Best Practices:
Voter List Maintenance

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Table of Contents

Introduction 2
Scope 3
Goals 3
Establishing and Maintaining a Voter List Maintenance Program 3
Resourcing 3
Voter Database 3
Processing Notifications of Voter Registration Changes 4
Financial Benefits 5
Timing Considerations 5
Voter List Quality Control 6
Transaction Reviews 6
Address Validation 6
Duplication Checks 6
Voters Over One Hundred Years Old 7
Tips for a Strong Voter List Maintenance Program 7
National Change of Address (NCOA) Participation 7
Vote by Mail Return to Sender: Arizona, a Case Study 8
Inactive and Cancelled Voters Due to Ineligibility 8
Email List Maintenance for Military and Overseas Voters 9
In-Person Voting Updates 9
Additional Voter List Maintenance Methods 10
Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) 10
Returned Jury Notices 10
Third-Party Data Provider: Orange County, CA, a Case Study 10
Voter Registration Database Data Tracking: Iowa, a Case Study 11
Public Engagement on Voter List Maintenance 11
Public Information: Websites, Social Media, Press Releases, and Media Engagement 11
Community Partners 14
Targeted Outreach of Voters Who Move 14
Conclusion 15

Introduction

All states, except North Dakota, require citizens to register with a state or local elections office prior to participating in certain election related activities, such as signing candidate petitions or voting. Election officials must accomplish two primary activities related to voter registration: adding individuals to the voter registration list who are eligible to vote and maintaining the accuracy of the list. The process of updating voter registration databases and removing ineligible voters is referred to as list maintenance.

The primary federal law governing voter registration in the United States is the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which became effective after the 1994 general election.[1] The NVRA requires states to conduct general list maintenance and establishes a process for states to keep voter registration lists accurate. List maintenance programs must be uniform, non-discriminatory, and in compliance with the Voting Rights Act. States have discretion in how they manage their ongoing, reasonable list maintenance programs, but some procedures, such as removal from the voter list, are outlined in the NVRA. Under this law, a voter can be removed from a state's list for the following reasons:

- The voter requests to be removed;
- The voter dies;
- The voter is declared mentally incapacitated if state law requires it[2];
- The voter is convicted of a specified crime if state law requires it; or
- The voter changes residences outside of the jurisdiction, in which case the removal process must be conducted under procedures outlined in the NVRA.

Under the process established by the NVRA, when returned or undeliverable mail indicates a voter has moved outside of the jurisdiction, the state must follow a process to verify that the individual is no longer eligible to vote. Unless an individual updates their information (directly with an elections office or through another agency like the Department of Motor Vehicles), election officials must follow an address confirmation procedure before removing the voter from the registration list.[3]

Additionally, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) required states to develop statewide voter registration databases. Previously jurisdictions in many states maintained their own local databases. Having centralized databases facilitates coordination across local jurisdictions, leading to more accurate voter registration lists.

HAVA also clarified Congress's intent in the NVRA that a voter cannot be removed from a voter registration list for the sole reason that they did not vote. HAVA does allow for the removal of voters

[1] Several states are not covered by the NVRA. North Dakota is exempt because it does not have voter registration. U.S. territories are also not subject to the NVRA, and the states of Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming are exempt because they had same day registration (SDR) at polling places in 1994 and have continued to make this option available uninterrupted since that time.

[2] The NVRA permits states to remove registrants because of mental incapacity. According to the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 13 states have laws that bar voting by individuals under guardianship, 22 states require courts to determine capacity, 4 states bar those who are *non-compos mentis*, 5 states use outmoded terms to describe people that can be barred from voting based on competence, and 10 states do not have disability related restrictions.

[3] Non-citizens, including permanent legal residents cannot vote in federal, state, and most local elections. In some states, identified ineligible voters may be removed immediately, while other states require a mailing to the voter to confirm the status prior to removal.

who both 1) do not respond to a voter address confirmation notice and 2) subsequently do not vote in the next two federal general elections. However, the Supreme Court noted that the confirmation mailing process outlined in the NVRA may be instituted based on failure to vote in an election or series of elections.[4]

State law will also lay out uniform procedures and options for list maintenance. Election officials face the challenge of keeping voter lists up to date, as voters commonly move within or outside of jurisdictions, die, or become otherwise ineligible to vote.

Scope

This document is designed to provide election officials with generally applicable recommendations, considerations, and best practices to increase the accuracy of voter registration lists. *The information provided in this document is not intended to constitute legal advice. All information is provided for general information purposes only. Laws and regulations vary greatly across the country. Officials should contact their legal representatives with questions about specific procedures or practices.*

Goals

The recommendations in this guide are intended for election officials, who are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of voter registration lists. These best practices will help election officials improve the quality of voter registration data.

Establishing and Maintaining a Voter List Maintenance Program

The responsibility for an accurate voter list resides with election officials. Investing in resources and technology to ensure a strong voter list maintenance program is essential for the success of the program. Voter list maintenance programs require funding and planning to maintain, including, but not limited to, voter database management systems, staffing, and mailings (including printing and postage).

Resourcing

Election officials must identify staff resource needs for both year-round list management and peak processing times, including near voter registration deadlines and after sending wide-distribution mailings. In addition to identifying staffing needs for processing, election officials should also allocate staff to perform timely quality control checks to ensure the best quality of voter registration data. At a minimum, the staff leading voter list maintenance activities should understand federal and state voter list maintenance responsibilities including the NVRA, HAVA, and other requirements. Laws and regulations may change over time, so ongoing monitoring of requirements is necessary. Election officials should invest in the continued training of staff, including providing opportunities to participate in state led NVRA and other list maintenance trainings.

Voter Database

All states have a statewide voter database. Staff assigned to voter list maintenance tasks may interact with the statewide voter database directly or through a local database management system. These

[4] *Husted v. Randolph Inst.*, 584 U.S. ___, 138 S. Ct. 1833 (2018).

databases should track a voter's registration through time, including initial applications, changes, inactivity, and cancellations. It is essential that staff conducting voter list maintenance activities receive comprehensive training to process voter registration transactions. Written procedures for database processing, including checklists or decision-making flow charts serve as useful reference tools for staff and ensure uniformity in processing. During peak processing periods reassigned or temporary staff may be tasked with voter list maintenance activities. It is essential that these individuals receive sufficient training and supervision on voter database processing.

Processing Notifications of Voter Registration Changes

Election officials receive first- and third-party notifications of voter registration changes. First-party notifications are generated by the actions of voters themselves, such as the completion of a new voter registration application by paper or online, a change to their voter registration during a Department of Motor Vehicles transaction, or a voter's request to cancel their registration. Third-party notifications received from trusted sources may also be used to update a voter's registration record. Laws and regulations vary by state, but common trusted third-party sources of information include:

Information Type	**Third-party Source**
Death Records	Vital Statistics Health Department Social Security Administration Other Government Entities Personal Knowledge Reports
Address Changes	Reports from Other Election Officials Returned Undeliverable Election Mail USPS though the NCOA Program
Declarations of Mental Incapacitation (if applicable)	Courts
Convictions of Specific Disqualifying Crimes (if applicable)	Courts Regional U.S. Attorney's Offices Government Prosecutors Departments of Correction

The timely processing of both first- and third-party voter registration changes is necessary to maintain an accurate voter list.

Table 2. States Most Often Use State Vital Statistics Office and Reports From Other States to Identify Ineligible Voters

Source of Data on Potentially Ineligible Voters	Percentage of States That Report Using Data From the Data Source
State vital statistics office death records	92.9%
Reports/notices from other states that a former resident has registered to vote	89.3%
Requests from voters for removal	85.7%
Entities that maintain felony/prison records	82.1%
Other mail from the election office (not ballots) that was returned as undeliverable	69.6%
Newspaper death notices/obituaries	66.1%
National Change of Address (NCOA) reports	58.9%
Data from an interstate data-sharing compact	57.1%
Social Security Administration death records	57.1%
Mailed ballots returned as undeliverable	55.4%
Motor vehicle agencies	46.4%
Entities that maintain records of individuals declared mentally incompetent	42.9%
Applications for mailed ballots	26.8%
Jury questionnaires	26.8%
Returned jury summons	16.1%
State public assistance agencies	16.1%
State agencies that serve persons with disabilities	12.5%
Canvassing	8.9%
Other	8.9%
State agencies that are not specified in the NVRA	7.1%
State tax filings	1.8%

Table 2 Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report, U.S. Election Assistance Commission, p. 67, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf. Accessed 5 December 2022.

Financial Benefits

Continuous list maintenance is in the financial interest of election offices by reducing the printing, postage, and additional staff handling costs associated with sending election mail, including ballots, to voters who are no longer eligible.

Timing Considerations

It is important to note that under the NVRA any program related to the systemic removal of ineligible voters cannot occur within 90 days prior to a federal primary or general election.[5]

[5] 11 CFR 8 - NVRA (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-1 et seq.)

Voter List Quality Control

Election officials should develop and maintain established policies and procedures for reviewing the quality of their voter registration data processing. This should include near real-time reviews of changes made in the voter registration database and regular reviews of data at the macro-level.

Transaction Reviews

New voter registrations or registration updates may be received electronically through programs such as online voter registrations or through paper and other mediums that require data entry (for example a paper voter registration form or a paper list of death records). Ideally, a second staff member reviews the source document and compares it to the data entered. For electronic processing, it is useful to regularly spot check transactions to understand the anticipated volume of transactions. This will help to detect if the number of transactions processed appears outside the norms. To be most beneficial, transaction reviews should occur as soon as possible after processing, preferably before notifications, including election mail, are sent to voters.

Address Validation

A common data challenge is address validation. Voter registration addresses must be valid for a voter to be associated with their correct precinct. A voter's precinct determines which contests they are eligible to vote on. Validation issues may occur when a voter or data processor enters a residence address inaccurately, incompletely, or when an address is identified as commercial or non-residential, such as a post office box. Typically, when a validation error occurs, the transaction cannot be processed. When address validation errors are detected, next steps may include:

- Reviewing and correcting the address data for any common standardization issues including standard typos, street pre-fixes and suffixes, unit abbreviations, and city associations.
- Reviewing a street reference guide to identify the correct formatting of the address.
- Escalating the address error to a staff member with additional expertise.
- Contacting the voter to collect additional information in order to process the transaction.

Jurisdictions that use GIS and have geocoded addresses can compare address and voting district information from their voter registration database to information in their GIS workspace to identify discrepancies. Regular comparison checks of this data can increase the data quality in the voter registration database, including ensuring voters are assigned to the correct precincts. Additional information about geocoding elections data can be found in the EAC's report *Geo-Enabled Elections*[6] and the National States Geographic Information Council's *Best Practices in Geo-Enabling Elections*.[7]

Duplication Checks

Identifying and resolving duplicate records is a necessary process in most databases. Voter registration databases are no exception and the identification and resolution of duplicate registrations is a

[6] *Geo-Enabled Elections*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/geo_enabled_elections. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[7] *Best Practices in Geo-Enabling Elections*. NSGIC, https://nsgic.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/GEE/Best_Practice_Detail_D.pdf. Accessed 5 December 2022.

requirement under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The initial check for duplication is often at the first point of data processing. After keying or importing a record, the system may flag likely matches in the database. Often records will be identified as likely matches based on criteria such as name, date of birth, driver's license number, etc. Typically, if confirmed, these matched records are merged so that only one record exists for the voter in the voter registration database. Duplicate records are not always detected at the initial point of entry. This could be because there are not enough matching criteria, a data entry error, or a name change. It is a best practice to regularly conduct reviews of potential record matches to remove duplicate voter records. Many state and local voter registration databases include duplication check functionality.

Voters Over One Hundred Years Old

It is recommended to review the voter registration database for voters over one hundred years old.[8] If a voter in this group has not cast a ballot in the last several elections, it can be worthwhile to attempt to reach out to the voter and confirm their information is up to date. Occasionally, when election officials are reviewing this group, they will find database or data-entry errors for the voter's birth year.

Tips for a Strong Voter List Maintenance Program

While state laws and regulations vary, jurisdictions can consider several common voter list maintenance best practices.

National Change of Address (NCOA) Participation

Millions of Americans move each year. Many of them provide a change of address to the United States Postal Service (USPS). Election officials can use National Change of Address (NCOA) data to keep registered voters' address information current. State election offices may subscribe to an NCOA product to receive and process updated information on an ongoing basis or push updates to local election officials for processing. NCOA records may provide an in-jurisdiction address update or indicate an out-of-jurisdiction move for a voter. In the 2020 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), 58.9% of states indicated that they used NCOA reports to identify potentially ineligible voters.[9]

Official Election Mailings

Every mailing sent by an elections office can be a voter list maintenance tool. Examples of routine official election mailings may include voter registration confirmation postcards, signature update requests, voter guides and sample ballots, polling location notices, ballots, and more. In the 2020 EAVS, 69.6% of states reported using election mail (not ballots) and 55.4% of states reported using undeliverable ballots as a source of discovering potentially ineligible voters.[10] Election officials may also consider sending a mailing to voters outside of peak election processing times to continue this type of

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[8] In the past, in some states, date of birth was not a required field for voter registration. Once electronic voter registration databases were implemented, many jurisdictions adopted the practice of inserting a placeholder date of birth for such voters (e.g., using January 1, 1900).

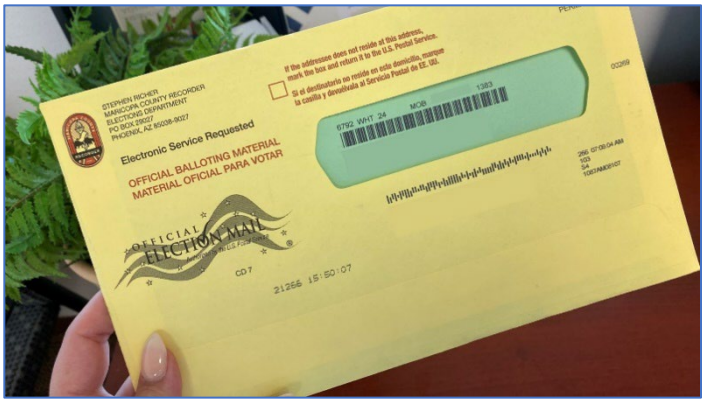
[9] *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, p. 67. Accessed 5 December 2022.

[10] *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, p. 67. Accessed 5 December 2022.

list maintenance during non-election periods. Typically, these types of mailings will provide notifications of change of addresses or non-delivery either by physically returning the mail piece or providing the information electronically. If provided electronically through USPS, the incoming address change data can often be matched against existing voter records for streamlined processing. When larger or jurisdiction-wide mailings are sent to voters, election officials should ensure they have sufficient staff for prompt processing.

Vote by Mail Return to Sender: Arizona, a Case Study

In Arizona, outgoing mail ballot envelopes are required to have a statement on the face indicating that if the addressee does not reside at the address, the recipient should mark the check box and return it to sender via USPS.[11] This allows residents who receive mail for voters who do not live in their household to report the information so election officials can use it for list maintenance activities.



Maricopa County Elections Department [@MaricopaVote] Hand holding yellow envelope. Twitter, 27 October 2022, 2:24 pm, https://twitter.com/MaricopaVote/status/1585699029471485953.

Inactive and Cancelled Voters Due to Ineligibility

Election officials may, upon identifying potential ineligibility, place a voter on an inactive voter list. Although terms and definitions vary between states, generally active voters require no additional processing before they can vote, while inactive voters require address verification before being permitted to vote. The most common reasons for placing a voter on an inactive list according to the 2020 EAVS include:

- undeliverable election mail (70%), and
- failure to return a confirmation notice (62%).[12]

Under the NVRA and HAVA, states are prohibited from cancelling a voter solely based on failure to vote. The voter may be cancelled if, after being placed in inactive (or equivalent) status and mailed a confirmation notice, they do not have some type of voter activity. Examples of voter activity may include:

- updating their voter registration,
- signing a petition, or
- confirming their address during the voter check-in process.

[11] A.R.S. 16-547.
[12] *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, p. 65. Accessed 5 December 2022.

A voter may be moved from an inactive to a cancelled list of voters if no voter activity occurs for a period of two federal general elections.[13]

The confirmation notice that starts the clock for a voter's removal must include a prepaid postage and pre-addressed return card and be sent by forwardable mail. Under the NVRA, states reported sending more than 28 million confirmation notices and removing more than 18 million records from their voter registration lists between the close of registration of the 2018 general election and the close of registration of the 2020 general election. More than half of these removals occurred because a voter failed to return a confirmation notice and did not vote in the following two federal general elections or because the voter moved out of the voting jurisdiction.[14]

As part of regular list maintenance activities, jurisdictions should consider processing cancellations for those voters who have been properly notified and not reactivated for a period of two federal general election cycles.

Email List Maintenance for Military and Overseas Voters

The Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 (MOVE) required, among other rules, that all states establish a system to electronically transmit blank ballots to military and overseas voters. Since the passage of the MOVE Act, the usage of electronic transmission of blank ballots for military and overseas voters has continuously increased. In the 2020 general election, 62.3% of mail ballots were transmitted to military and overseas voters electronically.[15] Election officials may consider annually emailing their military and overseas voters to ensure they have valid email addresses for these individuals. If emails are returned as invalid, staff should review the email addresses for data entry errors. If a correction cannot be made, election officials may mail a notification to the mailing address of the impacted voter or reach out to the voter by phone if a telephone number has been provided, requesting an updated email address.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) can be a great resource for election officials when conducting outreach activities or confirming eligibility. FVAP can look up active-duty service members' addresses for election officials, if available and releasable information.[16]

In-Person Voting Updates

In-person voting is an opportunity to collect the most up to date information for voters, particularly address information. Typically, an inactive voter is prompted to supply their current address when they appear to cast a ballot in-person. Active voters may also indicate a change in their address when voting in-person. State laws and regulations vary, but often this information can be used to update voters' registration information. The information could be recorded on a voter registration form, a provisional ballot envelope, or on an electronic poll book, among other methods. When permissible, changes to voter registration data may be recorded in electronic poll books, including voter status, name, address,

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[13] 52 U.S.C. § 20507(b)(2).
[14] *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, p. 114. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[15] *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*. U.S. Election Assistance Commission, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, p. 181. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[16] *FVAP Resources*. Federal Voting Assistance Program, https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/resources. Accessed 5 December 2022.

and party. Depending on state law and interoperability of databases, these electronically recorded changes may be transmitted directly to a voter registration database in real-time or uploaded post-election, reducing manual processing times. Data from in-person voting interactions should be promptly processed and go through comparable quality control checks as other registration changes.

Additional Voter List Maintenance Methods

Beyond the more common voter list maintenance practices previously outlined, a varying number of states conduct additional list maintenance processes as described below.

Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC)

As of March 2023, more than half the states and the District of Columbia are members of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).[17] State election officials formed ERIC as a non-profit organization that uses data matching technology to improve the accuracy of voter registration data. ERIC also identifies individuals who are not yet registered to vote so election officials can provide them information on how to register. Each member state submits its voter registration and Department of Motor Vehicles data at least once every sixty days.[18] This data is then compared to data from other member states and death record data from the Social Security Administration. The data allows ERIC to identify voters who have moved or died, as well as identifying duplicate registrations within a state's database. Additionally, states may request data from the USPS NCOA reports. Using data provided through ERIC, election officials can process voter list maintenance transactions consistent with the NVRA's requirements.

Returned Jury Notices

At least five states and DC work with their courts to receive regular reports of returned jury notices or reported address changes as part of their ongoing voter list maintenance program.[19] Election officials are often required to provide their list of registered voters to courts for purposes of identifying eligible jurors. Courts providing undeliverable, address forwarding, or disqualifying information reports from jury notices can help keep both government lists up to date.

Third-Party Data Provider: Orange County, CA, a Case Study

For more than 10 years, Orange County, CA, with 1.8 million registered voters has, in addition to regular list maintenance activities, also used address data through a credible third-party data provider (Experian) to identify voters who have moved and who election officials have not been notified about via other methods. Credit bureaus maintain consumer marketing demographic data, which may include address changes for voters. The third-party data provider compares the address data it has to the address data from the voter registration file. If the third-party data provider identifies a more recent

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[17] *FAQ's, Which States Are Members of ERIC*? ERIC, Inc. https://ericstates.org. Accessed 5 December 2022; Recently, some member states have chosen to withdraw from ERIC. Louisiana resigned from its membership in ERIC in 2022. Ardoin, Kyle R, *Letter to Mr. Shane Hamlin 13 July 2022*. Louisiana Secretary of State https://www.sos.la.gov/OurOffice/PublishedDocuments/ERIC%20Resignation%20Letter%2007-13-22.pdf. Accessed 9 January 2023.

[18] *Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) FAQ (V.3 01/20/2023)*. ERIC, Inc, https://ericstates.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ERIC_FAQS_V1.3_01-20-2023.pdf. Accessed 6 March 2023.

[19] *Voter Registration List Maintenance.* NCSL, https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-list-accuracy.aspx. Accessed 5 December 2022.

address for a voter, the new address is provided back to the elections office. The elections office is then able to reach out to the voter and verify if the new address is correct. In Orange County, for the voters responding to the outreach, election officials were able to update address information for voters who moved within the county, identify and cancel individuals who confirmed they no longer resided in the county, and realize cost savings by not sending election materials to outdated addresses. Consistent with the NVRA and CA state law, if a voter does not respond, Orange County makes no change to the voter's registration status. More information about Orange County's program can be found in their *2019 Voter Registration List Maintenance Report*.[20]

Voter Registration Database Data Tracking: Iowa, a Case Study

Beginning prior to the 2018 elections, Iowa was the first state to use a service called VoteShield to monitor and protect its voter data. VoteShield is a web application that uses public voter registration data and tracks changes to voter lists and detects and flags anomalies. If VoteShield detects an anomaly, local election officials can investigate the data.[21] An example from Iowa's Secretary of State's office:

> Another key problem VoteShield can discover and help solve is human error. A real-life example of how our partnership works with VoteShield and Professor Hagle is an incident that happened two months before our city-school election in 2019. A report showed an anomaly in one Iowa county's number of inactivated voters. We contacted that county's elections staff to ask about their high numbers. During our discussion, they realized that they incorrectly inactivated voters because of returned post cards from a mailing. The county auditor was able to reinstate more than 100 registered voters after receiving our phone call.[22]

Public Engagement on Voter List Maintenance

Directly engaging with the public, including voters, the media, government partners, and community organizations is a helpful component of a voter list maintenance program. Describing voter list maintenance activities on election websites and in conversations can inform the public about the year-round voter list maintenance activities that election officials perform and about how individuals can be part of the solution when it comes to maintaining an accurate voter list.

Public Information: Websites, Social Media, Press Releases, and Media Engagement

Including information about voter list maintenance on election websites provides a source of accurate information for the public to access. In addition to describing the processes election officials perform to keep voter registration lists up to date, websites can also provide specific guidance to voters on what they can do: if they move and need to change their address or cancel their registration, receive election material for someone who does not reside at their address, if a family member dies and needs to be

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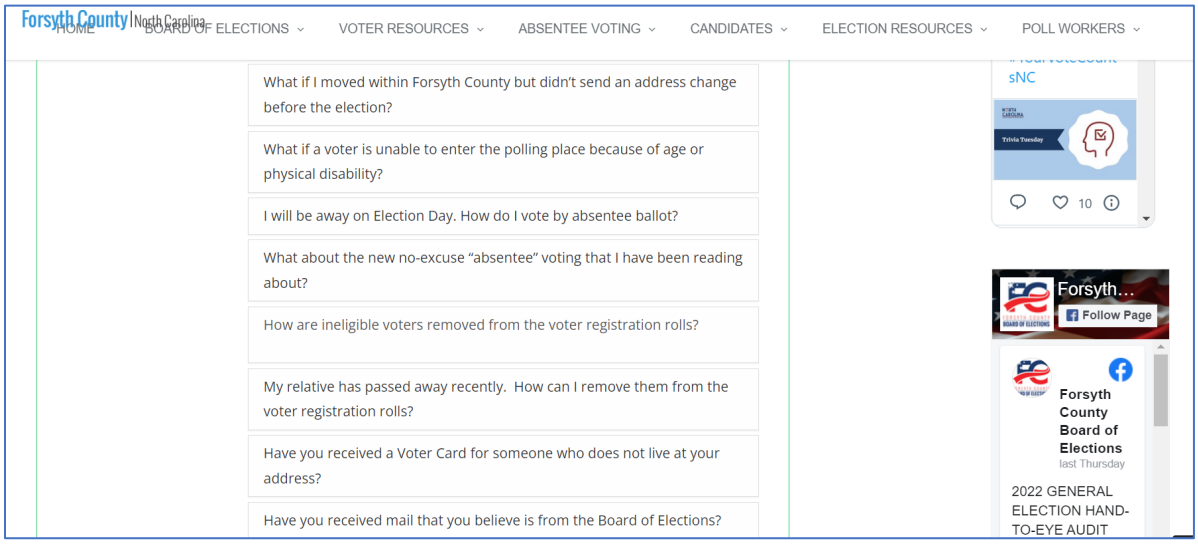
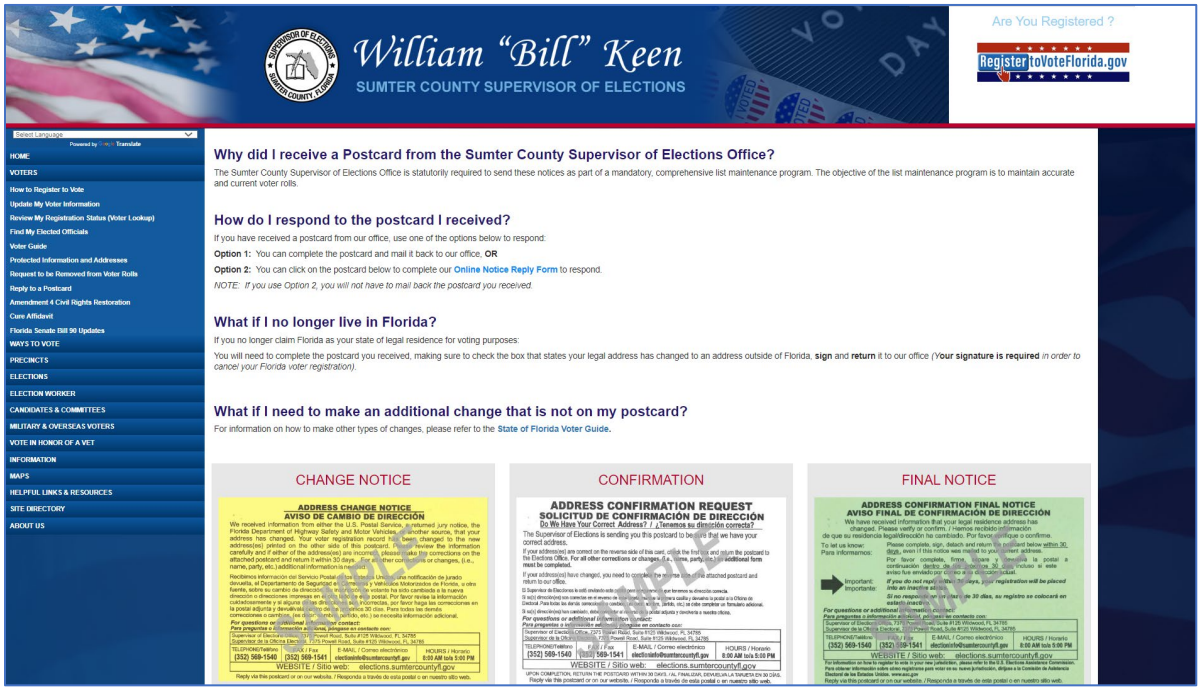
[20] *2019 Voter Registration List Maintenance Report.* Orange County Registrar of Voters. https://www.ocvote.gov/election-library/docs/2019%20Voter%20List%20Maintenance%20Report.pdf. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[21] *Iowa's First-in-the-Nation partnership with VoteShield helps protect integrity of elections.* Office of the Iowa Secretary of State, 15 January 2020, https://sos.iowa.gov/news/2020_01_15.html. Media Release. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[22] *NASS IDEAS Award Application – 2021 State of Iowa*, Iowa Secretary of State, https://www.nass.org/sites/default/files/awards/2021/IA-NASS-IDEAS-Award-Nomination-2021.pdf. Accessed 5 December 2022.

removed from the voter registration list, and numerous other circumstances. Forsyth County, NC covers many of these types of scenarios on their website's FAQ page.[23]



Websites can help explain and provide visual examples of important list maintenance notifications voters may receive in the mail. In Sumter County, FL the elections office has a page dedicated to why a voter may receive a variety of postcards from the office, how the voter can respond, and pictures of the postcards. Providing this level of information can help voters trust that these notifications are coming from an official source and encourage a response.[24]

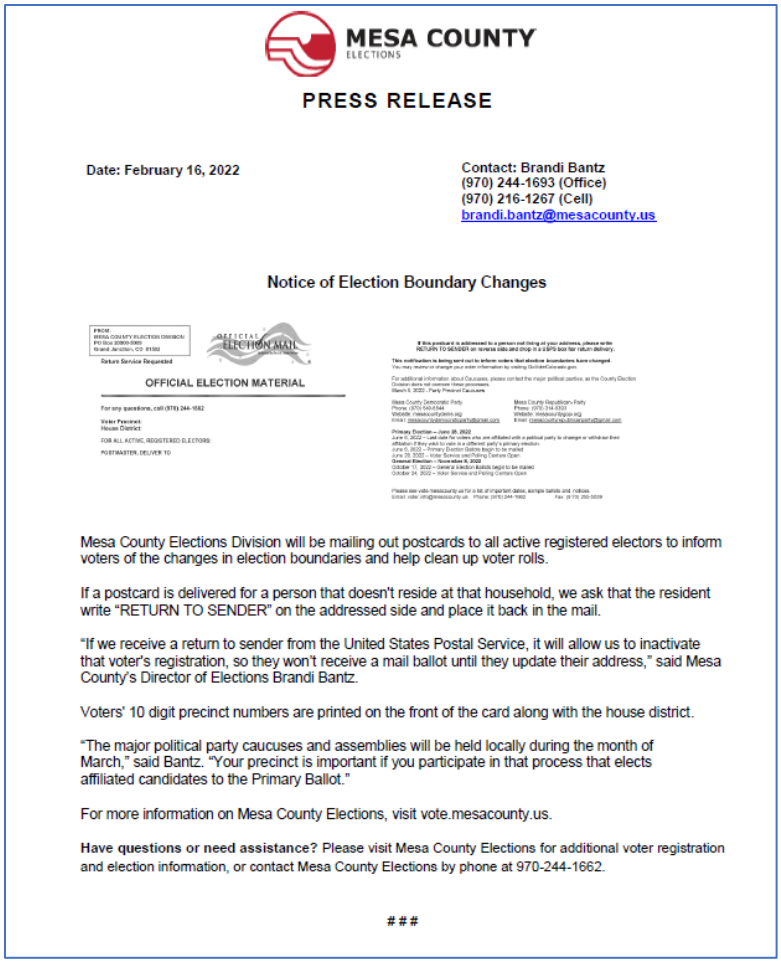


[23] *FAQs*. Forsyth County North Carolina Elections, https://www.forsyth.cc/Elections/FAQ.aspx. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[24] *Reply to a Postcard*. Sumter County Supervisor of Elections, https://www.sumterelections.org/Voters/Reply-to-a-Postcard. Accessed 5 December 2022.

Miami-Dade Elections [@MDCElections] Last Day, Be Election Ready, Twitter, 25 July 2022, 9:00 am, https://twitter.com/MDCElections/status/1551552881110687749.

Social media can be used to engage directly with eligible voters, including reminding voters to check their voter registration and update it if needed. Nearly every state has a public facing website that individuals can use to check their voter registration status and information. Including a link to official voter registration look-up pages is helpful in social media posts. It is likely that election officials' most active social media followers are already engaged voters so consider crafting messages that will encourage followers to share the message with their networks. Election officials should also consider including hashtags that may help expand the reach of posts. For example, common in Florida is #BeElectionReady.

Press releases and media engagements are useful ways to share information with the public. Voter list maintenance activities can be highlighted around certain events: voter registration deadlines, when sending out pre-election mail notifications, when mailing out ballots, and more. Messaging highlighting that these activities are occurring and how voters can follow up if they have questions or concerns can help build trust between election officials and voters. In 2022, Mesa County, CO issued a press release upon the mailing of pre-election notices of boundary changes that featured an image of the postcard and provided instructions to voters on what to do if they received a postcard for someone who did not live in their household.[25]



MESA COUNTY
ELECTIONS

PRESS RELEASE

Date: February 16, 2022

Contact: Brandi Bantz
(970) 244-1693 (Office)
(970) 216-1267 (Cell)
brandi.bantz@mesacounty.us

Notice of Election Boundary Changes

OFFICIAL ELECTION MATERIAL

Mesa County Elections Division will be mailing out postcards to all active registered electors to inform voters of the changes in election boundaries and help clean up voter rolls.

If a postcard is delivered for a person that doesn't reside at that household, we ask that the resident write "RETURN TO SENDER" on the addressed side and place it back in the mail.

"If we receive a return to sender from the United States Postal Service, it will allow us to inactivate that voter's registration, so they won't receive a mail ballot until they update their address," said Mesa County's Director of Elections Brandi Bantz.

Voters' 10 digit precinct numbers are printed on the front of the card along with the house district.

"The major political party caucuses and assemblies will be held locally during the month of March," said Bantz. "Your precinct is important if you participate in that process that elects affiliated candidates to the Primary Ballot."

For more information on Mesa County Elections, visit vote.mesacounty.us.

Have questions or need assistance? Please visit Mesa County Elections for additional voter registration and election information, or contact Mesa County Elections by phone at 970-244-1662.

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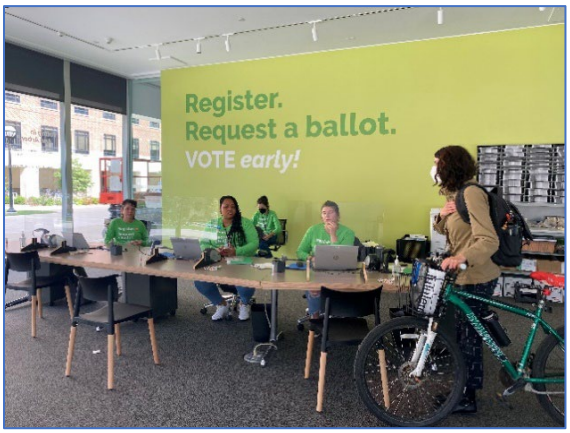
[25] *Notice of Election Boundary Changes.* Mesa County Elections, 16 February 2022, https://clerk.mesacounty.us/siteassets/elections/press-releases/precinct-postcard-02-16-2022.pdf. Press Release. Accessed 5 December 2022.

Community Partners

Voter registration is often an area of focus for community-based organizations. These organizations can support keeping voter registration lists up to date by encouraging not only new registrations but re-registrations when, for example, a voter moves. If election officials provide training or guidance to individuals or groups conducting voter registration drives, they may consider highlighting for groups how voters can look up their voter registration status and flagging that beyond new registrations that they can collect re-registrations for voters who have changes to their registration record.

Colleges frequently serve as partners between election officials and college students. If they so choose, college students are typically able to register to vote at their college residency address (if it differs from their permanent residence) depending on residency requirements of the state. Election officials often find unique ways of engaging with student populations. In 2021, the Tennessee Secretary of State hosted voter registration tailgates at Division I public universities across the state. These represented opportunities to connect with both students and the larger community of football fans.[26]

For the 2020 and 2022 general elections, local election officials operated a satellite location at the Ann Arbor campus of the University of Michigan. Additionally, the University of Michigan hosts a website with information targeted to students and links to how to register and vote using their college address or their permanent home address.[27]



City Clerk U-M Student Voting, https://www.a2gov.org/departments/city-clerk/Elections/Pages/Student-Voting.aspx. Accessed 5 December 2022.

Targeted Outreach of Voters Who Move

Moving is one of the most common reasons a person needs to re-register to vote. Election officials can consider outreach to entities that may have encounters with more frequent movers including colleges, the local Recorder, state long-term care ombudsmen, utility companies, realtors, and property managers. It is important, if working with such entities, that the outreach is equitable across demographic communities. These entities may consider, for example, including information about how to register to vote on their websites, in their newsletters, or via an insert in mailed materials.

[26] *Secretary of State and Tennessee's Division I Public Universities to Host Voter Registration Tailgates.* Tennessee Secretary of State, https://sos.tn.gov/press-releases/secretary-of-state-and-tennessees-division-i-public-universities-to-host-voter. Accessed 5 December 2022.
[27] U MICH Votes, https://www.govote.umich.edu/. Accessed 5 December 2022.

Conclusion

Voter list maintenance is an essential part of a well-functioning voter registration system. While this guide outlines many best practices for voter list accuracy available today, best practices will continue to evolve in the future.