



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
P.O. Box 45010, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

May 17, 2010

DIRECTIVE NO. 10-01

TO: Troy Hutson, Assistant Secretary, Economic Services Administration  
Kathy Leitch, Assistant Secretary, Aging and Disability Services Administration  
Andres Aguirre, Interim Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

FROM: Susan Dreyfus, Secretary

SUBJECT: **VOTER REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE FOR DEPARTMENT CLIENTS**

*Thank you  
for your support!*

*Troy  
Kathy  
Andres*

*Susan*

I know we all recognize that the right to vote is central to the protection and exercise of the other rights guaranteed in our state and nation. As we know, other basic rights are nonexistent if the right to vote is impaired. Nevertheless, our clients sometimes face practical barriers that can inhibit the free exercise of this recognized right, and among such barriers are isolation of our clients, fear of government, and the inability to understand the opportunity to exercise the right to vote. Therefore, I want to take this opportunity to reinforce the commitment we have to providing our clients with a real and effective opportunity to register and exercise their right to vote. **We must and shall offer voter registration assistance to clients at the point of application, eligibility or service change review, and address changes.**

Governor Gregoire's Executive Order 07-04 designated the Department of Social and Health Services as a voter registration assistance agency under the National Voters Registration Act and state law. As such, the Department must provide voter registration assistance within each office of the Economic Services Administration, Aging and Disability Services Administration, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Each local Area Agency on Aging office must also provide voter registration assistance because they are involved in processing applications, assessments, and change of address for Department clients.

While the Department must inform and offer to provide voter registration assistance to clients, voter registration is entirely voluntary on the part of the client and does not affect eligibility for services. To inform clients that we will provide assistance, voter registration assistance posters must be prominently displayed in client waiting areas of local offices.

As voter registration assistance is provided, it is particularly important that Department employees **must not**:

- Attempt to influence a client's political preference or registration;
- Display any such political preference or allegiance;

Voter's Registration Assistance for DSHS Clients

May 17, 2010

Page 2

- Make any statement that would discourage a client or applicant from registering to vote;
- Make any statement or take any action suggesting that a decision to register affects a client's eligibility for Department services.

Staff offering direct assistance must also complete the Voter Registration Service Form (DSHS 02-541 X) to document that voter registration assistance was offered to clients at application, eligibility or service change review, or address change. This form documents that we are providing this service to our clients and is an important record in the event we are audited by the Department of Justice. Typically, this form will need to be kept on hand for 22 months, after which they can be destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

If your local offices are out of voter registration forms, they may be accessed and printed from the Secretary of State's website. These forms are available in English, Cambodian, Cantonese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese. Use the printed form when assisting clients who wish to vote, and return the signed form to the Secretary of State (Mail Stop 40230).

In addition to the link posted on the Department Internet site to the Secretary of State's Voter Registration website, administrations are also required to find reasonable ways to utilize technology to efficiently and effectively provide voter assistance to clients. For example, the Automated Client Eligibility System will be evaluated to determine if modification can be made to allow for the automatic mailing of Voter Registration documents along with other Department documents. If feasible, this would allow clients to be routinely informed of the opportunity to register to vote at application, renewal/recertification of assistance, and change of address. It would also inform clients of our ability to assist them with registering to vote should they want our assistance.

I have appointed Kevin Krueger as the Voter Registration Assistance Officer for the Department. He will monitor and be responsible for efficient and appropriate compliance with state and federal assistance laws. Every affected Administration will be required to regularly report their assistance efforts. If you need posters, please contact Mr. Krueger at 360-902-7794 or [Kevin.Krueger@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Kevin.Krueger@dshs.wa.gov).

If you haven't already done so, every affected Administration must also appoint a Voter Registration Assistance Coordinator to manage the Voter Registration Assistance activities within your program, including making sure that:

- Voter Registration posters are in all local office client waiting areas;
- Voter Registration applications are in all local office client waiting areas and partner offices (Area Agencies on Aging);
- Instruction and training on Voter Registration Assistance occurs; and,
- Tracking and reporting of Voter Registration Assistance provided to clients and that voter registration forms are sent to the Office of the Secretary of State.

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<sup>1</sup> Because there is currently a Litigation Hold notice in place relating to the Department's voter registration assistance activities, the 22 month document retention/destruction timeline is suspended until further notice. If you have questions about this please contact Kevin Krueger, Voter Registration Assistance Officer or Steve Dotson, Department Discovery Manager.

Voter's Registration Assistance for DSHS Clients  
May 17, 2010  
Page 3

Also, position description forms for each Administration's appointed Voter Registration Assistance Coordinator must be updated to reflect these responsibilities and expectations. Please submit the name and contact information for your coordinator to Kevin Krueger no later than June 1, 2010.

Thank you for your full cooperation and support with the National Voter Registration Act. I ask that you embrace this not for "compliance" only, but to ensure every citizen who has the right to vote has the opportunity to do so. Voting is a core element to civic participation and the strength of our communities.

c: Executive Leadership Team