

2021 Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance

Frequently Asked Questions

Guide to Clerks and Election Commissioners

Which voters will receive the Notice of Suspension of Registration Postcard?

On May 17, 2021, WisVote identified approximately 186,982 voters as eligible for suspension. The voters identified as eligible for suspension met the criteria outlined in Wis. Stat. §6.50(1):

1. The elector had a status of Active – Registered in WisVote.
2. The elector was originally registered on or before December 31, 2016.
3. The elector has not voted in any election after December 31, 2016.

All voters, including military voters, will receive these postcards if they meet the above criteria.

What does the clerk do with the postcards after they record the mailing as undeliverable in WisVote?

Postcards that are returned to your office as undeliverable are official registration documents and should be attached to the original Voter Registration Application (EL-131). The postcards and associated registration forms may be destroyed after 4 years. Wis. Stat. §7.23(1)(c).

Why do I need to track postcards returned as undeliverable in WisVote if all the records get inactivated anyway?

The Commission is required by Wis. Stat. §6.50(2r) to provide statistics on the number of postcards that were returned as undeliverable.

What if I find a duplicate voter record somewhere else in the state?

If you find a duplicate voter record, determine which record is the most current. If the most current record is in your municipality you should merge the two records together. If the most current record is in another municipality you should contact the Elections Commission Help Desk for assistance.

What is the correct procedure to follow when the four-year voter maintenance postcards are returned by the Post Office as “Temporarily Away?”

According to the USPS the term “Temporarily Away” means that the holding period for this address has expired. The address is a valid address for the voter, but delivery of the notice was not successful.

You may resend the card (putting it in a new envelope) and permit forwarding on it, or, if you have a record of the temporary address, you may send the card directly there. The voter will still need to sign the Application for Continuation of Registration in order to remain an Active Registrant. If the resent card is returned and is marked “Temporarily Away” or “Undeliverable” record the mailing as undeliverable. All Requests for Continuation must still be received by July 15, 2021.

We are getting a lot of cards back, but there is no post office sticker on them, nor has the voter signed the card. How do we know the post office actually delivered these?

Contact your local post office and inquire about its process for returning undeliverable postcards. Different post offices may have different procedures. In the past, for example, some post offices have banded a group of undeliverable postcards together, putting only the undeliverable sticker on the top postcard (indicating that all postcards within were undeliverable). If you have any questions about a postcard being processed by the USPS, please contact your local post office for clarification.

After you have made contact and received clarification from your local post office, please contact WEC Help Desk if the issue persists. WEC staff will then work with our USPS contacts to address the issue.

What if the postcard was returned with a label stating *Forward Time Expired* or lists a different mailing address?

The address printed on the Four-Year Voter Maintenance postcard is either the Mailing Address in WisVote (if one is listed in the voter record) or the Home Address. The postcards should reflect the address information provided by the voter at the time of registration. You should record these postcards as returned undeliverable. These voters will need to re-register under their new address.

Which number should I enter if I do not have a bar code scanner?

The Mailing ID is the number under the bar code. This can be entered into the WisVote search box or in WisVote in the Record Returned Mailings Quick Task.



However, you can also manually enter the Voter Registration Number (above the bar code) or the Voter's name in WisVote to pull up the voter record.

Are the 4-Year Maintenance Official Voter Registration Notice postcards different from the Voter Verification postcards?

Yes, these are two distinct mailings. Voter Verification postcards are mailed to voters on an on-going basis who register on Election Day per Wis. Stat. §6.56(3), by mail or via the Online Voter Registration (OVR) process on the My Vote Wisconsin website per Wis. Stat. §6.32(4). The purpose of these postcards is to verify that the addresses provided by the voters are valid.

The 4-Year Maintenance Official Voter Registration Notice postcards are mailed to voters who have not voted in any election in the previous four years per Wis. Stat. §6.50(1). They are mailed in June of the year following a November General Election. Voters have 30 days to respond to the postcard with a return postcard to continue their registration. This FAQ document and accompanying Webinar pertain only to the 4-Year Maintenance Official Voter Registration Notice postcards.

Do I need to resolve all pending postcard records in WisVote?

No, you will only need to act on cards that have been returned to your office. If a record is merged or the voter completes a new registration, you do not need to find the postcard record and mark it in any way. If a voter record is updated via a registration, their status will be changed to Active/Registered. This will prevent the voter record from being deactivated after 30 days.

If a voter record is merged, WisVote will move the postcard record to the **2021 4-Year Maintenance Merged** view. No further action is needed. You may record a postcard that is returned undeliverable for a voter who has been merged. This will not impact the voter's WisVote record.

I chose the wrong record/returned status when recording returned postcards. How can I fix the mailing record?

Records already assigned a Returned Undeliverable or Requests Continuation status can still be updated to assign another response status. If the record is already open, you can use the undeliverable or continuation buttons to make the correction. If you have already closed the record, you will need to either search the voter's name or change the associated view to the appropriate response type in order to locate the impacted record. Once the record is located, you can update the status from the grid view or by opening the record directly and choosing the correct option.

If a mailing record should be returned to a No Response status, please contact the WEC Helpdesk.

A voter states they've voted in X election, but they still received a postcard. How do I handle this?

In most cases, this will be due to a duplicate voter record. Please refer to **What if I find a duplicate voter registration** for how to proceed in those cases.

If there is only one voter record and there is no participation record for the relevant election, you will need to check the physical poll books to resolve this issue. If the vote was not recorded due to an error (signature on another line, wrong bar code scanned, etc), correct the participation record under the election in WisVote.

Updating a voter's participation record will not change the voter's suspended status; you will also need to resolve the postcard to prevent their voter registration from being deactivated. Process the postcard as a Requests Continuation card and advise the voter they do not need to take any further action.

The deadline for voters to respond is July 15th, how do we process cards requesting continuation received after this deadline?

Voters who did not request continuation, or whose 4-Year Maintenance Official Voter Registration Notice was not returned to the clerk as undeliverable by July 15, 2021 will have their voter status changed to Inactive with a status reason of 4-Year Maintenance. Wis. Stat. §6.50(2). Signed postcards returned on or before July 15, 2021 should be processed as a request for continuation. If a signed postcard is returned after July 15, 2021, the voter will need to re-register. The clerk may send the voter an EL-131 form or direct the voter to the MyVote Wisconsin website (myvote.wi.gov) to register. Clerks have until July 31, 2021 to process these postcards in WisVote. Wis. Stat. §6.50(2r).

Do we have to keep returned postcards?

Returned postcards should be filed in accordance with standard election document-retention-policies. Any postcard requesting continuation should be attached to the original voter registration forms.

Any returned postcards resulting in the deactivation of a registration (undeliverable, voter request, etc.) should be kept with the original voter registration documents until the expiration of the 4-year records retention deadline per Wis. Stat. §7.23(1)(c).