
Chapter 2 Voter Registration

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Qualified Voter File	2
Qualified Voter File (QVF) Inbox	3
The Statewide Street Index.....	4
Voter Qualifications	5
Sources of Voter Registration Applications	5
Transmission of Voter Registration Applications	7
Mail-in Voter Registration Program:.....	8
Processing Voter Registration Applications.....	9
Returned Voter Information Cards	11
Election Eligible Voter Registration	13
Address Change within Jurisdiction:.....	14
Move to a Different Jurisdiction	15
Name Change.....	17
Addressing Confirmation Notices	17
Returned Confirmation Notices.....	18
Surrendered License	19
Inactive Voter Files.....	20
Voter Registration Cancellations	21
Retention of Canceled Voter Registration Records	22
Public Availability of Voter Registration Data.....	22
Reporting Postal Service Issues.....	23

THE QUALIFIED VOTER FILE: The Qualified Voter File (QVF) is a distributed database which ties Michigan's 1520 cities and townships to a statewide voter registration file maintained in Lansing. The QVF contains over 7.5 million voter registration records.

- City and township clerks have direct access to their local QVF data via Michigan's QVF system. Some jurisdictions coordinate voter registration activity with their county clerk's office.
- With the QVF, every "motor voter" registration transaction executed in a Secretary of State Branch Office is electronically forwarded to the appropriate local election official's QVF Inbox; a paper receipt of the transaction follows within days to confirm the electronic notification.
- 131 Secretary of State Branch Offices, the Secretary of State Renewal by Mail program and the ExpressSOS.com (BAM) online change of address program electronically enter all "motor voter" voter registration transactions (approximately 85% of all voter registration transactions in state). The data is electronically transferred to local QVF files daily. Except for ExpressSOS (BAM) transactions and stand-alone branch office changes of address for voters previously registered in Michigan, the corresponding hard copy voter registration applications are forwarded to local clerks by mail within one week.
- Individuals applying for a Michigan Driver's License or Personal Identification Card for the first time at any Secretary of State Branch office, and who meet the age and citizenship requirements, will be automatically registered to vote unless they "opt out." This transaction will be electronically transferred to local QVF Inboxes daily, as well as confirmed with a paper receipt of the transaction within days.
- All other voter registration transactions must be key entered into the QVF by county, city and township clerks.

Transactions requiring key entry are generated through the following voter registration programs:

- Federal and state "mail in" voter registrations
- Public Assistance agencies ("Designated Voter Registration Agencies")
- Armed Forces recruitment offices
- Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA)

- Addresses used for voter registration purposes are required to be residential addresses. Residence for the purposes of registration and voting is defined according to Michigan election law, as a “*place at which a person habitually sleeps, keeps his or her personal effects, and has a regular place of lodging.*” All voter registration records entered into the QVF system are matched to the Michigan driver’s license file. When matches are found, the voter’s driver’s license record is flagged. This linkage permits the updating of both files regardless of whether the voter initiates a driver’s license address change or a voter registration address change.
- All Michigan drivers are required to use their residential voter registration address for driver’s license purposes. As a result, all voter registration address changes are automatically posted to the driver’s license file. In the event a local clerk enters a change of address for a voter in the Qualified Voter File, the Department of State supplies an address change sticker for their driver license via the mail.

Note: 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 in order to register to vote.

- All voter registration application forms produced at Secretary of State Branch Offices are automatically printed with the voter’s name, address, date of birth and other data elements common to the voter’s driver’s license record. Individuals who are currently registered to vote in Michigan that change their Michigan driver’s license address to reflect a move to a *new* jurisdiction are automatically registered in their new jurisdiction of residence via the link between the Qualified Voter File and Michigan driver’s license file.

QUALIFIED VOTER FILE (QVF) INBOX: Electronic notification of all voter registration transactions that are processed at a Secretary of State Branch Office, SOS Renewal by Mail, and ExpressSOS.com are forwarded to each local clerk via the QVF system. A report of all such transactions is electronically forwarded to each jurisdiction daily and may be accessed via the QVF Inbox. A list of the more commonly used inbox notification types and the associated actions that clerks must take for each is located in *Appendix 1*. Some of the more common notification types and descriptions are listed below:

- **“New Voter”** – An individual who is registering for the *first time* in Michigan has been added to your local file.

- **“Moved From”** – An individual who was *previously registered* to vote in a different jurisdiction within Michigan has been added to your local file.
- **“Moved To”** – An individual who was/is registered in your jurisdiction has moved to a different address that is located either inside or outside your jurisdiction.

Note: For a full technical explanation of the QVF and its components as they apply to voter registration, please refer to Chapter Two of the QVF Reference Manual found in the eLearning Center. It may also be accessed by logging into QVF Refresh.

THE STATEWIDE STREET INDEX: The statewide street index is the foundation for the QVF system. The street index is a database that contains all known addresses within the state and the political districts and subdivisions that correspond to each address. All voter registration addresses entered into the QVF are automatically matched against the addresses contained within the street index. It is by matching these addresses that the QVF system can accurately identify and forward each voter registration transaction to the proper jurisdiction subsequently assigning the voter to the appropriate Congressional District, State Senate District, State House District, County Commission District, School District, Library District among other taxing authorities which the voter is entitled to vote based on their residence. Maintaining an accurate street index is critical to ensuring the accuracy of the QVF and for ensuring the accuracy of the precinct lists that are used at the polls on Election Day.

Each local clerk is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the addressing information for his or her jurisdiction. *Addressing changes that take place within a jurisdiction must be immediately reported to the Bureau of Elections* so that the statewide street index can be adjusted. Errors and omissions in the QVF precinct lists used at the polls on Election Day are generally the result of errors or omissions in the statewide street index. To report needed changes to the street index in your jurisdiction to the Michigan Bureau of Elections, refer to the following:

- Fill out a street index change request form located in the QVF (Administration>Street Index Lookup)
- If you have questions about a street index issue, email Bureau of Elections staff at Elections@Michigan.gov

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

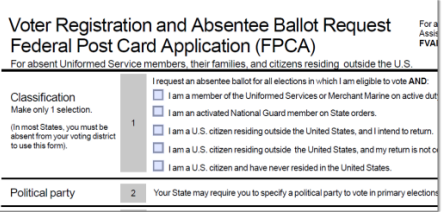

To register to vote in Michigan you must be:

- A resident of Michigan and the city or township where you are applying to register to vote for at least 30 days before Election Day.
- A United States citizen.
- At least 18 years of age (by Election Day).
- Not serving a sentence in jail or prison.

It's important to note that a voter may register at age 17.5 years of age. The Qualified Voter File will place an applicant on the registration list when they turn 18. Applicants who have a past criminal conviction and are no longer in jail or prison can register and vote. They may also register and vote if they are in jail and awaiting trial or sentencing. If they are currently serving a sentence in jail or prison they may not register or vote.

SOURCES OF VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS

The following chart shows the various places a voter may register to vote, and the forms associated with that registration location.

Registration Location	Form Type
Clerk's Office and Other	Any form used in the presence of the local or county Clerk or deputized staff for registering to vote
Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)	
Mail Registration	

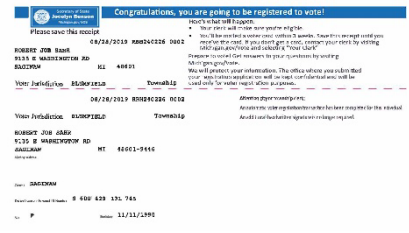
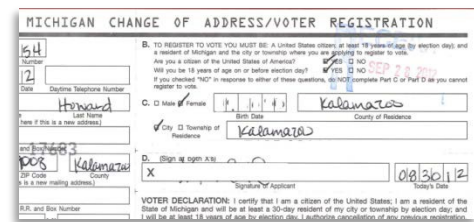

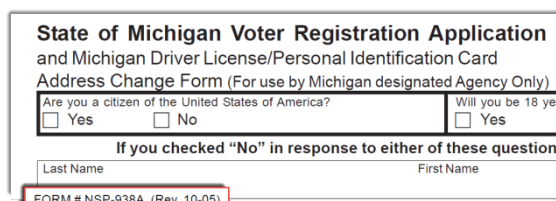
<p>SOS Branch Offices</p>	
<p>SOS Renewal by Mail Program</p>	
<p>VR Agencies Serving Disabled Persons</p>	
<p>VR Public Assistance Agencies</p>	

Photo ID for In-Person Voter Registration Applicants: Voter registration applicants that apply in person are required to provide photo identification if they have it. If the voter does not have an acceptable form of photo identification, he or she may sign an *Affidavit of Voter not in Possession of Picture Identification* form. Acceptable forms of identification are the same as those required for in-person voting, and include the following:

- Michigan driver’s license or Michigan personal identification card
- Current driver’s license or personal identification card issued by another state
- Current federal or state government-issued photo identification
- Current U.S. passport
- Current student identification with photo – from a high school or an accredited institution of higher education

- Current military identification card with photo
- Current tribal identification card with photo

The *Affidavit of Voter not in Possession of Picture Identification* form is also the same as what is used for in-person voting. A sample is included in Appendix I.

Voter Registration by Mail Sources:

- Mail Registration Program. (Includes the state mail-in voter registration application form and the federal mail-in voter registration application form.)
- Direct delivery of voter registration applications by persons working on behalf of voter registration drives. (The state and federal voter registration application forms developed to implement the Mail Registration Program are generally used by organizations involved in such efforts.)

TRANSMISSION OF VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS: A Secretary of State Branch office, designated voter registration agency or county clerk in receipt of a completed voter registration application is required to forward the application to the clerk of the county, city or township where the applicant resides *within seven calendar days*. If the receipt of the application occurs between the 21st and fifteenth day before the election, the application must be forwarded to the clerk of the county, city or township where the applicant resides *within one business day*.

The following illustrates when paper voter registration applications are forwarded by branches:

Branch Transaction	In person – new voter	In person – address change for voter reg & DL	In person – address change for voter reg only	Online address Change
Paper Application Sent	Yes	Yes	No	No

Special Note re: Renewal by Mail forms: Renewal by mail forms are keyed into the system by branch employees. The Secretary of State Branch office system does not allow employees to postdate transactions. If you received this form and it's near the close of registration date of an election, check the postmark date on the attached envelope and manually adjust the voter registration date on the QVF record accordingly.

MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATION PROGRAM:

- A voter registration application is considered received by the fifteenth day before the election if the elector submits an application through the mail that is postmarked with a date that falls on or before the fifteenth day before the election. If the postmark date is missing or unclear, the voter registration application is considered received by the fifteenth day before the election if it arrives in the mail on or before the eighth day prior to the election and the application is dated by the applicant on or before the fifteenth day prior to the election.
- If the elector submits a voter registration application by mail within 14 days of the election, the local clerk is **required** to send a notice to the elector informing them of the requirement to appear in person at the clerk's office to register if the elector wants to vote in that jurisdiction in the upcoming election. This notice is generated in the QVF.

Federal Identification Requirement: HAVA (and Michigan Law) require that a voter who has never voted in Michigan and registers by mail must meet an identification requirement. To comply with the identification requirement, the voter must:

- accurately enter his or her state issued driver license number or the last four digits of his or her social security number where requested on the mail-in voter registration form; or
- send one of the following forms of identification when mailing the mail-in voter registration form to his or her county or local clerk: a copy of any current and valid photo identification or a copy of a paycheck, government check, utility bill, bank statement or a government document which lists his or her name and address.

If a voter subject to the federal identification requirement does not meet the requirement when registering, the voter must present one of the above listed documents before being issued a ballot at the first election in which he or she wishes to participate. The federal identification requirement does not apply if:

- the voter hand delivers his or her mail-in registration form to the county or local clerk's office;
- the voter is disabled; or
- the voter is eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Implementation Points: The following implementation points merit close attention:

- 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. In this case, it is not necessary to complete the Provisional Ballot form. A special notice must be issued to the voter at the time the Envelope ballot is issued. A sample notice is provided in *Appendix I.*)
- If a clerk received a mail in registration and an absentee ballot application simultaneously, and the voter has provided a Michigan Driver's License or Personal Identification card number, or the last four of their Social Security Number, the AV ballot cannot be issued until QVF has verified the numbers provided - usually **overnight**. The ballot can then be issued as normal if the requirement has been met or issued with instructions for the voter to return the ballot with proper documentation.
 - Note, this will not affect a voter who registers in person and applies for an AV ballot at the same time, since that voter is not registering by mail and therefore the federal ID requirement does not apply.
- In an instance where a voter wishes to vote absentee and: 1) the voter is subject to the federal identification requirement because he or she is a first-time mail registrant who has never voted in Michigan 2) the voter has not met the federal identification requirement prior to requesting the absent voter ballot, and 3) the voter has not met the identification requirement while submitting the absent voter ballot, the voter should be notified of the need to fulfill the requirement and a Provisional Envelope ballot must be issued. If the required identification is not provided, the voted ballot must be preserved and processed as an Envelope ballot. It is recommended that in this case, the Envelope ballot not be delivered to the precinct or absentee counting board for processing on Election Day. For more information regarding the Provisional Balloting process see Chapter XI.

PROCESSING VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS:

Receipt of Voter Registration Applications Submitted by "First Time" Voter Registration Applicants:

Upon the receipt of a voter registration application submitted by an individual who was *not previously registered* in the state, the clerk reviews the form to determine its acceptability. The absence of any of the following data on the form *invalidates* the application:

- Name
- Registration address (*must be a street address, rural route number, or physical location located*

within the jurisdiction)

- Birth date
- Signature on qualification certificate (*An original signature must be provided.*)
- Affirmation of U.S. citizenship (*If the citizenship question is not answered change voter's status in QVF to "Challenge – Citizenship." If the voter answered "No" reject the registration and send the voter a notice of rejection.*)

Receipt of Voter Registration Applications Submitted by Voters Who Were Previously Registered:

Upon the receipt of a voter registration application submitted by an individual who was *previously registered* in a different jurisdiction within the state, the clerk reviews the form to determine its acceptability. The absence of any of the following data on the form *invalidates* the application *with exceptions* as noted:

- Name
- Registration address (*must be a street address, rural route number, or physical location located within the jurisdiction*)
- Birth date
- Signature on qualification certificate (*Exception: As an alternative, if a digitized signature is available in the QVF, an original signature is not required. If a digitized signature is not available, a signature must be obtained before a ballot is issued.*)
- Affirmation of U.S. citizenship (*If citizenship question is not answered change the voter's status in QVF to "Challenge – Citizenship." If the voter answered "No" reject the registration and send the voter a notice of rejection.*)

Registration Application Not Received (Existing Voters): For existing voters using online change of address through the Secretary of State's Express SOS program, no paper registration application is involved. If no registration application is received for previously-registered voters who have moved, the voter remains in active status.

Processing Acceptable Voter Registration Applications: If the voter registration application is acceptable, the clerk uses the information on the application to verify that the voter is in the QVF, then create the following voter registration records:

- Master card *generated from QVF*
- Voter Information Card *generated from QVF*

After creating the voter Master card on which the voter's digitized signature will be printed, the clerk is required to prepare a Voter Information Card for the applicant which includes the applicant's name and registration address; Congressional, State Senate, State Representative and County Commissioner district numbers; precinct number; and polling place location.

Upon receipt of application but no later than three weeks after receiving a QVF Inbox notification for registered voter, if no application has been received, the Voter Information Card must be mailed to the applicant's registration address by *nonforwardable mail*. The successful delivery of the Voter Information Card completes the registration process.

Following the creation of the voter Master card and Voter Information Card, the voter registration application may be destroyed. There is no need to attach the application to the Master card or retain on file.

Exception: If the voter provides a post office box as an alternative mailing address, the voter information card must be placed in an envelope which is addressed to the P.O. Box address. In this case, it is important that the alternative mailing address be entered into the QVF

RETURNED VOTER INFORMATION CARDS:

Voter Information Card Returned: If a *Voter Information Card* sent to an elector is returned as "undeliverable", the clerk proceeds as appropriate under the procedures outlined later in this chapter "Address Change Within Jurisdiction: Written notice not provided by voter" or under "Move to a Different Jurisdiction: Written notice of voter's registration in new jurisdiction of residence not provided." The returned information card is retained, and some clerks attach it to the voter Master Card until the issue is resolved. Under no circumstances does a returned Information Card result in a voter's registration being canceled or rejected without going through the NVRA cancellation process.

Processing Deficient Voter Registration Applications: If the voter registration application is not acceptable, the clerk takes the following actions:

*If the voter was **not** previously registered in Michigan, and if the signature on the voter registration application is **missing**, change the voter's QVF status to "Reject – Signature" and send the voter a "Notice of Rejection."*

Same Day Voter Registration: As explained further below, voters may now register or update their

registration on Election Day. The clerk may use this process to have an applicant who submitted a deficient voter registration application appear in person to sign the form or submit a replacement voter registration application on or before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, for the first election at which the voter chooses to participate. A digitized signature in this case is not acceptable.

App with No Signature	Previously registered within jurisdiction	Previously registered elsewhere in MI	New Voter in MI
Digital Signature on file	Active*	Active*	Reject – No Signature & send notice
Digital Signature not on file	Verify – Signature	Verify - Signature	Reject – No Signature & send notice

*unless voter’s application has other deficiencies requiring a status change

- If the voter *was previously registered* in Michigan, the *digitized signature* captured in the voter’s record located in the QVF will automatically print on the voter’s Master Card. If no digitized signature is available or if the clerk prefers to secure a physical signature, this must be obtained prior to the issuance of a ballot. In this case, the signature may be obtained on Election Day. Change the voter’s QVF status to “Verify – Sign Registration Card” and the Electronic Poll book or printed QVF Precinct List will contain a note to poll workers to obtain a signature prior to issuing a ballot.
- If the applicant is a *new voter* in Michigan and the physical registration is not received, change the voter’s status to “Verify – Sign Registration Card.” A voter *not previously registered* in Michigan must sign an attestation of qualification prior to being issued a ballot.
- If the citizenship question on the application is answered “No,” regardless of previous registration status, change the voter’s QVF status to “Reject – Citizenship” and send the voter a “Notice of Rejection.”

If the citizenship question is left blank, regardless of previous registration status, written affirmation of U.S. citizenship must be obtained prior to the issuance of a ballot. Change the voter’s QVF status to “Challenge – Citizenship.”

If the *registration application is not received*, proceed as follows:

- New voter: change the voter’s status to “Verify – Citizenship.”
- Existing voter: leaves as an active voter; no change of status is required.

Election Day Procedure Note: In the event a voter’s record is flagged “Verify or Challenge-

Citizenship” on the List of Qualified Voters in the precinct on Election Day due to a voter registration application deficiency, the flag may be remedied with the voter’s completion of the Application to Vote containing a positive attestation of citizenship that the voter signs prior to being issued a ballot. The flag will be removed from the voter’s record upon the update of the voter history.

- If the registration application is unacceptable because it does not bear the applicant’s full birth date or full residential address, the clerk attempts to contact the applicant by phone to obtain the required information. This information must be obtained on or before 8:00 p.m. on election day.
- If the registration application bears an address in another jurisdiction, the clerk is required to 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 the Department of State’s Bureau of Elections for review.

ELECTION ELIGIBLE VOTER REGISTRATION:

With the passage of Proposal 18-3, an unregistered elector (or a registered elector who has moved) who wishes to participate in an upcoming election now has the following options:

- Register to vote in person at a Secretary of State branch office, a designated voter registration agency, the voter’s county, city, or township clerk’s office or by mail no later than the 15th day prior to the election.
- Register to vote during the 14 days prior to the election, including on Election Day, by applying in person at his or her city or township clerk’s office.

Note: The Secretary of State, county clerk, and designated voter registration agencies are required to provide notice to individuals who register to vote at their location in the 14 days prior to Election Day that he or she is not eligible to vote in the next election unless he or she applies in person at his or her city or township clerk’s office or votes at their last place of residence.

Proof of residency: voters who register to vote in person with their city or township clerk during the 14 days prior to the election, including on Election Day, must show proof of residency. The following outlines the documents allowed as proof of residency and the associated ballot type the voter should be issued. Proper entry of this information in to QVF will appropriately assign the ballot type in the ePollbook, in the AV module, and/or on the receipt provided to the voter.

Proof of Residency	Michigan DL or PID with current address*	Michigan DL or PID without current address & other Proof of Residency	Other Picture ID and Proof of Residency	No Picture ID (Affidavit Required) with Proof of Residency	No Proof of Residency
Type of Ballot	Regular Ballot	Challenged Ballot	Challenged Ballot	Challenged Ballot	Ineligible for this Election

*Note, voters who register in person beginning 14 days prior to the election, including election day, with their Michigan Driver’s License or Personal ID that has their current residential address have met all requirements and will be issued a regular ballot. **A driver’s license with a Secretary of State provided sticker on the back, and a temporary driver’s license, would qualify.**

Documents that may be accepted if additional proof of residency is required (these items must include the applicant’s name and current address):

- a current utility bill
- bank statement
- paycheck
- government check
- other government document.

Upon registering the voter in to QVF, a receipt must be printed and issued to the voter. The voter must be instructed to bring this receipt to the precinct on Election Day, especially if registered after Electronic Poll Books have been downloaded at 4 p.m. the day before the election. The receipt will provide instructions to the election inspectors on proper processing of the voter and the proper ballot to be issued.

ISSUING BALLOTS TO ELECTION ELIGIBLE VOTERS: A voter who registers in the period beginning 14 days prior to the election, including Election Day, may be required to cast a challenged ballot depending on the type of ID and proof of residence provided at registration, even if the voter casts an AV ballot in the office.

If the voter registered prior to 4:00 p.m. on the Monday before the election, his or her name should appear on the Electronic Poll Book. If applicable, the voter will have a status code of Challenged next to his or her name. If the voter’s name does not appear on the list, election inspectors will need to add the voter’s name to the pollbook under the “unlisted tab” and physically prepare the ballot as “challenged.”

- As soon as possible following the election, voters who register in the period beginning 14 days prior to the election, including Election Day, must be sent a Voter Information Card.

- All voter registration forms submitted by applicants who register in the period beginning 14 days prior to the election, including Election Day, that resulted in a challenged ballot being issued **must** be retained for a period of six years.
- Remember, voters also have the option to cast their ballot, whether regular or challenged, as an absentee ballot at the clerk's office after registering on the day of the election.

ADDRESS CHANGE WITHIN JURISDICTION:

Written Notice Provided by Voter: Upon the receipt of written notice *signed by a voter* that he or she has moved to a different address *within the same jurisdiction*, the clerk updates the voter registration files as appropriate. If the change is made through a Secretary of State branch office such notice will include the receipt of a voter registration application form showing the new address and will be preceded by a QVF "Changed Address To" inbox notification. Such changes may also be made through an Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration form executed by the voter at the polls; or a corrected voter information card, letter, post card 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 address. Here, it is recommended that the updated voter information card be sent by *nonforwardable mail with address correction requested*. If the voter information card should subsequently be returned by the post office as "undeliverable," the address correction can then be used to proceed as appropriate under "Address Change Within Jurisdiction: Written notice not provided by voter" or under "Move to a Different Jurisdiction: Written notice of voter's registration in new jurisdiction of residence not provided."

Written Notice Not Provided by Voter: Upon the receipt of "reliable information", (refer to Reliable Information Flowchart, included in Appendix I) obtained through a "third party" source that a voter has moved to a different address *within the same jurisdiction or moved with no address provided*, the clerk must forward a return postage paid confirmation notice to the voter to confirm the move. The notice is mailed by *forwardable mail*.

"Reliable information" on such an address change would include a new address provided on returned mail; information supplied through a local utility; or notice provided through any similar source. The new address *may not* be added to the voter's registration records unless and until it is confirmed by the voter in writing or in person at the polls on Election Day. After mailing the confirmation notice, mark the voter's QVF record with a "Verify – Confirm Address – Moved Within" status code.

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. 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 he or she has *not* moved to a different address, the clerk changes the voter's QVF status back to "Active." If the voter neglects to return the reply card and does not appear to vote, the clerk takes no further action.

If the confirmation notice is returned by the post office as "undeliverable," the voter's status must be changed to "Challenged – Residency." (See: "Returned Confirmation Notices" discussed later in this chapter.)

MOVE TO A DIFFERENT JURISDICTION:

Written Notice of Voter's Registration in New State of Residence Provided: Upon the receipt of *written notice* that a voter has *registered to vote in another state*, the clerk cancels the voter's registration.

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 *without any confirmation that the voter has reregistered to vote in his or her new jurisdiction of residence*, the clerk sends the voter a confirmation notice by *forwardable mail*, which contains a postage prepaid and preaddressed reply card. "Reliable information" on such an address change would include a new address in another jurisdiction provided on returned mail, information supplied through a local utility, or notice provided through any similar source including the U.S. Postal Service or its licensees. A possible, but far less common source of such information would be a letter, post card or post office change of address form signed by the voter announcing the address change without any direction given on the desired disposition of his or her voter registration record. In this case, the clerk changes the voter's QVF status to "Verify – Confirm Address – Moved Outside."

The confirmation notice, which in this case is referred to as a "Notice of Cancellation," is used to confirm the voter's address within a different jurisdiction. Additional language printed on the notice advises that the voter's registration will be canceled unless the voter participates in an election, replies to a confirmation notice re-affirming residence in the community, or engages in another voting or voter registration transaction by the second November General federal election following the notice. In QVF, the "Cancellation Countdown" feature may be used to track the response timeframe. In this case, if no response is received and the timeframe expires, the voter registration will be canceled in accordance

with the NVRA.

Once the record is canceled, the date and reason for the cancellation is noted on the voter's Master Card. The master card is then moved to the jurisdiction's cancellation file where it is retained for 5 years beyond the date of cancellation.

- If the notice is *not* returned by the post office as "undeliverable" it is assumed that the notice was delivered.
- If the voter returns the reply card attached to the confirmation notice to verify that he or she has moved to another jurisdiction, the clerk cancels the voter's registration.
- 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." (See: "Returned Confirmation Notices" discussed later in this chapter.)
- If the voter appears to vote *in any election up to and including the second November General federal election following the notice and claims that he or she did not move to an address outside the jurisdiction*, the voter is issued a ballot under normal procedure. The "Verify – Confirm Address" status code is automatically removed with the recording of vote history immediately following the election.
- If through the questioning of the voter it is determined that the voter *did move to an address that is outside* of the jurisdiction, the voter may not be entitled to a ballot in that jurisdiction and may need to register with their new clerk. (See: Chapter XI "Voters Who Have Moved" for more information.)
- However, if through the questioning of the voter, it is determined that the voter moved *within the same jurisdiction*, the election inspectors serving in the voter's precinct direct the voter to complete an Election Day Change of Address/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration form. Once the form is completed and signed by the voter, a ballot is issued under normal procedure.

If no response is received, the voter does not participate in an election, and the voter does not engage in another voting or voter registration transaction by the second November General federal election following the notice, the voter's registration is canceled without further notice. This is handled programmatically through the QVF with a status of "Canceled NVRA."

NAME CHANGE: If a voter holds a Michigan driver's license or personal ID card, name changes must be made in person at a Secretary of State Branch office. Upon the receipt of a name change, the clerk updates the voter registration files as appropriate. After updating the registration files, the clerk prepares an updated voter Information card for the voter and mails it to the voter's registration address.

ADDRESSING CONFIRMATION NOTICES: While the NVRA requires that confirmation mailings be sent to registrants by *forwardable mail*, it does not specify the address which must be used. In certain cases (such as when a mailing to a registrant 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 faced with a choice of addresses, the advantage in mailing to the old address is that a registrant who has only *temporarily* changed addresses may not receive the mailing at the new address. A disadvantage to using the old address is that a registrant, who has, in fact, moved, may not receive the mailing through postal forwarding as post offices retain change-of-address records for a limited period of time (12 to 18 months). There are similar advantages and disadvantages in mailing to the new address: if the registrant has, in fact, moved, the notice will be received. If, on the other hand, the new address is in error, the registrant would never receive the mailing.

Given the above, it is recommended that in those instances where a local election official has both an "old address" and a "new address" for a registrant who must be sent a confirmation notice, that the mailing be sent to both addresses. The confirmation notice should contain a postage prepaid and preaddressed reply card.

RETURNED CONFIRMATION NOTICES: If a confirmation notice sent to a voter who has moved within his or her jurisdiction or to a voter who has moved to a different jurisdiction is returned by the post office as "undeliverable," the following actions are taken:

- The clerk marks the voter's QVF registration record as "Challenged – Residency."
- Each election official must then instruct the election inspectors appointed to serve in the voter's precinct on Election Day to question the voter on his or her residency status if the voter appears to vote. The voter *is not* required to provide documentation or proof of residence.

- If the elector appears to vote and affirms that he or she resides at the new address within the jurisdiction or advises that he or she has moved to *a different address within the jurisdiction*, the election inspectors issue a regular ballot to the elector. In this case, the election inspectors further direct the voter to complete an Election Day Change of Address Notice/Authorization to Transfer Voter Registration form. The completed notice is returned to the local clerk in the local clerk envelope following the close of the polls. The new address is then entered into the QVF following the election and an updated voter information card is forwarded to the voter that reflects the new information.
- If the elector appears to vote and it is revealed under questioning at the polls that the elector is not qualified to vote in the jurisdiction, the election inspectors do *not* issue a ballot to the elector and the voter's registration may be canceled. In this case the election inspector should place a note to this effect in the envelope addressed to the local clerk and direct the voter to go to their new clerk to register to vote.
- If the elector does not participate in an election, reply to a confirmation notice re-affirming residence in the community, or engage in another voting or voter registration transaction by the second November General federal election following the notice, the clerk cancels the voter's registration. As noted above, if the jurisdiction uses QVF to issue notices, the Cancellation Countdown feature will be turned on and used to track the response timeframe. If no response is received and the timeframe expires, the voter registration is automatically canceled. If the jurisdiction *does not have direct access to QVF*, it is recommended that a "tickler" file be established to track the voter registration records that are subject to cancellation. In this case, the clerk makes arrangements to change the voter's QVF status to "Cancel – Residence."

Once the record is canceled, the date and reason for the cancellation is noted on the voter's master card. The master card is then filed into the jurisdiction's cancellation file where it is retained for 5 years beyond the date of cancellation.

SURRENDERED LICENSE: The "Verify Surrendered License" QVF inbox notification/status code is used by the Department of State to flag the voter registration record of a voter who has surrendered his or her Michigan driver license when applying for a new driver's license in another state.

The fact that the voter has applied for a driver license in another state must be used as "reliable information" that the voter may no longer be a resident of the Michigan city or township in which he or

she is registered to vote. Under this scenario, an attempt must be made to confirm the voter's intent to 1) remain a resident of the jurisdiction (in this situation, the voter's status code is changed to "Active") or 2) discontinue residence within the jurisdiction (in this situation, the voter's status code is changed to "Cancel").

The State has instituted an automated process for generating these notices, and **local jurisdictions are not responsible for sending confirmation notices in these instances**. The State also handles all follow-up changes in QVF related to changing status and setting the cancellation countdown for these voters that have moved out of state.

The QVF Cancellation Countdown is used to track the response timeframe. If the voter does not participate in an election, reply to a confirmation notice re-affirming residence in the community, or engage in another voting or voter registration transaction by the second November General federal election following the notice, the voter's registration is canceled in QVF. This is handled programmatically and will appear in the inbox and the voter's records as 'Cancel—NVRA'.

INACTIVE VOTER FILES: The voter registration database in the Qualified Voter File is broken down into two components; "Active" registered voters and "Inactive" registered voters. Upon registration the voter's record goes into the active file and remains there as long as the voter participates regularly in elections. A voter record is placed in the inactive file when the person goes six consecutive years without voting, or when a confirmation notice is sent to a voter after the clerk receives reliable information that the voter has moved. (MCL168.509r) This inactive file is administered in the QVF programmatically and is simply a designation in the database. Master cards do not need to be segregated in a separate file. There are two practical effects of the inactive file. Voters in the inactive file can be subtracted from the total voter registration database for purposes of determining precinct size. The size limit of a precinct, 2,999 voters, can be determined either by use of the total number of registered voters in a precinct or by the number of registered "active" voters in a precinct. This choice also applies to the total of no more than 5,000 voters in a combined precinct.

The second effect concerns voters in the inactive file who have been placed there because a confirmation notice was sent to them. In these cases, if a voter in the inactive file applies to vote by absentee ballot, their ballot must be processed as a challenged ballot.

A voter will remain in the inactive file until they participate in an election, reply to a confirmation notice re-affirming their residence in the community or another voter registration transaction involving that voter occurs (including a change of address).

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

Requires Update of Voter Record in QVF and Adjustment of Master Card:

- The voter directs the cancellation of his or her registration record in a written, signed communication.
- The clerk receives or obtains information that the voter has died. Sources: QVF inbox notification; county clerk; death notices published in newspaper; personal firsthand knowledge.
- The clerk receives notice that the voter has registered to vote in another jurisdiction through another election official or through a QVF inbox notification.
- The voter verifies his or her residency in a different jurisdiction for voting purposes on a confirmation notice sent to the voter on "reliable information" that the voter has moved to a different jurisdiction.
- The voter's registration is challenged and it is revealed through questions directed to the voter in the polls on Election Day that he or she is *not* qualified to vote in the jurisdiction.

Requires update of Master Card only:

- The clerk determines that the voter has registered to vote in another jurisdiction through the QVF.
- No response is received from the voter *over the course of two, successive statewide November general elections* to a confirmation notice sent to the voter on "reliable information" that the voter has moved to a different jurisdiction. If the Cancellation Countdown was set in the QVF when the notice was sent, then the voter's QVF record will be updated automatically and only adjustment of the Master Card is needed.
- The voter fails to reply to a confirmation notice re-affirming residence in the community, or engage in another voting or voter registration transaction by the second November General federal election after a confirmation sent to the voter on "reliable information" that the voter has moved within the jurisdiction or to a different jurisdiction is returned by the post office as "undeliverable."

RETENTION OF CANCELED VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS: City and township clerks are required to maintain the original copy of a canceled voter registration record (Master Card) 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. As an exception, an original copy of a canceled voter registration record may be destroyed after two years if the record is reproduced pursuant to the Records Media Act (MCL 24.401 - 403). A canceled voter registration record reproduced under the Records Media Act may be destroyed five years after the date of cancellation.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF VOTER REGISTRATION DATA: All voter registration records are public documents and as such, must be available for public inspection during normal business hours. It is emphasized that the public availability of the records is *required by law*. Despite the public availability of voter registration information, Michigan election law restricts county, city and township clerks from producing lists or releasing copies of voter registration records which show any of the following information as such information is **exempt** from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

- Driver license or state personal identification card numbers.
- Month and day of the voters' birth. (Year of birth is not exempt and must be provided if requested.)
- Voter phone numbers.
- The identity or type of office that initially received the voters' registration applications.
- Any information regarding an individual's refusal to register to vote.
- Email addresses provided by absent uniformed services voters or overseas voters for transmitting registration applications or absent voter ballots.

The above disclosure restrictions apply to voter registration lists produced on paper and electronically. A county, city or township clerk supplying an interested person with a copy of a voter registration record must block out the restricted information.

It bears note that the above prohibitions do *not* limit a person's right to personally inspect a city or township clerk's registration files. In this case, a written request is not required.

Reporting of Postal Service Issues

As a note, if you are having recurring issues with mail delivery, electionmail.org is tracking postal issues and the U. S. Postal Service's response. Reports to the website electionmail.org are also copied to the Bureau of Elections.

Issues to Report:

- Delivery delay
- Damaged mail
- Lost mail
- Undeliverable / returned mail
- Misdirected mail

Please be as detailed as possible when reporting your issues, including specific addresses and mailing dates to assist USPS in identifying which postal facilities are having problems.