# Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual A-200: Customer Rights and Legal Issues

Revised May 11, 2018

On May 11, the “National Voter Registration Act of 1993” subsection was added to A‑201: Legal Authorization, and a new section, A-208: Voter Registration, was added to this chapter.

## Introduction

The Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Division (TWC VR) places the highest priority on maintaining a customer’s rights while the customer participates in the rehabilitation process. It is important for customers to know that VR counselors and other staff actively protect customers’ personal information and safety.

Systems to monitor service delivery include explicit and implicit processes for maintaining a safe and secure environment within which the customer progresses toward goals. When the VR counselor and the customer do not agree about the provision or denial of services, systems exist to safeguard the customer’s:

* right to appeal;
* access to mediation; and
* process for resolving disagreements.

Maintaining these rights supports the key values of VR.

## A-201: Legal Authorization

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TWC rules governing VR hearings and mediation procedures were transferred from the Texas Department of Assistive and Regulatory Services (DARS) to TWC Chapter 850 Vocational Rehabilitation Services Administrative Rules and Procedures rules.

### National Voter Registration Act of 1993

[52 USC §20506](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title52/subtitle2/chapter205&edition=prelim) requires that states designate the offices that provide services to individuals with disabilities as “voter registration agencies.”

“(4)(A) At each voter registration agency, the following services shall be made available:

(i) Distribution of mail voter registration application forms in accordance with paragraph (6).

(ii) Assistance to applicants in completing voter registration application forms, unless the applicant refuses such assistance.

(iii) Acceptance of completed voter registration application forms for transmittal to the appropriate State election official.”

[Tex. Elec Code §20.001.1](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/EL/htm/EL.20.htm) requires National Voter Registration Act implementation in Texas.

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### A-207-4: Injuries Unrelated to an Incident

To report injuries sustained by employees and nonemployees during routine business activities, staff must follow the procedures outlined in the [TWC Personnel Manual (Word)](http://intra.twc.state.tx.us/intranet/hr/docs/personnel_manual.docx).

## A-208: Voter Registration

On February 21, 2018, under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) and Chapter 20 of the Texas Election Code, TWC-VR was designated by the Secretary of State to provide voter registration services through its VR program. TWC-VR is required to offer customers an opportunity to register to vote when they apply for services or when they report a change of address.

VR program staff is prohibited from:

* influencing a customer’s political preference or party registration;
* displaying political preference or party affiliation;
* making any statement or taking any action to discourage a customer from registering to vote; and
* documenting—in ReHabWorks case management notes or case files—any customer response or reaction to being given the opportunity to register to vote.

VR staff may email questions on policies and procedures related to TWC voter registration services to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual Support mailbox at vrsm.support@twc.state.tx.us, and review DARS1680INST, Opportunity to Register to Vote.

VR staff must inform VR customers that they can contact the Texas Secretary of State Elections Division at any time to ask questions or file a complaint, and must provide them with the contact information to do so:

Elections Division
Texas Secretary of State
P.O. Box 12060
Austin, Texas 78711-2060
Phone: (800) 252-VOTE (8683)
Email: elections@sos.texas.gov
Website: <http://www.votetexas.gov>

### A-208-1: Voter Registration Procedures

VR staff offer the customer the opportunity to register to vote at the time of application for services, or when the customer reports a change of address.

#### Application for Services

During application for services, VR program staff must:

* provide a voter registration application to the customer and helps the customer complete the voter registration application, if the customer accepts assistance;
* mail the application for the customer or inform them that they can mail it themselves;
* obtain the customer’s signature on DARS1680, Opportunity to Register to Vote;
* sign and date DARS1680 and retain it for 22 months in an office file apart from the customer’s case file, and
* document in a case note that voter registration services were provided according to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual policy.

#### Change of Address

When a customer reports a change of address in-person, VR program staff must:

* offer the customer the opportunity to register to vote using the new address;
* provide a Texas Voter Registration Application to the customer and helps the customer complete the voter registration application, if the customer accepts assistance;
* mail the application for the customer or inform them that they can mail it themselves;
* obtain the customer’s signature on DARS1680, Opportunity to Register to Vote (link);
* sign and date DARS1680 and retain it for 22 months in an office file apart from the customer’s case file; and
* document in a case note that voter registration services were provided according to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual policy.

When a customer reports a change of address by phone, email or other communication, it is not required to obtain the customer’s signature on DARS1680. VR program staff must:

* offer the customer the opportunity to register to vote using the new address;
* mail a Texas Voter Registration Application and DARS1681, Texas Voter Registration Application Letter;
* help the customer complete the voter registration application, if customer accepts assistance; and
* document in a case note that a Texas Voter Registration Application and DARS1681 were mailed to the customer’s new address, and that voter registration services were provided according to Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual policy.