

ELECTIONS BULLETINS

2024 ELECTION CYCLE

*Includes Bulletins from
November 2023 – September 9, 2024*

**Vermont Secretary of State
Sarah Copeland Hanzas**

Elections Division

**sos.vermont.gov/elections
sos.electionsdivision@vermont.gov**

Director: Seán Sheehan
Assistant Director: Tammy Sink
Elections Administrators: Lori Bjornlund, Mark Houle,
Dan Brown
Administrative Services Coordinator: Rosie Casciero

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SUBJECT: ELECTIONS PROCEDURES UPDATE

ATTACHMENT(S): Select a Party Ballot, Write-In Notice, Election Procedures 2024

SENT: 11/29/2023

Good Afternoon Clerks!

As we head into December (!), we wanted to provide you with some materials to help you prepare for the 2024 election season. Many you have started preparations for town meeting day, and we will start to provide you with more updates and bulletins as we get closer to 2024. This e-mail will be the first of many important updates from our office. Please make sure you are all receiving updates and let us know if you would like your assistant clerks to receive these updates as well (if they are not already).

Attached and linked on our website here <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks/election-procedures/> is the **Election Procedures Guide 2024**. The website should be updated later today. There have been no changes to the election laws, so the main body of the procedures has changed very little. We have updated it for clarity and mentions of new Appendices. This will replace the bright yellow Election Procedures Guide 2022. We will be printing them, but we intend to wait until later in the spring to print and distribute copies to you and your BCAs. Please feel free to share this e-mail and links with them and your other election officials.

New Appendices:

- **Appendix F Notice to Voters** has been updated. It contains instructions for how voters should fill in the ovals completely. Please use this to post around your polling places on election day.
- **Appendix G Local Ballot**- This is a PDF copy of a sample local ballot.
- **Appendix Q Defective Ballot Notice**. This is a new Appendix for the defective ballot notice. You should continue to use the postcards we have provided, but you can use this Appendix on Election Day if needed.

Finally, I have also attached two new notices that I would encourage you to use in 2024.

First, **Select a Party Ballot Notice** is for the Presidential Primary. It is a reminder to voters that they **must select either a Democratic or Republican ballot for the Presidential Primary**. Please print and post as you feel is needed. Second, I have also attached a **Write-in Notice**. We thought you could print, copy, and cut for posting in your polling booths. It reminds voters to stay in the box and write in block letters if voting a write-in candidate.

Please follow up with me if you have any questions.

SUBJECT: PRES. PRIMARY ABSENTEE ENVELOPES

ATTACHMENT(S): Local envelopes.zip

SENT: 12/20/2023

Good Afternoon,

We are following up on the message below, to let those of you who are choosing our vendor to print your **local election envelopes** know that they have asked for those orders to be submitted to them by the end of next week, **December 29th**. The envelope designs we provide for local elections are attached, if you want to use those, and the vendor's contact information is highlighted below.

When you submit your order, you will need to specify the type of envelope seal you would like, as there are two options in our contract:

1. "Wet and seal" – The gum adhesive that you have to wet to seal; or
2. "Peel and seal" – The sticker adhesive that you just have to peel the paper off of to seal.

The pricing for each option is below:

Envelope Details		Wet & Seal Prices		Peel & Seal Prices	
Type	Size	per 500	per 1,000	per 500	per 1,000
1. Local Voted Ballot Envelope	5-3/4 x 9	\$43.34	\$86.68	\$53.99	\$107.97
2. Local Outgoing Envelope – to Voter	6-1/8x11-1/2	\$84.87	\$169.93	\$96.13	\$192.25
3. Local Return Envelope – to Clerk	5-7/8x10-1/2	\$76.86	\$153.72	\$87.97	\$175.93

There is a minimum order of 500 (per envelope type), but these orders you are submitting by December 29th will all be combined into one job, so you shouldn't have to worry about that this time. However, if you order envelopes for a local election later on, like for a special election, and the vendor isn't able to combine it with other orders, then you will need to meet the minimum in your order.

These prices do not include freight. The freight charge is \$35.95 per package of 500 envelopes.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – MUST READ TOWN MEETING

ATTACHMENT(S): Local Ballot Certificate_Instructions

SENT: 1/10/2024

Good Morning Clerks,

We are writing to provide you with some helpful reminders for town meeting and links to useful documents. Over the next month or so, you will be hearing from us more frequently as we provide you with information and collect information from you regarding the upcoming 2024 Annual Meeting. Remember you can always reach out to sos.elections@vermont.gov with questions. For now, here are some helpful reminders.

[Act 1](#) is still in effect and permits the **legislative body** to:

- **vote to move the date of the annual meeting** to a later date in the year.
- **vote to apply the Australian ballot system** for articles that are otherwise typically voted from the floor.

A few important details regarding these items:

If the legislative body votes to move the date of the annual meeting:

- The current municipal officers shall serve until the annual meeting is held and their successors are chosen.
- If the meeting date is moved, the deadlines in the statute move as well. For instance, the ballots would need to be prepared 20 days before the newly rescheduled meeting date, and the candidate filing deadline would be the sixth Monday before the new date. Any petitions for articles or candidates that were accepted before the meeting date was moved shall be valid for the rescheduled meeting and do not have to be filed again.

If the legislative body votes to use the Australian ballot system:

- The informational hearing that is required to be held by the legislative body within ten days before the meeting may be held by electronic means without designating a physical location. A telephone option must be provided to access the hearing if feasible and the hearing must be recorded if possible.

Here is a link to our webpage that contains a link to the **Elections Calendar** <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks/election-procedures/>. For those of you that move your annual meeting, this will be a helpful document to calculate your new deadlines.

Consent of Candidate forms for local office can be found here <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/candidates/local-office->

[candidates/](#). The deadline for candidates to file is Monday, January 29 at 5 pm (if you have not moved your annual meeting to a later date). This does not mean you must remain open until 5 pm, but you should leave a note on your door with instructions for how candidates may file if you are not open and also check at 5 pm to see if anyone has filed.

We have **templates for Warnings and Notices to Voters** on our website here <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/town-meeting-local-elections/reminders-warnings/>. VLCT has a very helpful Model Town Meeting Articles document and other helpful information <https://www.vlct.org/>. The Annual Meeting Warning must be posted no less than 30 days before the meeting, which for the March 5 election is February 4. (**Please note** – the Warning for the Presidential Primary is a separate document. Our office is required to provide those, and we will be mailing you the necessary number for your town in the next few days. We will send another bulletin very soon with further details and guidance regarding the Presidential Primary).

Tabulators – If your BCA has voted to use a tabulator machine for your local elections, you will need to contact LHS prior to the election to have them program your machine, once you know the candidates and questions that will appear on the ballot, otherwise it will not be able to read and tabulate your ballots. You will also need to have LHS format and create your ballot. You can have any vendor print the ballot, but LHS needs to format and create it. LHS will email you a pdf for the printer after you have provided them the content. The Secretary of State's office does this for statewide and federal elections, but it is the responsibility of the town to do so for their local elections. The town will bear the cost of the programming for this (minimum cost is around \$250). The phone number for LHS is (888) 547-8683. Do not forget to test your tabulator machine(s) once the memory cards that are programmed for the election are provided to you. This must be done no later than 10 days prior to the election. You can find procedures for use of the tabulator machine in the [Tabulator Guide](#) (Logic and Accuracy testing is located on [page 7](#)).

School district mailing to all active voters – Remember, schools and towns are 2 separate municipalities. In order to mail the school ballots to all active voters in the municipality (i.e. all of the towns in the school district), each selectboard must agree to allow the school district to do so. If not all selectboards agree, then the school ballot cannot be sent to all active voters. Please read the below statutory language CAREFULLY.

[17 VSA 2680](#)

(2) A school board may, after receiving the approval of the legislative body of each member town in the district, vote to mail its annual meeting ballot to all active registered voters in the district. In such case, the town clerk and election officials in the member towns shall be responsible for the mailing of the ballots but all costs associated with the mailing of ballots shall be borne by the school district.

Early processing of ballots – If you want to start processing your ballots before town meeting day (i.e. deposit them into the vote tabulator or into a ballot box), your BCA must

vote to approve that. [17 VSA 2546a](#). It is not required that you do this, but may assist in places with large numbers of early/absentee voters.

Attached are the **instructions and the certificate** you can use for voters that request their ballot by electronic means. Remember, you will need to directly e-mail the local ballot to your voters that request an electronic ballot (overseas and military voters). Local ballots will not be delivered through VEMS.

Town Reports should be submitted to VSARA electronically if possible, or by mailing a physical copy to them. Instructions can be found here <https://sos.vermont.gov/vsara/file/municipal-reports/>. **Please do not send the report to the Elections Office. You may need to update your mailing labels!**

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN-MUST READ PRES PRIMARY INFO

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 Pres Primary Warning, Select a Party Ballot

SENT: 1/11/2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

Below are some reminders about the upcoming presidential primary. Please read this bulletin carefully. You should also have received a reminder bulletin yesterday about local elections on town meeting day.

Ballots

- Ballots for the Presidential Primary will be delivered to you no later than Friday, January 19. They are in the process of being shipped as we speak. Please be sure that your office hours are up to date. You can check your hours in our [Town Clerk's Guide](#). Please let us know as soon as possible if your hours have changed. We provide the hours to the ballot printers to help ensure your ballots arrive when you are open.
 - Presidential Primary Absentee Envelopes will be shipped to all of you starting this Friday. You will receive them before 1/19.
- There will be two ballots for the Presidential Primary: Democratic and Republican. At the polling place, and when requesting an absentee ballot, **voters MUST declare which ballot they want**. Please only give **1 ballot to each voter**, according to their choice. You must also record, on the checklist, which ballot (Democratic or Republican) each voter took. You will also need to enter this information into the participation report in VEMS after the election.

(**Please note this is a different process from the statewide Primary in August, where each voter is given all three ballots and then chooses which one to vote in private. Many voters will remember this process and may ask why they must choose one ballot for the Presidential Primary. Please just remind them the law is different for the Presidential Primary, they must choose, and that the election official must record their choice on the checklist. See [17 VSA 2704](#).) We have created, and provided in a previous bulletin, a document you can post in your office and/or at the polls, notifying voters of this requirement, and it is attached again here.

- Remember to enter any absentee requests you receive into VEMS. Federal Law requires that all **absentee ballots requested by military or overseas (UOCAVA)** voters at least 45 days prior to the election must be issued (mailed or electronically delivered) no later than January 19. VEMS will automatically be issuing ballots to those voters who requested electronic delivery, starting overnight on Friday, January 19. You will be cc'ed on an e-mail once those ballots are issued. After January 19th, you can manually issue any new requests for electronic ballots or wait for the system to automatically issue those overnight. **Once your printed ballots arrive on or before 1/19, you should mail ballots to any overseas or**

military voter who requested them no later than 1/19. We will be sending detailed guidance on this process in the coming weeks prior to the 1/19 deadline and please feel free to contact us with any questions about this process.

- Your office is required to be open Friday, January 19, so that you can process and record in VEMS any absentee requests from military or overseas voters that are pending or are received on Friday. See [17 V.S.A. §2539\(c\)](#). **At a minimum, you need to make sure that you check the mail for any new requests, and log in to VEMS throughout the day in case any requests are submitted from the My Voter Page.** Our state law sets the deadline for Friday, but I will note that the actual deadline in federal law is Saturday, so if any of you have ballots that need to be mailed and are not mailed by Friday, they may be mailed on Saturday and the issue date should be entered in VEMS. We will send out more reminders about this deadline as we get closer.

Warning and Notice for Presidential Primary

- We are mailing you hard copy printed versions of Presidential Primary Warning in the number required for your town or city under [17 VSA 2521](#). You should receive the warning the week of January 15, or earlier. You are required to post the warning in 2 public places within town and in or near the town clerk's office. Or, if you have more than one polling place, in 2 public places within each *voting district* and in or near the town clerk's office. As a backup, and for use on your website and as you see fit otherwise, we have attached a PDF version of the warning and notice to this bulletin.

Checklists / Participation Reports

- Voters who will be 18 years of age for the November 5, 2024, general election are eligible to vote in the primaries, only. **17-year old's may NOT vote in your local elections.** If you print a local checklist they will not appear on that list. They will only appear on the Pres. Primary checklist.
- State law mandates that you enter participation for each annual Town Meeting and each statewide election. There may be some people that only choose to vote in the Presidential Primary or only in the Town Meeting election. For this reason, you will need to track participation separately for each election. We will have suggestions for how to do so and more advice on this closer to the elections.
- 17 V.S.A. §2593 requires that you **enter participation reports into VEMS within 60 days after a primary election, general election, AND annual Town Meeting. You will need to set up the Town Meeting election in VEMS to report your participation and to track absentee ballots** (we set up the Presidential Primary). **Please refer to your VEMS user manual for instructions on setting up a local election.** Towns that vote on all articles from the floor are not required to enter a participation report in VEMS but should report the highest vote total on any article

as your turnout number on the Town Meeting Survey that we will send following the annual meeting. If you vote any or all articles by Australian ballot, you will need to set up the election and report your participation in VEMS using your checklist for those ballots.

Thank you and good luck. We will be in touch on an ongoing basis in the next few months as deadlines approach and with further guidance, as necessary. We are also always here for your questions. We look forward to working as a team with all of you as we navigate through the Annual Meeting/Presidential Primary and beyond throughout 2024.

The Elections Team,

SUBJECT: BALLOT MAILING DEADLINE FOR MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 1/16/2024

Good Afternoon Town and City Clerks,

**Deadline, by federal law, to send absentee ballots to Military and Overseas Voters:
Next Friday, January 19.**

Next **FRIDAY, January 19**, is the deadline for you to send absentee ballots for the Presidential Primary to any overseas or military voter who has requested them. **All requests made by military or overseas voters (UOCAVA), and issue dates, must be entered into VEMS on or before next Friday.** (Additional military and overseas voters can still request ballots after next Friday – this deadline is for you to send out any ballots for which you have pending requests). You can find a list of your UOCAVA voters with requests in VEMS by going to Reports>Absentee>Detailed Absentee Voter List. There is an option to show only UOCAVA voters.

You should be receiving your ballots from the printers no later than Thursday, 1/18. Some of you may have received them already. Please let us know if you do not receive the ballots by next Wednesday. Be sure you enter all requests for electronic delivery into VEMS before Friday and the system will automatically issue those overnight on Friday. For ballots requested by mail, you need to enter the request and the “issue date” (the date you mail them) on or before Friday.

1. Requests for the ballot to be sent electronically:

If a voter has requested that the ballots be sent to them by electronic delivery, select “ELECTRONIC” in the “delivery method” dropdown menu when entering the request into VEMS. For any voter who has requested electronic delivery, when issued the VEMS system will place a pdf file with the ballots on that voter’s “My Voter Page”, or the voter also has the option of using the online ballot marking tool. An email will be sent to the voter with instructions on how to access their ballot by either method. The voter will be provided the certificate and instructions on how to return the ballots by mail to the clerk. When the ballots begin being issued overnight on Friday, the electronic requests will automatically be updated as having been “Issued” with the appropriate date. There is nothing else you need to do in VEMS until the ballots are returned. Ballots must be returned by mail. They cannot be returned electronically. After this deadline, please enter any requests into VEMS and issue the ballot on the same day you receive them.

The most important thing to remember is that **all requests received on or before Friday should be entered by Friday in order to meet the Federal deadline.**

2. Requests for the ballot to be sent by mail:

If a military or overseas voter requested the ballot to be sent by mail, you need to record the request and issue date in VEMS and mail the ballots no later than next Friday, 1/19. As soon as you receive your ballots from the printer, you should mail ballots to any military or overseas voter who has a pending request that the ballot be sent by mail, and **enter the date you mail them as the issue date** in VEMS. **In any case, the ballots must be mailed and the issue date entered in VEMS by Friday, 1/19.**

You will receive envelopes for mailing the ballots next week, prior to the deadline. For mailing ballots to overseas or military voters, please use the “Par Avion” prepaid mailing envelopes that you have always used for the military and overseas voters, if you have them. If not, you may use the standard envelopes. Remember that you will only mail the single ballot, Democratic or Republican, that was requested by the voter. If you do not receive your new envelopes prior to the deadline, please use any you have on hand in order to get the ballots in the mail.

NOTE: If you have not received your printed ballots by Thursday, please contact us and we can provide instructions on how to use a pdf version of the ballot to meet the mailing deadline. The pdf versions will appear on your dashboard in VEMS early next week.

Under one of the recent changes to the election law, your office is now required to be open next Friday, January 19, so that you can process and record in VEMS any absentee requests from military or overseas voters that are pending or are received on Friday. See [17 V.S.A. §2539\(c\)](#). We know this can be difficult for those of you who don't usually have office hours on Friday. At a minimum, you need to make sure that you check the mail for any new requests, and log in to VEMS throughout the day in case any requests are submitted from the My Voter Page. Our state law sets the deadline for Friday, but I will note that the actual deadline in federal law is Saturday, so if any of you have ballots that need to be mailed and are not mailed by Friday, they may be mailed on Saturday and the issue date should be entered in VEMS.

*If you have any questions about how to enter these requests or issue dates into the VEMS system, please contact our office (Tammy: 828-3721; Lori: 828-2464; Will: 828 - 0175). **New clerks please contact us if necessary with any questions about this deadline.***

If you receive additional requests for ballots by mail from overseas or military voters after next Friday, please send the absentee ballots to the voter on the same day as you receive the request and enter the date issued into VEMS. If you receive requests for ballots to be delivered electronically following Friday (1/19), you should enter the request and date issued for the ballot at the same time, and the ballot will instantly be available to the voter as soon as the issue date is entered.

Please contact us with any questions.
The Elections Division

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT: BALLOT MAILING DEADLINE FOR MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 1/18/2024

Good Morning Clerks,

We are following up on the guidance below with a few updates...

- Ballots and envelopes for the presidential primary are still being shipped
- Remember that it is **only** your **UOCAVA** absentee ballots (those requested by military or overseas voters) that you need to issue by Friday, and you only need to worry about the ones that are to be **mailed**, the electronic ballots will be issued automatically overnight @ 1am, Friday, all electronic requests that are sent will also be Cc'd to the clerk's email . If you have a voter that cannot access the My Voter Page, check to see that their voter record contains and has the correct, DOB and or VT DL#, last 4 of SSN. If all the information is correct contact the elections division.
- To see your UOCAVA requests, you can run an inquiry or report as shown below
- If you do not receive your **ballots** by Friday, you can print from the PDF of the ballot that is available on your dashboard in VEMs, also shown below
- If you do not receive your **envelopes** by Friday, you can mail your UOCAVA ballots out using any Par Avion envelopes you have on hand (see below). The Par Avion envelopes have prepaid postage on them and are to be used only for UOCAVA voters. If you don't have any Par Avion envelopes, you may use any of the older presidential primary envelopes you have. If you have no envelopes on hand that could be used to mail your UOCAVA ballots by Friday, check with nearby towns to see if they have any.
- For any NON-UOCAVA absentee ballot requests you have (not military or overseas), you can wait until you have received your shipment of both the ballots and the new envelopes to issue those.

Search Inquiries for UOCAVA Requests:

The screenshot shows the 'ABSENTEE BALLOT INQUIRIES' search interface. The 'Request Type' dropdown menu is open, displaying four options: 'MILITARY WITHIN U.S.', 'CIVILIAN OVERSEAS (INCLUDES CANADA)', 'MILITARY OVERSEAS', and 'ILL OR WITH DISABILITY'. The 'Delivery Method' dropdown is set to 'MAIL'. The 'Election' dropdown is set to '03/05/2024 -- PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY'. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'INQUIRIES', 'VOTER REGISTRATION', and 'ABSENTEE BALLOTS'. A 'SEARCH' button is located at the bottom right of the search area.

Search Reports for UOCAVA Requests:

DETAILED ABSENTEE VOTER LIST SEARCH CRITERIA

*Election Category: Statewide Local *Election: 03/05/2024 -- PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

Party Affiliation: -- Select one --

District Type: -- Select one -- District: -- Select one --

Absentee Ballot Request: From Date: / / To Date: / /

Options: Only UOCAVA Include Status Include Reason

Report Type: PDF Excel

[CLEAR](#) [GENERATE NOW](#) [GENERATE LATER](#) [SCHEDULE REPORT](#)

Find and Print the Ballot:

DASHBOARD

MY TASKS

Task
REVIEW Absentee Ballot Activities.
REVIEW There are 1 Absentee Date Range Requests from MVP
REVIEW There are 1 Address change requests from DMV
REVIEW There are 1 voters transferred from your town with in last 10 days.
REVIEW Presidential Primary election ballot is ready.
REVIEW Presidential Primary election sample ballot is ready.

BALLOT REVIEW LIST

Election Name	Election Category	Election Date	District	Party	Sample Ballot	Online Ballot
03/05/2024 -- PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY	STATEWIDE	03/05/2024		DEMOCRATIC		
03/05/2024 -- PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY	STATEWIDE	03/05/2024		REPUBLICAN		

Displaying page 1 of 1, records 1 to 2 of 2

[BACK TO DASHBOARD](#)

Par Avion Envelope:

POSTAGE PAID 6 x 9

U.S.
POSTAGE
PAID
39 USC 3406
PAR AVION

OFFICIAL
ELECTION MAIL
Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service

VERMONT OFFICIAL EARLY OR ABSENT VOTER BALLOTS - FIRST CLASS MAIL

TO: _____

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IN THE U.S. MAILS - DMM 703.8.0

Thank you,
The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN-MUST READ ACCESSIBLE SYSTEM

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024PP Election Data USB, Pres Prim Load Paper edited

SENT: 1/30/2024

Hello,

You will soon receive a USB in the mail from our vendor for the accessible voting system (Democracy Live). This USB contains the Presidential Primary election data to be loaded onto your Accessible Voting System Tablet. The documents attached contain instructions for how to load the election data from the USB onto the tablet and how to load the pre-printed ballots into the printer.

Please remember you are required by Federal Law to set up the accessible voting system. Any voter can use the system to vote if they choose to.

- If you experience any issues with the process, please contact Democracy Live at this email Vermont.support@democracylive.com or call 855-655-8683
- You can also contact the elections division at sos.elections@vermont.gov
- The login credentials are listed here as well as in the attached instructions:
 - Username: vermont
 - Password: 030524
 - Log in PIN: 2023
 - Poll Worker PIN: 3333
- Remember for the Presidential Primary:
 - The poll worker will ask the voter which ballot (D or R) they want to vote on.
 - The poll worker will select the party ballot on the tablet for the voter.
 - The poll worker will then load the ballot chosen by the voter into the printer. Please have the instructions for Loading the Ballot close by for the poll worker to reference so that the ballot prints correctly.
 - The voted ballot will be printed with the oval marked for the candidate selected by the voter.
 - If you use a tabulator the voter can feed their ballot through the tabulator for counting.
 - In hand count towns the marked ballot is placed in the ballot box.
- Please remember to hang the Laminated posters that promote the system somewhere prominent in the polling place. These posters were sent to each town in 2018. If you cannot find it, then do not worry about hanging it in the polling place.
- For support on the use of the system or setup of the system you can email Democracy Live, Vermont.support@democracylive.com
- Remember you can test the voting process on the tablet as many times as you want.

Elections Team

SUBJECT: DEFECTIVE BALLOT PROCEDURES

ATTACHMENT(S): CCD-VT-Cure Postcard-Need Signature-2022-02-07, CCD-VT-Cure Postcard-Need Additional Info-2022-02-07, Visual Guide for Using Postcards for Defective Ballot Notifications

SENT: 1/31/2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

We are writing today for a few reasons...

First, to say THANK YOU to those of you who participated in the VT Election Security Summit hosted by CISA on Monday. As promised, the materials that were covered will be shared with you all soon, and those who were not able to attend can review them to see what was missed. The other reasons we are reaching out are to...

1. Provide clarification on how soon you should respond to absentee ballot requests; and
2. Provide instructions for what to do when ballots are returned defective

Responding to Absentee Ballot Requests

If you have received your envelopes and ballots for the presidential primary, please go ahead and start issuing ballots for any requests you have pending for that election now. It is best to issue those right away, rather than waiting until your local ballots are ready. As soon as your local ballots are ready, you can start sending them out together in the envelopes we provided for the presidential primary, but until then, you will have to send them separately.

Receiving Absentee Ballots - Defective Ballot Process

Under [17 V.S.A. § 2546](#), beginning 30 days before the election, you are required to determine if a ballot is defective **within 3 days** of receiving it, and to notify the voter **within 24 hours** of deeming it defective. In the notification to the voter, you must provide them with options for curing their ballot, so that, if properly cured, their ballot can be counted. Please continue reading below for the detailed steps of this process.

STEPS

1. Receive the ballot

Upon receipt of a returned ballot (whether by mail, in person, or in a drop box), **within 3 days** (or on the next day the office is open, whichever is later) you will need to open the mailing envelope and inspect the contents (this does not require you to inspect the ballot itself, just *the manner in which it was returned*); then

2. Determine whether the ballot is defective

There are 5 reasons a ballot may be deemed defective:

- a. The certificate envelope is missing a signature
- b. The ballot wasn't in the certificate envelope
- c. In the case of the *August* Primary, the voter didn't return their *unvoted* ballots
- d. The voter did not submit ID when they first registered to vote

- e. The voter already returned a ballot

Note: For reasons (a) - (c) the voter can sign an affidavit to cure their ballot, and they can return that in person, by mail, or email – or submit it via the My Voter Page. For reasons (d) or (e), the voter will need to contact the town clerk to provide the necessary documentation (for reason d), or discuss the indication that they have already returned a ballot in that election (reason e).

3. **Process the ballot**

- a. **If the ballot IS NOT defective** – Mark the ballot as “**Received**” in VEMS and place the ballot in a secure ballot box for processing on or before election day. That is it, no need to continue with the next steps.
- b. **If the ballot IS defective** –
 - i. Mark the ballot as “**Defective**” in VEMS, as well as the reason it is defective.
 - ii. Indicate the reason on a Defective Ballot Marking Card (see [Appendix J](#) in your [Election Procedures Guide](#)).
 - iii. Attach the card to the certificate envelope, if it is unsigned, or to the ballot if it was returned outside of the envelope or without one. Due to this new process that allows a voter the opportunity to correct the error, we now advise that you staple together the ballot, certificate envelope, mailing envelope and the Marking card. It is best practice now to keep all of these items together so that you can identify the ballot when it is cured and have a record of the what the error was.
 - iv. Place the ballot in the Defective Ballot Envelope with the Defective Ballot Envelope cover affixed to the outside (see [Appendix H](#) in your [Elections Procedures Guide](#)), use the cover to track the number of Defective ballots for each reason, and the total, and mark this ballot there as appropriate.

4. **Notify the voter**

If the ballot is defective, you are required to notify the voter **within 24 hours**. You can notify the voter by mail, phone, or email, depending on which contact information you have, and your preference.

- a. **Phone** – If you notify a voter by phone, you will need to instruct them where they can access the affidavit which may be used to cure some defective ballots (2.a.-2.c. above). Continue to read below for more information on this. They may also come to the office to correct it, or request a new ballot, but signing and returning the affidavit will be easiest for most.
- b. **Mail** – We have provided a set of postcards that you can use to notify voters by mail. A shipment of these were sent out in 2022. You can continue to use what you have left, or print your own from the attached PDFs. There are 2 different postcards – one that provides an affidavit to be signed and returned for defective reasons 2.a.-2.c. above, and another for reasons 2.d.-2.e., which informs the voter they need to contact the town clerk and provide

more information to cure their ballot. We have attached some visual instructions on how to use those postcards. Alternatively, you can use the form letter (see [Appendix Q](#) in your [Election Procedures Guide](#)). Both the post card and form letter contain a returnable affidavit for voters who may cure their defective ballots by signing and returning that, but only the post card mentions they may also sign the affidavit through MVP, so if you are using the form letter you may want to add a note that the voter may cure their ballot through their My Voter Page as well (only for reasons a – c).

- c. **Email** – We are still in the process of developing a feature in VEMS that will allow you to send an email automatically from VEMS to any voter whose ballot is marked defective, if that voter has an email in the system. For now, you may email them outside of the system if you have an email address. You can use the language from the form letter and/or attach it to those emails. In your message, you can inform the voter that they may cure their ballot through their My Voter Page as well, for reasons a - c.

Note: *During the five days preceding the election, the clerk is not required to mail notice to voters but is required to make a reasonable effort to contact them using any other contact information contained in the checklist (phone or email). If the clerk only has a mailing address, the postcard/ letter is not required to be sent, but the ballot must be marked “Defective” in VEMS so that the voter at least has an opportunity to receive notice through their My Voter Page under Ballot Status.*

5. **Voter options to cure**

The voter may correct the defect using the following methods:

- a. **Requesting a new set of ballots** and returning the voted ballot in the correct manner, replacing the first defective ballot; or
- b. **Coming in person** to your office to correct the error; or
- c. **Signing an affidavit** asking that the ballot be counted despite the error, and submitting it to you (only for the following scenarios):
 - i. The ballot is defective because the certificate was not signed; or
 - ii. The voted ballot was not in the voted ballot envelope; or
 - iii. In the case of the August Primary, if the unvoted ballots weren't returned

6. **If the voter cures the error**

If a voter cures the error in their ballot return, you must follow these steps to count their ballot:

- a. Go back into VEMS and update the return status of the ballot from “Defective” to “Received / Cured Ballot”.
- b. Remove the ballot from the Defective Ballot envelope. We have slightly revised the Defective Ballot Envelope Cover to include a column for you to track the ballots that have been cured. Whenever you remove a ballot, you will indicate that on the cover. To determine your total you will subtract the number corrected/cured from the number that were placed in the envelope.

- c. What you will do with the ballot you are removing will depend on the method that the voter has used to correct their error:
- i. **Requesting a new set of ballots** – In what we think will be the rare instance where a voter requests a second ballot to be sent, and then returns that second ballot correctly, you should mark the front of the Defective Ballot Envelope to indicate one of the ballots have been cured, find that ballot in the envelope, affix a note to it that it has been cured, and leave it in the Defective ballot envelope to ensure it won't be counted.
 - ii. **Coming in person** – We also anticipate voters deciding to come to your office to cure the error. In these cases you would proceed in the same way, except that you can give the ballot and other materials back to the voter and have them place it in the envelope, or a new one, sign the envelope, and again you can include it with all of the other voted ballots to be processed.
 - iii. **Signing the affidavit** – In the vast majority of cases we anticipate the voter will sign the affidavit verifying the ballot should be counted despite the error. In these cases you can move forward processing that ballot along with all others to be counted. You will need to retain these affidavits in the ballot bag for the retention period (90 days for a local election and 22 months for statewide elections).

Please remember that historically there are a very small number of ballots that are deemed defective. It is our hope that this process will not be too cumbersome or take up too much of your time. We have heard from many of you how difficult it can be to inform a voter that their ballot won't be counted, simply because they made an error in how it was returned. This process should provide relief from that stress, and enable you to bear the good news for your voters that they have an opportunity to correct their error and have their ballot counted.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
The Elections Division

CORRECTIONS TO EMAIL:

Good Morning Clerks,

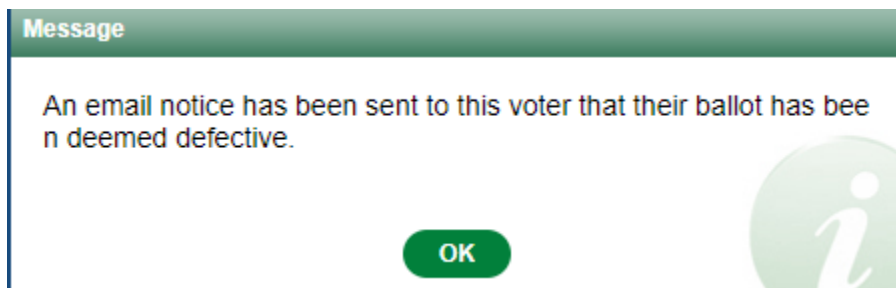
Correction... The **email** notification feature in VEMS for defective ballots (highlighted below) is now **working**, but of course only for those voters with an email address on their record, so you do not need to send a notification to them, as the system will do so automatically (you must choose the email notice method as shown below), but you will need to send a notification to the voters without an email address on their record.

- a. **Email** – We are still in the process of developing a feature in VEMS that will allow you to send an email automatically from VEMS to any voter whose ballot is marked defective, if that voter has an email in the system. For now, you may email them outside of the system if you have an email address. You can use the language from the form letter and/or attach it to those emails. In your message, you can inform the voter that they may cure their ballot through their My Voter Page as well, for reasons a - c.

* Returned Date:

* Ballot Acceptance:

* Defective Ballot Notice Method: Email Phone Mail



Also, if you are out of the defective ballot postcards we sent you in 2022, and you prefer to use those over the form letter or printing your own, we do have some more on hand in the office that we could send you. Please reach out to **Dan Brown** Dan.Brown@vermont.gov if you would like to request some, and he will send you the same quantity we sent the last election cycle.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT – ELECTIONS REMINDERS

ATTACHMENT(S): 2023 VEMS USER MANUAL

SENT: 2/27/2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

We are writing today to provide you with some reminders for the upcoming **Annual Meeting/Presidential Primary Day**, which is just a week away – we hope you all are feeling prepared! We’ve sent out lots of supplies and bulletins, and have been fielding many questions in the lead up to the meetings. We hope the guidance provided has been helpful and the reminders below will help to further prepare you. Please be sure to read this bulletin carefully, but feel free to reach out to us if you still have questions. As usual, we and our vendors will be available all day and into the evening on Town Meeting Day (March 5), to assist you with any election day issues that arise. Remember, Town Meeting Day is a State holiday, so please call the Election Division at our *direct lines* if you have any questions or need assistance.

Contact information for election day:

Election Procedure Questions & VEMS Issues	Tabulator Issues	Accessible System Issues
SOS Elections Division	LHS	Democracy Live
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tammy- 828-3721• Lori- 828-2464• Dan- 828-0771	Technical Assistance: (888) 547-8683	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Juliet 603-800-6889 juliet@democracylive.com If not able to reach Juliet, try: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felicia 206-482-8231 felicia@democracylive.com

Important reminders:

1. It is crucial that you set up your local election in VEMS *prior* to the election. This will allow you to enter your participation data following the meeting. If you try to set up an election *after* the date it occurs, you will not be able to enter in your participation. Please see the attached VEMS user manual if you need assistance setting up your election. If you vote all articles from the floor, you don’t have to set up your election and you can report your participation in response to the Town Meeting Survey that we will send out after the meetings.

2. When printing a combined Presidential Primary and Town Meeting checklist from VEMS, please pay close attention to the voter status codes that show under the “Stat” column. Remember, 17 year-olds who will be 18 by the General Election may vote in the Presidential Primary, so they will be included in the combined checklist; however, they CANNOT vote in the *local* election. When you have one of these voters on your checklist, you will see the status code “N18”. While those voters are included in the combined checklist for both the Presidential Primary and Town Meeting, that is only because they must be included for the Presidential Primary. Be sure your election officials know that those voters may not participate in the local election. When printing a checklist solely for a local election, those voters will not be included.
3. Whether your town meeting is from the floor, by Australian ballot, or a little bit of both, same-day voter registration must be available to all eligible voters. Please feel free to contact us with more specific questions as we have issued detailed guidance in the past.
4. Write-in candidates need to receive votes of at least 1% of the municipal checklist—or 30 votes, whichever is less—and the most votes to win. [17 VSA 2682a](#). If multiple candidates receive the minimum vote (1% of checklist or 30 votes), the person who received the most write-in votes wins.
5. In contested elections (more than one candidate running for the same office and term), the person who receives the most votes wins. [17 VSA 2682\(c\)](#).
6. In the case of a tie-vote, a candidate can withdraw from the race within 5 days. If none of the tied candidates withdraw, a run-off election will need to be held. [17 VSA 2682b](#).
7. If there are no candidates on the ballot and there is no write-in winner, the legislative body may appoint someone to fill that position until the next annual meeting. [17 VSA 2682\(d\)](#).
8. Candidates have 10 days from the election to request a recount. The recount threshold can be found in [17 VSA 2683](#). We can assist you if you receive a request for a recount.
9. On election night, *“When the same number of persons are nominated for any town office as there are positions to be filled, the presiding officer may declare the whole slate of candidates elected without making individual tallies, provided each person on the slate has more votes than the largest number of write-in votes for any one write-in candidate.”* [17 VSA 2682\(f\)](#). For example, if there is 1 candidate on the ballot for an office and one candidate is to be elected, as long as no write-in vote is greater than the named candidate, you can declare the named candidate the winner without tallying each individual vote. This is the same process you use for the justices of the peace during the general election.

5. Oaths of Office and Certificates of Election: The oaths of office and certificates of election you will need for newly elected officers can be found on the [Town Clerks and Election Workers page](#) of our website.
6. Please remember that any campaigning for candidates or questions on the ballot must take place outside – no campaigning or campaign material for candidates or items on the ballot may be inside the building. Voters must be able to access and exit the building unimpeded by anyone campaigning – the walkways must be kept clear. Rules regarding the placement of signs or where people may stand are a matter of BCA policy. Please post your polling place policies prominently within the polling place. The statute regarding campaigning at the polling place: [17 V.S.A. 2508](#).

NOTE: At a floor meeting, discussion of items on the Warning is permitted during the course of the meeting and candidates are allowed to introduce themselves and state why they are running to the extent permitted by the voters.

7. After the polls close, the counting process is open to the public. There should be an area for the count to take place that is separated by guardrails or otherwise from the area where the public may observe the count. The public is allowed to observe, but not interfere with the counting process in any way. The statute is [17 V.S.A. 2581](#).
8. Please remember that [17 V.S.A. 2593](#) requires that you enter voter participation into VEMS within 60 days after Town Meeting day. Towns that vote all articles from the floor are not required to enter a participation report in VEMS but should report the highest vote total on any article as your turnout number on the Town Meeting Survey that we will send following the annual meeting. If you vote any or all articles by Australian ballot, you will need to set up the election and report your participation in VEMS using your checklist for those ballots.
9. Town reports should be submitted to the Archives Division (VSARA) electronically if possible, or by mailing a physical copy to them. Instructions can be found here <https://sos.vermont.gov/vsara/file/municipal-reports/>. Do not mail them to 128 State Street.
10. If you are using a tabulator, make sure to print and have your [Tabulator Guide](#) with you. There is a [Troubleshooting Guide](#) within it that may come in handy. Also, don't forget you need to have completed [Logic and Accuracy testing](#) at least 10 days before the election. For those of you who's school district decided to postpone the vote on the school budget, please also make sure to test whatever changes were made to the tabulator programming and/or ballot as a result. Remember, the guidance provided said if the vote is being postponed, you could either do nothing to the ballot and programming of the tabulator and just ignore the vote totals, or you could strike out the question on the ballot, but when doing so you must **be careful not to strike through the oval or in the area with the timing marks**.

11. Lastly, please review the [Elections Procedures Guide](#). It has a lot of useful information and resources, like a checklist of items you should bring to the polls, a list of what goes in the ballot bag at the end of the night, etc. Many of the Appendices are documents you will want to have on hand at the polls, such as the Affirmation of Residence that voters who have not responded to a challenge letter must sign (Appen. D) and the Defective and Replaced ballot envelopes (Appens. H and I).

We have a listing, and interactive map, of polling places, dates, and times on our website, [HERE](#). If you still need to update your information, please contact Dan Brown at dan.brown@vermont.gov.

Good luck and, as always, please contact us with any questions.

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT – ELECTION NIGHT RESULTS REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 Presidential Primary Election Night ENR_ORV Entry Instructions

SENT:

Good Morning Clerks,

We're reaching out today to provide you with the information you need to **report your Presidential Primary results on election night** and to **complete your Official Return of Votes within 48 hours of the election**. Detailed instructions for entering your **Election Night Results (ENR)** and **Official Return of Votes (ORV)** are attached here. Please read and print them so you have them with you as you are performing these tasks. In addition to the attached instructions, please also read and print the important notes about each of these processes below:

ELECTION NIGHT RESULTS REPORTING

- **By law, all town clerks are required to report the results of the Presidential Primary to our office on election night, March 5.** Unless you are unable to do so, you are required to submit the results using VEMS. You are not required to submit your local election results, only the Presidential Primary.
- Town clerks in towns that use a tabulator should enter the Unofficial Results from the machine tape as soon as possible after the tape is printed.
- Town clerks in hand count towns please enter your Unofficial Results into VEMS as soon as possible following the count.
- Please note that, on election night, you are only required to report the totals for the candidates named on the ballot. You can report your total write-in votes, but you are not required to enter all of the write-in names and their vote totals.
- Once you submit your ENR, you can view the results from your town and across the state at <https://electionresults.vermont.gov/> (this link currently points to our website but will point to the ENR site very soon)
- You will be able to log into VEMS on Wednesday after the election and edit your Election Night Results (ENR), if you choose. Within 48 hours of the election you will need to enter your Official Return of Votes (ORV), which you will also do through VEMS (see below).
- Finally, please be aware that your **Blank ORV, Tally, and Summary sheets** are available through the system. Go to Reports>Elections>Summary/Tally Sheets.
- If you are having any trouble submitting your results through VEMS on election night, please contact one of the Elections Team *directly*. We will first try to help troubleshoot the issue so that you can submit the results yourself through

VEMS. If you are ultimately unable to report the results through VEMS, you must submit them to us by phone or email instead. Our office staff will enter the data into the system for you on election night.

OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES ENTRY

- Following the election, your next most important responsibility is to submit your Official Return of Votes (ORV) for the Presidential Primary to our office. **By law, you are required to submit your Presidential Primary ORV to us within 48 hours of the closing of the election. This means you should submit it by the end of the day on Thursday, March 7.** You are not required to report the results of your local elections to our office.
- Like you did for the Election Night Results, **you will be submitting the ORV for the Presidential Primary using the VEMS system – you do not need to send us, or anyone else, a paper copy of your ORV.** Your ORV will be delivered through VEMS to our office. Once you submit your ORV in VEMS and the system confirms it has been submitted, you will have fulfilled your results reporting responsibilities.
- **The ORV should be completed in VEMS by you in the presence of at least one other election official.** The last step in the process will be for you and one other election official to electronically “sign” the form by checking the box that attests to the truthfulness of the information submitted.
- If you are having any trouble submitting your ORV, please contact our office immediately the day after the election. Our staff will be in the office and available to assist you through this process.

Thanks for all you do, and please let us know if you have any questions!

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT – OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES MUST BE ENTERED BY MARCH 7

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 3/6/2024

OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES ENTRY - MUST BE COMPLETED BY **7:00 PM** MARCH 7, 2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

This is a reminder that, **by law, you are required to submit your Presidential Primary Official Return of Votes (ORV) to us within 48 hours of the closing of the election. This means you must submit your ORV by 7:00 pm on Thursday, March 7.** You are ***not*** required to report the results of your local elections to our office.

As you did for the Election Night Results (ENR), you will be submitting the ORV for the Presidential Primary using the VEMS system. You do not need to send us, or anyone else, a paper copy of your ORV. Your ORV will be delivered through VEMS to our office. Once you submit your ORV in VEMS and the system confirms it has been submitted, you will have fulfilled your results reporting responsibilities.

The ORV should be completed in VEMS by you in the presence of at least one other election official. The last step in the process will be for you and one other election official to electronically "sign" the form by checking the box that attests to the truthfulness of the information submitted.

Thank you for all that you do. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at our direct lines, listed below:

- Tammy - 802-828-3721
- Lori - 802-828-2464
- Dan - 802-828-0771

Thank you,

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT – POST-ELECTION REMINDERS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 3/8/2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

Congratulations on a successful election day! We know it's a much more complicated process having to juggle a Presidential Primary along with your local elections, and we appreciate all of your hard work and everything you do for Vermonters!

We're following up on the reminders we sent you prior to the election with some important *post*-election reminders, including what to do about budget revotes, recounts, and reconsideration, as well as a few other tips and reminders for post-Town Meeting. Please read carefully and let us know if you have any additional questions.

1. Oaths

If you entered candidates into VEMS and completed the official return of votes for your local election, you can use the certificates and oaths from the system. If you did not, we have them on our website here <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/town-clerks/>.

2. Budget Revotes

If your budget failed by Australian ballot, the legislative body will have to prepare a revised budget and establish a date for the vote on the revised budget, taking the appropriate steps to warn a public informational meeting on the budget and the vote. Do not confuse this process with the process for "reconsideration". When a budget fails, and there is a revote as a result, you are NOT required to send ballots to all those that requested one for the first vote, as you would have to for a reconsideration vote by Australian ballot. However, for voters that have requested ballots for ALL elections, you should do your best to get a ballot out to them if you can, and/or encourage those voters to come and vote early in person at your office.

Remember that [17 VSA 2680](#) permits a municipality to do a "quick turnaround" vote for budgets **only**. This shortened warning period is only an option and not required.

"(2) If a budget voted on by Australian ballot is rejected, the legislative body shall prepare a revised budget.

*(A) The legislative body shall establish a date for the vote on the revised budget and shall take appropriate steps to warn a public informational meeting on the budget and the vote. The date of the public informational meeting shall be at least five days following the public notice. **The date of the vote shall be at least seven days following the public notice.***

(B) The vote on the revised budget shall be by Australian ballot and shall take place in the same locations that the first vote was taken; provided, however, that if that polling place is unavailable, the vote may be held at a different location, with notice posted of the meeting location at the original location.”

3. **Recounts**

a. **For Candidates:**

A candidate for local office may request a recount by filing a request in writing with the municipal clerk within **10 days** after the election. A candidate qualifies for a recount only if the difference between the number of votes cast for a winning candidate and the number of votes cast for a losing candidate is **5% or less** of the total votes cast for all the candidates for an office, divided by the number of persons to be elected. [17 V.S.A. § 2683](#)

b. **For Questions:**

A registered voter or, in the case of a union school district, at least one registered voter from each member of the union district may demand a recount of ballots on any question submitted to the vote of the municipality using the Australian ballot system, if the margin by which the question passed or failed is **less than 5%** of the total votes cast on the question. The request shall be filed with the municipal clerk within **10 days** after the vote. [17 V.S.A. § 2688](#)

4. **Reconsideration or Recission**

If voters are asking about reconsideration votes, you can refer to them to the reconsideration portion of our local elections website <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/town-meeting-local-elections/local-petitions/>. Reconsideration petitions require signatures from **at least 5%** of the registered voters in town, and must be filed with the clerk of the municipality within **30 days** following the date of the meeting. For a reconsideration vote by Australian ballot, you ARE required to mail a ballot to all voters who requested one for the first vote.

5. **Tabulator Memory Cards**

Please return your memory cards to the **Secretary of State’s Office** at **128 State St. Montpelier, Vermont 05633**. We are beginning to receive records request for the Cast Vote Record (CVR) data, so please send them as soon as you are able, or at least by next **Friday, March 15th**.

If you receive a records request for either the Presidential Primary or your local election CVR data, please let us know and we will assist you in fulfilling that public records request.

We will keep your cards for the 90 day retention period to answer those requests, in case any requests come in during that time, and then we will send the cards back to LHS.

If you end up having to do a revote or recount, or if your school district has postponed the vote for the budget question (or the entire meeting), please reach out to LHS ASAP to receive new cards: (888) 547-8683.

Please reach out to Dan Brown (dan.brown@vermont.gov) if you have any other questions about the memory cards.

6. Retention

Please follow the applicable [retention schedules](#) for your ballots, envelopes, etc. Remember, there are different retention schedules for local elections than the Presidential Primary. Ballots for the **local elections** should be stored for **90 days**, while the ballots for the **Presidential Primary** must be stored for **22 months**. We have been working with the folks at VSARA to update the retention schedule, and they have been kind enough to create the attached quick reference guide. The second page also shows what must be stored in the ballot bag. We plan to add this to the Election Procedures soon. Please refer to this going forward, as needed. If you have any questions about records management, please contact sos.rim@vermont.gov.

7. Reimbursements

As noted in the memos sent on Monday, February 12th, all costs associated with ballot reprinting due to a **cancelled** school budget vote, as a result of H.850, are eligible for reimbursement. The reimbursable expenses include the costs to reprint and mail ballots for the rescheduled votes, inclusive of costs for additional staff/election worker time spent on these activities, as well as any costs incurred for public outreach to inform voters of the change. **Please note:** if your budget *was voted on as originally scheduled and rejected*, those costs are NOT eligible for reimbursement.

The process for reimbursement:

1. Clerks will submit additional costs to the school districts;
2. School districts will tally the total costs for the district, which could include multiple towns;
3. School districts will submit the total costs to the Vermont Secretary of State's Office;
4. Funds will be mailed to school districts; and,
5. School districts will reimburse town(s).

Please do not send your invoices or costs directly to us. Send them to your school district.

8. Post-Town Meeting Survey

We will be sending you a survey to collect the information we are required by law to collect, including the names of your selectboard members. **Please do not send us your results individually.**

9. Threats

A Presidential election can sometimes ignite and enflame tensions and emotions more than usual, and contentious local issues can do so as well. We expect some of you may see an increase in threats and other aggressive behavior from many different directions and want you to know that we are here to help. If something is directly threatening, you should take the appropriate precautions and report it to law enforcement, as needed, but please also let us know when you receive any threats, so we can make sure they are reported up the chain and logged and tracked by state and federal law enforcement as well.

As always, we're here to help in any way we can. Please let us know if you have any other questions!

Thank you for all you do!

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN, PLEASE READ: Voter Participation - enter by May 4th

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 PRIMARY PARTICIPATION INSTRUCTIONS, Resolving Outstanding Absentee Requests

SENT: 3/21/2024

Good afternoon Clerks,

We're writing today to remind you that **voter participation records must be entered into the VEMS system before Saturday, May 4, 2024** (60 days following the election - [17 V.S.A. § 2593](#)). You must process your absentee ballots **before** entering your participation records for those records to display correctly.

Please read this email and its attachments carefully. Attached are instructions on:

- How to process absentee ballots, depending on how they were delivered to you
- How to enter voter participation data in VEMS

Reporting your participation data is required for the Presidential Primary and your annual Town Meeting. At the end of March, we will send you a survey to collect other information you are required to report to us post-Town Meeting. Voter participation data will be one of the questions asked. If yours is a town that does not create local elections in VEMS and you cannot enter your participation there, you will be able to provide that data to us in the survey instead.

As always, thank you for all that you do, and please let us know if you have any questions.

I would also like to introduce you all to a new member of the Elections Team, Rosie Casciero. Rosie started about 3 weeks ago and has already been an invaluable asset to the team.

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ: 2024 ANNUAL MEETING & SELECTBOARD SURVEYS DUE 4/12
ATTACHMENT(S): N/A
SENT: 4/1/2024

Hello Clerks,

Every year following Town Meeting Day, we ask you to complete the Annual Meeting Survey and the Selectboard Members Survey (**see links below**). We use the information you provide to publish the *Guide to VT Town and City Clerks*, to update our list of Selectboard members, and to send you numerous bulletins and other communications throughout the year. As in the past, we are using the online survey tool Survey Monkey to conduct these surveys.

Please complete both surveys by Friday, April 12. By Vermont State statute, you are required to provide certain data requested in *both* surveys. If you are no longer the Town Clerk, please forward this email to the new Town Clerk and copy us on the email. We will follow up until we receive your town's completed survey.

- **2024 Annual Meeting:** www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024TMDSurvey
- **2024 Selectboard:** www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024Selectboard

Remember: to ensure you only share your professional contact information, be sure to disable or remove the auto-fill data in your browser via its privacy settings.

If you have any questions, contact Dan in the Elections Division at dan.brown@vermont.gov or (802) 828-0771 and leave a detailed message with your name, town name, and phone number.

Details

The Annual Meeting Survey asks for your polling locations for the 2024 August Primary and 2024 November General Election. This meets your requirement to notify us of your polling locations. We understand these polling places may change and you can send us those changes in the coming months. The Annual Meeting Survey also asks about the standard voting methods used by your town and school district, not any emergency procedures put in place in recent years. We also ask whether voting by Australian Ballot was adopted for this year and whether ballots were mailed to all voters. There is a lot of interest in this data, so thank you for providing it.

The Selectboard Survey asks for information about your Selectboard members. You are required by statute to send us the names of your Selectboard members—completing this survey fulfills that requirement (see [17 V.S.A. § 2665](#)). If your town keeps an up-to-date list

of Selectboard members on its website, then you can simply provide a link to that webpage to save yourself some typing.

We have also added a new feedback section at the end of the survey to rate your satisfaction with the absentee ballot envelopes and the Accessible Voting Systems.

Thanks for all that you do!

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTION BULLETIN - MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE FILING DEADLINES & INSTRUCTIONS

ATTACHMENT(S): Major Party Consent of Candidate Financial Disclosure Forms, 2024_AugPrimary_Rep_District_Clerks_VEMS_Manual

SENT: 4/22/2024

Good morning, Representative District Clerks:

In the coming months, major party (Democratic, Progressive, and Republican) candidates for the Vermont House of Representatives will be submitting candidate petitions to you as the Representative District Clerk for your House district(s). This email is a reminder that the candidate filing period begins today, **Monday, April 22, 2024**. The specific duties required of you are detailed below. Please read this email and its attachments carefully.

Important Dates – 2024 Statewide Primary Election

- **Monday, April 22, 2024** – Filing period for Major Party Candidates begins
- **Thursday, May 30, 2024, 5 p.m.** – Filing period for Major Party Candidates ends
- **Tuesday, August 13, 2024** – Primary Election

Attachments

- 2024 August Primary Representative District Clerks VEMS Manual
- Major Party Consent of Candidate Form & Financial Disclosure Form

Tips

- Enter candidate into VEMS as soon as possible after receiving the candidate's filing and verifying the candidate is qualified. Do not wait until the last minute to do this.
- All forms for Major Party, Minor Party, and Independent candidates can be found on the [Candidates page of the Elections website](#).
- Only Statewide Officers need to submit an IRS Form 1040. If a candidate for State Representative submits a Form 1040, return it.

Representative District Clerks' Duties

- ***You must review the forms and enter a candidate's information into VEMS within 3 days of receiving the candidate's filing.***
- **Receive candidate filings**
 - **Office(s): State Representative**
 - Filings must include: Consent of Candidate form, Petition with at least 50 signatures, **Financial Disclosure Form**
 - Clerks cannot accept filings without both a consent form and financial disclosure statement signed by the candidate ([17 V.S.A. § 2402\(d\)](#) & [17 V.S.A. § 2414](#))

- Candidates do not need to submit an IRS Form 1040. If received, return form to candidate.
- **Verify signatures on petitions**
 - Petitions must include **legible** signatures from voters within the district.
 - By statute ([17 V.S.A. § 2358](#)), you are directed to examine candidates' petitions and determine if they contain "a sufficient number of legible signatures". You are directed to check the voter registration status of the names on the petition only if you have "reason to believe" that someone who signed the petition is not a registered voter.
 - If the petition **does not** contain the required number of legible signatures, notify the candidate and our office **within 72 hours**. The candidate will then have 10 days to return the corrected petition.
- **Enter candidates in the Vermont Elections Management System (VEMS)**
 - Once you have certified that the candidate is qualified, enter the information from the candidate's consent form, including the name on the ballot, **EXACTLY** as it appears on the Consent of Candidate form.
 - [17 V.S.A. § 2361](#) describes precisely how a candidate's name may appear on the consent form and, by extension, how you must enter the name into VEMS.
 - If the candidate is not a registered voter, contact our office for assistance entering that candidate.
 - Representative district clerks can access voter checklists of all towns within their district through VEMS.

Notes

- All Major Party statewide candidates and all Independent candidates must file Candidate Consent forms with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. The exception to this is Independent Justices of the Peace, who file with their town clerks.

Contact

Please let us know if you have any questions!

- Tammy – 802-828-3721
- Lori – 802-828-2464
- Dan – 802-828-0771
- Rosie – 802-828-0418
- Mark – 802-828-2304

sos.elections@vermont.gov

Thank you from the Elections Division Team

SUBJECT: ELECTION BULLETIN - MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE FILING DEADLINES & INSTRUCTIONS

ATTACHMENT(S): Major Party Consent of Candidate Financial Disclosure Forms, 2024_AugPrimary_County.Senate_VEMS_Manual

SENT: 4/22/2024

Good morning, County and Senate District Clerks:

In the coming months, major party (Democratic, Progressive, and Republican) candidates for county and senate offices will submit candidate petitions to you. This email is a reminder that the candidate filing period begins today, **Monday, April 22, 2024**. The specific duties required of you are detailed below. Please read this email and its attachments carefully.

Important Dates – 2024 Statewide Primary Election

- **Monday, April 22, 2024** – Filing period for Major Party Candidates begins
- **Thursday, May 30, 2024, 5 p.m.** – Filing period for Major Party Candidates ends
- **Tuesday, August 13, 2024** – Primary Election

Attachments

- 2024 August Primary County/Senate Clerks VEMS Manual
- Major Party Consent of Candidate Form & Financial Disclosure Form

Tips

- Enter candidate into VEMS as soon as possible after receiving the candidate's filing and verifying the candidate is qualified. Do not wait until the last minute to do this.
- All forms for Major Party, Minor Party, and Independent candidates can be found on the [Candidates page of the Elections website](#).
- Only Statewide Officers need to submit an IRS Form 1040. If a candidate for State Senate submits a Form 1040, return it.

Clerks' Duties

- ***You must review the forms and enter a candidate's information into VEMS within 3 days of receiving the candidate's filing.***
- **Receive candidate filings**
 - **COUNTY CLERKS**
 - **Office(s): High Bailiff**
 - Filings must include: Consent of Candidate form, Petition with at least 100 signatures
 - **SENATE CLERKS**
 - **Office(s): State Senate**
 - Filings must include: Consent of Candidate form, Petition with at least 100 signatures, **Financial Disclosure Form**

- Clerks cannot accept filings without both a consent form and financial disclosure statement signed by the candidate ([17 V.S.A. § 2402\(d\)](#) & [17 V.S.A. § 2414](#))
 - Candidates do not need to submit an IRS Form 1040. If received, return form to candidate.
- **Verify signatures on petitions**
 - Petitions must include **legible** signatures from voters within the district.
 - By statute ([17 V.S.A. § 2358](#)), you are directed to examine candidates' petitions and determine if they contain "a sufficient number of legible signatures." You are directed to check the voter registration status of the names on the petition only if you have "reason to believe" that someone who signed the petition is not a registered voter.
 - If the petition **does not** contain the required number of legible signatures, notify the candidate and our office **within 72 hours**. The candidate will then have 10 days to return the corrected petition.
- **Enter candidates in the Vermont Elections Management System (VEMS)**
 - Once you have certified that the candidate is qualified, enter the information from the candidate's consent form, including the name on the ballot, **EXACTLY** as it appears on the form.
 - If the candidate is not a registered voter, contact our office for assistance entering that candidate.

Notes

- All Major Party statewide candidates and all Independent candidates must file Consent of Candidate forms with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. The exception to this is Independent Justices of the Peace, who file with their town clerks.
- Grand Isle County Clerk does not act as Senate Clerk

Contact

Please let us know if you have any questions!

- Tammy – 802-828-3721
- Lori – 802-828-2464
- Dan – 802-828-0771
- Rosie – 802-828-0418
- Mark – 802-828-2304

sos.elections@vermont.gov

Thank you from the Elections Division Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN, PLEASE READ: VOTER PARTICIPATION – ENTER BY MAY 4TH

ATTACHMENT(S): How to process absentee ballots, Voter Participation entry

SENT: 5/10/2024

Good afternoon Clerks,

We're writing today to remind you that voter participation records must be entered into the VEMS system before Saturday, May 4, 2024 (60 days following the election - [17 V.S.A. § 2593](#)). You must process your absentee ballots before entering your participation records for those records to display correctly.

Please read this email and its attachments carefully. Attached are instructions on:

- How to process absentee ballots, depending on how they were delivered to you
- How to enter voter participation data in VEMS

Reporting your participation data is required for the Presidential Primary and your annual Town Meeting. At the end of March, we will send you a survey to collect other information you are required to report to us post-Town Meeting. Voter participation data will be one of the questions asked. If yours is a town that does not create local elections in VEMS and you cannot enter your participation there, you will be able to provide that data to us in the survey instead.

As always, thank you for all that you do, and please let us know if you have any questions.

I would also like to introduce you all to a new member of the Elections Team, Rosie Casciero. Rosie started about 3 weeks ago and has already been an invaluable asset to the team.

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – MUST READ AUGUST ABSENTEE ENVELOPES

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 5/15/2024

Good Afternoon,

We have placed the August Primary absentee envelope order with our vendor Cenveo, you will be receiving a set amount of the 4 newly designed envelopes sometime during the week of May 20th. This should be enough to get you through the 2024 and 2026 elections.

These envelopes have been redesigned and look a lot better. The new designs are attached (these are the four pdfs). We are really pleased with the new design for these and hope the clear instructions will limit the number of defective ballots.

Last, we have gotten questions from some of you about what to do with the envelopes you have on hand, given we are sending newly designed ones for the statewide elections in sufficient quantities to cover you going forward. If you have excess inventory of any old absentee envelopes in your offices, I have attached a word document that has pictures of some of the various ones used in the past with an explanation of what you may do with them. They may also simply be recycled but pay particular attention to those I have indicated can be used for local elections, as that may save costs of purchasing new envelopes for your local elections going forward. Also please note that the General election envelopes you may have left from 2022 may be used again in 2024 for ballots mailed out to new voters after the statewide mailing we will do in September. I have noted these in the file as well. If you have different ones than those included in this document, please take a picture, and send it to me for review.

Thank you,
The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTION BULLETIN – AUGUST PRIMARY BALLOTS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 6/13/2024

Good Afternoon Clerks,

We would like to provide you with an update for the August Primary ballots.

- Ballots are being printed and will be delivered to all offices no later than Friday, June 28.
- If you have not already noticed, there is a new item on your VEMS Dashboard that says "August Primary election ballot is ready". **Do not** use these ballots unless the printed ballots are not delivered by June 28.

REVIEW

AUGUST PRIMARY election ballot is ready.

- **As soon as possible review the ballots and let us know of any errors.** When you click on the "Review" button there will be three ballots for the August Primary: Democratic, Progressive and Republican.
- On Monday June 17, there will be another item on the VEMS Dashboard for the SAMPLE ballots.

REVIEW

AUGUST PRIMARY election sample ballot is ready.

Thank you,

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – Clerk Resources

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 6/19/2024

Greetings, Town Clerks!

The Elections Division would like to congratulate all new Town Clerks on their positions! We are writing today to introduce ourselves and to let you know that we are here to help. While this email is geared toward new clerks, we expect the resources listed will be useful to new and experienced clerks alike.

The Elections Division of the Secretary of State’s office is a small but dedicated team. We have many responsibilities, the most important of which is the administration of free, fair, and accessible elections. The work you do in your town is fundamental to the advancement of active and engaged democracy. Therefore, we see our most vital role being to support you. Please contact us any time you have a question or concern about elections in your city or town.

Below are a few tips and resources for you to review.

Tips:

- Email is our primary means of communication.
- We regularly send emails with information you will need for conducting elections, attending trainings, etc. We call these “Elections Bulletins.”
- To ensure you receive these important bulletins, add our email addresses below to your “safe senders” list, and check your junk mail regularly.
- We rely on contact information provided by you to keep our distribution list for the bulletins current, so please make sure to let us know if your email address changes as soon as possible!

Election Resources:

Election Law	Title 17 of the Vermont Statutes Online (the unofficial copy of the Vermont Statutes Annotated), is where you can find the statutes related to the registration of voters, checklist maintenance, and conduct of elections. If you’d like a hardcopy, you can request one from the Vermont Department of Libraries .
Elections Bulletins	Check your email regularly for bulletins from our office. Bulletins contain important information and forms that you will need to conduct elections. They may also contain surveys we use to

	collect important information you are required by statute to report to us.
Elections Website	Review the website thoroughly. There is a great deal of information there that could be helpful to you and your voters. You can also find useful information posted by other divisions on the Secretary of State's website that will help you throughout your term.
Elections Calendar	The calendar highlights critical dates and deadlines during the election cycle. Review this well in advance of any election. There is also a PDF version linked on that page for you to print.
Elections Procedures Guide	This guide is designed to be used as an overview of the election process and as a step-by-step reference for election officials conducting elections. It is supplemented during the election year by elections bulletins and emailed by the Elections Division to the town clerks as a reminder of the various requirements of election administration as deadlines approach. It is updated every 2 years. Make sure to check online for newer versions and print the guide prior to the election to have with you for early processing and on election day.
Vote Tabulator Guide	This guide is only for towns that use a tabulator to count ballots. The guide provides instructions and procedures for setting up, testing, operating, and troubleshooting your tabulator machine. You will want to print this and have it with you for early processing and on election day. The guide is currently being updated, so keep an eye on emails from us to find out when the new version is available.
Accessible Voting System Guide	Federal law requires each polling place to have an accessible voting system. Our office has purchased and provided the OmniBallot system to you. This is a tablet-based system that marks the voter's selections onto the same paper ballots used by all voters at the polls, increasing the privacy and independence of the vote for a voter with disabilities. We will send you a bulletin in July with instructions on how to maintain and operate the system.
Vermont Elections Management System	VEMS is the system where you will conduct many of your election-related tasks. Contact Lori Bjornlund immediately if you do not already have your own account login. The VEMS guide (available

	<p>in the ‘messages’ section of VEMS, in a message dated 6/18/24) gives step-by-step instructions on checklist maintenance, voter registration, election management, and more. Please review the VEMS guide thoroughly before using the system. This system also sends data to voters on their My Voter Page, including polling places, town office information, and clerk contact information. Be sure to go into the “Maintain Town” section to confirm your town’s information is accurate, and update as soon as there are any changes.</p>
Elections Trainings	<p>Our office provides election workshops for Town Clerks and BCA members in the summer during statewide election years. In addition, we offer more focused, hands-on trainings to any group that assembles at least 5 attendees. A great opportunity to request such a training is at a regular meeting of the clerks within a county.</p>
Election Supplies	<p>Our office can provide certain supplies you will need to conduct elections. Use the supply order form on our website to request supplies when needed.</p>

Other Resources:

Vermont Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Association	<p>VMCTA provides information and training for clerks across Vermont. Each member town has a designated mentor to assist new clerks in mastering responsibilities from tax appeals to board of abatement meetings.</p>
Vermont League of Cities and Towns	<p>For member towns, VLCT is a valuable resource for legal advice.</p>

<p>Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center</p>	<p>The EI-ISAC supports the rapidly changing cybersecurity needs of U.S. election offices. Membership to the EI-ISAC is available at no cost for all SLTT (State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial) governments supporting U.S. elections and related associations. By joining EI-ISAC, you gain access to no-cost resources that will enhance your cybersecurity posture, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR): quickly detects and stops the spread of malicious activity 2. Malicious Domain Blocking and Reporting (MDBR): prevents your information technology systems from connecting to potentially dangerous or malicious sites 3. Essential Guide to Election Security: a handbook written for election officials on cybersecurity topics 4. Best Practices and Webinars: learn about proven techniques to protect your critical election infrastructure <p>Register at https://learn.cisecurity.org/ei-isac-registration and enjoy the benefits of your free membership.</p>
<p>Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency</p>	<p>CISA works to secure both the physical security and cybersecurity of the systems and assets that support the nation’s elections. CISA works with EI-ISAC and offers other resources, including a Cybersecurity Toolkit, a free in-person physical security assessment through the Security Assessment at First Entry (SAFE) program, and more.</p>
<p>Clerks</p>	<p>We encourage you to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of seasoned clerks in the towns close to yours. The listserv, MuniNet, is a great way to field questions with other clerks as well.</p>

Contact Us:

You are welcome to call or email the Elections Division team with any questions you have, any time. We are here to help you!

- Elections Division group email: sos.elections@vermont.gov
- Elections Division main phone line: **802-828-2363**

Or, reach a team member directly:

Name	Position	Subject Matter	Email	Phone
Seán Sheehan	Director	General questions	sean.sheehan@vermont.gov	802-828-0175
Tammy Sink	Assistant Director	General questions	tammy.sink@vermont.gov	802-828-3721
Lori Bjornlund	Elections Administrator	VEMS issues, trainings, tabulators, general questions	lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov	802-828-2464
Mark Houle	Elections Administrator	Campaign finance, candidate filings, general questions	mark.houle@vermont.gov	802-828-2304
Dan Brown	Elections Administrator	Lobbying disclosures, voter registration, election supplies, tabulator memory card returns and CVR requests	dan.brown@vermont.gov	802-828-0771
Rosie Casciero	Administrative Services Coordinator	Updates to publicly posted clerk contact information, general admin support	rosie.casciero@vermont.gov	802-828-0418

Municipal Law:

For questions regarding open meeting laws, board governance, and other municipal law questions, contact **Jenny Prosser**, Director of Municipal Assistance.

- jenny.prosser@vermont.gov
- 802-828-1027

Thank you, and good luck from the Elections Division!

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – AUGUST PRIMARY WARNING

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 August Primary Warning

SENT: 6/20/2024

Greetings Clerks,

The August Primary Warning is now available to you. Physical copies of the Warning are being mailed to you today and you should receive them before Wednesday, June 26. Please let us know immediately if you do not receive them by the anticipated date.

Additionally, please find attached to this email a PDF copy of the Warning. You are welcome to print it - just remember to use 11"x17" paper.

Remember: You are required to post the Warning no later than Sunday, July 14, 2024.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us.

Thank you,
The Elections Team

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – UOCAVA DEADLINE JUNE 29 – FEDERAL REQUIREMENT

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 6/21/2024

Greetings Clerks,

REMINDER: Saturday, June 29 is the deadline to send absentee ballots for the August Primary to military or overseas voters (UOCAVA) who requested them. This is a federal requirement with which you *must* comply.

If you have questions about processing these requests, we are hosting office hours next Tuesday and Thursday (June 25 and 27) from 12 noon to 1pm. Log-in info below.

All requests made by military or overseas voters (UOCAVA) must be entered into VEMS on or before next Friday, June 28 to meet the federal deadline. *Absentee ballot requests from voters residing in Vermont (non-UOCAVA) may be delivered after this deadline.* Per [17 V.S.A. §2539\(c\)](#), your office is also now required to be open next Friday, June 28 so that you can process and record in VEMS any absentee requests from military or overseas voters that are pending or are received on Friday. We understand this may be difficult for clerks who do not typically have office hours on Friday. At a minimum, check the mail for any new requests and log in to VEMS throughout the day in case any requests are submitted from the My Voter Page. If you receive new requests, you should process them by the end of the day on Friday.

Be sure to enter all requests for both electronic delivery and delivery by mail. VEMS will automatically issue electronically delivered ballots overnight on Friday. For ballots requested by mail, you must enter the request *and* the issue date (the date you mail them) on or before Friday. Military and overseas voters may still request ballots after next Friday, but June 28 is your deadline to issue any ballots for which you have pending requests. Requests made after June 29 should be entered into VEMS and issued/processed the same day they are received.

To find your list of UOCAVA ballot requests:

- Reports > Detailed Absentee Voter List
- Election Category: Statewide, 08/13/2024 – August Primary
- Options (below Absentee Ballot Request date ranges): Only UOCAVA
- Report type: PDF or Excel

Processing electronic ballot requests

- Select “Voter Type”
- Select “Electronic” from the delivery method dropdown menu
- Enter the voter email address
- Click “Submit” to record the request in VEMS
- Process ballots returned by mail – they cannot be returned electronically.
- After June 28, enter any ballot requests into VEMS and issue the ballot on the same day you receive the request.

Processing mailed ballot requests

Contact us immediately if you have not received your printed ballots by Thursday, June 27.

- Record the request and issue date in VEMS
 - Issue date is the date you mail the ballots
- Mail the ballots no later than Friday, June 28
 - Include all three ballot types, the unvoted ballot envelope, and return envelope
 - Use your August Primary envelopes. If you do not have these yet, you may use any Par Avion postage prepaid envelopes you have on hand. Par Avion envelopes may only be used for UOCAVA mailings. If you do not have any, check if a neighboring town has any to spare. You can also use older August Primary envelopes you may have.

If you have not received your printed ballots by June 27, you can print them from the PDF available via your VEMS dashboard. To access it, go to:

- Dashboard > My tasks > August Primary election ballot is ready.
- From the Ballot Review List, select the Online Ballots and print each party’s ballot.

Pre-UOCAVA Deadline Office Hours

New clerks, and veteran clerks who would like a refresher, are invited to join these unstructured webinars to ask Lori and Sean any questions about meeting the Saturday 6/29 UOCAVA deadline.

Option 1: [Click here at 12 noon on Tuesday June 25 to join the Teams meeting](#)

(Meeting ID: 229 681 301 229, Passcode: cdX7mX)

Or call [+1 802-828-7667](tel:+18028287667), [75757079#](tel:+18028287667) (Phone conference ID: 757 570 79#)

Option 2: [Click here at 12 noon on Thursday June 27 to join the Teams meeting](#)

(Meeting ID: 229 681 301 229, Passcode: cdX7mX)

Or call [+1 802-828-7667](tel:+18028287667), [75757079#](tel:+18028287667) (Phone conference ID: 757 570 79#)

Please contact us with any questions you may have about this process, and thank you!

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – POSTERS TO MEET NEW STATE REQUIREMENT FOR POLLING PLACES, INCLUDING TOWN CLERK OFFICES

ATTACHMENT(S): Firearm Policy, Posters for town clerks' offices and school 1 – 8, S209 Sample FPF and Newsletter Posts, S209 FAQ-3.27.24

SENT: 6/27/2024

Hi Clerks,

I am writing today with resources related to a new state law, S.209, requiring notice of a prohibition of firearms in polling places. This requirement applies to town clerk offices during early voting, so we hope these resources help.

But first off, thank you to everyone who has been processing absentee requests ahead of the UOCAVA deadline. We had good office hour sessions on Tuesday and today. If you have any issues processing your requests, please let us know as soon as possible so we can work to resolve them this afternoon or tomorrow.

Back on [S. 209](#), the main focus of the bill is on unserialized "ghost" guns, but it also contains a provision that prohibits the possession of firearms at polling places during elections. The law applies to town clerk offices during early voting as well as any place a municipality has designated to the Secretary of State as a polling place. Part of that provision calls for "notice... [to] be posted conspicuously at each public entrance to each polling place."

We want to support you in meeting the law's requirement and, more importantly, we want to get out the word that this is a State Law, not any individual clerk's proclivity. By spreading the word before people come to your office, we hope to minimize the number of surprises at the polls.

There are a lot of attachments to this email, specifically:

1. A policy one-pager
2. Draft FAQ – we anticipate this will expand as more questions come in, so we've added a date at the bottom and will update as needed.
3. Sample FPF/Newsletter post – please feel free to share any adaptations or original communications you develop and we'd be happy to share those with others as we collectively work to get the word out.
4. Eight versions of the poster (differences explained in attached FAQ)

Thank you for all that you do. We hope the attached helps, and we look forward to hearing from you in the weeks ahead if you get questions or if there are other things we can do to support you.

SUBJECT: OPEN MEETING LAW, OUTREACH RESOURCES, CISA PHYSICAL SECURITY ASSESSMENT

ATTACHMENT(S): Joint_VLCT_VSBA_SOS_Act133_S.55, OML_RecordkeepingChart_2024, My Voter Page

SENT: 7/1/2024

Hello Clerks,

First off, thank you for your great work issuing absentee ballots to your military and overseas voters ahead of the UOCAVA deadline. We really appreciate it and know your UOCAVA voters do too. Also...

Happy July! With the UOCAVA deadline in the rearview mirror, your August ballots in hand, and Democracy Live scheduling times to set up your accessible voting system, the statewide primary is surely moving to the forefront of all of our minds. I want to call attention to a few resources in particular:

1. **Open Meeting Law** – With the start of the state fiscal year comes new laws, including updates to Open Meeting Law. The attached “Joint Guidance on 2024 Updates to Open Meeting Law (ACT 133) and Frequently Asked Questions” and one-pager on recordkeeping are important resources for all of us.
2. **Outreach resources** – The Secretary of State’s outreach interns are going around the state participating in voter registration efforts and promoting My Voter Page. Some clerks have asked us about handouts, so I’m attaching two PDFs used by our outreach team in the hope they will be useful to you as well.
3. **Free CISA security assessments** – I wanted to call your attention to a free assessment that we included in the June 18th Election Bulletin’s list of resources. If you have questions or concerns about the physical security of your office and/or polling location, we encourage you to take advantage of this assessment offered by our friends at CISA, Gabe Palazzi and Will Senning (who of course many of you know from his previous hat - my current role!). Please take a moment to read the following letter from Will and the attached CISA Sheet.

In appreciation,

Seán

Clerks,

As we get closer to the General Election, and with the continuing concerns we know you all share about ensuring the physical security of your offices and polling places, we’d like to remind you of the availability of a physical security assessment for your facilities from our federal partners at CISA. Known as a Security

Assessment at First Entry – or SAFE assessment, the service is designed to rapidly evaluate a facility’s current security posture and identify options for improvement.

CISA has a Protective Security Advisor (PSA) dedicated to our state. Upon request, this PSA can visit your office and/or polling location to provide a structured review of that facility’s existing security measures and deliver feedback on observed vulnerabilities and options for improving security. The SAFE assessment is free, quick, and designed for ease of use. The PSA will conduct a brief walk- through of your site and then discuss with you the existing security features and concerns. The assessment will take no longer than 2 hours. After completing the SAFE visit, the assessor delivers a report to the requesting stakeholder containing commendable actions already in place, vulnerabilities and options for consideration to improve those, and points of contact and various resources to assist in any effort you might undertake to make improvements.

Please review the attached Fact Sheet for more information and If you are interested in scheduling a SAFE assessment with our partners at CISA, please contact our office and we will help coordinate with their team.”

Let me know if you need anything else, and I hope you all are doing well.

Regards,
Will

William Senning
Election Security Advisor, Region 1 (New England)
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
William.senning@cisa.dhs.gov : (202) 769 – 6716

SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES PETITION SIGNATURES

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 7/9/224

Happy Tuesday Town Clerks:

I am receiving many calls and emails about Independent Presidential Candidates contacting town clerks about petition signatures. Signatures were not required during the last presidential cycle, they were waived at that time due to COVID, but they ARE required for this election cycle, so some confusion exists.

- **Under 17 V.S.A. § 2402**, town clerks are the certifying officials for petition signatures on statements of nomination for **Independent Presidential Candidates**.
- Independent Candidates for President may submit petition signatures to town clerks by (1) sending a legible copy to the clerk, (2) faxing a legible copy to the clerk, or (3) delivering a legible copy or original to a town clerk.
- You will not find a statute or bill explaining this, because it was a Supreme Court ruling. In *Anderson v. State*, 2013 VT 73, 194 Vt. 437, 82 A.3d 577 (2013), the Vermont Supreme Court instructed town clerks to accept legible photocopies or facsimiles for the purpose of certification of petitions of Independent Presidential Candidates only.
- This is the one exception to wet-ink original petition signatures. The rationale provided was that an Independent Candidate for President would need to (1) travel to many clerks to get certification, (2) it would be difficult to sort out signatures by town, and (3) the burden outweighed the benefit.

The Vermont Supreme Court makes the difference clear:

"The restriction at issue applies only to independent (Presidential) candidates and therefore imposes a burden on independent (Presidential) candidates that does not apply to major party candidates," Anderson v. State, 2013 VT 73, ¶ 17, 194 Vt. 437, 446, 82 A.3d 577, 584 (2013)

- If you are presented with an original petition signature form that has been certified on the bottom by another town clerk, please certify the original petition signature form on the back.

Process:

1. An Independent Candidate for President or their representative will contact you to certify their signature petitions.
2. When you receive legible copies or facsimiles of the petition sheets you have 72 hours to certify those persons who are qualified eligible registered voters in your town.
3. Check the name of each person who has listed your town as their residence. If the name is on your checklist, you can check the box that is next to the name. If it is not, write "no" in that column.
4. You will then certify each page on the bottom as seen below with the number of qualified eligible registered voters on the page from your town; identify your town, your signature, name, title, and date.
If another clerk has filled out the bottom, use this format to certify the back of the same page.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY		
I hereby certify _____ names on this petition are registered voters of _____		
	(Town or City)	
_____ (Official's Signature)	_____ (Please print name & title)	_____ (Date)

20 blank lines/page

5. You will return the certified petition to the candidate by email, fax, or in person.
6. They will present original wet ink petitions to this office along with copies of certifications from town clerks (and all other paperwork)

Let us know if you have any questions.

**SUBJECT: ELECTIONS TRAINING TO DOS – TABULATOR TESTING & USE GUIDANCE,
EARLY BALLOT PROCESSING**

ATTACHMENT(S): 2022 Vermont Vote Tabulator Guide, Sample Warning – Early Processing,
VT ImageCast Training – Early Processing

VT ImageCast Training – Election Day Processing ONLY

SENT: 7/17/2024

Greetings Clerks,

In preparation for the upcoming August Primary Election, we'd like to share some guidance on your use of the tabulator machines. This email contains information on memory cards, tabulator testing and use, and early processing of ballots. Please review this email carefully.

Attachments: [2022 Vote Tabulator Guide](#), VT ImageCast Training – Early Processing, VT ImageCast Training – Election Day Processing, and Sample Warning of Early Processing.

Please note in your Tabulator Guide the [Chain of Custody Procedures](#) (p. 1), [Early Processing Procedures](#) (p. 13), [Election Day Chain of Custody Log Sheet](#) (p. 37), and [Early Processing Chain of Custody Log Sheet](#) (p. 39).

1. **Memory Cards** – LHS mailed tabulator memory cards to you at the beginning of July. If you have not yet received them, contact LHS immediately at (888) 547-8683.
2. **Tabulators**
 - **We strongly recommend using a tabulator to count your ballots. If your BCA has not approved the use of a tabulator, it may be beneficial to discuss this with them.**
 - **Testing** – You *must* complete your Logic & Accuracy (L&A) testing no later than 10 days before the election ([17 V.S.A. § 2493\(b\)](#)). Tabulator testing is meant to be open to the public. You are not explicitly required to post a warning for the testing, but we recommend that you do notify the public if your testing will not occur during your regular business hours. A blank and fillable warning is attached for your use.
 - o Review the attached [Tabulator Guide](#). The guide includes step-by-step instructions for L&A testing, early processing, and election day processing. Also attached are PowerPoint presentations from a previous tabulator training with LHS that include helpful visuals – be sure to review *either* the Early Processing or Election Day Only presentation, depending on how your town processes ballots.

- **You must seal the two (2) memory card access doors on the tabulator.** You are not required to seal the auxiliary and main ballot compartment access doors during testing. These should be locked.
- Contact dan.brown@vermont.gov if you need to order more seals. We will fulfill your orders on a rolling basis.
- **Results Reporting** – Results produced on the tabulator tape are organized by party (Dem, Prog, Rep).
- **Ballot Marking** – Ballots should be marked in pen *only*. The tabulators do not accurately process ballots marked in pencil. Please provide only pens to voters during the early voting period and on election day – LHS recommends Paper Mate Flair pens, as they do not bleed through to the other side nor leave residue on the scanner. Towns are responsible for purchasing their own pens. Our office is not able to provide them at this time for the August Primary. Ballots marked in pencil that cannot be read by the machine may be transferred to a new ballot or marked over using the recommend pens by two election officials – or they may be set aside for hand counting.
- **Write-in Votes** – Please encourage voters to write only within the write-in space for a given office or to use uppercase lettering. When there are two or more write-in spaces for an office, and the voter makes markings in one space that run into the other space (e.g., the tail of a lowercase ‘g’ or ‘y’), the tabulator may pick up those markings and register them as:
 - **Ambiguous marks** – The tabulator will reject the ballot, which cannot be overridden. These ballots, if discovered in early processing, may be transferred with the write-in name contained to just the single box or may be hand-counted. If discovered at the polling place with the voter present and trying to cast the ballot, your poll workers can ask the voter to complete a replacement ballot and stay within the lines for any write-in vote, or the voter can place the ballot in the auxiliary compartment for hand counting.
 - **An overvote** – The tabulator may also register the markings as an additional write-in vote, creating an overvote. The ballot will be rejected with the “overvoted” office identified and the opportunity to review it. To clarify – there is not an actual overvote and the machine is simply registering the hanging marking a from the write-in box above. During early processing, the ballot should be transferred with the write-in contained to the appropriate box or set aside for hand counting. At the polls, explain to the voter that the hanging marks cause the tabulator to count the mark as an

overvote and that they can either complete a replacement ballot or place the ballot in the auxiliary compartment for hand counting.

- 3. Early Processing of Ballots** – Instructions for operating a tabulator when processing ballots early can be found beginning on page 13 of your [Tabulator Guide](#). They are simple instructions but include a few important notes, so please review them. If you run into any issues with your tabulator or have questions regarding the process with the machine, please call LHS at (888) 547-8683. Also included in the guide are the Tabulator and Memory Card Chain of Custody Procedures (page 1), a Chain of Custody Log Sheet for Election Day processing (Appendix A, page 37) and a Chain of Custody Log Sheet for early processing (Appendix B, page 39). Even if you choose not to run the ballots through the tabulator early, you may still follow the process as far as removing the voted ballot from the certificate envelope and depositing the voted ballots in a secure ballot box for processing on Election Day or whenever you choose to begin running them through the tabulator.

As ever, please contact us with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – ACCESSIBLE VOTING SYSTEM – FEDERAL REQUIREMENT

ATTACHMENT(S): Accessible Voting System Poster for Polls

SENT: 7/22/2024

Greetings Clerks,

We are writing to remind you **that you are required to have the Accessible Voting System Tablet set up and available for use for the August Primary on August 13, 2024. This is a federal requirement for all statewide elections.** Any voter may use this system for voting. They do not need to declare that they have a disability to use the system. We will be sending more reminders about this as we approach election day – please be sure to read them carefully.

If you would like assistance setting up your Accessible Voting System, contact our vendor, Democracy Live, to request a visit and they will set up the machine for you. They have asked that all requests for help be submitted by July 17, so please contact them right away at vermont.support@democracylive.com if you have not done so already.

If you have not requested assistance in setting up your Accessible Voting System, Democracy Live will automatically send the USB containing the August Primary election data to you. You will also receive an email with a link to the file and instructions.

In the next couple of weeks, we will send a follow-up email with updated Poll Worker and Admin instructions. The instructions will contain the login credentials to use once you have downloaded the data onto the tablet.

Reminders & Recommendations

- **System Testing** – Test the system with those who will be attending the system as many times as needed until you are all familiar with using it.
- **Paper** – Load into the printer the ballot paper stock that you received in the shipment of your ballots.
- **Posters** – Please hang the laminated posters promoting the system somewhere prominent in your polling place(s). These posters were sent to each town in 2018. If you cannot find your poster(s), you are welcome to print the attached PDF (8"x14" paper recommended).
- **No unvoted ballots printed** – When the system prints the ballot, it will only print the party ballot that the voter selected to vote. We specifically designed the system to

only print the party ballot that the voter chose to vote. They do not need to have the unvoted ballots as well.

Again, to setup a visit, or for support on how to set up or use the system, please email Democracy Live at vermont.support@democracylive.com.

Thank you for all that you do, and please reach out with any questions or technical difficulties.

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – DUE 8/23: GENERAL ELECTION JUSTICE OF THE PEACE & LOCAL PUBLIC QUESTION ENTRY

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 Ballot Question Data Entry Instructions, 2024 Justice of the Peace Entry

SENT: 7/23/2024

Greetings Clerks,

ALL towns have the option for their Justice of the Peace (JP) candidates and local articles being voted on November 5 to appear on the back of the General Election ballot. If your town would like this to happen, ***you must notify the Elections Division by August 9, 2024.*** We will then give you permission to enter the JP candidates and, if needed, the article(s) into VEMS.

JPs nominated by party caucus or committee are limited to the number that can be elected in that town. For instance, if you elect only 5 JPs, each party can nominate up to that number of candidates.

Attachments

- 2024 Ballot Question Data Entry Instructions
- 2024 Justice of the Peace Entry Instructions

Timeline

- **Friday, August 16, 2024:** Deadline for Independent JP candidates to file consent forms **and** for Major and Minor parties to submit JP nominations to Town Clerks. Petitions must contain 30 signatures, or 1% of the checklist, whichever is less.
- **Friday, August 23, 2024:** Deadline for Town Clerks to enter JP candidate data and local public questions into VEMS for inclusion on the General Election ballot.

IMPORTANT!

- The JP filing deadline falls on **Bennington Battle Day** this year. Because the deadline falls on a State holiday, it will extend the filing deadline to the next business day you are open. Please accept any filings that come in on that day. If you are closed on August 16, we recommend that you post notice to the candidates and parties that your office is closed on the filing deadline, but that petitions and nominations will be accepted the following business day. Because this will mean less time for you to review those petitions and nominations before the deadline to enter them into VEMS, we also suggest that you encourage candidates and town parties to file petitions with you before the 16th, if possible.

Reminders

- You are **NOT** required to have your JPs and local public questions on the back of the General Election ballot. If you prefer to create a separate ballot for your local

election that includes your JPs and local public questions and mail that to your voters separately, as needed, you may do so.

- If you **DO** want to include your local public questions on the back of the General Election ballot, your legislative body **MUST** approve mailing a ballot to all “Active - Not Challenged” voters, as our office conducts the universal ballot mailing for general elections.
- If you choose to have the JPs and local public questions on the back of the General Election ballot, please email Lori (lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov) immediately and she will give you permissions in VEMS to enter the information. **DO NOT CREATE AN ELECTION IN VEMS.**
- Once you have notified Lori of your intention to include your JPs and local public questions on the General Election ballot, you may begin data entry. **Data entry MUST be completed by August 23.**
- Including JPs and local public questions on the back of the ballot ensure they will also be available on the Accessible Voting System and for voters who have requested an electronic absentee ballot.
- If you include JP candidates and local public questions on the back of the General Election, you will only need to have one entrance checklist. If you conduct a separate election for your JPs and articles, you will need to manage two checklists. For ease of processing, we encourage you to include your JP candidates and articles on the General Election ballot.

Tips

- Make sure to read the attached guides carefully.
- We strongly encourage you to enter candidate data and question language **early** to have enough time to review it for accuracy.
- Confirm the number to “Vote For” is accurate.
- Carefully proofread all data and language you enter into VEMS for candidates and questions to ensure it is printed correctly.

Again, the deadline to enter Justice of the Peace candidate data and local public question articles into VEMS is Friday, August 23, 2024.

Please let us know if you have any questions or technical difficulties, and thank you for all that you do!

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – REMINDER: VERIFY POLLING PLACE(S)

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 7/25/2024

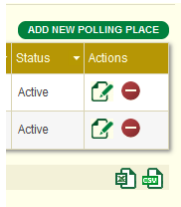
Hello Clerks,

This is a reminder to verify your polling place information in VEMS. If you have changed, added, or discontinued use of a polling place since your last election, it is important to update this information. The election and polling place information you enter in VEMS is displayed for voters on My Voter Page.

NOTE: We are now within 30 days of the Primary. So, if your polling place(s) has changed due to flood damage or other **emergency** circumstances, you must notify us within 24 hours of the decision to change. We will then notify the major party chairs and update our records. Please let us know if you need help getting the word out, as well ([17 V.S.A. § 2502](#)).

Quick process overview:

- From your dashboard, navigate to Maintain Town Data > Maintain Polling Place
- On the Maintain Polling Place screen, you can edit, delete, or add a new polling place for your town



- Be sure to fill out all required and relevant fields (and remember to mark whether the polling place is active!!)
- Click "Update" if updating your polling place information, or "Submit" if entering new polling place information

As ever, please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – OUTREACH MATERIALS FOR VOTERS AND POTENTIAL POLL WORKERS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 8/1/2024

Hello Clerks!

As we flip the calendar to August, we're continuing to think of all of our communities impacted by July floods. We're sorry for anyone who was unable to join this week's training and we're looking ahead to how we can support each other through a smooth statewide primary the week after next. This Tuesday's training for new clerks was a tremendous example of learning from each other. A huge thank you to Tracy Borst and Sara Haskins for helping with the discussions, and to all of the clerks who attended, asked questions, and shared your perspective on best practices.

We want to create more space to talk with all of you about anything in the Election Procedures Guide and bulletins that you'd like clarification. More on online office hours below.

But first, did you know that August 1st is National Poll Worker Recruitment Day? Knowing many of you need more poll workers, Secretary of State Copeland Hanzas and I promoted recruitment efforts to reporters this morning. If you're looking for resources to use in your community, please check out the Election Assistance Commission's [Poll Worker Resources for Voters](#).

I also wanted to share:

1. Voter education materials
2. Online office hours for clerks and BCA
1. **Voter education materials**

As part of a [national #TrustedInfo2024 initiative](#), the Vermont Secretary of State's office has created several resources with the aim of promoting voter education and serving as a bedrock source of trustworthy information. [Here's a short video announcing this effort](#), which is also being shared on our social media pages. In addition, check out:

- [An 8-minute video that details election security practices in Vermont](#). This video features Secretary of State Copeland Hanzas and several of you - town and city clerks from around the state - to outline the many ways in which our elections are secure. By showcasing the folks doing this important work, we hope to help Vermonters understand and appreciate the election process and all the safeguards. Kudos to those of you in the video!

- [How to Register and Vote in Vermont video](#) - a partnership between the Secretary of State and Vermont Language Justice Project translated this video into 14 different languages, available on YouTube. The English version, with ASL, can be found [here](#).
- A [Social Media Toolkit](#) with everything the public may need to know about the upcoming elections. You are invited to use these posts on your own social media accounts to spread #trustedinfo2024. Please do not edit this content.
- [Facts Matter – Six Truths about Vermont Elections](#) - To counter some of the more prevalent mis and dis-information “election myths” out there, we've updated our "Myths v Facts" webpage. It covers a range of election topics, from voter registration to vote counting and results certification.

2. **Online office hours webinar for clerks and BCA**

All clerks and BCA are invited to join the Secretary of State Office's Election Division next Thursday at noon to talk through anything you've found confusing in the Election Procedures Guide or in our bulletins. Please feel free to share the login and call in information below with your BCA.

What: Online office hours webinar for clerks and BCA

When: Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 12 noon

Where: [Click here 8/8 at 12 noon to join the Teams meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 212 634 721 412; Passcode: jUKC3V

Or dial in by phone to: [+1 802-828-7667,,308094417#](#)

Thank you for all you do!

SUBJECT: OMNIBALLOT LOGIN INFO, GUIDES, ZOOMS, ETC.

ATTACHMENT(S): Pollworker Guide & Login info 2024 VT State Primary, Election Data USB

SENT: 8/4/2024

FROM: Juliet Harvey-Bolia, Democracy Live

Good morning, VT Town Clerks:

In response to your request for an all-inclusive guide, I've included a quickstart USB guide with the POLLWORKER GUIDE which has login information such as passwords. OmniBallot passwords:

Username: vermont Password and Pollworker PIN: 081324

NEXT STEPS: Most of you have had a visit by a tech. If so, the VT Primary election file for Aug 13 has been loaded on your Omniballot(s). If this is the case, you'll only need to check that L & A testing has been completed under ELECTION ADMINISTRATION, and then proceed to OPEN ELECTION under the same tab in addition to setting up the printer on election day. If you haven't been visited by a tech, you'll need to load your election data USB that arrived in the mail and follow the enclosed instructions, if you haven't already done so. You should've received your USB by now. If not, please contact me ASAP and I'll send you a download link.

Upcoming ZOOM MEETINGS: Please join me this Tuesday and Friday at 10 AM for Zoom meetings for help on any issue or just to listen in! Topics will include loading the election file, general set-up of equipment, printer issues, trouble-shooting, or any question you have.

Tuesday Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85716954163?pwd=81CN5XF7ez6QtmptOBgwhnkXRvMqO6.1>

***Friday Zoom:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81629451962?pwd=pNuw9VS6LHBgzJluj2V0ckHq4Kem0m.1>

*The previously-scheduled Thursday Zoom has been canceled. I will still be available via phone/email anytime.

I'm also attaching the election file import guide separately. This is a repeat of information that was previously sent.

Please reply to this email or call my cell number at 603-941-4932 if you have a question or need assistance.

Thanks very much,

Juliet

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – AUGUST 13, 2024 PRIMARY ELECTION REMINDERS

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 8/5/2024

Greetings Clerks,

We hope you all are doing well. We are writing today with a few reminders and notes regarding the upcoming Primary election. The Primary will take place one week from tomorrow, on Tuesday, August 13th. This bulletin covers ENR/ORV entry, canvassing, tally/summary sheets, tabulators, Election Procedures, absentee ballot processing, Independent candidate petitions, and JP and public question entry.

1. **Election Night Reporting and Official Return of Votes entry** - Make sure to keep an eye on your email for bulletins from us. Over the next few days, we will send detailed, step-by-step instructions for a) Election Night Results Entry, b) Official Return of Votes Entry, and c) Canvassing (for the Representative District Clerks).
 - **Election Night Results Reporting (ENR)** – Please remember that statute requires you to enter your results into VEMS **on election night**. For Election Night Reporting, you are only required to report the vote totals for named candidates (you are not required to report write-in votes, blanks, or overvotes).
 - **Official Return of Votes (ORV)** – You are required to enter your Official Return of Votes into VEMS **no later than 48 hours after the election**, which means by the end of the day on the Thursday following the election (8/15). Most clerks enter their ORV on the Wednesday after the election. We will be in our office both days to assist with this process.
 - **Canvassing** – We will send detailed instructions for canvassing later this week to all Representative/Senate District and County Clerks. For now, please remember that the canvassing meeting for single-town districts is the day after the Primary (**August 14**) at 10 a.m., and the canvassing meeting for multi-town districts is the third day following the Primary (**August 16**) at 10 a.m. Even though the meeting falls on Bennington Battle Day this year, canvassing **must** still be completed at that time. The canvassing committee consists of the Representative District Clerk and one other election official from the district.
2. **Tally Sheets, Summary Sheets, and Blank ORVs** – You can download these reports from VEMS now to use in the election, if needed. To access them, navigate to Reports > Elections and you will see them in the list of available reports. Please

remember to choose both the Representative District and Senate District when generating these reports. If you do not, the reports will be missing candidates. Please let us know right away if you notice any errors.

3. **Tabulators** – If you are using a tabulator, please remember that the law requires you to perform the Logic and Accuracy testing on your tabulator no later than 10 days before the election. That deadline was Saturday, August 3. If you missed this deadline, please perform the testing ASAP. There are detailed instructions [beginning on page 7](#) of your Tabulator Guide. Also, make sure to print and have your [Tabulator Guide](#) with you on election day. There is a [Troubleshooting Guide](#) within it that may come in handy.
4. **Election Procedures** – Make sure to review the [Election Procedures Guide](#) thoroughly before the election and print it to have with you at the polls if you don't already have a printed copy. It has a lot of useful information and resources, like a checklist of items you should bring to the polls, a list of what goes in the ballot bag at the end of the night, etc. Many of the Appendices are documents you will want to make copies of to have on hand at the polls as well, such as the Affirmation of Residence that voters who have not responded to a challenge letter must sign (Appen. D) and the Defective and Replaced ballot envelopes (Appen. H and I).
5. **Absentee Ballot Processing** – Please make sure you have mailed all absentee ballots to any voters who have requested them by mail. As of this morning, the system shows about **430** voters who have requested ballots be mailed to them for which a ballot does not appear to have been issued. We understand many – likely the majority -- of these have, in fact, been mailed, but an issue date has not been entered in the system. Please ensure that all ballots requested by mail have been sent to the voter **and that the issue date (date they were mailed) has been entered into VEMS**. Please check the Absentee Ballot Activity link on your dashboard daily until the election for any new MVP requests that come through to your dashboard.

Please remember that, under [the statute](#) regarding defective ballot notification, you are required to open the mailing envelope, determine whether a voter's ballot has been properly returned, and check that voter off the checklist as having returned a ballot, within three days of receiving the ballot in the mail. This means that all ballots returned more than three days ago to your office should be marked as returned or defective in VEMS. For any that are deemed defective, the voter should be notified within 24 hours. (You are not required to *mail* a notice to the voter during the 5 days preceding the election but should make a reasonable effort to reach them using other contact info available, if possible). Please do your best to keep up with this process.

6. **Independent Candidate Petitions** – If you receive any petitions from Independent candidates (other than Justices of the Peace), please direct the person attempting to file them with you to instead file them at the Secretary of State’s office. They are due in our office by Thursday, **August 8**. Remember: the deadline for Independent **Presidential** candidates passed on August 1. We sent a bulletin on July 9 with instructions for that process.
7. **JP and Public Question Entry for the General Election** – If you would like your Justice of the Peace candidates/public questions printed on the back of the General Election ballot, contact Lori (lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov) if you have not already, and she will provide you access in VEMS to enter them. The deadline to receive petitions from Independent JP candidates and nominations from your town party committees is the Friday after the election (**August 16**). Remember: because the filing deadline falls on a legal holiday this year, it extends the deadline to the following business day. You should have all of your JP candidates by Monday, **August 19**. We sent a bulletin on July 23 with instructions for entering your JP candidates and public questions into VEMS. Please make sure to do so by **August 23**.

Again, please keep an eye on your email for bulletins from our office over the coming week, particularly your instructions for performing results entry in VEMS. Otherwise, please contact us with questions as you prepare for the election. We thank you for all you do to administer a successful election next week and in November!

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – Election Results Entry Instructions due Aug 13 (ENR) & Aug 15 (ORV)

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 August Primary Election ENR_ORV Entry Instructions

SENT: 8/7/2024

Greetings Clerks,

The following bulletin and attached instructions contain the information needed to report your results on Election Night and to complete your Official Return of Votes within 48 hours of the August 13 Primary Election. Results from your town and across the state are available at electionresults.vermont.gov. **Please print the attached instructions** and have them available when completing the Election Night Results and the Official Return of Votes.

Timeline

- **August 13, 2024, after 7 p.m.** – Primary Election Unofficial Election Night Results reported via VEMS
- **August 15, 2024, by 7p.m.** – Official Return of Votes (ORV) reported via VEMS within 48 hours of closing the polls

Attachments(s): 2024 August Primary Election ENR_ORV Entry Instructions.pdf

Notes

- **Tally & Summary Sheets:** To access blank sheets, navigate in VEMS to Reports > Elections > Summary/Tally Sheets. Select Statewide and “08/13/2024—Primary Election”.
- **Tabulator towns:** Designate one person to enter the Unofficial Results from the machine tape as soon as the tape is printed.
- **Hand-count towns:** Enter your Unofficial Results into VEMS as soon as you can following the count.

ELECTION NIGHT RESULTS REPORTING

Per [17 V.S.A. § 2588](#), you are required to report the results of the August Primary to our office on Election Night, August 13. Unless you are unable to do so, you are required to submit the results using VEMS.

To report your *unofficial* results:

- Log into VEMS
- Navigate to Election Results > Election Night Results
- Enter the unofficial results using the detailed instructions attached to this email
 - On Election Night, you are only required to report the totals for the candidates named on the ballot. You can report your total write-in votes, but

you are not required to enter the write-in names and their vote totals in your ENR

*If you are unable to report the results online in VEMS on election night, you **must** submit them to us that night by telephone (802-828-2464) or email (sos.electionsddivision@vermont.gov). We will then enter the data into the system.*

We will be in the office for several hours after the polls close on Election Day to provide support.

OFFICIAL RETURN OF VOTES REPORTING

By law, you are required to submit your August Primary Official Return of Votes (ORV) to our office within 48 hours of the closing of the election – Thursday, August 15 before 7 p.m. Following the election, this is your next most important responsibility. You are *not* required to report the results of your local election(s) to our office.

You will submit the ORV for the August Primary using VEMS – you do not need to send us, or anyone else, a paper copy of your ORV. Your ORV will be delivered through VEMS to the Representative District Clerk, the Senate/County clerk, and to our office. Once you submit your ORV in VEMS and the system confirms it has been submitted, you will have fulfilled your results reporting responsibilities. Detailed instructions for completing the ORV entry in VEMS are attached to this email.

Notes

- Navigate from your dashboard to Election Results > Official Return of Votes Entry, then follow the instructions attached to this email.
- **The ORV should be completed in VEMS by you in the presence of at least one other election official. Both of you MUST electronically “sign” the form by checking the box that attests to the truthfulness of the information submitted.**

Our staff will be in the office all day on Wednesday and Thursday to assist you with this process. **Please contact us on Wednesday (the day after the election) if you are having any difficulty completing your ORV.**

Elections Contact Info

- Seán Sheehan – sean.sheehan@vermont.gov – 802-828-0175
- Tammy Sink – tammy.sink@vermont.gov – 802-828-3721
- Lori Bjornlund – lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov – 802-828-2464
- Mark Houle – mark.houle@vermont.gov – 802-828-2304
- Dan Brown – dan.brown@vermont.gov – 802-828-0771
- Rosie Casciero – rosie.casciero@vermont.gov – 802-828-0418

Thank you, best of luck, and feel free to contact us with questions.

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN – Clerk & BCA Webinar 12pm today, 2024 Election Cycle Bulletins, Polling Places

ATTACHMENT(S): ELECTIONS BULLETINS 2024 Elections Cycle

SENT: 8/8/2024

Greetings Clerks,

Thank you for bearing with us as we send multiple bulletins this week. It's a busy time before the Primary and a lot of information must be shared. We're writing this morning about today's online office hours for clerks and BCA members, a bulletins compendium, and emergency changes to polling places.

Online Office Hours

All clerks and BCA are invited to join the Secretary of State Office's Election Division TODAY at noon to talk through anything you've found confusing in the Election Procedures Guide or in our bulletins. Please feel free to share the login and call in information below with your BCA.

What: Online office hours webinar for clerks and BCA

When: Thursday, August 8, 2024 at 12 noon

Where: [Click here 8/8 at 12 noon to join the Teams meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 212 634 721 412; Passcode: jUKC3V

Or dial in by phone to: [+1 802-828-7667](tel:+18028287667),,308094417#

2024 Election Cycle Bulletins Compendium

As we work toward clarifying and streamlining our bulletins and how we share them with you, we've compiled a document housing all bulletins sent for the 2024 Election Cycle (November 2023 to the present). This will serve as a useful reference tool for both new and experienced clerks. We will continue to add to this document and will share the updated version with you at the end of each month. Please let us know if you have any questions about the document, and we welcome any suggestions or requests for how we can continue to support you.

Emergency Changes to Polling Places

We are aware that some towns may have to change their Primary polling place(s) as severe weather continues to affect our region. If you must make an emergency change to your polling place(s) between now and the Primary, **you are required by statute (17 V.S.A. § 2502) to inform us of that change within 24 hours of the decision to change.** We will

then notify the major party chairs and update our records. Please let us know if you need help getting the word out, as well.

If changing polling place(s) due to emergency circumstances, your town should:

1. Re-warn the election as you would for a local election
 - a. Publish warning in a newspaper of general circulation at least 5 days prior to the election
 - b. Publish warning on your town website (if the town actively updates its website on a regular basis)
2. Post the new warning in at least two public places

See [17 V.S.A. § 2502](#), [§ 2521](#), and [§ 2641](#).

The Secretary of State's office, Elections Division will:

1. Notify major party chairs of the change to your polling place
2. Update its listing of polling places housed on its website
3. Post specific notice on its website of the change to your polling place

See [17 V.S.A. § 2502](#).

As ever, thank you for all that you do, and please be on the look out for at least two more bulletins from us today and tomorrow.

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - Canvassing Committee Instructions for August 13

Primary [Representative District]

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024_AugPrimary_Rep_District_Clerk_Canvassing_VEEMS_Manual

SENT: 8/8/2024

Greetings Representative District Clerks,

We are writing to provide an outline of the canvassing committee process for new clerks and a quick reminder for experienced clerks. After the Primary election, you are required to hold a canvassing committee meeting to tally the votes for state representatives to the General Assembly. The committee is composed of the Representative District Clerk and one additional election official from the district ([17 V.S.A. §2592\(d\)](#)). Please read this email and the attached canvassing instructions carefully.

Timeline

- **Tuesday, August 13, 2024** – Primary Election
- **Wednesday, August 14, 2024 at 10 a.m.** - Canvassing Committee meeting for *single-town districts*
- **Friday, August 16, 2024 at 10 a.m.** – Canvassing Committee meeting for *multi-town districts*

Attachment(s): 2024_AugPrimary_Rep_District_Clerk_Canvassing_VEEMS_Manual

IMPORTANT!

The canvassing committee meeting date for *multi-town districts* falls on Bennington Battle Day this year – Friday, August 16. Per [17 V.S.A. § 2368](#), the canvassing committee shall meet at 10 a.m. on the third day after the election (see more below). You **MUST** hold the canvassing committee on August 16, even if your office is closed for the State holiday. The canvassing meeting date may not be moved to the next day or business day.

Canvassing

- **Single-town district / multiple districts in one town:** The canvassing committee meeting **MUST be held the day after the election – Wednesday, August 14th at 10 a.m.** ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#)). When the district or districts are within a single town, the Town or City Clerk plus one other election official from within the town make up the canvassing committee.
- **Multi-town district:** The canvassing committee **MUST be held on the third day after the election – Friday, August 16th at 10 a.m.** ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#)). We recommend that Representative District Clerks in multi-town districts have a Town Clerk or an election official from one of the other towns in the district attend the canvassing committee. However, this is not a requirement and another election official from your town may serve.

Process Overview

- **Follow the attached canvassing instructions to prepare your report(s)**
 - VEMS will tally the votes and present the totals in your district(s) for review and approval
 - Once the process is complete, print the canvass report
- **Before the canvass committee meets:**
 - Review the district results on the VEMS site for the three major parties (Democratic, Progressive & Republican)
 - Merge write-ins and print all canvass reports and certificates of nomination (see attached instructions for details)
- **Hold the canvassing committee meeting to review and approve the results**
 - The canvassing committee reviews the canvass report containing the vote tallies for State Representative from the Official Return of Votes (ORVs) submitted to you through VEMS by the Town Clerks in your Representative District.
 - Single-town districts / multiple districts in one town: only your town's ORV(s) will be tallied
 - Multi-town districts: You must tally the votes from all towns in your district
- **The canvassing committee reviews, approves, and signs the canvass report**
- **Upload the executed reports for *each major party* to VEMS**
- **Print and mail Certificates of Nomination for each winning candidate for each party** (Democratic, Progressive, and Republican State Representative(s)).

Winning Candidates

- In Representative Districts represented by one State Representative and with at least one candidate printed on the ballot, the candidate with the greatest number of votes wins.
- In Representative Districts with two representatives, the candidates with the greatest and next to greatest (top two vote-getters) are both winners and your committee will prepare two Certificates of Nomination for each party for State Representative.
- If your Representative District had no candidates printed on the ballot for State Representative for a particular party, a write-in candidate must receive at least 25

votes in order to win the Primary and receive a Certificate of Nomination. ([17 V.S.A. §§2370](#) and [2355](#)).

Remember that you must complete a canvass for all three parties even if there was no winner (no named candidates and no write-ins receiving the 25 required votes).

Once you have completed the canvass, the VEMS system will produce a **Certificate of Nomination for each nominee for State Representative for each party** (i.e., Democratic State Representative(s), Progressive State Representative(s) and Republican State Representative(s)). If your district elects two representatives, you could have two certificates for each party (the two highest vote-getters in each party.)

- Make at least one copy of the completed Certificate(s) and one copy of the canvassing report. Keep one copy of each for your records.
- Upload (scan) one copy of the signed canvassing report into the VEMS system (for each major party)
- The canvassing committee must **mail or deliver in person** the original signed copy of the **Certificate of Nomination** to each candidate nominated by the primary within two days of your meeting. Keep the copy or copies of the Certificate of Nomination(s) in your files.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office.

Regards,

The Elections Division

FOLLOW-UP REMINDER EMAIL 1

Good morning Representative District Clerks,

This is a reminder that you are required by Vermont election law ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#)) to hold a canvassing committee meeting to tally the votes for state representatives to the General Assembly.

- **Single-district towns shall meet at 10 a.m. on the day after the Primary Election, Wednesday, August 14.**
- **Multi-district towns shall meet at 10 a.m. on the third day after the Primary Election, Friday, August 16** (see below for how Bennington Battle Day affects this).

These dates *and* times are stated clearly in statute and cannot be changed to earlier or later dates. If you have not already, you will need to confirm in advance with the other election official(s) who will attend the canvassing committee meeting to ensure they are still available to do so. More information can be found in our original email to you (below).

Please reach out to us if have any questions, and thank you for all that you do!

FOLLOW-UP REMINDER EMAIL 2

Good morning Representative District Clerks,

We are writing to provide clarification and a few reminders for you as you complete your ORV and canvass. Our original bulletin on canvassing is below, and we have attached both the canvassing instructions and ORV entry instructions for reference. Please read everything carefully.

1. Please consult the attached spreadsheet to confirm the district(s) for which you are a Rep clerk and if that district includes one town or multiple towns. The spreadsheet is currently sorted by district.
 - If you are the clerk for a Rep district that contains one town, **you canvass today** (e.g., ADDISON-1, Middlebury Town Clerk).
 - If you are the clerk for a Rep district that contains one town with multiple districts within it, **you also canvass today** (e.g., WINDHAM-7 / WINDHAM-8 / WINDHAM-9, Brattleboro Town Clerk).
 - If you are the clerk for a Rep district that contains multiple towns, **you canvass on Friday, August 16** (e.g., ADDISON-4, Bristol Town Clerk).
2. The ORV MUST be completed by ALL towns in the district before the canvass can be submitted. If you have multiple towns in your district, communicate with the other town clerks on their progress to ensure you are able to canvass on time.
 - We understand that some towns have many write-ins to count and that processing may be delayed, but please try to complete your ORV as soon as possible.
3. Clerk office hours today - If you have questions or need support, please join our office hours today from 2pm - 2:45pm on Teams (meeting info below).

TEAMS MEETING INFO

Canvassing Dates - IMPORTANT, PER STATUTE.

- **Single-town district / multiple districts in one town:** The canvassing committee meeting **MUST be held the day after the election – Wednesday, August 14th at 10 a.m. ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#))**. When the district or districts are within a single town, the Town or City Clerk plus one other election official from within the town make up the canvassing committee.
- **Multi-town district:** The canvassing committee MUST be held on the third day after the election – Friday, August 16th at 10 a.m. ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#)). We recommend that

Representative District Clerks in multi-town districts have a Town Clerk or an election official from one of the other towns in the district attend the canvassing committee. However, this is not a requirement and another election official from your town may serve.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us:

- Sean - 802-828-0175 - sean.sheehan@vermont.gov
- Tammy - 802-828-3721 - tammy.sink@vermont.gov
- Lori - 802-828-2464 - lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov
- Mark - 802-828-2304 - mark.houle@vermont.gov
- Dan - 802-828-0771 - dan.brown@vermont.gov
- Rosie - 802-828-0418 - rosie.casciero@vermont.gov

Thank you for all that you do!

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - Canvassing Committee Instructions for August 13 Primary [County/Senatorial]

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024_AugPrimary_County.Senate_Clerk_Canvassing_VEEMS_Manual
SENT: 8/8/2024

Greetings County/Senatorial District Clerks,

We are writing to provide an outline of the canvassing committee process for new clerks and a quick reminder for experienced clerks. After the Primary Election, you are required to hold a canvassing committee meeting to tally the votes for State Senate and County offices. The committee is composed of the County/Senatorial District Clerk and the County Party Chair for each major party (Democratic, Progressive, Republican) ([17 V.S.A. §2592\(d\)](#)). Please read this email and the attached canvassing instructions carefully.

Timeline

- **August 16, 2024, 10 a.m.** – Canvassing committee meeting for Senate & County offices
 - **NOTE!! August 16 is Bennington Battle Day, but per [17 V.S.A. § 2368](#), the canvassing committee shall meet at 10 a.m. on that third day after the election (see more below). You MUST hold the canvassing committee on August 16, even if your office is closed for the State holiday. The canvassing meeting date may not be moved to the next day or business day.**

Attachment(s): 2024_AugPrimary_County.Senate_Clerk_Canvassing_VEEMS_Manual

County/Senatorial Clerk Duties

Before the canvass committee meets:

- Review the district results on the VEEMS site for the three major parties (Democratic, Progressive & Republican)
- Merge write-ins and print all canvass reports and certificates of nomination (see attached instructions for details)

If there are any candidate names printed on the party ballot in a race, then the candidate with the highest number of votes wins, whether write-in or preprinted on the ballot. If there are no candidate names printed on the party ballot for a particular race, then a write-in candidate for state senate or county office must receive at least 50 votes in order to win the primary and receive a certificate of nomination by a party to be placed on the ballot for the General Election ([17 V.S.A. §2370](#)).

Therefore, if there are no names on the ballot for state senate or the county office, and no write-in receives 50 votes, then there is NO NOMINATION for that party for that office ([17 V.S.A. §2355](#)). Please do not make the mistake of declaring a write-in candidate as the

winner if no candidate receives the required 50 votes! You need to complete the canvass process even if there is no winner.

Canvass Committee Meeting

- Attendees: County Clerk, County Party Chair for **each** major party
 - **We suggest that you call or send a note to the county party chairs to remind them of their responsibilities for the canvassing committee as soon as possible if you have not already done so. Party contact info can be found on our website under [Election Info & Resources > Parties](#).**
 - If your county does not have a chair for one of the parties, you can write or call the state party chair to ask them to designate a representative. If the state party declines to appoint a designee, then you meet with the other available party chairs and if no chairs are available, you must invite at least one additional election official.
- **Review and sign the results of the Canvass Report from VEMS.**
- **Scan and upload the signed canvassing reports into VEMS.**
 - **Reports for each party should be uploaded separately, even if there are no winners for that race**
 - **Use this naming convention: mm/dd/yyyy__County_Party**
- **Copy the Certificates of Nomination for your files.**
- **Mail or hand deliver original Certificates of Nomination to all winning candidates.**
- **Keep the originals of the completed canvassing committee reports** along with a copy of each signed Certificate of Nomination in your records (you do not need to send our office copies of the report or certificates – we can access them in VEMS).

As ever, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Regards,

The Elections Division

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL REMINDER 1

Good morning County/Senatorial District Clerks,

This is a reminder that you are required by Vermont election law ([17 V.S.A. § 2368](#)) to hold a canvassing committee meeting to tally the votes for State Senate and County offices after the August Primary Election on Friday, August 16 at 10 a.m. The date *and* time are stated clearly in statute and cannot be changed to an earlier or later

date. If you have not already, you will need to coordinate in advance with the County Party chairs for each major party to ensure they are available to attend the meeting. More information can be found in our original email to you (below).

Please reach out to us if you need assistance contacting your county's party chairs or have any questions.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - Candidate Filings & Canvass Report Reminders

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 8/19/2024

Hello Town Clerks, Rep Clerks, and Senate/County Clerks:

This bulletin includes important information on how to process candidate nominations and conduct your canvassing duties after the Primary Election. Please be sure to read this email carefully, and let us know if you have any questions.

Canvass Reports:

- If you are a Rep or Senate/County Clerk, please make sure to complete your canvass for all 3 parties, even if there are no winners. You must also have the canvass committee sign ALL 3 reports.
- There are still some canvasses that appear to be incomplete, so make sure you have uploaded all 3 parties' reports.
- If you have questions, please refer back to the bulletin we sent on August 8th (reminders also sent on August 12th and 14th), or contact us.

Nominated Candidates:

- Candidates nominated by party committee must file their nominations, consent of candidate forms, and financial disclosure forms with the Secretary of State's Office, NOT with town clerks. If you receive a nomination, do not accept the paperwork and please direct the filer to file with us
- We must receive original-wet ink signed documents at our office.
- Nominations are due by August 19th at 5:00 pm (**TODAY**).

Write-in Candidate Winners:

- When you send a write-in candidate their winning nomination certificate, you **MUST** inform them that they will need to file a consent of candidate form and financial disclosure forms with the Secretary of State's Office. (For housekeeping, let them know that they can make any corrections to how their name will appear on the ballot on their consent of candidate form).
- They must file with the Vermont Secretary of State's Office and NOT with town clerks.
- We must receive original-wet ink signed documents at our office. **NO EMAILED PDFS, PLEASE.**
- Write-in filings are due by August 23rd at 5:00 pm.
- If you have difficulty contacting any write-in winners, please let us know.

You can direct candidates to our website for more information, if necessary at sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/candidates.

Thank you for all that you do!

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - Important Post-Primary Election Reminders & Guidance

ATTACHMENT(S): Appendix R – Election Materials Retention Guidance, Resolving Outstanding Absentee Requests, 2024 August Primary Participation Instructions

SENT: 8/19/2024

Greetings Clerks,

We wanted to take this chance to say **thank you** for your very hard work in administering a successful Primary election. You stepped up and served your voters and communities impressively. We really do appreciate everything you do.

We are writing today with information on your duties after the election, including returning tabulator memory cards, entering participation after resolving outstanding absentee ballot requests, retaining ballots and envelopes, entering JP candidate data, and ensuring your safety. **Please read the following bulletin and attachments carefully.**

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Friday, August 23, 2024** – Justice of the Peace candidate and ballot question data must be entered in VEMS
- **Monday, September 2, 2024 (on or about)** – Export of General Election mailing data
- **Saturday, October 12, 2024** – Participation for August Primary due (60 days after the election)

Attachment(s): Appendix R - Election Materials Retention Guidance, Resolving Outstanding Absentee Requests, 2024 August Primary Participation Entry Instructions

TABULATOR MEMORY CARDS

- Please return your **memory cards, keys, and yellow boxes** to the Secretary of State's Office at 128 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05633 **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. If you are attending the VMCTA Election Summit on 9/10, you can return the yellow boxes to us in person.
 - We expect records requests for Cast Vote Record (CVR) data, so please send them as soon as you are able. After Wednesday, August 28, we will begin contacting towns that have not returned their memory cards. If you receive a records request for either the August Primary or your local election CVR data, please let us know and we will assist you in fulfilling that public records request. We will keep your cards for the 90-day retention period to answer requests that come in during that time, and then we will return the cards to LHS.
 - If you end up having to do a revote or recount, please reach out to LHS as soon as possible to receive new cards: (888) 547-8683.

- Please reach out to Dan Brown (dan.brown@vermont.gov) if you have any other questions about the memory cards.

BALLOT & ENVELOPE RETENTION

Please note: The [Election Materials Retention Guidance](#) issued by VSARA has been updated as of August 15, 2024.

- **Statewide Primary Ballots (voted)** – Retain for 22 months after the election
- **Local Ballots (voted)** – Retain for 90 days after the election
- **Certificate Envelopes** – Retain signed certificate envelopes for 22 months after the election. If you were unaware of this requirement and have disposed of your signed certificate envelopes already, please just note this requirement for the General Election.
- **Unused/Unvoted/Unopened Ballots** – These can be destroyed/recycled.

DATA ENTRY

- **Participation Entry** – Per [17 V.S.A. § 2593](#), you are required to report voter participation for the August Primary within 60 days of the election—before **Saturday, October 12, 2024**. It is best practice to resolve any outstanding absentee ballot requests *before* entering participation. This allows you to remove absentee ballot requests from your dashboard because you will not be able to resolve any absentee ballot requests after you enter participation. Instructions are attached.
- **Justice of the Peace (JP) Candidate Entry** – If your town’s JP candidates will be printed on the back of the General Election ballot, we need you to review your entries for accuracy. **This is critical.** We will send the listing of candidates on Friday, August 23 for you to double-check. Most errors on our ballots occur in the JP races and we would like to eliminate these errors.
 - **If you have not already requested access to enter your JPs in VEMS, please email Lori NOW at lori.bjornlund@vermont.gov.**
 - If you are editing your JP names in VEMS, please do not edit or delete any of the candidates for state representative, even if you do not recognize them. There have been many independent candidates and candidates nominated by party committee entered into the system, so you may not recognize the names, but please do not edit or delete any of them.
- **Absentee ballots after election** – Also please remember to record any ballots that were returned after the election within your absentee ballot activity.
- **Defective ballots** – If you have not already, please enter the reason why you have deemed any ballots defective, if you have that data recorded but have not updated your absentee ballot activity in VEMS with those reasons. We have historically received requests for data on how many ballots were deemed defective, the reasons

why, and how many ballots were returned late. We provide that data through the absentee ballot reports, so it is very helpful if you can enter it into VEMS.

GENERAL ELECTION UNIVERSAL BALLOT MAILING DATA

- We anticipate exporting the voter data from VEMS for the mailing of ballots **on or around Monday, September 2**. We will be sure to let you know exactly when that happens, as any voters who register after that time will need to be sent a ballot by you and will not be included in the mailing. We will send a bulletin with further guidance regarding the details of how the mailing will work.

SECURITY & SAFETY

- Elections can sometimes ignite and enflame tensions and emotions more than usual, and contentious local issues can do so as well. We expect some of you may see an increase in threats and other aggressive behavior from many different directions and want you to know that we are here to help. If something is directly threatening, you should take the appropriate precautions and report it to law enforcement, as needed, but please also let us know when you receive any threats. We can then make sure they are reported up the chain and logged and tracked by state and federal law enforcement, as well.

As was the case throughout the summer in preparation for the Primary, we will be in touch very often in the coming weeks and months with updates, reminders, and instructions. We will provide as much assistance as we can at each step along the way. Please keep a close eye on your email for bulletins from us throughout the late summer and fall.

We are confident that the General Election will be as successful as the Primary. It will be hard work, but we continue to be impressed with your ability to overcome obstacles and adapt.

Thanks again,

The Elections Team

SUBJECT: Re: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - Due 8/23: General Election Justice of the Peace & Local Public Question Entry

ATTACHMENT(S): 2024 Justice of the Peace Entry, 2024 Ballot Question Data Entry

Instructions

SENT: 8/22/2024

Hello Clerks,

This is a reminder that all candidates for Justice of the Peace MUST be entered in VEMS before 12 pm tomorrow--Friday, August 23. We are on an incredibly tight deadline with our General Election ballot/envelope vendor, and must send them the candidate data on Monday, August 26. Early tomorrow afternoon, we will send a listing of all JP candidates entered into VEMS as of 12 pm for you to review and proof. Please take a moment to check that your town's listing of JPs is accurate and complete. This should only take most towns a few minutes to do.

If you have not already requested permission to enter JPs in VEMS, contact us ***immediately*** so that we can work with you to complete the data entry.

Additionally, we plan to include in our email tomorrow the address listing for the GE ballot mailing. We ask that you take a few minutes to proof your town's address in that listing, as well.

Thank you for all your assistance, and have a great evening.

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - General Election Ballot Mailing, Ballot/Envelope Delivery

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 8/29/2024

Greetings Clerks,

We're writing today with important details and guidance on our office's upcoming mailing of General Election ballots. Included is information on that statewide ballot mailing, which ballots you'll need to mail, and when you'll receive your stock of ballots and envelopes. Be sure to look for emails from us over the next couple of weeks about the UOCAVA deadline, as well. **Please read this email carefully!**

TIMELINE

- **Tuesday, September 3, 2024** – Elections Division exports voter mailing address data from VEMS
- **Week of September 16, 2024** – Town clerks receive stock of ballots and envelopes
- **Friday, September 20, 2024** – UOCAVA ballot mailing deadline
- **September 23 – October 1, 2024** – Ballots mailed on a rolling basis to all active and qualified voters registered in Vermont

1. MAILING DATA EXPORT

- **On Tuesday, September 3**, the Elections Division will export from VEMS the mailing address data for all active and qualified voters registered in Vermont. *You must process any new absentee ballot requests, new registrations, or new voter transfers received on or after September 3* (see #3 for details).

2. UNIVERSAL VOTE-BY-MAIL FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

The Secretary of State's Office will mail an absentee ballot to all active and qualified voters registered in Vermont for the November 5, 2024 General Election. Ballots will be mailed to voters on a rolling basis between September 23, 2024 and October 1, 2024 (per [17 V.S.A. § 2537a](#)).

- Ballots will be sent to 1) the address listed in a voter's General Election absentee ballot request, 2) to the voter's mailing address as listed on their voter record if they haven't submitted a request, or 3) to the address listed on their voter record if neither 1 or 2 apply to the voter.
- If a voter contacts you before September 3 requesting an absentee ballot for delivery to an address other than the mailing address on their voter record, please enter an absentee ballot request for that voter with their preferred mailing address before September 3 and that address will be used in the mailing by our office. This method also applies to absentee ballot requests made on or after September 3, which you will also need to fulfill.

- As ballots are mailed between September 23 and October 1, we will provide updates to you. Each day, an issue date will be entered for any voters who are mailed a ballot on the date their ballot is sent. When you receive the voted ballot, you should only need to enter a return date for all voters who were issued a ballot as part of this mailing.
- You'll need to issue ballots to the following voters because they will be excluded from the mailing by our office.
 - Military & overseas voters (UOCAVA) – *Prioritize these voters*. You will be required to mail or electronically deliver via VEMS these ballots to your military and overseas voters as you normally do. Detailed guidance on this process will follow in the coming weeks before the 9/20 deadline to mail these ballots.
 - Any other voters that have requested electronic delivery.
 - Any voters that have requested home delivery by Justices of the Peace.
 - Challenged voters – These voters must request a ballot and are required to respond to the challenge letter or affirm their residence before casting a ballot.
- Voters without existing absentee ballot requests as of September 3 will have requests automatically created for them with September 3, 2024 entered as the request date.
- Note: Voters under 18 who will not turn 18 between now and the General Election are ineligible to cast a ballot. Adults who have not taken the voter's oath will need to do so in order to cast a ballot in the election.

3. BALLOT MAILING BY CLERKS

After September 3, you will be responsible for mailing General Election ballots to any newly registered voters or transferred voters.

- New voter registration after September 3 – If someone registers in VT for the first time in your town or city after September 3, you will be responsible for mailing a ballot to them (see more on ballots and envelope types below).
- Transferred voter after September 3 – If a voter registering in your town has moved from another Vermont town and was an active, registered voter there when the mailing data was exported (i.e., before September 3), there are several steps you may have to take before providing them a new ballot:
 - If they did not receive the ballot, they should sign the *Affidavit of No Ballot Cast* ([Appendix N](#)) and may be mailed or cast a ballot after they do so.
 - If they have received the ballot but have not voted it yet, they should return it to you, or sign the affidavit, before being provided a ballot from your town.

- If they have received and cast the ballot in the previous town, they should be informed they cannot cast another ballot in the election.

4. STOCK OF BALLOTS & ENVELOPES FOR IN-PERSON VOTING & ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUESTS

You'll receive during the week of September 16 your stock of ballots and envelopes to issue to voters excluded from the mailing or who request absentee ballots after September 3.

- **Ballots** – The stock of ballots you will receive will be equal to 28% of the number of voters on your checklist. These will be used for your UOCAVA ballot mailing, fulfilling any absentee ballot requests made after September 3, early in-person voting, and in-person voting at your polling place(s) on Election Day.
- **Envelopes** – The stock of envelopes you will receive will be equal to 10% of the number of voters on your checklist. Three types of envelopes will be provided: a) a certificate envelope the voter must sign and in which they enclose their voted ballot, b) a return envelope the voter will use to return the ballot to you, and c) the outgoing envelope in which you will send the ballot, the certificate envelope, and the return envelope to the voter.
 - **Outgoing envelopes** –
 - These will include your town's address as the sender, with return service requested, so you may receive ballots returned by the post office for voters who have moved or whose address on record is invalid.
 - For logistical reasons, we are unable to apply postage to the outgoing envelopes, but we will reimburse these costs following the election for those towns that track their postage costs for any ballots mailed to voters. We recommend doing so on a spreadsheet or via your postage meter's report function, if available.
 - **Return envelopes** – These will be pre-addressed with your town's mailing address and will include prepaid postage.
 - **Certificate envelopes** – These will contain the voter's name, voter ID number, barcode, ballot style number, representative district, and ward if applicable. We hope this makes processing these voters as easy as possible for you. All identifying information will be on the same side of the envelope as the signature line, allowing the envelope to be turned over during processing and to not include any identifying information as it is removed from the envelope.

We hope this email helps to answer some of your questions regarding this process, and we will continue to be in touch throughout the process with any updates. As ever, please feel free to contact us with any questions.

The Elections Division

SUBJECT: Re: ELECTIONS BULLETIN - General Election Ballot Mailing, Ballot/Envelope Delivery

ATTACHMENT(S): N/A

SENT: 9/5/2024

Greetings, Clerks!

We are following up on our last bulletin (see below) to notify you that the General Election ballot mailing voter address file was successfully exported from VEMS between 5:10 and 5:20 pm on Tuesday, September 3. The file was sent to our vendor for printing, and they will mail the ballots to voters for the upcoming election between September 23 and October 1. You will receive your stock of ballots the week of September 16.

We will follow up in the next day or so with the progress of the ballot printing process. The sample and print-ready ballots will be uploaded to VEMS today, and you will need to go to your Dashboard to review the ballot to ensure there are no issues. Please respond ASAP to let us know if any are found.

IMPORTANT – NEW REGISTRATION & TRANSFER PROCESSING

- Any *newly registered* voters entered into VEMS after 5:20 pm on September 3 will NOT be included in the statewide ballot mailing. You will be responsible for mailing a ballot to them.
- Any *voters transferred* to your town after 5:20 pm on September 3 who were previously active in another town WILL be included in the statewide mailing, and they WILL be mailed a ballot for the town in which they were previously registered. As we have instructed below, you will need to confirm with them and/or their former town clerk the status of the ballot mailed to them before sending them one for your town.
 - If they did not receive the ballot, they should sign the *Affidavit of No Ballot Cast* ([Appendix N](#)) and may be mailed or cast a ballot after they do so.
 - If they have received the ballot but have not voted it yet, they should return it to you, or sign the affidavit, before being provided a ballot from your town.
 - If they have received and cast the ballot in the previous town, they should be informed they cannot cast another ballot in the election.
- In the period between when the address file was exported and when we sent it to our vendor, a number of voters were transferred or purged. We removed those voters from the file, and they are listed below. These voters will NOT be included in the statewide mailing. If they were transferred to your town, you may issue a ballot to them.

ABSENTEE REQUESTS AND BALLOT ISSUE DATE

For those voters included in the statewide mailing who did not already have an absentee request, we have created one for them in VEMS with the request date of 9/3/2024. You should now see those requests on your VEMS Dashboard. **Please DO NOT delete the requests or remove them from your dashboard, as doing so will delete the request.** When our vendor mails the ballots, we will update those requests with an issued date. There is nothing you need to do with those requests until you receive the ballot back from the voter, at which time you will update the request with the ballot acceptance reason and received date.

LIST OF TRANSFERRED OR PURGED VOTERS REMOVED FROM THE MAILING FILE

As explained above, these voters will NOT be included in the statewide mailing. If they were transferred to your town, you may issue a ballot to them.

VOTER ID	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	MI	ORIGINAL TOWN OF RESIDENCE	TRANSFERRED TOWN OF RESIDENCE	STATUS CHANGED TO
000877484	BRENT	MILLER		ARLINGTON	DORSET	
000444583	JOHN	BRUCKNER	T	BARNET	CLARENDON	
000873790	PATRICIA	BOOSKA	A	BARRE CITY	BARRE TOWN	
000963145	WILLIAM	COBURN	F	BARTON	NEWPORT CITY	
000963015	EVAN	HINCHLIFFE	M	BERLIN	BURLINGTON	
000849492	MCKENDRICK	JOHNSON		BRADFORD		PURGED
000969812	DAVID	WRIGHT	C	BRADFORD		PURGED
000991516	CHERYL	ALLEN	A	BRADFORD		PURGED
001021710	TIMOTHY	ODELL	PETER	BRADFORD		PURGED
000804766	LARISSA	ROSE	R	BRATTLEBORO	PUTNEY	
000936987	SAMUEL	CHAMBERLAIN		BRIDPORT	BRISTOL	
000189766	FLORENCE	KIRBY	R	BRISTOL		PURGED
000965084	SYDNEY	GOLDFARB	J	BURLINGTON	STRATTON	
001071648	OLIVIA	SHIN	SPERANZA	UNDERHILL	BURLINGTON	
000789199	SAMUEL	ROGERS	C	CAMBRIDGE	EDEN	
001052940	ROBBIE	HARRIS	WALTER	CHELSEA	RANDOLPH	
000291382	GHOLAM	MARZBANI	R	COLCHESTER	SOUTH BURLINGTON	
001065621	MIKAYLA	CADIEUX	MORGAN	DERBY	BARTON	
000861859	JULIE	CARTER	F	ESSEX TOWN	ESSEX JUNCTION CITY	
001049589	CHRISTOPHER	EVANS	A	ESSEX TOWN	RUTLAND CITY	
000672477	PATRICK	KELLY	S.	FERRISBURGH	RANDOLPH	
000448817	BRADLEY	HIGHBERGER	C.	HARDWICK		PURGED
000985976	KYLE	RICE	JAMES	HARTFORD	ROYALTON	
000052932	BERTINA	WELLS		HIGHGATE		PURGED

001034634	DAVID	NGUYEN	QK	LUDLOW	WILMINGTON	
000821930	JOHANNA	NICHOLS	L	MONTPELIER	MIDDLEBURY	
000958301	TAYLOR	STADELI	ROSE	MONTPELIER	BERLIN	
000645614	SARAH	BALDWIN	E	NEW HAVEN	BRANDON	
000823897	CHRISTOPHER	MURPHY		NEWPORT CITY	ESSEX JUNCTION CITY	
000832225	LINDA	AMES	L	PEACHAM	DANVILLE	
000165639	ELIZABETH	WHITNEY		PROCTOR	RUTLAND CITY	
000729614	ENID	LEVINE	P	PUTNEY	GUILFORD	
000941339	JEFFREY	LEVINE	T	PUTNEY	GUILFORD	
000482067	DONNA	DESROSIERS	MAY	ROCHESTER	RUTLAND CITY	
000776331	MATTHEW	POND	R.	RUTLAND CITY	WALLINGFORD	
000906004	JESSICA	COLBY	MARIE	SAINT ALBANS TOWN	BURLINGTON	
000931191	JUSTICE	ALDRICH	M	SAINT JOHNSBURY	STANNARD	
000834255	SUSAN	IRISH-REED	M.	SHELDON		PURGED
000615023	DAVID	RAY	D	SOUTH BURLINGTON	RANDOLPH	
000874450	LOGAN	SEFCIK		SOUTH BURLINGTON	ESSEX TOWN	
001062284	NICOLETTA	SALVATORE	F	SOUTH BURLINGTON	BRANDON	
001071687	CHRIS	RAY	M	SOUTH BURLINGTON	RANDOLPH	
001038451	JEORLINE	KING	J	STANNARD		PURGED
000715385	PATRICIA	ROOT	E	STRAFFORD	HARTFORD	
000571048	DEREK	LIBBY	R	SWANTON	MONTPELIER	
000934998	BRIAR	LAROSE	A	TROY	SOUTH BURLINGTON	
000790739	ALLISON	GIROUX	R	UNDERHILL	WILLISTON	
000742541	ROBERT	QUINN	C	WATERBURY	BURLINGTON	
000891484	ALEXANDER	MARANVILLE	J	WEST RUTLAND	RUTLAND CITY	
001058846	KATHERINE	QUAYLE	L	WEYBRIDGE	MIDDLEBURY	
000883117	RICHARD	SPRADLING	D	WILLISTON	SOUTH BURLINGTON	
000200916	BONITA	PELLICCIONE	M	WINOOSKI	ESSEX TOWN	
000401692	GORDON P	BATCHELDER		WOODBURY		PURGED
000928558	KAREN	BATCHELDER	L	WOODBURY		PURGED
000937051	AARON	GERBER	M	WOODSTOCK	HARTFORD	
000738511	ZOE	STONE		MONTPELIER	EAST MONTPELIER	

Thank you for all that you do, and please let us know if you have any other questions!