

How to Become a Deputy Registrar

You know the saying, "Good data in, good data out; garbage in, garbage out?" Every voter roll in America starts with a single registration application. In a handful of states, private citizens can be formally appointed by their local election office to help register voters and turn those applications in. That appointment goes by different names from state to state, but it is most often called a **Deputy Registrar**.

In our training *How to Research Incoming Voter Registration Applications*, step one was to familiarize yourself with the role of a Volunteer (or Deputy) Voter Registrar. This guide takes that step further. It explains what the role is, what it means, what it might ask of you, and exactly who to contact to become one in the states that offer it.

What is a Deputy Registrar? A Deputy Registrar is a private citizen who has been appointed, trained, and (in most states) sworn in by a local election official to help register eligible voters on that official's behalf. Unlike an ordinary registration-drive volunteer, a Deputy Registrar works under the authority and supervision of the election office, is accountable to it, and can have that appointment revoked.

It Goes by Many Names

Depending on your state, the same basic role may be called:

- Volunteer Deputy Registrar (Texas)
- Deputy Registrar (Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Nebraska)
- Deputy Registration Official (Missouri)
- Field Registrar (Nevada)
- Volunteer Registrar (West Virginia)
- Registration Official or Registrar (Alaska, Idaho)
- Registration Agent (Rhode Island, New Mexico)

What It Is Not

Two things are easy to confuse with this role:

1. **Paid election-office staff.** In many states, "deputy registrar" is simply the job title of an employee in the registrar's office (Louisiana and Arkansas, for example). Those are hired positions, not volunteer appointments.
2. **Voter registration drives.** Many states allow private citizens and organizations to distribute voter-registration forms, but rules for assisting applicants, collecting completed forms, registering as a third-party agent, and returning applications vary by state. Participating in a voter-registration drive is not necessarily the same as holding an official appointment as a Deputy Registrar.

What It Means

Becoming a Deputy Registrar means you are acting as an extension of your election office. That carries weight:

- **You are a steward of public trust.** You handle other people's personal information and the documents that put them on the voter roll.
- **You are accountable.** In many states your name or appointment number appears on every application you accept. These are the same records citizen researchers review. The accuracy of your work is on the record.
- **You are nonpartisan.** Several states require bipartisan teams, and nearly all prohibit campaigning while registering voters.
- **You are bound by law.** Late delivery, altering an application, or registering someone you know is ineligible can be a crime.

Deputy Registrars are one of the first safeguards of an accurate voter roll. A well-trained registrar catches an incomplete address, a missing signature, or an applicant who is not yet eligible

*before the application ever reaches the office.
Good data in, good data out.*

What the Role Might Entail

Duties vary by state and county, but you can generally expect to:

- Complete training (and in some places pass an exam) before accepting any application
- Take an oath of office
- Carry a certificate, badge, or appointment number
- Distribute official registration forms free of charge
- Help applicants complete their forms accurately and completely, without filling in answers for them
- Issue a receipt to the applicant where required
- Deliver completed applications to the election office by a strict deadline, anywhere from the next business day to 15 days depending on the state
- Keep a log of forms issued and returned
- Register voters only at approved times and places, if your office requires it
- Renew your training when your appointment expires

Common Restrictions

Rules differ, but Deputy Registrars are commonly prohibited from:

- Being paid per application or working under quotas
- Campaigning, handing out campaign literature, or influencing party choice while registering someone
- Altering, copying, withholding, or destroying an application
- Refusing to accept an application based on the applicant's party
- Knowingly registering an ineligible person
- Delegating their duties to someone who is not appointed

NOTE: Holding an appointment does not change your state's eligibility rules for voters. Your job is to help qualified applicants register correctly, not to decide eligibility. That decision belongs to the election official.

How to Become a Deputy Registrar

1. **Confirm your state offers the role.** Use the State-by-State Reference in this guide. If your state is not listed, see "If Your State Doesn't Have It."
2. **Identify your appointing office.** This is usually your county voter registrar, county clerk, county recorder, or board of registrars. The reference section lists who appoints in each state.
3. **Contact that office and ask for the application.** Ask when the next training is offered and whether you need a sponsoring organization. (Some offices, such as in Illinois, appoint through organizations.)
4. **Confirm you meet the requirements.** Most states require that you be a registered voter or qualified elector. Some add age, residency, or criminal-history rules.
5. **Complete the training.** Take notes. Ask for a copy of the written rules and deadlines.
6. **Pass any exam and take the oath.**
7. **Receive your certificate, badge, or appointment number.** Keep it with you whenever you register voters.
8. **Follow the rules every time.** Deliver on time, keep your log, and stay nonpartisan.
9. **Track your expiration date and renew.** Texas appointments expire at the end of each even-numbered year; Nebraska requires retraining every three years; Illinois terms run two years.

Questions to Ask Your Election Office

- Who is eligible, and is there an application form?
- When and where is training held? Is there an exam?
- How long does my appointment last?
- Can I register voters anywhere in the county, or only at approved events?
- Can I register residents of other counties?
- What is the deadline to deliver completed applications?
- Do I need a partner from another party?
- What records must I keep and turn in?
- What happens if an application is incomplete?

NOTE: Approach your election office the same way you would when presenting research findings: introduce

yourself, explain your purpose, and make it clear you want to work with them. Most offices will welcome a trained volunteer who follows the rules.

State-by-State Reference

These states have a formal role a private citizen can be appointed to (or, in New Mexico, register for) in order to register voters. Each entry follows the same format. Requirements can also vary by county, so always confirm details with your appointing office.

Alaska

AS 15.07.100

Registration Official ("Registrar")

Who appoints	Director of the Division of Elections, by precinct
Who qualifies	Qualified Alaska voter
Training / oath	Training by the Division; the director may require a test. Oath required.
Term	Serves at the director's pleasure; periodic performance review
Turn-in deadline	Within 5 days of the voter completing the form
Key rules	Where more than one is appointed in a precinct, political parties must be represented
Contact	Alaska Division of Elections, elections.alaska.gov

Key rules

Register only at board-approved sites and times; no door-to-door. No partisan activity while on duty. Wear a county deputy registrar nametag.

Contact

Your county Board of Registrars / elections office

Idaho

Idaho Code § 34-406

Registrar

Who appoints	County Clerk (optional)
Who qualifies	Not specified in statute
Training / oath	Not specified in statute
Term	Not specified in statute
Key rules	Must register any elector who appears, free of charge (§ 34-407). May register sick or disabled electors at home when the clerk directs.
Contact	Your County Clerk. Ask whether the county uses this authority.

Arizona

A.R.S. § 16-131(D)

Deputy Registrar

Who appoints	County Recorder (optional; programs vary by county)
Who qualifies	Qualified elector. Maricopa County also requires age 18+, U.S. citizenship, county residency, and voter registration.
Training / oath	Maricopa County: free nonpartisan training and a test
Term	Not set by statute; ask your Recorder
Turn-in deadline	Set by the county; ask your Recorder
Key rules	Serves without pay. Forms must be supplied free of charge. May distribute forms, help register voters, and accept completed forms.
Contact	Your County Recorder. Maricopa: elections.maricopa.gov (Deputy Registrar Program)

Illinois

10 ILCS 5/4-6.2

Deputy Registrar

Who appoints	County Clerk, or the Board of Election Commissioners where one exists (e.g., Chicago; see also 5/5-16.2, 5/6-50.2)
Who qualifies	Registered voter in the county. Appointments generally come through a sponsoring organization: schools, libraries, colleges, labor organizations, civic organizations, corporations, and certain agencies. Municipal and township clerks and precinct committeepersons also qualify.
Training / oath	Training by the clerk. Oath to support the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions.
Term	2 years, beginning December 1 after each even-year general election
Turn-in deadline	Mail within 2 business days or deliver in person within 7 days. Tighter deadlines apply close to an election (48 hours, then 24 hours).
Key rules	No electioneering while registering voters
Contact	Your County Clerk. Chicago: chicagoelections.gov

Georgia

O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-213, -214

Deputy Registrar

Who appoints	County Board of Registrars
Who qualifies	Georgia elector who can read, write, and speak English. Felonies involving moral turpitude disqualify unless rights were restored 10+ years ago; any fraud conviction is a permanent bar.
Training / oath	Board-set training before serving. Statutory oath.
Term	Not stated; ask your board
Turn-in deadline	Main office by the end of the next business day

Missouri

RSMo §§ 115.143-.147

Deputy Registration Official

Who appoints	Local election authority (County Clerk or Board of Election Commissioners)
Who qualifies	A registered voter in that jurisdiction, among other categories (government, school, and library staff). Some boards, such as Kansas City's, require ties to an eligible organization.
Training / oath	Instruction by the election authority

Term	Not stated in statute
Key rules	Citizen appointees register voters only at the dates, times, and places the election authority sets and publicizes
Contact	Your local election authority. Kansas City: kceb.org

Nebraska Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 32-305 to -307

Deputy Registrar

Who appoints	County Election Commissioner or County Clerk
Who qualifies	Any registered voter
Training / oath	Mandatory training (up to 4 hours). Certificate qualifies you in any county statewide. Oath to support the U.S. and Nebraska Constitutions.
Term	Retrain at least every 3 years
Turn-in deadline	By the end of the next business day
Key rules	Notify the office of each drive's time, place, and registrars' names and parties; the office may approve or reject it. Teams of at least two, not all from the same party. No registering after 6 p.m. on the third Friday before an election. No political material within 50 feet.
Contact	Your County Election Commissioner or County Clerk

Nevada NRS 293.505

Field Registrar

Who appoints	County Clerk
Who qualifies	Registered voter who is not a candidate. Clerks may not knowingly appoint anyone convicted of a felony involving theft or fraud.
Training / oath	Clark County: about 2 hours of training, a written exam, and an oath; badge issued
Term	Serves at the clerk's pleasure. Clark County badges run 2 years.
Turn-in deadline	Forward once you hold 5 or more applications, and never hold any longer than 10 days
Key rules	No soliciting votes or campaign material while registering. No refusing anyone based on party. No delegating duties. Several violations are felonies.
Contact	Your County Clerk. Clark: clarkcountynv.gov (Field Registrar)

New Mexico NMSA § 1-4-49; 1.10.25 NMAC

Third-Party Registration Agent

Who authorizes	Not an appointment. You register as an agent with the Secretary of State or your County Clerk before helping anyone.
Who qualifies	Sponsoring organization and each agent must register
Training / oath	Mandatory training (online or in person) and a sworn statement
Turn-in deadline	Within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays under the rule)

Key rules	Log every blank form by its unique number. Intentional violations are a petty misdemeanor and revoke agent status.
Contact	NM Secretary of State, sos.nm.gov, or your County Clerk

Rhode Island R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-5

Registration Agent

Who appoints	Local Board of Canvassers (statewide agents by the State Board of Elections)
Who qualifies	Not specified in statute; ask your board
Training / oath	Sworn to faithful performance of duties
Term	Serves through the year; removable by the local board
Key rules	May register voters at times and places the board designates, including special sessions at workplaces or care facilities on petition
Contact	Your city or town Board of Canvassers

Texas Tex. Elec. Code §§ 13.031-.048

Volunteer Deputy Registrar (VDR)

Who appoints	County voter registrar (Tax Assessor-Collector or Elections Administrator)
Who qualifies	18+, U.S. citizen, Texas resident. No final felony conviction (unless sentence fully discharged or pardoned). No identity-theft conviction. Not found totally mentally incapacitated by a court. Never convicted of failing to deliver applications.
Training / oath	Training developed or approved by the Secretary of State; the county may require an exam
Term	Expires December 31 of each even-numbered year
Turn-in deadline	In person by 5 p.m. on the 5th day after receipt. Late delivery is a criminal offense.
Key rules	Appointed county by county (no need to retake the exam in another county). No per-application pay or quotas. No photocopying applications.
Contact	Your county voter registrar. votetexas.gov

West Virginia W. Va. Code §§ 3-2-8, -9

Volunteer Registrar

Who appoints	Clerk of the County Commission
Who qualifies	Same qualifications as election officials, including being a registered voter of the county
Training / oath	Trained and supervised by the county clerk. Oath required.
Term	Not stated in statute
Turn-in deadline	Within 15 days of signing. Failure to deliver is a misdemeanor (§ 3-2-10).
Key rules	Unpaid. Two registrars of opposite parties serve together. The clerk gives the county commission 14 days' written notice before outreach begins.
Contact	Your County Clerk

Limited or Local Programs

These states allow some form of appointment but do not run a general citizen program, or the program exists only at the local level:

- **Virginia** (Va. Code § 24.2-112): General registrars may appoint unpaid deputy registrars. State guidance reserves these for highly qualified and experienced people, such as retired election staff.
- **Mississippi** (§ 23-15-223), **South Carolina** (§ 7-5-20), **Delaware** (15 Del. C. §§ 2001–2004): The statute permits appointments, but we found no public volunteer program. Ask your county or state election office.
- **California**: The statewide deputy registrar role was repealed in 2015 (AB 1020). Los Angeles County still offers a Deputy Registrar training certificate.
- **Tennessee**: There is no statutory role, but Shelby County offers a volunteer Deputy Registrar class.
- **Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut**: Assistant or deputy registrars are municipal election officers, not volunteer programs.

If Your State Doesn't Have It

The remaining states have no citizen deputy registrar role. Wisconsin abolished its Special Registration Deputies (2015 Act 261), North Carolina abolished special registration commissioners in 1993, and North Dakota has no voter registration at all. In these states you can still:

- Work with a voter registration drive under your state's drive rules (deadlines and registration requirements vary)
- Apply to be a poll worker or election official
- Research incoming applications using our training, *How to Research Incoming Voter Registration Applications*

Laws change. This guide reflects state statutes and election-office guidance as of September 2026. Before you apply, confirm the current rules with your appointing office and ask for a copy of its written procedures.

Stay Connected

Deputy Registrars see firsthand how applications are completed and where the process can break down. Please share what you learn info@truethevote.org. Your work should reflect True the Vote's credo: free and fair elections, regardless of political party affiliation. Questions? Contact info@truethevote.org or www.truethevote.org/contact.