Maintaining Voter Lists

COVID-19 and Election Administration:
Approaches for Election Officials
June 9, 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

- Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic may result in new voter registration patterns
- Implement best practices for increasing voter list accuracy
- Proactively streamline voter registration and mail ballot requests
Today’s agenda

- Introduction (10 mins.)
- Needs and challenges (10 mins.)
- Best Practices for Voter List Maintenance (10 mins.)
- Reflections from Daniel Wade (5 mins.)
- Support from ERIC (10 mins.)
- Q&A (10 mins.)
- Wrapping up and survey (5 mins.)
Hello, there!

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Harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org
Federal resources

● Set of 10 documents (with more coming) 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
“You’re holding an election during a pandemic, with a relatively new voting system, with a mail-in ballot system that is being widely embraced. Preparing for this is sort of like an earthquake, a tornado and a hurricane hitting you at the same time every day.”

--Al Schmidt, Philadelphia City Commissioner
VOTER LISTS DURING COVID: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES
Why is voter data so important?

- Inaccurate voter records may **prevent people from receiving ballots** or **having their votes counted**
- Up-to-date voter lists **promote integrity** and **strengthen trust** among voters and candidates
- Accurate voter data helps **save public funds** and **prevent waste** of election department resources and staff time
What’s the extent of errors?

24 million – or 1 in 8 – voter registrations are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate, including:

1.8 million deceased individuals

2.75 million people with registrations in more than one state
Sources of errors in voter data:

• Voters move and don’t update their registrations
• People omit information when registering or updating
• Signatures change or their data format becomes obsolete
• Data entry or other internal errors
• Local variation in voter list management practices
With more mail voting comes an increased need for accurate voter data.

But, accuracy has been frustrated by DMV closures, displacement of people from normal addresses, and other pandemic disruptions.
About 1 in 10 ballots went undelivered to Baltimore City voters during 7th Congressional District special election
Remember your voters with the greatest need

- Language barriers
- Voters with disabilities
- Displaced voters
- Hard-to-reach voters
Strategies to maintain your voter list

BEST PRACTICES FOR VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE
Do your homework

If you’re not sure how list maintenance is done in your state, check in with your state election authority
Allow voters to verify and update registrations using OVR
Let voters request mail ballots through OVR or an online request

And make sure the application provides an opportunity for voters to update their records
Send all voters a postcard to verify their registrations
Create a policy for undeliverable mail to trigger record updates

Undeliverable Ballot Matrix

Ballots are required to be mailed to voters by nonforwardable mail with a reply requested if not deliverable as addressed by the USPS. Those Undeliverable Ballots include the following categories and the action required by county election officials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Undeliverable Ballot</th>
<th>Action to Take If Received:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 8 pm on Election Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Away</td>
<td>Do not take any action on this group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused – Attempt to contact</td>
<td>Do not take any action on this group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Mail Receptacle – Attempt to contact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moved out of State or County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attempted Not Known</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forwarding Order Expired</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not At This Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moved Left No Address</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moved Left No Forwarding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to Forward</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gone No Order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Forwarding Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Deliverable as Address (not an data entry error)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclaimed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After 8 pm on Election Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactivate voter registration record, changing effective date of registration to election day or before to deduct from eligibility pool for the election, whether done prior to or after election day, but prior to certification if have any 50% measures on ballot.</td>
<td>Do not inactivate until after certification of election. (OAR 165-007-0130 (3))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proactively update signatures on file with postcards
Streamline your registration forms and processes

Streamlining and nudging in voter registration

Some of us at the Center for Civic Design used to think about voter registration as just an enabling task, something voters had to do to get access to a ballot. It was a way of authenticating (or at least getting affirmation) that a person was eligible to vote. A necessary step.

In working with several states on modernizing voter registration, it’s clear that after the initial phase, voter registration can be streamlined.
Spread the word about verifying and updating registration

Flatten the curve of voter registration and list maintenance! Get as much activity out of the way before Sept./Oct. as you can.
If ERIC member, download reports and act within NVRA timeline

Haven’t done list maintenance in the last year? Soon is a good time.
If not ERIC member, use NCOA, SSA, etc. and act within NVRA timeline

What update sources are available? When’s the last time they were used?
Review your security protocols for your voter registration data

Like in 2016, voter records will be attractive target for cyber attacks in 2020
Challenges and learnings

REFLECTIONS FROM DANIEL WADE
Weber County, Utah at a glance

- Utah’s 4th most populous county
- 110,355 active registered voters
- Votes by mail, normally has vote centers, but vote centers eliminated for June 20 primary
- Utah a ERIC member since 2012 (a founding state)
- Daniel in role since 2015
List maintenance challenges in Weber County

- Accommodating a transitory population
- Achieving current and accurate addressing
- Facing the reality that maintenance is a full-time job
Learnings about list maintenance in Weber County

- Tasks must be performed *early* and *often*
- Vote-by-mail is the ultimate resource available
The role of the Electronic Registration Information Center

HOW ERIC CAN SUPPORT YOUR ELECTION DEPARTMENT
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Member States</th>
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<td>Alabama</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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So, how is ERIC thinking about supporting accurate voter records in this challenging year?
ERIC has ideas for expanded list maintenance, focusing on outreach

Helping states focus on the records that need the most attention
ERIC plans to expand the “eligible but unregistered” report

Giving people another chance will help ensure more complete and accurate voter lists
ERIC is actively seeking feedback and suggestions from states

They’re assessing needs and brainstorming ways to help states
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 questions come up for you...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll find someone for you who can

hello@techandciviclife.org
We’ve covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP
# Today’s resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CISA guide: “Importance of Accurate Voter Data”</td>
<td></td>
<td>cisa.gov/protect2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Registration Information Center</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ericstates.org">www.ericstates.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Voter Registration Day Outreach Grant (not aimed at election departments)</td>
<td></td>
<td>nationalvoterregistrationday.org/apply-for-2020-outreach-grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Civic Design: “Voter Registration Forms in Pennsylvania (and Others)”</td>
<td></td>
<td>civicdesign.org/voter-registration-forms-in-pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ModernReg.org: The Voter Registration Modernization Resource Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>modernreg.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timeline considerations, 146 days out:

Applications for ballots
   ○ Outbound application envelope approval from USPS (140 days)

Outbound ballots -- logistics
   ○ Artwork approval with USPS (140 days)

Voter list maintenance
   ○ Process NCOA list (60 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 course 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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