

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES MEDICAID POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	2900	Effective Date:	June 2020
	Policy Title:	Voter Registration		
Policy Number:	2980	Previous Policy Update:	MT 45	

REQUIREMENTS

Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (“NVRA”), requiring states to establish procedures for public assistance applicants and recipients (A/R) to register to vote. As designated under Section 7 of the NVRA, the Department of Human Services (DHS) shall distribute a Voter Registration application and a Voter Registration Declaration Statement with each application for public assistance and with each renewal, recertification or change of address related to such assistance.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

It is the policy of the Department of Human Services (DHS) that all Office of Family Independence (OFI) programs must offer voter registration services to all applicants and recipients whenever they apply for services, renew services or submit a change of address, whether in person, electronically, or via the telephone, facsimile or mail.

Voter registration services include distribution of:

- Voter Registration Application
- Voter Registration Declaration Statement
- Voter Registration Cover Letter
- Assistance in completing the form, if requested
- Acceptance and transmittal of completed Voter Registration Application and the Agency Recap Forms to the Secretary of State’s Office.

OFI Staff in each county DFCS office must mail, on a weekly basis, the completed Voter Registration Applications to the Office of the Secretary of State. For the 15 days leading up to a registration deadline for a primary or general election, county offices shall mail the packets to the Secretary of State’s Office at the end of each business day.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS (cont.)**Confidential Information**

Information that is considered confidential for voter registration purposes is:

- information on the Voter Registration Declaration Statement
- information about the location of where an applicant applies to register to vote
- Social Security Number
- Date of Birth
- Drivers License or State ID Number.

Special Considerations**OFI STAFF SHALL NOT:**

- seek to influence or discourage an applicant's political preference or party registration;
- display any such political preference or party allegiance;
- make any statement to an applicant or take any action to discourage the applicant from registering to vote;
- make any statement to an applicant or take any action which leaves the applicant with the impression that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the availability of program services or benefits;
- hold completed registration forms for more than one week from the day each is completed;

Voter Registration Supplies and Forms

Each office should keep a two-week supply of Voter Registration Applications, Voter Registration Declaration Statements, Voter Registration Cover Letters, the Agency Recap Form and envelopes. The Voter Registration Applications and the envelopes can be ordered or downloaded from the Secretary of State agency portal at:

www.sos.ga.gov/electionconnection

The cost of Voter Registration Applications, envelopes and postage for NVRA purposes is paid by the Secretary of State's Office.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS (cont.)**Getting Help**

Please contact the Secretary of State NVRA Coordinator at:

Secretary of State Elections Division
2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Suite 802 West Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: (404) 656-2871
Email: gaelections@sos.ga.gov

Inquiries regarding the status of a Voter Registration Application should be directed to the Secretary of State. Additional information can be obtained by visiting the Secretary of State Elections Division at: www.sos.georgia.gov.

PROCEDURES

Integrate the voter registration services into the regular office process so that each A/R who applies for public assistance benefits, renews or recertifies for public assistance benefits, or submits a change of address, whether in person, electronically or via the telephone, facsimile or mail, is offered the opportunity to register to vote.

In-person Client Transaction

- Step 1** Advise all clients that DFCS offers Voter Registration Application submittal services. Distribute Voter Registration Application, Declaration Statement, and the Voter Registration Cover Letter with all DFCS applications for benefits, recertification / renewal and change of address material.
- Step 2** Verbally advise the client that he or she shall complete the Voter Declaration Statement and return the form to the DFCS employee;

The client may complete the Voter Registration Application and return the completed application to the DFCS employee.

PROCEDURES (cont.)**In-person Client Transaction (cont.)**

- Step 3** If the A/R is unwilling to complete the Voter Registration Application at that time; the procedure should be explained, that the Voter Registration Application should be mailed, per the instructions on the application.

Assist the A/R in completing the Voter Registration Application when assistance is requested. Provide the same degree of assistance to each A/R in completing the Voter Registration Application as the agency provides to an A/R in completing DFCS forms. All applicants must sign his or her name, or make his or her mark on the application signature line in order for the application to be submitted to the Secretary of State's Office.

If the county staff provides assistance to an illiterate or disabled A/R by completing any written portion of the application on the A/R's behalf, the county staff member assisting the A/R, must also sign the Voter Registration Application in the space provided on the Voter Registration Application to identify the person offering assistance.

If the A/R declines to register to vote, the A/R should indicate his/her declination on the Voter Registration Declaration Statement. The client's response must be recorded in GA Gateway.

- Step 4** In the event that the client declines to complete the Voter Registration Declaration Statement, the staff must enter explanatory information of the client's response on the Voter Registration Declaration Statement in the space provided at the bottom of the form and record the response of the client as unknown in GA Gateway. Staff Must also retain the Voter Registration Declaration Statement in an assigned central location, as outlined in the agency policy.

Telephone Transaction

- Step 1** During a telephone interview with a client who reports a change of address, the client must be reminded that a Voter Registration Application and a Voter Registration Declaration Statement were provided with their benefit materials and ask the client whether he or she wishes to apply to register to vote or update any prior voter registration information. The client's response must be recorded in GA Gateway.
- Step 2** Mail a Voter Registration Application, Voter Registration Declaration Statement, and Voter Registration Cover Letter to the client.
- Step 3** Notify the A/R that completed Voter Registration Applications may be returned to the DFCS office or mailed directly to the Secretary of State's Office.

PROCEDURES (cont.)**Telephone Transaction (cont.)**

- Step 4** If the Voter Registration Declaration Statement is not returned, then the offer for Voter Registration should be counted as a blank response and recorded as unknown in GA Gateway.

Mail, Facsimile or Dropped off Transaction

- Step 1** Provide a Voter Registration Application and a Voter Registration Declaration Statement to applicants/recipients who are applying for public benefits, recertifying or renewing benefits or reporting a change of address by mail.
- Step 2** Include the Voter Registration Cover Letter advising the client that the Voter Registration Application and the Voter Registration Declaration Statement are enclosed.
- Step 3** Notify the A/R that completed Voter Registration Applications may be returned to the DFCS office or mailed directly to the Secretary of State's Office.
- Step 4** If the Voter Registration Declaration Statement is not returned, then the offer for Voter Registration should be counted as a blank response and recorded as unknown in GA Gateway.

Do not mail the Voter Registration Declaration Statement to the Secretary of State's Office, or file in the A/R's case record. It is a confidential document, and the counties must maintain a file exclusively for the Voter Registration Declaration Statements in the local DFCS offices in a central location.

Office Procedures

Each DFCS employee shall submit the completed Voter Registration Declaration Statement forms to his/her supervisor at the close of each business day. Upon review of the Voter Registration Declaration Statements, the supervisors shall submit the forms to the DFCS employee responsible for completing the Agency Recap Form.

A copy of the Agency Recap Form should be attached to the Declaration Statements completed that day.

The Voter Registration Declaration Statements shall be filed in a central location for at least twenty-four (24) months. File chronologically by year and month.

The county DFCS offices shall mail one summary Recap Form and the completed Voter Registration Applications weekly to the Office of the Secretary of State using the pre-addressed envelope.

PROCEDURES (cont.)**Office Procedures (cont.)**

For the 15 days leading up to a registration deadline for a primary or general election, county offices shall mail the Voter Registration Applications to the Secretary of State's Office at the end of each business day.