



Wisconsin Elections Commission News

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Wisconsin Mails Postcards to Voters Who May Have Moved

MADISON, WI – The State of Wisconsin is mailing more notification postcards – this time to approximately 97,700 registered voters who may have moved within or out of Wisconsin.

“We want voters to be prepared for elections in 2022,” said Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin’s chief elections official. “This mailing is designed to help people who may have moved within Wisconsin make sure they’re ready to vote next year. It will not keep anyone who is eligible from voting.”

“If you move, even to a different apartment in the same building, you must update your voter record by reregistering,” Wolfe said.

The new batch of postcards is being mailed to voters identified through the “ERIC Movers” process, which has been in the news since late 2019 because of long court case that ended earlier this year with a decision from the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The court ruled in the Wisconsin Elections Commission’s favor, agreeing that state law does not require the Commission to deactivate voters who may have moved if they do not respond to the mailing within 30 days.

Following the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s decision, the six-member, bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission approved new procedures for handling ERIC Movers mailings at [a special meeting on June 10](#).

What is ERIC and how does it identify voters who may have moved?

ERIC is the [Electronic Registration Information Center](#), an organization currently made up of 30 states and the District of Columbia. ERIC members pool information about their voter lists to help keep them up to date. In 2016, the Wisconsin Legislature passed a law requiring the state to join ERIC and to abide by ERIC’s membership agreement. ERIC helps its members keep their voter registration lists current by identifying voters who may have changed their address, moved out of state or died.

ERIC identifies voters who have told another government agency that they have moved recently. They do this by comparing Wisconsin’s database of registered voters to records from the Wisconsin DMV, change-of-address data from the U.S. Postal Service, and records from other states to identify voters who may have moved. The membership agreement requires the WEC to contact those voters and let them know that if they have moved, they need to reregister at their

new address before the next time they vote. The membership agreement does not require WEC to deactivate those voters.

Why is it important for voters who move to reregister before an election?

State law does not require voters who move to reregister to vote immediately, but they must register at their new address before the next time they vote. While Wisconsin voters can wait until Election Day to register, the purpose of the ERIC Movers mailing is to get them to register at their new address early. Registering early reduces lines and paperwork at the polling place. It also helps reduce problems that could prevent someone who is eligible from voting.

Is the ERIC Movers list reliable?

The majority of voters on the list have likely moved to a new address, but the WEC's experience with movers mailings in 2017 and 2019 shows that some people on the ERIC Movers list have not actually moved for voting purposes. For the 2019 ERIC Movers list, 16,390 voters (7.9%) affirmed that they still lived at their same address. This may be because some voters have only temporarily relocated. Sometimes, registering a vehicle with DMV at another address can flag someone as a potential mover.

If you receive a postcard but you did not move, what should you do?

You have several options:

- return your signed postcard to your municipal clerk
- visit the MyVote Wisconsin website and click the "Confirm Your Address" button
- vote in the next election where you can confirm with poll workers that you have not had a change of address.

The postcard includes a toll-free number, 1-866-VOTE-WIS, you can call to talk to the WEC Help Desk. You may also contact your municipal clerk with questions in response to this postcard.

Could voters who do not respond to the movers mailing postcard be deactivated?

Yes, but not by the Wisconsin Elections Commission and not without being mailed a second notice. Under state law, municipal clerks can deactivate voters if they have reliable information that a voter has moved out of the municipality. However, they must send the voter a 30-day notice letter first. If a clerk receives reliable information that a voter has moved within a municipality, state law requires the clerk to update the voter's record and send the voter a notification letter.

Will there be more ERIC Movers mailings?

Yes, starting this year, the WEC has approved using a quarterly Movers review process. There are three mailings planned in 2021. This first mailing of 97,700 postcards will be the largest, as

we are catching up on everyone who may have moved since the last mailing in the Fall of 2019. Subsequent, smaller mailings are planned for September and December 2021. The goal is to reach voters who may have moved as soon as possible so they can update their registrations.

How is this mailing different than the mailing WEC sent out in June 2021?

In mid-June 2021, WEC sent postcards to 186,900 registered voters who have not voted in the past four years, as required by state law, known as the Four-Year Maintenance mailing. That law requires WEC to deactivate voters whose postcard is returned as undeliverable or who do not respond to the postcard within 30 days. According to the Wisconsin Supreme Court's recent ruling, state law does not require the WEC to deactivate voters who do not respond to the ERIC Movers mailing.

Why has WEC changed its ERIC Movers mailing process over the years?

“The Wisconsin Elections Commission learned valuable lessons from our first two ERIC Movers mailings in 2017 and 2019, as well as the Wisconsin Supreme Court case,” Wolfe said. While state law is very specific about how Four-Year Maintenance mailings are to be handled, it provides very little guidance for ERIC Movers mailings. As a result, the six-member, bipartisan Commission has had to develop its own process over time, based on what is learned from each mailing, as well as from the court case.

Are Wisconsin's voter registration lists current and accurate?

Yes. The ERIC Movers mailing is just one of many ways the Elections Commission helps Wisconsin's 3.7 million registered voters and 1,850 municipal clerks keep the voter list current. “Working together with Wisconsin's clerks, the Commission is improving data quality to make the voter list more accurate,” Wolfe said. “This has many benefits to Wisconsin voters and taxpayers, both in the election process and in the costs of conducting elections.”

Voter Registration and List Maintenance Facts

- Wisconsin has a voting-age population of 4,536,293 people, according to estimates by the [state's Demographic Services Center](#).
- Of those, 3,703,185 people were actively registered to vote on July 1, 2021.
- Wisconsin has had a [statewide voter registration list](#) since 2006. State law sets out procedures for election officials to remove ineligible people from the list, including those who have died, moved, been convicted of a felony, or found incompetent to vote.
- In 2016, Wisconsin joined the multi-state [Electronic Registration Information Center](#), which provides members with additional tools to keep their voter lists current by identifying eligible residents who are not registered, as well as voters who may have moved or died out of state.
- This is Wisconsin's third mailing to contact voters who may have moved. The first mailing in 2017 went to approximately 343,000 voters and the second mailing went to approximately 232,000 voters.

- In even-numbered years, WEC mails postcards to people identified by ERIC as being eligible to vote but unregistered, encouraging them to register to vote. In 2016, 1.28 million postcards went to eligible but unregistered voters; in 2018, approximately 384,000 postcards were mailed, and in 2020, the number was 198,600.
- A spreadsheet containing the number of ERIC Movers postcards sent to voters in each Wisconsin municipality is available with this news release on the WEC website.

More information about the ERIC list maintenance process is posted to the Commission's website: <https://elections.wi.gov>.

NOTE TO EDITORS: An image of a sample ERIC Movers postcard is attached. Your publication of the sample postcard as companion art to a story will help assure voters it is not a scam.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.