

NVRA AGENCY-BASED VOTER REGISTRATION IN COLORADO

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Voter registration opportunities for citizens receiving public assistance in Colorado in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)



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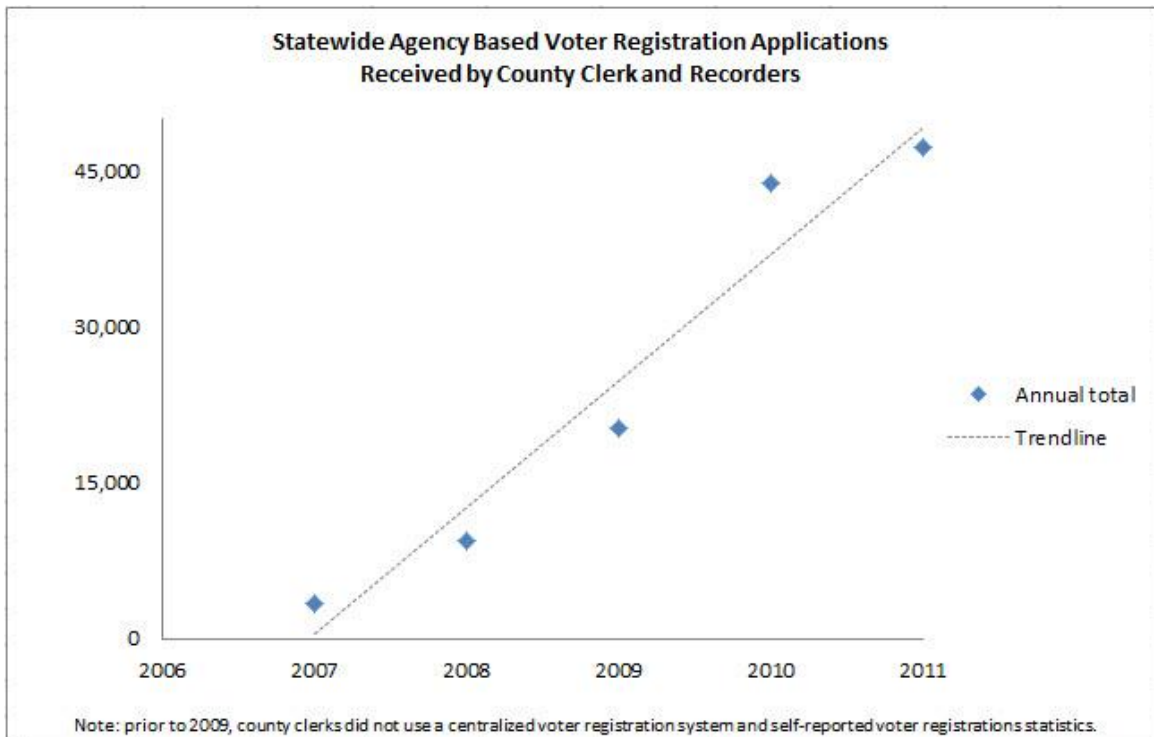
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines procedures implemented in compliance with Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which requires states to offer voter registration services at agencies providing public assistance.¹ Specifically, the NVRA requires agencies to provide and accept voter registration applications from anyone who recertifies or renews benefits or services, changes their address related to their benefits or services, or applies for public assistance benefits or accommodation services.²

Colorado's partnership between the Secretary of State's office and covered agencies results in improved registration opportunities for voters. Because of Colorado's focus on compliance and commitment to voter registration, applications generated through public assistance agencies in 2011 increased by 7.74% from 2010 and have increased more than 1,300% since 2007. In 2007, county clerks reported 3,340 applications for registrations received from covered agencies. In 2011, the number of applications reported was 47,199. Appendix A illustrates the number of voter registrations submitted by public assistance agencies between 2007 and 2011.

¹ 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-5(a)(1) and (3)

² See 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-5(a)(4)(A) and (a)(6)(A)



Milestones

Fall 2007: Received notice of intent to sue

Spring 2008: New procedures and reporting implemented

Summer 2009: Received re-notice of intent to sue

Summer 2011: Integrated voter registration into Human Services web-based benefit application system (PEAK)

Winter 2007: Secretary of State conducted independent review

Fall 2008: Statewide voter registration system (SCORE) implemented

Fall 2009: Began sending registration forms in renewal packets

COLORADO’S SECTION 7 COMPLIANCE

In the first quarter of 2008, the Secretary of State’s office conducted an independent review of available voter registration data. The findings suggested the need for education. The Secretary of State’s office identified key stakeholders and specific areas of non-compliance to develop a comprehensive mitigation plan. The plan addressed the need for improved communication and coordination with local agencies regarding their specific NVRA duties. The plan also called for the development of training materials and creation of a web-based tracking system to record voter registration statistics.

In fall of 2009 the Secretary of State’s office—in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS)—began sending voter registration applications in the monthly renewal packets mailed to individuals who receive public assistance from DHS agencies. Every applicant now receives an opportunity to register to vote—or update his/her voter registration information—even if he or she does not appear in person at a local office. Additionally, this centralized mailing removes the burden from local DHS offices who were previously required to mail voter applications separately to each potential elector not applying in person for renewal. Approximately

50,000 voter registration applications are mailed each month. This mailing supplements, but does not supplant, the opportunity to register to vote when potential applicants apply for or renew services in person.

COLORADO’S NVRA SECTION 7 SUCCESS

Colorado’s improved Section 7 compliance is enhanced by the partnership between the Secretary of State’s office, the Department of Human Services, the Women Infant and Children (WIC) program, and Colorado’s publicly-funded colleges and universities. Stakeholders work together to increase awareness and improve compliance with Section 7.

The Secretary of State tracks agency-based voter registrations via a voter registration form containing a “source code.” Web-based, monthly reporting by covered agencies also improves tracking of registrants.

After receiving the registration numbers for 2011, the Secretary’s office began using a tool comparing covered applications and population demographics for each county to infer local success. Statistics are extracted from the American Community Survey and the Census. The Secretary’s office determines the number of individuals likely to apply for services as being individuals above the age of 18 and below the poverty line. This number is divided by the number of reported voter registrations received by county clerks from covered agencies, as reported in the statewide voter registration system.

After determining the average deviation from the median, the Secretary’s office identifies underperforming counties. The Secretary’s office works with underperforming counties or agencies and offers appropriate mitigation services.

This year, the median is 20.35 with a standard deviation of 16.13. Agencies in the following counties fall outside the standard deviation:

Counties Falling Outside the Standard Deviation

County	18+ and BPL	NVRA Reg	100% - (% 18+ and BPL/NVRA Reg)
Sedgwick	290	3	3.33
Larimer	44046	758	41.89
Elbert	2655	48	44.69
Rio Blanco	347	7	50.43
San Juan	90	2	55.00
Eagle	4019	97	58.57
Pitkin	1320	33	60.00
Montezuma	6521	173	62.31
Baca	523	14	62.64
Ouray	368	10	63.20

Appendix A at the end of this report contains the full results. The Secretary plans to refine formulas used in this analysis and seeks transaction numbers from the DHS to replace calculations for likely eligible applicants.

The Secretary of State implemented online voter registration in April 2010. The Secretary’s office partnered with the DHS and the Office of Information Technology to integrate online voter registration with the DHS’s web-based benefit application system, PEAK. The new online system directs applicants wishing to register to vote to www.GoVoteColorado.com, thereby allowing applicants to register or update their voter information while

applying for benefits. This technology streamlines agency-based voter registration procedures, promotes voter convenience, creates more accurate data, and reduces the amount of time needed for case managers to assist potential electors with completing voter registration applications. In addition, online voter registration allows applicants to complete the application in Spanish. The Secretary's office tracks statistical information in order to monitor the effectiveness of online voter registration at covered agencies.

To maintain the State's Section 7 compliance, the Secretary of State contacted publicly-funded colleges and universities with offices that primarily serve students with disabilities. Following litigation in the State of New York³, the Secretary of State contacted these offices to provide training and information regarding Section 7 compliance. In 2010, the Secretary of State sent forms, posters, and other information to 23 colleges and universities not previously offering voter registration in offices serving students with disabilities.

In 2009 the Secretary of State transitioned agency staff training to a web-based environment. With this new system, training is consistent and easily accessible 24 hours a day, ensuring agency staffers are aware of their responsibilities regarding Section 7 compliance. Online training ensures each agency in the state has access to materials when most convenient for the office seeking training. The Secretary of State continues to provide in-person training to agencies and colleges when requested.

The Secretary of State's office distributes a quarterly newsletter, *Registration Connections*, to provide additional communication to agencies and colleges. This newsletter includes information on NVRA requirements, election dates, instructions for online form ordering, and other topics relating to NVRA compliance.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

While Colorado's Section 7 compliance improves, the Secretary of State's office, the Department of Human Services, WIC, colleges and universities, and other public assistance agencies face continuing challenges meeting the needs of potential registrants. With increased employee turnover and limited staff and departmental resources, many agencies struggle not only to provide the basic client services, but also to meet Section 7 compliance.⁴

Despite the challenges, voter registration opportunities have improved substantially. The statewide voter registration system, known as SCORE, provides a well-developed system of evaluation and tracking of voter registration applications transmitted from agencies to Colorado's county clerk and recorders. SCORE allows the state to compare the number of completed agency applications against the number of applications received by county clerk and recorders to identify and mitigate inconsistencies on an ongoing basis.

Despite the current and future challenges, the Secretary of State's office is committed to enhancement of voter registration opportunities for citizens applying for public assistance or disability services.

³ *U.S. v. State of New York*, No. 5:04-CV-00428 (NAM/DEP) (N.D. N.Y. March 3, 2010).

⁴ In early 2012, the Secretary of State was notified that a vendor serving a covered-agency submitted approximately 88 voter applications to a county well after the established timeframes. The Secretary of State's Office investigated the matter, and spoke with the Governor's office to mitigate identified problems. Since that time, Secretary of State staff have noted a marked increase in calls and emails from agencies requesting voter applications and assistance with NVRA compliance.

CONCLUSION

The Secretary of State's office is committed to continuing its positive partnership with the Department of Human Services, WIC, local public assistance agencies, colleges, and other stakeholders to improve and maintain compliance with the NVRA.

SECRETARY SCOTT GESSLER'S NVRA TEAM:

Christi Heppard- Special Projects Coordinator

Christi joined the Office of the Secretary of State in 2005 and serves as the Training and Compliance Coordinator for the Elections Division, a task that includes oversight of NVRA administration and compliance. Prior to joining the Department of State, Christi was the Chief Deputy and Elections Administrator for Teller County, Colorado, where she served for 10 years. Christi may be contacted via email to christi.heppard@sos.state.co.us.

Lisa Doran- NVRA Coordinator

Lisa serves as the NVRA Coordinator for the Office of the Secretary of State and is responsible for communication with covered agencies, collecting statistical data, and ensuring appropriate materials are prepared and distributed. Lisa joined the Department of State in 1999, after serving 13 years with the Arapahoe County Clerk's Office. Lisa may be contacted via email to lisa.doran@sos.state.co.us.

APPENDIX A
VOTER REGISTRATION TABLES
2007-2011

Data presented in the following table depict information reported by County Clerks and Recorders, as reflected in the statewide voter registration database. While every effort has been made to ensure that accurate data is presented, in some cases data may contain anomalies. Contact the Secretary of State's office for more information about voter registration data.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE VOTER REGISTRATION DATA

Adams – Jefferson Counties

Voter Registration Received From NVRA-Designated Agencies					
County	2007*	2008*	2009	2010	2011
Adams	729	283	1,368	2,858	3,026
Alamosa	66	139	82	140	98
Arapahoe	270	1,797	2,303	6,183	8,613
Archuleta	0	2	1	34	35
Baca	2	85	36	35	14
Bent	1	4	47	74	89
Boulder	6	3,575	422	1,401	1,237
Broomfield	385	82	152	181	172
Chaffee	6	11	21	80	71
Cheyenne	4	2	8	14	12
Clear Creek	4	4	35	45	49
Conejos	14	32	17	41	106
Costilla	16	5	86	70	947
Crowley	7	81	37	47	99
Custer	0	2	7	15	30
Delta	12	74	154	287	455
Denver	280	21	7,601	12,785	9,844
Dolores	0	5	17	47	48
Douglas	38	28	268	395	723
Eagle	2	65	199	493	97
El Paso	14	792	1,844	5,008	6,250
Elbert	327	15	73	140	48
Fremont	51	21	155	539	476
Garfield	45	18	65	152	283
Gilpin	0	2	19	38	20
Grand	0	42	102	43	46
Gunnison	0	112	41	61	95
Hinsdale	0	0	8	22	28
Huerfano	36	92	42	88	104
Jackson	0	3	7	0	137
Jefferson	19	87	1,553	5,345	4,428

*Prior to 2009, county clerks did not use a centralized voter registration system and self-reported voter registrations statistics.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE VOTER REGISTRATION DATA

Kiowa - Yuma Counties

Voter Registration Received From NVRA-Designated Agencies					
County	2007*	2008*	2009	2010	2011
Kiowa	0	1	0	19	14
Kit Carson	0	19	4	22	42
La Plata	4	43	285	474	683
Lake	3	2	25	63	39
Larimer	527	462	570	860	758
Las Animas	0	20	50	114	111
Lincoln	98	13	50	55	42
Logan	22	27	139	155	324
Mesa	0	118	282	749	1,243
Mineral	0	0	0	4	2
Moffat	0	64	55	119	130
Montezuma	0	44	215	262	173
Montrose	3	18	144	315	302
Morgan	5	68	111	134	137
Otero	20	58	33	93	278
Ouray	0	31	29	24	10
Park	15	6	47	104	116
Phillips	85	37	17	42	14
Pitkin	0	7	17	12	33
Prowers	29	36	47	49	100
Pueblo	101	100	210	1,374	1,352
Rio Blanco	0	17	13	22	7
Rio Grande	0	111	97	200	183
Routt	0	3	39	59	76
Saguache	3	98	28	105	96
San Juan	0	0	10	10	2
San Miguel	76	8	44	26	67
Sedgwick	9	14	8	9	3
Summit	0	39	246	182	210
Teller	0	102	76	108	351
Washington	5	8	18	16	62
Weld	0	35	405	1,290	2,477
Yuma	1	390	101	77	82
Statewide Totals By Year	3,340	9,480	20,185	43,808	47,199

*Prior to 2009, county clerks did not use a centralized voter registration system and self-reported voter registrations statistics.

ANALYSIS OF COMPLIANCE

The Secretary is vested with the responsibility to coordinate NVRA responsibilities under section 1-1-107(1)(d), C.R.S. The following formula is an analysis of local compliance. The office first determines the number of individuals in each county above eligible voting age (18) and living below the poverty line. This number is divided by the number of reported voter registrations from covered agencies. The table below illustrates the number of possible eligible voters and the number of registrations received by county clerks. Low ratios indicate higher compliance levels.

Top Half of Counties by Ratio of Likely Eligible Electors to Applications Received by County Clerks:

County	Total Population	County Size	18+ and BPL	NVRA Reg	100% - (% 18+ and BPL/NVRA Reg)
Costilla	3524		796	947	99.16
Jackson	1394		155	137	98.87
Hindsdale	843		35	28	98.75
Lincoln	5467		60	42	98.57
Teller	23350		1471	351	95.81
Arapahoe	572003		58916	8613	93.16
Dolores	2064		343	48	92.85
Delta	30952		3343	455	92.65
La Plata	51334		5493	683	91.96
Rio Grande	11982		1546	183	91.55
Park	16206		1037	116	91.06
Jefferson	534543		42763	4428	90.34
San Miguel	7359		648	67	90.33
Washington	4814		602	62	90.29
Fremont	46824		4636	476	90.26
Logan	22709		3157	324	90.26
Yuma	10043		903	82	88.99
Huerfano	6711		1168	104	88.77
Denver	600158		111034	9844	88.72
Crowley	5823		1130	99	88.59
El Paso	622263		71560	6250	88.55
Kiowa	1398		165	14	88.21
Otero	18831		3427	278	87.67
Montrose	41276		3756	302	87.56
Conejos	8256		1354	106	87.23
Weld	252825		32362	2477	86.94
Cheyenne	1836		158	12	86.83
Moffat	13795		1766	130	86.42
Saguache	6108		1307	96	86.39
Douglas	285465		9991	723	86.18
Clear Creek	9088		700	49	85.71
Summit	27994		3163	210	84.94

Bottom Half of Counties by Ratio of Likely Eligible Electors to Applications Received by County Clerks:

County	Total Population	County Size	18+ and BPL	NVRA Reg	100% - (% 18+ and BPL/NVRA Reg)
Kit Carson	8270		645	42	84.64
Adams	441603		50343	3026	83.36
Bent	6499		1514	89	82.99
Custer	4255		515	30	82.83
Garfield	56389		4962	283	82.47
Mesa	146723		22155	1243	82.18
Broomfield	55889		3130	172	81.80
Grand	14843		876	46	80.96
Archuleta	12084		689	35	80.31
Gunnison	15324		1885	95	80.16
Pueblo	159063		28473	1352	78.94
Routt	23509		1669	76	78.04
Las Animas	15507		2497	111	77.50
Gilpin	5441		457	20	77.15
Prowers	12551		2347	100	76.53
Morgan	28159		3492	137	74.51
Chaffee	17809		1870	71	73.66
Phillips	4442		382	14	72.71
Mineral	712		58	2	71.00
Lake	7310		1199	39	69.26
Boulder	294567		41534	1237	66.42
Alamosa	15445		3460	98	64.69
Ouray	4436		368	10	63.20
Baca	3788		523	14	62.64
Montezuma	25535		6521	173	62.31
Pitkin	17148		1320	33	60.00
Eagle	52197		4019	97	58.57
San Juan	699		90	2	55.00
Rio Blanco	6666		347	7	50.43
Elbert	23086		2655	48	44.69
Larimer	299630		44046	758	41.89
Sedgwick	2379		290	3	3.33

* Data represented is not the final analysis of the Secretary of State's review of agencies. This formula is expected to change with specific statistics from the Department of Human Services. As a result, these numbers may be over-inclusive or under-inclusive