DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ELECTIONS & CAMPAIGN FINANCE

VOTER REGISTRATION CANCELLATION, CHALLENGE, AND CORRECTION

(By authority conferred on the secretary of state by section 31(1)(a) of the Michigan election law, 1954 PA 116, MCL 168.31)

R 168.251 Definitions.

Rule 1. (1) As used in these rules:

(a) "Act" means the Michigan election law, 1954 PA 116, MCL 168.1 to 168.992.

(b) "Cancellation notice" means the notice that is sent to a voter 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, as described in section 509aa(3) and (5) of the act, MCL 168.509aa. Sending this notice begins the cancellation countdown.

(c) "Challenge" means the process by which a registered voter may challenge the validity of another registered voter's registration status.

(d) "Confirmation notice" means the notice that is sent to a voter when the clerk receives reliable information that the voter has moved within the clerk's jurisdiction, as described in section 509aa(2) of the act, MCL 168.509aa.

(e) "Election activity" means any voter transaction, including, but not limited to, requesting an absentee voter ballot, returning a voted absentee ballot, voting in person during early voting or on election day, confirmation in the voter registration database of the individual signing a petition, or other voter-initiated transaction, such as notice of a move.

(f) "Personal knowledge" means information that an individual knows to be true based on direct, firsthand observance. In the case of a voter's residency, to constitute personal knowledge an individual shall know the voter is not a resident for voting purposes. Observing reliable information indicating a voter has moved does not constitute personal knowledge that a voter is not a resident for voting purposes.

(g) "Reliable information" means information indicating that an individual has moved, which election officials can trust confidently, is specific to a voter, and is objectively verifiable. Reliable information that a voter has moved requires notice, waiting period, and confirmation as described in this rule set and the act before a voter's registration can be cancelled on the basis that the voter is no longer a resident for voting purposes.

(h) "Returned election mail" means mail, such as voter information cards, notices, absentee ballot applications, and absentee ballots, that is returned by the post office either as undeliverable or with an updated address.

(i) "Voter registration database" means the qualified voter file as defined in section 509m of the act, MCL 168.509m, or its successor.

(j) "Waiting period" means the requirement in section 8 of the national voter registration act of 1993, 52 USC 20507, that an individual's registration must not be cancelled until

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

that individual has failed to respond to a notice and has not voted or engaged in any election activity in 2 successive federal November general election cycles. The waiting period is also referred to as the cancellation countdown.

(2) Unless otherwise defined in these rules, a term defined in the act has the same meaning when used in these rules.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.252 Reliable information.

Rule 2. (1) Whether information is reliable information that a voter has moved is considered on an individual, case-by-case basis.

(2) The following sources of information are examples of reliable information:

(a) A voter's failure to vote for 20 years or more, or for a timeframe as provided in the act.

(b) United States Postal Service returned election mail.

(c) A voter appears on a United States Postal Service national change of address list and the entry on the list is checked against the voter record and they match.

(d) During a house-to-house canvass, the clerk speaks to an individual who lives at the voter's registration address, and the individual informs the clerk that a voter has permanently moved.

(e) The voter surrendered their driver license from this state to a different state.

(f) Utility bills with an address or name that is different than the voter's registration name and address, if accompanied by additional information that shows that the voter has moved.

(g) City income tax records with an address that is different than the voter's registration address.

(h) A statement or communication indicating a permanent change of address made by a voter that does not include the voter's signature.

(3) The following sources of information are not on their own reliable sources of information sufficient to trigger sending either a confirmation or cancellation notice to a registered individual, but can be considered in combination with other information:

(a) Information pulled from online databases that list individual names and dates of birth.

(b) Word-of-mouth claims about a registered individual that are not based on personal knowledge of the individual making the claim, including attempted challenges to voter registration that fail to meet the requirement of personal knowledge.

(4) A clerk is not obligated to begin an investigation of an individual's registration status after receiving information from the sources identified in subrule (3) of this rule.

(5) If a clerk chooses to investigate an individual's registration status based on information from the sources identified in subrule (3) of this rule, the clerk shall independently verify the information from a source listed in subrule (3) of this rule with reliable information before sending a confirmation or cancellation notice to a registered individual.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.253 Required notice procedure after receiving reliable information.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

Rule 3. (1) After a clerk receives reliable information that an individual has moved, the clerk shall take the following steps:

(a) Verify that the voter is not entitled to protections under the military and overseas voter empowerment (MOVE) act, Public Law 111-84, or under the uniformed and overseas citizens absentee voting act (UOCAVA), Public Law 99-410. If the voter is entitled to protections under the MOVE act or UOCAVA, the clerk shall not send a notice. If the voter is not subject to protections under the MOVE act or UOCAVA, proceed to subrule (1)(b) of this rule.

(b) Update the individual's status in the voter registration database, but not cancel the voter's registration.

(c) Send the individual either a cancellation or confirmation notice using the following criteria:

(i) When a clerk receives reliable information that the voter has moved within the clerk's jurisdiction, the clerk shall send the individual a confirmation notice.

(ii) When a clerk receives reliable information that a voter has moved outside of the clerk's jurisdiction or if election mail is returned by the post office as undeliverable with no new address information, the clerk shall send the individual a cancellation notice.

(2) The cancellation or confirmation notice must be sent by forwardable mail. The notice must comply with the following:

(a) Include a postage prepaid and preaddressed return card for the individual to verify or correct the address information or verify their registration status.

(b) Be sent to all addresses that the clerk is aware of for the individual.

(c) Contain the information required by section 509aa of the act, MCL 168.509aa, and section 8 of the national voter registration act of 1993, 52 USC 20507.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.254 Actions following confirmation notice.

Rule 4. (1) If the voter returns the notice, depending on the response, the clerk shall take 1 of the following actions:

(a) If the individual confirms they reside at their registration address, the clerk shall indicate the individual confirmed their residency in the voter registration database. The individual is returned to active status.

(b) If the individual confirms a new address that is still within the same jurisdiction, the clerk shall update the individual's address in the voter registration database, update the individual's master card as required by the act, and send the individual a new voter information card. The individual is returned to active status.

(c) If the individual confirms a new address that is outside of the jurisdiction, the clerk shall cancel the individual's registration and update the individual's master card as required by the act.

(2) If the voter fails to return the notice but engages in election activity, the individual is returned to active status in the voter registration database.

(3) If a voter fails to return the notice and does not engage in election activity, the individual remains registered to vote but maintains a verify status.

(4) If the notice is returned by the post office as undeliverable, the clerk shall update the voter's status in the voter registration database but take no registration cancellation action.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

If after the expiration of the waiting period the individual has not engaged in any election activity, the individual's registration shall be cancelled by the secretary of state in the voter registration database. The clerk shall update the voter's master card as required by the act.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.255 Actions following cancellation notice.

Rule 5. (1) If the voter returns the notice, depending on the response, the clerk shall take 1 of the following actions:

(a) If the individual confirms they reside at their registration address, the clerk shall indicate the individual confirmed their residency in the voter registration database. The individual is returned to active status.

(b) If the individual confirms a new address that is still within the jurisdiction, the clerk shall update the individual's address in the voter registration database, update the individual's master card as required by the act, and send the individual a new voter information card. The individual is returned to active status.

(c) If the individual confirms a new address that is outside of the jurisdiction, the clerk shall cancel the individual's registration and update the individual's master card as required by the act.

(2) If the voter fails to return the notice but engages in election activity, the individual is returned to active status in the voter registration database.

(3) If there is no response to the cancellation notice or the notice is returned by the post office as undeliverable, the clerk shall take no registration cancellation action. If after the expiration of the waiting period the individual has not engaged in any election activity, the individual's registration shall be cancelled by the secretary of state in the voter registration database. The clerk shall update the voter's master card as required by the act.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.256 Challenges to voter registration; requirements for a valid challenge.

Rule 6. (1) A challenge to an individual's registration is a specific process that is distinct from the notice process that follows the receipt of reliable information.

(2) A challenge to an individual's registration must comply with the requirements of section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, and is valid only if it meets all the following requirements:

(a) The challenge must be submitted by a registered voter in the same municipality as the challenged voter.

(b) The challenge must be submitted to the city or township clerk for the relevant municipality. Submission may be in person, by mail, or by electronic mail.

(c) The challenge must be made through a written and notarized affidavit. A separate written and notarized affidavit is required for each individual voter whose registration is being challenged. Submission of a copy of the written and notarized affidavit is acceptable.

(d) The challenger must swear that they have personal knowledge that the challenged voter is ineligible and must specify the grounds for ineligibility.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

(e) The challenge cannot be made indiscriminately and without good cause, or for the purpose of harassment. A challenge is made indiscriminately and without good cause if the challenger does not know or have a reasonable belief that the challenged individual is ineligible. Improper reasons for making a challenge to a voter's eligibility include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) The voter's race or ethnic background.

(ii) The voter's sexual orientation or gender identity.

(iii) The voter's physical or mental disability.

(iv) The voter's inability to read, write, or speak English.

(v) The voter's need for assistance in the voting process.

(vi) The voter's manner of dress.

(vii) The voter's support for or opposition to a candidate, political party, or ballot question.

(viii) The appearance or the challenger's impression of any of the traits listed in paragraphs (i) to (vii) of this subdivision.

(ix) Other characteristics or appearance of characteristics that are not relevant to an individual's qualification to cast a ballot.

(3) An individual's voter registration may be cancelled pursuant to section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, only for the following reasons:

(a) The individual is not old enough to register to vote. An individual may preregister to vote when they are 16 years of age, and is qualified to be registered to vote when they are 17.5 years of age or older.

(b) The individual is not a United States citizen.

(c) The individual does not reside within the jurisdiction where they are registered.

(d) The individual is deceased.

(4) The requirement that the challenger have personal knowledge that the challenged voter is ineligible is not satisfied when the challenger's basis for their claim is reliable information that a voter has moved or other third-hand information indicating that a voter is not eligible, including an online database, United States Postal Service information, or other information from a third-party such as another resident contacted during a house-to-house canvass.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.257 Independent verification; applicability of notice and waiting period procedure.

Rule 7. (1) If the challenger fails to properly assert personal knowledge of a voter's ineligibility as required by R 168.256(2)(d), the clerk may attempt to independently verify the information but is not required to conduct an independent investigation before rejecting the challenge for failure to meet the statutory requirements for a valid challenge.

(2) If a clerk exercises their discretion to independently verify a challenge that failed to satisfy the statutory challenge requirements under section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, and their investigation reveals reliable information to support the conclusion that the challenged voter may have moved, that reliable information must be used to initiate the sending of a confirmation or cancellation notice in accordance with section 509aa of the act, MCL 168.509aa.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

(3) The challenge cancellation timeline of 30 days that applies after receiving a valid challenge under section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, does not apply when a clerk investigates in response to an invalid challenge and independently finds reliable information. Instead, the sending of a confirmation or cancellation notice in accordance with section 509aa of the act, MCL 168.509aa, is required.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.258 Challenges asserting individual voter is deceased.

Rule 8. (1) If the clerk receives a challenge on the basis that the challenged individual is deceased, and the clerk independently verifies that the challenged individual is deceased, the clerk shall immediately process a cancellation based on the individual's death instead of following the challenge procedure. If the clerk does not independently verify that the challenged individual is deceased, but the challenge properly asserts personal knowledge of a voter's ineligibility as required by R 168.256(2)(d), the clerk shall process the challenge under R 168.259.

(2) A clerk may use the following sources to independently verify an individual is deceased:

(a) Confirmation from next of kin.

(b) Death certificate.

(c) An obituary.

(d) Notification from the county clerk under section 510 of the act, MCL 168.510.

(e) Other information that verifies the death of the voter.

(3) In verifying that a voter is deceased, the clerk shall verify that the deceased individual is the same individual as the voter, including by matching personal identifying information such as address, date of birth, or other information that confirms the identity of the individual.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.259 Procedure after receiving a challenge to voter registration.

Rule 9. (1) If a challenge to an individual voter's registration does not satisfy any 1 of the requirements in R 168.256 and section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, the challenge must be rejected.

(2) If a challenge to an individual voter's registration does satisfy the requirements in R 168.256 and section 512 of the act, MCL 168.512, the clerk shall do the following:

(a) Update the individual's status in the voter registration database.

(b) Send notice of the challenge to the challenged individual.

(3) The notice required under subrule (2)(b) of this rule must comply with the following:

(a) Be sent by registered or certified mail to the last registered or known address for the challenged individual.

(b) Include the grounds for the challenge.

(c) Inform the challenged individual that they have 30 days after the day immediately following the date of mailing the notice to respond to the challenge.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

(d) Inform the challenged individual that failure to respond within 30 days results in the informed individual's registration being cancelled.

(4) To respond to a challenge, a challenged individual may do any 1 of the following:

(a) Appear in person before the clerk to take an oath and answer questions confirming that the challenged individual is qualified to be a registered voter where they are currently registered.

(b) Submit a notarized affidavit to the clerk confirming that the challenged voter is qualified to be a registered voter where they are currently registered.

(c) Respond to the notice and confirm that the challenged individual is not qualified to vote and that their voter registration must be cancelled.

(5) If a challenged individual fails to respond to the challenge as explained in subrule (4) of this rule within 30 days after the day immediately following the date of mailing the notice, the clerk shall cancel the individual's registration.

(6) If a challenged individual responds to the challenge to confirm that their voter registration must be cancelled, the clerk shall cancel the individual's registration.

(7) If the challenged voter appears in person as specified under subrule (4)(a) of this rule or submits a notarized affidavit as specified under subrule (4)(b) of this rule and indicates that they are qualified to be a registered voter, the challenge process is complete, the challenge flag in the voter registration database is removed, and the individual remains registered.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.260 Registration cancellation not requiring notice and waiting period.

Rule 10. A voter's registration must be cancelled immediately without sending a confirmation or cancellation notice only when any of the following occur:

(a) The individual voter requests cancellation. An individual's request to cancel their registration to vote must be in writing and signed by the individual.

(b) The individual voter confirms they are no longer a resident of the jurisdiction. This confirmation could be in the form of a signed letter from the voter or a signed response to a confirmation notice.

(c) An election official from a jurisdiction outside of this state informs the clerk that the individual voter has registered to vote in another state, and the election official forwards the clerk a copy of a registration application signed by the individual that includes the individual's previous address in this state.

(d) An individual voter is challenged and questions directed to that individual voter by an election inspector at the polls on election day or during early voting reveal that the individual voter is not qualified to vote in the jurisdiction.

(e) The clerk verifies that the individual voter has died.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.261 Duplicate voter registrations.

Rule 11. When an individual's registration is identified as duplicate, the clerk shall submit a merge request through the voter registration database to merge the voter registrations.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules

This merge combines the records into 1 record and maintains the individual voter's registration to vote.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

R 168.262 Correcting voter registration records.

Rule 12. (1) A clerk shall take steps to notify a registered individual if the clerk becomes aware of a deficiency in their voter registration record.

(2) If a deficiency is the result of an administrative error, such as a registration that is submitted with both a mailing address and a residential address, but the mailing address is erroneously entered into the voter registration database as the residential address, the clerk shall correct the individual's voter registration record.

History: 2026 MR 4, Eff. Feb. 23, 2026.

Courtesy of Michigan Administrative Rules