



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

No. 2022-4

To: State Department Directors and Autonomous Agency Heads
From: Governor Gretchen Whitmer
Date: May 1, 2022
Re: Increasing Voter Registration Opportunities

The state and federal constitutions guarantee the right to vote. Every eligible Michigan voter should have the opportunity to register to vote and cast their ballot in free and fair elections with confidence. No Michigander should miss out on this crucial opportunity to participate in our democracy because they do not know how to register to vote, have not had an opportunity to do so, or face challenges such as limited mobility. The state must take a whole-of-government approach to increase access to voter registration services and election-related information to prevent any eligible voter from missing out on the opportunity to participate fully in our democracy.

Our state government interacts with Michigan residents from all walks of life in countless ways—from providing hunting and fishing licenses; to supporting veterans; to issuing driver's licenses; to administering benefits such as food assistance, childcare assistance, state emergency relief, WIC, cash assistance, and Medicaid; to educating children and adults; to regulating and licensing businesses. This engagement with Michiganders all over the state provides a unique opportunity for state government offices to reach eligible voters and encourage their full participation in our democracy.

Democracy takes work. But ensuring free and fair elections with broad participation that reflect the will of the people is well worth the effort. Together, we must defend democracy against the forces that threaten it and work to strengthen our elections and improve access to the ballot for every eligible voter. Too many Michiganders face challenges in exercising their right to vote. Black voters and other voters of color have faced discrimination and numerous obstacles that have burdened their exercise of this fundamental right. Likewise, individuals with disabilities have been denied legally required accommodations in too many situations, and a lack of language assistance has prevented eligible voters who have limited English proficiency from registering to vote or casting their ballots.

I am committed to protecting the right to vote, making participation in our democracy accessible, combating misinformation, and empowering all eligible voters to make their voices heard at the ballot box and beyond.

In 1995, Governor Engler issued Executive Order (EO) 1995-1 to comply with the requirements of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). In addition to directing that applicants for a Michigan driver's license be able to register to vote at the same time, EO 1995-1 designated specific state offices as voter registration agencies pursuant to sections 7(a)(2)(A) and (B) of the NVRA. Since 1995, there have been myriad changes to public assistance programs and programs that provide services to persons with disabilities, as well as to the offices that accept applications for and administer these programs. In light of these changes, it is time to review and update Michigan's list of voter registration agencies. This step is necessary to ensure compliance with the law and to enable state offices that regularly engage with the public to use those interactions as an opportunity to offer access to voter registration services. Even offices that are not well-positioned to serve as a voter registration agency have a role to play in ensuring that members of the public have access to information about registering to vote and voting.

Consistent with the NVRA and acting under sections 1 and 8 of Article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963, I direct the following:

1. Departments and agencies must identify and assess potential opportunities, consistent with applicable law, to expand the ability of eligible Michiganders to register to vote and gain access to reliable information about voting. This review must consider the following:
 - (a) Whether there are ways to provide members of the public with reliable information on voter registration and voting, including but not limited to informational displays in public spaces, printed materials distributed by the department or agency, online information on department or agency websites, public announcements, and social media posts.
 - (b) Whether links to the Michigan Online Voter Registration System and/or the Michigan Voter Information Center could be included in online or printed materials that are frequently viewed by the public.
 - (c) Whether there are ways to increase opportunities for the department or agency's employees to vote or volunteer to serve as non-partisan poll workers, consistent with applicable rules.
 - (d) Which, if any, offices within the department or agency could serve as voter registration agencies, which would require them to distribute mail voter registration application forms, assist applicants in completing voter registration application forms, and accept applications for voter registration, as well as an assessment of such offices' fitness for such role. This assessment should include information about the number and type of in-person and remote interactions that the relevant office has with the public, the size and diversity of the office's client base, the extent to which information needed for

voter registration is currently collected during office interactions, opportunities for integrating training and instructions on voter registration with current office training protocols, whether the office interacts with a significant number of limited English proficient language citizens, the frequency of the office's interaction with citizens who do not have a Michigan driver's license or identification card, whether the office can effectively implement safeguards to prevent registration of ineligible individuals if it interacts with a significant number of non-citizens, and any specific challenges or advantages the office may have in effectively serving as a voter registration agency and reaching underserved individuals and groups.

2. Departments and agencies must provide a report detailing their conclusions with respect to such opportunities within 60 days. In addition, such reports must also include a list of any offices within that department or agency that administer or provide services or assistance under any public assistance programs, including both federal and state programs, and any office that provides state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities.
3. The Department of State should use the information provided in these reports to review Michigan's compliance with the requirements of the NVRA, in particular, the requirement in section 7 that all state offices that provide either public assistance or state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities are offering voter registration services. To the extent that the Department of State recommends additional offices be designated as voter registration agencies to comply with the NVRA, I expect to take appropriate action expeditiously.
4. In coordination with the Department of State and the relevant department or agency, my office will consider the information contained in the reports required by this directive and recommend appropriate action to me, including but not limited to designating additional offices as voter registration agencies pursuant to section 7(a)(3) of the NVRA.

This directive is effective immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation in implementing this directive.



Gretchen Whitmer
Governor