

## Administrative Policy No 8.12

**Subject:** Voter Registration Assistance

**Information contact:** Voter Registration Assistance Officer  
MS 45115, Tel: (360) 902-7813

**Authorizing sources:** Governor's Executive Orders [07-04 & 15-02](#)  
[RCW 29A.08](#).310 – 360

**Resources:** [National Voter Registration Act](#)  
Automatic Voter Registration Act of 2018

**Effective date:** August 1, 2013

**Revised:** April 5, 2021

**Approved By:** Original signed by Lori Melchiori  
Senior Director, Office of Policy and Rules

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### Purpose

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires that individuals be given the opportunity to register to vote (or to change their voter registration name and/or address) when applying for or receiving services or assistance at any office in the state that provides public assistance.

The Automatic Voter Registration Act of 2018 directs state agencies to take every step possible to make it easier to vote in Washington state by automatically registering eligible applicants and clients, unless they opt-out.

### Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS organizational units that provide voter registration assistance services.

### Definitions

**Designated Agency** – An office or agency in the state that provides public assistance or that

provides state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities, and that is required by the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to implement a program designed and administered by the Secretary of State for registering voters.

**National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)** – requires states to offer voter registration opportunities at state offices that provide public assistance and state offices that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in serving persons with disabilities. For the NVRA process, a paper copy of the voter registration form is provided to the client/applicant and they are offered assistance in completing and mailing the form to the Secretary of State’s Office.

**The Automatic Voter Registration Act of 2018 (AVR)** -- directs state agencies to take every step possible to make it easier to vote in Washington state. AVR is a paperless process. DSHS electronically transmits information to the Secretary of State’s Office for eligible DSHS benefits applicants and clients, unless they opt-out. Those determined by the Secretary of State’s Office to be eligible to vote are automatically registered, reducing the need to complete and mail paper forms.

**Voter Registration Assistance Officer** – The person designated by the secretary of DSHS, within an agency that is responsible for administering all aspects of the voter registration program for that agency as prescribed by the Secretary of State.

## Policy

DSHS must:

- A. Provide the same level of service for voter registration assistance as is provided with eligibility of services, recertification, or an address change.
- B. Appoint a Voter Registration Assistance Officer who will monitor and be responsible for compliance with state and federal voter registration assistance laws.
- C. Analyze how best to use technology to efficiently and effectively provide voter registration assistance for in-person services as well as tele-centers and web portals.
- D. Partner with the Secretary of State (SOS) to ensure voter registration assistance services are delivered in a manner that allows the SOS to register voters efficiently.

Administrations must:

- A. Designate a voter registration assistance coordinator to manage the voter registration assistance activities within their administration to ensure:
  - i. Voter registration posters are in all local office waiting areas.
  - ii. Voter registration applications are in all local office client waiting areas and with contractors who provide eligibility services.
  - iii. Instruction and training on Voter Registration Assistance.
  - iv. Tracking and reporting of Voter Registration Assistance.
  - v. Voter registration applications are sent to the Office of the Secretary of State.

The voter registration assistance officer must:

- A. Monitor compliance with state and federal voter registration assistance laws.
- B. Serve as the liaison between the Secretary of State and DSHS regarding voter registration assistance.
- C. Report on voter registration statistics to the Secretary of State.

Administration employees must not:

- A. Attempt to influence a person's political preference.
- B. Display political posters or demonstrate any political preference or party allegiance.
- C. Make any statement or take any action which may discourage a person from registering to vote.
- D. Make any statement or take any action which would lead a person to believe that a decision to register or not has any effect on their ability to receive or continue to receive services or benefits.
- E. Use any person's voter registration information for any purpose other than voter registration.