

Voter Verification Postcards Overview

November 29, 2012

Who Gets a Voter Verification Postcard?

Verification Postcards are mailed to Voters who register:

- Via mail
- Via an SRD
- Via a registration drive
- On Election Day
- Via Click and Mail, if the form is sent via mail, submitted by a SRD, or completed on Election Day

Why Are Postcards Sent?

State Statutes require Municipal Clerks to mail postcards to voters who register using the above methods, to verify that the addresses provided by the voters are valid.

- **Via Mail/SRD:** Statutes require Municipal Clerks to mail a verification postcard to voters who register by mail or via a special registration deputy, within 10 days of registration:

“...the clerk shall...transmit a 1st class letter or postcard to the registrant...within 10 days of receipt of the form.” Wis. Stat. § 6.32(4).

- **EDR:** Statutes require Municipal Clerks to mail voter verification postcards to all voters who register on Election Day, unless the G.A.B. notifies them that G.A.B. will fulfill that obligation for municipal clerks. These cards are sent after Election Day as Election Day registrations are entered into SVRS, and are not required to be sent within 10 days:

“...the municipal clerk...shall make an audit of all electors registering to vote at the polling place...unless the clerk...receives notice...that the board will perform the audit. The audit shall be made by 1st class postcard...” Wis. Stat. § 6.56(3).

Who Mails the Postcards?

While statutes require Municipal Clerks to mail verification postcards, G.A.B. mails voter verification postcards statewide on behalf of clerks, and has been doing so since 2006 when SVRS became operational.

- G.A.B. can mail the cards more cost-effectively than local clerks due to volume discounts and being able to directly extract all voters eligible for a postcard statewide directly from SVRS.
- A 2005 report by the Legislative Audit Bureau found that verification postcards were not being mailed out consistently by Municipal Clerks across the state and recommended that the G.A.B. take steps to ensure these statutory requirements were being completed consistently across the state.

When are Postcards Mailed Out?

- Postcards are mailed out based upon when the voter application is entered and approved in SVRS.

- G.A.B. does a weekly data pull from SVRS for all voter applications entered into SVRS that require having a postcard mailed.
- This ensures the 10 day timeline required for voters who register by mail or by Special Registration Deputy is adhered to.
- This also allows for Election Day Registration postcards to be mailed out in a timely manner as EDR's are entered into SVRS.

What is On the Postcard?

- The postcard contains the voter's name, home address, polling place, district information, and the verification language specified in statute.
- If the voter has a mailing address in SVRS, the card will be sent to the mailing address and will show the home address on a separate line for the voter to see.
- Polling place information is based on the "Normal Polling Place" designated for the voter's ward. It is important for clerks to keep this information up to date in order to ensure accurate information on the postcard.

What Do You Do if a Postcard is Returned as Undeliverable?

1. Review the address on the undeliverable postcard for any missing information or other obvious error. Compare the voter's address as it appears on the undeliverable postcard to the voter's paper registration form and look for typographical errors. Correct any obvious errors in SVRS, and email the G.A.B. Help Desk at GABHelpdesk@wi.gov to have a postcard resent to the corrected address. Make sure to include the voter's registration number.
2. If the address on the undeliverable postcard is complete and correct, and matches what the voter put on their form, more investigation needs to be done to determine if the voter deliberately gave an invalid address, or if some other circumstances apply, such as a post office error, or a homeless voter or other circumstance where a legitimate address is non-deliverable. G.A.B. recommends mailing the voter a 30-day notice letter indicating that the voter's verification postcard was returned as undeliverable, and giving the voter 30 days to confirm their registration.
3. If the 30-day notice letter is also returned as undeliverable, or if the voter fails to respond within 30 days, the clerk shall inactivate the voter's record in SVRS. If the voter registered on Election Day, the postcard and any other materials related to the clerk's investigation should be forwarded to the District Attorney.
4. If the voter receives the letter and responds confirming their registration, the voter remains active in SVRS and no further follow-up is required.
5. Note that if your municipality does not have postal mail delivery, you must enter a mailing address in SVRS for each of your voters in order for the verification postcard or other mailings to be deliverable. Please enter the mailing address in SVRS if it is missing, and email the G.A.B. Help Desk at GABHelpdesk@wi.gov to have a postcard resent to the corrected address. Make sure to include the voter's registration number.