citizenship and age, he/she is not legally qualified to register to vote and should not complete the application. It is critical that the client provide a full legal name, physical address, mailing address, date of birth and either his/her Mississippi driver’s license number or the last four digits of his/her social security number. If the client does not have either of these numbers, it should be left blank. *Please remember that pursuant to a public records request, date of birth, driver’s license number and the last four digits of the social security number should be redacted as none are considered public record under the Mississippi Elections Code.* When a client has completed the voter registration application, the agency caseworker should review it to ensure it is complete and has been signed. If it is not complete, the caseworker should return the form to the client so that he/she can include any missing information. Once the form is complete, it is ready for submission to the circuit clerk.

Please inform the client that they should not use Post Office Boxes or rural route addresses in the physical address section. If a client does not have a street address, he/she may draw a locational map or diagram outlining landmarks or roads near the residence. Registrants are required to list a valid mailing address where they can receive a voter registration card. If a client does not have a valid mailing address, the client may use the agency’s address for this purpose if the agency provides clients the same service for its own benefits applications. If the agency does not provide this service, the agency should inform the client that he/she may use the local county DHS office as his/her mailing address and provide that address. In either case, agency staff should inform the client he/she must update his/her mailing address with the county circuit clerk as soon as the client establishes a new mailing address or no longer receives services from the agency. The agency whose address is used as a voter’s mailing address for voter registration purposes has no affirmative obligations to the voter other than maintaining any voting-related mail in the client’s file and making it available to the voter upon request. However, should the residential address provided on any voting-related mail not match the residential address on the file with the agency, the agency should inform the county of the same through written communication.

**(2) Previous Registration: If You Were Previously Registered Under a Different Name or Address**

This section should be completed if the client is completing the application to update registration information. Please have the client complete all items in the section, along with the rest of the voter registration application.

**(3) Voter Declaration**

The client must read, sign, and date the declaration. If the applicant is unable to sign, any person (*including agency employees*) assisting the applicant must also sign and date the application under the applicant's signature. The applicant should provide a telephone number where he/she can be reached in the event the application is incomplete. An application will not be rejected because it lacks a telephone number. *Please remember that pursuant to a public records request, telephone numbers should be redacted as they are not considered public record under the Mississippi Elections Code.*

**II. NVRA COORDINATORS AT AGENCIES AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

**A. Agency Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities**

To oversee and coordinate agency and local office compliance with the NVRA, each agency should designate an Agency NVRA Coordinator for the State. The Agency NVRA Coordinator's responsibilities include:

1. Developing and maintaining an up-to-date list of Site NVRA Coordinators (see below).
2. Compiling and analyzing the voter registration data provided by the Site NVRA Coordinators and reporting the required data to the Secretary of State's Office each quarter; monitoring the agency's administration of its NVRA program; and creating a quarterly report as referenced below.
3. Answering any questions from Site NVRA Coordinators regarding voter registration policies and procedures.
4. Serving as a liaison to the Secretary of State's Office on issues of voter registration and NVRA compliance and serving as the agency's contact person on voter registration matters for state and county elections officials.
5. Ensuring that NVRA training materials are incorporated into Agency training materials and that staff are trained semi-annually in voter registration.
6. Ensuring that NVRA compliance is incorporated into standard monitoring procedures.

7. Ensuring that the agency offices have an adequate supply of voter registration materials at all times. *Voter registration applications may be downloaded from the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov).*

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Each month, the Agency Coordinator shall collect the monthly reports from each Site Coordinator, which will be used to compile the quarterly report for the Secretary of State (see Section II.B below). While compiling and transmitting the report the Agency Coordinator shall review the data for compliance with the requirements of this manual.

Each quarter, the Agency Coordinator shall compile a Quarterly Report and forward it to the Secretary of State's NVRA Coordinator, who shall be the Assistant Secretary of State for the Elections Division. The Quarterly Report shall contain a) the current list of NVRA Coordinators for the agency; b) a record of NVRA trainings completed by agency staff; c) any investigations, incident reports, or corrective action taken per the requirements of Section II.B of this manual; d) any other compliance actions taken.

### **B. Site Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities**

In order to ensure the Agency Voter Registration Program is successful, each site providing voter registration services must designate a Site Coordinator. Agencies may use a district or county coordinator as a Site Coordinator if the agency determines this is adequate.

The Site Coordinator has the following responsibilities:

1. Maintain adequate supplies, including:
  - Agency Voter Registration Applications;
  - Agency Voter Preference Forms (unless incorporated into benefit application);
  - Agency Transmittal Forms;
  - Training materials, including the *National Voter Registration Act Agency Guide and Training Manual*; and
  - Posters announcing the availability of voter registration at the office.
2. Train new or reassigned employees on voter registration duties immediately upon hiring or reassignment and ensure re-training twice a year.
3. Resolve site questions and problems relating to the voter registration process.
4. The Site Coordinator should be monitoring the implementation of the Agency Training manual at their specific site.
5. Ensure the timely and accurate transmittal of completed voter registration

applications to the county circuit clerks within five (5) business days of completion by the client and confirm that these transmittals have been received by elections officials.

6. Communicate with local and state election officials to ensure that materials are current and address any transmittal or other issues between election officials and offices under her purview.
7. Collect data (as listed below) and report it to the Agency Coordinator, each month.
8. Review completed voter registration applications and voter preference forms/questions to ensure that the forms are being filled out completely. A review should be completed weekly.
9. Display NVRA posters and instructions in the office's lobby.
10. Training employees on voter eligibility requirements such as disenfranchising felony convictions (listed on voter registration application).
11. Ensure language assistance is provided to jurisdictions covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

### **Training**

Each Agency must train its employees who will perform NVRA related functions and who supervise those who will perform such functions on voter registration requirements. All employees who will perform NVRA related functions should be provided a current agency training manual that is based on the Secretary of State's NVRA training manual on the voter registration procedures implemented by the agency. Each agency must train this group of employees on voter registration requirements, including eligibility to vote, on a semi-annual basis using this manual and the PowerPoint presentation attached. Each agency must also create its own agency specific voter registration manual that is based on the Secretary of State's manual; the agency manual must be used in all agency NVRA trainings and must be provided to all staff. Each agency must provide its training manual to the Secretary of State for approval. Each agency should review their training manual every three years and provide the Secretary of State with a copy to be reapproved. In addition to holding semi-annual trainings, the agency must train all new employees who will perform NVRA related functions within sixty days. The Site Coordinator must compile a list of those employees who attended the training and forward it along to the Agency Coordinator (see below) within a month of the training date. Those employees who are required to receive the training and whose names are not on the list must complete the training within a month of that list's date. To obtain copies of the National Voter Registration Act Agency Guide and Training Manual, please visit our website at [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov). The manual can be found under "Elections & Voting," and then under "Publications." (For training assistance, contact the Secretary of State's Office Elections Division at 1-800-829-6786 or (601)576-2550.)

### **Resolving Questions and Problems**

Most questions and problems can be easily resolved on site by referring to the *National Voter Registration Act Agency Guide and Training Manual*. If issues persist or you are unable to resolve questions related to your registration duties, please contact the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office at 1-800-829-6786 or (601)576-2550.

### **Monitor Administration**

The Site Coordinator is responsible for supervising the daily voter registration activities at the location. The Site Coordinator should be well trained in the registration practices required of the agency. The Site Coordinator should monitor the agencies activities and quickly work with employees to resolve any noted deficiencies.

The Agency Coordinator will review the data compiled by Site Coordinators from the reports (see Attachment D) on a quarterly basis to determine whether offices are performing their NVRA responsibilities. If a review of the data indicates an office is not performing in its obligations, under the NVRA, the Agency Coordinator shall require the Site Coordinator to take immediate action and submit a report on such follow-up measures within a month of being notified by the Agency Coordinator. The Agency Coordinator shall forward copies of all reports and corrective action plans to the Secretary of State's Office. If the Agency does not take appropriate remedial measures, the Secretary of State shall perform an audit of the office's voter registration practices.

### **Transmittal**

All voter registration applications must be submitted to the circuit clerk's office of the county in which the client resides *within five (5) business days* of completion of the application. This includes any applications completed to update an existing registration. When transmitting the applications, you should use the transmittal form provided (Attachment C). This will allow you to keep a record and accounting of the number of forms sent to each circuit clerk's office. Ensure each voter registration application is stamped with the agency code and date before it is transmitted to the county circuit clerk.

### **Transmittal of Report to the Agency Coordinator and the Secretary of State's Office**

Attachment D should be used to transmit your monthly registration report to the agency coordinator, and agency coordinator should compile and transmit this data to the Secretary of State's Office in the quarterly report. The duty of transmittal applies whether the client fills out a voter registration application in person at the office or mails/brings in a completed form to the office. This form should be completed and mailed, or emailed, to the Secretary of State quarterly. This will allow our office to have a record of the number of applications transmitted by your agency to each circuit clerk's office.

## **Reporting**

The Site Coordinator should provide NVRA reports to the Agency Coordinator which memorialize NVRA activity at each site. Site Coordinators must include the data that will assist the Agency Coordinator in preparing the report outlined in Attachment D and forward the report, and any other information that is helpful in monitoring local office results, to the Agency Coordinator, and the Agency Coordinator should compile and send Attachment D to Secretary of State's Office quarterly. At a minimum, the reported numbers should contain information for each county in the total number of covered transactions.

## **Tracking and Transmitting Voter Registration Applications**

*The timely delivery of voter registration applications to the appropriate circuit clerk is extremely important. Timely delivery will ensure that all individuals are properly registered to vote. The voter registration deadline falls 30 days prior to an election, meaning the application must be received by your agency and dated received by the close of business at least 30 days prior to the election, or it must be postmarked 30 days prior to the election, or the voter must register in person at the county circuit clerk's office 30 days prior to the election. If the 30<sup>th</sup> day falls on a Sunday or legal holiday, then the voter registration deadline is the NEXT business day. Any voter registration applications that arrive by mail or other means to the agency after it has closed on the final day will be timely received and should be stamped by agency staff as arriving on the final day to ensure that county elections officials can see that they should be processed as timely. Any voter registration applications that arrive at the agency after the voter registration deadline that are postmarked before the deadline should be stamped or marked with the postmark date so that county elections officials can see that they should be processed as timely.*

## **Transmitting Materials**

Completed voter registration applications should be transmitted within five (5) business days to the respective circuit clerk's office. The duty of transmittal applies whether the client completes a voter registration application in person at the office or mails or brings a completed form to the office. Please follow the procedure outlined below when transmitting voter registration applications:

- Stamp each voter registration application with the agency code and date received at the agency.
- All voter registration applications should be placed in a secure and sealed envelope. Date of birth, social security numbers, telephone numbers, and the agency of registration are confidential and should be kept from public view.
- Please enclose with the applications the *NVRA Agency Voter Registration Application Transmittal Form*. (See Attachment C) You should complete *all fields* on the form and retain a copy of the form for your records.

- For every Mississippi election, the voter registration deadline falls 30 days prior to the election. Agency employees should be aware of these deadlines and transmit applications as soon as possible when a registration deadline is near. Applications must be marked with the date received at the agency as the NVRA requires the state to treat applications received at the agency prior to the 30-day registration deadline as timely, meaning the date the agency receives the application is the date of voter registration.

### **C. Secretary of State NVRA Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities**

As the State's chief elections official, the Secretary of State is responsible for Mississippi's compliance with the NVRA. To facilitate proper oversight and to assist designated agencies with compliance, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Elections Division shall serve as the NVRA Coordinator. The Secretary of State NVRA Coordinator's responsibilities are:

1. Working collaboratively with each Agency Coordinator to generally monitor compliance, troubleshoot compliance issues, and ensure adequate supplies.
2. Reviewing data and reporting from designated agencies to spot trends and determine if there is a need for greater oversight. This includes quarterly reports referenced in Section II.B and quarterly reports created by Agency Coordinators referenced in Section II.A.
3. Following up with any Agency Coordinators and Site Coordinators to resolve any issues or problems. This follow up shall occur if the data analysis conducted above reveals any problems such as downward trends in voter registration applications per covered transaction; in response to any incident reports forwarded to the Secretary by the Agency Coordinator pursuant to the "Monitor Administration" paragraph of Section II.B above.
4. Training county circuit clerks on the coding NVRA agency voter registration application in the Statewide Elections Management System (SEMS) and conducting oversight to ensure that the system is being used properly. This includes:
  - a. Ensuring the proper use of the NVRA coding is included in any general SEMS trainings that the Secretary's Office provides to county circuit clerks;
  - b. Ensuring that each county circuit clerk receives training on the NVRA coding in SEMS at least annually;
  - c. Each quarter, comparing the number of voter registration applications designated agencies report transmitting with the number of agency-generated voter registration applications entered into SEMS to determine if there are any transmittal or data entry problems; and following up with counties where there is a significant discrepancy to encourage or retrain the county officials to enter the agency code into SEMS.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. Where are Voter Preference Form/Question kept on file?**

Voter Preference Forms are kept in a central file at the local agency office where the form is completed or the client's file for 22 months. If the voter preference question is included as part of the benefits forms, this is kept in the client's general file. A record of the client's response to the voter preference question should also be included as part of the client's computerized record/file.

### **2. Can the Secretary of State's Office provide agency offices with a list of all circuit clerks and their contact information?**

A current contact list of all county circuit clerks including the clerk's name, mailing address, telephone number and facsimile number can be found on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ms.gov](http://www.sos.ms.gov). On the left side of the home page, click on "Elections & Voting" and then click on "Voter Registration Information". There is a link for "County Election Information" on this page, along with a link for the "Voter Registration Application".

### **3. Who registers applicants to vote in Mississippi?**

County circuit clerks register applicants. Circuit clerks receive voter registration applications and determine whether an applicant meets the registration requirements under State law. If an applicant's voter registration application is rejected, the applicant may appeal the matter to the county election commission. Agency personnel do not determine the eligibility of clients who apply to register to vote.

### **4. If a circuit clerk needs additional information before processing a voter registration application, will the circuit clerk contact the client or the agency?**

The circuit clerk will contact the client. Only in rare situations will it be necessary for the circuit clerk to contact the agency taking the application. Please be sure to have the client provide a telephone number on the application.

### **5. How will clients who complete applications know where to vote?**

The county circuit clerk who receives the application will send the applicant a voter registration card once the application is processed. The voter registration card will contain a voter registration number and information regarding the voter's assigned precinct and polling place.

### **6. If the client prefers to take the application home and complete it, do we use the same application that is used for in agency registrations?**

Yes, the application completed at the agency may also be used if the client prefers to complete the application outside of the agency. The agency should stamp the agency's information to

the form before the client leaves with the form. When the client completes the application, he/she may mail or hand deliver it to the county circuit clerk where he/she resides, or the applicant may return it to agency.

**7. Once a person is registered to vote, is there a need to re-register at any time?**

If a voter has been removed from the voter roll for a reason specified in state or federal law, he/she will need to submit an application to re-register in order to vote again. If a voter moves to a new county, he/she must cancel any previous registration and submit an application to register in the new county. A client can accomplish both by completing the information on the voter registration application. If a client moves to another address in the same county, the voter must update his/her physical address, but the client does not have to re-register. If a client is unsure of his/her registration status, he may complete the application, and the county circuit clerk will determine if he/she is already registered. Or the client may contact the office of the county circuit clerk to inquire of his/her voter status. If the circuit clerk determines that the client is already a voter in the county, the clerk will not re-register the client.

**8. Are agency employees required to offer clients under the age of 18 the opportunity to complete a voter registration application?**

Yes. Mississippi law allows persons to vote in a primary election associated with a general election if the person will be 18 years of age on or before the date of the general election. Therefore, the agency employees may encounter circumstances where a 17- year-old is eligible to register to vote. If a 17-year-old will turn 18 before the general election date in November, that 17-year-old can register and vote in the primary election held earlier the same year.

**9. Can homeless persons register to vote?**

Yes. If the client resides at a non-traditional address, the client may provide a physical address by drawing a map of where he/she resides. The client must provide a mailing address for the circuit clerk to send a voter registration card and any other official correspondence. If a client does not have a mailing address, the client may use the agency's address for this purpose so long as the client is informed, he/she must update his/her mailing address with the county registrar as soon as the client establishes a new mailing address or no longer receives services from the agency.

**10. Are polling places and voting machines accessible to voters with disabilities?**

Under federal law, both polling places and voting machines must be accessible to the disabled. Clients who have concerns about accessibility should contact the circuit clerk's office of the county where the client votes or the Secretary of State's Office.

**11. How do agency personnel assist a visually impaired client with completing the application?**

The law requires that agency staff provide the same degree of assistance during the voter

registration process as would be provided during the completion of standard agency forms and applications. In the case of a visually impaired client, it may be necessary for the agency employee to complete the application for the client (only providing answers as instructed by the client) and assist the client in making a mark in the signature block. The agency employee providing assistance must sign in the place provided under the applicant's signature line.

**12. What should an agency employee do if a client is unable to sign the application?**

If a client is unable to sign the application, the client should attempt to make a mark in the signature block. If the client cannot make a mark, the employee may assist the client in signing. *The client must ask for assistance from the agency employee.* The client should be touching the pen as his/her name is written by the agency employee. The agency employee providing assistance must sign in the place provided under the applicant's signature box.

**13. Can a disabled voter receive assistance at the polling place?**

Yes. Any voter who is blind, physically disabled, or unable to read or write may request assistance. Anyone can provide assistance other than a candidate whose name is on the ballot, or by a spouse, parent sibling or child of a candidate whose name is on the ballot, or by a poll watcher who is observing the polling place on election day, the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union. *The voter must declare he/she needs assistance with voting to the poll managers, declare one of the reasons stated above in order to receive assistance, and select someone to assist him/her. Please remind clients that accessible voting machines for voters with disabilities are located in every Mississippi polling place.*

**14. Will agency voter registration offices be audited or monitored for following correct registration practices under this program?**

When voter registration applications are processed by the county circuit clerk, the circuit clerk will record the agency from which the application originated. This data should be entered into the Statewide Elections Management System (the voter registration roll for the State of Mississippi), and it will allow the Secretary of State's Office to verify that agencies are following appropriate procedures. The Secretary of State will also rely on feedback we receive from the public. Please note that failure to offer voter registration services to clients is a violation of the National Voter Registration Act. In addition, agency staff will be sending data each month to the Secretary of State. Both the agency staff and Secretary of State staff will review this data quarterly to assess office performance and take any necessary corrective action.

**15. If an agency client wishes to take the voter registration application outside of the agency to complete, who is responsible for paying the postage to mail it to the county circuit clerk?**

If the client takes the application home to complete, he/she is responsible for the cost of

postage required to return the application to the circuit clerk. The client may also hand deliver the application to the circuit clerk or return it to the agency. The agency is required to transmit the application to the circuit clerk if the client returns it to the agency.

**16. Do agency offices serving more than one county register voters for each of those counties?**

Yes. It is important to verify that applications are transmitted to the appropriate county circuit clerk for processing.

**17. How does the agency comply with the 5-day transmittal deadline if the client completes the application at home?**

The 5-day deadline begins to run from the date the completed application is received by the agency office. A voter registration application is considered timely if it is delivered to any agency office by the voter registration deadline or postmarked by the voter registration and subsequently arrives at any agency office. It is critical that agency staff stamp each voter registration application with the date of receipt so that elections officials will know to treat an application described above as timely even if the agency transmits the application to the county circuit clerk after the deadline.

**18. How should an agency employee handle a situation where the client refuses to complete the Voter Preference form or question?**

Before the client is asked to complete the form, it should be explained by the agency employee. If the client refuses to complete the form after a thorough explanation, the agency employee should complete the form by entering the client's name, dating the form, and signing under the client's name. You may tell them the form is required under National Voter Registration Act. Please inform the client that if they do not sign the form, they will be considered to have declined to register to vote. The agency employee should also include a brief explanation of the circumstances which require the employee to complete the form.

**19. What procedure should be followed if a client is unable to complete a voter preference or registration form at the time of application for services at the agency?**

If a client presents at the agency in a condition that prohibits him from completing the transaction, the agency employee must use some discretion in determining if the client has the ability to complete the appropriate paperwork. If the agency employee determines the client is unable to complete the transaction (due to intoxication, mental deficiency or some other condition that might inhibit the client's competency), the transaction should be delayed. The agency employee should complete a voter preference form by entering the client's name, dating the form, and signing the agency employee's name to the form. The agency employee should also include a brief explanation of circumstances that the required the employee to complete the form.

**20. If a client has previously declined to register, are agency employees required to offer the**

**opportunity to register to vote at subsequent visits?**

Yes. Agency personnel must provide voter registration services to clients at each application for service or benefits, and with each recertification, renewal or change of address with respect to such benefits. Each time a client is offered voter registration services, the voter preference form must also be completed, if separate from agency benefits forms.

**21. Are agency employees required to check voter registration applications for completeness?**

Agency employees must provide the same degree of assistance in completing a voter registration application as they do in helping clients to complete a benefits application or other agency forms. Agency employees should offer assistance to the client in completing a voter registration application if the client requests assistance. Agency employees should attempt to ensure that all sections of the application are complete and that the form has been signed.

## **PROHIBITIONS**

Agency employees providing voter registration services may NOT engage in any of the following:

- Seek to influence a client's political preference or party designation; *(Please note that Mississippi does not require voter registration applicants to declare party affiliation.)*
- Display any political preference or party allegiance;
- Make any statement to a client or take any action for the purpose of discouraging the client from registering to vote; or
- Make any statement to a client or take any action that would lead a client to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits the client will receive.

# ATTACHMENT A: VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION

## MISSISSIPPI MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION

Agency Code: \_\_\_\_\_

- You can use this form to: register to vote in Mississippi or change your name and/or address.
- If you are registering for the first time in Mississippi and DO NOT have a Mississippi driver's license or social security number, you must send with this application a copy of a current and valid photo ID or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows your name and address in this county.
- An application for voter registration must be postmarked or hand delivered to the Circuit Clerk's Office located in the county of your voting residence no later than 30 days before an election.
- You may not register to vote if you have been convicted in a Mississippi state court of any of the following crimes: voter fraud, murder, rape, bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, bigamy, armed robbery, extortion, felony bad check, felony shoplifting, larceny, receiving stolen property, robbery, timber larceny, unlawful taking of a motor vehicle, statutory rape, carjacking or larceny under lease or rental agreement.
- If you live in an area without house numbers or street names, please include a drawing of your location to enable us to identify your appropriate voting precinct.
- Photo ID Required to Vote: You will be required to present an acceptable form of photo identification when you vote at your polling place on Election Day or by absentee ballot in your Circuit Clerk's Office, unless exempted by law. For more information, go to [www.MSVoterID.ms.gov](http://www.MSVoterID.ms.gov) or call (844) 678-6837.

<b>Check One:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> New Registration <input type="checkbox"/> Change of Information	<b>Are you a citizen of the United States of America?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Will you be 18 years of age on or before Election Day?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NOTE: If you checked 'No' in response to either of these questions, DO NOT complete this form.</i> <b>Would you like to serve as an Election Day poll worker?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
<b>Name</b>	Last Name	Maiden Name	First Name	Middle Name	Suffix
<b>Physical Home Address (Where you live)</b>	Number and Street/Road/Dorm/Apt #				
	City	County	State: MS	Zip	
<b>Mailing Address (If different from above)</b>	Street or Post Office Box				
	City	County	State:	Zip	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	Month	Day	Year	<b>MS Driver's License Number or Last 4 Digits of your Social Security Number</b>  _____ or _____	
<b>Phone #</b>	Cell ( )	Work ( )			
<b>Email</b>					
<b>Previous Registration</b>	Name		Address		
	City	County	State:	Zip	

### VOTER DECLARATION- Read and Sign

I swear/affirm, under penalty of perjury, that:

- I am a U.S. citizen.
- I will be 18 years of age on or before the next general Election Day.
- I am a resident of Mississippi, this county and this city for at least 30 days.
- I have not been adjudicated as mentally incompetent.
- I have never been convicted of voter fraud or any other disenfranchising crime OR, if convicted, I have had my voting rights restored as required by law.
- The address listed above is my legal place of residence.

**WARNING:** Giving false information to register to vote is a felony punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment for not more than 5 years, or both. Miss. Code Ann. § 23-15-17.

X _____ Signature (or mark) of applicant	Date: _____
X _____ If applicant is unable to sign, the person who assisted the applicant	Date: _____
Address _____	

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**ATTACHMENT B: VOTER PREFERENCE FORM**

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICANTS COMPLETING REGISTRATION FORMS AT NVRA DESIGNATED AGENCIES**

If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today? Yes  No

**IF YOU DO NOT CHECK EITHER BOX YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED TO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO REGISTER TO VOTE AT THIS TIME.**

**Applicant's**  
**X Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**X** \_\_\_\_\_ **Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
If applicant is unable to sign, the signature of the person who assisted applicant in completing this form.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

If voter is unable or unwilling to complete form, briefly explain the circumstances below:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Applying to register or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency. (If applicable.)*

*If you would like help in filling out the voter registration application form, we will help you. The decision whether to seek or accept help is yours. You may fill out the application form in private.*

*If you believe that someone has interfered with your right to register or to decline to register to vote, your right to privacy in deciding whether to register or in applying to register to vote, or your right to choose your own political party or other political preference, you may file a complaint with: Mississippi Secretary of State, Elections Divisions, P.O. Box 136, Jackson, MS 39205-0136*

**ATTACHMENT C: NVRA AGENCY TRANSMITTAL FORM**

**NVRA Agency Voter Registration Program**

**VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL FORM**

**Please complete the fields below and enclose this form with the materials to be transmitted to the County Circuit Clerk.**

**Retain a copy for your records.**

<b>Today's Date:</b>	
<b>Agency Name:</b>	
<b>Agency Representative:</b>	
<b>Agency Location:</b>	
<b>Notes:</b>	

<b>County applications delivered to:</b>	
<b>Number of Applications Enclosed:</b>	
<b>Method of Delivery:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hand Delivery</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mail</b>

**ATTACHMENT D: QUARTERLY REPORTING TO SOS**

**NVRA Agency Voter Registration Program**

**VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION MONTHLY REPORTING FORM**

**Please complete the fields below and return this form to:**

**MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE’S OFFICE  
ELECTIONS DIVISION  
ATTN: AGENCY VOTER REGISTRATION REPORTING  
401 MISSISSIPPI STREET  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39201**

**RETURN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO THE AGENCY COORDINATOR**

**[ADD AGENCY CONTACT INFO HERE]**

**(You may also email this form, or a document created by the agency containing the same information to [ElectionsAnswers@sos.ms.gov](mailto:ElectionsAnswers@sos.ms.gov). Please contact the Elections Division at 1-800-829-6786 or (601) 576-2550 with questions.)**

<b>Today’s Date:</b>	
<b>Number of clients who (1) applied, (2) recertified or redetermined, or (3) changed an address/contact information in connection with benefits*</b>	<b>(1)</b>
	<b>(2)</b>
	<b>(3)</b>
<b>Number of clients who checked “Yes” on the voter preference form – Registration Application Completed and Transmitted to County Circuit Clerk</b>	
<b>Number of clients who checked “No” on the voter preference form</b>	
<b>Number who left the voter preference blank</b>	
<b>Agency Representative (Signature – May be submitted by email):</b>	

\* The total number of clients served should equal the total number of clients who checked “Yes,” “No,” or left the voter preference question blank.

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Attachment E: Voter Registration Signs**

Signs should be posted at all public service agencies advertising Voter Registration Services are available and Voter Registration Applications are available. PDFs of signs can be obtained from the Secretary of State's Office.





# **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS**

**Available Here**