

**VOTER REGISTRATION
VOLUNTEER TRAINING
AND INFORMATION
GUIDE**

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CHANGES IN ELECTION LAWS THAT AFFECT VOTER REGISTRATION

Introduction

Whether working with a citizen who will be participating in the process of registering voters for the first time or a seasoned Maryland Voter Registration Volunteer (VRV), the local boards of elections should ensure that volunteers are aware of recent changes in State and federal election laws that affect voter registration. The following information should be incorporated in the instruction process to ensure that each Voter Registration Volunteer is aware of changes that have altered the application process.

Continuous Registration Law – Effective June 1, 2001

Before June 1, 2001, a voter's registration was cancelled when an election office received information that the voter had moved from one county to another within Maryland. To vote in the new county of residence, the voter had to re-register. The provisions of Continuous Registration now ensure that a voter's registration is permanent as long as the voter continues to live in Maryland and keeps his/her address current with the board of elections where he/she lives. If a registered voter moves within Maryland, whether it is within the same county or from one county to another, and the voter notifies the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) of that change, his/her registration should automatically be moved to the new county of residence. The voter may also fill out a new Voter Registration Application (VRA) or send a signed, written notice to the board of elections, and the voter registration information will be updated to reflect the change.

Election Law §3-102. Qualifications for voter registration – Effective June 1, 2010

Effective June 1, 2010, Maryland Election Law was changed to allow individuals who are at least 16 years old to register to vote. Please note that being eligible to register to vote does not equate to being eligible to vote. Registrants that will be 18 years old on or before a General election may vote in the Primary election prior to the General election if they have not yet reached 18 years of age.

Voting Rights – Ex-Felons Act – Effective March 10, 2016

The Ex-Felons Act amended the qualifications to register to vote in Maryland for criminal offenders. These qualifications are contained in the Election Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, §3-102.

The Ex-Felons Act gives qualified reformed offenders an opportunity to register to vote and participate in the election process. The conditions preventing an offender from registering have been changed and now read:

§3-102 (b) Exceptions. -- An individual is not qualified to be a registered voter if the individual:

(1) has been convicted of a felony and is currently serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction;

Completion of the court-ordered sentence requires the service of any time in prison. The Act also prohibits individuals who have been convicted of buying or selling votes from registering to vote. If an individual is unsure whether or not he or she qualifies to register, the Division of Parole and Probation and the court where the conviction was recorded should be able to provide information about whether and when the sentence was completed.

Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)

Congress enacted significant election reform legislation after the 2000 Presidential Election that mandates (1) identification for registrants who apply by mail after January 1, 2003 and will be voting in the state for the first time after January 1, 2004, (2) modification of the voter registration application form to include affirmation of citizenship and a requirement for a personal identification number (a driver's license or MVA identification card number, or if the individual has no MVA identification, the last four digits of a social security number), (3) provisional ballots, (4) voting system accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and (5) a uniform statewide voter registration system.

In 2003, Maryland modified the content of the statewide voter registration application and amended the State's instructions for the federal NVRA form to ensure compliance. Local boards should be certain that Voter Registration Volunteers are provided with the most recent forms to ensure prompt processing of mail-in voter registration applications.

Meeting the Verification Requirement – Personal Identification Number Must Be Provided by All New Applicants

A new voter registration applicant *must* now provide his or her driver's license number or MVA Identification card number or, if the applicant does not have a driver's license number, the last four digits of his or her social security number. The driver's license number or social security number provided by all new applicants must be verified with the Motor Vehicle Administration or Social Security Administration.

If the applicant does not provide this information, or the driver's license or social security number is not verified, the applicant will be placed in "pending" status. Election officials will notify the applicant that the application was incomplete and request additional identification. If the applicant does not respond to the notice, he or she will be given the opportunity to vote a provisional ballot. Identification must be received prior to the provisional ballot canvass.

Remember: Check to make sure that the applicant has written a number in Box 6a or 6b or has checked Box 6c.

Affirmation of Citizenship for Mail-In Registrants

HAVA requires that Maryland's mail-in voter registration application include the question "Are you a US citizen?" This question now appears in Box 1 of the Maryland Statewide Voter Registration Application. HAVA also requires that, if a by mail applicant fails to answer the citizenship question, election officials must notify the applicant of the failure and provide the applicant with an opportunity to complete the form in a timely manner. The status of the voter's registration record will be made pending if the citizenship question is not answered. If time permits, the local election board may return the form to the applicant; or it may require the applicant to appear in person at the election office if a voter registration application deadline is approaching. If the applicant checks the "No" box in response to the citizenship question, his or her voter registration application will not be processed, or if the application has previously been processed, the registration will immediately be cancelled.

FORMS USED TO REGISTER VOTERS IN MARYLAND

Maryland recognizes two basic types of applications for voter registration: the Statewide Voter Registration Application, designed and produced by the State Board of Elections (SBE) as required by EL §3-202, and the National Voter Registration Application (known as the federal form), prescribed by the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993.

SBE is accountable for the design, production, approval, and distribution of a statewide voter registration application and bears all costs associated with these functions. The statewide form helps to ensure that all voter registration applications consistently meet all State and federal laws, provides uniform voter registration information to all Maryland voters, and enables jurisdictions across the State to obtain the same information from voters. SBE revises the statewide voter registration application as soon as practicable after a change in voter registration law and/or the certification/decertification of a political party.

The content of the statewide application appears in several types of applications, including:

MAIL-IN REGISTRATION FORM

This form can be picked up by a prospective voter or mailed to a prospective voter on request. The applicant can then provide the required information, refold the form, and return it to the appropriate election board for processing. Maryland has two mail-in registration forms: a regular VRA and an NVRA (specifically used at NVRA-designated agencies in Maryland). Both the VRA and NVRA forms are available in Spanish.

VRA (SBE 03-202-1)

This application form is available at libraries and post offices throughout the State and is distributed by the election boards to voter registration volunteers for registration drives and to citizens on request – in person, by telephone, or through the Internet.

NVRA (SBE 03-202-2)

This application is distributed to and used by designated NVRA agencies. The form is the same as the regular VRA, but is distinguished by the logo “Register to Vote Now” on the back of the application. Election officials must ensure that only the NVRA form is distributed to designated NVRA agencies, so that the source of a registration can be properly credited on the monthly NVRA summary report compiled by SBE.

NOTE: A VRV should not be provided or distribute NVRA applications (easily identified by the “Register to Vote Now” logo on the back) – these are intended as a special use form to help track registration at NVRA-designated agencies.

SBE WEBSITE APPLICATION

SBE provides additional access to the voter registration application form and other important election information through the agency website at www.elections.maryland.gov. If the Voter Registration Volunteer does not have enough printed voter registration applications, he/she may download a copy of the complete form from the website and make additional copies, as necessary.

MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION (MVRA)

Since the State's implementation of the NVRA in the 1990s, Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) has been responsible for the greatest number of Maryland voter registration transactions of any source. The local boards of elections must review nearly 1 million MVA transactions each year; these include new registrations, changes of address, and other registration information updates. In addition to the thousands of NVRA forms that SBE distributes to the MVA, the MVA produces a separate voter registration application, approved by SBE, for use as part of its driver's license system.

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION

This is a generic federal form prescribed by the Election Assistance Commission pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993; it is available with State-specific instructions. Individuals who wish to use this form may obtain a printer-ready copy or a PDF version on the EAC website at www.eac.gov/voters/register-and-vote-in-your-state.

If an applicant is not a Maryland resident but seeks to apply to register to vote in another state, the applicant needs to complete this form. The VRV should advise the applicant to read and follow the instructions for the appropriate state. If these forms are returned to the State Board of Elections, the applications will be forwarded to the appropriate state board for processing.

Note: No other registration form may be used for registration purposes in Maryland without prior approval from the State Board.

QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF A VOTER REGISTRATION VOLUNTEER

What is the role of a Voter Registration Volunteer (VRV)?

A Voter Registration Volunteer, who has received training from a State or local election official, offers individuals an opportunity to apply to register to vote by distributing the statewide VRA, providing assistance with the completion of the application, and, when requested, returning the completed applications to a State or local election official for processing.

Who can be a Voter Registration Volunteer?

To qualify as a VRV, an individual must be of legal voting age. VRV's are encouraged to complete VRV training with the State Board of Elections or a local board of elections within the State.

What is considered legal voting age?

Someone who will be 18 years old by the next succeeding general or special election is of legal voting age.

Does an individual have to be a resident of Maryland to be a VRV?

No. As long as the individual meets all other qualifications, an individual who lives out-of-state is not prohibited from becoming a VRV.

What are the duties of a VRV?

- a) Ensure that the VRA is filled out correctly, completely and accurately.
- b) Advise the registrant that he or she may personally return the application to the appropriate election board or permit the VRV to return it for processing.
- c) When entrusted with the completed VRA, the volunteer must promptly return the application to the appropriate election office, either by mail or in person.
- d) If the application is obtained immediately before a voter registration deadline, the VRV must ensure that it is delivered timely.

Timeliness: To ensure that an individual is registered to vote and qualifies to participate in an upcoming election, the VRV must deliver any application completed on or before the voter registration deadline to an election official not later than 5:00 p.m. on the last

day to register to vote. Any application delivered to election officials after that time cannot be processed until voter registration reopens 11 days after the election.

If a VRV mails an application to the appropriate election office, the application must bear a postmark indicating that it was mailed on or before the deadline date in order to be processed for the election. Applications that bear a postmark after the voter registration deadline will be processed when the books reopen.

- e) A VRV must inform the applicant that he/she is not a registered voter until he/she receives a Voter Notification Card in the mail from the county board of elections and should tell the applicant that if he/she does not receive a Voter Notification Card within three weeks, he/she should contact the county board of elections.
- f) All individuals, regardless of party or candidate preference, should be registered. A VRV may not attempt to influence the applicant's party affiliation decision or check off a party choice if the voter has not done so.
- g) If, rather than entrusting the VRA to the VRV, the applicant decides to return the form "by mail" to the election board, the VRV should ensure that the applicant has provided either a personal identification number that can be verified or a copy of alternative identification information to satisfy HAVA requirements. While the VRA can currently be processed without the information, a first time voter will have to provide identification prior to the provisional ballot canvass process.

Note: A VRV should carry identification, approved by the State Administrator, to establish that the VRV has been trained to register voters.

Can a VRV receive compensation for registering voters?

No. Ordinarily, a VRV may not be paid in any form (including a per registrant basis) for voter registration activity. A volunteer may, however, be served meals, beverages, or refreshments, or may be compensated for expenses actually incurred for meals or transportation, incident to registration activities.

Can a VRV offer money or any other item of value as an incentive when providing applicants an opportunity to register to vote?

No. On August 22, 2000, the State Board of Elections unanimously adopted a strong policy that prohibits staff of the State Board, local boards and their staffs, designated agencies, and other official voter registration volunteers from offering or permitting **others to offer money or any item of value in** connection with a voter registration drive. However, this policy does not prohibit giving those who register or others who accompany them a sticker, pin, or similar item of nominal value.

What is the VRV's duty to keep personal identification information (i.e., social security numbers and driver's license numbers) confidential?

A VRV or any individual assisting another individual to register to vote may not copy or retain personal information for any reason. The VRV could be blamed for identity theft or other problems caused by the improper release of personal information.

Can the VRV make copies of voter registration applications before returning them to election officials for processing?

Copying of VRAs is not sanctioned by SBE and could lead to the improper release of confidential personal information. However, there is currently no specific law prohibiting copying of an application. SBE recommends that a VRV never copy a voter registration application.

Box 6a, 6b: **Personal Identification Number:** If the applicant has a current, valid Maryland driver's license or MVA identification card, the applicant must enter the MVA number here. If he/she has neither of these, the applicant must enter the last four digits of his/her social security number. The disclosure of the full social security number is optional; if it is provided, it will be kept confidential.

Box 6c: This box should be checked **only** if the applicant has neither a current, valid Maryland driver's license number or MVA identification card or a valid social security number.

Box 7: **Maryland Residence Address:** The applicant must provide the actual physical street address of his/her residence. **A post office box or a business or other non-residential address cannot be used.** The physical address is used to determine that the applicant is registered in the appropriate voting jurisdiction.

(Please verify that the applicant has provided a complete residential address.)

NOTE: If the applicant lists Baltimore as city of residence, it is important to know whether the address lies within Baltimore City or Baltimore County to ensure the application is forwarded to the appropriate election office.

(If the applicant lives within Baltimore City, please verify that the check box has been marked.)

Box 8: **Mailing Address:** If the applicant's mailing address is different from the residence or physical address listed in Box 7, the applicant should provide the mailing address here. State law does not require that the mailing address be in the same county, within the State, or within the United States.

(A post office box may be provided here.)

Box 9: **Party:** If an individual does not select a party, the election board will enter the applicant as "unaffiliated." A voter must ordinarily be registered with a party to participate in that party's primary election.

(Please verify that the applicant has selected a party, "unaffiliated," or "other.")

Box 10: **Contact Information:** While a daytime telephone number or email is not required to register, it enables the election board to contact the applicant to provide or verify any information, should this be necessary.

Box 11: If the applicant would like information about polling place assistance or is unable to write or to read a ballot, this box should be checked. The local election board will contact the applicant to provide any requested information or assistance.

A check box is also provided to be checked if the applicant is interested in working as an election judge.

Box 12: Oath and Signature: Confirm that the applicant has read the oath and that the application is **signed** and dated.

(If the voter is unable to sign his/her name, assist him/her in completing all but Box 12, and then complete the form titled “Assistance Provided to a Person Who, Because of a Handicap or Otherwise, is Unable to Complete or Sign the Voter Registration Application” and attach it to the Voter Registration Application. If the form is not available, you can have the registrant sign the application and in the signature space beside his/her signature, write the words: Assisted by: and sign the registration and then print their name under the signature.)

LAST VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

If the applicant is currently registered to vote, whether in Maryland or in another state, the applicant should complete this section so that the registration can be cancelled in the former jurisdiction.

ELECTION LAW COMPLIANCE REMINDER:

1. You **must** inform the applicant that he/she has the option of either personally returning the Voter Registration Application to the county board of elections office in person or by mail, or giving the Voter Registration Application to you for return.
2. You **must** inform the applicant that he/she is not a registered voter until he/she receives a Voter Notification Card in the mail from the county board of elections. Tell the applicant that if he/she does not receive a Voter Notification Card within three weeks, he/she should contact the county board of elections.

VOTER REGISTRATION VOLUNTEER

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Uses for a Statewide Voter Registration Application:

- Apply to Register to Vote in Maryland
- Change Current Voter Registration Address
- Change Current Party Affiliation
- Change or Update Registered Voter's Name

Qualifications to Register to Vote:

- Be a U.S. citizen
- Be a Maryland resident
- Be at least 16 years old
- Not have been found by a court to be unable to communicate a desire to vote
- Not have been convicted of buying or selling votes
- Not have been convicted of a felony, or if have, have completed serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment.

Residency in Maryland:

To be considered a Maryland resident, an individual's domicile must be in **Maryland**. Your domicile is **the place that you consider to be your 'official' or 'permanent' home (the location you intend to return to)**, even though it may be different from the place where you are actually living on a short-term or temporary basis. The address that is most frequently used on tax returns or other government documents, driver's license, bank accounts, charge accounts, for insurance purposes, and so forth is generally your domicile.

Must be 18 by the Next General Election to vote, and must be at least 16 years old to register to vote:

Please note that the 2005 Maryland Legislature passed Senate Bill 86, Rules of Interpretation – Computation of Age that was signed into law by the Governor on April 26, 2005. This legislation was for the purpose of establishing that an individual attains a specified age on the day of the anniversary of the individual's birth. This means that an individual for voting purposes would have to be 18 on or before the next general election for them to be able to vote. An individual born on February 29 attains a specified age on March 1 of any year that is not a leap year.

MARYLAND LOCAL ELECTION OFFICES

ALLEGANY COUNTY

701 Kelly Road, Suite 231
Cumberland, Maryland 21502-2887
301-777-5931

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Anne Arundel County Government Building
Street Address: 6740 Baymeadow Drive
Glen Burnie, MD 21060

Mailing Address:

PO Box 490
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21060-0490
410-222-6600

BALTIMORE CITY

Charles L. Benton Building, Room 129
417 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-3432
410-396-5550

BALTIMORE COUNTY

11112 Gilroy Road, Suite 104
Hunt Valley, MD 21031
410-887-5700

CALVERT COUNTY

30 Duke Street, Lower Level
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678
410-535-2214

Mailing Address:

PO Box 798
Prince Frederick, Maryland 20678-0798
410-535-2214
301-855-1376

CAROLINE COUNTY

Health and Public Services Building
403 S. Seventh Street, Suite 247
Denton, Maryland 21629-1335
410-479-8145

CARROLL COUNTY

300 South Center Street, Room 212
Westminster, Maryland 21157-5366
410-386-2080

CECIL COUNTY

200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 1900
Elkton, Maryland 21921-6395
410-996-5310

CHARLES COUNTY

201 East Charles Street
La Plata, Maryland 20646

Mailing Address:

PO Box 908
La Plata, Maryland 20646-0908
301-934-8972

DORCHESTER COUNTY

501 Court Lane, Room 105
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Mailing Address:

PO Box 414
Cambridge, Maryland 21613-0414
410-228-2560

FREDERICK COUNTY

340A Montevue Lane
Frederick MD 21702-8213
301-600-8683

GARRETT COUNTY

Public Service Center
2008 Maryland Highway, Suite 1
Mountain Lake Park, Maryland 21550
301-334-6985

HARFORD COUNTY

133 Industry Lane
Forest Hill, Maryland 21050
410-638-3565

HOWARD COUNTY

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, Maryland 21046
410-313-5820

KENT COUNTY

135 Dixon Drive
Chestertown, Maryland 21620-1141
410-778-0038

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

18753-210 N. Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879-3121
240-777-8500

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

1100 Mercantile Lane, Suite 115A
Largo, MD 20774
301-341-7300

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

110 Vincit St, Ste 102
Centreville, Maryland 21617
410-758-0832

Mailing Address:

PO Box 274
Centreville, Maryland 21617-0274
410-758-0832

SAINT MARY'S COUNTY

41650 Tudor Hall Road
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650
301-475-4200 ext. *1625

Mailing Address:

PO Box 197
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650
301-475-7844 ext. 1100

SOMERSET COUNTY

11916 Somerset Avenue
County Office Building
Princess Anne, Maryland 21853

Mailing Address:

PO Box 96
Princess Anne, Maryland 21853-0096
410-651-0767

TALBOT COUNTY

215 Bay Street
Easton, Maryland 21601

Mailing Address:

PO Box 353
Easton, Maryland 21601-0353
410-770-8099

WASHINGTON COUNTY

35 W. Washington Street, Room 101
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4833
240-313-2050

WICOMICO COUNTY

123 Bateman Street
Salisbury, Maryland 21804

Mailing Address:

PO Box 4091
Salisbury, Maryland 21803-4091
410-548-4830

WORCESTER COUNTY

201 Belt Street, Suite C
Snow Hill, Maryland 21863-1300
410-632-1320

State of Maryland

BOARD OF ELECTIONS

(County or Baltimore City)

Affidavit of Voter Registration Volunteer Trainer

I do solemnly swear (or affirm), under penalty of perjury, that I have given instruction to _____ regarding the requirements for participation in volunteer voter registration activity as specified below.

Affidavit of Voter Registration Volunteer

I do solemnly swear (or affirm), under penalty of perjury, that I have been given instruction regarding participation in volunteer voter registration activity and that I will engage in such activity in accordance with that instruction as specified below and in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

1. Each individual applicant for registration will be advised that it is the applicant's option to personally return the Voter Registration Application to a Maryland election board or to permit the VRV to return the form.
2. Should any applicant complete and sign a Voter Registration Application and return it to the VRV for delivery to an election board, the VRV must return it promptly, before the next deadline for registration. The VRV may not mark or destroy the form, or make or allow any additions, changes, or deletions to any information on the form without the specific knowledge and authority of the applicant.
3. A registrant's selection of a political party is an individual choice and, by law, the VRV may not influence the applicant's choice.

Name of Volunteer: _____

Address of Volunteer: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature of Volunteer: _____

Date of Training: _____

Name of VRV Trainer: _____

Signature of VRV Trainer: _____

State of Maryland

Assistance Provided to a Person Who, Because of a Disability, or Otherwise, is Unable to Complete and Sign the Voter Registration Application

Instructions:

- 1) On the face of the Voter Registration Application, the voter registration volunteer must fill out the information about the applicant, except for the signature in Box 12. If the applicant is unable to sign, he/she may make an "X" or other mark in Box 12.
- 2) Please fill in the name of the applicant legibly in the blank space provided below.
- 3) Voter Registration Volunteer must then sign and date this form.
- 4) This form **must** be stapled to the Voter Registration Application.

Voter Registration Volunteer Affirmation

_____ states that he/she is unable to complete and sign a voter registration application without assistance. The applicant affirms that he/she meets the qualifications necessary to become a registered voter in Maryland (as shown on the voter registration application) and that the information he/she provided to me is true.

Today's Date

Voter Registration Volunteer Signature