

DATE: July 14, 2016

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, Temporary Assistance Directors

FROM: Phyllis D. Morris, Deputy Commissioner
Center for Employment and Economic Supports

SUBJECT: Social Services District Responsibility for Submission of Voter Registration
Forms Received via Electronically Submitted Applications

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau – (518) 474-9344

The purpose of this message is to inform Social Services Districts (SSDs) that new language has been added to myBenefits regarding the NYS Agency Based Voter Registration Form. Applicants and recipients completing applications or recertification applications through myBenefits will now receive instructions to print, sign and submit the electronic NYS Agency Based Voter Registration Form directly to their local SSD.

This GIS also reiterates to SSDs their role and responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). SSDs must ensure they offer applicants and recipients of public benefit programs the opportunity to register to vote, as instructed in 98 LCM-40/National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Litigation.

SSDs must make sure that all of the following are met:

1. One 10" x 24" poster, provided by the State Board of Elections, be prominently placed in each reception area.
2. NRVA has been incorporated into new worker training for every district. This training is currently provided to all new staff that attends the Institute for Temporary Assistance Programs (ITAP).
3. Each SSD must designate a Site Coordinator who has been adequately trained and who must ensure that workers, including reception staff, are trained and have adequate back-up in case of illness or emergency. Any changes to a Site Coordinator's contact information such as, name, address, email address and/or telephone number must be reported to: Glenna Roach at (518) 474-9344 or Glenna.Roach@otda.ny.gov.
4. Each applicant and recipient must be provided with the opportunity to register to vote at initial application, recertification and upon notification of a change of address. The same level of assistance must be provided to complete the Voter Registration application as is given to complete other Social Services documents. Although there is no state level change of address form, any local form which is given to or otherwise filled out with client participation should be annotated to show that the client was advised of the availability of NVRA services at the time the change of address was initiated.

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5. Procedures exist at each site to ensure that all voter registration forms, including electronic NYS Agency Based Voter Registration Forms received by the SSD, are handled properly. Voter Registration applications must be forwarded to the County Board of Elections within 10 days of completion, but we recommend that they be submitted weekly. Signed declinations must be retained by the district for 22 months. We recommend that declinations be retained in chronological order by month, rather than in case files.
 6. If the applicant or recipient does not sign the electronic or paper NYS Agency Based Voter Registration Form, these forms are considered a declination, and therefore, should be noted and tallied on the Agency Based Registration Transmittal Form. We recommend that unsigned forms be kept in a folder to aid in the count. Forms can be reused after they have been accounted for.