



DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
Olympia, Washington

TITLE: VOTER REGISTRATION POLICY 5.07

Authority: National Voter Registration Act of 1993
Chapter 11.88.010(5) RCW
Chapter 29.07 RCW

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.

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. DDD will support the right to vote by offering registration assistance to division clients and applicants for division services.
- 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 invite 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 that a current court order exists that determined the individual ineligible to vote; and
 - b. Such knowledge is based upon reading the court order or being informed of the provisions by the individual's legal representative.
 3. DDD staff will advise applicants that if an order of guardianship exists, applicants and their legal representatives should follow the provision of that order relating to the applicant's voting rights.
- 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 \(ABVR\) \(1/2006\)](#). If the applicant wants to register at a later time, give the applicant the Office of the Secretary of State's (OSS) [Mail-In Voter Registration](#) to take with him/her.
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 \(ABVR\) \(1/2006\)](#) 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.

3. Send all completed voter registration forms promptly via campus mail to Mailstop 40230 or by US Postal Service to:

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

The sending office/outstation will enter the 3-digit Reporting Unit (RU) number in the return address for OSS tracking purposes.

5. Regional DDD offices 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.
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.

EXCEPTIONS

None.

SUPERSESSSION

DDD Policy 5.07
Issued May 23, 2004

DDD Policy 5.07
Issued December 8, 1994

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

Date: August 9, 2006