Lifecycle of a Mail Ballot

The Elections Group

Step 1 – Receiving

- Ballots are received from USPS and secure ballot drop boxes

- Staff verify security measures (locks, seals, chain of custody, etc.)

- Piece counts are recorded

- Voter record updated as having voted

Step 2 – Sorting

- Individual ballots sorted into uniform batch size or by precinct

- Performed manually or using sorting equipment, which may also capture signature or affidavit information

- Ballot accounting and chain of custody logs completed

Step 3 – Signature Review

- Review signature at two levels:
    - A quick analysis of the general characteristics of the signature
    - A sharp focus on individual details
- Performed by bipartisan teams in an area where voter data can be protected
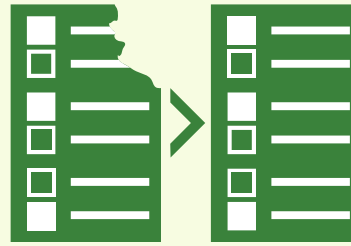- Ballot accounting and chain of custody logs completed
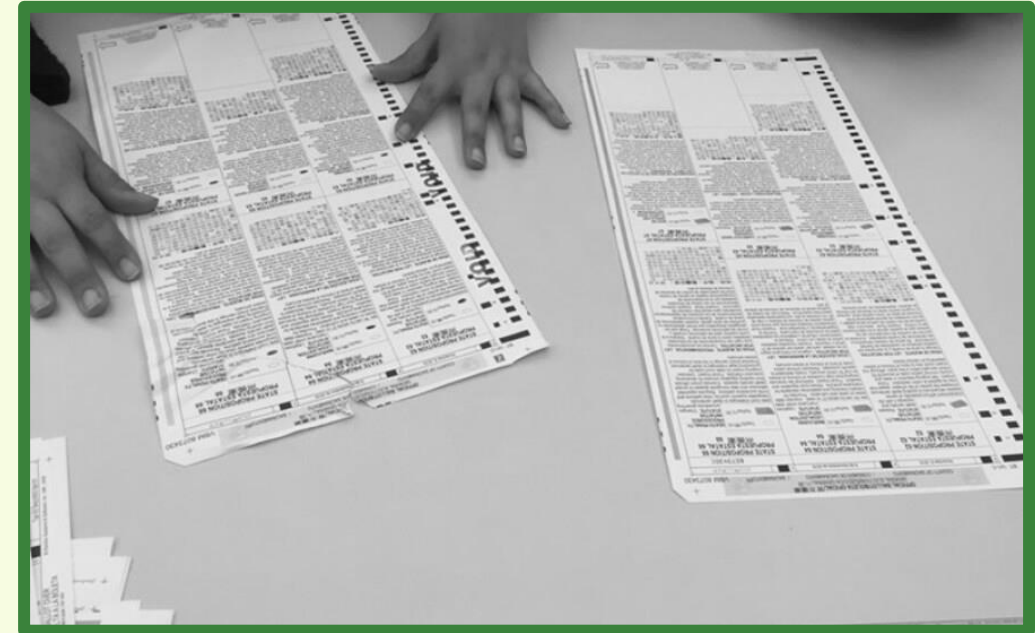
Step 4 – Opening and Extracting

- Verify starting piece count

- Extract ballots from envelopes with voters' name facing down

- Tables or trays arranged for staging - ready for extraction, emptied envelopes, extracted ballots ready to scan

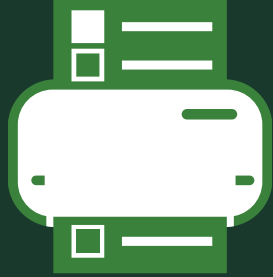- Ballot accounting and chain of custody logs completed

Step 5 – Replication

- Damaged ballots or ballots marked in such a way that they cannot be read by the voting system

- Bipartisan teams assign a control number to the original and replicated ballot (O-001 and D-001)

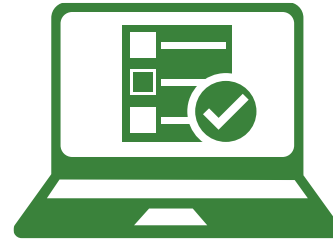- Duplication log serves as chain of custody documentation
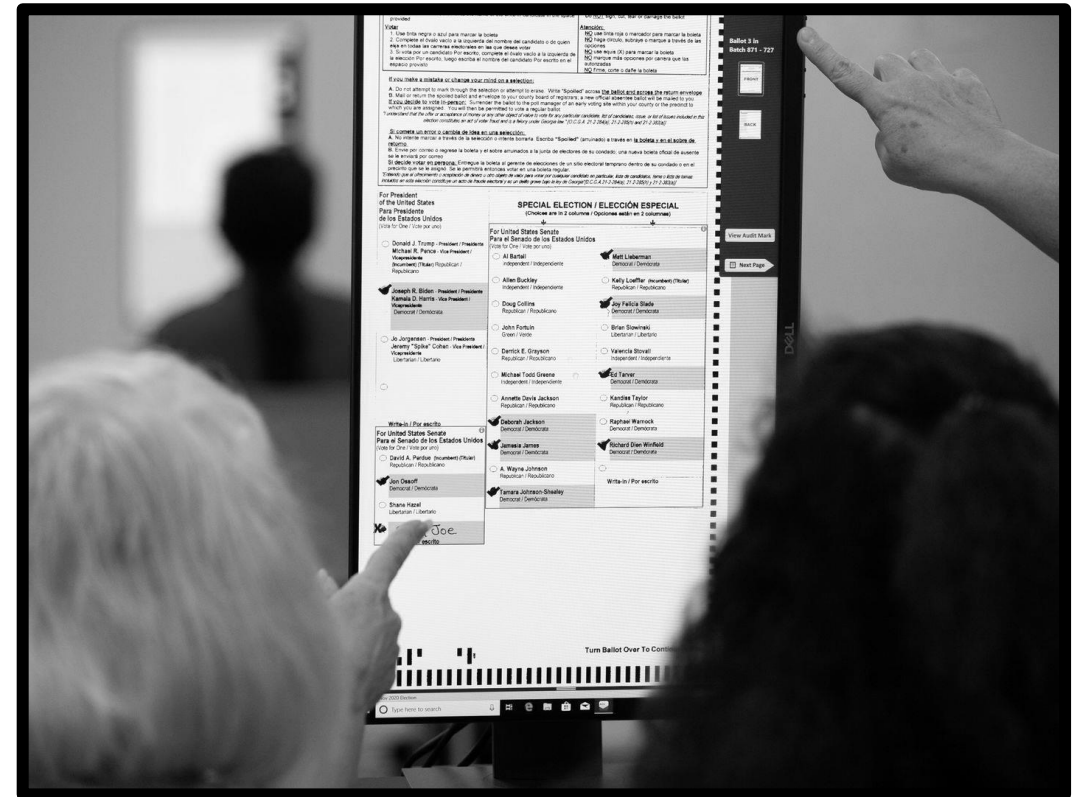
Step 6 – Scanning

- Verify starting piece count

- Inspect ballots for any that may need to be replicated

- Teams scan ballots, verifying piece count

- Ballot accounting and chain of custody logs completed

- Ballots sealed in logged and labeled storage box

Step 7 – Adjudication

- Ballots that have stray marks, are overvoted, or have write-ins are manually reviewed

- Clear voter intent guidelines are vital

- Post a large chart with examples of a "valid vote" to increase transparency and reinforce procedure

Step 8 – Storing

- Prepare a secure area for the storage of all scanned ballots

- Verify batch control sheet/batch label is attached to the correct storage box

- Enter batch control sheet/batch label information into a ballot manifest

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