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DIRECTIVE 2012-18

May 18, 2012

TO: All County Boards of Elections
Directors, Deputy Directors, and Board Members

RE: Using the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) Database to Cancel
Voter Records of Deceased Ohioans

SUMMARY

This Directive addresses county procedures for the receipt and processing of registration database activities from the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE).

This Directive replaces Directive 2010-90, which is rescinded.

For ease of use, this Directive is organized as follows:

- A. Background
- B. Decedent identifying information matched with voter identifying information in county download file
- C. When and how BOEs must download SWVRD records that have been matched with STEVE records
- D. How to process the SWVRD records that have been matched with STEVE data and mandatory updates to the voter registration database

INSTRUCTION

A. Background

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993¹ (NVRA) was signed into law on May 20, 1993 and requires states to "conduct a general program that makes a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters by reason of the death of the registrant."²

The Ohio Department of Health is a partner jurisdiction in the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE) database. Use of STEVE will provide boards of elections

¹ 107 Stat. 77, 42 U.S.C. 1973gg.

² Section 8 of the NVRA, 42 USC 1973gg-6(a)(4)(A).

with more timely and accurate information on Ohio electors who have died in Ohio or in a STEVE jurisdiction.³ With the use of STEVE, the Ohio Department of Health will discontinue publishing decedent identifying information on its vital statistics webpage (accessed by county boards of elections from <http://vitalsupport.odh.ohio.gov>).

Beginning May 25, 2012, and on a monthly basis thereafter, boards of elections will download a file from the Secretary of State (SOS) hosted web portal (link to be provided under a separate cover). The file will contain information on decedents obtained from STEVE that are potential matches to electors in the SWVRD.

Use of STEVE provides a number of benefits, including (1) the number of jurisdictions providing decedent identifying information for Ohio residents who died out of state will increase, and (2) automatically, and on a monthly basis, decedent identifying information will be compared to the county records in the SWVRD and only records that are potential matches will be displayed for board staff to research and resolve.

Matching criteria are as follows (i.e., any of the below will result in a matched pair of records in the download file for the county):

SSN4	DOB	LAST_NAME	FIRST_NAME
Y	Y	Y	Y or N
Blank in SWVRD	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y	Y
Y	Blank in SWVRD (i.e., 1/1/1800)	Y	Y
Y	N	Y	Y

Then, only if the STEVE record indicates the decedent is female:

SSN4	DOB	LAST_NAME	FIRST_NAME
Y	Y	N	Y

B. Decedent Identifying Information Matched With Voter Identifying Information in County Download File

Following are the fields (in order of appearance) that will be contained within the county download file for STEVE-SWVRD matched records:

³ As of May 1, 2012, participating STEVE jurisdictions are Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

STEVE (decendent identifying information):

Last Name
First Name
Middle Name
Suffix
Last four digits of SSN
Birth date
Date of Death
Male or Female (if supplied)
Residence City
Residence House Number and Street (including pre- and post-street direction, description and unit number)
Residence Zip Code
Residence County
Residence State

SWVRD (voter identifying information supplied by the county BOE to the SWVRD):

Unique State Voter ID Number assigned by the SWVRD
Unique County Voter ID Number assigned by the county VRS
SWVRD Status
Last Name
First Name
Middle Name or Initial
Suffix
Last four digits of SSN
Birth date

C. When and How BOEs Must Download SWVRD Records that Have Been Matched with STEVE Records.

Beginning May 15, 2012, and no less frequently than once every month thereafter, boards of elections must download their file of decendent identifying information matched to county records in the SWVRD and promptly process every record in the file. The board will be assigned a user name and password to log into the SOS system.

Once the board has logged into the SOS system, a link to the board's file will display. The board should download the file by clicking on the link, and naming and saving the file in an appropriate directory and folder on its computer. Also displayed for the board is a list entitled "Processed." After a board has downloaded its file of decendent identifying information, the file will automatically move into the "Processed" list where the board can re-access files that it has already downloaded.

D. How to Process the SWVRD Records that Have Been Matched with STEVE Data and Mandatory Updates to the Voter Registration Database (within 10 days of receipt)

Within 10 days of downloading its STEVE-SWVRD matched records, a county board of elections shall use the information provided from STEVE to confirm whether a voter in its county is deceased. **It is important to keep in mind that a match between a record from STEVE and a record from the SWVRD does not guarantee that the records are for the same person.** Board staff must carefully examine each pair of matched records and compare other identifying information from each source, STEVE and the SWVRD, such as middle name or initial, suffix, and address. If board staff is able to confirm that the voter is deceased using the information supplied, the board shall cancel the voter's registration.

Occasionally, the board of elections may be contacted by a person (e.g., spouse, relative, friend, concerned citizen, etc.) who purports to have knowledge of a voter who is deceased. In this instance, a board of elections may cancel a voter's registration due to death only if the board can verify that the voter is deceased using the information provided from the standard death file obtained through STEVE, the chief health officer of a political subdivision, or the director of the Ohio Department of Health.

When a board cancels the registration of a voter due to confirmation of death with a government health agency as described above, the board is not required to send an "Ohio Voter Registration Cancellation Notice" (SOS Form 10-B).

Please note that this Directive does not alter the specific procedures for confirming whether a voter may be deceased as outlined in Directive 2012-16.

Additionally, this Directive serves as a reminder that boards will continue to receive automatically generated messages from the SWVRD, in the form of XML packets, when either the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Social Security Administration indicates that an Ohio elector may be deceased. Your office must continue to investigate whether those voters are in fact deceased by following the procedures outlined in Directive 2012-16.

If you have any questions about this Directive, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Masterson, Caitlin Decatur, or Robin Fields by calling 614-466-2585.

Sincerely,



Jon Husted