



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
Olympia, Washington

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TITLE: VOTER REGISTRATION POLICY 5.07

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Authority: National Voter Registration Act of 1993  
Chapter 11.88.010(5) RCW  
Chapter 29.07 RCW  
[RCW 29A.08.140](#), [RCW 29A.08.145](#), [RCW 29A.08.310](#), [RCW 29A.08.330](#),  
[RCW 29A.08.320](#).

**BACKGROUND**

The United States Congress passed the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, which requires all states to provide voter registration assistance through their public assistance offices. The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is required to offer voter registration assistance at every face-to-face interview for application and eligibility review.

**PURPOSE**

This policy establishes guidelines for staff of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) regarding voter registration of division clients and applicants for DDD services.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to all DDD Field Services offices and Residential Habilitation Centers.

**POLICY**

- A. The right to vote is a fundamental privilege in the United States Constitution, but frequently people with developmental disabilities encounter barriers to exercising that right, such as inaccessible voting sites, ballots or voter registration services. DSHS is required to offer voter registration assistance at every face-to-face interview for application and eligibility review. DDD will support the right to vote by offering registration assistance to division clients and applicants for division services at a face-to-face interview at least annually.

- B. At the time of intake, DDD staff will ask applicants for division services if they would like to register to vote and if they need assistance as follows:
1. DDD staff will ask all applicants to register who are adults or who will turn eighteen (18) years of age before the next election.
  2. DDD staff will not offer voter registration to an individual:
    - a. If the staff knows the individual is denied civil rights due to a felony conviction or declared mentally incompetent by a Superior Court judge; and
    - b. Such knowledge is based upon reading the court order or being informed of the provisions by the individual's legal representative. If the client has a felony conviction, ask the client if he/she has received a certificate of discharge restoring his/her civil rights. If the client has such a certificate, the civil rights have been restored.
- B. DDD staff must not:
1. Attempt to influence an applicant's or client's political preference or party affiliation;
  2. Display any political or party preference;
  3. Attempt to discourage an applicant or client from registering to vote; or
  4. Lead the applicant or client to believe that the decision to register, or not to register, will affect the availability of services or benefits.
- C. DDD staff will provide a voter registration form to any division client or member of the public who asks to register at a DDD office or outstation.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. DDD staff will assist the applicant to complete the DSHS 02-541 (X), *Voter Registration Service*, and the [Agency-Based Voter Registration \(ABVR\)](#). If the applicant wants to register at a later time, leave the ABVR form with them.
2. At least annually, during face-to-face visits, Field Services staff will ask clients if they would like to register to vote and if they need assistance. Include the [Agency-Based Voter Registration \(ABVR\)](#) and the DSHS 02-541 (X), *Voter Registration Service*, forms in the client packets distributed at the time of assessment and reassessment. The ABVR

form can be used to assist the client to register to vote, update his/her registration due to having moved, changed his/her name, or to request ongoing absentee ballots. The Secretary of State's office has added a field to allow DDD offices and the RHCs to type in their office name. The new field is a rectangular square that can be found right under the return address location of the form. All offices must type in their name followed by the acronym "ADSA."

3. RHC staff will offer assistance with voter registration to clients during the annual IHP and follow the same process.
4. Send all completed voter registration forms promptly via campus mail to Mailstop 40230 or by U.S. Postal Service to:

The Office of the Secretary of State  
Voter Registration by Mail  
P.O. Box 40230  
Olympia, WA 98504-0230

5. Regional DDD offices and RHCs must keep the DSHS 02-541 (X), *Voter Registration Service*, forms on file for 22 months. Follow your local procedure for storage and disposal after the 22 month retention expires. If the client is already registered to vote and has not moved, staff does not have to fill out this form.
6. If during face-to-face contact with a client, a DDD staff learns of a change of client address, he/she will assist the client to complete a new voter registration form.
7. For DDD staff who use the CARE tool, document on the Client Demographics Screen, Voter Assistance Offered by marking Yes or No and that the client is a United States Citizen and already registered to vote or ineligible to vote in the SER notes. Do not document the client's party affiliation.

### **EXCEPTIONS**

None

### **SUPERSESSION**

DDD Policy 5.07  
Issued August 9, 2006

DDD Policy 5.07  
Issued May 23, 2004

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Issued December 8, 1994

Approved: /s/ Linda Rolfe  
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

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