

DIRECTIVE 2024-14

July 19, 2024

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

Re: Preparation for the Statewide Mailings of Absentee Ballot Applications for the
November 5, 2024, General Election

SUMMARY

Since 2012, the General Assembly has authorized the Secretary of State to send absentee ballot applications to all Ohio voters in the gubernatorial and presidential general elections. This year, the Ohio Controlling Board authorized the Secretary of State's office to use funds to conduct a statewide mailing of absentee ballot applications for the upcoming November 5, 2024, general election. This Directive requires each board of elections to update its voter registration database and resolve duplicate records in preparation for the Secretary of State's statewide mailing.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

To ensure fairness and uniformity across counties, to reduce lines at polling places, and to make participation in the November 5, 2024, general election as accessible as possible, the Secretary of State's office will mail an absentee ballot application by non-forwardable mail to every registered Ohio voter in "active" or "confirmation" status.¹

The absentee ballot application will be pre-filled with the voter's name, current address, and local voter identification number (represented numerically and as a barcode) and mailed to the voter's address as it appears in the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD). To receive an absentee ballot, the voter must complete the absentee ballot application by providing the voter's date of birth, signature, sufficient identification, and other required pieces of information.² The completed ballot application may be submitted to the voter's county board of elections in person or by mail.³ Should the voter

¹ [R.C. 111.31.](#)

² [R.C. 3509.03.](#)

³ [R.C. 3509.03.](#)

submit by mail, the voter must seal the application in the included envelope and affix a first-class stamp.

The United States Postal Service is expected to deliver the initial absentee ballot application during the first two weeks of September 2024.

INSTRUCTIONS

I. PREPARATIONS FOR INITIAL MAILING

To facilitate the initial mailing of absentee ballot applications, each county board of elections must complete all of the following **no later than July 24, 2024**:

- Enter into the county voter registration database all new voter registrations and changes of address or name, including information from returned confirmation notices received, and ensure that those new registrations and changes are transmitted to the SWVRD. **Do not wait until July 24, 2024, to enter new voter registrations, changes of address or name, or information from returned confirmation notices.**
- Resolve all in-county and cross-county duplicate records. Remember, it is *never* an acceptable practice for any county board of elections to simply “keep” a voter registration record to avoid resolving duplicate records.
- Review all alternate mailing addresses in the SWVRD (e.g., P.O. Boxes) for the county and verify that all alternate mailing addresses associated with a voter’s record in the SWVRD are current and relevant to the elector’s voter registration rather than some other election administration purpose (i.e., if the board has populated the elector’s alternate mailing address with the address for a previous election’s absentee ballot and that alternate mailing address was sent to the SWVRD as the elector’s alternate mailing address, that address should be removed since it is associated with absentee voting for a particular election).

II. PREPARATIONS FOR SUPPLEMENTAL MAILINGS

In early October, the Secretary of State’s office will supplement the first mailing by sending an absentee ballot application to any individual who registers to vote or changes their name or address from July 25 through September 30, 2024. To facilitate this mailing, each board must complete all of the following:

- **No later than October 1, 2024**, enter into the county voter registration database all new voter registrations and changes of address or name, including information from returned confirmation notices, and ensure that those new registrations and changes have been transmitted to the SWVRD. **Do not wait**

until October 1, 2024, to enter new voter registrations, changes of address or name, or information from returned confirmation notices.

- **No later than 5:00 p.m. on October 2, 2024,** resolve all in-county and cross-county duplicate records that exist.

The Secretary of State's office will conduct a second supplemental mailing for any individual who registered to vote or changed their name or address between October 1 and October 7, 2024 (the voter registration deadline). This timeline would also include voter registrations properly postmarked by October 7, 2024, or properly received by October 11, 2024.⁴ To facilitate this mailing, each board of elections must complete all of the following:

- **No later than October 11, 2024,** enter into the county voter registration database all new voter registrations and changes of address or name, including information from returned confirmation notices, and ensure that those new registrations and changes have been transmitted to the SWVRD. **Do not wait until October 11, 2024, to enter new voter registrations, changes of address or name, or information from returned confirmation notices.**
- **No later than 5:00 p.m. on October 11, 2024,** resolve all in-county and cross-county duplicate records that exist.

III. MANDATORY POSTING AT VOTING LOCATIONS ON ELECTION DAY

All county boards of elections must post a copy of the statewide absentee ballot application mailing at each polling location **only** on Election Day as a reference for voters who are marked in the pollbook as having to cast a provisional ballot on account of having requested an absentee ballot. The prescribed posting will be provided to county boards of elections under separate cover at a later date and will explain why voters who have requested an absentee ballot are required to vote provisionally.

If you have any questions about this directive, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Division at 614.466.2585.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

⁴ [R.C. 3503.19\(A\)](#).