IV. STATE-BY-STATE SURVEY

When states regulate voter registration drives, it directly affects who participates in the electoral process, and who is permitted to assist them. This survey provides a state-by-state snapshot of the following four categories of restrictions.

1) **Official Volunteer Systems**
   - Laws requiring official certification or authorization to conduct voter registration drives.

2) **Training Programs**
   - Laws offering or requiring a specified course of training before conducting voter registration drives.

3) **Registration & Reporting Requirements**
   - Laws requiring groups to first register with the State and maintain or submit various records and reports related to drives.

4) **Return Deadlines & Penalties**
   - Laws requiring the submission of collected voter registration applications prior to the general book closing deadline, and imposing penalties for violations of the return deadline or violations of other rules.

For almost every state, the Brennan Center provided the chief election official with an opportunity to edit the summary. Revised drafts were returned to the official for final review.

These summaries are not intended as, and do not constitute, legal advice. They are provided for informational and educational use only. For more information, including specific voter registration requirements, or any revisions to the laws described, contact the elections office listed for each state.

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**CALIFORNIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Volunteer System:</th>
<th>Optional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training:</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration &amp; Reporting:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return Deadline &amp; Penalties:</td>
<td>3 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**For More Information:**
Elections Division
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 657-2166
California maintains an optional official volunteer system. The law allows “interested individuals and organizations” to become “deputy registrars” and thereby register voters following the same procedures as government elections officials.1 Non-government individuals and organizations that register voters are subject to pre-registration, turnaround deadlines and various other requirements. The California Secretary of State provides an optional training guide that can be read online.2

Large quantities of voter registration forms, which are self-addressed with postage prepaid by the Secretary of State, may be obtained from a county elections official or the Secretary of State.3 Those seeking more than 50 state voter registration cards must complete a request form that includes a distribution plan. The distribution plan should describe the planned voter registration drive, what groups will be targeted, what methods will be used to distribute registration forms, and an acknowledgement that organizers know and will follow the laws and rules related to voter registration.4

Any person who collects a state voter registration form must complete the detachable receipt, providing his or her address and telephone number, and give it to the person registering to vote.5 Any person paid to collect voter registrations must include his or her full name, telephone number, address, employer’s name and telephone number, and their signature on each registration form collected.6 Individuals or organizations that compensate others to collect voter registration forms are required to retain for three years (and produce on demand) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of each of their employees, and a signed acknowledgement of each employee’s receipt of a statement describing their duties under the law.7

All individuals and organizations that collect completed state voter registration forms are required to return those forms to county elections officials or deposit the forms in the postal service within three days of their receipt from voters (excluding weekends and state holidays), or before the close of registration, whichever is earlier.8 Unused registration cards must be returned to elections officials upon completion of the distribution plan.9

Knowingly or negligently failing to return a completed state voter registration form by the deadline is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to $1,000.10 Any deputy registrar who “knowingly neglects or refuses to return affidavits of registration” is also guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be reported to the county district

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1 CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2103(b) (Deering 2012).
3 CAL. ELEC. CODE §§ 2157(a)(8), 2158(b).
5 CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2158(b)(1) (Deering 2012).
6 CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2159(a) (Deering 2012).
7 CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2159.5(a) (Deering 2012).
8 CAL. ELEC. CODE §§ 2138, 18103 (Deering 2012).
9 CAL. ELEC. CODE § 2139 (Deering 2012).
10 CAL. ELEC. CODE §§ 18103, 18104 (Deering 2012).
attorney.\textsuperscript{11} The willful failure to provide a completed registration form receipt to an applicant is an infraction, punishable by a fine up to $200.\textsuperscript{12}

Additional penalties apply to drives that compensate volunteers or employees for collecting forms. People who are compensated for collecting registration forms and fail to include their information on the form are guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a $1,000 fine or six months in jail or, if the violation is found to be willful, one year.\textsuperscript{13} A third or subsequent conviction is punishable by a $10,000 maximum fine or one year in jail, or both.\textsuperscript{14} Failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements for people or organizations compensating others to collect forms is a misdemeanor punishable by a $1,000 fine or up to six months in jail or both, or if the violation is found to be willful, up to one year.\textsuperscript{15} A third or subsequent conviction is punishable by a maximum $10,000 fine or up to one year in jail.\textsuperscript{16} When an individual, company, or organization that compensates persons to collect forms submits three or more forms that do not comply with the law (false registrations, defacement of party affiliation, etc.), the elections official shall notify the employer and may forward the forms to the district attorney for possible criminal prosecution.\textsuperscript{17}

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View the full report at:
http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/state_restrictions_on_voter_registration_drives/

\textsuperscript{11} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18104 (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{12} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18107 (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{13} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18108(a) (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{14} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18108(b) (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{15} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18108.5(a) (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{16} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18108.5(b) (Deering 2012).
\textsuperscript{17} \textsc{Cal. Elec. Code} § 18108.5(c) (Deering 2012).