

SEVEN STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL REGISTRATION DRIVE

Successful voter registration drives have similarities – they are well planned and well organized. Yet every voter registration drive is unique if you design it to meet community needs. This guide will help you plan and carry out voter registration efforts. Please note that setting goals and dates come only after extensive advance planning.

STEP ONE – KNOW THE LAW

Become familiar with the federal, state and local laws that govern voter registration. In 1993, the U.S. Congress passed the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). The Help America Vote Act of 2002 has additional provisions designed to make registration more convenient. The following points reflect changes in registration and voting:

- NVRA expands the ease of registration by allowing the distribution of mail-in registration forms as part of a door-to-door or single location voter registration effort.
- [Persons may also download a blank mail-in voter registration form from their local election authority.](#) The downloadable registration form must be printed, physically signed, and mailed or delivered to the Election Division **no later than 28 days before the next election.**
 - If you do not include a photo copy of a current and valid photo ID or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check or paycheck or other government document that shows your name and address with your application, you may need to show ID the first time you vote.
- Illinois has made it very easy to register electronically (computer, tablet, smart phone, etc). [Online voter registration](#) can be used to register up to 16 days before an election. To register via this link, one is required to have a current Illinois Driver's License or an Illinois State Identification Card which includes the current address. (Your signature is already in the system and no additional physical identification is needed.)
- Illinois also has [automatic voter registration](#) (AVR) at multiple Illinois state agencies, including Secretary of State driver services facilities. The purpose of AVR is to streamline the voter registration process while you interact with a designated AVR agency.

When registering a potential new voter, emphasize the following facts for voters:

- Basic requirements for registering are the same:
 - U.S. citizen,
 - at least 18 years old on or before the next election (*or*, for a General Primary Election, must be 17 years old and age 18 by the General Election)
 - resident of their voting precinct for 30 days prior to the election
 - not be convicted and in jail (detainees awaiting trial or bail can vote)

- o cannot claim the right to vote anywhere else.
- Newly registered individuals should notify their election authority if their voter ID card is not received within 4 weeks of registration.
- Persons with disabilities should be encouraged to receive information from their election authority about the accessibility of their polling place as well as information on the locations and accessibility of early voting sites.
- Persons whose registration can't be verified at their polling place on election day may request to vote a provisional ballot.

STEP TWO – WORK WITH ELECTION OFFICIALS

To register voters, you will need a supply of forms. Standard and mail-in registration forms may be obtained from local election authorities.

The [National Mail-In Voter Registration Form](#) is available from the State Board of Elections. It is intended for use in assisting persons who wish to register outside Illinois. It is available in 15 languages.

STEP THREE – FORM A COALITION AND SET GOALS

Many local organizations plan registration drives before major elections. Seek ways to coordinate and share information. Successful drives need many contacts, skills and volunteers, so take advantage of each group's special strengths. One organization may have good relationships with election officials, while another may have access to historically under-registered groups, such as youth and minorities.

Your goals for a drive depend on the nature of the community and your resources – time, people and money. Set an achievable numerical goal to inspire volunteers and to serve as a guide post for evaluation of these goals. In addition to how many potential voters you may wish to register, your goals may include “voter contact” (helping a voter find if they are registered under their current address, locate their polling location, etc.).

STEP FOUR – RECRUIT, TRAIN, AND ASSIGN VOLUNTEERS

Your League could work with another community group, but there should be at least one deputy registrar at the drive throughout the length of the drive. Other volunteers may help voters look up their information (if they are registered at the correct address, where their polling place is, etc).

Other volunteers may be recruited to promote the League or give nonpartisan voter education material, but they need to be at a separate table from the voter registration.

STEP FIVE – “SELL” VOTER REGISTRATION

Visibility is one of the most important aspects of a voter registration drive.

- Use a mixture of print (flyers, posters), electronic (e-alerts, website pages), and social media to alert the community about the importance of voting. When hosting a voter drive, be sure to contact local media and submit information on “community news” or “community calendars” as additional ways to spread the news.
- Provide plenty of information about eligibility, site and registration deadlines.
- Promote the times and locations of the registration drives.

It’s important to consider site selection and timing for any registration drive. Good locations to register voters include:

- Festivals, fairs and sporting events.
- School and college registration tables.
- Retirement centers and nursing homes
- Public transit stops, malls and downtown areas.
- Workplace cafeterias, concert intermissions and naturalization ceremonies.
- Schedule sessions at peak activity times.
- Get permission to register at both privately and publicly owned sites; let authorities know if you anticipate attracting a large crowd to a public place. Some public spaces require permits, particularly for large crowds.
- Visit sites ahead of time and choose the most visible and accessible place to station volunteers.
- Consider and accommodate needs of persons with disabilities.

STEP SIX – HOLD THE SESSION

- Stage an event to attract a crowd – a celebrity appearance, band concert or remote broadcast.
- Ensure people can find your table at the site by using banners, bunting or flags.
- A good practice is to work in front of a table, not behind it to encourage people to register. This may mean recruiting enough volunteers to also work the crowd if necessary.
- For people who are interested to register to vote but do not have their driver’s license or state ID, remind them that they can register online at ova.elections.il.gov. This can be done up to 16 days before the election. Have this website available as a handout.
- Use door-to-door registration using deputy registrars or supplying persons with mail-in forms. It is important to tell voters who register by mail that they may have to vote in-person the first time, either at their polling place or early at the office of the election authority or other early voting location and be prepared to show an ID with current address.
- An informational brochure about registration and voting, including early voting, is appropriate and may list the election authority, as well as local League’s name and phone numbers for additional information.

TO BE AN LWV DEPUTY REGISTRAR

Volunteers will interact directly with potential voters and will need to be knowledgeable about how to fill out forms and submit them to the election authority promptly. Standard registration forms used by deputy registrars require registrants to show two pieces of ID, one of which lists their current address. The carbon copy of this form is verification of an official registration and should be retained by the registrant until the voter ID card is received.

League members and others who have taken the training are granted **deputy registrar** status by the election authority who does the training. The registrars are deputies of that authority, not of LWV. As deputies, they are bound by law to not promote any candidate, ballot issue or public policy question when acting as deputy registrars. League of Women Voters members are eligible for deputy registrar's training because the League has been given recognition as a bona fide civic organization. **Note that LWVIL Policy states that one MUST be a League member to be a deputy registrar under the League of Women Voters recognition.** Failure of League members to adhere to the law could jeopardize the League's status as such a recognized organization.

Forms of identification that can be used (but are not limited to):

- driver's license,
- social security card,
- public aid identification card,
- utility bill,
- employee or student identification card,
- lease or contract for a residence,
- credit card,
- or a civic, union or professional association membership card.

A homeless individual must have a mailing address in order to be eligible to register to vote. For purposes of this Act, a mailing address shall constitute a homeless individual's residence for voting purposes. A mailing address of a homeless individual may include, but is not limited to, a shelter, a day shelter, or a private residence. (10 ILCS 5/3-2). *Note that the regulation does NOT specify evidence of the use of the mailing address.*

You may want to have "Pledge to Vote" pieces available for newly registered individuals to sign up. There are many examples available (sign a piece of paper, sign up for text messages, emails, etc.)

STEP SEVEN – PUBLISH RESULTS, EVALUATE AND CELEBRATE

Report your results (the number of registrations and/or "voter contacts" - perhaps checking if the voter is registered at their current address) to [LWVIL](#).

Tell the world that your voter registration drive made a difference. Registrants will be happy to hear that they were part of a success story and may be more motivated to vote. Volunteers will feel positive about their hard work. Decide which registration sites and techniques worked best and keep this information, along with the names and contact information of the volunteers for the next time. Reward volunteers with a well-timed show of appreciation. It may help persuade them

to work on a get-out-the-vote campaign and your next registration drive. If a coalition of groups worked on the drive, a joint celebration will establish rapport for future projects.