

# CHAPTER 48A

## VOTER REGISTRATION

Chapter applicable to primary elections, §43.5  
See also definitions in §39.3  
Criminal offenses, see chapter 39A

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SUBCHAPTER I  
GENERAL PROVISIONS

**48A.1 Statement of intent.**

It is the intent of the general assembly to facilitate the registration of eligible residents of this state through the widespread availability of voter registration services. [This chapter](#) and other statutes relating to voter registration are to be liberally construed toward this end.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §1](#)

**48A.2 Definitions.**

The definitions established by [this section](#) and [section 39.3](#) shall apply wherever the terms so defined appear in [this chapter](#), unless the context in which any such term is used clearly requires otherwise.

1. “*Commissioner of registration*” means the county commissioner of elections as defined in [section 47.2](#).

2. “*Homeless person*” means a person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is one of the following:

a. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations.

b. An institution that provides a temporary residence for persons intended to be institutionalized.

c. A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

3. “*Person who is incompetent to vote*” means a person with an intellectual disability who has been found to lack the mental capacity to vote in a proceeding held pursuant to [section 633.556](#).

4. “*Voter registration agency*” means an agency designated to conduct voter registration under [section 48A.19](#). Offices of the office of driver services of the state department of transportation are not voter registration agencies.

5. “*Voter registration form*” means an application to register to vote which must be completed by or on behalf of any person registering to vote. The voter registration form may also be used to make changes to an existing voter registration record.

6. “*Voter registration list*” means a compilation of voter registration records produced, upon request, from the electronic voter registration file or by viewing, upon request, the original, completed voter registration applications and forms.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §2; 96 Acts, ch 1129, §14; 98 Acts, ch 1185, §1; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §17, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §39, 43; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §14; 2012 Acts, ch 1019, §5; 2013 Acts, ch 130, §16, 35](#)

2013 amendment to subsection 3 takes effect July 1, 2014; 2013 Acts, ch 130, §35  
Subsection 3 amended

**48A.3 Commissioner of registration.**

The county commissioner of elections is designated the commissioner of registration for the county, and may appoint deputies and assistants, subject to the approval of the county board of supervisors, necessary to carry out the commissioner’s responsibilities under [this chapter](#) and under rules of the state voter registration commission and the state registrar of voters.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §3](#)

**48A.4 Qualification of officers.**

Before undertaking any voter registration duties, each voter registration officer, deputy, or assistant in whatever capacity, or clerk in the office of commissioner shall take an oath in the form prescribed by the state commissioner of elections.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §4](#)

SUBCHAPTER II  
QUALIFICATIONS TO REGISTER TO VOTE

**48A.5 Voter qualifications.**

1. An eligible elector wishing to vote in elections in Iowa shall register to vote as required by [this chapter](#).

2. To be qualified to register to vote an eligible elector shall:

a. Be a citizen of the United States.

b. Be an Iowa resident. A person's residence, for voting purposes only, is the place which the person declares is the person's home with the intent to remain there permanently or for a definite, or indefinite or indeterminable length of time. A person who is homeless or has no established residence may declare residence in a precinct by describing on the voter registration form a place to which the person often returns.

c. Be at least eighteen years of age. Completed registration forms shall be accepted from registrants who are at least seventeen and one-half years of age; however, the registration shall not be effective until the registrant reaches the age of eighteen. The commissioner of registration shall ensure that the birth date shown on the registration form is at least seventeen and one-half years earlier than the date the registration is processed. A registrant who is at least seventeen and one-half years of age and who will be eighteen by the date of a pending election is a registered voter for the pending election for purposes of [chapter 53](#).

d. Not claim the right to vote in more than one place. A registrant shall be presumed to revoke any earlier claim of residence for voter registration purposes.

3. If a person who meets the requirements set forth in [subsection 2](#) moves to a new residence, either in Iowa or outside Iowa, and does not meet the voter requirements at the person's new residence, the person may vote at the person's former precinct in Iowa until the person meets the voter requirements of the person's new residence. However, a person who has moved to a new residence and fails to register to vote at the person's new residence after becoming eligible to do so shall not be entitled to vote at the person's former precinct in Iowa.

4. A citizen of the United States who lives outside of the United States has the right to register and vote as if the person were a resident of a precinct in Iowa if the citizen was an eligible elector of Iowa immediately before leaving the United States. A citizen who was not old enough to register to vote before leaving the United States but who met all of the other requirements for voter registration at that time also has the right to register and vote as if the person were a resident of a precinct in Iowa. This right applies even though while living outside the United States the citizen does not have a residence or other address in the precinct, and the citizen has not determined whether to return to Iowa. To qualify to vote in Iowa a United States citizen living outside the United States shall:

a. Comply with all applicable requirements of [sections 53.37 to 53.53](#) relating to absentee ballots for members of the armed forces and other citizens living outside the United States.

b. Not maintain a residence, shall not be registered to vote, and shall not vote in any other state, territory, or possession of the United States.

c. Possess a valid passport or identity card and registration issued under authority of the United States secretary of state, or, if the citizen does not possess a valid passport or card of identity or registration, an alternative form of identification consistent with the provisions of applicable federal and state requirements.

5. If a United States citizen living outside the United States meets the requirements for voting, except for residence, has never lived in the United States, and has a parent who meets the definition of a member of the armed forces of the United States under [section 53.37](#), the citizen is eligible to register to vote and vote at the same voting residence claimed by the citizen's parent.

6. The deadlines for voter registration shall not apply to a person who has been discharged from military service within thirty days preceding the date of an election. The person shall present to the precinct election official a copy of the person's discharge papers. The person

shall complete a voter registration form and give it to the official before being permitted to vote.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §5; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §40, 43; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §13, 56

Referred to in §53.37

Iowa Constitution, Art. II, §1

**48A.5A Determination of residence.**

Residence shall be determined in accordance with the following principles:

1. The residence of a person is in the precinct where the person’s home or dwelling is located.

2. A residence for purposes of this chapter cannot be established in a commercial or industrial building that is not normally used for residential purposes unless the building is used as a primary nighttime residence.

3. A person does not lose residence if the person leaves the person’s home to reside temporarily in another state or precinct.

4. If a person goes to another state or precinct and files an affidavit of residence in that state or precinct for election purposes, the person loses residence in the former state or precinct, unless the person moved to the other state after that state’s deadline for registering to vote in a particular election.

5. A student who resides at or near the school the student attends, but who is also able to claim a residence at another location under the provisions of this section, may choose either location as the student’s residence for voter registration and voting purposes.

6. If an active member of the United States armed forces, as defined by section 53.37, has previously resided at a location that meets the requirements of this section, that person may claim either that previous residence or the person’s current residence as the person’s residence for voter registration and voting purposes.

7. Notwithstanding subsections 1 through 6, the residence of a homeless person is in the precinct where the homeless person usually sleeps. Residence requirements shall be construed liberally to provide homeless persons with the opportunity to register to vote and to vote.

8. A person’s declaration of residency for voter registration and voting purposes is presumed to be valid unless a preponderance of evidence indicates that another location should be considered the person’s voting residence under the provisions of this chapter.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §6

**48A.6 Disqualified persons.**

The following persons are disqualified from registering to vote and from voting:

1. A person who has been convicted of a felony as defined in section 701.7, or convicted of an offense classified as a felony under federal law. If the person’s rights are later restored by the governor, or by the president of the United States, the person may register to vote.

2. A person who is incompetent to vote. Certification by the clerk of the district court that any such person has been found no longer incompetent by a court shall qualify such person to again be an elector, subject to the other provisions of this chapter.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §7; 98 Acts, ch 1185, §2; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §18, 115

Iowa Constitution, Art. II, §5

Proceedings regarding competency to vote, see §229.27, 633.556

Restoration of rights by governor, see chapter 914

Section not amended; editorial change applied

**48A.7 Registration in person.**

An eligible elector may register to vote by appearing personally and completing a voter registration form at the office of the commissioner in the county in which the person resides, at a motor vehicle driver’s license station, including any county treasurer’s office that is participating in county issuance of driver’s licenses under chapter 321M, or at any voter registration agency. A separate registration form shall be signed by each individual registrant.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §8; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §12; 98 Acts, ch 1143, §12, 26

#### 48A.7A Election day and in-person absentee registration.

1. *a.* A person who is eligible to register to vote and to vote may register on election day by appearing in person at the polling place for the precinct in which the individual resides and completing a voter registration application, making written oath, and providing proof of identity and residence.

*b.* (1) For purposes of [this section](#), a person may establish identity and residence by presenting to the appropriate precinct election official a current and valid Iowa driver's license or Iowa nonoperator's identification card or by presenting any of the following current and valid forms of identification if such identification contains the person's photograph and a validity expiration date:

- (a) An out-of-state driver's license or nonoperator's identification card.
- (b) A United States passport.
- (c) A United States military identification card.
- (d) An identification card issued by an employer.
- (e) A student identification card issued by an Iowa high school or an Iowa postsecondary educational institution.

(2) If the photographic identification presented does not contain the person's current address in the precinct, the person shall also present one of the following documents that shows the person's name and current address in the precinct:

- (a) Residential lease.
- (b) Property tax statement.
- (c) Utility bill.
- (d) Bank statement.
- (e) Paycheck.
- (f) Government check.
- (g) Other government document.

*c.* In lieu of paragraph "*b*", a person wishing to vote may establish identity and residency in the precinct by written oath of a person who is registered to vote in the precinct. The registered voter's oath shall attest to the stated identity of the person wishing to vote and that the person is a current resident of the precinct. The oath must be signed by the attesting registered voter in the presence of the appropriate precinct election official. A registered voter who has signed an oath on election day attesting to a person's identity and residency as provided in this paragraph is prohibited from signing any further oaths as provided in this paragraph on that day.

2. The oath required in [subsection 1](#), paragraph "*a*", and in paragraph "*c*", if applicable, shall be attached to the voter registration application.

3. At any time before election day, and after the deadline for registration in [section 48A.9](#), a person who appears in person at the commissioner's office or at a satellite absentee voting station or whose ballot is delivered to a health care facility pursuant to [section 53.22](#) may register to vote and vote an absentee ballot by following the procedure in [this section](#) for registering to vote on election day. A person who wishes to vote in person at the polling place on election day and who has not registered to vote before the deadline for registering in [section 48A.9](#), is required to register to vote at the polling place on election day following the procedure in [this section](#). However, the person may complete the voter registration application at the commissioner's office and, after the commissioner has reviewed the completed application, may present the application to the appropriate precinct election official along with proof of identity and residency.

4. *a.* The form of the written oath required of the person registering under [this section](#) shall read as follows:

I, ..... (name of registrant), do solemnly swear or affirm  
all of the following:

I am a resident of the ..... precinct, ..... ward or township,  
city of ....., county of ....., Iowa.

I am the person named above.

I live at the address listed below.

I do not claim the right to vote anywhere else.

I have not voted and will not vote in any other precinct in this election.

I understand that any false statement in this oath is a class “D” felony punishable by no more than five years in confinement and a fine of at least seven hundred fifty dollars but not more than seven thousand five hundred dollars.

.....

Signature of Registrant

.....

Address

.....

Telephone (optional to provide)

Subscribed and sworn before me on ..... (date).

.....

Signature of Precinct Election Official

b. The form of the written oath required of a person attesting to the identity and residency of the registrant shall read as follows:

I, ..... (name of registered voter), do solemnly swear or affirm all of the following:

I am a preregistered voter in this precinct or I registered to vote in this precinct today, and a registered voter did not sign an oath on my behalf. I have not signed an oath attesting to the identity and residence of any other person in this election.

I am a resident of the ..... precinct, ..... ward or township, city of ....., county of ....., Iowa.

I reside at ..... (street address) in ..... (city or township).

I personally know ..... (name of registrant), and I personally know that ..... (name of registrant) is a resident of the ..... precinct, ..... ward or township, city of ....., county of ....., Iowa.

I understand that any false statement in this oath is a class “D” felony punishable by no more than five years in confinement and a fine of at least seven hundred fifty dollars but not more than seven thousand five hundred dollars.

.....

Signature of Registered Voter

Subscribed and sworn before me on ..... (date).

.....

Signature of Precinct Election Official

2007 Acts, ch 35, §2, 7; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §242; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §73 – 75  
Referred to in §39A.2, §48A.9, §48A.14, §48A.25A, §48A.26, §48A.26A, §49.11, §49.77, §49.79, §53.2

**48A.8 Registration by mail.**

1. An eligible elector may request that a voter registration form be mailed to the elector. The completed form may be mailed or delivered by the registrant or the registrant’s designee to the commissioner in the county where the person resides. A separate voter registration form shall be signed by each individual registrant.

2. An eligible elector who registers by mail and who has not previously voted in an election for federal office in the county of registration shall be required to provide identification documents when voting for the first time in the county, unless the registrant provided on the registration form the registrant’s Iowa driver’s license number, or the registrant’s Iowa nonoperator’s identification card number, or the last four numerals of the registrant’s social security number and the driver’s license, nonoperator’s identification,

or partial social security number matches an existing state or federal identification record with the same number, name, and date of birth. If the registrant under [this subsection](#) votes in person at the polls, or by absentee ballot at the commissioner's office or at a satellite voting station, the registrant shall provide a current and valid photo identification card, or shall present to the appropriate election official one of the following current documents that shows the name and address of the registrant:

- a. Utility bill.
- b. Bank statement.
- c. Paycheck.
- d. Government check.
- e. Other government document.

3. If the registrant under [subsection 2](#) votes an absentee ballot by mail, the registrant shall provide a photocopy of one of the documents listed in [subsection 2](#) when returning the absentee ballot.

4. A registrant under [subsection 2](#) who is required to present identification when casting a ballot in person shall be permitted to vote a provisional ballot if the voter does not provide the required identification documents. If a voter who is required to present identification when casting a ballot votes an absentee ballot by mail, the ballot returned by the voter shall be considered a provisional ballot pursuant to [sections 49.81](#) and [53.31](#).

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §9; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §6, 37; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §15](#)

#### **48A.9 Voter registration deadlines.**

1. Registration closes at 5:00 p.m. eleven days before each election except general elections. For general elections, registration closes at 5:00 p.m. ten days before the election. An eligible elector may register during the time registration is closed in the elector's precinct but the registration shall not become effective until registration opens again in the elector's precinct, except as otherwise provided in [section 48A.7A](#).

2. The commissioner's office shall be open from 8:00 a.m. until at least 5:00 p.m. on the day registration closes before each regularly scheduled election. However, if the last day to register to vote for a regularly scheduled election falls on the day after Thanksgiving, the deadline shall be the following Monday.

3. A registration form submitted by mail shall be considered on time if it is postmarked no later than the fifteenth day before the election, even if it is received by the commissioner after the deadline, or if the registration form is received by the commissioner no later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day to register to vote for an election, even if it is postmarked after the fifteenth day before the election.

4. Registration forms submitted to voter registration agencies, to motor vehicle driver's license stations, and to county treasurer's offices participating in county issuance of driver's licenses under [chapter 321M](#) shall be considered on time if they are received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day registration closes for that election. Offices or agencies other than the county commissioner's office are not required to be open for voter registration purposes at times other than their usual office hours.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §10; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §12; 98 Acts, ch 1143, §13, 26; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §19, 115; 2007 Acts, ch 35, §3, 7; 2014 Acts, ch 1101, §12, 32](#)

Subsection 1 amended

#### **48A.10 Registration required.**

If a registered voter moves to a different county, the person shall submit a completed voter registration form to the commissioner in order to be qualified to vote in that county. An otherwise eligible elector whose right to vote has been restored pursuant to [chapter 914](#) or who has been found not to be a person who is incompetent to vote may register to vote.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §11; 98 Acts, ch 1185, §3; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §20, 115](#)



SUBCHAPTER III  
FORMS AND PROCEDURES FOR  
VOTER REGISTRATION

**48A.11 Voter registration form.**

1. Each voter registration form shall provide space for the registrant to provide the following information:

- a. The county where the registrant resides.
- b. The registrant's name, including first name and any family forename or surname.
- c. The address at which the registrant resides and claims as the registrant's residence for voting purposes.
- d. The registrant's mailing address if it is different from the residence address.
- e. Iowa driver's license number if the registrant has a current and valid Iowa driver's license, Iowa nonoperator's identification card if the registrant has a current and valid Iowa nonoperator's identification card, or the last four numerals of the registrant's social security number. If the registrant does not have an Iowa driver's license number, an Iowa nonoperator's identification card number, or a social security number, the form shall provide space for a number to be assigned as provided in [subsection 8](#).
- f. Date of birth, including month, date, and year.
- g. Sex.
- h. Residential telephone number (optional to provide).
- i. Political party affiliation as defined in [section 43.2](#) or nonparty political organization affiliation if approved for inclusion on the form pursuant to [section 44.18](#).
- j. The name and address appearing on the registrant's previous voter registration.
- k. A space for a registrant who is homeless or who has no established residence to provide such information as may be necessary to describe a place to which the person often returns.
- l. A statement that lists each eligibility requirement, contains an attestation that the registrant meets all of the requirements, and requires the signature of the registrant under penalty of perjury.
- m. A space for the registrant's signature and the date signed.

2. The voter registration form shall include, in print that is identical to the attestation portion of the form, the following:

- a. Each voter eligibility requirement.
- b. The penalty provided by law for submission of a false voter registration form, which shall be the penalty for perjury as provided by [section 902.9, subsection 1, paragraph "e"](#).

3. The following questions and statement regarding eligibility shall be included on forms that may be used for registration by mail:

- [1] "Are you a citizen of the United States of America?"
- [2] "Will you be eighteen years of age on or before election day?"
- [3] "If you checked 'no' in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form."

4. Voter registration forms used by voter registration agencies under [section 48A.19](#) shall include the following statements:

- a. If a person declines to register to vote, the fact that the person has declined to register will remain confidential and will be used only for voter registration purposes.
- b. If a person does register to vote, the office at which the registrant submits a voter registration form will remain confidential and the information will be used only for voter registration purposes.

5. Voter registration forms may be on paper or electronic media.

6. All forms for voter registration shall be prescribed by the state voter registration commission.

7. A person who has been designated to have power of attorney by a registrant does not have authority to sign a voter registration form, except as otherwise provided in [section 39.3, subsection 17](#).



8. A voter registration application lacking the registrant's name, sex, date of birth, residence address or description, or signature shall not be processed. A voter registration application lacking the registrant's Iowa driver's license number, Iowa nonoperator's identification card number, or the last four digits of the registrant's social security number shall not be processed. A registrant whose registration is not processed pursuant to [this subsection](#) shall be notified pursuant to [section 48A.26, subsection 3](#). A registrant who does not have an Iowa driver's license number, an Iowa nonoperator's identification number, or a social security number and who notifies the registrar of such shall be assigned a unique identifying number that shall serve to identify the registrant for voter registration purposes.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §12; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §21, 115; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §7 – 12, 37; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §355; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §18; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §41, 43; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §76, 77; 2013 Acts, ch 30, §235](#)

#### **48A.12 Federal mail voter registration form.**

1. The mail voter registration form prescribed by the federal election assistance commission shall be accepted for voter registration in Iowa if all required information is provided, if it is signed by the registrant, and if the form is timely received.

2. The state commissioner of elections shall make the federal mail voter registration forms available for distribution to governmental and private entities, with particular emphasis on making them available to organized voter registration entities and programs.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §13; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §78](#)

#### **48A.13 Electronic signatures on voter registration records.**

Electronic signatures shall be accepted. However, before the use of electronic signatures is accepted on voter registration forms, the state voter registration commission shall prescribe by rule the technological requirements for guaranteeing the security and integrity of electronic signatures.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §14](#)

#### **48A.14 Challenges of voter registrations.**

1. The registration of a registered voter may be challenged by another registered voter of the same county subject to the conditions and limitations of [this section](#). A challenge shall be a statement in writing to the commissioner alleging one or more of the following reasons the challenged registrant's registration should not have been accepted or should be canceled:

- a. The challenged registrant is not a citizen of the United States.
- b. The challenged registrant is less than seventeen and one-half years of age.
- c. The challenged registrant is not a resident at the address where the registrant is registered.
- d. The challenged registrant has falsified information on the registrant's registration form.
- e. The challenged registrant has been convicted of a felony, and the registrant's voting rights have not been restored.
- f. The challenged registrant has been adjudged by a court of law to be a person who is incompetent to vote and no subsequent proceeding has reversed that finding.

2. A challenge shall not contain allegations against more than one registered voter.  
3. A challenge shall contain a statement signed by the challenger in substantially the following form:

I am a registered voter in (name of county) County, Iowa. I swear or affirm that information contained on this challenge is true.  
I understand that knowingly filing a challenge containing false information is an aggravated misdemeanor.

4. A challenge may be filed at any time. A challenge filed less than seventy days before a regularly scheduled election shall not be processed until after the pending election unless the challenge is filed within twenty days of the commissioner's receipt of the challenged registrant's registration form or notice of change to an existing registration. A challenge filed

against a person registering to vote pursuant to [section 48A.7A](#) is considered a challenge to a person offering to vote and must be filed under [section 49.79](#).

5. A challenger may withdraw a challenge at any time before the hearing held pursuant to [section 48A.16](#) by notifying the commissioner in writing of the withdrawal.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §15; 95 Acts, ch 67, §7; 98 Acts, ch 1185, §4; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §22, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §85](#)

Referred to in [§39A.3, §48A.15](#)

#### **48A.15 Commissioner's action upon receipt of challenge or withdrawal.**

1. A challenge is valid if it meets the criteria in [section 48A.14, subsections 1, 2, and 3](#).

2. Upon receipt of a challenge which is not valid, the commissioner shall notify the challenger of the reason the challenge is not valid, and shall take no further action regarding the challenge.

3. Upon receipt of a valid challenge, the commissioner shall, within five working days, notify the challenged registrant and the challenger of the date, time, and place of a hearing on the matter of the challenge, to be held not less than twenty nor more than thirty days from the commissioner's receipt of the challenge. The notice of a hearing shall include a copy of the challenge, and shall advise the challenged registrant that the registrant may personally appear at the hearing, or may submit to the commissioner before the hearing evidence, documentation, or statements refuting the challenge.

4. The notice prescribed by [subsection 3](#) shall be sent by first class forwardable mail to the challenged registrant at the registrant's most recent mailing address according to the registration records.

5. If the challenge is withdrawn, the commissioner shall immediately notify the challenged registrant of the withdrawal, and shall cancel the scheduled hearing.

6. If the challenged registrant notifies the commissioner that the challenged registrant wishes to appear in person but is unable to do so on the date scheduled, the commissioner may reschedule the hearing.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §16](#)

#### **48A.16 Hearing on challenge — appeal.**

1. At the time and place fixed for the hearing, the commissioner shall accept evidence on the challenge from the challenger and the challenged registrant, or from any person appearing on behalf of either, and review any documents or statements pertaining to the challenge received before the hearing. On the basis of the evidence submitted, the commissioner shall either reject the challenge or cancel the registration of the challenged registrant. Either the challenged registrant or the challenger may appeal the commissioner's decision to the district court in the commissioner's county, and the decision of the court shall be final.

2. If a challenged registrant does not personally appear at the hearing and the challenged registrant's registration is canceled, the commissioner shall immediately notify the challenged registrant of the cancellation by first class forwardable mail sent to the challenged registrant's most recent mailing address according to the registration records.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §17](#)

Referred to in [§48A.14](#)

### SUBCHAPTER IV

#### PLACES TO REGISTER

#### **48A.17 Registration at commissioner's office.**

A person who meets the qualifications to vote may appear in person at the office of the county commissioner of registration and apply to register to vote.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §18](#)

#### **48A.18 Voter registration at motor vehicle driver's license stations.**

1. Each state motor vehicle driver's license application, including any renewal application or application for a nonoperator's identification card, submitted to the office of driver services of the state department of transportation shall serve as an application for voter registration unless the applicant declines to register to vote. A completed voter registration form submitted to the office of driver services of the state department of transportation shall be considered to update any previous voter registration by the registrant.

2. A change of address form submitted to the office of driver services of the state department of transportation shall serve as a change of address for voter registration purposes unless the registrant states on the form that the change of address is not for voter registration purposes.

3. Information relating to the refusal of an applicant for a driver's license to apply to register to vote shall not be used for any purpose other than voter registration.

4. Forms and procedures used by the office of driver services for voter registration and a schedule for transmission of voter registration forms from the office to the county commissioner of registration shall be prescribed by the state voter registration commission by rule.

5. A county treasurer's office participating in county issuance of driver's licenses pursuant to [chapter 321M](#) shall participate in voter registration under [this section](#) to the same extent as a license facility of the state department of transportation.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §19; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §12; 98 Acts, ch 1143, §14, 26](#)

#### **48A.19 Voter registration agencies.**

1. The following state agencies are responsible for voter registration:

a. All state offices that have direct client contact and provide applications for public assistance, including but not limited to offices administering the following programs:

- (1) Food stamps.
- (2) Medical assistance under [chapter 249A](#).
- (3) Iowa family investment program.
- (4) Special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children.

b. (1) All offices that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities, including but not limited to all of the following:

- (a) Department for the blind.
- (b) Division of vocational rehabilitation services of the department of education.
- (c) Office of deaf services of the department of human rights or its successor agency.
- (d) Office of persons with disabilities of the department of human rights or its successor agency.

(2) An agency designated a voter registration agency under this paragraph which provides services to persons with disabilities in their homes shall provide voter registration services at the clients' homes.

c. Other federal and state agencies designated to provide voter registration services include, but are not limited to, the United States armed forces recruiting offices.

2. Agencies designated to provide voter registration services shall provide the following services:

- a. Distribution of a voter registration form either on paper or electronic medium.
- b. Assistance to registrants in completing voter registration forms, unless the registrant refuses assistance.
- c. Acceptance of completed voter registration forms for transmittal as required in [section 48A.21](#).

3. The voter registration agency shall provide voter registration services with each application for services or assistance and with each recertification, renewal, or change of address form completed relating to the agency's services. The secretary of state shall adopt administrative rules in cooperation with voter registration agencies to carry out the requirements of [this section](#).

4. a. The voter registration agency shall provide a form to applicants that includes all of the following:

(1) The question:

If you are not registered to vote where you live now, would you like to apply to register to vote here today?

(2) If the agency provides public assistance, the statement:

Applying to register or declining to register to vote will not affect the amount of assistance that you will be provided by this agency.

(3) (a) Boxes for the applicant to check and choices in substantially the following form:

- I want to register to vote.
- I do not want to register to vote.

(b) The following statement shall be printed near the choices and shall be printed in large, readable type:

If you do not check either box, you will be considered to have decided not to register to vote at this time.

(4) (a) The statement:

If you would like help in filling out the voter registration form, we will help you. The decision whether to seek or accept help is yours. You may fill out the application form in private.

(b) However, in those voter registration agencies where electronic forms are used, the following statement shall be used:

If you want to fill out the form in private, a separate paper form for voter registration will be provided.

(5) (a) The statement:

If you believe that someone has interfered with your right to register or to decline to register to vote, your right to privacy in deciding whether to register or in applying to register to vote, or your right to choose your own political party or other political preference, you may file a complaint with the state voter registration commission.

(b) The name, address, and telephone number of the voter registration commission shall complete the statement.

b. The voter registration agency may distribute the voter registration form either on paper or by electronic medium.

5. The voter registration agency shall provide each applicant who chooses to register to vote the same degree of assistance in completing the registration form as is provided by the office for the completion of its own forms unless the applicant refuses such assistance.

6. Completed voter registration forms shall be transmitted as provided in [section 48A.21, 94 Acts, ch 1169, §20; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#)

**48A.20 Prohibited acts by voter registration agency employees.**

A person who provides voter registration services as required by [this subchapter](#) shall not:

1. Seek to influence an applicant’s political preference or party registration.
2. Display a political preference or party affiliation.
3. Make any statement to an applicant or take any action which has the purpose or effect of discouraging the applicant from registering to vote.
4. Make any statement to an applicant or take any action which has the purpose or effect of leading the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register to vote has any bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §21](#)

**48A.21 Transmission of forms from agencies and driver's license stations.**

The state registrar of voters shall adopt administrative rules regulating the transmission of completed voter registration forms from voter registration agencies and from driver's license stations, including county treasurer's offices participating in county issuance of driver's licenses under [chapter 321M](#). All completed voter registration applications in the possession of a voter registration agency, a driver's license station, or a county treasurer's office that is participating in county issuance of driver's licenses at 5:00 p.m. on the last workday of each week shall be transmitted to the location designated by the state registrar of voters by rule. Procedures or requirements for more frequent transmissions may be specified by rule.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §22; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §12; 98 Acts, ch 1143, §15, 26](#)

Referred to in [§48A.19](#)

**48A.22 Voter registration by volunteer organizations.**

The secretary of state shall encourage volunteer organizations to undertake voter registration drives by providing registration forms.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §23; 97 Acts, ch 170, §14](#)

**48A.23 Registration at educational institutions.**

1. At least twice during each school year, the board of directors of each school district operating a high school and the authorities in charge of each accredited nonpublic school shall offer the opportunity to register to vote to each student who is at least seventeen and one-half years of age.

2. All postsecondary schools, including but not limited to colleges, universities, and trade and technical schools which receive state funding, shall offer the opportunity to register to vote to each student at least once each year. Students shall be provided with the federal voter registration form or the Iowa voter registration form, as applicable.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §24](#)

Referred to in [§280.9A](#)

**48A.24 Voter registration forms in income tax returns and booklets.** Repealed by 2004 Acts, ch 1073, §51. See [§421.17\(28\)](#).

**48A.25 Compensation for assistance in completing registration forms.**

A person may pay, offer to pay, or accept compensation for assisting others in completing voter registration forms only if the compensation is based solely on the time spent providing the assistance.

Paying, offering to pay, or receiving compensation based on the number of registration forms completed, or the party affiliations shown on completed registration forms, or on any other performance criteria, is unlawful.

[This section](#) shall not apply to state statutory political committees, as defined in [section 43.111](#).

[This section](#) shall not apply to state and political subdivision employees who are required to offer assistance to clients as a part of their regular job duties, and who shall not be granted additional compensation for voter registration activities. A person assisting another in completing a voter registration form shall not complete any portion of the form without the knowledge or consent of the registrant.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §26; 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §8](#)

Referred to in [§39A.4](#)

**48A.25A Verification of voter registration information.**

1. a. Upon receipt of an application for voter registration, the commissioner of registration shall compare the Iowa driver's license number, the Iowa nonoperator's identification card number, or the last four numerals of the social security number provided by the registrant with the records of the state department of transportation. To be verified, the voter registration record shall contain the same name, date of birth, and Iowa driver's license number or Iowa nonoperator's identification card number or whole or partial social security number as the records of the state department of transportation. If the information

cannot be verified, the application shall be recorded and the status of the voter's record shall be designated as pending status. The commissioner of registration shall notify the applicant that the applicant is required to present identification described in [section 48A.8, subsection 2](#), before voting for the first time in the county. If the information can be verified, a record shall be made of the verification and the status of the voter's record shall be designated as active status.

*b.* This subsection shall not apply to applications received from registrants pursuant to [section 48A.7A](#).

2. The voter registration commission shall adopt rules in accordance with [chapter 17A](#) to provide procedures for processing registration applications if the state department of transportation does not, before the close of registration for an election for which the voter registration would be effective, if verified, provide a report that the information on the application has matched or not matched the records of the department.

3. This section does not apply to persons described in [section 53.37](#) who are entitled to register to vote and to vote.

2004 Acts, ch 1083, §13, 37; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §356; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §19; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §42, 43; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §16

Referred to in [§48A.26](#), [§48A.37](#), [§53.38](#)

## SUBCHAPTER V

### PROCESSING VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS

Referred to in [§50.19](#)

#### **48A.26 Acknowledgment of registration form.**

1. *a.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph “*b*”, within seven working days of receipt of a voter registration form or change of information in a voter registration record the commissioner shall send an acknowledgment to the registrant at the mailing address shown on the registration form. The acknowledgment shall be sent by nonforwardable mail.

*b.* For a voter registration form or change of information in a voter registration record submitted at a precinct caucus, the commissioner shall send an acknowledgment within forty-five days of receipt of the form or change of information.

2. If the registration form appears on its face to be complete and proper, the acknowledgment shall state that the registrant is now a registered voter of the county. The acknowledgment shall also specify the name of the precinct and the usual polling place for the precinct in which the person is now registered. The acknowledgment may include the political party affiliation most recently recorded by the registrant.

3. If the registration form is missing required information pursuant to [section 48A.11, subsection 8](#), the acknowledgment shall advise the applicant what additional information is required. The commissioner shall enclose a new registration form for the applicant to use. If the registration form has no address, the commissioner shall make a reasonable effort to determine where the acknowledgment should be sent. If the incomplete registration form is received during the period in which registration is closed pursuant to [section 48A.9](#) but by 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday before the election for general elections or by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election for all other elections, the commissioner shall send a notice advising the applicant of election day and in-person absentee registration procedures under [section 48A.7A](#).

4. If the registrant applied by mail to register to vote and did not answer either “yes” or “no” to the question in [section 48A.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph “*a*”, the application shall be processed. If the application is complete and proper in all other respects and information on the application is verified, as required by [section 48A.25A](#), the applicant shall be registered to vote and sent an acknowledgment.

5. If the registrant applied by mail to register to vote and answered “no” to the question in [section 48A.11, subsection 3](#), paragraph “*a*”, the application shall not be processed. The acknowledgment shall advise the applicant that the registration has been rejected because the



applicant indicated on the registration form that the applicant is not a citizen of the United States.

6. If the acknowledgment is returned as undeliverable by the United States postal service, the commissioner shall follow the procedure described in [section 48A.29, subsection 1](#).

7. If a registrant has not supplied enough information on a registration form for the commissioner to determine the correct precinct and other districts, the commissioner shall obtain the information as quickly as possible either from the registrant or other sources available to the commissioner.

8. An improperly addressed or delivered registration form shall be forwarded to the appropriate county commissioner of registration within two working days after it is received by any other official. The date of registration shall be the date the registration form was received by the first official. If the registration form was postmarked fifteen or more days before an election and the registration form was received by the first official after the close of registration, the registration form shall be considered on time for the election.

9. When a person who is at least seventeen and one-half years of age but less than eighteen years of age registers to vote, the commissioner shall maintain a record of the registration so as to clearly indicate that it will not take effect until the registrant's eighteenth birthday and that the person is registered and qualifies to vote at any election held on or after that date.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §27; 97 Acts, ch 170, §15; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §14, 15, 37; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §79; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §17; 2014 Acts, ch 1101, §13, 32](#)

Subsection 3 amended

#### **48A.26A Acknowledgment of election day and in-person absentee registration form.**

1. Within forty-five days of receiving a voter registration form completed under [section 48A.7A](#), the commissioner shall send an acknowledgment to the registrant, in the manner provided in [section 48A.26, subsections 2 through 5](#), as applicable, at the mailing address shown on the registration form. The acknowledgment shall be sent by nonforwardable mail.

2. If the acknowledgment is returned as undeliverable by the postal service, the commissioner shall attempt to contact the voter by forwardable mail. If a response is not received from the voter within fourteen days after the notice is mailed, the commissioner shall change the status of the registration to inactive status and shall immediately notify the state registrar of voters and the county attorney.

[2007 Acts, ch 35, §4, 7](#)

Referred to in [§48A.37](#)

#### **48A.27 Changes to voter registration records.**

1. Any voter registration form received by any voter registration agency, driver's license station, including county treasurer's offices participating in county issuance of driver's licenses under [chapter 321M](#), or the commissioner shall be considered as updating the registrant's previous registration.

2. *a.* A person who is registered to vote may request changes in the voter's registration record at any time by submitting one of the following, as applicable:

(1) A signed, written notice to the county commissioner in person, by mail, by facsimile, or by electronic mail.

(2) A completed Iowa or federal mail registration form to the county commissioner.

(3) On election day, a registration form to the precinct election officials at the precinct of the voter's current residence.

(4) A change of address form to the office of driver services of the state department of transportation, or to a county treasurer's office that is participating in county issuance of driver's licenses under [chapter 321M](#).

(5) A change of address notice for voter registration submitted to any voter registration agency.

*b.* If a registered voter submits a change of name, telephone number, or address under [this subsection](#), the commissioner shall not change the political party or nonparty political organization affiliation in the registered voter's prior registration unless otherwise indicated by the registered voter.



3. The commissioner shall make the necessary changes in the registration records without any action by the registrant when any of the following events occur:

a. Annexation of territory by a city. When an existing city annexes territory, the city clerk shall furnish the commissioner a detailed map of the annexed territory. If a city is divided into wards for voting purposes, the detailed map shall show the ward designations for the annexed territory. The commissioner shall change the registration of persons residing in that territory to reflect the annexation and the city precinct to which each of those persons is assigned. If the commissioner cannot determine the names and addresses of the persons affected by the annexation, the commissioner shall send each person who may be involved a letter informing the person that the person's registration may be in error, and requesting that each person provide the commissioner with the information necessary to correct the registration records.

b. Change of official street name or house or building number by a city or county. When the city or county changes the name of a street or the number of a house or other building in which a person resides, the city clerk or county board of supervisors shall inform the commissioner of the change, and the commissioner shall change the registration of each person affected.

c. Incorporation or discontinuance of a city. When a new city is incorporated or an existing city is discontinued, the city clerk shall notify the commissioner. The commissioner shall change the registration of each person affected.

d. Change of rural route designation of the residence of the registered voter. The commissioner shall request each postmaster in the county to inform the commissioner of each change in rural route designation and the names of the persons affected, and the commissioner shall change the registration of each person as appropriate.

4. a. A commissioner, either independently or in cooperation with the state registrar of voters, and in accordance with rules of the state voter registration commission, may enter into an agreement with a licensed vendor of the United States postal service participating in the national change of address program to identify registered voters of the county who may have moved either within or outside the county.

b. If the information provided by the vendor indicates that a registered voter has moved to another address within the county, the commissioner shall change the registration records to show the new residence address, and shall also mail a notice of that action to the new address. The notice shall be sent by forwardable mail, and shall include a postage prepaid preaddressed return form by which the registered voter may verify or correct the address information.

c. If the information provided by the vendor indicates that a registered voter has moved to an address outside the county, the commissioner shall make the registration record inactive, and shall mail a notice to the registered voter at the new address.

(1) The notice shall be sent by forwardable mail, and shall include a postage paid preaddressed return card on which the registered voter may state the registered voter's current address.

(2) The notice shall contain a statement in substantially the following form:

Information received from the United States postal service indicates that you are no longer a resident of, and therefore not eligible to vote in (name of county) County, Iowa. If this information is not correct, and you still live in (name of county) County, please complete and mail the attached postage paid card at least ten days before the primary or general election and at least eleven days before any other election at which you wish to vote. If the information is correct and you have moved, please contact a local official in your new area for assistance in registering there. If you do not mail in the card, you may be required to show identification before being allowed to vote in (name of county) County. If you do not return the card, and you do not vote in an election in (name of county) County, Iowa, on or before (date of second general election

following the date of the notice) your name will be removed from the list of voters in that county.

d. If the information provided by the vendor indicates the registered voter has moved to another county within the state, the notice required by paragraph “c” shall include a statement that registration in the county of the person’s current residence is required.

e. If a registered voter returns a card sent pursuant to [this subsection](#) and confirms that the registered voter has moved to a new residence outside the county, the commissioner shall cancel the registration of the voter.

f. If a registered voter returns a card sent pursuant to [this subsection](#) and states that the registered voter’s residence address has not changed for the purpose of voter registration, the commissioner shall reinstate the record to active status, making any other changes directed by the registrant in the notice.

5. The commissioner shall keep a record of the names and addresses of the registered voters to whom notices under [this section](#) are sent and the date of the notice. When the return card from a notice is received by the commissioner, the commissioner shall record the date it was received and whether the registrant had moved within the county, moved to an address outside the county, or had not changed residence.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §28; 97 Acts, ch 170, §16 – 18; 98 Acts, ch 1073, §12; 98 Acts, ch 1143, §16, 17, 26; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §23, 24, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §147; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §80; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §24; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §18, 97; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §14](#)

#### **48A.28 Systematic confirmation program.**

1. Each commissioner shall conduct a systematic program that makes a reasonable effort to remove from the official list of registered voters the names of registered voters who have changed residence from their registration addresses. Either or both of the methods described in [this section](#) may be used.

2. a. A commissioner may participate in the United States postal service national change of address program, as provided in [section 48A.27](#). The state voter registration commission shall adopt rules establishing specific requirements for participation and use of the national change of address program.

b. A commissioner participating in the national change of address program, in the first quarter of each calendar year, shall send a notice and preaddressed, postage paid return card by forwardable mail to each registered voter whose name was not reported by the national change of address program and who has not voted in two or more consecutive general elections and has not registered again, or who has not reported a change to an existing registration, or who has not responded to a notice from the commissioner or registrar during the period between and following the previous two general elections. The form and language of the notice and return card shall be specified by the state voter registration commission by rule. A registered voter shall not be sent a notice and return card under [this subsection](#) more frequently than once in a four-year period.

3. a. For a commissioner who is not participating in the national change of address program, in February of each year the commissioner shall mail a confirmation notice to each registered voter in the county. The notice shall be sent by forwardable mail. The notice shall include a preaddressed, postage paid return card for the use of the registered voter or the recipient of the notice. The card shall contain boxes for the recipient to check to indicate one of the following:

(1) That the recipient is the registered voter named on the card, and is still a resident at the address listed.

(2) That the recipient is the registered voter named on the card, but is no longer a resident of the address listed.

(3) That the recipient is not the registered voter named on the card, and the registered voter named on the card is not a resident of the address listed.

b. The form and language of the confirmation notice and return card shall be specified by the state voter registration commission by rule.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §29; 97 Acts, ch 170, §19, 20; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §25, 115; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §16, 37; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201

Referred to in §48A.29, §48A.37

**48A.29 Procedure upon return of confirmation card.**

1. If a confirmation notice and return card sent pursuant to [section 48A.28](#) is returned as undeliverable by the United States postal service, the commissioner shall make the registration record inactive and shall mail a notice to the registered voter at the registered voter’s most recent mailing address, as shown by the registration records.

a. The notice shall be sent by forwardable mail, and shall include a postage paid preaddressed return card on which the registered voter may state the registered voter’s current address.

b. The notice shall contain a statement in substantially the following form:

Information received from the United States postal service indicates that you are no longer a resident of (residence address) in (name of county) County, Iowa. If this information is not correct, and you still live in (name of county) County, please complete and mail the attached postage paid card at least ten days before the primary or general election and at least eleven days before any other election at which you wish to vote. If the information is correct, and you have moved, please contact a local official in your new area for assistance in registering there. If you do not mail in the card, you may be required to show identification before being allowed to vote in (name of county) County. If you do not return the card, and you do not vote in some election in (name of county) County, Iowa, on or before (date of second general election following the date of the notice) your name will be removed from the list of voters in that county.

2. When a detachable return card originally attached to a confirmation notice is returned indicating that the registered voter is still a resident of the address shown on the registration records, the commissioner shall make a record of the date the card was received.

3. When a detachable return card originally attached to a confirmation notice is returned by anyone other than the registered voter indicating that the registered voter is no longer a resident of the registration address, the commissioner shall make the registration record inactive, and shall mail a notice to the registered voter at the registered voter’s most recent mailing address, as shown by the registration records.

a. The notice shall be sent by forwardable mail, and shall include a postage paid preaddressed return card on which the registered voter may state the registered voter’s current address.

b. The notice shall contain a statement in substantially the following form:

Information received by this office indicates that you are no longer a resident of (residence address) in (name of county) County, Iowa. If the information is not correct, and you still live at that address, please complete and mail the attached postage paid card at least ten days before the primary or general election and at least eleven days before any other election at which you wish to vote. If the information is correct, and you have moved within the county, you may update your registration by listing your new address on the card and mailing it back. If you have moved outside the county, please contact a local official in your new area for assistance in registering there. If you do not mail in the card, you may be required to show identification before being allowed to vote in (name of county) County. If you do not return the card, and

you do not vote in some election in (name of county) County, Iowa, on or before (date of second general election following the date of the notice) your name will be removed from the list of registered voters in that county.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §30; 97 Acts, ch 170, §21, 22; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §26, 115; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §25; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §148

Referred to in §48A.26, §48A.30, §48A.37

#### **48A.30 Cancellation of voter registration.**

1. The voter registration of a registered voter shall be canceled if any of the following occurs:

a. The registered voter dies. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), the commissioner may accept as evidence of death a notice from the state registrar of vital statistics forwarded by the state registrar of voters, a written statement from a member of the registered voter's household, an obituary in a newspaper, a written statement from an election official, or a notice from the county recorder of the county where the registered voter died.

b. The registered voter registers to vote in another jurisdiction, and the commissioner receives notice of the registration from the registration official in the other jurisdiction.

c. The registered voter requests the cancellation in writing. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), a confirmation by the registered voter that the registered voter is no longer a resident of the county constitutes a request for cancellation.

d. The clerk of the district court, or the United States attorney, or the state registrar sends notice of the registered voter's conviction of a felony as defined in [section 701.7](#), or conviction of an offense classified as a felony under federal law. The clerk of the district court shall send notice of a felony conviction to the state registrar of voters. The registrar shall determine in which county the felon is registered to vote, if any, and shall notify the county commissioner of registration for that county of the felony conviction.

e. The clerk of the district court or the state registrar sends notice that the registered voter has been declared a person who is incompetent to vote under state law.

f. The registered voter's registration record has been inactive pursuant to [section 48A.29](#) for two successive general elections.

2. When a registration is canceled pursuant to [subsection 1](#), paragraph "d", "e", or "f", the commissioner shall send a notice of the cancellation to the registered voter.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §31; 98 Acts, ch 1185, §5; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §27, 28, 115

Referred to in §48A.37

#### **48A.31 Deceased persons record.**

The state registrar of vital statistics shall transmit or cause to be transmitted to the state registrar of voters, once each calendar quarter, a certified list of all persons seventeen and one-half years of age and older in the state whose deaths have been reported to the bureau of vital records of the Iowa department of public health since the previous list of decedents was certified to the state registrar of voters. The list shall be submitted according to the specifications of the state registrar of voters. The commissioner shall, in the month following the end of a calendar quarter, run the statewide voter registration system's matching program to determine whether a listed decedent was registered to vote in the county and shall immediately cancel the registration of any person named on the list of decedents.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §32; 2002 Acts, ch 1119, §123; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §19

#### **48A.32 Destruction or removal of canceled voter registration records.**

Twenty-two months after the next general election following the cancellation of a person's voter registration, the commissioner may destroy all records of that person's registration. At the discretion of the commissioner, canceled records may be donated to a historical society if all confidential information has been removed from the records.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §33

Referred to in §48A.35

**48A.33 Declination of registration opportunity.**

When a client or applicant of a voter registration agency declines to register to vote, the record of the declination shall be kept by the voter registration agency for twenty-two months after the next general election after which time the agency may destroy the records.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §34

## SUBCHAPTER VI

RETENTION AND STORAGE OF VOTER  
REGISTRATION RECORDS**48A.34 Confidentiality of certain records.**

Voter registration records are available for public inspection at reasonable times at the office of the county commissioner. The commissioner and any voter registration agency which has custody of voter registration records shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the name of the agency at which the voter registration form was submitted remains confidential.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §35

**48A.35 Voter registration records under control of the commissioner.**

1. The county commissioner of elections shall be responsible for the maintenance and storage of all paper and electronic voter registration records in the commissioner's custody. Original registration records shall not be removed from the commissioner's office or from any other designated permanent storage location except upon request of a county commissioner or a court order, as provided in [subsection 2](#), or as provided by [section 48A.32](#). The state registrar of voters and the state voter registration commission shall adopt administrative rules to implement [this section](#).

2. The county commissioner of elections may store an unaltered version of completed voter registration applications, including the applicant's signature, as an electronic document, or in another format suitable for preserving information in the registration record, regardless of the format in which the application is submitted.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §36; 2014 Acts, ch 1101, §7

Section amended

**48A.36 Electronic registration record retention in voter registration agencies.**

1. Voter registration agencies and the office of driver services of the state department of transportation may electronically transmit registration data to the state registrar of voters, who shall distribute the information, electronically or otherwise, to the appropriate commissioner in accordance with rules of the state voter registration commission and the state registrar of voters. The state agency originating the registration data shall permanently retain an electronic copy of the form completed by the registrant, including the registrant's signature, and shall develop procedures for the retrieval and printing of that electronic document. A printed copy of an electronic registration document shall be made only upon the agency's receipt of a court order.

2. Upon receipt of electronic registration data under [subsection 1](#), the state registrar of voters shall cause the updating of registration records. The registrar shall notify the appropriate commissioner of the actions taken.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §37; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §17, 37

**48A.37 Electronic registration records.**

1. Voter registration records shall be maintained in an electronic medium. A history of local election participation shall be maintained as part of the electronic record for at least two general, primary, school, and city elections. Absentee voting shall be recorded for the previous two general and primary elections. After each election, the county commissioner shall update telephone numbers provided by registered voters pursuant to [section 49.77](#).

2. Electronic records shall include a status code designating whether the records are active, inactive, incomplete, pending, or canceled. Inactive records are records of registered voters to whom notices have been sent pursuant to [section 48A.28, subsection 3](#), and who have not returned the card or otherwise responded to the notice, and those records have been designated inactive pursuant to [section 48A.29](#). Inactive records are also records of registered voters to whom notices have been sent pursuant to [section 48A.26A](#) and who have not responded to the notice. Incomplete records are records missing required information pursuant to [section 48A.11, subsection 8](#). Pending records are records of applicants whose applications have not been verified pursuant to [section 48A.25A](#). Canceled records are records that have been canceled pursuant to [section 48A.30](#). All other records are active records. An inactive record shall be made active when the registered voter requests an absentee ballot, votes at an election, registers again, or reports a change of name, address, telephone number, or political party or organization affiliation. An incomplete record shall be made active when a completed application is received from the applicant and verified pursuant to [section 48A.25A](#). A pending record shall be made active upon verification or upon the voter providing identification pursuant to [section 48A.8](#).

94 Acts, ch 1169, §38; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §18, 37; 2004 Acts, ch 1175, §357; 2007 Acts, ch 35, §5, 7; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §81; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §20

#### **48A.38 Lists of voters.**

1. Any person may request of the registrar and shall receive, upon payment of the cost of preparation, a list of registered voters and other data on registration and participation in elections, in accordance with the following requirements and limitations:

a. The registrar shall prepare each list requested within fourteen days of receipt of the request, except that the registrar shall not be required to prepare any list within seven days of the close of registration for any regularly scheduled election if the preparation of the list would impede the preparation of election registers for that election.

b. Each list shall be as current as possible, but shall in all cases reflect voter activity reported to any commissioner twenty-eight or more days before preparation of the list.

c. Each list shall be in the order and form specified by the list purchaser, and shall contain the registration data specified by the list purchaser, provided compliance with the request is within the capability of the record maintenance system used by the registrar.

d. Lists prepared shall not include inactive records unless specifically requested by the requester.

e. The registrar shall prepare updates to lists at least biweekly, and after the close of registration for a regularly scheduled election, but before the election, if requested to do so at the time a list is purchased. All updates shall be made available to all requesters at the same time, and shall be in the order and form specified by each requester.

f. The county commissioner of registration and the state registrar of voters shall remove a voter's whole or partial social security number, as applicable, Iowa driver's license number, or Iowa nonoperator's identification card number from a voter registration list prepared pursuant to [this section](#).

2. The registrar shall update information on participation in an election no later than sixty days after each election.

3. The registrar shall maintain a log of the name, address, and telephone number of every person who receives a list under [this section](#), and of every person who reviews registration records in the office of the registrar. Commissioners of registration shall maintain a similar log in their offices of those who receive a list from the commissioner or who review registration records in the commissioner's office. Logs maintained under [this subsection](#) are public records, and shall be available for public inspection at reasonable times.

94 Acts, ch 1169, §39; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §29, 115; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §19, 37; 2005 Acts, ch 19, §20; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §21

Referred to in [§47.8](#)

**48A.39 Use of registration information.**

Information about individual registrants obtained from voter registration records shall be used only to request the registrant's vote at an election, or for another genuine political purpose, or for a bona fide official purpose by an elected official, or for bona fide political research, but shall not be used for any commercial purposes.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §40](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1071, §9](#)

Referred to in [§39A.4](#)

**48A.40 Reports.** Repealed by 2009 Acts, ch 57, §96.

SUBCHAPTER VII  
CRIMINAL PENALTIES

**48A.41 Criminal penalties.** Repealed by 2002 Acts, ch 1071, §15. See chapter 39A.