September 29, 2016

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #16303

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Joanna Southard
              Assistant Chief, Elections Division

RE: General Election: Election Mail Resources

Below is a list of election mail resources for your use in the upcoming November 8, 2016, General Election.

United States Postal Service (USPS): The USPS has a variety of materials to answer questions and help guide elections officials in their election mailings. Please see the USPS' attached Postal Service General Election Recommendations, Election Mail Checklist, and list of Pacific Area Election Mail Coordinators. https://about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/

Election Assistance Commission (EAC): The EAC maintains a clearinghouse of resources for election mailings. http://www.eac.gov/election_management_resources/usps_issues.aspx

Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP): FVAP provides resources and guidance on sending ballots under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/sending-ballots

ElectionMail.org: This website can be used to report past and current issues with election mailings, after reporting the issues to USPS. The submissions to the website are tracked nationwide and provided to USPS for follow-up. http://www.ElectionMail.org/

If you have any questions or if you experience any mailing issues, please contact me at Joanna.Southard@sos.ca.gov or at (916) 657-2184.

Postal Service General Election Recommendations

Work With Your Local Election and Political Mail Coordinator

- A key to success in 2016 will be local partnerships between Postal Service™ election coordinators and the election community. Election and Political Mail Coordinators are trusted to log and resolve issues locally.

- Contact a Postal Service Election Mail Coordinator <about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/> to discuss all aspects of your mailing, including:
  o Mailpiece design.
  o Mailing preparation/entry.
  o Delivery and pickup activities.

- Early communication is very important.
  o Contact your local Election Mail Coordinator as soon as questions or concerns arise.
  o Should your concern regard a specific mailing, please provide front and back PDF copies of the mailpiece as well as physical samples. This will aid the Postal Service's investigation with regard to identifying the cause and providing timely corrective action when necessary.

Use Postal Service Recommended Best Practices

- Reply envelopes should include:
  o Official Election Mail Logo for visibility.
  o Delivery point Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb®).
  o The specific amount of postage needed to return balloting materials by mail, as required under current mailing standards, unless subject to the following exceptions:
    - The balloting materials are qualified under the special exemption for military and overseas voting.
    - The ballot is returned under Business Reply Mail service.
    - Return postage is guaranteed through a postage-due account.
    - Postage on the ballot is prepaid by stamps, meter, or Permit Reply Mail.

- Use letter-size reply envelopes.
  o The use of letter-size reply envelopes will increase the operational likelihood that the ballot receives a postmark.

- Use First-Class Mail® postage.
  o Board of Elections should use First-Class Mail postage rather than Standard or Non-Profit postage rates when paying for the delivery of outbound absentee or vote by mail ballots. Most First-Class Mail is delivered within 2–5 days.

- Use Green Tag for 191 domestic and international ballots.
  - The tag identifies trays and sacks that contain ballot mail.
  - The designation provides greater visibility during mailing induction.
  - It can ONLY be applied to ballot mail, such as vote-by-mail Ballot and absentee ballots.

- Review sample mailpieces.
- At the time of mail entry, the Postal Service strongly encourages the mailer to supply an unaddressed copy of all official election mailpieces. However, for official ballots, regardless of class of mail, the mailer must provide a sample mailpiece with its contents, unless an exception is met. See DMM 703.8 at <pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/703.htm#1174014>.

- Properly label postage statements.
  - Check off the "Yes" box next to "This is Official Election Mail."

Encourage Voters to Mail Early

- The Postal Service recommends that voters mail ballots one week before the due date to account for any unforeseen events or weather issues, and to allow for timely receipt and processing by election officials.
- The Postal Service is committed to processing and delivering Official Election mail within our stated delivery standards. Most First-Class Mail deliveries are made within 2–5 days. Standard Mail® deliveries are made within 3–10 days (within the contiguous 48 states).
- Customers should understand their options in receiving a postmark on ballots.
  - Home or Business Mailboxes: Ballots will be postmarked the day the Postal Service mail carrier collects it.
  - Local Post Office™ facility: Take the ballot to a local Post Office facility and confirm with the counter representative that the ballot will be postmarked that day.
  - USPS® Blue Collection Boxes: If the ballot is deposited after the printed collection time on the box, the ballot will not be postmarked until the next day of collection.

Election officials should consider including a voter notification with the above guidelines, as well as state deadlines and requirements, in the ballot material packet to clarify key information.

Resources

The following resources are available during the election season to assist in the mailing process:

- Mailpiece Design Analysts (MDA).

  o For assistance with mailpiece design, contact a Mailpiece Design Analyst by calling the MDA Support Center at 855-593-6093 (hours of operation are Monday—Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT) or by sending a request by email message to mda@usps.gov.

- 2016 Official Election Mail Program Kit (Mailed to Election Officials April 19, 2016).

  o A soft copy is available online at <about.usps.com/election-mail/election-mail-resources.htm>.

- USPS Election Mail Websites and email addresses:

  o The following Web resources and email addresses are available at <about.usps.com/gov-services> for additional information:

    - *USPS Election Mail Homepage*: Find links to Postal Service Election Mail resources and guidelines. <www.about.usps.com/gov-services/election-mail/>

    - *Election Mail Coordinators*: Find a local Election Mail Coordinator to support preparation, entry delivery and pickup planning.

    - *Find a Business Mail Entry Unit*: Learn where to drop off government and Election Mail.

    - *Contact the Election Mail Task Force Program Manager*: ElectionMailProgramManager@usps.gov

The following checklist will help to ensure a successful election mailing:

1. CALL YOUR POSTAL SERVICE ELECTION MAIL COORDINATOR

☐ Discuss the specific purpose for the mailing (e.g., information, ballots, and voter registration).

☐ Discuss when you intend to present the mail to the Postal Service.

☐ Discuss your delivery date requirements.

☐ Determine if the mailing must go as First-Class Mail—USPS recommends the use of First-Class Mail postage on all outbound absentee or vote by mail ballots.

☐ Determine where and when the mailpieces must be presented to the Postal Service to meet your desired delivery dates.

☐ Determine the size of the mailings.

☐ Determine the best method of receiving return mail (e.g., Post Office Box or Caller Service).

☐ Determine the best time to pick up the mail each day.

☐ Determine the latest time when an election official can pick up returns.

☐ Determine the final date for receiving return mail.

☐ Determine the necessary postal equipment and supplies needed.

☐ Determine payment method.

☐ Determine what forms are needed for mailing and for postage payment.

☐ Determine if the mailing must meet address or Move Update requirements.

☐ Determine if the mailing needs to have an ancillary service endorsement (e.g., Return Service Requested).

☐ Determine if the mailing needs extra services (e.g., Certified Mail, Registered Mail).

2. DETERMINE IF THE MAILING NEEDS TO INCLUDE A REPLY PIECE

☐ Decide if you plan to use Business Reply Mail or Courtesy Reply Mail.

☐ Decide if it is cost-effective to use Qualified Business Reply Mail.

3. PREPARE YOUR ADDRESS LIST

☐ Decide who should receive the mailpieces.

☐ Compile your address list.

☐ Ensure proper address list hygiene.

☐ Validate physical address accuracy.

☐ Validate that you meet the Move Update standard, if applicable.

4. FILE REQUIRED FORMS FOR POSTAGE DISCOUNTS AND OTHER MAILING SERVICES (IF NEEDED)

☐ PS Form 1093, Application for Post Office Box Service.

☐ PS Form 1093-C, Application for Post Office Caller Service.

☐ PS Form 3615, Mailing Permit Application and Customer Profile (for Permit Imprint and Business Reply Mail permits).

☐ PS Form 3623, Request for Confirmation of Authorization (or Pending Application) to Mail at Nonprofit Standard Mail Prices.

☐ PS Form 3624, Application to Mail at Nonprofit Standard Mail Prices.

☐ PS Form 6805, BRM/QBRM Application for ZIP+4 Code Assignment/Validation and QBRM Approval (Business Reply Mail/Qualified Business Reply Mail).

5. MAILPIECE DESIGN–WORK WITH A MAILPIECE DESIGN ANALYST TO ENSURE MAILPIECE COMPLIANCE–POSTAL SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ Voter communication is an essential component of preventing late ballots.

— Election officials should consider including a voter notification in the ballot packet to ensure timely delivery of ballots.

— Return by Mail date guidance based on state/local laws.

☐ Use letter-size reply envelopes.

☐ Board of Elections should use First-Class Mail postage on all outbound absentee or vote-by-mail ballots.

☐ Use the Official Election Mail Logo on all Official Election Mail.

☐ Use IMb Tracing–a service which provides near real-time tracking information for your automation-compatible letters and flats.

☐ Use Tag 191 on all Domestic and International Ballot mailings.

☐ Consider appropriate colors, weight limitations, proper wording, placement of postal markings, etc.

☐ Obtain an evaluation of the final mailpiece design before printing.

6. PREPARE AND PRESENT THE MAILING

☐ Print mailing in time for preparation and delivery to the Post Office.

☐ Affix Tag 191 for Domestic and International Ballots.

☐ Obtain postal supplies and equipment (e.g., carts, trays, stickers, rubber bands, and tags).

☐ Prepare mailing for delivery to the Post Office.

☐ Obtain and complete postage statements to be presented with mailing:

▪ If using Bulk First-Class Mail, you will need to use one or more forms in the 3600 series.

▪ If using Standard Mail, you will need to use one or more forms in the 3602 series.

☐ Present mailing, postage statement, and check (payment) for postage account, if needed.