

The New Reality of Voting by Mail: 2016 was Like No Other Year

EAC Board of Advisors Meeting
Minneapolis, MN
May 23rd, 2017

Messaging for Election Officials

From Maryland to Washington State, Phoenix to Tampa, clerks associations to conferences of the Secretaries of State, the message has been that we have a New Reality of postal service that we need to be aware of and ensure that our procedures and instructions enable voters to participate effectively.



There is a gap...

Election administration is a profession of constant change.

Changes based on federal law, state law, federal lawsuits, local litigation, administrative rules, and limitations in resources.

Indiana: Tipp Co. Clerk: August allows enough time to choose new software

Iowa: Court decision leaves Montrose woman without voting rights

Louisiana: Group seeks to restore felons' voting rights | 70K convicted felons sue to get their voting rights back

Minnesota: Voters to get first opportunity for mail balloting with August primary | Some Brown Co. precincts will have mail balloting

Nevada: Officials say lining up election cycles could save millions

North Carolina: Appeals court tosses district maps for commissioners, school board | June primary cost \$18 per vote | Re-cast of provisional March 15 primary ballots to begin in July

North Dakota: Fargo poised to study election changes, including runoffs

2016: A year of collaboration



States are organizing Postal Task Forces to share information and resources.

The State of Washington has special education sessions at their state association conference and frequent meetings with regional leadership.



Throughout 2016 USPS® officials, including the Deputy Post Master General on numerous occasions, engaged with election officials across the country to identify issues and propose solutions.



National Postal Forum 2016

Regional Focus Group



Delivering Democracy: The Critical Role of USPS® in American Elections

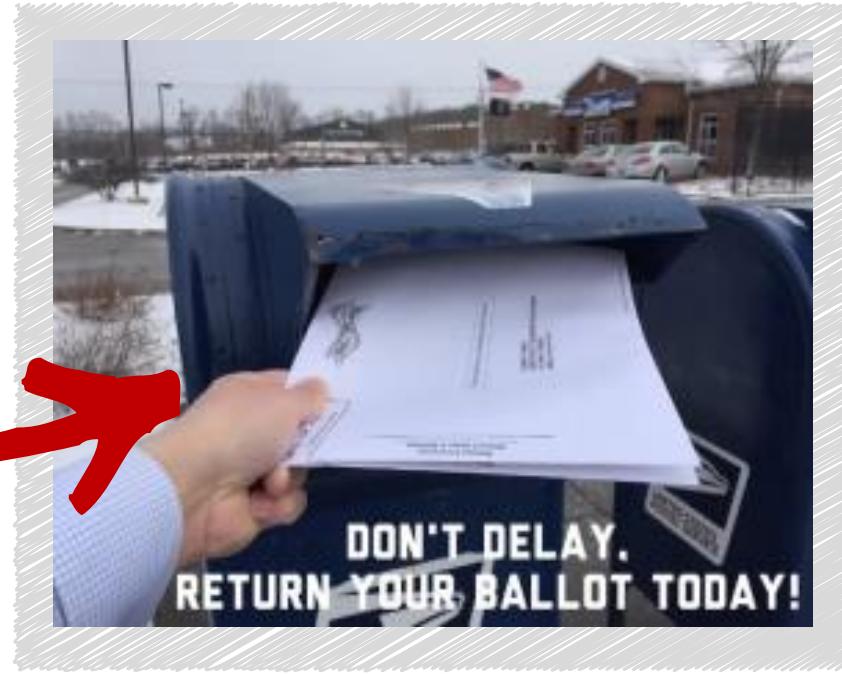
Tammy Patrick

Webinar conducted
for USPS on July 6th
that shared by over
980 Postal Service
employees

Presentation July
18th for Election Mail
Specialists

2016 Election Season

An increasing number of Americans are voting by mail



Election administrators rely on the partnership with their vendors and USPS® to inform them of the best ways to leverage voting by mail.

9

Consistent Advice Around Election Mail is Essential



Poll workers, USPS® employees and the Mailing Industry are on the front lines in providing consistent guidance and service to election customers.

NVRA National Voter Registration Act

Election officials use mailings to verify that voters still reside where they are registered.



NVRA

National Voter Registration Act

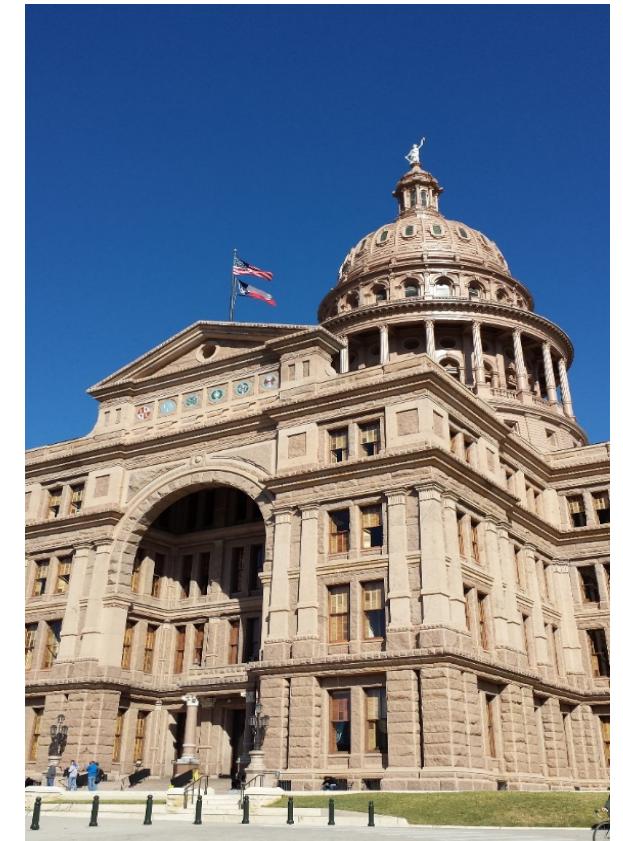
When information from USPS® states that a voter is no longer at an address the voter is put on an inactive list and, if they do not vote during two federal election cycles, their voter registration is cancelled.

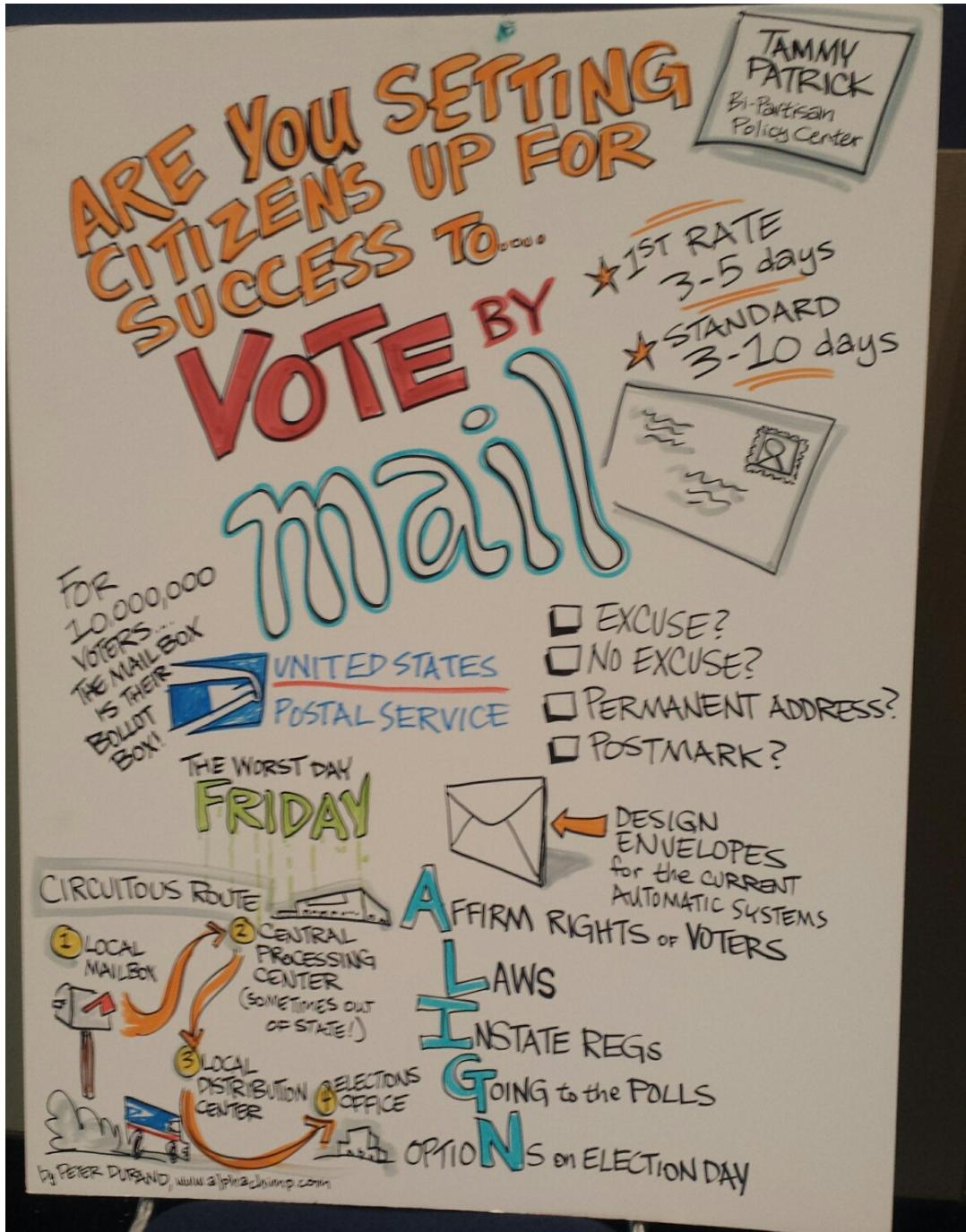
Depending on the state, this can impact their ability to vote in other elections.



Variation in State Laws: Absentee/Early Voting

- The ability to vote by mail depends on state laws:
- Excuse required
- No excuse
- Permanent List
- All-mail elections
- Deadlines to request vary greatly across the states, with some allowing for requests as late as the Monday before Election Day Tuesday.
- *Laws should allow time for the voter to be successful.*





National Conference of State Legislatures

Message to the legislators:
Review your statutes to make
sure that voters can be successful
given the delivery standards.

“The bottom line – The Postal Service Our commitment – Election Mail will be processed within our Delivery Standards”

These standards
changed early in 2015.

First-Class Mail: DMM 333.2.0

- Personal, handwritten, or typed information
- **2-5 day delivery (50 United States)**
- Free forwarding and return
- Sealed against inspection

Standard Mail: DMM 243.2.0

- No personal, handwritten, or typed information
- **3-10 day delivery (Contiguous 48 United States)**
- Forwarding/return require endorsement and a fee
- May be opened for postal inspection

Communication: With USPS

- USPS:
 - Local Post Master
 - Mail Design Analyst: MDA Support Center (855) 593-6093 or mda@usps.gov
 - Regional Election Mail representatives found online:
 - <http://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/>

Lead Coordinators											
Area	Area	Atlanta	Baltimore	Capital	Greater South Carolina	Greensboro	Mid-Carolinas	Northern Virginia	Richmond	Tennessee	Western
CapMetro	Kevin Bray 404-792-3141	Nicole Spencer (770) 717-3708	Judy Wood (410) 347-4432	Sylvia Moss (202) 636-1027	Mike Lance (803) 926-6060	Paul Ludwig (336) 931-9497	Steve Place (704) 393-4566	Lisa Jones-Brown (703) 698-6491	Robin Stinson (804) 737-3571		
Eastern	Gene Schwemmer (412) 494-2197	Appalachian (304) 561-1058	Central Pennsylvania (717) 396-6994	Cincinnati (513) 684-5523	Kentuckiana (502) 454-1789	Northern Ohio (216) 443-4184	Philadelphia Metro (215) 863-5048	South Jersey (1) (856) 933-4263	South Jersey (2) (856) 933-4397	Tennessee (615) 885-9113	Western (716) 8
Great Lakes	Tim Anderson (630) 539-7471	Central Illinois (708) 563-7476	Chicago (312) 983-7661	Detroit (248) 758-5715	Gateway (314) 436-3509	Greater Indiana (317) 464-6282	Greater Michigan (616) 977-4745	Lakeland (608) 246-1259			
Northeast	William Bulger (860) 285-7099	Albany (518) 452-4006	Caribbean (787) 622-1791	Connecticut Valley (860) 524-6361	Greater Boston (617) 654-5892	Long Island (516) 221-1390	New York (212) 330-3872	Northern New England (207) 482-7215	Northern New Jersey (973) 468-7178	Triboro (718) 348-3135	West (914) 6
Pacific	Kelly Porter (858) 674-2681	Bay-Valley (510) 874-8427	Honolulu (808) 423-3830	Los Angeles (323) 586-1240	Sacramento (916) 373-8054	San Diego (858) 674-0182	San Francisco (415) 550-5024	Santa Ana (714) 662-6447	Sierra Coastal (661) 775-7834		
Southern	Teresa Farley (214) 912-1841	Area (1) (214) 783-5313	Area (2) (205) 521-0349	Alabama (501) 228-4121	Arkansas (501) 462-2209	Dallas (817) 317-3863	Fort Worth (817) 317-3863	Houston (713) 226-3201	Louisiana (504) 589-1104	Mississippi (601) 351-7125	Gulf Atlantic (904) 645-3220
Western	Al Cunningham (303) 313-5973	Area (907) 266-3368	Alaska (602) 225-3150	Arizona (316) 946-4633	Central Plains (303) 853-6558	Colorado/Wyoming (605) 333-2642	Dakotas (515) 283-7608	Hawkeye (816) 504-3200	Mid-America (702) 361-9286	Nevada-Sierra (651) 681-2604	Portland (503) 2

Communication: With USPS



(2 of 4) Hal

District Election Information

District Name	CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
ZIP Range	169 - 188, 195 - 196
Lead Coordinator	Dawn Chalk
Phone	570-831-3420

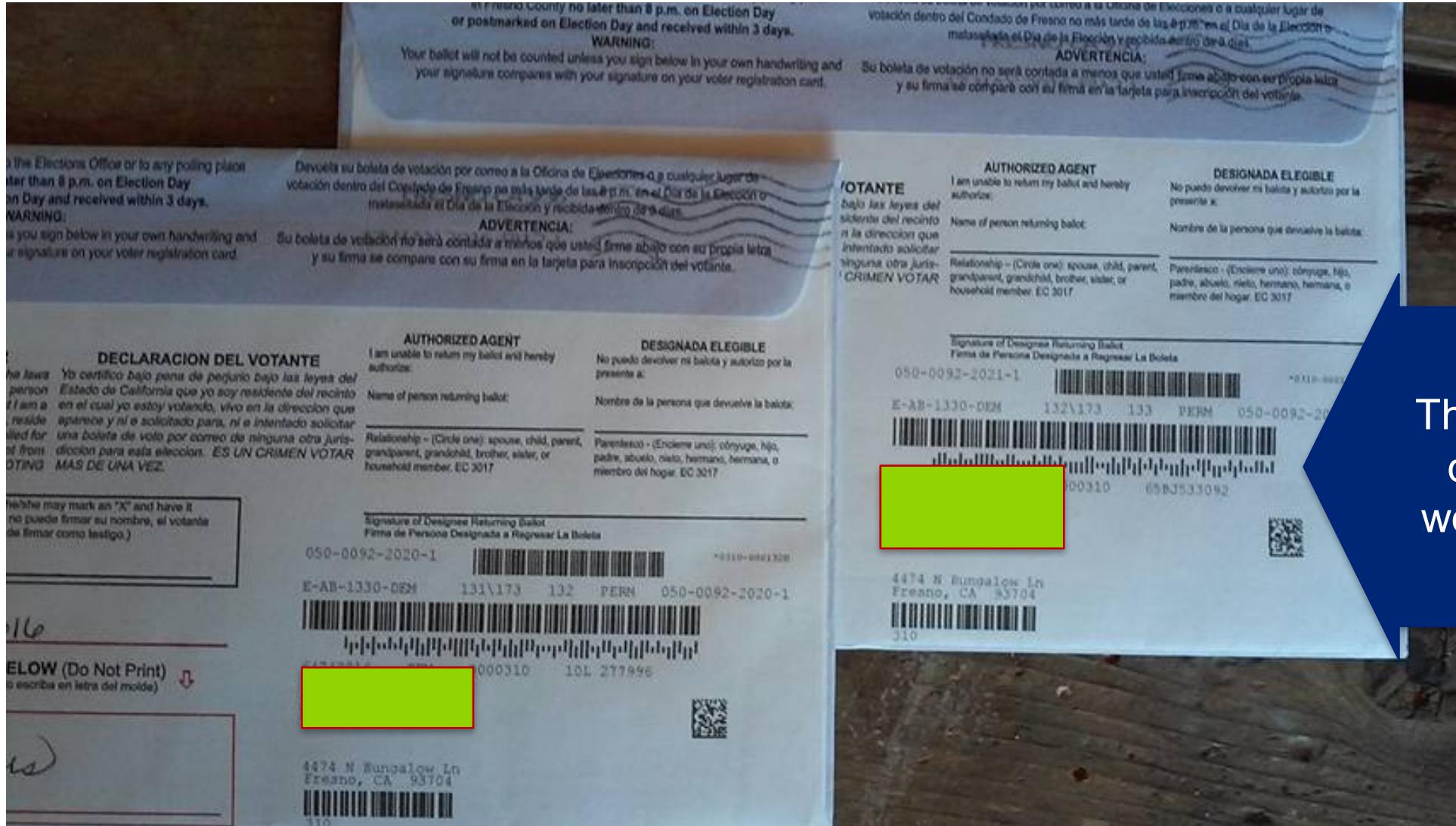
+ Zoom to

Communication: With USPS

- USPS:
 - They tasked all of their Election Mail Specialists with reaching out to every local jurisdiction in the country by AUGUST 15th last year.
 - They entered in their contacts into a centralized reporting system where efforts are being tracked and accountability is enforced.

Communication: With USPS

- What to advise them:
 - Mailing dates & prospective volumes
 - Election Dates
 - Coordinate election night ballot pickup & facility sweep advise if you have colored envelopes or other visual indicators to look for (are you using Business Reply Mail?)
 - *Any changes you've had (or are considering) regarding design, size, content, etc.*



This is right where a delivery address would be located...



Envelope Design Considerations

FOR CLERK'S USE ONLY

Ballot Envelope Returned: Date _____ Time _____ Received By _____

I certify that I have checked the signature on this envelope with the signature on file and they agree.

X _____
Election Official

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ABSENT VOTER

I assert that I am a United States citizen and a qualified and registered elector of the city, township or village named below. I am voting as an absent voter in conformity with state election law. Unless otherwise indicated below, I personally marked the ballot enclosed in this envelope without exhibiting it to any other person.

I further assert that this absent voter ballot is being returned to the clerk or an assistant of the clerk by me personally; by public postal service, express mail service, parcel post service, or other common carrier; by a member of my immediate family; or by a person residing in my household.

SIGN HERE: X _____
Signature of Absent Voter _____ Date _____
THE ABOVE FORM MUST BE SIGNED OR YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED.
AN ABSENT VOTER WHO KNOWINGLY MAKES A FALSE STATEMENT IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR.

▼ VOTER'S NAME, ADDRESS, CITY, STATE, ZIP ▼

Ballot No. 133 Precinct No. 9

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF VOTER IS ASSISTED IN VOTING BY ANOTHER PERSON

I assisted the herein named absent voter who is disabled or otherwise unable to mark his/her absent voter ballot pursuant to his/her directions. The absent voter ballot was inserted into the return envelope without being exhibited to any other person.

Signature of Person Assisting Voter _____

Print Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

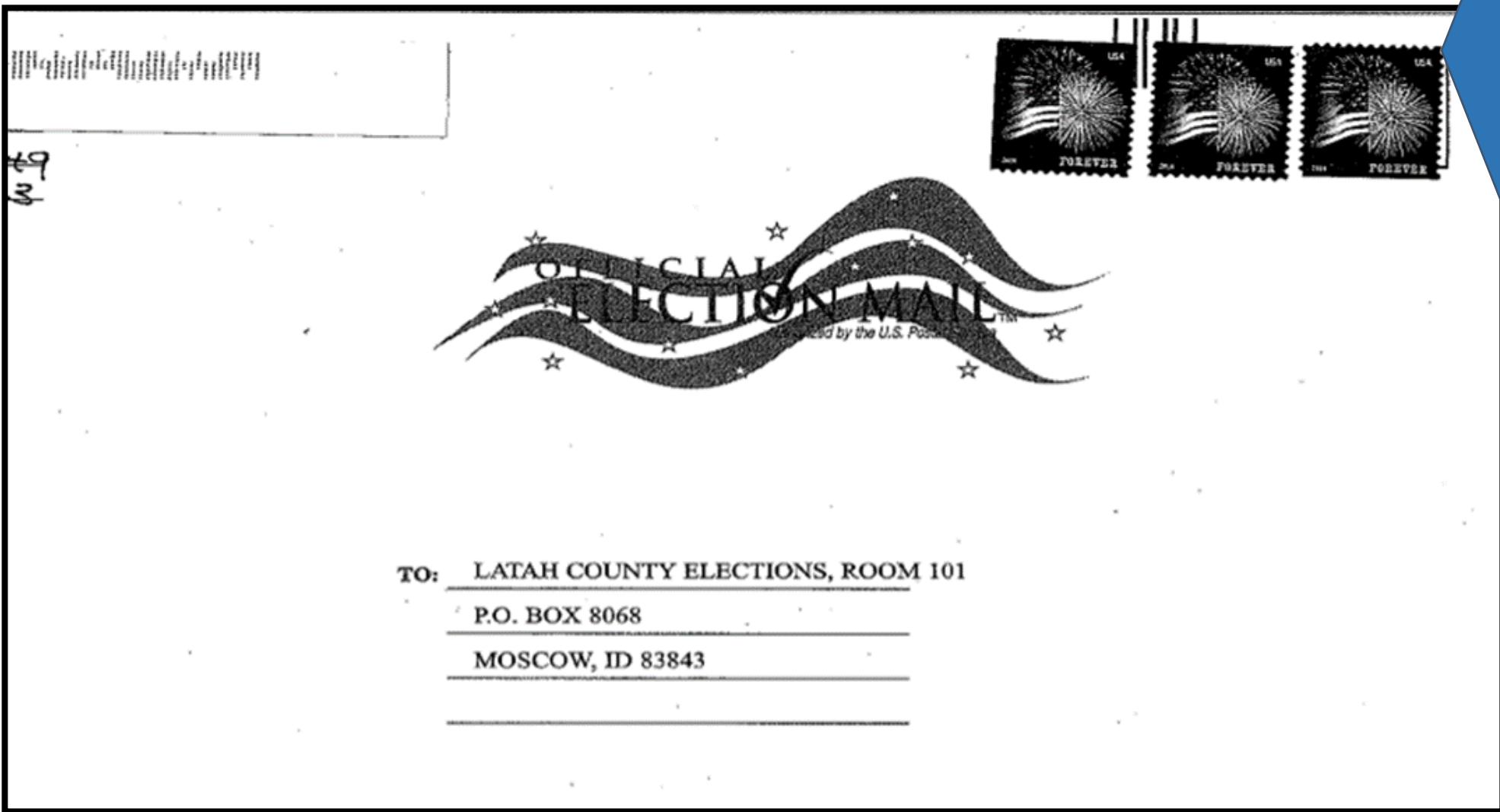
A PERSON WHO ASSISTS AN ABSENT VOTER AND

Many examples of this

Barcode: 08/02/2016 00009 00000133

Barcode: 08/02/2016 00009 00000133

Where the voter
puts the stamps is
also impactful!



2017-2018

That is why USPS is asking for examples of ballot mailing packets to use when they need to test the automation equipment when changes are made to the software or to the orientation algorithm.

Send 10 examples to:

US Postal Service

Attn: Election Mail Program Manager

PO Box 23282

Washington, DC 20026-3282

2017-2018

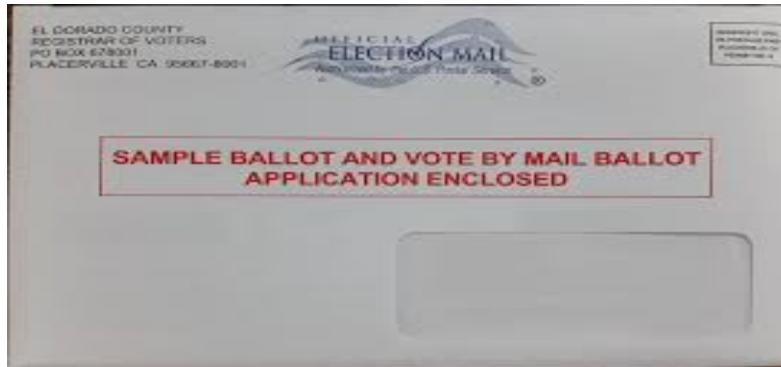
They are also asking for any statutory language associated with the content or format of the mailing envelopes:

dbentley@usps.gov

Communication: Mail House/Vendor

- Ask about ballot tracking – you may be mailing out with an IMB, but not getting the benefit. Be sure you are getting a unique identifier from your vendor.
- If you are still keying all the yellow move tags, ask about Address Change Service (ACS) & get that information electronically





Elections rely on USPS® for:

- Pollworker solicitations
- Sample Ballots
- Polling place location cards
- Candidate information
- Publicity Pamphlets
- NCOA and List Maintenance
- Ballot requests

Perhaps most critically for many voters:
BALLOT DELIVERY

Ballot Delivery to the Voter



Mailing Ballots at Standard Mail®

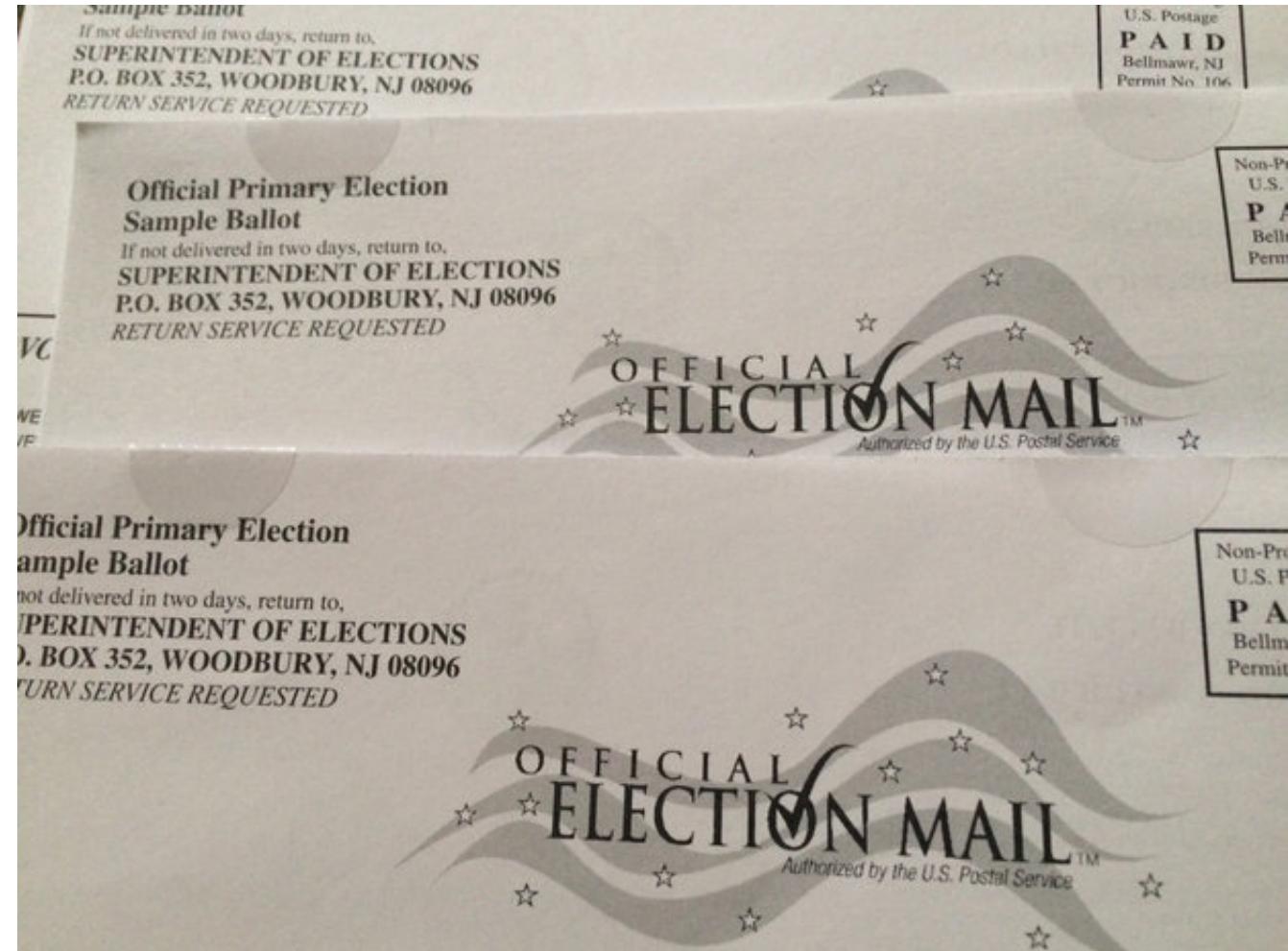
Many states mail out ballots at a Standard Mail® rate, which is subject to inspection, they need to be certain to include an “example mailing” for review.





All USPS® staff at intake & processing should know about Tag 191 for official balloting material (not just the red tag for political mail)

Although it isn't required (YET?), all election officials should be using the Official Election Mail logo:



2017

Visibility in the
mailstream is
increasing with a
new service:
Informed Delivery.



2017

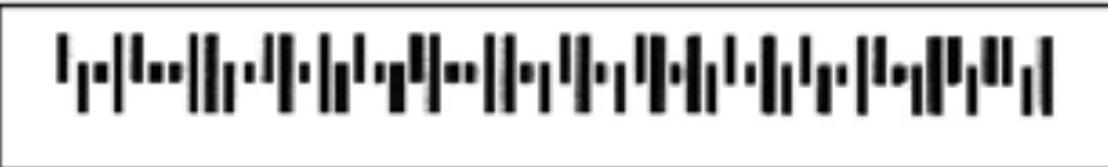
Pilot has been expanded to national coverage. Promotions also in the works for providing digital content.



USPS Informed Delivery

2017-2018

The Intelligent Mail barcode



The POSTNET barcode



6-digit Mailer Identifier

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Barcode ID [2N]	Service Type ID [3N]		Mailer ID [6N]		Serial Number [9N]		Routing Code [none, 5, 9, or 11N]																							

Service type ID for ballots: ETA 2018

Ballot Return



Ballot Return: What to tell voters?

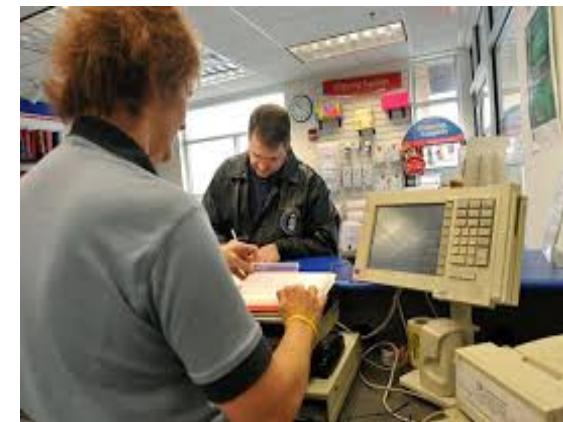
Unless the election official is paying for the return of the ballot or have an overage account, the voter instructions need to advise the voter of the cost to mail back the ballot (DMM® 703.8).

Many will do this as an insert with the ballot:



Consistency of message is critical

2 Jurisdictions with exact same ballot material envelope recently were told 2 different costs for voters to return their ballots. One was 47 cents, the other 68:



Now the one that put 47 cents on their return envelopes is getting calls from voters that

- 1) they're being told when they mail them that they need additional postage and, even worse
- 2) some voters are getting their ballots back in the mail as insufficient funds...

DEADLINES & Options!!

Voters need to be mindful when dropping ballots into blue boxes of pick-up/collection times...

Rural offices may have truncated hours to consider.

Do voter instructions clearly explain return options?





Use of color in the envelope or in striping increases the visibility of the ballot in the mail stream



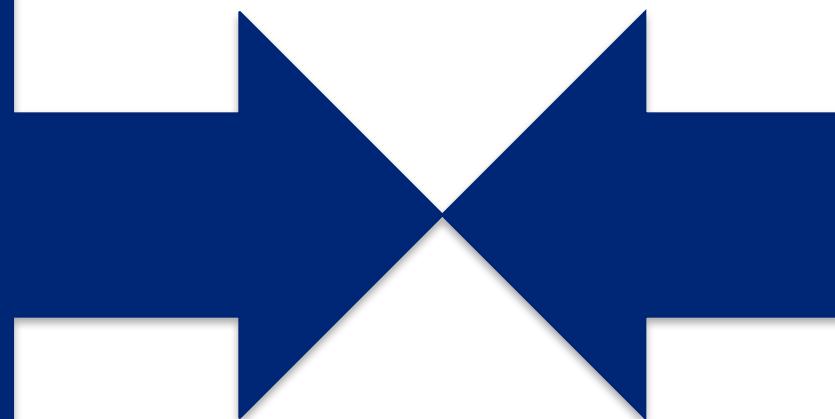
And how smart is this?
This ensures the
envelope is empty and
they are bundled in
batches for ease of
counting and auditing

What to Look Out For



“The U.S. Postal Service® recommends that voters mail ballots *one week before the due date* to account for any unforeseen events or weather issues and to allow for timely receipt and processing by election officials”

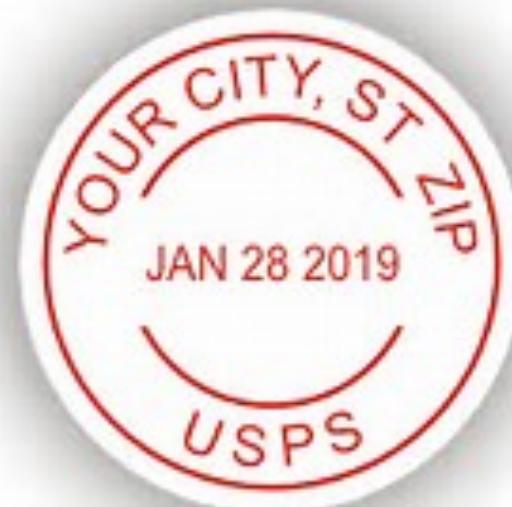
States with in-hand deadlines are looking to reduce the numbers that arrive late that cannot be counted. Looking to use of postmark.



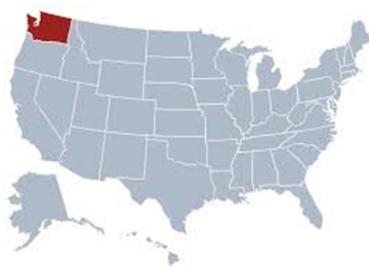
States using postmarks have issue with lack-of or illegible ones. Considering going back to in-hand or other alternatives.

DEADLINES & Options!!

Voters can go into any USPS® counter and ask that their ballot envelope be hand-cancelled (also referred to as a “round-stamp”).

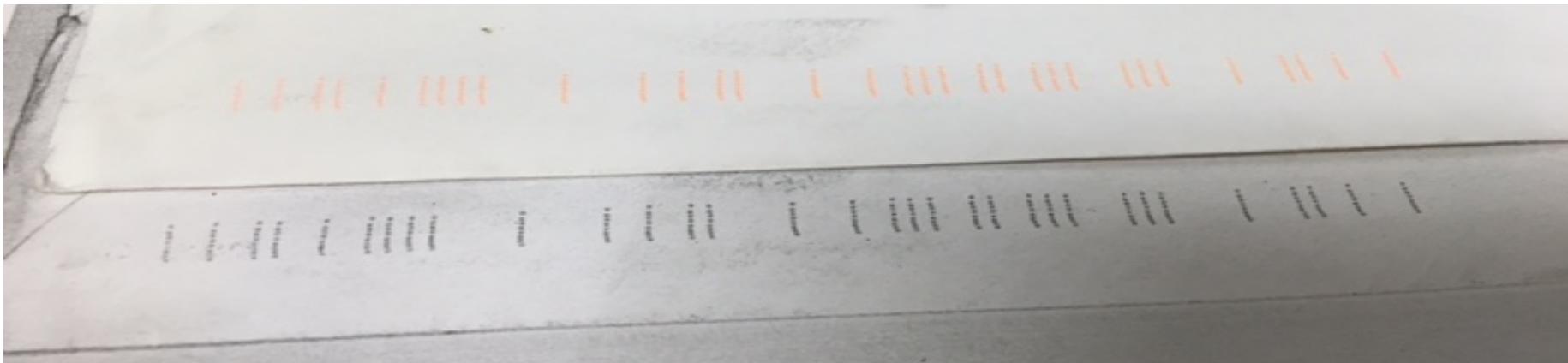


Ballot Return Considerations



Postmarking/cancellation issues have driven states to allow for other methods to ensure that the voter submitted the ballot in the statutory timeframe:

- WA: Use of the date the voter used in signing the affidavit
- OH: Use scanning data from USPS®





Iowa Legislation: Allow IMb™ data

- 14 b. The sealed return envelope may be mailed to the commissioner by the registered voter or by
15 the voter's designee. If mailed by the voter's designee, the envelope must be mailed within
16 seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the voter or within time to be postmarked, or bear an
17 intelligent mail barcode showing the point of entry into the mail system, not later than the day
18 before the election, whichever is earlier.
- 19 2. In order for the ballot to be counted, the return envelope must be received in the
20 commissioner's office before the polls close on election day or be clearly postmarked by an
21 officially authorized postal service, or bear an intelligent mail barcode showing the point of entry
22 into the mail system, not later than the day before the election and received by the commissioner
23 not later than noon on the Monday following the election.
- 24 2. If the law authorizing the election specifies that the supervisor canvass the votes earlier than

DEADLINES & Options!!

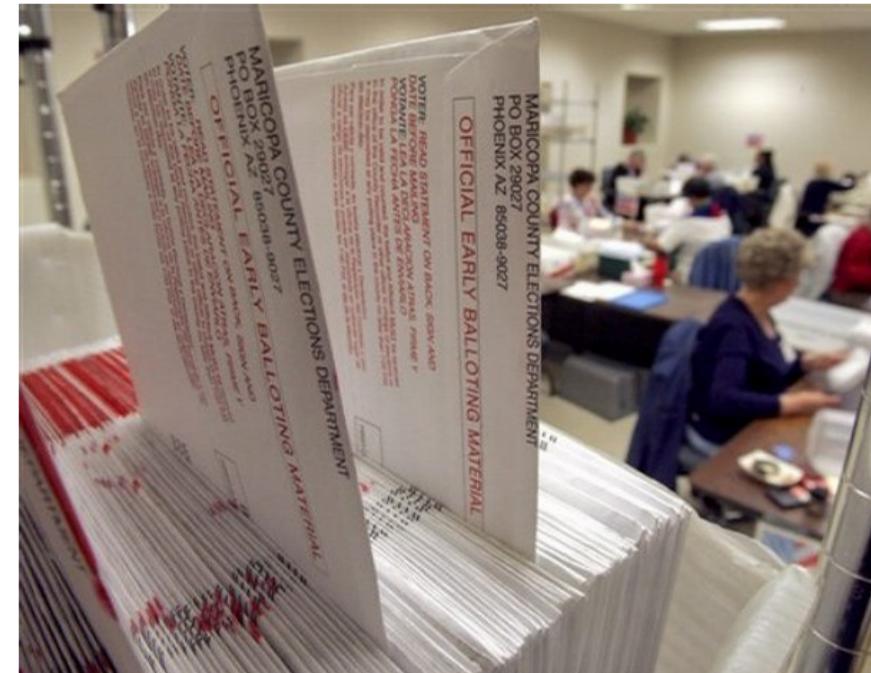
Some states allow other options in returning their ballot such as drop-boxes before Election Day and at the traditional polling locations (for states that have them).



Election Official Data Collection

Don't wait until ED+1 (Wednesday) to discover if there are issues!

Election officials are advised to train staff to look for dates out of the delivery range & missing postmarks (if applicable) as they process the incoming ballot envelopes.



ELECTIONMAIL.ORG

In an effort to document issues to identify true scope and causes, and then provide best practices to election officials to mitigate these challenges, www.electionmail.org was created by Democracy Works and The Bipartisan Policy Center with the generous support of the Democracy Fund.

Submissions are sent directly to USPS® in DC:

The screenshot shows a web page titled "ELECTIONMAIL.ORG" with a sub-header "REPORT A PROBLEM WITH ELECTION MAIL". The page contains a form for reporting problems with election mail. The form includes fields for Name, Email Address, Phone Number, and Election Jurisdiction, each with a required indicator (*). There is also a checkbox for "Does this issue impact..." and a note about the form's purpose: "Local and state election officials may use this form to report past or current issues with official Election Mail processed by the United States Postal Service. This form is intended as a supplement to official reporting, and should not replace communication with your local post office. If you are a voter experiencing a problem, please contact your local election official."



ELECTIONMAIL.ORG

This reporting tool has helped to identify inconsistency in understanding of some basics surrounding election mail:

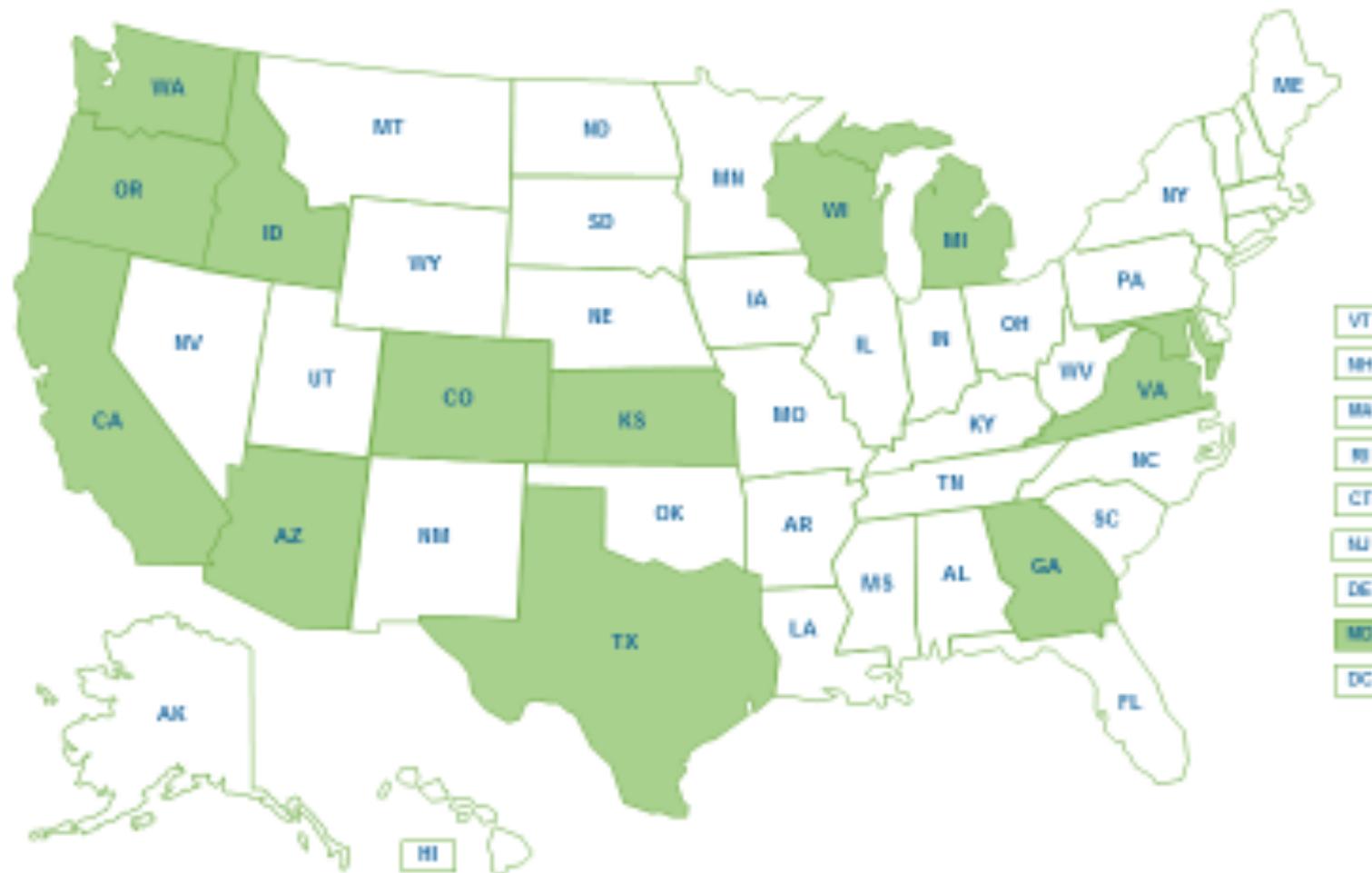
- MI: Military ballots being denied for postage when they had the correct indicia
- CA: Voted ballots that were held for weeks and then sent to the Mail Recovery Center rather than to the election department
- NCOA & MyMove: routing of voter registrations to the correct election official

What type of problem are you reporting? *

- Delivery delay
- Damaged mail
- Lost mail
- Undeliverable/returned mail
- Addressing/CASS/NCOA
- Rate/class qualification
- Postmark/cancellation
- Misdirected mail
- Intelligent Mail tracking
- Communication/responsiveness
- Other

STATES WHICH HAVE USED ELECTIONMAIL.ORG

52



www.votebymail.gov



What to Look Out For

Trays/pallets of election mail that sit in excess of delivery standards.

*If you see something,
say something!*





Checklist for voters who vote by mail

Checklist for election administrators

Checklist for state legislators

Checklist for USPS®

For tens of millions of voters their mailbox
is their ballot box



**By working together we can be certain that
their voices are heard!**



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