

# Maintaining Voter Lists

*COVID-19 and Election Administration:*

*Approaches for Election Officials*

June 9, 2020

# Housekeeping

- Be gracious about **work-from-home setups**
- **Restart Zoom** if needed
- **Slides and captioned recordings** will be available on the registration page
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions

# Today's objectives

- Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic may result in new voter registration patterns
- Implement best practices for increasing voter list accuracy
- Proactively streamline voter registration and mail ballot requests

# Today's agenda

- Introduction (10 mins.)
- Needs and challenges (10 mins.)
- Best Practices for Voter List Maintenance (10 mins.)
- Reflections from Daniel Wade (5 mins.)
- Support from ERIC (10 mins.)
- Q&A (10 mins.)
- Wrapping up and survey (5 mins.)

# Hello, there!



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TECH AND  
CIVIC LIFE

# Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL)

Harnessing the promise of technology  
to modernize the American voting  
experience

@helloCTCL

[www.techandcivicliflife.org](http://www.techandcivicliflife.org)

# Federal resources

- Set of 10 documents (with more coming) provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials
- Written by the Joint COVID-19 Working Group
  - Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
  - Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
  - Elections Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC)

<https://www.cisa.gov/protect2020>

# Keep in mind

1. This is tough!
2. One size doesn't fit all
3. Things will change
4. Preparation and flexibility > certainty
5. A supportive team > a solo mission
6. Your work *matters*, and it's hugely appreciated

**“You’re holding an election during a pandemic, with a relatively new voting system, with a mail-in ballot system that is being widely embraced. Preparing for this is sort of like an earthquake, a tornado and a hurricane hitting you at the same time every day.”**

**--Al Schmidt, Philadelphia City Commissioner**



David Swanson/The Philadelphia Inquirer

How voter lists face special pressure

# VOTER LISTS DURING COVID: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

# Why is voter data so important?

- Inaccurate voter records may **prevent people from receiving ballots** or **having their votes counted**
- Up-to-date voter lists **promote integrity** and **strengthen trust** among voters and candidates
- Accurate voter data helps **save public funds** and **prevent waste** of election department resources and staff time

# What's the extent of errors?

**24 million** – or 1 in 8 – voter registrations are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate, including:

**1.8 million** deceased individuals

**2.75 million** people with registrations in more than one state

# Sources of errors in voter data:

- Voters **move and don't update** their registrations
- People **omit information** when registering or updating
- **Signatures change** or their **data format becomes obsolete**
- **Data entry** or other internal errors
- Local **variation** in voter list management practices



With more mail voting comes an increased need for accurate voter data



But, accuracy has been frustrated by DMV closures, displacement of people from normal addresses, and other pandemic disruptions

POLITICS

## About 1 in 10 ballots went undelivered to Baltimore City voters during 7th Congressional District special election

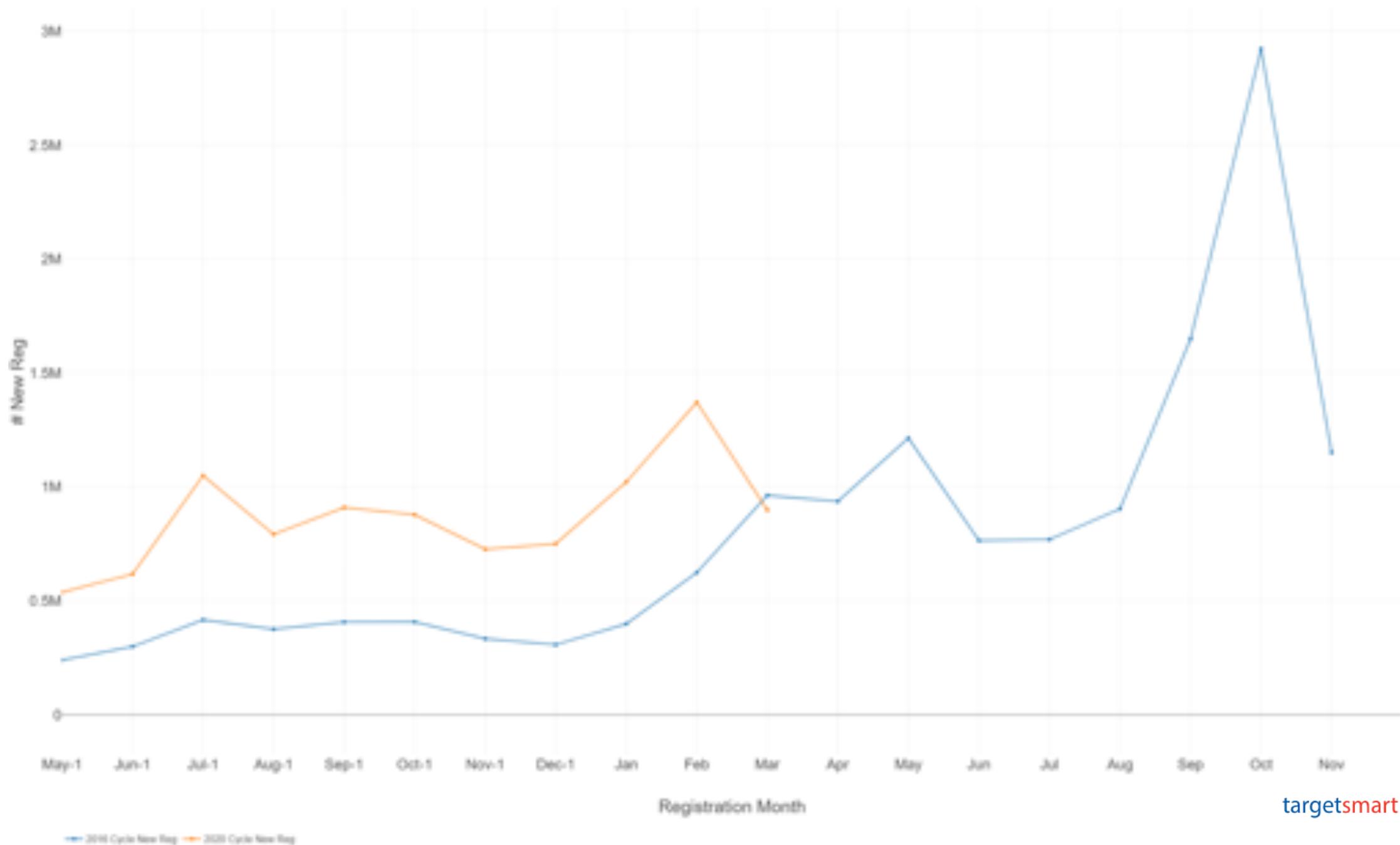


By EMILY OPILO

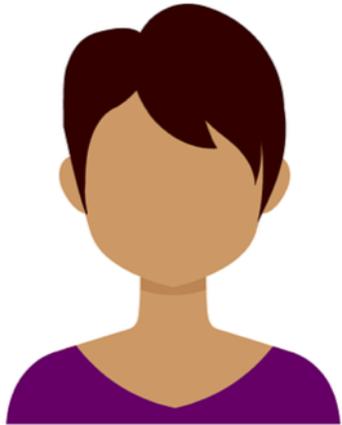
BALTIMORE SUN | MAY 13, 2020 | 4:36 PM



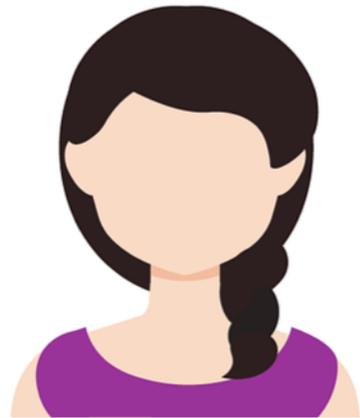
### New Reg By Month Comparison



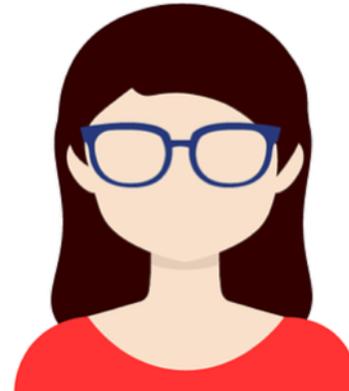
# Remember your voters with the greatest need



**Language  
barriers**



**Voters with  
disabilities**



**Displaced  
voters**



**Hard-to-reach  
voters**

Strategies to maintain your voter list

# **BEST PRACTICES FOR VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE**

# Do your homework

If you're not sure how list maintenance is done in your state,  
check in with your state election authority

# Allow voters to verify and update registrations using OVR

**John R. Ashcroft**  
Missouri Secretary of State

Business Services | Elections & Voting | Investor Protection & Securities | State Library | Records & Archives | Administrative Rules

## ELECTIONS & VOTING

- Register to Vote
- How to Vote
- Where Do I Vote?
- View Candidates & Issues
- What Do I Bring To The Polls
- Absentee Voting
- Military and Overseas
- Accessible Voting
- Find My Local Election Authority
- Missouri Election Laws
- Election Results
- Election Integrity Unit
- Frequently Asked Questions

### Check Your Voter Registration

For security, the Voter Lookup uses the exact data you provided when you registered to vote. If you are unsure how you registered - for example, whether you used a middle initial - you may need to try again.

When checking your voter registration, make sure to:

- Enter your first name. (Tip: It will be in the Voter Lookup exactly as you registered your name. If you type "Susan B." in the First Name box, but are registered as "Susan," the Voter Lookup may not locate your registration. You may have to re-try.)
- Enter your last name.
- Enter your house number.
- Enter the name of your street **WITHOUT** including the street type (Drive, Avenue, Street, etc.).
- Enter your birth date.
- Select your county from the drop-down menu.
- Click the "I'm not a robot" check box and click "Submit."
- If you have a non-standard address such as a rural route, you will need to contact your Local Election Authority instead of using this lookup.

\* First Name (As Registered)

\* Last Name

\* House Number

\* Street Name without Type (Do not enter Dr., Ave., etc.)

\* Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY)

\* County

# **Let voters request mail ballots through OVR or an online request**

And make sure the application provides an opportunity for voters to update their records

# Send all voters a postcard to verify their registrations



# Create a policy for undeliverable mail to trigger record updates

## Undeliverable Ballot Matrix

Ballots are required to be mailed to voters by nonforwardable mail with a reply requested if not deliverable as addressed by the USPS. Those Undeliverable Ballots include the following categories and the action required by county election officials.

Category of Undeliverable Ballot	Action to Take if Received:	
	By 8 pm on Election Day	After 8 pm on Election Day
Temporarily Away Refused – Attempt to contact No Mail Receptacle – Attempt to contact	Do not take any action on this group.	Do not take any action on this group.
Moved out of State or County Attempted Not Known Forwarding Order Expired Vacant Not At This Address Moved Left No Address Moved Left No Forwarding Unable to Forward Gone No Order No Forwarding Address Not Deliverable as Addressed (not an data entry error) Unclaimed	<b>Inactivate</b> voter registration record, changing <b>effective date of registration to election day or before</b> to deduct from eligibility pool for the election, whether done prior to or after election day, but prior to certification if have any 50% measures on ballot.	Do not <b>inactivate until after certification of election.</b> (OAR 165-007-0130 (3))

# Proactively update signatures on file with postcards

**Returning Your Signature Card**

- 1** Sign your card with black or blue pen
- 2** Detach the top portion of the card
- 3** Fold in half so that your signature is covered
- 4** Seal with tape and mail  
No stamps needed



The diagram illustrates the process of returning a signature card. It features four numbered steps with corresponding images. Step 1 shows a yellow and white card with a signature. Step 2 shows the top portion of the card being detached. Step 3 shows the card folded in half. Step 4 shows the card sealed with tape. The card has a yellow background with a white section at the bottom for the signature. The text 'SIGN ON 2020' is visible on the card.

# Streamline your registration forms and processes



Center for Civic Design

Field Guides

Projects

## Streamlining and nudging in voter registration

*Some of us at the Center for Civic Design used to think about voter registration as just an enabling task, something voters had to do to get access to a ballot. It was a way of authenticating (or at least getting affirmation) that a person was eligible to vote. A necessary step.*

In working with several states on modernizing voter registration, it's clear that at least in some places, voter registration can be streamlined to

# Spread the word about verifying and updating registration

Flatten the curve of voter registration and list maintenance!  
Get as much activity out of the way before Sept./Oct. as you can.

# **If ERIC member, download reports and act within NVRA timeline**

Haven't done list maintenance in the last year? Soon is a good time.

**If not ERIC member, use NCOA, SSA, etc.  
and act within NVRA timeline**

What update sources are available? When's the last time they were used?

# **Review your security protocols for your voter registration data**

Like in 2016, voter records will be attractive target for cyber attacks in 2020

Challenges and learnings

# REFLECTIONS FROM DANIEL WADE

# Weber County, Utah at a glance



- Utah's 4th most populous county
- 110,355 active registered voters
- Votes by mail, normally has vote centers, but vote centers eliminated for June 20 primary
- Utah a ERIC member since 2012 (a founding state)
- Daniel in role since 2015

# List maintenance challenges in Weber County

- Accommodating a transitory population
- Achieving current and accurate addressing
- Facing the reality that maintenance is a full-time job

# Learnings about list maintenance in Weber County

- Tasks must be performed *early* and *often*
- Vote-by-mail is the ultimate resource available

The role of the Electronic Registration Information Center

# HOW ERIC CAN SUPPORT YOUR ELECTION DEPARTMENT





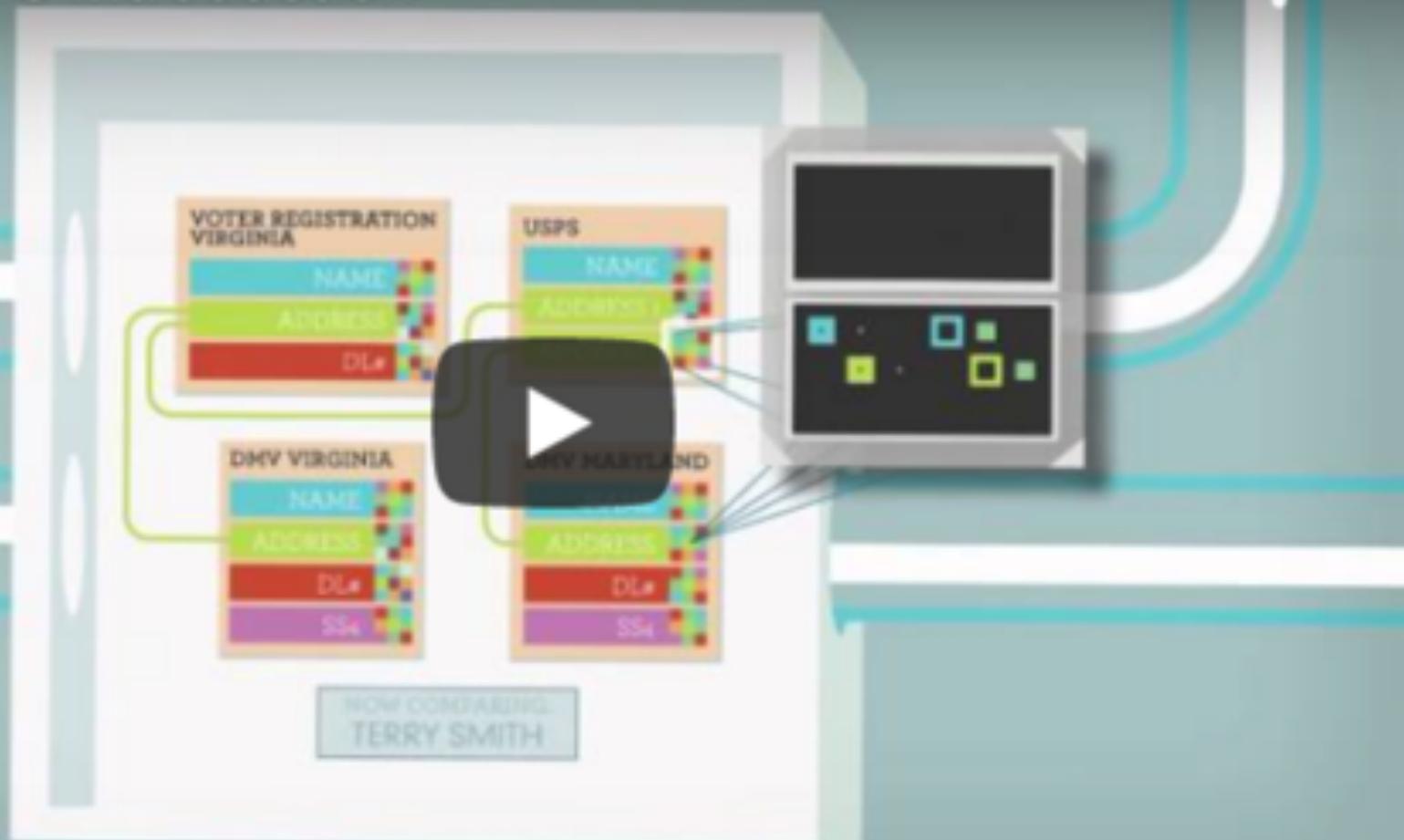
## Member States

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- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  Alabama           |  Alaska          |  Arizona          |  Colorado     |
|  Connecticut       |  Delaware        |  Florida          |  Georgia      |
|  Illinois          |  Iowa            |  Kentucky         |  Louisiana    |
|  Maryland          |  Michigan        |  Minnesota        |  Missouri     |
|  Nevada           |  New Mexico     |  Ohio            |  Oregon      |
|  Pennsylvania    |  Rhode Island  |  South Carolina |  Texas      |
|  Utah            |  Vermont       |  Virginia       |  Washington |
|  Washington D.C. |  West Virginia |  Wisconsin      |  |



# ERIC Introduction



**So, how is ERIC thinking about supporting accurate voter records in this challenging year?**

# **ERIC has ideas for expanded list maintenance, focusing on outreach**

Helping states focus on the records that need the most attention

# **ERIC plans to expand the “eligible but unregistered” report**

Giving people another chance will help ensure more complete and accurate voter lists

# **ERIC is actively seeking feedback and suggestions from states**

They're assessing needs and brainstorming ways to help states

Let's talk

# DISCUSSION



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# Share your thoughts

- What resonated with you from today's webinar? (Any “ah-ha” moments?)
- What are your next steps?
- What questions do you have about what we covered today?
- What questions do you have about what we didn't cover today?

# As questions come up for you...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We'll help out, or
  - We'll find someone for you who can

[hello@techandciviclife.org](mailto:hello@techandciviclife.org)

We've covered a lot of ground

# WRAPPING UP

# Today's resources

CISA guide: "Importance of Accurate Voter Data"	<a href="https://cisa.gov/protect2020">cisa.gov/protect2020</a>
Electronic Registration Information Center	<a href="https://www.ericstates.org">www.ericstates.org</a>
National Voter Registration Day Outreach Grant (not aimed at election departments)	<a href="https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/apply-for-2020-outreach-grant">nationalvoterregistrationday.org/apply-for-2020-outreach-grant</a>
Center for Civic Design: "Streamlining and Nudging in Voter Registration"	<a href="https://civicdesign.org/streamlining-and-nudging-in-voter-registration">civicdesign.org/streamlining-and-nudging-in-voter-registration</a>
Center for Civic Design: "Voter Registration Forms in Pennsylvania (and Others)"	<a href="https://civicdesign.org/voter-registration-forms-in-pennsylvania">civicdesign.org/voter-registration-forms-in-pennsylvania</a>
ModernReg.org: The Voter Registration Modernization Resource Center	<a href="https://modernreg.org">modernreg.org</a>

# Timeline considerations, 146 days out:

## **Applications for ballots**

- Outbound application envelope approval from USPS (140 days)

## **Outbound ballots -- logistics**

- Artwork approval with USPS (140 days)

## **Voter list maintenance**

- Process NCOA list (60 days)

# What was your experience with today's webinar?

- A brief survey is linked in the chat box
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants

# Up next

- ~~Supporting election officials (Thursday, May 21)~~
- ~~Planning 2020 workload and resource allocation (Tuesday, May 26)~~
- ~~Ensuring access, equity, and inclusion (Thursday, May 28)~~
- ~~Educating voters about their options (Thursday, June 4)~~
- ~~Maintaining voter lists (Tuesday, June 9)~~
- Managing mail ballot request forms (Thursday, June 11)
- Organizing ballot dropoff locations (Tuesday, June 16)
- Streamlining the inbound ballot process (Thursday, June 18)
- Verifying and curing signatures (Tuesday, June 23)
- Recruiting and training election workers (Thursday, June 25)
- Implementing public health guidelines for voting locations (Tuesday, June 30)

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# Thanks!

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