



# **Election Officials Manual**

## **Chapter 2: Voter Registration**

September 2024

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# I. Introduction

This chapter lays out the legal framework governing voter registration in Michigan, as well as the technical aspects of maintaining and updating the voter rolls. Questions about the content of this chapter should be directed to [Elections@Michigan.gov](mailto:Elections@Michigan.gov).

## II. Eligibility to register to vote in Michigan

To register to vote in Michigan, a person must be all of the following:

- A Michigan resident at the time the person registers to vote
- A resident of the city or township in which the person is registering to vote for at least 30 days when the person appears to vote
- A United States citizen
- At least 17.5 years old, and at least 18 years old on or by the election in which the person votes
- Not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison

### Defining residence

For voter registration purposes, a person's residence is the place at which a person habitually sleeps, keeps their personal effects, and has a regular place of lodging.

A person's place of residence for voter registration purposes may differ from the individual's residence for tax or other purposes. Voter registration forms are self-certifying; by signing the registration form, an applicant indicates that, for voting purposes, the applicant is a resident of the jurisdiction in which the applicant is registering and a resident of the address at which the person is registering.

Only residential addresses may be used for voter registration purposes. A person cannot register to vote using a business address unless the business address is also the address at which the person resides. If a person is unhoused and does not have a traditional residential address, they may provide cross streets or a landmark in the address field describing their location.



## **Persons with criminal convictions**

Any otherwise qualified person who is not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison may register to vote and cast a ballot, even if they have a past criminal conviction.

## **Persons confined to jail or prison**

A person may register to vote and cast a ballot if they are in jail awaiting trial or sentencing. A person who is currently serving a sentence in jail or prison may not register to vote or cast a ballot.

## **Registration by persons between 17.5 and 18 years of age**

A person who meets the other qualifications to register to vote may apply to register to vote when they reach 17.5 years of age. A person may only cast a ballot, however, for an election that occurs when they are at least 18 years of age. Early voting or absentee voting before Election Day are permitted as long as they are 18 on Election Day. If a person applies to register to vote after turning 17.5 but before turning 18, the Qualified Voter File (QVF) will mark the individual's registration with the date that the person applied to register to vote and with the effective date of their eligibility to vote—the day on which the person turns 18. The voter's name will not appear on a precinct list until an election that occurs once they are eligible to vote.

## **Preregistration by persons between 16 and 17.5 years of age**

A person who meets the other qualifications to register to vote may preregister to vote when they reach 16 years of age. Once a preregistered person turns 17.5, the voter does not need to take additional action to become a registered voter. The voter will be considered registered, and the clerk will mail them their Voter Information Card. However, the person may only cast a ballot for an election that occurs after they are 18 years of age. Early voting or absentee voting are permitted as long as they are 18 on Election Day). QVF information for preregistrants is confidential and not subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests until the individual turns 17.5.



## **Address Confidentiality Program participants**

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) was created to conceal the addresses of victims of domestic violence and individuals at risk of being harmed if they are located through public records. ACP participants who register to vote in Michigan are registered at their actual address but provide a designated (substitute) address on their voter registration form and receive elections mail at their designated address. The voter registration form of an ACP participant is confidential and not subject to FOIA requests.

## **Name changes**

If a voter holds a Michigan driver's license or state ID, name changes must be made in person at a Secretary of State office. If the voter's legal name is different from what is on their birth certificate or legal presence document, they must show official proof of the name change, such as an official marriage certificate, a certified divorce decree, or a court order. Upon the receipt of a name change, the clerk updates the voter's Master Card and prepares and mails the voter a new Voter Information Card. Voters without a Michigan driver's license or state ID should contact BOE to change their name on their voter registration.

## **Updating voter registration with new address**

Unless otherwise specified, for the purposes of timelines, proof of residency, or other procedures laid out in this chapter, there is no difference between a person registering to vote in Michigan for the first time or a person updating an existing voter registration record to reflect a new address. A person may update their voter registration address at any time. However, within 14 days of Election Day, a person must update their voter registration address in person at their local clerk's office in order to vote in that election. Voters updating their registration will need to satisfy the voter identification requirement and provide proof of residency. A person may update their voter registration on Election Day as long as they are in line by 8 p.m. Upon updating their voter registration on Election Day, the person is entitled to complete and return an absent voter ballot at the clerk's office or cast a ballot at an Election Day vote center if one is available in their jurisdiction.

### *Voters who have moved to a new city or township in Michigan 60 or fewer days prior to the election*

An individual who moves residence from one city or township in Michigan to another city or township in Michigan within 60 calendar days of an election,



and who is ineligible to participate in the upcoming election in their new jurisdiction because either they have either lived in that jurisdiction for fewer than 30 days prior to the election or because they have not yet registered to vote in their new jurisdiction, is eligible to vote in their old jurisdiction during the upcoming election. If the voter has moved to a new jurisdiction and has registered to vote there, the voter cannot return to their old jurisdiction to vote. Finally, after the upcoming election occurs, the voter must vote in their new jurisdiction in future elections; they are ineligible to return to their old jurisdiction to vote.

### *Voters who have moved to a new city or township more than 60 days prior to the election*

A voter who has moved residence from one city or township in Michigan to another city or township in Michigan more than 60 calendar days prior to an election must register to vote in their new city or township of residence to participate in the upcoming election. The voter cannot vote in their old city or township of residence.

### *Voters who have moved within their city or township*

A voter who has moved within the city or township in which the voter is registered will always be permitted to vote in their old precinct of registration one last time after the move. When the voter appears to vote at their old precinct, the voter will be asked to, or may request to, change their registration to their new address using the *Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration*.

Alternatively, a voter who has moved within the city or township in which the voter is registered may choose to proactively update their voter registration with their local clerk. If the voter chooses to update their voter registration address 14 or fewer days prior to an election, the voter must make that update in person at their local clerk's office and must provide proof of residency as explained later in this chapter. A voter making an update to their registration address 14 or fewer days prior to an election is entitled to complete and return an absent voter ballot at the time they update their registration address.

Because a voter may only vote in their new city or township once they have lived there for at least 30 days, a change in address in the 30-day period before an election may affect the voter's ability to vote in certain races. Questions about this topic should be directed to [Elections@Michigan.gov](mailto:Elections@Michigan.gov).





### **III. Voter registration timelines**

A person may register to vote at any time until 8 p.m. on Election Day. If the person is in line to register at 8 p.m. on Election Day, they must be allowed to register and vote in the election, including after 11:59 p.m. on Election Day if necessary. The requirements a person must satisfy to register to vote, however, depend on the proximity of the date of the person's voter registration to the date of the election.

#### **Registering 15 or more days before an election**

If the next election is 15 or more calendar days in the future, a person who is eligible to register to vote may submit a registration application in any of the following ways:

- At a Secretary of State office
- Through the Secretary of State Renewal by Mail program
- Through the Secretary of State online change of address program
- Online at Michigan.gov/Vote
- By mail
- With a state agency administering public assistance or assisting persons with disabilities
- With a designated voter registration agency
- By filling out a voter registration form delivered by a third party to the local clerk
- In person at the local clerk's office

If the voter application is valid and properly completed, the person will be eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

#### **Registering 14 or fewer days before an election**

If the next election is 14 or fewer calendar days in the future, a person who is eligible to register to vote who wishes to participate in the upcoming election must register to vote in person at their local clerk's office. When registering within 14 days of an election, an applicant must supply proof of residency. Proof of residency is a Michigan driver's license showing the address at which they are registering, a Michigan state ID showing the



address at which they are registering, or any other acceptable document set out in the *Voter identification requirement for in-person voter registration applicants* section. While a person registering at their local clerk's office can choose to vote in their assigned precinct on Election Day, BOE encourages persons registering to vote in person at their local clerk's office 14 or fewer calendar days before an election to request, complete, and return an absent voter ballot at the clerk's office at the time of registration.

If a person submits a voter registration application at a location other than their local clerk's office within 14 days of an election, or if a person submits a voter registration application but cannot meet the proof of residency requirement, the person's voter registration will become valid after the upcoming election. The person may not vote in the upcoming election but may vote in all subsequent elections.

## **Registering on Election Day**

Michiganders who are eligible to register to vote and who are not already registered to vote at the address at which they reside may submit a voter registration application up to 8 p.m. on Election Day by appearing at their local clerk's office and following the process described in the previous section for a person applying to vote within 14 days of an election. While a person registering at their local clerk's office can choose to vote in their assigned precinct so long as they appear to vote at the precinct before 8 p.m., BOE encourages persons registering to vote on Election Day to vote an absent voter ballot at the clerk's office, or at an Election Day vote center if available, at the time of registration.

If the person is in line to register or update voter registration at the clerk's office at 8 p.m. on Election Day and is able to meet the requirements to register to vote, they must be allowed to register and vote in the election, including after 11:59 p.m. on Election Day if necessary.

## **Election Day vote centers**

Cities or townships that processed at least 500 Election Day voter registrations in either or both of the previous two November general elections are also able to establish an Election Day vote center to tabulate ballots for voters who register or update their registration on Election Day.



Election Day vote centers function as polling places and must be located in the same building where the city or township clerk provides Election Day registration, which may include the clerk's satellite office.

For municipalities with an Election Day vote center, every person waiting in line to register or update voter registration at 8 p.m. on Election Day, and who is able to meet the requirements to register to vote, must be allowed to complete that transaction and to cast a ballot at the Election Day vote center, including after 11:59 p.m. on Election Day if necessary.

## **Requirements to register to vote in person at the city or township clerk's office**

Every person who registers to vote in person at their city or township clerk's office at any time must fulfill a voter identification requirement. This voter identification requirement is not required for other methods of registration. Additionally, any person who registers to vote at their city or township clerk's office 14 or fewer calendar days prior to an election must fulfill a proof of residency requirement to be eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

### *Voter identification requirement for in-person voter registration applicants*

Applicants who submit a voter registration application in person at their local clerk's office are required to provide photo ID if they are in physical possession of the photo ID at the time they register to vote. If the voter is not in possession of an acceptable form of photo ID, they may sign an *Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Photo Identification*. This form, which can be found in Appendix I, is the same form that is used by a voter not in possession of photo ID who appears at a precinct on Election Day.

The voter identification requirement applies to all persons registering to vote in person at their local clerk's office at any time. The voter identification requirement is independent of the proof of residency requirement that persons registering to vote within 14 days of an election must satisfy to participate in that election. The voter identification requirement does not apply to voter registrations through a method that is not submission of a voter registration application in person at a local clerk's office. Persons submitting a voter registration application using a method other than in-person registration are subject to the identification requirements of the federal Help America Vote Act, which are described in the section *Federal*



*identification requirement for first-time voter registration applicants applying by mail.*

Acceptable forms of photo ID for voters registering in person are the same as those required for in-person voting, and include the following:

- A current or expired Michigan driver's license or Michigan state ID
- A current driver's license or personal ID issued by another state. This must be the physical document, not a mobile driver's license or digital ID.
- A current federal, state, or local government-issued photo ID
- A current U.S. passport
- A current ID card issued by an educational institution, so long as the document includes the individual's photo
- A current military ID card, so long as the card includes the individual's photo
- A current tribal ID card, so long as the card includes the individual's photo

If an applicant signs an *Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Photo Identification* because they are not in possession of acceptable photo ID at the time they submit their voter registration application, the applicant has fulfilled the voter identification requirement and the clerk must register the person to vote in the same manner as any other voter.

### *Proof of residence requirement for in-person voter registration applicants registering to vote within 14 days of an election*

An individual registering to vote in person at their local clerk's office within 14 days of an election must provide an address-confirming document to prove their residency in order to be eligible to vote in the upcoming election. An address-confirming document can be any of the following:

- A current or expired Michigan driver's license or state ID showing the address at which the voter is registering to vote
- A current utility bill showing the voter's name and the address at which the voter is registering to vote
- A bank statement showing the voter's name and the address at which the voter is registering to vote



- A paycheck showing the voter’s name and the address at which the voter is registering to vote
- A government check showing the voter’s name and the address at which the voter is registering to vote
- Any other government document showing the voter’s name and the address at which the voter is registering to vote

*Examples of documents and combinations of documents used to satisfy the voter identification and proof of residency requirements*

This section explains which documents a voter who is registering to vote in person at their city or township clerk’s office 14 or fewer days prior to an election may use to satisfy the picture identification and proof of residency requirements.

- **Michigan driver’s license or Michigan state ID showing the address at which the voter is registering to vote:** If an applicant presents a current or expired Michigan driver's license or a current or expired Michigan state ID with the address at which the applicant is registering to vote, the applicant has satisfied both the voter identification and the proof of residency requirements and will be eligible to cast a regular ballot in the upcoming election. A Michigan driver's license or state ID where the address has been updated using a sticker supplied by the Secretary of State is a valid driver's license or state ID, and a person presenting either form of identification with such a sticker may register to vote at the address shown on the sticker. A temporary Michigan driver's license is a valid Michigan driver's license for voter registration purposes and must be treated identically to a permanent driver’s license. A person who registers to vote at their local clerk’s office within 14 days of the election, and who presents a current or expired Michigan driver's license or a current or expired Michigan state ID showing the address at which the person is registering, is eligible to vote in the upcoming election.
- **Michigan driver’s license or state ID card with an address other than the address at which the person is registering to vote:** If an applicant presents a current or expired Michigan driver’s license or a current or expired state ID showing an address other than the address at which the applicant is registering to vote, the applicant has satisfied the voter identification requirement but has not satisfied the proof of



residency requirement. If the applicant is applying to register 15 or more days prior to an election, the applicant does not need to provide any further documentation. If the applicant is applying to register to vote 14 or fewer days prior to an election, and if the applicant wishes to vote in the upcoming election, the applicant must present a proof of residency document as detailed in the *Proof of residence requirement for in-person voter registration applicants registering to vote within 14 days of an election* section. An applicant applying to register to vote 14 or fewer days prior to an election who presents a Michigan driver's license or state ID with an address other than the address at which the applicant is registering to vote and who also presents a second document proving residency at the address at which the applicant is registering to vote is eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

- **Any other document used to satisfy the voter identification requirement:** A person who satisfies the voter identification requirement with a document other than a current or expired Michigan driver's license or a current or expired Michigan state ID may, if the person is registering 14 or fewer days prior to an election, use the same document to satisfy the proof of residency requirement if the document shows the address at which the person is registering to vote. An applicant applying to register to vote 14 or fewer days prior to an election who presents acceptable photo ID showing the address at which the applicant is registering is eligible to vote in the upcoming election.
- **Satisfying the voter identification requirement with the *Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Picture Identification*:** If an applicant signs the *Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Photo Identification* instead of presenting photo ID, the applicant has satisfied the voter identification requirement. If the person is registering to vote 14 or fewer days before an election, however, the person must independently satisfy the residency requirement in order to participate in the upcoming election. The person may satisfy the residency requirement using any of the documents listed in the *Proof of residence requirement for in-person voter registration applicants registering to vote within 14 days of an election* section. Once the person has satisfied the proof of residency requirement, the person is eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

If a person applying to register to vote 14 or fewer days prior to an election cannot satisfy the proof of residency requirement, the person may still



register to vote. The person will be ineligible to participate in the upcoming election but will be eligible to participate in all following elections.

## **Absent voter ballots for newly registered voters**

Clerks must also make the voters who register in person at the clerk's office aware of their option to request an absent voter ballot immediately after their registration is processed by the clerk. The clerk must also inform the newly registered voter that the voter is eligible to complete and return that absent voter ballot to the clerk immediately after receiving the ballot. An absent voter ballot requested and returned by a newly registered voter is treated identically to any other absent voter ballot under the procedures explained in *Chapter 8: Absent Voter Ballot Processing*.

## **Challengers at the clerk's office in the 40 days prior to Election Day**

Each organization qualified to appoint election challengers on Election Day may assign one challenger to observe the issuance and receipt of absent voter ballots at a clerk's office or a satellite location maintained by the clerk during the 40-day period prior to Election Day. A challenger may be present only in areas of the clerk's office where an absent voter ballot may be requested. A challenger may be present in the clerk's office only when the office is open for business and during the period prior to an election when voters may request or return an absent voter ballot at the office. A challenger present in a clerk's office may not view the QVF.

## **Voter registration receipt**

If a person registers to vote within 14 days of an election, and if that person satisfies the proof of residency requirement, the clerk must print a voter registration receipt from the QVF showing the successful registration to the voter. The clerk must issue that receipt to the voter. After issuing the receipt, the clerk must notify the voter that the voter is eligible to immediately request and vote an absent voter ballot at the clerk's office. If the voter declines to request an absent voter ballot at the clerk's office, the clerk must instruct the voter to bring the receipt to the precinct on Election Day. If the voter registers on Election Day and the jurisdiction provides Election Day vote centers, the clerk must provide that option to the voter as well. If the voter registered before 4 p.m. on the day before the election, the voter's name should appear in the electronic pollbook (EPB) and the voter will not need to present the receipt to vote. If the voter's registration is



processed after 4 p.m. on the day prior to the election, the voter's registration will not appear in the EPB, and the election inspectors must add the voter's name to the pollbook under the "unlisted" tab and prepare a challenged ballot for the voter. The receipt will provide instructions to the election inspectors on proper processing of the voter and the proper ballot to be issued.

## **Voter Information Cards for voters registering within 14 days of an election**

The clerk must send all persons who registered to vote within 14 days of an election a Voter Information Card as soon as possible following the election.

## **Record retention for voters who register to vote within 14 days of an election**

The clerk must retain all voter registration forms submitted by voters who register to vote in the 14 days prior to an election or who register to vote on Election Day.

# **IV. Voter registration management and the Qualified Voter File**

The QVF is a distributed database which ties Michigan's 1,521 cities and townships to a statewide voter registration file maintained by the Bureau of Elections. The QVF contains over 8 million voter registration records and over 7 million active voter registration records.

## **Clerk access to the QVF**

City and township clerks have direct access to their local voter registration data through the QVF software provided by BOE. A clerk can view all voters registered in Michigan through the QVF, but the clerk can only modify voter registration records associated with the clerk's jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions coordinate voter registration activity with their county clerk's office. In those cases, both the county clerk and the local clerk of each jurisdiction would have access to the jurisdiction's voter registration data.





## Adding voter registrations to the QVF

Voter registrations can be added to the QVF during a Secretary of State transaction or at the clerk's office. New and updated registrations collected by Secretary of State offices, the Secretary of State Renewal-by-Mail program, the Secretary of State online change-of-address program, and Michigan.gov/Vote are automatically validated and entered into the QVF. These registrations are transferred to local QVF files daily. Once transferred, a clerk may edit these records with new voter information.

Alternatively, a voter may choose to register by returning a paper registration form. This form must be delivered to the local clerk, who is then responsible for manually validating the application and entering the information into the QVF. More information on the manual validation and entry process is provided in the *Processing voter registration applications* section of this chapter. Typical sources of paper voter registration applications include federal and state mail-in applications, applications from public assistance agencies or other agencies designated to provide voter registration applications under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), applications collected at armed forces recruitment centers, the federal post card application, and voter registration drives.

## Clerk maintenance of voter list stored in the QVF

Clerks must conduct regular maintenance of their jurisdiction's voter list. Generally, maintenance consists of checking the QVF inbox for registration-related messages and processing those messages as appropriate. A list of QVF inbox notification types and the associated clerk duties can be found in the QVF manual,<sup>1</sup> but some of the more common notification types and the duties they trigger are:

- **"New voter"** – This message indicates that an individual who is registering for the first time in Michigan has been added to the jurisdiction's local file. The clerk must create a Master Card and print and mail a Voter Information Card to each new voter.
- **"Moved from"** – This message indicates that a voter who was previously registered to vote in a different city or township within Michigan has been added to the clerk's local voter file. The clerk must

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://mielections.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/curriculum/03b7763f-1963-4fc7-ab20-d9bdcae99b53>.



create a Master Card and print and mail a Voter Information Card to each voter who has newly moved into the clerk’s jurisdiction.

- **“Moved to”** – This message indicates that an individual who is registered in the city or township has moved out of the jurisdiction. If the individual moved to a new jurisdiction within Michigan, their registration is automatically transferred to their new city or township of residence. If the individual moved to a new address within the original city or township, the process described in the *Address change within a jurisdiction* section is triggered. In either case, the clerk should treat the outdated copy of the voter’s Master Card as described in the section *Retention of canceled voter registration Records*.

If a clerk receives a QVF inbox notification other than those listed, if a clerk wishes to report addressing changes affecting the Statewide Street Index, or if the clerk encounters other QVF issues, the clerk should refer to Chapter 2 of the QVF Reference Manual found in the eLearning Center.<sup>2</sup> The chapter may also be accessed through the QVF software.

## V. Common sources of voter registration applications

Voters have several options when applying to register to vote in Michigan. These registration options include:

- Registering to vote during state interactions, including transactions with Secretary of State offices, Michigan.gov/Vote, the Secretary of State’s online change-of-address form, and self-service kiosks located throughout Michigan
- The Federal Post Card Application. More information about the Federal Post Card Application is available in *Chapter 7: Military and Overseas Voters*.
- The State of Michigan’s Mail Voter Registration Application, also known as the paper voter registration application.<sup>3</sup> The registration application is submitted directly to the clerk’s office. Common sources of paper voter registration applications include submission by

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<sup>2</sup> Available at <https://mielections.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/material/de9a3427-9694-4819-9c4e-39cee55b464f>.

<sup>3</sup> Available in English and other languages at <https://www.michigan.gov/sos/elections/voting/voters> .



individuals registering to vote, submission by persons who have conducted a voter registration drive, and submission by armed service recruitment centers or Michigan state agencies designated as voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act.

## **Automatic voter registration (AVR)**

Any individual who meets the age and citizenship requirements to register to vote and who conducts a driver's license transaction or personal identification transaction at any Secretary of State office or on the Secretary of State's website will be automatically registered to vote but will be given an opportunity to opt out of registration. These registrations are transferred to the relevant jurisdiction's QVF inboxes daily. An AVR opportunity will be presented during every eligible transaction regardless of previous opt out.

All Michigan drivers are required to use the same address for voter registration and driver's license purposes. As a result, all changes made to a voter's registration address or permanent mailing address in the QVF, including changes made by a local clerk, are automatically posted to the voter's driver's license file. Likewise, all changes to a voter's driver's license file are automatically transferred to the QVF. When the residential or *permanent* mailing address of a person with a Michigan driver's license changes in the QVF, the Secretary of State mails the person an address change sticker with the person's new address and instructs the person to place it on their driver's license to indicate their new residential address. Changing a voter's *temporary* or *alternative* mailing address in the QVF for ballot mailing purposes does not trigger this process, but clerks should take care to make this *temporary* change in the voter's absent voter information (AV Scan and AV Details).<sup>4</sup> For more information on defining a voter's residential address, refer to the *Voter qualifications* section.

A person registered to vote in Michigan who changes the address associated with their driver's license to an address in a new city or township will have their voter registration automatically updated with the new address. This update is made in the QVF once the change of address is processed by the Secretary of State. The registration of a voter moving within a jurisdiction is updated following the process laid out in the *Address change within a jurisdiction* section.

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<sup>4</sup> Additional information on adding an alternative mailing address is available in the eLearning Center at <https://mielections.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/material/fcbcd4b2-58cb-41eb-a1ca-aa03b0bc0891>.



Although all Michigan drivers are required to use the same residential address for both their voter registration and driver's license records, **a Michigan voter is not required to possess a Michigan driver's license to register to vote.**

## **Transmission of voter registration applications to local clerks**

When a Secretary of State office receives a completed paper voter registration application, the office staff will enter the registration into the Driver File and the registration will be transmitted electronically to the QVF. If the SOS office is unable to register the applicant via the paper application, the application will be forwarded to the applicant's city or township clerk and the clerk will complete the registration. Paper voter registration applications received by a designated voter registration agency or by a county clerk are similarly required to be forwarded to the relevant city or township clerk. In most circumstances, paper applications must be forwarded to the local clerk within seven calendar days of the office, agency, or clerk's receipt of the application. If the application is received on or between the 21st and 15th day before the election, however, the application must be forwarded to the local clerk within one business day.

### *Renewal by Mail forms*

When a Secretary of State office receives a *Renewal by Mail* form, the office does not record in the QVF either the date that the form was received or the date that the form was postmarked. Instead, a voter registration generated by the office for the *Renewal by Mail* form will only indicate the date on which the form was processed by staff, which is often a different date than the date that the form was received or that the form was postmarked. The date of postmark or receipt, however, not the date on which the *Renewal by Mail* form was processed by staff, determines a voter's eligibility to vote in an upcoming election. Thus, a *Renewal by Mail* form received 15 or more days before an election, or a *Renewal by Mail* form received within 14 days of an election but postmarked 15 or more days before an election, may result in a voter registration record in the QVF that is incorrectly marked as ineligible for the upcoming election. If the clerk receives a voter registration 14 or fewer days prior to an election through the QVF inbox which is marked as ineligible for the upcoming election and which was sent from "Branch 400" (which is the QVF code for *Renewal by Mail* forms), the clerk must contact BOE to determine if the registration was actually postmarked or



received more than 14 days prior to the election and if the registration should be made eligible for the upcoming election.

## **Voter registration applications submitted by mail**

A voter may submit an application to register to vote by mail and be eligible to vote in the next election if the application meets any of the following criteria:

- The application is received by the local clerk at least 15 days prior to the next election.
- The application is postmarked at least 15 days prior to the next election.
- If the postmark is missing or unclear, the application is received by the clerk on or before the eighth day prior to the election and the application is dated on or before the fifteenth day prior to the election.

If an individual submits a voter registration application by mail within 14 days of the election, the local clerk is **required** to send a notice to the individual informing the individual that they must appear in person at their clerk's office to register if the elector wishes to vote in that jurisdiction in the upcoming election. This notice is generated in the QVF. The clerk must also contact the voter using the notification methods set out in *Chapter 1: The Structure of Michigan's Election System*.

## **Voter registration applications submitted in person**



If an individual submits a voter registration application in person at any Michigan government office that can receive voter registration applications, including a clerk's office, a Secretary of State office, or a voter registration agency which provides public benefits or serves persons with disabilities, the individual must either present voter identification as described in this chapter or sign an *Affidavit of Voter Not in Possession of Photo Identification*, certifying that they are not in physical possession of such identification at the time they submit their registration application.

Additionally, if a person submits a voter registration application at the clerk's office during business hours fewer than 15 days prior to an election, the person must supply proof of residency if they wish to be eligible to vote in the upcoming election. For more information on both requirements, refer to the section *Requirements to register to vote in person at the city or township clerk's office*.



## Federal reporting requirements on the source of voter registration applications

The federal National Voter Registration Act requires that states report the number of voter registration applications received from agencies that provide public benefits or agencies that provide services to persons with disabilities. The source of the voter registration application is recorded in the QVF when the registration is entered. If a clerk receives a voter registration application from a voter registration agency, the clerk can use the form number to discern whether the application originated in an agency that serves persons with disabilities or an agency that provides public assistance. Applications from agencies serving persons with disabilities are numbered NSB-938B, while applications from agencies which provide public assistance are numbered NSB-938A. The form number can be found on the bottom left corner of the voter registration application:

Method of registration	Form type/appearance
Voter registration agencies serving persons with disabilities (Form # NSP-938B (Rev 10-05))	
Voter registration agencies providing public assistance (Form # NSP-938A (Rev 10-05))	

## VI. Processing voter registration applications

This section sets out the process clerks should use to input voter registrations into the QVF. This process only applies to paper voter registrations received and input into the QVF by the clerk; it does not apply to voter registrations that are automatically generated through a state transaction or through automatic voter registration, as explained previously. Registrations created or modified through state transactions or automatic



voter registration are automatically processed and checked for accuracy before they are input into the QVF.

## Quick match tool

The clerk processes paper voter registration applications using the QVF Quick Match tool. The clerk must first perform a search via Quick Match to determine if the registration applicant was previously registered to vote in Michigan. Searches can be run using the applicant's license number, last name, first initial, and date of birth. If the voter was registered, the clerk should transfer the voter's registration from their old jurisdiction to the clerk's jurisdiction. This will help minimize duplicate registrations. Refer to Chapter 2 of the QVF Manual for specific instructions on using the Quick Match tool.<sup>5</sup>

## Persons registering to vote in Michigan for the first time

Upon the receipt of a paper voter registration application submitted by an individual who was not previously registered to vote in Michigan, the clerk must review the application to determine its acceptability.<sup>6</sup> The absence of any of the following data on the form either invalidates or mandates rejection of the application:

- **The person's name**
- **The address at which the person is registering to vote:** The provided registration address must be a street address, rural route number, or other physical location within the jurisdiction. If the voter registration does not contain the applicant's full registration address, the clerk must notify the applicant and attempt to obtain the full registration address from the applicant. If the registration application bears an address in another jurisdiction, the clerk must forward the application to the clerk of the appropriate jurisdiction. If the clerk is unable to determine the applicant's jurisdiction of residence, the clerk forwards the application to BOE for review.

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<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://mielections.csod.com/ui/lms-learning-details/app/material/de9a3427-9694-4819-9c4e-39cee55b464f>.

<sup>6</sup> Individuals preregistering to vote or Address Confidentiality Program participants preregistering or registering to vote must use the application specific to their circumstance, not the general voter registration application.



- **Date of birth:** If the voter registration does not contain the applicant’s full date of birth, the clerk must notify the applicant and attempt to obtain the applicant’s full birth date from the applicant.
- **Registrant’s signature:** The applicant’s original signature must be provided. A voter with a disability may provide a signature using a signature stamp or mark; the signature stamp or mark must be accepted by the clerk. If an original signature is not provided, the clerk should change the voter’s QVF status to “Reject – Signature” and send the voter a *Notice of Rejection*. The *Notice of Rejection* can be generated in the QVF.
- **Affirmation of U.S. citizenship:** If the affirmation of citizenship is left blank, the clerk should enter the registration into the QVF with the status “Challenge – Citizenship.” The voter may remedy a blank affirmation of citizenship by signing an *Application to Vote* at an in-person polling place on Election Day or by signing an *Absent Voter Ballot Application*, because both documents include an affirmation of citizenship. The “Challenge – Citizenship” status code is removed once the applicant is issued a ballot after signing the *Application to Vote* or an *Absent Voter Ballot Application*. If the applicant answered “No” to the affirmation of citizenship, the applicant’s QVF status must be changed to “Reject – Citizenship” and the registration application must be rejected. The clerk must send the applicant a Notice of Rejection, which can be generated in the QVF.

If an applicant’s voter registration is rejected as invalid for lack of information, but the clerk can still identify the applicant and the applicant’s mailing address or other contact information, the clerk must send the voter a notice of rejection. The clerk must use all of the notification methods set out in *Chapter 1: The Structure of Michigan’s Election System* to contact the individual and explain the reason for rejection.

## **Federal identification requirement for first-time voter registration applicants applying by mail**

The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires that a voter who has never voted in Michigan and who registers to vote by mail must meet an identification requirement. To comply with the identification requirement at the time of registration, the applicant must do one of the following:





- Accurately enter their Michigan driver's license number, their Michigan state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security Number where requested on the mail-in voter registration form.
- Include one of the following forms of identification when mailing the mail-in voter registration form to their county or local clerk: a copy of any current and valid photo ID, or a copy of a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement, or a copy of a government document which lists the applicant's name and address.

A voter subject to the federal identification requirement may satisfy the requirement by submitting the required information or documentation to their clerk at any point between the submission of their voter registration application and the first election in which they participate. If a voter subject to the federal identification requirement does not meet the requirement prior to participating in an election, the voter must present the election inspector with a current picture identification or a copy or an original of a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement, or a government document which lists the voter's name and address before being issued a ballot.

A voter who is subject to the federal identification requirement who is unable or unwilling to produce an acceptable form of identification must be issued a Provisional Envelope ballot. If a voter is issued a Provisional Envelope Ballot because they are unable or unwilling to satisfy the federal identification requirement, the election inspector is not required to complete the Provisional Ballot form. A special notice must be issued to the voter at the time the Provisional Envelope Ballot is issued. A sample of this notice is provided in *Appendix I*.

If a clerk received a mail-in registration and an absent voter ballot application simultaneously from an applicant subject to the federal identification requirement, and if the voter has provided a Michigan driver's license or Michigan state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security Number, the clerk cannot issue an absent voter ballot to the applicant until the QVF has verified the accuracy of the identifying numbers provided. The accuracy verification process usually occurs overnight following entry of the registration into the QVF. If the provided information matches the information on file, the federal identification requirement is met and the absent voter ballot can be issued normally. If the provided information does not match the information on file, the federal identification requirement has not been met and the absent voter ballot must be issued with instructions for the voter to return the ballot with proper documentation.



If a voter who has not satisfied the federal identification requirement requests an absent voter ballot, the clerk should include an *ID-Unconfirmed Notice* in the absent voter ballot instructions when mailing the absent voter ballot to the voter. This notice informs the voter that the voter must provide their Michigan driver's license number, their Michigan state ID number, the last four digits of their Social Security number, or one of the other documents listed to satisfy the requirement and avoid having their ballot treated as a Provisional Envelope Ballot.

If a voter who has not satisfied the federal identification requirement returns a completed absent voter ballot without including any documents that satisfy the federal identification requirement, the clerk must notify the voter that the voter must fulfill the requirement by 8 p.m. on Election Day for their ballot to be processed normally. If the required identification is not provided, the returned absent voter ballot must be preserved and processed as a Provisional Envelope Ballot. For more information on Provisional Envelope Ballots, refer to *Chapter 12: Election Day and the Voting Process*.

The federal identification requirement **does not apply if any of the following conditions is met:**

- The voter has a disability.
- The voter is eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.
- The voter has previously voted in Michigan.

The federal identification requirement also does not apply to any person applying to register to vote in person, though an applicant registering to vote in person is subject to Michigan's voter identification requirement for in-person registrations described in the section *Voter identification requirement for in-person voter registration applicants*.

## **Persons who have previously been registered to vote in Michigan**

The clerk should review the voter registration application submitted by an individual who was previously registered in a different city or township within Michigan using a slightly different process than that used for the review of the registration application of someone who is registering in Michigan for the first time. The absence of any of the following information either invalidates or mandates rejection of the application, subject to the exceptions explained in the following section:



- **Name**
- **The address at which the person is registering to vote:** The provided registration address must be a street address, rural route number, or other physical location within the jurisdiction. If the voter registration application does not contain the applicant's full registration address, the clerk must notify the applicant and attempt to obtain the full registration address from the applicant. If the registration application bears an address in another jurisdiction, the clerk must forward the application to the clerk of the appropriate jurisdiction. If the clerk is unable to determine the applicant's jurisdiction of residence, the clerk forwards the application to BOE for review.
- **Date of birth:** If the voter registration application does not contain the applicant's full date of birth, the clerk must notify the applicant and attempt to obtain the full birth date from the applicant.
- **Registrant's signature:** If an original signature is not provided on the voter registration application, and if a digitized signature is available in the QVF, the digitized signature in the QVF will be used as the voter's signature for registration purposes. If an original signature is not provided with the application and a signature is not available in the QVF, the clerk should change the voter's QVF status to "Verify – Sign Registration Card." The voter's signature must be obtained before a ballot is issued to that voter. The voter may supply a signature by signing an *Application to Vote* on Election Day, by physically signing an *Absent Voter Ballot Application* prior to Election Day, by appearing in person and supplying a signature to the clerk, or by any other method the clerk deems acceptable.
- **Affirmation of U.S. citizenship:** If the affirmation of citizenship is left blank, the registration should be entered into the QVF with the status "Challenge – Citizenship." The voter may remedy a blank affirmation of citizenship by signing an *Application to Vote* at an in-person polling place on Election Day or by signing an *Absent Voter Ballot Application*, because both documents include an affirmation of citizenship. The "Challenge – Citizenship" status code is removed once the applicant is issued a ballot after signing the *Application to Vote* or an *Absent Voter Ballot Application*. If the applicant answered "No" to the citizenship question, the applicant's QVF status must be changed to "Reject – Citizenship" and the registration application must be rejected. The clerk must send the applicant a *Notice of Rejection*, which can be generated in the QVF.



## **Processing sufficient voter registration applications: the Master Card and Voter Information Card**

If the voter registration application meets the applicable criteria, the clerk should enter the voter's information into the QVF and then generate and print the Master Card and the Voter Information Card using built-in QVF functionality.

### *Master Card*

The Master Card is the hard copy of the voter registration record for each voter and contains the voter's signature. The Master Card is retained by the clerk.

### *Voter Information Card*

The Voter Information Card contains the voter's name and registration address, the voter's Congressional, State Senate, State Representative and County Commissioner district numbers, the voter's precinct number, and the voter's polling place location.

Within one week of receipt of either a paper voter registration application or a QVF notification that a registration has been processed through the Secretary of State, the local clerk must mail the applicant a Voter Information Card by nonforwardable mail. The successful delivery of the Voter Information Card completes the registration process. If a Voter Information Card sent to an elector is returned as "undeliverable," the clerk proceeds as appropriate under the procedures outlined in the section *Address change within jurisdiction*. Under no circumstances shall a voter's registration be canceled or rejected because of a returned Voter Information Card without following those procedures. The returned Voter Information Card is retained by the clerk. The returned Voter Information Card may be, but is not required to be, attached to the voter's Master Card until the issue is resolved.

If the voter provides a Post Office Box as a mailing address, the Voter Information Card must be placed in an envelope which is addressed and sent to the P.O. Box address. The mailing address must then be entered into the QVF. In all other circumstances, including when the voter has provided an alternative mailing address other than a P.O. Box, the Voter Information Card should be mailed to the registration address provided.



A paper registration application may be destroyed after the voter's Master Card has been created and the Voter Information Card has been mailed to the voter. There is no need to attach the application to the Master Card or otherwise retain the application. If an existing voter needs a new Voter Information Card, the clerk must also generate and mail the new card to the voter.

## **Processing insufficient voter registration applications**

### *Invalid voter registration applications*

A voter registration application is invalid if the application is deficient in a way that makes identifying the applicant or obtaining contact information for the applicant impossible. For example, a voter registration form lacking the applicant's name would be invalid. The clerk should not enter an invalid voter application into the QVF, because the application lacks information necessary for the QVF to create a record. Invalid applications must be retained by the clerk for six months after receipt, then may be destroyed.

### *Rejected voter registration applications*

A voter registration application is rejected if the application contains sufficient information to identify and contact the applicant, but another portion of the application is deficient. For example, an application where "no" is checked for the affirmation of citizenship would be rejected. The clerk must enter a rejected application into the QVF and indicate the reason for rejection. Rejected applications must be retained by the clerk for six months after receipt, then may be destroyed.

### *Notifying applicants of invalid or rejected voter registration applications*

A clerk who determines that a voter registration application is insufficient must notify the person submitting the application of the insufficiency and the reason for the insufficiency. Notification can be required for a variety of circumstances, including the confirmation of ambiguous information on a voter registration application or an inquiry about a possible change of residency. In all situations requiring contact with a voter, the clerk should send notice via first-class mail. Additionally, in any situation in which an individual must be contacted by the clerk, clerks should communicate a brief



explanation of the issue and steps necessary to address the issue using the following communication methods:

- Phone call, if the clerk has a phone number associated with the individual (The clerk may also send a text message to the voter.)
- Email, if the clerk has an email address associated with the individual
- Preferred mailing address, if the individual has indicated that they prefer mail to be sent to a mailing address other than the address at which they are registered to vote. Documents sent to a preferred mailing address cannot replace documents required to be sent to a voter's registration address.

If a clerk is able to contact a voter through one of these methods, the other methods need not be utilized. When a mailed notice is required under law, the additional notification methods may supplement, but cannot replace, the legal requirement of a first-class mailing to the voter's registration address.

If the clerk cannot ascertain the applicant's identity and cannot ascertain any contact information for the applicant from the insufficient voter registration application, the clerk is excused from this notice requirement.

### *Curing an invalid or rejected voter registration application*

An invalid or rejected voter registration application may be cured if the applicant fills out a new voter registration application. The new form may be submitted in any form. The new voter registration application does not need to be submitted using the same method that the applicant used to submit an invalid or rejected application. A prior invalid or rejected voter registration application does not affect an individual's ability to submit a new voter registration application in any form.

The clerk must allow an applicant who submitted an insufficient voter registration application to appear in person at the clerk's office to cure the identified issue or submit a replacement voter registration application on or before 8 p.m. on Election Day for the first election at which the voter chooses to participate.



## **VII. Processing changes to a registered voter's address**

Voters often change addresses. These changes can entail a move within a city or township, between cities or townships within Michigan, or from Michigan to another state. Some moves are changes of residency that affect a voter's registration; other moves are not changes in residency and thus do not affect registration. State and federal law, including the National Voter Registration Act, set out a detailed process for identifying and processing a change of address for voter registration purposes.

### **Confirming a change of address**

A clerk cannot modify a voter's registration because of the voter's change of address unless the clerk either receives a statement signed by the voter indicating that the voter has moved addresses or receives "reliable information" confirming the voter's change of address. In the latter instance, the clerk must follow statutory notice requirements before modifying a voter's registration.

#### *Statement signed by the voter*

A signed statement provided by the voter must either contain the voter's physical signature or result from an electronic transaction between the voter and the Secretary of State during which the voter consents to the use of their digital signature to verify their identity. Neither an unsigned written statement from the voter nor an oral statement from the voter may serve as a signed statement by the voter, even if the voter indicates that they wish for the registration to be altered in the unsigned written or oral communication. The clerk may only modify the voter's registration record after receiving a signed statement from the voter.

#### *Reliable information*

Reliable information includes a new address provided on returned mail, information supplied through a local utility, or notice provided through any similar source. Instructions on how the clerk should handle each situation is explained in more detail in the following paragraphs, as well as in the *Reliable Information Charts* included in *Appendix I*. A statement or communication made by a voter, such as a phone call or email which does not include the voter's signature may be treated as reliable information. The



receipt of reliable information initiates voter notification requirements; it is not enough to modify the voter's registration record.

## **Differentiating confirmation and cancellation notices**

Absent a written statement from a voter authorizing a change in their voter registration, a voter's registration may only be changed after the voter has been sent a confirmation or cancellation notice. The type of notice sent depends on the type of address change made by the voter. State and federal law requires that confirmation and cancellation notices contain different text and different directions for the voter. A confirmation notice is only sent to a voter when the clerk receives reliable information that the voter has moved within the clerk's jurisdiction. A cancellation notice is sent when the clerk receives reliable information that the voter has moved to a new jurisdiction or reliable information that the voter has moved to an unknown address.

### **Address change within a city or township**

#### *Written notice provided by voter*

Upon the receipt of written notice signed by a voter that the voter has moved to a different address within the clerk's city or township, the clerk should update the voter's registration to reflect the voter's new address. If the signed notice is provided through an electronic transaction, such as a change of address processed at a Secretary of State office or through the online portal, the address change will be automatically entered into the QVF and a QVF "Changed Address To" inbox notification will be sent to the local clerk. If the notice is made through a paper form, the clerk must manually input the address change into the QVF. Sources of nonelectronic signed notices include *Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration* forms executed by the voter at the polls, corrected Voter Information Cards, letters, postcards, or post office change of address form signed by the voter announcing the address change.

After updating the voter registration files, the clerk prepares an updated Voter Information Card for the voter and mails it to the voter's new registration address. The Bureau of Elections recommends that the updated Voter Information Card be sent by nonforwardable mail with address correction requested. If the Voter Information Card is returned by the post office as "undeliverable," the clerk may use the mail return as reliable





information that the voter has moved and may proceed with the *Written notice not provided by voter* process described in the following section.

### *Written notice not provided by voter*

Upon the receipt of reliable information that a voter has moved to a different address within the same jurisdiction or reliable information that the voter has moved but without information about the voter's new address, the clerk must send a return postage paid confirmation notice to the voter to confirm the move. The notice must be mailed by *forwardable mail* to the address at which the voter is registered to vote. After mailing the confirmation notice, the clerk should mark the voter's QVF record with a "Verify – Confirm Address – Moved Within" status code. If the voter appears to vote without responding to the confirmation notice, election inspectors must ask the voter for their current address. More information on this process is provided in the section *Voters who have moved in Chapter 12: Election Day and the Voting Process*.

If the voter confirms the move by returning the reply card or during questioning at the polls, the clerk updates the voter registration files as appropriate. If this information is confirmed at the polls, the voter shall be instructed to complete an *Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration* form at the polls. Once the form is completed, the voter shall be allowed to cast a normal ballot at their old precinct and directed to vote in future elections at their new precinct. After updating the voter registration files, the clerk prepares an updated Voter Information Card for the voter which lists the voter's new registration address. The updated Voter Information Card is mailed by *nonforwardable mail*.

If the voter states on the reply card or during questioning at the polls that the voter has *not* moved to a different address, the clerk removes the flag by changing the voter's QVF status back to "Active." A voter does not need to show proof of residency to satisfy this requirement; the voter's statement to the election inspectors that the voter has not moved is sufficient for the voter to be issued a ballot. The "Verify – Confirmation Notice – Moved Within" status code is automatically removed if the voter casts a ballot in an election or if the voter engages in any voter transaction after the mailing of the notice.

If the confirmation notice sent to the voter is returned by the post office as undeliverable, the voter is treated as having moved to an unknown address. The clerk must change the voter's status in the QVF to "Challenged – Residency" and the cancellation countdown is initiated. If the voter does



return the reply card and does not appear to vote, the clerk takes no further action.

## **Address change to a new city or township or a new state**

### *Written notice of voter's registration in new state of residence provided*

Upon the receipt of written, signed notice that a voter has registered to vote in another state, the clerk cancels the voter's registration.

### *Surrendered licenses*

The "Verify Surrendered License" QVF inbox status code is used by the Department of State to flag the voter registration record of a voter who has surrendered their Michigan driver's license when applying for a new driver's license in another state or when the Michigan receives reliable information of a new voter registration in another state. The fact that the voter has applied for a driver's license in another state is reliable information that the voter may no longer be a resident of the Michigan city or township in which they are registered to vote. The Secretary of State maintains an automated process for mailing required notices to persons who surrender their Michigan license in another state. Local jurisdictions are not responsible for sending cancellation notices to these persons. The Secretary of State also handles all follow-up changes in the QVF related to changing status and setting the cancellation countdown for these voters. A voter's registration that is canceled because of a surrendered license will appear in the QVF inbox as "Cancel—NVRA". Clerks who receive such cancellation notifications must update the voter's Master Card.

### *Written notice of voter's move to a new city or township*

Upon the receipt of written, signed notice that a voter has registered to vote in another city or township in Michigan, the clerk directs the voter to register to vote in the new city or township and explains that the voter's new registration in that city or township will cause the voter's registration in their prior city or township to be transferred to their new city or township of residence.



## *Voter registers to vote in another city or township in Michigan*

If a voter registers to vote in another city or township in Michigan, the voter's registration is treated as a signed notification of a change of address and the voter's registration record is transferred to the new city or township.

## *Written notice of voter's registration in new jurisdiction of residence not provided*

Upon the receipt of reliable information that a voter has moved to another jurisdiction within Michigan or to another state, the clerk must send the voter a *Notice of Cancellation* by forwardable mail. The cancellation notice must contain a postage prepaid and preaddressed reply card. In this case, the clerk should change the voter's QVF status to "Verify – Confirm Address – Moved Outside" and the cancellation countdown starts.

The cancellation notice is used to confirm the voter's address within a different jurisdiction. Additional language printed on the notice advises the voter that their registration in the jurisdiction sending the notice will be canceled unless the voter participates in an election, reaffirms their residence in the jurisdiction by replying to the cancellation notice, or engages in some other voter transaction by the second federal November general election following the notice. If the voter appears to vote in any election up to and including the second federal November general election following the notice and attests that they did not move to an address outside the jurisdiction, the voter is issued a ballot under the normal procedure.

A voter does not need to show proof of residency to satisfy this requirement; the voter's statement to the election inspectors that the voter has not moved is sufficient for the voter to be issued a ballot. The "Verify – Confirm Address" status code is automatically removed with the recording of vote history immediately following the election or upon recording the receipt of an absent voter ballot application. If the voter confirms that they moved to an address outside of their old jurisdiction but within Michigan, however, the voter may still be entitled to vote one final time in their old jurisdiction. More information on this process is provided in the section *Voters who have moved in Chapter 12: Election Day and the Voting Process*.

Finally, if the voter confirms at the polls on Election Day that they moved within the same jurisdiction, the voter should be directed to complete an *Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration* form at the polls. Once the form is completed, the voter must be allowed to cast a normal ballot at their old precinct and directed to vote in future



elections at their new precinct. The *Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration* form should be processed by the local clerk in the same manner as a voter record flagged with a “Verify – Confirm Address – Moved Within.”

If the voter returns the reply card attached to the cancellation notice and verifies that they have moved to another jurisdiction, the clerk cancels the voter’s registration. Once the record is canceled, the clerk must note the date and the reason for the cancellation on the voter’s Master Card. The Master Card is moved to the jurisdiction’s cancellation file, where it must be retained for 5 years after the date of cancellation.

If the notice sent to the voter is returned by the post office as undeliverable, the voter’s status must be changed to “Challenged – Residency” and the cancellation countdown starts.

If the cancellation notice is not returned by the post office as undeliverable, it is assumed that the notice was delivered. In this case, the cancellation countdown will track the response timeframe. If no response is received and the voter does not participate in an election, reply to the cancellation notice reaffirming residence in their former jurisdiction, return an absent voter ballot application, or engage in another voting transaction by the second federal November general election following the notice, the voter’s registration will be canceled without further notice. This cancellation is handled programmatically through the QVF with a “Canceled NVRA” status. Once the record is canceled, the clerk must follow the same cancellation process as if the voter had returned the reply card confirming a move out of the jurisdiction.

### *Selecting mailing address for confirmation or cancellation notices*

While federal law requires that confirmation or cancellation notices be sent to registrants by forwardable mail, the law does not specify the address to which the confirmation should be sent. In certain cases, such as when a mailing to a voter has been returned as “undeliverable” with no forwarding address, only one address will be available. In other cases, such as when a second address is supplied by the post office, two addresses will be available. When the clerk is sending a notice to a voter for whom the clerk has two potential addresses, the notice should be sent to both addresses. Each cancellation notice should contain a postage prepaid and preaddressed reply card.



## Voter registration cancellations

A clerk is authorized to cancel a voter's registration record only under the following circumstances. A notice of the cancellation is not required, except where specifically noted.

### *Cancellations requiring clerk to both update voter record in the QVF and the Master Card*

The clerk must update a voter's registration record in the QVF and update the voter's Master Card for cancellations made in the following manner:

- **Voter requests cancellation:** The voter requests the cancellation of their registration record in a written, signed communication.
- **Voter confirmation of move:** The voter verifies their residency in a different jurisdiction for voting purposes on a confirmation notice sent to the voter upon the clerk's receipt of reliable information that the voter has moved to a different jurisdiction. More information is provided in the section *Address change to a new city or township or a new state*.
- **Notification of registration in new jurisdiction outside of Michigan:** The clerk receives notice from an election official in a non-Michigan jurisdiction that a voter has newly registered in the non-Michigan jurisdiction. This situation will rarely occur, as almost all out-of-state registrations are processed by BOE and directly entered into the QVF.
- **Accepted challenge to voter's registration:** The voter's registration is challenged and questions directed to the voter at the polls on Election Day reveal that the voter is not qualified to vote in the jurisdiction.
- **Voter death:** The clerk receives or obtains information that the voter has died. This information may be the result of a death notice published in newspaper, personal firsthand knowledge of the death by the clerk, information from the county clerk, or a QVF inbox notification.

### *Cancellations for deceased voters*

Beginning in January 2023, PA 195 of 2022 expanded the procedure for canceling the voter registration of individuals over the age of 17.5 years that have died.



When county clerks receive the list of voters of voters who have died in the previous month from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the county clerk will mark those voters as **Challenged-Deceased** in QVF. The following day, the deceased voter's city or township clerk will receive a QVF inbox message of "ACTION REQUIRED: COUNTY DECEASED NOTIFICATION." In order to finish the cancellation process, the city or township clerk must mark those voters as **Cancelled-Deceased** in QVF.

The initiation of this process will occur according to the following schedule:

**Monthly:** From January 1 until the first Friday in July, and again in August and September, by the second business day of each month.

**Weekly:** From the first Friday in July before an August election until 16 days before the August election, by close of business each Friday. From the first Friday in October before a November election until 16 days before the November election, by close of business each Friday.

**Daily:** From 15 days before each August and November election until the day before each August and November election, by close of business each business day. (Note: for cancellations occurring the day before an election, the county clerk must contact the city or township clerk directly to ensure that the cancellation is finalized.)

Finally, if the Secretary of State updates the QVF to cancel the voter registration of a deceased voter, it will, within 24 hours, send an inbox notification to the city or township clerk. In these cases, no further action is needed by clerks. In many cases, especially when county users are initiating cancellations on a monthly basis, the deceased voter's registration may already have been cancelled by the Secretary of State using Social Security Administration data.

### *Cancellations requiring clerk to only update the Master Card*

There are three situations in which a clerk will be notified of a change to a voter's registration in a manner that does not require the clerk to process the change in the QVF. In these cases, the clerk must still update the voter's physical Master Card.

- **QVF-documented new voter registration within Michigan:** The clerk receives a "Moved To" QVF inbox notification stating that the voter has registered to vote in another jurisdiction within Michigan.
- **QVF-documented new voter registration outside of Michigan:** The clerk receives a "Status Change – Canceled – Moved Out Of State"



notice in QVF that the voter has registered to vote in a jurisdiction outside of Michigan.

- **Cancellation countdown clock terminates:** No response is received from the voter over the course of two, successive federal November general elections to a cancellation notice sent to the voter under the processes set out in the section *Address change to a different jurisdiction*. The QVF will automatically update the voter file upon termination of the countdown clock and the clerk will receive a “Cancellation – NVRA” QVF inbox notification.

### *Retention of canceled voter registration records*

City and township clerks are required to maintain the original copy of the Master Card corresponding to a canceled voter registration for at least five years. Such records must be available for public inspection upon request. Duplicate copies of canceled voter registration records may be destroyed two years after the date of cancellation. If the original copy of the Master Card is reproduced pursuant to the Records Media Act,<sup>7</sup> the original copy may also be destroyed two years after the date of cancellation. A reproduction of a record of a canceled voter registration created under the Records Media Act may be destroyed five years after the date of cancellation.

A cancellation or confirmation notice returned by a voter or returned as undeliverable may be discarded after the receipt of the notice has been recorded in the QVF and any relevant updates to the Master Card have been made by the clerk.

## **VIII. Public availability of voter registration data**

All voter registration records are public documents and, by law, must be available for public inspection during normal business hours. The provisions of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), however, exempt certain personal information from being disclosed in response to a request made under FOIA. When clerks receive a FOIA request related to voter registration records, **the clerk must redact the following information**<sup>8</sup>:

- Driver’s license or state ID numbers

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<sup>7</sup> MCL 24.401 – 403.

<sup>8</sup> MCL 168.509gg



- Month and day of the voters' birth. A registrant's year of birth is not exempt and must be provided if requested.
- Voter phone numbers and email addresses
- The identity or type of office that initially received a voter's registration applications
- Any information regarding an individual's refusal to register to vote
- The voter's digitized signature
- The last 4 digits of the voter's Social Security number contained in a registration record

If the application is for a participant in the Address Confidentiality Program or a preregistration application, that application should not be provided. In addition, any information pertaining to individuals between the ages of 16 and 17.5 years old that have preregistered to vote is confidential and exempt from disclosure under FOIA until the individuals reach 17.5 years of age.

These disclosure restrictions apply to all voter registration lists produced in response to a FOIA request, regardless of whether the lists are produced on paper or electronically. A list of voter registrations generated by QVF for the purposes of responding to a FOIA request will automatically redact this information.

Voter registration record requests that are not submitted through FOIA should also have the same personal information redacted. The only exception to any personal information redaction would be for voters asking for their own voter registration history.

## **IX. Reporting Postal Service issues**

Any clerk experiencing recurring issues with mail delivery may report those issues to [electionmail.org](http://electionmail.org). This website aggregates and tracks postal issues and the U.S. Postal Service's response. Reports made to [electionmail.org](http://electionmail.org) by election officials in Michigan are forwarded to the Bureau of Elections. Issues that may be reported at [electionmail.org](http://electionmail.org) include all of the following:

- Delivery delays
- Damaged mail
- Lost mail





- Undeliverable or returned mail
- Misdirected mail

Please be as detailed as possible when reporting issues to [electionmail.org](https://electionmail.org). If possible, include specific addresses and mailing dates to assist USPS in identifying the postal facilities involved.

