



FACT SHEET: Voter Registration List Maintenance

An important part of the EAC's mission is to support state and local election officials in their efforts to ensure accessible, accurate and secure elections. This fact sheet highlights how states conduct list maintenance, the importance of accurate voter registration lists, and the National Voter Registration Act's provisions to ensure voter lists are maintained. It also gives guidance for voters wishing to proactively check the status of their own voter registration.

What is voter registration list maintenance?

Voter list maintenance is the process state and county election officials use to maintain accurate and up-to-date voter rolls. Officials must follow appropriate state and federal laws to determine whether a voter should be removed from the rolls.

Why is voter registration list maintenance important?

Maintaining accurate voter registration lists is essential to protecting election integrity. Americans deserve an election system that produces an accurate result based on each eligible voter casting a single ballot in their proper jurisdiction. Maintaining an accurate voting roll enfranchises voters because it lowers the likelihood of lines at the polls, reduces voter confusion and decreases the number of provisional ballots. Updated records also allow election administrators to plan, to better manage their budget and poll workers, and to improve voter experience.

What is the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)?

Commonly referred to as the "motor voter" law because it contained provisions about voter registration at local DMV offices, the NVRA provides guidance for when a state may remove the name of a voter from a list. The 2014 Election Administration and Voting Survey found that states removed over 14.8 million voters from voter registration lists that election cycle. The NVRA allows states to remove voters who have not voted in two consecutive federal general elections and failed to respond to a confirmation notice from an elections office. Other reasons for removal include death, felony conviction, having moved from one jurisdiction to another, mental incompetence, or at the voter's request.

Do states automatically share and cross-check voter registration information?

The short answer is no. Each state makes its own determination about how best to maintain an accurate voter registration list. The NVRA does permit states to use uniform and non-discriminatory practices to ensure the accuracy of these lists, including using mechanisms to check information across states. The two most well-known cross-state efforts include the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC – www.ericstates.org), which is used by 20 member-states and the District of Columbia, and the Interstate Crosscheck Program, which has 30 state participants. States participating in ERIC can compare voter list data, motor vehicle data, change of address data, and death records to keep voter rolls more accurate and up-to-date. Among other information, this method flags voters who may have moved or died. The Interstate Crosscheck Program, which compares state voter registration records, identifies possible duplicate registrations among states and provides evidence of possible double votes.

What are other sources election officials use to ensure accurate voting lists?

In addition to the programs described above, states can use other government records to check the accuracy of their voting lists. Sources such as felony records from state departments of correction, state agencies that handle death records, or authorities that handle other vital statistics such as property deeds. Many states also use the U.S. Postal Service's National Change of Address data and the Social Security Administration's death records.

How can I check the status of my own voter registration?

If you have questions about your own voter registration status, local election officials can guide you on the procedure for ensuring an accurate registration. Most state election websites have online tools to check your status.