

ELECTION CLASS MAIL PROPOSAL

Election Center Vote-by-Mail Task Force

July 9, 2010

The Vote-by-Mail Task Force proposes a new class of service for voter centric mail. Mail from election administrators to voters *and* voted ballots from voters shall be based upon First-Class services at nonprofit rates.

First-Class mail service at a reduced “Election Class” rate would ensure compliance with the rules of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). It would increase the volume of pieces handled by the USPS and simplify the handling of election mail. If a mailing does not qualify for nonprofit rates, election mail will be sent at the new “Election Class” rate.

Who qualifies

Government agencies responsible for conducting elections and qualified to use the USPS Elections Logo. No registration is necessary for election administrators.

Voters returning voted ballots

What qualifies for “Election Class”

Voter centric mail from Election Administrators

Election specific

- Ballots
- Sample ballots
- Voter pamphlets
- Absentee request forms
- Notices of election
- Other election specific communications

Voter registration

- Voter list maintenance pieces
- Voter registration cards
- Voter registration correspondence
- Voter registration applications
- Other voter registration communications

Voter centric mail addressed to Election Administrators

Voted ballots weighing up to 3.3 ounces require a single First-Class stamp

What doesn't qualify for "Election Class"

- Bill payments
- Vendor communications
- Payroll checks
- Office correspondence
- Other non voter centric mailings
- Any mail sent to Election Administrators except a voted ballot

Piece requirements

- Each piece must be machineable
- Maximum piece weight 3.3 ounces
- Mail piece design compliance with USPS standards
- Required use of IMb for automated mailings
- Must comply with state and federal election law
- Mail piece must display the official USPS Election Mail Logo
- Reply mail must display election specific FIM
- IMb will include a service code identifying "Election Class" mail

Rates

- Automated and presorted mail at nonprofit rates
- Single piece rate at half the cost of a First-Class stamp
- One ounce First-Class stamp for voted ballots up to 3.3 ounces
- First-Class ancillary services fee schedule applies

Service level

- One to three day average delivery time
- First-Class ancillary services included
- Rules of inspection for First-Class mail apply
- All other First-Class services

Technical requirements

- Create IMb service codes for "Election Class" mail
- Create election specific FIMs
- Exempt NCOA/Move Update requirement for outbound ballots
 - Creates delivery failure of ballots
 - Voters don't always want a change of address applied to their ballot
- Preserve the use of green tags, at mailer's option

Grandfather clause

Effective upon implementation of “Election Class” mail, jurisdictions with existing nonprofit status are grandfathered and will retain nonprofit mailing status

Summary

“Election Class” mail service will provide efficiencies to the USPS.

Increase the volume of mail

- Provides incentive for jurisdictions to convert from in person voting to Vote-by-Mail
- Provides less incentive for electronic ballot delivery

Decrease the need to verify compliance

Reduce voter confusion when returning voted ballots

Less handling will be required, thereby reducing costs

Linked to existing rate structure

Pieces are easily identifiable with the logo, FIM and IMb service codes

Will improve customer relations