



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
*Executive Office of Health and Human Services*  
**Department of Transitional Assistance**  
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

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Lieutenant Governor

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Commissioner

**Operations Memo 2012-36**  
**July 30, 2012**

**To:** Department of Transitional Assistance Staff

**From:**  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

**Re:** TAFDC, EAEDC and SNAP – Updated Voter Registration Procedures

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**Overview**

The National Voter Registration Act requires the Department to provide voter registration services to all applicants and clients (hereafter referred to as clients). There are very specific requirements for clients of all programs during the application, reevaluation and recertification process as well as when clients report a change of address. Clients may register to vote either at the TAO or by using a mail-in form. Voter registration services provided to our clients include:

- informing clients of the ability to register to vote at a TAO or by use of a mail-in form if the client prefers;
  - asking clients if they would like to register to vote at application, reevaluation, recertification and when they report an address change to a case manager;
  - distributing the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option Form, entitled "*Declination Form*," which includes a voter registration question;  
**Important:** This form must be distributed at all in-office applications, reevaluations, recertifications and when clients report a change in their address during an interview, whether or not they agree to or decline voter registration services.
  - providing a *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* to the client who wants to register and assisting such client with completion of the voter registration form, unless the client declines the assistance;
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**Overview  
(continued)**

- if the client prefers, providing a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* that a client may mail or hand-deliver to their city or town hall instead of the Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form that is completed at the TAO;
  - giving the client a *Mail-in Voter Registration Form* if the client refuses to or does not fill out and sign the Secretary of the Commonwealth's "*Declination Form*" (assuming the client has not verbally indicated that he or she wishes to register to vote at the TAO);
  - transmitting clients' filled-out *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration* forms to the appropriate local election office **within five days** of the client's completion of the form; and
  - making voter registration forms available at TAO reception desks, providing assistance in completing such forms, and transmitting such filled-out voter registration forms to the appropriate local election office within five days of completion of the form.
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**Purpose**

The purpose of this Operations Memo is to remind TAO staff about voter registration procedures so clients may register to vote if they choose. Please refer to Operations Memo 2012-29 for an explanation of BEACON changes relating to voter registration.

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**Obsolete Memo**

This Operations Memo makes obsolete Operations Memo 2012-16.

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**Attachment A**

Attachment A is a sample of the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*.

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**Attachment B**

Attachment B is a Voter Registration Job Aid that will help DTA staff determine which forms need to be given to clients during specific circumstances.

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**Overview of TAO Staff Responsibilities**

Directors and assistant directors are responsible for:

- sending the completed *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Forms* to the appropriate local election office **within five days** of the client's completion of the form;
- ensuring that:
  - ✓ the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Forms and voter registration forms are distributed to clients in accordance with procedures outlined in this memo;
  - ✓ posters informing clients about the ability to register to vote at the TAO and copies of G.L. c. 56 §§ 7-9 are posted in waiting rooms;
- ensuring that the completed Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Forms are filed in the case record and kept for at least 22 months;
- assisting clients with voter registration; and
- ensuring overall TAO compliance with the voter registration process.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that case managers are following the voter registration procedures outlined in this memo;
- ensuring that the completed Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Forms are filed in the case record and kept for at least 22 months; and
- assisting clients with voter registration.

Case managers are responsible for:

- following the voter registration procedures outlined in this memo; and
- assisting clients with voter registration.

Waiting Room Managers and Clerical Staff are responsible for:

- assisting clients with voter registration; and
  - ensuring that voter registration forms are accessible to clients and other individuals who request them.
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**Process for Informing Clients about Registering to Vote**

During applications, reevaluations, recertifications and when a client reports an address change during an interview, case managers must ask the client if he or she would like to register to vote and give them the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form.

At applications, reevaluations or recertifications, the case manager must go to the Voter Registration page located in the AU Composition Details workflow after the Foster Care page in BEACON.

While the voter registration questions are only asked of the client who is the grantee (i.e., head of household), if there are others in the household who may wish to register, supply them with the appropriate voter registration form. The Voter Registration page must be completed by the case manager for the grantee in order for the case action to be processed.

**Important:** Any client who comes into the TAO for one of the transactions listed above **must** be provided with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form.

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**Client Wants to Register at the TAO**

If the client indicates that he or she wishes to register, either by so stating to the case manager or by checking "yes" on the Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form, the case manager must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the BEACON procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form provided;
  - click the Yes radio button for Wants to register at this time;
  - provide the client with the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*, if the client wants to register at the TAO. Case managers shall help the client in completing the form (this includes providing an interpretation of the form, if appropriate), unless the client declines such assistance;  
**Note:** If interpreter services are needed, case managers should follow established procedures found in Operations Memo 2008-16.
  - write "AAB" in the Agency Designation box, once the client completes the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*.
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**Client Wants to Register at the TAO (continued)**

- give the yellow copy (including the top portion of the form) to the client, when the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* has been completed;
- give the white copy (original) to the TAO director or designee when the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* has been completed;
- click the Yes/No radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form signed, depending on the client’s response;  
**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A.
- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed; and
- click the Yes radio button for the Voter Registration form completed field;  
**Note:** This field is important to accurately count the number of voter registration forms completed at the TAO and transmitted to election officials. If the client wants to register, but does not have time to fill out the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*, give the client a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* and tell the client to mail or hand deliver the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* to their city or town hall. If a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* is provided, click the **No** radio button on the Voter registration form completed field.

**Important:** Only originals of the Voter Registration forms are acceptable. Do not use photocopies of the Voter Registration forms. The Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Voter Registration Workbook for Agencies has been revised and sent to all TAOs. TAOs may order this workbook through Schraffts. This Workbook can be used in TAOs as a tool to help with the voter registration process.

The TAO Director or designee must send the completed *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* to the appropriate local election office **within five days** of the completion of the form. To determine the address of the local election official, use this link:

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleclk/clkidx.htm>

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**Client Wants to Register at the TAO (continued)**

**Important:** Case managers must provide each client the same degree of help completing the voter registration forms as is provided by the office in completing its own agency forms, unless the client declines to register to vote or declines the help.

**Important:** The *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* must **not** be mailed in envelopes with a DTA return address. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's pre-printed envelope must be used when returning the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*. If these envelopes are not available, plain envelopes should be used with the following **return address** written on their **left front corner**:

Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Elections Division  
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705  
Boston, MA 02108

This address must be used on plain envelopes if the supply of pre-printed envelopes with the return address is depleted.

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**Client Wants to Register at a Later Time and Is Provided Mail-in Voter Registration Form**

If the client indicates that he or she wishes to register but prefers to register to vote at a later time, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the BEACON procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions::

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form provided;
  - click the Yes radio button for Wants to register at this time;
  - provide the client with the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form*;
  - click the Yes/No radio button for Voter Registration Option ("*Declination*") Form signed, depending on the client's response;  
**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A.
  - click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed; and
  - click the No radio button for the Voter Registration form completed field.
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**Client States  
Already  
Registered At  
Current Address**

If a client states that he or she does not wish to register to vote because the client is already registered at his or her current address, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form provided;
- click the No radio button for Wants to register at this time;
- click the Yes radio button for Already registered at current address; and
- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form signed, if the client signs this form.

**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A.

**Note:** If the client does not fill out and sign Part A of the form, the client must be provided with a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form*. In this case, follow the instructions in section captioned “Client Does Not Want to Register But Fails to Complete And/Or Sign Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form.”

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**Client States  
Already  
Registered But  
Not at Same  
Address**

If the client states that he or she is registered to vote but not at the current address, and wants to register to vote, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form provided;
  - click the Yes radio button for Wants to register at this time;
  - if the client wants to change his or her voter registration address at the TAO, provide the client with the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*.
    - Case managers shall help the client in completing the form (this includes providing an interpretation of the form, if appropriate), unless such assistance is explicitly declined;  
**Note:** If interpreter services are needed, case managers should follow established procedures found in Operations Memo 2008-16.
    - write “AAB” in the Agency Designation box, once the client completes the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*.
    - give the yellow copy (including the top portion of the form) to the client, when the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* has been completed;
    - give the white copy (original) to the TAO director or designee when the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* has been completed;
  - if the client prefers to change his or her voter registration address at a later time, provide the client with the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form*;
  - click the Yes/No radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form signed, depending on the client’s response;  
**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A.
  - click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed; and
  - click the Yes radio button for the Voter Registration form completed field if the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* was provided and the client filled it out at the TAO. If the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* was provided, click the **No** radio button for this field.
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**Client Does Not  
Want to Register  
and Declines in  
Writing**

If the client indicates that he or she does not wish to register by checking “no” and signing the Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form provided;
- click the No radio button for Wants to register at this time;
- click the Yes/No radio button for Already registered at current address, depending on the client’s response;
- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form signed;

**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A. For instructions on the actions to take if the client fails to sign Part A, see the section captioned “Client Does Not Want to Register But Fails to Complete And/Or Sign Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form.”

**Note:** If the client does not fill out and sign Part A of the form, the client must be provided with a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form*. In this case, follow the instructions in section captioned “Client Does Not Want to Register But Fails to Complete And/Or Sign Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form.”

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**Client Does Not Want to Register but Fails to Complete and/or Sign Voter Registration Option (“Declination”) Form**

If the client indicates that he or she does not want to register to vote, but fails to complete and/or sign the Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form provided;
  - click the No radio button for Wants to register at this time;
  - click the Yes/No radio button for Already registered at current address, depending on the client’s response;
  - provide the client with the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form*;
  - click the No radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form signed;  
**Note:** The case manager must complete Part B regardless of whether the client completed Part A.
  - click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed; and
  - click the No radio button for the Voter Registration form completed field.
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**Phone Call  
Contact at TAO/  
Centralized  
Eligibility and  
Processing Units  
Responsibilities:  
Client Wants to  
Register**

When a client contacts (or is contacted by) the case manager by telephone when applying, recertifying, being interviewed for a reevaluation or when the client reports a change of address, the case manager/unit worker must ask the client whether he or she wishes to register to vote.

**Important:** This applies whether the client is working with the TAO (including Centralized TAFDC and Malden Centralized SSI), Centralized Eligibility and Processing Unit or Web Application Unit.

If the client wants to register, mail the client a *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* and tell the client to mail or hand-deliver the form to their city or town hall. Inform clients that if assistance is needed in filling out the form, clients can visit any TAO or call the toll-free number maintained by the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683).

**Note: Do not mail the Secretary of the Commonwealth's "Declination" Form in these situations.**

Then, case managers must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the No radio button for Voter Registration Option ("Declination") Form provided (this can only be selected if it is a phone contact);
  - select Face to Face Interview not conducted from the Reason drop-down box;
  - click the Yes radio button for Wants to register at this time;
  - click the Yes radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed; and
  - click the No radio button for the Voter Registration form completed field.
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**Phone Call  
Contact at TAO/  
Centralized  
Eligibility and  
Processing Units  
Responsibilities:  
Client Does Not  
Want to Register**

When a client tells a case manager/unit worker by telephone during application, recertification, interview for a reevaluation, or reporting of a change of address that the client does not wish to register to vote, the case manager/unit worker must go to the Voter Registration page in BEACON and, following the procedures set forth in Operations Memo 2012-29, take the following actions:

- click the No radio button for Voter Registration Option (“*Declination*”) Form provided;
- select Face to Face Interview not conducted from the Reason drop-down box;
- click the No radio button for Wants to register at this time;
- click the Yes/No radio button for Already registered at current address, depending on the client’s response; and
- click the No radio button for Voter Registration Form Provided or Mailed.

**Note: The Secretary of the Commonwealth’s “*Declination*” Form need not be sent in these situations.**

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**Important  
Reminders**

- Any client who comes to the TAO for an application, reevaluation and recertification or a change of address, and wants to register to vote, must be given either the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* or the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* to complete, unless the client declines in writing by completing and signing the “*Declination*” *Form*.
- Any client who is seen through a home visit for an application, reevaluation and recertification or a change of address must be given the opportunity to register to vote in accordance with the procedures above.
- Unless the client declines assistance, he or she must be provided the same degree of help in completing the voter registration forms as is provided by the TAO in completing its own agency forms.
- Both the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form* and the *Mail-In Voter Registration Form* must be available at all TAO reception desks for the clients’ usage. TAO staff must help the client in filling out the forms, if requested.
- Voter registration forms should also be made available to members of the general public who come to the TAO, and want to register to vote.
- The “*Declination*” *Form* must be filed in the case record.

DTA staff may not:

- influence how a client registers to vote;
- seek to influence a client’s political preference or party registration;
- display any political preference or party allegiance while at work;
- make any statements to a client or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the client from registering to vote; or
- make any statement to a client or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the client to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

**Important:** TAO Directors or their designees are reminded of the importance of sending out completed Massachusetts Official Voter Registration forms **within five days** of completion.

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**Filing Out the  
Voter  
Registration  
Form**

When helping clients fill out the *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form*, use these guidelines and tell the client:

- Section 1 – To check off the boxes that apply (if the client checks off “No” in either of these boxes, the form cannot be completed).  
**Note:** If the client checks off “No” in these boxes, the client must be told that he or she should not register to vote.
  - Section 2 – To print his or her name: last, first and middle name or initial.
  - Section 3 – To complete this only if applicable.
  - Section 4 – To print his or her current residential address (cannot be a Post Office Box).  
**Note:** Homeless clients can use a shelter address or list a street corner or park where they are currently living as their address.
  - Section 5 – To print where he or she receives mail (only if the address is different from Section 4). This can be a Post Office Box.
  - Section 6 – To print his or her date of birth in month, day and year format.
  - Section 7 – To print his or her license number or **last four digits** of his or her Social Security Number. If he or she does not have either a driver’s license or a Social Security Number, a unique voter identification number will be assigned.
  - Section 8 – To enter his or her phone number, if he or she wants to. This can be a cell phone number.  
**Note:** Explain that providing this information is optional and that if the client enters the phone number on the form, it becomes a public record *unless* the box “Check if unlisted” is checked.
  - Section 9 – To check which party in which he or she wishes to enroll. The client should check No Party if he or she wishes to remain unenrolled or enter a Political Designation not related to any party.  
**Important:** Case managers may not influence how a client registers to vote.
  - Section 10 – To print the address where he or she was last registered.
  - Section 11 – To fill in the name of the person helping the client fill out the form, if appropriate.
  - Section 12 – To read the oath or read the oath to the client.
  - Section 13 and 14 – To date and sign the form.
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**Ordering Forms** TAOs that need additional *Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Forms*, *Mail-In Voter Registration Forms*, the Secretary of the Commonwealth's *Declination Forms*, envelopes or voter registration posters and signage should contact Document Production at Schraffts.

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**New Staff Training** All new staff will be trained on Voter Registration procedures.

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**Policy** Voter Registration Policy for TAFDC and EAEDC is found at 106 CMR 705.950.


Voter Registration Policy for SNAP is found at 106 CMR 360.950.

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**Questions** If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.

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To register to vote in Massachusetts you must be: **A U.S. CITIZEN**, a resident of Massachusetts and at least 18 years old on or before the next election. If you are registering to vote at an agency, the fact that you register or refuse to register to vote will remain confidential and will be used only for voter registration purposes and the office at which you register will remain confidential and be used only for voter registration purposes. **Penalty for Illegal Registration:** Fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than five years or both (MGL c56 s8).

 **Massachusetts Official Voter Registration Form • William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth**

<b>1</b>	<b>Check all that apply:</b> Are you a Citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Will you be 18 years of age or older on or before Election Day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	NOTE: If you checked "no" to either of these questions, do not complete this form.
<b>2</b>	<b>Full name:</b> <i>last name</i> <i>first name</i> <i>middle name or initial.</i> <i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i> <small>Miss Ms. Mrs. Mr. (circle one if appropriate)</small>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Former name</b> (if applicable): <i>last name</i> <i>first name</i> <i>middle name or initial.</i> <i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i> <small>Miss Ms. Mrs. Mr. (circle one if appropriate)</small>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Address where you live now</b> (street number, street name, rural route number and box number): <i>street number / street name / rural route number and box number</i> <i>apartment number</i> <i>city or town</i> <i>zip code + 4-digit</i>	
<b>5</b>	<b>Address where you receive all your mail</b> (if different from #4): <i>street number / street name / rural route number and box number</i> <i>apartment number</i> <i>city or town</i> <i>zip code + 4-digit</i>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Date of birth:</b> <i>month</i> <i>day</i> <i>year</i>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Identification #:</b> <i>license # or last four digits of your Social Security #</i>	<b>8</b>
		<b>Telephone (optional):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Check if unlisted</i> ( ) —
<b>9</b>	<b>Party enrollment or designation</b> (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Democratic</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Republican</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Green-Rainbow</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No Party (unenrolled)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Political Designation (not a political party):</i>	
<b>10</b>	<b>Address at which you were last registered to vote:</b> <i>street number / street name / rural route number and box number / post office box</i> <i>apartment number</i> <i>city or town</i> <i>state</i> <i>zip code + 4-digit</i>	
<b>11</b>	If the applicant is unable to sign this form, give the name, address and telephone number (optional) of the person helping the applicant: <i>name</i> <i>address</i> <i>telephone number (optional)</i>	
<b>12</b>	<b>I hereby swear (affirm)</b> that I am the person named above, that the above information is true, that <b>I AM A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES</b> , that I am not a person under a guardianship which prohibits my registering to vote, that I am not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law from voting because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, that I am not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and that I consider this residence to be my home. Signed under the penalty of perjury.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Today's date:</b> <i>month</i> <i>day</i> <i>year</i>	<b>14</b>
	<b>Signed:</b> <i>Sign your name here.</i>	Agency Designation:



# Voter Registration Job Aid

When to give forms to clients:

SITUATION	WHETHER TO GIVE: Voter Registration Option “Declination” Form	WHETHER TO GIVE: Voter Registration Form	WHETHER TO GIVE: Mail-in Registration Form
Applicant/client wants to register or to update existing registration (for example to register at new address)  (in-office)	Yes	Yes, unless the client wants a Mail-in Registration Form instead	Depends - if the client does not have time to register at the office and wants to register at a later time, a Mail-in registration form must be given
Applicant/client does not want to register or to update existing registration (for example, if already registered at current address)  (in-office)	Yes	No	Depends – Mail-in registration form must be given if applicant/client does not sign Voter Registration Option “Declination” Form
Applicant/client wants to register or to update existing registration (for example to register at new address)  (phone contact)	No	No	Yes – Mail-in registration form must be sent to applicant/client
SITUATION	WHETHER TO GIVE:	WHETHER TO GIVE:	WHETHER TO GIVE:

	Voter Registration Option “Declination” Form	Voter Registration Form	Mail-in Registration Form
Applicant/client does not want to register or to update existing registration (for example, if already registered at current address)  (phone contact)	No	No	No
Applicant/client wants to register or to update existing registration (for example to register at new address)  (home visit)	Yes	Yes, unless the client wants a Mail-in Registration Form instead	Depends - if the client does not have time to register during the home visit and wants to register at a later time, a Mail-in registration form must be given
Applicant/client does not want to register or to update existing registration (for example, if already registered at current address)  (home visit)	Yes	No	Depends – Mail-in registration form must be given if applicant/client does not sign Voter Registration Option “Declination” Form