

USPS – Voter ID Card Issues

April, 2012

- **Voter identification cards must be mailed to the voter's registration address by 1st class mail, Return Service Requested (*nonforwardable mail*).** *Exception:* If the voter provides a post office box as an alternative mailing address, the voter identification card must be placed in an envelope which is addressed to the PO Box address. USPS provides Returned Service Requested at no additional charge for 1st class mailings. NOTE: There is also a "Temporary Return Service Requested" service (also free for 1st class) that will allow for forwarding only for those who have filed a TEMPORARY forwarding address with USPS. Use of the Temporary Return Service Requested service is also acceptable for voter ID cards.

Several scenarios are possible with respect to returned mail under this service, which include:

- Address change data
 - If no forwarding address is available, information on why a piece of mail was determined to be non-deliverable may be included when it is returned – such as no longer at this address, undeliverable and mailbox blocked. Mail may also be returned with no additional information.
 - The specific list of "non-deliverable" reasons may vary depending on the local post office.
 - If the additional reason(s) provide "reliable information that the person has moved", send the appropriate confirmation/cancellation notice. (Refer to the Clerk Accreditation manual, Chapter 2, "Returned Voter Identification Cards", and the "Reliable Information" flowchart posted on the BOE website, www.michigan.gov/elections.)
- Discounts are available for mailings of 500 or more. To obtain discounts, the post office requires mail to be *presorted* and to utilize a *move update method* such as the National Change of Address (NCOA) system. USPS offers all of these services, as do several private companies. These services all come at additional charge which varies depending on the source.
 - *Non-profit* mail rates are only available for standard-rate (not 1st class) mailings; therefore the non-profit rate cannot be used for ID card mailings. Note that "Return Service Requested" is an additional fee if you are using standard-rate or non-profit rate mail.
 - Layout – Return Service Requested indicia must be printed with ¼" clearance around the message. Some locally-developed ID card formats without this clearance have recently been rejected by some local post offices. The USPS indicates this has been a requirement for some time, with varying degrees of enforcement.

- “Election Mail” logo – many jurisdictions have begun to use the “Election Mail” logo to alert the USPS and recipients of official election-related mail. Use of this logo is trademarked, and there are strict requirements with respect to the design and the size, colors, and placement when it is used. Similar to the “Return Service Requested” message, there must be ¼” clearance around the “Election Mail” logo. Use of this logo does not guarantee special or expedited service, and does not provide discounted rates. It is simply a standardized logo that is used to distinguish election-related mail for postal carriers and recipients. See this link for more detailed information: <http://about.usps.com/publications/pub631.pdf>
- The USPS also offers a statewide mail design specialist that can assist local jurisdictions in designing their mailings and understanding the various USPS options and requirements. The statewide contact is Patty Grabb, phone: 313-226-8129, email: Patricia.c.grabb@usps.gov. There are also several “Mailing Requirements Clerks” that are available to specific areas of the state. These contacts are listed on the following page. These representatives can also assist with new design approval and also specialize in bulk mailing requirements.
- Clerks are encouraged to contact their local post office to alert them of planned mass mailings and other pertinent dates for election-related mailings. The USPS also publishes an Election Mail User’s Guide: <http://about.usps.com/publications/pub632.pdf>

US Postal Service contacts:

Mailpiece Design Analyst:

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Mailing Requirements:

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USPS Resources:

Postal Explorer: <http://pe.usps.gov/>

Info on Quick Service Guides, Domestic Mail Manual, Rate Calculator, Postage Statements

Business Customer Gateway: <https://gateway.usps.com/bcg/login.htm>

The Business Customer Gateway gives you a single, unified landing point to access the Postal Service's online business offerings. These channels consist of the products that support Intelligent Mail Full Service Mailing. This includes PostalOne!, FAST (Facility Access and Shipment Tracking), CLDS (Customer Label Distribution System), and Mailer IDs (MID).

Election Mail website: <https://www.usps.com/gov-services/gov-services.htm>

For information on preparing and sending mail, visit our Election Officials' Mailing Resources site at [usps.com/electionmail](https://www.usps.com/electionmail). You'll also find resources to help you plan, address, and design Official Election Mail.