

# Instructions: Using the MiAEYC Voter Registration Kit

September 2004

Thank you for your interest in registering voters. This Voter Registration Kit allows you to register two kinds of people: (1) Those who are registering for the first time in Michigan; (2) Those now registered in Michigan who need to re-register a change in their address or name.

The kit was developed so that you could set up a voter registration table to register people who came by. However, you can promote voter registration in other ways. The main task is to have people fill out a voter registration form. You, or the person registering, will then mail the completed form to the appropriate city or county clerk whose address is located on a list in this kit.

## Remaining Nonpartisan

MiAEYC and its chapters, as 501(c)(3) educational organizations, stress the importance of using the kit as nonpartisans. Please see the FAQ paper for a discussion of this topic. Also note that one of the posters contains the language that follows; please display that poster whenever you set up a voter registration table or station.

The nonpartisan statement:

These voter registration services are available without regard to the voter's political preference. Information and other assistance regarding registering or voting shall not be offered, withheld or refused on the basis of support for or opposition to particular candidates or a particular party.

## Posters

The kit contains five posters that provide visibility when you set up a voter registration table or station. The posters are available as black-and-white or, if you are connected to a color printer, in color.

## Using the Voter Registration Form

The voter registration form is the heart of this program. This is what registrants fill out and what is mailed or delivered to the appropriate city or county clerk.

Although this kit contains displays and instructions for a voter registration table, please be creative in using these forms in other settings. Here are some other ways to use them:

- Send copies of the form and these instructions to child care centers and other programs so staff can encourage parents and other staff to fill-out the forms and mail them in.
- Give copies of the form and these instructions to people so they can register family members and work colleagues. Anyone can distribute this form for others to use.
- Carry extra forms with you to meetings; have people fill them out then-and-there.

The voter registration form may be complicated for some registrants and they will seek your help. Reading these instructions and those that accompany the form, plus registering two or three people, will make you an expert on how the form works.

The document that contains the voter registration form has three pages:

First Page – Gives instructions on using the registration form. Read it carefully because it answers many questions that people have. In particular, please note:

- First-time-voters who use this form to register by mail must vote at the polling place during their first election.
- A person's driver's license address and voter registration address must be the same.
- If the registrant cannot provide one of the three I.D. numbers requested by the registration form, the person will have to bring I.D. the first time he or she votes.

Second Page – Lists addresses of city and county clerks. Every citizen of Michigan is covered by at least one of these clerks. Please take great care, working with the registrant, to IDENTIFY THE

**CORRECT CLERK.** If a person lives in one of the listed cities, mail to the city clerk instead of the county clerk. (i.e., a registration for a citizen of Grand Rapids should go to the Grand Rapids City Clerk, not the Kent County Clerk).

Some people will say they live in a "village." Michigan law treats villages and cities the same: villages are very small cities that perform limited governmental functions. Send registration forms with village addresses to the appropriate county clerk.

Third Page – This is the form that the registrant fills out. Make sure that the registrant:

- Meets the age and citizenship requirements;
- After filling out the form, SIGNS AND DATES IT 2 TIMES.

While the registration form is straight forward, one item may confuse the registrant: the line that starts out, "Mailing Address *if different*." This accommodates people who want mail pertaining to their driver license and/or voter registration to come to their business address. Most people will leave this blank.

Please be ready to give this three-page document to anyone who wants to register family members at home or their colleagues at work. You might want to provide them with a single copy of pages 1 and 2 plus multiple copies of page 3.

### Mail or Deliver Completed Forms to the Right Clerk Before the Deadline

For those who want to vote on November 2, 2004, the deadline is Monday, October 4, 2004. Voter registration must occur 30 or more days before an election.

The forms you collect must be post marked or hand delivered on or before October 4. Remind those registrants who will handle their own delivery about this deadline.

If you or your organization pays the postage to mail in registrations, two or more completed forms going to the same clerk can be bundled in one envelope to save on postage.

Please mail or deliver voter registration forms to clerks within 24 hours after they are filled out. Do not collect completed forms for a few days then plan to mail or deliver them to the various clerks. We have many reasons for this:

- Some clerk offices are less efficient than others (sad, but true) and you want to give such offices as much time as possible to process registrations.
- The clerk will mail a voter registration card to the registrant. This card identifies the person's voting place. Again, let's give the clerk and the postal service as much time as possible to do their work.
- The longer you keep the completed forms, the greater the risk that illness, a natural or man-made disaster, or personal emergency will cause them to become lost or forgotten.

Of course, if you register people that final weekend of October 2 and 3, or on October 4, make sure that mailed registrations are postmarked no later than October 4; or hand deliver forms to the correct clerk for each registrant before the close of business on October 4.

People who take forms home or to work will have to mail or deliver the registration forms themselves. Explain very clearly the importance of getting the forms to the correct clerks and on time.

### Comments or Questions? Will You Evaluate Us?

The voter registration network will continue to be developed among early childhood professionals over the next few years. Your feedback will help us evaluate this first effort to operate a voter registration program. Please contact Steve Manchester at: [smanchester@miaeyc.org](mailto:smanchester@miaeyc.org); 800-336-6424, ext. 24, to share your comments or questions.