# VOTER REGISTRATION OUTREACH MANUAL

**REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**
**675 TEXAS ST. SUITE 2600**
**FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA 94533**
**(707) 784-6675**
**1-888-933-VOTE**

This manual has been prepared to assist you and your organization or group to register voters.

This is merely a guide and is not all encompassing. It summarizes the major areas related to registering voters. The California Elections Code (Sections 2000 – 2300) and the California Administrative Code (Division 7, Chapter 1, Sections 19001 – 20107) have the force of law and are your best source of current information on Voter Registration. If you are running for office or working on a voter registration drive, please do not rely solely on this guide; call the Registrar of Voters Office at (707) 784-6675 or toll free at 1-888-933-VOTE (8683) for more detailed information. The Registrar of Voters Office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday, excluding holidays.

# General Considerations

Voting in the United States and California is a conditional right. That is, you must be at least 18 years old, a US citizen, and not in prison or on felony parole. Additionally in California, you must be a resident of the state, not be mentally incompetent (a legal condition as well as mental), and register to vote at least 15 days prior to the election in which you wish to vote.

Registering to vote requires the use of a state voter registration card or federal registration form. Over the years these have changed; the latest state voter registration card has been revised to reflect voters' passage of Proposition 14 in 2008 which created the "top-two" primary and changed "party affiliation" to "party preference." While prior voter registration cards are still valid, the Secretary of State and local elections officials encourage the use of the latest registration cards. Also, while the federal form is available online from the Secretary of State, local elections officials favor using the state form because the federal form does not contain all the data required for the state form. When local election officials receive federal forms, voters must be contacted to obtain missing information.

Once a person signs the voter registration *card*, it becomes a voter registration *affidavit*. That is, the voter is affirming under penalty of perjury that s/he meets the voter eligibility requirements and the information provided is true and accurate. There also is a box at the bottom of the registration card asking whether anyone helped the person fill out or deliver the form. It is common in voter registration drives to complete the form for the prospective voter and keep it to show that someone has registered. If you put pen to paper or keep the completed affidavit (for delivery to the local elections official within three days, EC § 2138), you must sign and date this box and include the organization name and telephone number of the drive sponsor (EC § 2158(b)(1), EC § 2159).

Voter registration drives can often be at odds with voters' priorities. The information required on an affidavit of registration is spelled out in EC § 2150 and later in this manual. The state requires (based on the federal Help America Vote Act) certain confidential information – the voter's California driver's license number or state ID number, or last four digits of her/his Social Security Number (EC § 2138.5) – which people are understandably unwilling to share with just anyone. The voter also is just registering to vote while the voter registration drive is commonly targeting voters with a particular party preference. Additionally, voter registration drives often have a financial incentive to hold on to the registration affidavit after the voter signs it.

You should keep in mind that courts liberally construe the voter is right for registration, casting a ballot, and having the ballot counted. Thus, if a prospective voter is from a party other than the party sponsoring the drive, you should give the voter a registration card. Also, if you give the voter a registration card and the voter does not want to let you return it for her/him, let it go.

# Getting Started

1. Visit the Elections Department at **675 Texas Street, STE. 2600, Fairfield**.

2. There is no charge for voter registration cards and the return postage is paid by the Secretary of State.

3. Any individual or organization may obtain up to 50 registration cards simply by asking. If you make repeated requests for 50 registration cards, we will have you complete a "Statement of Intention."

4. A "Voter Registration Card Statement of Intention" must be completed if an individual or organization wishes to obtain 50 or more registration cards. The form is provided by the Elections Department and requires the name, address, telephone number, and organization of the person requesting the cards as well as a brief explanation of how cards are to be distributed.

5. If you request 2,000 or more voter registration cards, the Elections Department will forward a copy of the "Statement of Intention" to the Secretary of State (California Administrative Code §20001g) who will supply you the cards.

**The Affidavit of Registration is a legal document that must be used and processed with care.**

**The voter must:**

- *Accurately and completely* fill in required data on the affidavit using current information
- We recommend using a **black ballpoint ink pen**. These affidavits will be scanned for subsequent electronic retrieval. Colored or "metallic" inks do not scan well.
- Correct error(s) by drawing one line through it and printing the correction above it; or invalidate the affidavit by writing "Spoiled" across the affidavit. Complete the stub and write "Spoiled."
- The applicant must sign corrections made to a political party preference.
- Write legibly or print.
- Instead of executing a new affidavit of registration for a change of address within the county, voters may send a signed letter to the Elections Department and the address will be changed.

**PLEASE DO NOT……**

- Give affidavits to other people who have not been authorized to distribute cards by the Elections Department.
- Sign blank affidavits in advance.
- Allow recipients to use a place of business as a residence address, unless applicant is actually living on the business premises.
- Allow recipients to use a mail drop as a residence address.
- Allow applicants to use a P.O. Box number for a residence address.
- Allow a wife to register using her husband's name, i.e. Mrs. John Jones.

# VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS – HOW TO USE

## PURPOSE

The purpose of voter registration cards is to make it easy for citizens to register to vote or to change their current registration.

## WHO MAY COMPLETE A CARD

Anyone who is:

- A citizen of the United States;
- A resident of California;
- Is or will be 18 years of age or older by the next election;
- Is not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction;
- Not be deemed by an appropriate court to be mentally incompetent.

**(Elections Code §§ 2000, 2121, 2201)**

*No documentation or proof of the above requirements is required in order to register to vote. The statement on the voter registration card, which the voter signs under penalty of perjury, is sufficient and all that the law requires.*

## WHO SHOULD COMPLETE A CARD

Anyone who meets the above criteria and:

- Does not remember voting within the last five years;
- Is not now registered in Solano County;
- Has changed his/her place of residence since last registering;
- Wishes to change his/her political party preference; and
- Has changed his/her name since last registering.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COMPLETED CARD

The completed card must be delivered or mailed to the Registrar of Voters. No additional postage is required. If you accept a completed card from someone, it must be delivered to the Registrar of Voters within three days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays. A voter must be registered to vote 15 days before an election. A card, which arrives by mail at the Registrar of Voters after the 15-day close of registration and within four days of the 15-day close date, is usually accepted if all required data is present. A card delivered in person to the Registrar of Voters must reach this office on or before the 15-day close of registration or it will be considered late for the election, but will be accepted for future elections.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT REGISTRATION

The voter should complete the card. Do not mark, stamp, or partially complete any part of the affidavit for the voter. You may assist ONLY if the voter specifically requests you to assist. If you assist, you must specifically ask for all required information, including party preference. Do

not attempt to answer questions except to explain the data requirements of the card. Direct any questions on voter registration to:

**Solano County Registrar of Voters**
**675 Texas Street Suite 2600**
**Fairfield, CA 94533**
**(707) 784-6675; 1-888-933-VOTE (8683)**

# COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS

| | |
|---|---|
| **BOX 1** | Enter **FIRST** and **MIDDLE** name (**required**). |
| **BOX 2** | Enter **LAST** name (**required**). |
| **BOX 3** | Select Title: Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss (optional). |
| **BOX 4** | Enter **HOUSE** number and **APARTMENT** number for **RESIDENCE** address (**required**). (**NOTE**: You **CAN NOT** use a P.O. Box or place of business as a residence address.) |
| **BOX 5** | Enter **CITY**, **STATE**, and **ZIP CODE** for residence address (**required**). |
| **BOX 6** | If Voter has **NO PHYSICAL RESIDENCE** – use this area to **DESCRIBE** the location where you stay. Preferably using major cross streets. (**NOTE**: This section is often used to register homeless individuals) |
| **BOX 7** | Enter **MAILING ADDRESS** if applicable (P.O. Box, PMB, School, Place of Business, etc.) (optional). |
| **BOX 8** | Enter **City, State** and **Zip** for **MAILING** address (optional). |
| **BOX 9** | Enter **BIRTHDAY** (month, date, year) (**required**). |
| **BOX 10** | Enter **US STATE or FOREIGN COUNTRY** of birth (e.g., California, Spain) (**required**). |
| **BOX 11** | Enter **CALIFORNIA** Driver's License or State ID Number. If voter does not have a CDL or State ID, Enter **Last 4** of Social Security Number (**required**). |
| **BOX 12** | Enter Email address (optional). |
| **BOX 13** | Enter Phone number (optional). |
| **BOX 14** | **Select a political party preference OR** mark the green box to the left to **be registered with NO Party Preference** (**NOTE**: If no party is selected you will be registered as having No Party Preference) (**required**). |
| **BOX 15** | **INITIAL** here if you want a **Vote-By-Mail** ballot sent to you via U.S. Mail for all elections (optional). |
| **BOX 16** | Fill this area out if have ever been registered to vote at any other address (**required**). |
| **BOX 17** | **Are you a U.S. citizen?** Answer YES or NO<br>**Will you be 18 or older by the next election?** Answer YES or NO<br>(**NOTE**: Answering **NO** to either of these questions means you can not register to vote.) (**required**) |
| **BOX 18** | **READ and SIGN** the voter declaration. Your **SIGNATURE** is used to **confirm your identity** for all future elections, re-registrations and requests for changes to your voter record (**required**). |
| **Optional Box** | The box titled **OPTIONAL** is optional, **you can**:<br>**A**. Indicate if you would like to work as a Poll Worker on Election Day or if you can |

| | |
|---|---|
| | provide a Polling Place Location. **B**. Provide your ethnicity/race. **C**. Indicate your Language Preference. |
| **Did someone help you fill out or deliver this form?** | If yes, this person must fill this section out. Persons other than the voter who put pen to paper or keep this affidavit for the purpose of submitting it on behalf of a Voter must complete the entire BLUE section of the Optional Box (**required**). |
| **Bottom Portion** | The bottom part of the Registration Form is the **Voter's receipt**. The person registering to vote keeps the bottom part of the form as their receipt until they receive a Voter Notification Card in the mail. This part also has the Registrar of Voters and Secretary of State contact information on it. |
| **Review** | **Review** the entire form for completion. Common mistakes include using a P.O Box or business address as the residence address, not providing a place of birth, and forgetting to sign the form. |

# KNOW THE LAW!

## NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS REGISTERING VOTERS

**You are responsible for obeying ALL laws governing voter registration drives and elections.** Please take note of the following Elections Code penal provisions for registering nonexistent persons, altering voter registration cards, interfering with the prompt delivery of completed cards to the Registrar of Voters, and other registration crimes.

**18101. Registration of fictitious person.**

Every person who knowingly and willfully completes, or causes or procures the completion of, in whole or in part, an affidavit of registration or a voter registration card, with the intent to cause the registration or re-registration as a voter, of a fictitious person or of any person who has not requested registration or re-registration as a voter, is guilty of a crime punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for 16 months or two or three years, or in a county jail for not more than one year. (*Added by Stats*. 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**18102. Registration of nonexistent persons.**

Any deputy elections official or registration elections official who knowingly registers a nonexistent person, knowingly registers a person under a false name or address, or knowingly registers a person who is ineligible to register is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison for 16 months or two or three years or in county jail for not more than one year. (*Added by Stats*. 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**18103. Interference with transfer of affidavit to county elections official.**

Any person who knowingly or negligently (a) interferes with the prompt transfer of a completed affidavit of registration to the county elections official (b) retains a voter's completed registration card, without the voters authorization, for more than three days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays, or after the close of registration, or (c) denies a voter the right to return to the county elections official the voter's own completed registration card, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not exceed one thousand dollars. (*Added by Stats*. 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**18106. <u>Alteration of affidavit party affiliation.</u>**

Every person is punishable by imprisonment I the state prison for 16 months or two or three years or in the county jail for not more thank one year who, without the specific consent of the affiant, willfully and with the intent to affect the affiant's voting rights, causes, procures, or allows the completion, alteration, or defacement of the affiant's party affiliation declaration contained in an executed, or partially executed, affidavit of registration pursuant to subdivision (h) of Section 2150 and Section 2151

*This section shall not apply to a county elections official carrying out his or her official duties* (*Added by Stats*. 1994, c. 920 §2.)

**2138. <u>Return of completed affidavits of registration</u>.**

Individuals and organizations distributing voter registration cards pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 2158 and who receive completed voter registration cards from voters shall return the completed cards to the county clerk or shall deposit such cards in the postal service within three days, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and state holidays, or receipt from a voter. (§. 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**2139. <u>Return of completed affidavits of registration</u>.**

On the day of the close of registration for any election all deputy registrars of voters or individuals and organizations which have submitted plans for distribution, shall immediately return all completed affidavits of registration in their possession to the county elections official. Unused affidavits shall be returned upon completion of the distribution plan. (*Added by Stats.*1994, c.920, §2.)

**2158. <u>County elections official to provide voter registration cards.</u>**

In addition to registration conducted by deputy registrars of voters, the county election official shall do all of the following:

**(a)** Provide voter registration cards for the registration of voters at his or her office and in sufficient number of locations throughout the county for the convenience of persons desiring to register, to the end that registration may be maintained at a high level.

**(b)** Provide voter registration cards in sufficient quantities to any citizens or organizations who wish to distribute such cards other than to persons who have been convicted of violating this section within the last five years. Citizens and organizations shall be permitted to distribute voter registration cards anywhere within the county.

**(1)** If, after completing his or her voter registration affidavit, an elector entrusts it to another person, the latter shall sign and date the attached, numbered receipt indicating his or her address and telephone number, if

any, and give the receipt to the elector. Failure to comply with this paragraph shall not cause the invalidation of the registration of a voter.

**(2)** Any citizen or organization which distributes voter registration cards shall give a voter registration card to any elector requesting it; provided, that the citizen or organization, has a sufficient number of cards.

**(3)** If distribution of voter registration cards pursuant to this subdivision is undertaken by mailing cards to persons who have not requested the cards, the person mailing the cards shall enclose a cover letter or other notice with each card instructing the recipients to disregard the cards if they are currently registered voters.

**(c)** Mail a voter registration card immediately to any person who wishes to register to vote and requests a voter registration card. (*Added by Stats*, 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**18107. <u>Fine for failure to provide voter registration card</u>.**

Every person who willfully violates Section 2158 is guilty of an infraction, punishable by a fine not to exceed two hundred dollars ($200). (*Added by Stats*. 1994, c. 920, §2.)

**2159. <u>Telephone number and address of person or organization who pays money for completed affidavits of registration.</u>**

**(a)** Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 2158, any person who, in exchange for money or other valuable consideration, assists another to register to vote by receiving the completed affidavit of registration from the elector, shall sign in his or her handwriting and affix directly on the affidavit of registration his or her full name, telephone number and address, and the name and telephone number of the person, company, or organization, if any, that agrees to pay money or other valuable consideration for the completed affidavit of registration. Failure to comply with this section shall not cause the invalidation of the registration of the voter.

**(b)** Any person who in exchange for money or other valuable consideration assists another to register to vote by receiving the completed affidavit or registration from the elector, and knowingly misrepresents himself or herself as having helped register another to vote on a registration form is guilty of a misdemeanor, pursuant to Section 18108.1. (*Amended by Stats.* 2006, c.377, §1.)

# PLANNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

A good plan is the key to a successful drive. You may want to vary the style and method of reaching people according to different target populations and geographic areas.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the various registration drives, the Secretary of State's Office will make available to all organizations interested in conducting voter registration drives information as to the location of potential voters, names of people to contact who are also conducting voter registration drives, and information regarding special events or projects relating to voter registration.

**REGISTERING PEOPLE AT PUBLIC PLACES.**

One of the most effective ways to register large numbers of people with a limited number of registration workers is to register people using fixed sites such as shopping centers, neighborhood stores, community centers, local parks, recreation centers, or churches.

It is very important to obtain permission from the manager of these sites before sending people out to register voters. Parking lots, malls, entrances to stores and sidewalks in shopping centers are considered private property and require permission to use. Be prepared to answer their questions regarding whom you are representing, when you plan to be there, how many people will be involved, and what type of display you may be using.

**DOOR-TO-DOOR REGISTRATION DRIVES.**

Door-to-door voter registration drives can be very effective if sufficient registration workers are available. One of the most effective techniques has been to assign registration workers to their own neighborhood or to neighborhoods they know.

A voter registration drive can also use precinct walking lists by going to the households that do not have registered voters. Precinct lists can be purchased at the Elections Department for registration purposes.

**SPECIAL EVENTS.**

Special events such as high school or college sporting events, concerts, fairs, town meetings, conferences, etc. can be fruitful places to register voters. Request permission to register voters at these events and plan ahead.

**Remember, you should not just hand a card to every person that comes through the entrance. This is a wasteful, expensive and ineffective method. Ask individual people if they are registered, and if not, ask if they would like to register. Check into making announcements to the entire group alerting attendees that voter registration is available.**

**REGISTERING PEOPLE BY MAIL.**

Any mailing of a registration card to a person who did not request one must be accompanied by a cover letter or other notice with each card instructing the recipient to disregard the card if he or she is currently registered to vote and does not wish to change name, address, political party affiliation or other registration information. This notice may be stamped on the card (Elections code §2158).

**REGISTERING THE HOMELESS:**

When registering the homeless use **box 6 on the voter registration card** to **DESCRIBE where the person states they are living**. We do not necessarily need an actual residential address, but we must have an accurate description of the location in order to correctly assign them to a precinct for voting purposes.

**Ask the individual to provide us with information on cross streets, land marks and/or businesses**.

**Examples**:
**1.** On the corner of Sunset and HW 12 behind the Raley's Shopping Center.
**2.** Under the I-80 overpass where West Texas turns into Rockville Rd.
**3.** In the grove of trees to the right of the main entrance to Alan Witt Park.

The individual **MUST** provide us with a **mailing address, city, state, and zip** in Areas 7 and 8 of the voter registration form. This mailing address can be the address of a friend or relative, or a P.O Box or other form of mailing address. It is especially important that the address be a **VALID** address because mail that is returned to the Registrar of Voter's office marked undeliverable will cause the voters registration to become **INACTIVE**.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**WHAT MUST I DO BEFORE I CAN VOTE?**
Registration is necessary in order to vote in any election. You must have registered at least 15 days prior to a particular election in order to vote in that election. You do not need to re-register unless you move, change your name, or wish to change your political party affiliation.

**WHERE CAN I REGISTER?**
Registration cards are available at most county offices, Libraries, Post Offices, Department of Motor Vehicles, the Registrar of Voters, City Clerk's offices and the Secretary of State's office.

**WHEN DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW REGISTRATION CARD?**
You need to fill out a new card only when changing your name, address, or political party or if you are not registered at your current address.

**MUST I CHOOSE A POLITICAL PARTY WHEN I REGISTER?**
It is not necessary to choose a political party when registering. However, those who decline to state a party preference may not be able to vote for some parties' candidates at a primary election for U.S. President or party committee.

**WHAT IS A PRIMARY ELECTION?**

Primary elections are those in which parties choose their candidates for state and national offices. They take place early in June during even numbered years in which state and national elections are scheduled. During primaries, citizens are given the opportunity to also vote for non-partisan offices and on state and local propositions.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE REGISTERED?

Once you have filled in and returned a registration card, your name is entered on the election rolls and you will receive a notification card in the mail. A sample ballot will be mailed to you prior to the next election.

## I AM GOING TO BE 18 THIS YEAR. MUST I WAIT UNTIL AFTER MY 18TH BIRTHDAY TO REGISTER?

You may register while you are 17, provided you will be 18 on or before the next election. You should not register more than 90 days prior to reaching your 18th birthday but you must be sure to register at least 15 days before the particular election.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHERE I VOTE? WHEN ARE THE POLLS OPEN?

Before every election, each registered voter receives a sample ballot, which contains information on the election and the address of his/her polling place. You can only vote in the precinct in which you are registered unless you apply for an absentee ballot. The polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

## HOW DO I GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

The sample ballot mailed to you before every election also contains an application form for an absentee ballot with instructions on how to apply. You may request it earlier, if you will be away, by sending a postcard or letter to the Registrar of Voters, 675 Texas St, Suite 2600, Fairfield, CA 94533. Include your name, residence address, mailing address, if different, and your signature. The application for an absentee ballot is also available on our web site at www.solanocounty.com/elections. You have the option to print the application to fill out and mail in or you may submit it online. For more information covering special circumstances such as being ill or disabled call the Registrar of voters at 707-784-6675 or Toll free 1-888-933-VOTE (8683).

## HOW DO I FIND OUT WHO MY ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE?

For information on all elections taking place within Solano County and to find out in what district you reside (city, school, supervisorial, state legislative, Congressional, etc.) call the Registrar of Voters at 707-784-6675, toll free at 1-888-933-VOTE (8683) or visit our web site at www.solanocounty.com/elections.

## WHAT IS PROVISIONAL VOTING?

A voter who is currently registered in Solano County, but who has moved and not re-registered at their new address by the 15th day prior to the election, may cast a Provisional Ballot at the Registrar of Voters office or any polling place. After providing the election officer with the proper information and completing a new registration form they will be allowed to vote.

A Vote-by-Mail voter who never received or lost their ballot may receive a replacement ballot at the Registrar of Voters Office or vote a Provisional Ballot at any polling place. Call this office at (707) 784-6675 or toll free at 1-888-933-VOTE (8683) for more information.

# VOTER INFORMATION

**SOLANO COUNTY**
**REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**
675 Texas Street, Suite 2600
Fairfield, Ca 94533
(707) 784-6675
1-888-933-VOTE (8683)

**CALIFORNIA**
**SECRETARY OF STATE**
1-800-345-VOTE (8683)
www.sos.ca.gov