**Section 512.20 Opportunities for Voter Registration**

a) In accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (52 USC 20501 through 20511), staff are required to provide clients the opportunity to apply to register to vote and to assist clients, if requested, in the completion of voter registration applications and declaration forms. Opportunities for application for voter registration shall be provided at the time of application for services, annual review, recertification or reassessment of services.

1) Staff shall:

A) Inform the client of his or her right to execute or decline to execute a voter registration application.

B) Provide the client with a declaration form that asks if he or she would like the opportunity to apply to register to vote. Each client has the right to accept or decline the opportunity.

C) Provide to each client who does not decline to apply to register to vote the same degree of assistance with regard to the completion of the voter registration application form as is provided by the staff with regard to the completion of IDHS' own forms, unless the applicant refuses that assistance.

D) Provide the client with a mail-in voter registration application when the client provides notification to IDHS of a change of address and offer the client assistance in completing the form.

2) Staff shall not:

A) seek to influence a client's political preference;

B) display any political preference or party allegiance;

C) make any statements or take any action to encourage or discourage an applicant from registering to vote; or

D) make any statements or take any action to lead a client to believe that a decision to register or not to register will affect the availability of services or benefits provided.

b) If the client indicates either by checking the appropriate box on the declaration form or verbally (if he or she cannot write) that he or she desires to apply to register to vote, staff shall assist the client in the completion of the voter registration application, if requested. Assistance shall include, but not be limited to, sign-language interpreters (for deaf and hard of hearing individuals), readers (for blind and visually impaired individuals), and a verbal explanation of the application, as appropriate. The declaration form shall be retained in accordance with Section 512.30.

c) IDHS mental health facility staff may offer voter registration after admission in instances in which it may be clinically ill-advised to do so upon admission. Staff shall ask the client to sign the declaration form and shall retain the form in accordance with Section 512.30. A State-operated mental health facility is not recognized as a valid address for voter registration. Therefore, staff shall instruct clients of State-operated mental health facilities to register with their last address prior to entering the mental health facility.

d) If the client indicates either by checking the appropriate box on the declaration form or verbally that he or she declines to apply to register, staff shall ask the individual to sign the form or to affix his or her mark on the form and shall retain the form in accordance with Section 512.30.

e) If the client does not check the appropriate box and does not communicate any choice, staff shall treat this as a declination. Staff shall note that the client did not indicate a preference on the form, fill in the client's name if he or she does not and retain the form in accordance with Section 512.30.

f) IDHS clients who are unable to register to vote or change their address at IDHS due to the traditional close of the registration deadline (28 days prior to an election) may utilize a grace period to register to vote pursuant to Section 4-50 of the Election Code [10 ILCS 5]. The grace period is from the normal close of registration until and including the day of the election.

(Source: Amended at 41 Ill. Reg. 4969, effective April 25, 2017)