

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

Key terminology:

Covered Transactions:

- Application for service or assistance
- Recertification or renewal
- Change of Address

During an In-Person Transaction, DSS staff must provide a voter registration application, a copy of the Laminated Form (NVRA Information Sheet) and offer assistance during each covered transaction. A voter registration application must be handed to the client despite their response the voter registration application.

Core Guidance:

The following guidance applies to all covered transactions that take place remotely (Remote Transactions):

ePASS

- Caseworkers must mail a Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter to all clients using ePASS if the client has:
 - o Indicated (s)he wants to register to vote
 - o Failed to answer the Voter Preference Question

Telephone Communication

- Ask the client the Voter Preference Question and provide client with a Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter by mail or electronically, regardless of the client's response to the NVRA question.

Communication by Mail

- If a client indicates on an application returned by mail that (s)he desires to register to vote or update their registration or failed to answer the Voter Preference Question on the form, mail the client a Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter

Report of a Change of Address

- Caseworkers are required to mail a Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter to each client that reports a change of address through a remote transaction, regardless of the method by which the address change is conducted (i.e. by telephone, fax, email or Internet)

Questions and Answers:

1. When should DSS staff provide a Voter Registration (VR) application?

Answer- DSS staff should provide the client a VR application after any covered transaction (please see the above key terms and definitions for a more detailed explanation).

2. If there is current voter registration evidence, do we end date it and then enter new evidence?

Answer- The Caseworker can provide an end date for voter registration evidence if there is current voter registration evidence entered already. It is not required if no changes have been reported. However, providing an end date and then entering a new evidence date is highly recommended to document the Caseworker fulfilled the required NVRA steps: ask the NVRA questions, provide a

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

voter registration application, and a paper copy (during a Pandemic) of the Laminated Form (NVRA Information Sheet).

3. If the case worker is doing an application and the case head of the household is not a U.S. citizen what info would have to be input in the box to make sure that I follow rules and regulation?

Answer- If a caseworker is aware of a client's eligibility status through NC DHHS Policies MA-2506, MA-3332, FNS-225, and Work First -111 that would make them ineligible to register to vote, you do not have to offer voter registration services to the client.

4. If the client states they are already registered to vote at their current address, do they still get a form?

Answer- Yes, a client should be offered the opportunity to register to vote during every covered transaction.

5. If a client decided not to register and sign the application stating they don't, should the case worker still turn a copy of their form into the board of elections?

Answer- In this case the voter registration application would not need to be submitted to the county board of elections office. DSS staff should dispose of the application as they would with confidential information.

6. For telecommuters, are we allowed to complete the NVRA application (NC Voter Registration Application) via phone interview, use that as their signature and then mail them a copy of the NVRA statement?

Answer- No, only the voter may sign or make their mark on the voter registration application. Caseworkers may assist the voter in the completion of the application. USDA extended the waiver for the normal telephonic signature requirements for applications and recertifications received between September 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this does not apply to voter registration applications.

7. Since there is already existing evidence in NC FAST, can the cover letter and voter registration application be automatically sent from NC FAST to save postage costs for the counties?

Answer- No, DHHS does not have the capacity to do these mailings at this time.

8. What does code 09 mean in place of code 01? Are the forms still accepted if the client signs with an X?

Answer -The "09" source code is traditionally associated with Spanish language voter registration applications. Currently, there are two source codes associated with Spanish language voter registration applications: 09NVRA and 09s. The 09NVRA coded voter registration application should be used by NVRA agencies. The 09s coded applications are the serial numbered versions of the voter registration application and should not be used by NVRA agencies. Registration source code "01" is

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

the correct English coded voter registration application to be used by Public Assistance agencies (DSS & WIC). All web-based versions of these forms have the letter “w” after the code on the applications. The “w” does not impact the processing of the application as it relates to an agency’s analysis and statistics. **A voter registration applicant is required to sign or make their mark on the voter registration application.** If the “X” is their mark, that is acceptable.

10. Regarding age of voters 16 and over in the household, do caseworkers ask, give or send voter registration applications for all family members of age to vote? Would this include ePASS and faxed application/recertifications?

Answer- Voter registration services must be offered to the client. If the client asks for additional voter registration applications for others in the household, please provide. This guidance would apply to all covered transactions.

11. Is there a benefit to preregistering to vote? If there are multiple clients on the case that are of voting age, does the caseworker send 1 per person or 1 per household if the NVRA question is unanswered or if it states yes?

Answer- To register to vote in North Carolina, eligible voters must be at least 18 years old by the date of the election, but 16- and 17-year-olds may preregister to vote. This means that once the applicant becomes eligible by age to vote, their voter registration application will then be processed. If the applicant will be 18 years of age by the date of the next general election, their application may be processed as early as 60 days prior to the date of any primary election associated with that general election, even if they will only be 17 years old during the primary. The applicant would then be qualified to vote in the primary election for all eligible contests.

A voter registration application should be provided for each client that is at least 16 years old in the household.

12. At redetermination and change of address, the caseworker is required to send the Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter to at each redetermination and change of address notification since no face to face contact currently?

Answer- Yes, recertifications/renewals and a change of address are considered covered transactions under NVRA. Therefore, a voter registration application and DSS Cover letter should be mailed to the client.

13. If DSS has outdated voter registration applications, can the agency still be use or should the agency print current forms until the agency receives them from SBE?

Answer- Outdated voter registration applications should not be used. DSS offices should discard of old voter registration applications the same way they would dispose of their own agency’s confidential documents. The latest version of the voter registration application states “2020.02” in the top right corner of the document. DSS staff should place an online request for Voter Registration

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

Applications at <https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/national-voter-registration-act-nvra/request-voter-registration-applications-nvra>.

An electronic PDF version of the form is available at <https://www.ncsbe.gov/registering/national-voter-registration-act-nvra> under the NVRA Voter Registration Applications section. Only utilize this option when low on hard copies or awaiting an order of the applications.

14. As it relates to compliance with NVRA, what actions are DSS employees required to take for Medicaid Exparte Reviews/Recertification?

Answer- Beginning in August 2020, an automated batch process is in place within NC FAST that triggers the mailing of a cover letter and an enclosed voter registration application 90 days prior to the Medicaid certification end date to all 18 yrs. and older.

15. Is there a delay in the orders? A request was made for VR applications a few months ago.

Answer-There are no current delays with voter registration application orders. DSS staff should follow up the SBE Team using the email contact of nvra@ncsbe.gov if an order is not received in a timely manner.

16. If an inmate application from the DPS is received and the application did not include the page where it does ask about if the inmate is not registered to vote.... Do we mail the NVRA cover letter and a voter registration form?

Answer-To register to vote, a person must not be currently serving a felony sentence, including any probation, post-release supervision, or parole. However, a person may register and vote if they're serving an extended term of probation, post-release supervision, or parole, they have outstanding fines, fees, or restitution, and they do not know of another reason that their probation, post-release supervision, or parole was extended.

When an individual is convicted of a misdemeanor in North Carolina, they **do not** lose their right to vote, even if they are incarcerated. If a person that is incarcerated undergoes a covered transaction with a program or benefits offered by your office and the voter registration section of the paperwork is incomplete, caseworkers may look up a client's sentence status using the [NC Department of Public Safety \(DPS\) Offender Public Information search](#). Assistance and further inquiries reviewing these unique cases is available by contacting the SBE at nvra@ncsbe.gov.

More information about [Registering as a Person in the NC Criminal Justice System](#) is available on the SBE's website.

17. Is the information on the NVRA Semi-Annual Report that was sent to the County DSS NVRA Coordinator different than what is showing on the website?

Answer-The NVRA Semi-Annual Report includes analysis and review of each county's voter registration statistics usually for the previous 5 to 6 months. The report also includes extra data sets

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

that are not shared on the website. The [NVRA Registration Statistics webpage](#) has downloadable user-friendly tables and charts specific to Public Assistance agencies. The data on this site is updated monthly.

18. Instead of handing out the laminated forms, can DSS post the laminated form?

Answer-Best practice during this time of the COVID-19 Pandemic is to create and utilize one-time use copies of the Laminate Form (NVRA Information Sheet). County DSS offices should have both the English and Spanish language versions of the form available. Provide the client with the one-time use copy. In addition, County DSS can post the laminate form in the Agency Office.

19. If we go to Voter Search and we can see the client is registered where they reside can we just document this and not send a form regardless of how they answer the question on a review or application?

Answer- DSS Staff should not use the Voter Search function on the NC SBE website to research if a client is registered to vote at their current residence. The NVRA requires that for each covered transaction, the client must be offered voter registration services. DSS staff must not make this determination without asking the client the Voter Preference Question (NVRA Question). Follow the guidance of when to provide a voter registration application and/or DSS Cover Letter for each covered transaction.

20. For NC FAST generated covered transactions, we have noticed that the mailed NVRA application is different than the applications we have on site...can you please elaborate on this? And does our agency still receiving credit once submitted?

Answer-Each form has a code to show mailed from NCDHHS and are tracked back to NCDHHS.

01-Public Assistance
09-Spanish Language
21-Medicaid Renewal

21. It seems to be an issue with many clients when they say they do not want to register to vote and the case worker still tries to offer them take a voter registration form. Is there a reason the caseworker still needs to offer them take the form?

Answer- The NVRA Statements are on the back of each voter registration application. The statements include important information about a client's rights, benefits, how to file a complaint and seek assistance if needed.

22. Some County DSS Agencies do not have universal units, they are specialized. If the Family & Child Medicaid Worker (F&C) is conducting a transaction and the FNS worker is conducting a transaction, are both required to send the voter registration form?

Answer- Yes, a voter registration application and cover letter should be provided for each covered transaction.

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

23. On the review form (DSS-2435) it states, "if you do not check either box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time." So, if the client leaves it blank and they sign the review form would you consider this "in writing" that the client said no.

Answer- Yes.

24. Many clients refuse to register to vote at time of application. Once the agency has asked the required question and client has denied registering to vote, does an application still have to be provided to the client & if there are other members in household whom are 16 yrs. or older must an voter registration be given for them as well?

Answer- During an In-Person Transaction, DSS staff must provide a voter registration application, a copy of the Laminated Form (NVRA Information Sheet) and offer assistance during each covered transaction. A voter registration application must be handed to the client despite their response to the voter registration application. After asking the Voter Preference Question, if the client's response is that they are ineligible to vote, DSS staff should not give the client a voter registration application. DSS staff are also not required to provide a voter registration application to other members in the household who are not clients.

25. DSS would like to post the SBE link on our webpage since so many are not coming into our agency to see the posters. Are you seeing other agencies do anything else to reach people during the pandemic?

Answer- It is permissible to post a digital version on the NVRA Poster or inform the public that voter registration services are provided by the Department of Social Services. Some offices have also utilized their social media pages.

26. If the client states they are already registered to vote at their current address, do they still get a form?

Answer- Yes, follow the guidance above on when to give a voter registration application or mail the client an application and the DSS Cover Letter based on the type of covered transaction.

27. As a suggestion, can the DHHS automatically include the voter registration and the NVRA cover letter in the ALL recertification packets mailed to the clients as 95% of the client skip the voter registration questions when completing the recertification resulting in caseworkers mailing a voter reg to 95% of recertifications.

Answer-No, DHHS does not have the capacity to do these mailings at this time

28. What happens if you mail the voter registration form and the cover letter and it is not returned via mail?

Answer- If the voter registration application is not returned via mail to the county DSS office, staff is no longer responsible for the submission of the form to the county board of elections office.

Questions and Answers National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Training for County Department of Social Services Offices on January 6, 2021

29. When DSS mail out a voter reg. Should we check the 01 box before sending it out even though DSS do not see it filled out or help with filling it out?

Answer- Yes, DSS staff should check the “01” checkbox on the Spanish version of the voter registration application.

30. What if you are a Telecommunicator and client is signed up for documents to be emailed and change address are we able to email NVRA form since they have chosen to have all forms sent by email?

Answer- It is not permissible to email the voter registration application to clients. The agency must mail the voter registration form.

31. What is the current protocol for the automatic redeterminations?

Answer- The Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act was signed into law recently allowing states the option to continue certain waiver options that have been approved during the Covid-19 pandemic. North Carolina accepted the option to automatically extend all Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) cases that have a six- month certification period. The extension does not apply to FNS cases with 12-month certification period or Simplified Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) cases. At re-certification/redetermination the NVRA question is required to be asked, and the Voter Registration Application and DSS Cover Letter are required to be provided to the client.