VERIFYING AND CURING SIGNATURES

COVID-19 and Election Administration: Approaches for Election Officials
June 23, 2020
Housekeeping

- Be gracious about **work-from-home setups**
- **Restart Zoom** if needed
- **Slides and captioned recordings** will be available on the registration page
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions
Today’s objectives

- **Audit and expand** your existing signature files
- Explore resources to **train election workers** on the fundamentals of signature verification
- Review options for **helping voters “cure” signature** issues after they submit their ballots
Today’s agenda

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Building a foundation (10 minutes)
- Review Framework & Verification Training (20 mins)
- Cure process (10 minutes)
- Q&A (10 minutes)
- Wrapping up and course survey (5 minutes)
Hello, there!

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Kurt Sampsel
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Brittny Petersen
Cherry County, NE
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- ~3800 registered voters
- Rural community

Rey Valenzuela
Maricopa County, AZ
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- ~2.4 million reg. voters
- 1.7 million on permanent early voting list
- Largely urban, some rural areas
Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

Harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org
Federal resources

- Set of documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials

- Written by the Joint COVID-19 Working Group
  - Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
  - Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
  - Elections Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC)

https://www.cisa.gov/protect2020
Keep in mind

1. This is tough!
2. One size doesn’t fit all
3. Things will change
4. Preparation and flexibility > certainty
5. A supportive team > a solo mission
6. Your work *matters*, and it’s hugely appreciated
Collecting, updating, and auditing your signature files

BUILDING A SIGNATURE FOUNDATION
Reasons for ballot rejections

- Signature didn't match 26.14%
- Ballot received too late 19.04%
- Incomplete bearer portion 9.23%
- Certificate missing 13.58%
- Certificate not signed 4.28%
- Ballot not enclosed 1.93%
- Miscellaneous* 0.77%
- Other 25.04%

*Miscellaneous reasons are: voter registration ID missing, bearer book not signed, bearer brought too many ballots, moved out of county, incomplete assister portion, candidate assisted voter.
Table 1. Most Common Reason for By-Mail Ballot Rejection is “Other”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage of Rejected Ballots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Other” reason given</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballot not received on time/missed deadline</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-matching signature</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No voter signature</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No witness signature</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All additional reasons</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter already voted in person</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signature Challenges

- Unscanned transfers from a legacy paper systems
- Outdated signatures
- Signatures collected from electronic pads
- Identity verified through non-signature means
Updating signatures

- Send voters a signature card
- Update files from other agencies (if possible)
- Create or begin a signature history
Lessons learned

Rey - Maricopa County, AZ

• Quality & “Quantity”

• Build a sample signature repository

Brittny - Cherry County, NE

• Utilize advantages of small jurisdictions to contact voters

• Use all the signatures that you have access to
What processes can you put in place to review signatures?

SIGNATURE REVIEW PROCESS
A tiered system of review

Tier 1

- Manual or automated
- If automated, have a tight tolerance
- Compare envelope and image file
  - “almost perfect match”

A tiered system of review

Tier 2

● Ballots did not pass tier 1 review
● Always done by human inspection
● Reviewers utilize training and re-review signature
  ○ Ideally - history of signatures
● Shouldn’t require more than 30 seconds
A tiered system of review

Tier 3

● Final arbitration
● Did not pass tier 1 and tier 2 review
● Much deeper inspection
  ○ Deeper look at past signature
● Have a bipartisan team inspect
● Can take up to 3 minutes
Lessons learned

Rey - Maricopa County, AZ

• System of redundancies
• Know your audience
• Use voter-centric cure methods

Brittny - Cherry County, NE

• Have administrative procedures ready
• The Nebraska tiered review process
How can you verify signatures?

SIGNATURE VERIFICATION
Training for Sig. Verification

Broad Characteristics

● Type of writing (cursive v print)
● Spacing
● Size and proportions
● Position (slant v straight)

https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/docs/SignatureVerificationGuide.pdf
Training - broad characteristics

Type of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genuine Signature</th>
<th>Questioned Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>John Doe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Spacing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genuine Signature</th>
<th>Questioned Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James A. Garfield</td>
<td>James A. Garfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| John Adams        | John Adams           |
Training for Sig. Verification

Local Characteristics

● Internal spacing
● Letter size & combos
● Curves, loops and cross points
● Beginning and ending strokes

https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/docs/SignatureVerificationGuide.pdf
Training - local characteristics

Internal spacing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genuine Signature</th>
<th>Questioned Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronald</td>
<td>Ronald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Carter</td>
<td>Jimmy Carter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curves, loops and cross points

[Signature examples]

H. R. Ford        | [Signature example]
How to handle manual verification

- Create a single process
- Know how long each step takes
- Have a ballot tracking system
- Reconcile ballots regularly
Automating the process?

- It is possible!
- Can speed up the verification process
- Integrated into mail ballot sorting equipment & VR system
- Can support reconciling and accounting of ballots
Lessons learned

Rey - Maricopa County, AZ
• Create a redundant system
• Capture signatures from returned packets
• Create signature statuses or codes

Brittny - Cherry County, NE
• It’s an evolving process
• Increase in voting by mail state-wide
• COVID created a unique scenario
Handling signature discrepancies

SIGNATURE CURE PROCESS
Signature cure process

● 19 states require notification of signature discrepancy
● Daily process
● Notification to voters that their ballot has been rejected (for the moment)
● Provides solutions to “cure” their ballot
  ○ Signed affidavit w/ copy of ID
Signature cure considerations

- Organize a system for rejected ballots
- Track cure letters
- Aim for quick notification
  - Message through ballot tracking app
  - Send letters via email
  - Send a text reminder or text-to-cure app
FIGURE 11: Remedy Rate by Notification Form

Mail-only counties had some of the highest cure rates, particularly Santa Clara and Marin which send voters follow-up letters.

Cure Rate

- SANTA CRUZ
- CONTRA COSTA
- NAPA
- SACRAMENTO
- HUMBOLDT
- SONOMA
- SF
- LOS ANGELES
- AMADOR
- KERN
- MARIN
- SANTA CLARA

Red bars represent Multiple Forms, and pink bars represent Mail Only.
Center for Civic Design

- Short form cure letter - California
- Cure letter form layout - Florida

https://civicdesign.org/tool-kit-for-scaling-up-vbm/#signaturecure
Your signature is missing on your vote-by-mail ballot envelope

The Santa Cruz County Elections Department received your vote-by-mail ballot envelope without your signature. For your ballot to be counted, we must get your signature.

You may either come to our office and sign your ballot envelope as soon as possible, but no later than 5pm June 15, 2016 or submit the unsigned ballot envelope statement below. (Elections Code §3019)

Read these instructions carefully before completing the statement. Failure to follow these instructions may cause your ballot not to count.

1. Complete the statement below and make sure you sign your name.
2. Use one of the following methods to return your statement:
   • Mail the statement to Santa Cruz County Elections, 701 Ocean St, Room 210, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 so that it will reach us no later than 5pm, June 15, 2016. Make sure you have sufficient postage. You may also deliver the statement to our office or have someone else deliver it for you.
   • FAX the statement to 831-454-2445 no later than 5pm, June 15, 2016.
   • Deliver the statement on Election Day to a polling place in Santa Cruz County by 8pm, Tuesday, June 7, 2016 or
   • Drop the statement off on Election Day in a designated ballot drop box in Santa Cruz County by 8pm, Tuesday, June 7, 2016.

Unsigned ballot envelope statement

I, ______________________, am a registered voter of Santa Cruz County. State of California.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I requested and returned a vote-by-mail ballot, and that I have not and will not vote more than one ballot in this election. I understand that if I commit or attempt any fraud in connection with voting, or if I aid or abet fraud or attempt to aid or abet fraud in connection with voting, I may be convicted of a felony punishable by imprisonment for 16 months or two or three years. I understand that my failure to sign this statement means that my vote-by-mail ballot will be invalidated.

Voter’s Signature:

X

Date:

If the voter cannot sign his/her name, have the voter make a mark in the box above and then the witness signs here:

Address where you live in Santa Cruz County:

Number & Street

City

State

Zip

Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections • 831-454-2060 • info@votescount.com • www.votescount.com
Which would you rather fill out?
Let’s talk
DISCUSSION
Share your thoughts

● What resonated with you from today’s webinar? (Any “ah-ha” moments?)
● What are your next steps?
● What questions do you have about what we covered today?
● What questions do you have about what we didn’t cover today?
As more questions come up...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll find someone for you who can
We’ve covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Signature Verification and Cure Process”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Civic Design Tool Kit</td>
<td><a href="https://civicdesign.org/tool-kit-for-scaling-up-vbm/#signaturecure">https://civicdesign.org/tool-kit-for-scaling-up-vbm/#signaturecure</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dates to keep in mind (132)

Equipment
○ Purchase automated software (152 to 32 days)

Signature Files
○ Review for voters with no archived signature image. Send out form to those missing signatures. (123 to 92 days)

Document verification
○ Document verification and cure process (92 to 30 days)
What was your experience with today’s webinar?

- A brief survey is linked in the chat box
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the webinar for future participants
Up next

- Supporting election officials (Thursday, May 21)
- Planning 2020 workload and resource allocation (Tuesday, May 26)
- Ensuring access, equity, and inclusion (Thursday, May 28)
- Educating voters about their options (Thursday, June 4)
- Maintaining voter lists (Tuesday, June 9)
- Managing mail ballot request forms (Thursday, June 11)
- Organizing ballot dropoff locations (Tuesday, June 16)
- Streamlining the inbound ballot process (Thursday, June 18)
- Verifying and curing signatures (Tuesday, June 23)
- Recruiting and training election workers (Thursday, June 25)
- Implementing public health guidelines for voting locations (Tuesday, June 30)

techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/
Thanks!

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Website: www.techandciviclife.org