VRDB

Version 2.x

NOTE: It is critical that this information is read and understood before using the program, particularly with regard to creating the report from LCR. A lot of time can be wasted if this information is disregarded or not followed as written.

Requirements

This program has been tested on x64 editions of Windows 10 and 11. It should work on any system with adequate available disk space (~5 GB).

Support

If you encounter issues, send an email to advappsw@gmail.com.

License

This program is licensed under the Apace 2.0 license – see the license.txt file – and is free for personal use. However, the data imported from an extract is subject to the same limitations and permissions of the extract as found in the "Extract Readme.PDF" which came with the extract.

Installation Locations

The program is installed in the "%PROGRAMFILES%\Advanced Applications\VRDB" folder. The data files are located in the user's "%APPDATA%\Advanced Applications\VRDB" folder.

Obtaining Voter Registration Data

The Washington State Voter Registration data can be obtained by going to the menu bar and selecting "Help > Submit Request". This opens a web page where a request can be submitted. These requests are generally approved and the data is made available for download for about two weeks. NOTE: This data is for non-commercial use as noted in the documents which come in the data download.

After downloading the archive (ZIP) file, extract the contents to a temporary folder. Once you have loaded the data into VRDB database, you can delete the download or keep it as desired. It is not required further after the data is loaded.

Loading Data

When the program first starts, it has no data and you must load the database. Depending upon the size of the extract this can take an hour or so.

1. In the menu bar, select "File > Load…" to open a dialog for selecting the extract file.
2. Locate the extract file; e.g., 202101_VRDB_Extract.txt.
3. Highlight the extract file; then click [Open].
   - A panel will appear to show the progress of loading the data.
   - When complete, the progress panel will disappear and the results are displayed in the status panel

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Once the data has been loaded, this does not need to be done again unless you obtain a new extract.

Data Considerations

The voter registration database can serve as another data point when attempting to determine addresses for members who may have moved out of the ward, members who have relocated within the ward, or members who have traditionally be difficult to contact or determine whether the address is accurate. However, there are some caveats when using this data:

- The voter registration data has been entered at different times by different people and there can be inconsistencies. There can be misspellings, missing street direction identifiers, transposed digits, etc. Because of this, when comparing against member records, it should not automatically be assumed that the voter registration data is correct. If a compare indicates there is a difference between member data and voter registration data, this is **only an indicator** that it requires manual review and consideration whether a change to the member record is warranted.
- Before using the database, it is highly recommended that all member records are reviewed in Leader and Clerk Records (LCR) and each member address put into standardized form by using the suggested address when saving. Taking this step can reduce the number of false negatives identified during the compare process.
  - This is particularly important if using the automated Compare capability.
  - Having taken this initial step, you need only continue using standardized addresses when new records are brought into your unit.
  - This effort has other obvious benefits of just cleaning up the member record information, and possibly uncovering; e.g., a PO Box listed in the residential address instead of the mailing address.

Manual Search

A manual search can be made using the entry fields and clicking [Search]. Tool tips appear when you hover over each text box. You can use the wildcard '%' to search with partial entries; e.g., 'BAR%' will return all values starting with 'BAR'. At minimum, to reduce the time taken to search the data, you should enter at least a partial **Last Name** and a **Birth Year**.

Automated Compare

Using the "Voter Registration Comparison" report (see the section Creating the Voter Registration Comparison Report at the end of this document), you can compare the output of the report against the contents of the database.

Steps:

1. Print a new report using the steps listed in the section Printing the Voter Registration Comparison Report, below.
2. Once the new report has been generated, click the [Compare] button.
3. Locate the "Voter Registration Comparison" report; click on it, then click [Open].
   a. The comparison will begin and a progress bar will appear showing the progress.

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4. Once the completed, each member record will appear in the display along with any information found in the voter registration data.
   a. Each row in the results grid displays the member identification from the LCR report (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, Birth Date, Gender), the associated address from the voter registration data (Address, City, State, Zip), the status of the voter registration data (Registered Date, Last Voted, and Status), and, finally, a column showing either "Missing", "Different", or "Same" based upon the success of the comparison.
   b. GREEN – the member was found in the voter registration database and the address matched exactly.
   c. YELLOW – the member was found in the voter registration database but the address did not match exactly
      i. This can be due to the address truly being different, a typo in either or both of the addresses, or simply a difference in entry; e.g., finding "Ave" (avenue) instead of "St" (street).
      ii. In any case, a review of the entry is necessary to determine what the difference truly is and whether there is need to take action with the member's record.
   d. RED – the member was not found in the voter registration database.
      i. This can be due to the member having moved out of Washington or having deceased. It can also be due to an inability to adequately match the member criteria to that in the database or to the member having not registered to vote.

The comparison matches individuals based upon the Last Name and Birth Year with the optional settings found under "Tools > Options > Compare". By default, the "Full First Name" option is enabled. So, unless the user changes the settings, the comparison searches for each individual matching by Last Name, Birth Year, and Full First Name. This generally provides the best match situation and accounts for changes in address or other factors.

The options allow including Gender and the Middle Initial. However, testing has shown that gender and middle names are sometimes missing (or marked "X" in the case of Gender) from the voter registration database so, including them, can produce false indications of members "Missing" from the voter registration database. Similarly, the options allow for **not** using the Full First Name (and using the First initial, instead) but this typically has shown to produce false "Different" indicators (where they should be "Missing") since the number of matches increases.

Also, the Street Name, Street Number, and Street Type can be used to provide the strictest match but, again, will not match if the person has moved between registering to vote and the output of the Comparison report PDF.

Exporting Results

Following a comparison or search, the results displayed in the grid may be exported. This can be a spreadsheet file (XLSX, usable by most spreadsheet software; e.g., Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, etc), to a CSV file (comma-delimited, strings in quotes), or a TXT file (tab-delimited) file.

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When exporting to an XLSX, by default, it employs conditional formatting to color the rows in the spreadsheet to match the rows in the results grid, dependent upon the value (Same, Different, Missing) in the "Compare" column. If your spreadsheet program cannot handle conditional formatting, you can disable this option from the menu bar.

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Printing the Voter Registration Comparison Report

1. From the menu bar in LCR, click on "Reports > Create a Report".
2. In the list of reports, locate the "Voter Registration Comparison" report.
3. To generate the PDF:
   a. To generate the report in portrait orientation:
      i. Click the "Printer" icon on the right to print the report.
   b. To generate the report in landscape orientation:
      i. Click the "Pencil" icon on the right to print the report.
      ii. On the right-hand side, click on "Preview".
      iii. Click the "Printer" icon at the upper-right and select "Landscape"; then click "Print".
4. The PDF of the report is generated.
5. From the PDF viewing page, click the "Download" icon in the upper-right (down-arrow).
6. When prompted, select where you will save the report and enter the name "Voter Registration Comparison"; then click [Save].
   a. Remember the location where you have saved the report. It is recommended you use something with easy access such as your desktop or temporary folder.

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Creating the Voter Registration Comparison Report

The report can be created by going into LCR and following these steps:

1. From the menu bar in LCR, click on "Reports > Create a Report".
2. From the "Create a Report" page, on the right-side, click the "+ Create Report" link.
3. Edit the title to be a meaningful title; e.g., "Voter Registration Comparison". Include the name of the ward if generating the report at the stake level.
4. Provide a description; e.g., "Report listing each adult member (18+) with DOB and address."
5. Click [Select…] and select "Age"; then select "Is or Is Greater Than"; then enter "18".
6. If generating the report at the stake level:
   a. Click the "+" to the lower-right to add an additional criterion.
   b. Click [Select…] and select "Unit"; then select "Is"; then select the specific ward/branch for this report.
7. Click [Continue].
8. Under "Columns", click on each of the following entries: "Address – City", "Address – Postal Code", "Address – State or Province", "Address – Street1", "Birth Date (1 Jan 1990)", "Full Name", and "Gender".
9. Click on the trash can icon beside "Preferred Name" to remove it.
10. If generating the report at the stake level:
    a. Click on the trash can icon beside "Unit" to remove it.
11. Under "Column Order", arrange the fields by clicking and dragging each title up or down. Arrange them in this order:
    a. Full Name
    b. Birth Date
    c. Gender
    d. Address – Street 1
    e. Address – City
    f. Address – State or Province
    g. Address – Postal Code
12. Click [Continue].
    a. The report appears showing member data from your unit.
13. Click [Save Report] to save it.

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