

Title 71: Voter Assistance Commission

Chapter 1: Preparation of Voter Assistance Plans

§ 1-01 Scope of Rules.

These rules establish content and format requirements for agencies to follow in preparing annual voter assistance plans specifying the resources, opportunities and locations the agency will provide for voter assistance.

§ 1-02 Definitions.

Agency. "Agency" means a mayoral agency that has regular contact with the public in the daily administration of its business and shall include the Department of Aging, Department of Business Services, Department of Consumer Affairs, the Department of Correction, the Department of Employment, Department of Finance, the Department of Health, the Department of Homeless Services, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Department of Mental Health, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Personnel, the Police Department, the Department of Probation, the Human Resources Administration, the Department of Transportation, Department of Youth Services, and such other agencies as may be designated by the Coordinator of Voter Assistance after consultation with the agency.

Board of Elections. "Board of Elections" means the Board of Elections of the City of New York.

Charter. "Charter" means the New York City Charter.

Party. "Party" means any political organization meeting the definition of a "party" under § 1-104 of the election law.

Plan. "Plan" means a voter assistance plan to be prepared annually by agencies specifying the resources, opportunities, and locations the agency will provide for voter assistance activities.

Registration form. "Registration form" means the application form to register to vote designed by the State Board of Elections pursuant to Election Law 5-210(5).

§ 1-03 Submission of Plan.

Pursuant to Section 1056 of the Charter, on or before January 15, 1994 and on or before January 15th of each succeeding year, each agency shall submit a plan to the Mayor and the Coordinator of Voter Assistance in accordance with these rules.

§ 1-04 Registration Opportunities.

(a) Each plan shall specify the efforts the agency will make to provide opportunities to the public to register to vote.

(b) Each agency shall include in its plan:

(1) an amendment to the intake, application or other form it requires individuals to complete before receiving services at the earliest possible or next regularly scheduled printing of their forms, containing the following:

(i) the question, "IF YOU ARE NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE WHERE YOU LIVE NOW, WOULD YOU LIKE TO APPLY TO REGISTER TO VOTE HERE TODAY? YES __ NO __" in prominent type;

(ii) the statement, "Applying, or declining to apply, to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency".

(iii) the statement, "if you would like help in filling out the voter registration application form we will help you".

(2) Until such time as each agency amends its forms as set forth in paragraph (1) of this subdivision, each of the employees in such agency who deal directly with members of the public applying for services shall routinely ask the question and make the statements set forth in paragraph (1) to all such applicants.

(c) In cooperation with the Coordinator of Voter Assistance, each agency shall develop promotional materials in English, Spanish, and Chinese informing the public of the existence of voter registration materials and shall specify in its plan the locations open to the public at which such materials shall be prominently displayed.

§ 1-05 Employees.

(a) Each agency, after consultation with the Department of Personnel, shall specify in its plan, that each of the agencies employees or other persons who have contact with the public will be assigned to voter assistance activities it undertakes and the job titles of such employees. Wherever possible, the employee who provides assistance should be the same person who gives assistance in the application process and in the regular services that the agency provides. Each employee assigned to voter registration activities shall provide to each applicant who registers to vote the same degree of assistance as with regard to the completion of its own forms.

(b) Each agency shall name in its plan a coordinator of voter assistance activities in that agency and a site coordinator for each agency office conducting voter assistance activities who shall be trained by the staff of the Voter Assistance Commission and who shall be responsible for the implementation and reporting of the agency's plan. The agency coordinator shall train all employees and other persons assigned by the agency to work on voter assistance activities how to fill out voter registration forms, or arrange for its employees to receive such training from the VAC or its designate, and shall provide such employees and other persons with instructional materials on voter registration to be supplied to each agency by the Voter Assistance Commission. Each agency shall provide ongoing training for the agency voter assistance program.

(c) Employees and other persons working on voter assistance activities for an agency shall not:

(1) directly or indirectly seek to influence an applicants political preference or party enrollment;

(2) make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant from registering to vote; or

(3) make any such statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing in the availability of services or benefits.

(d) Employees and other persons working on voter assistance activities for an agency may not collect or mail registration forms filled out by members of the public but shall direct members of the public, to whom registration forms are distributed to the nearest mailbox.

§ 1-06 Reporting.

Each plan shall require the agency coordinator of voter assistance to record the number of employees and other persons working on the voter assistance activities performed by the agency, list all the voter registration sites and locations, and the total number of voter registration forms distributed to the public. The agency coordinator shall report no later than the second Monday of each month to the City Coordinator of Voter Assistance the number of employees and other persons assigned each day to each voter assistance activity during the previous month and the total number of voter registration forms distributed during the previous calendar month. Agencies shall collect data on the number of voter registration applications completed and any additional statistical evidence deemed necessary for program evaluation. No information relating to a declination to vote in connection with an application made at an agency may be used for any purpose other than registration.