

National Association of State Election Directors

July 15, 2019

**VOTER REGISTRATION IMPROVEMENTS
AT OKLAHOMA
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AGENCIES**



**PAUL ZIRIAX
SECRETARY,
OKLAHOMA STATE ELECTION BOARD**

BACKGROUND

August 2014

Dēmos, ACLU & several Oklahoma-based organizations sent notice alleging NVRA Section 7 violations by Oklahoma's 3 largest public assistance agencies:

- OK Dept. of Human Services (DHS)
- OK State Dept. of Health
- OK Healthcare Authority

Oklahoma disputed the allegations
of Section 7 violations.

July 2015

After many months of negotiations, all parties agreed to avoid litigation and resolve the matter through a Non-Litigation Agreement.



Oklahoma agencies agreed to improve:

- Communication
- Training
- Collection and publication of VR statistics and VR materials

BACKGROUND

Complainants agreed not to pursue litigation and to waive any claim to attorneys' fees and costs associated with the matter.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

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OK established a working group of officials from the State Election Board and the public assistance agencies.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

Each agency designated an agency-wide NVRA Coordinator to oversee Section 7 compliance.

DHS and Health Dept. also designated local NVRA coordinators.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

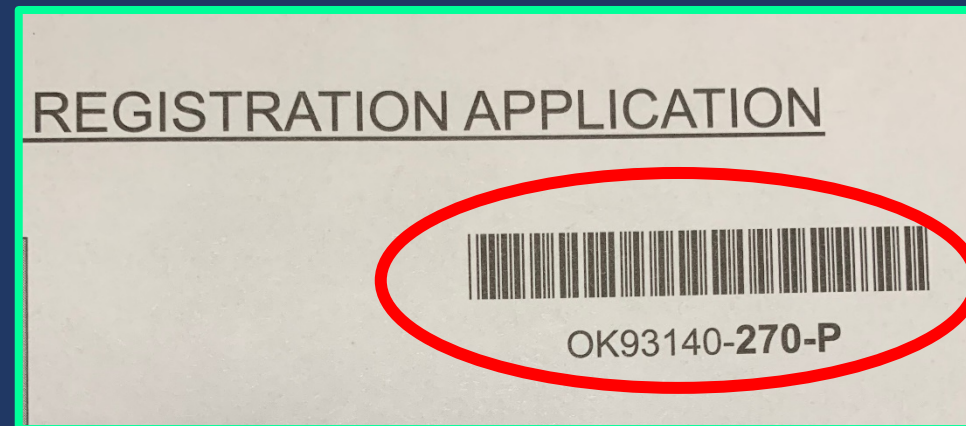
The State Election Board's NVRA Coordinator works directly with the agency coordinators to ensure Section 7 compliance, collect statistics, and supervise training.

IMPROVED STATISTICS

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Each agency began using “pre-coded” Voter Registration Applications that improved collection of the VR statistics.

(The code tracks the agency, not a specific voter or location, and is not retained with the individual VR record.)



IMPROVED STATISTICS

The State Election Board collected each agency's VR statistics, and published monthly and quarterly reports on our public website.

IMPROVED VOTER SERVICES & TRAINING

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State Election Board approved changes
to agency procedures.

IMPROVED VOTER SERVICES & TRAINING

State Election Board updated:

Training for employees of public assistance agencies.

IMPROVED VOTER SERVICES & TRAINING

State Election Board updated:

Voter registration information and materials for use
by public assistance agencies.

IMPROVED VOTER SERVICES & TRAINING

State Election Board ensured every eligible citizen
received VR services
(In-person, online, and by mail).

EXPIRATION OF THE AGREEMENT

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NLA expired November 30, 2018.

EXPIRATION OF THE AGREEMENT

Organizations praised Oklahoma for its progress and cooperation.

Voting rights advocate praises Oklahoma in expanding registration access



By Randy Krehbiel Tulsa World Dec 18, 2018



Voters cast ballots on the first day of early voting at the Tulsa County Election Board on Nov. 1. MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World file

Voting rights activists on Tuesday praised Oklahoma's efforts to make registration more accessible under the National Voting Rights Act.

"Oklahoma has tripled the numbers of people registering through public assistance agencies since 2015," said Brenda Wright, senior adviser for legal strategies at Demos, a New York-based nonprofit that advocates for ballot access and other causes.

"The state should be commended for its impressive commitment to our shared American value that every eligible voter should be able to vote come Election Day," Wright said in a news release. "By implementing a comprehensive plan for voter registration services at these agencies across the state, Oklahoma has exemplified the NVRA's principle and promise: States must do their part to bring all Americans into our democracy."

Oklahoma Sees Major Increase in Voter Registration Among Low-Income People by Making Registration More Accessible at Public Assistance Agencies

DECEMBER 18, 2018

Demos



Advocates Praise Oklahoma's Progress Adding Thousands of Voters to Rolls During Three-Year Settlement

NEW YORK, WASHINGTON and OKLAHOMA CITY – Voting rights advocates are praising important progress in registering low-income people to vote through Oklahoma public assistance agencies in the wake of a settlement agreement that came to a formal close on November 30. The agreement, in effect since 2015, was the result of outreach to state officials by the Metropolitan Tulsa Urban League, the League of Women Voters of Oklahoma and Metropolitan Tulsa, and YWCA Tulsa, under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA), a federal law requiring state public assistance agencies to offer voter registration opportunities to clients.

EXPIRATION OF THE AGREEMENT

State Election Board continues to work with public assistance agencies and publicly publish their VR statistics.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

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Unrelated to the NLA, the State Election Board worked with OK Dept. of Public Safety to review its Section 5 NVRA procedures for MLAs.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

This resulted in updated training materials and better VR procedures for MLAs and driver license examiners.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Also resulted in development of electronic notification system for driver license address changes.
(Previously had been done by paper.)

SOURCES & CREDITS

- Designed by Freepik.com: Handshake, Working Group