



ELECTION CENTER

Professional Education Manual

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1. History of the Program

There was a time when the administration of elections and voter registration was a straight forward, relatively simple matter of occasionally organizing election workers, maintaining registration lists, and holding periodic elections. That time is no longer. Civil rights concerns (racial, ethnic, disabilities, language minorities) as well as a variety of other considerations ranging from increasing participation to the demands of modern technology have forever and radically altered the nature of the elections/registration process. As a result, thoughtful election and registration officials have come to believe that this profession is one that requires expert, trained administrators who understand the subtleties of the myriad of factors now making the administration of the elections process a specialty for which specific knowledge and abilities are essential.

The result of those concerns was the development of the nation's first and only professional certification program for election and voter registration professionals. The program began with four courses being offered at The Election Center's 1992 Annual National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. Since 1994, The Election Center has offered professional certification as Certified Election/Registration Administrator (CERA) status. CERA designation is the highest achievement for those in the elections profession. Earning — and more importantly — maintaining CERA status means a commitment to a career-long process of continuing professional education.

Election 2000 established in the public's mind just how complex the elections process could be. Election 2004 demonstrated how important the voter registration process is and its potential to affect participation as well as administration. It is clear that Congressional and state legislative leadership have focused on our profession more than in any other period in American history. Political leadership at all levels is insisting on more training and better administration of the entire process.

In 1992, The Election Center invited Auburn University in Alabama to forge an alliance to dramatically improve election administration. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Robert Montjoy formerly of Auburn University, and the faculty of Auburn's Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program. The election community's gratitude to the founders of this program and to the faculty of the MPA Program at Auburn University is overwhelming. Ernie Hawkins, Carol Garner and Tom Wilkey accepted the challenge of developing courses specific to the voter registration and election administration profession. Now that Dr. Montjoy has moved to the University of New Orleans, he continues with the Professional Education Program.

The Election Center continues to develop new advanced Professional Education Program courses that help election professionals continue to grow and develop in their profession.

Since specific degree programs in elections/registration administration have not been developed, the establishment of a program providing professional education for practitioners in the field has become very important.

During this process, which involved representatives of the academic sector, election and registration officials from the local level, members of The Election Center, and the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED), numerous possibilities were examined. The Election Center's Professional Education Program presents the approach developed through that process. A foundation of high-quality educational courses in the core skills required for modern elections/registration administration was clearly necessary and that dedication to excellence is now the basis of the current program.

The Election Center's Professional Education Program was designed and coordinated with Auburn University. The involvement of an institution of higher education and the application of academic discipline to the planning and implementation gives The Election Center's Certification Program a level of credibility unequalled by other certification programs. Because of our relationship with Auburn University, our program participants have the opportunity to gain continuing education units through an academic institution as well as a certification of professional excellence through The Election Center's Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) Program that makes the program the most significant of its kind.

The Election Center's Professional Certification Board was created by Doug Lewis, the newly appointed Executive Director in 1995. It, in concert with The Center's Board of Directors, serves as the governing body for the Professional Education Program. Membership of the Certification Board will consist of eleven members, all of whom shall be voting members. Eight members will be selected to serve staggered, two-year terms, so that four of the eight are being appointed each year. The eight members will be comprised from the following groups:

a) Three members from the following responsibility level: secretary of state (when responsible for the election or registration process); State Board of Elections (or similar titles); state election director, and/or state voter registrar (with no elections responsibility) or its similar title/function. The three members so selected will serve staggered terms.

b) Five members from the following level: county clerk (when responsible for elections); county election director (or similar title/function); city/municipal election director; or City Board of Elections, and/or county or city voter registrar (with no elections responsibility). The five members so selected will serve staggered terms.

The eight members above will be appointed by the executive director of The Election Center, with the consent of The Center's Board of Directors. Consideration of future members for the Certification Board's eight rotating slots will come from recommendations by Election Center members and CERA graduates to the Executive Director and as chosen by the Director.

Three permanent members of the Certification Board will be: The Election Center's executive director; the Professional Education Program director for The Election Center; and one member as appointed by The Election Center's chairman of the Board of Directors (the chairman's selection shall serve at the pleasure of the chair and can be replaced at any time); the other two positions are "position dependent" rather than "person dependent"; i.e., whoever holds the title of each position will automatically serve as member of the Certification Board.

The chairman and vice chairman of the Certification Board will be elected from the membership of the Certification Board and will serve as chair or vice chair for one year; they may be elected to serve no more than two consecutive terms as officers although there is no limit on the number of times they may serve in one of these roles. The chair may appoint, with the consent of The Center's Board of Directors, various advisory committees as are deemed necessary by the Certification Board. Advisory committees may be chaired by a member of the Certification Board, and actions taken by advisory committees will be as recommendations to the Certification Board.

In the aftermath of Election 2000, we also decided that we needed to include training and certification for those manufacturers and suppliers of election administration goods and services. We added a new program beginning in 2001 for Certified Elections/Registration Vendor (CERV). The core course work is the same (currently) as that for the CERA program with the intent being to prepare elections and registration vendors with the kinds of issues, decisions, and processes that are faced by today's elections professionals. The CERV program is also aimed to developing better-prepared suppliers who subscribe to the same principles and standards shared with elections professionals. Eventually, the CERV program will add courses specific to the improvement of goods and services offered and delivered to the elections community. CERA status is reserved for those who are government employees serving in the profession, the CERV program is for employees of election and registration suppliers.

Beginning in 2007, the Election Center included a training and certification program for individuals that observe elections internationally. The new certification designation was named Certified Elections Monitor (CEM). Our first international student from India graduated as the first CEM in 2008.

In 1995, the program received the Outstanding Noncredit Certificate Award from the National University Continuing Education Association.

The core curriculum has been carefully designed to emphasize the skills and abilities, which are necessary to function effectively as a professional, certified, elections/registration administrator. At the current time, there is no testing associated with the CERA program, but it is anticipated that testing may be added in the future.

Presentation of the core curriculum occurs in different venues. Each year The Election Center conducts workshops in February and April. In conjunction with those workshops, Professional Education Program courses are taught. Additionally, courses are offered at the National Conference each August. The courses taught in February, April and August are taught concurrently meaning that each student can complete one course at each

offering. The reason for offering these concurrently is that Auburn faculty have regular teaching duties at the university during those months. Each May, several courses are offered at Auburn University (usually the courses are those most needed by the greatest number of students for CERA graduation) and each July, five courses are offered in a Summer Session. In odd number years, Courses 1-5 are offered in the summer; during even numbered years, Courses 6-10 are offered. This, then, constitutes our Professional Education Program. This curriculum provides the **only** university-approved intensive instruction for elections and voter registration officials available at the state and local level. The Election Center and the elections/registration community are committed to this project.

Already, several states are participating in The Election Center's State Registered Election Official (REO) certification programs. The REO Program provides a complimentary approach to certification including state specific programs for knowledge of state laws, procedures and court decisions. Successful completion of the State REO program can be used as credit towards one of the National CERA certification course offerings. Your interest in this program is evidence of its importance to our profession. Should you decide to pursue designation as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator, you will be committing yourself to a career long process of professional education. You will work hard to earn and maintain your CERA status. You will be recognized for your dedication and commitment to excellence in your profession.

Moreover, you will have the pride that comes with accomplishment beyond what others are able to achieve. Welcome, then, to what is sure to be an incredible journey in the pursuit of professional excellence.

2. Introduction

To understand the scope of our Professional Education Program (PEP), which can result in a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (**CERA**) designation, we encourage you to read the ***HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM*** section of the manual because it will give you a sense of the effort it took to get to the present. All too often people ask why we have chosen one thing rather than another and reading these two sections will give you the basis for many of our decisions and an indication of collective and individual effort that brought you this outstanding and much-copied program. Additionally, the Certified Elections/Registration Vendor (**CERV**) and Certified Elections Monitor (**CEM**) designations meet the identical course content in the Core Courses.

Perhaps we should define our use of the terms **Professional Education Program** and the **Certified Elections/Registration Administrator**. It is important to understand that the **Professional Education Program** is an overall education program designed to assist professionals at all levels within the specific office where they are employed in our profession. It is envisioned that there may be more levels of the Professional Education Program than exist currently. Some of those levels will advance beyond the current program, and some may be developed for employees who are not able to pursue the full CERA program. One example of this is the Election Center's State Certification Program, where election officials are certified to the specific practices and laws of their home state, which results in designation of (State) **Registered Election Official (REO)**.

CERA, CERV and **CEM** designations result from a career long commitment to continuing education, both academically and through seminars, conferences, and professional association work. However, you can be involved with the Professional Education Program without making a total commitment to pursuing the requirements of **CERA, CERV** and **CEM** certification. While sometimes the terms get used interchangeably, they really are separate terms. The Professional Education Program is available to all within the profession. CERA is not only the Professional Education Program, but also a commitment to continuous improvement of your professional skills.

If you started in this program under the requirements of a previous manual, the program content of your original program will not change from the provisions in the previous manual; however, fees, graduation procedures, and endorsement of our code of ethics are examples of changes in later editions of the manual that affect all participants.

3. *About the Program*

OVERVIEW

Congratulations, you are showing interest in The Election Center's Professional Education Program (PEP). This is a course of study and other requirements for those who want to be recognized for their professional knowledge and expert skills and are committed to continuing education for periodic upgrades of both knowledge and elections/registration management practices. The program consists of two major parts. After completion of certain coursework and additional requirements, you can become a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA), a Certified Elections Vendor Administrator (CERV) or a Certified Elections Monitor (CEM). To maintain this status, you must comply with additional requirements found in the subsection on *RENEWING AND MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION*.

The CERA, CERV or CEM designation is to be honored. To obtain the designation and/or to maintain CERA, CERV or CEM status will require a commitment and dedication to the highest professional standards, a commitment to continuing education, and a willingness to comply with the mandates of the PEP Certification Board. We welcome all who choose to seek certification. You will be challenged and you will gain from the experience.

Once you have applied to enter the program or completed one course, the requirements for certification are set until you either obtain CERA, CERV or CEM status or the twelve-year limitation (for anyone who started on or after January 1, 1997) is completed, whichever comes first. In other words, although the certification requirements may change over the years, applicants will not have their original certification program changed.

The Election Center's CERA/CERV/CEM Program differs substantially from other certification efforts that you may have encountered through other programs. Those certified through the CERA/CERV/CEM program will have the benefit of having been taught by university professors, professional educators, as well as subject matter specialists, and can obtain CEU (College Education Unit) university credit for their classroom participation. These professional educators and specialists have been paired with skilled, seasoned elections/registration practitioners so that the course work developed is related directly to your professional needs. Additionally, as with the programs of our workshops and conferences, The Election Center gears its continuing education program to have more substance, more information directly related to your profession, than other groups and associations. The hallmark of Election Center programming is to offer participants the best and most substantive educational experience available.

The cost factors of the CERA/CERV/CEM program are substantial. We are aware that some will question why the fee structure is the way it is. We want you to be aware that the cost of travel for educational professionals, honorariums for the professional educators, host facilities, meals, educational and course materials, promotional materials, mailings, faxes, phone calls and staff time to coordinate all of the above, is significant.

The fact remains that professional certification, done correctly, is not inexpensive. Thus, we sponsor the Auburn Sessions and the Summer Sessions at a significant discount with economy accommodations in mind.

Take pride in your enrollment in the CERA/CERV/CEM program. Upon successful completion of the program, you will have improved your skills and your knowledge of election and/or registration issues. You will have had many opportunities to get better acquainted with your colleagues throughout the nation who are in a professional role similar to yours. You will have accomplished what few in your profession have achieved: the right to be recognized for your expertise. You will have earned the right to be designated as a Certified Elections/Registration Administrator.

NOTE: Fees, which are listed throughout this manual, may be changed without notice and in no instance does a published fee amount constitute a contract amount. Fees may be changed wherever the costs associated with the program warrant new fees as determined by The Election Center's management process.

4. Requirements

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to become CERA/CERV/CEM certified, there are specific requirements regarding the program that must be met:

1) You must fill out an application for admission and submit it to The Election Center. The Application Fee of \$50 by check or non-cancelable purchase order (vouchers and/or billings not allowed) made payable to: Election Center- PEP Application Fee.

2) Each student has twelve years to complete the program from the acceptance date we issue to you or the date of your first class, whichever comes first. Your acceptance date is defined as the date The Election Center indicates in your acceptance letter. Those who have already taken one or more courses can have those courses credited toward CERA status. Send in an application immediately (but definitely no later than 30 days after your first course). You will have twelve years from acceptance date to complete your program. The Election Center's records will be the sole determinant of acceptance date.

3) *Students in the courses must attend the full class and its total time;* i.e., if the class is for two days instruction, the student must be present for all of the instruction on both days. Credit will not be given for those who enroll, attend a portion of the class, go do business or sightseeing, and return to the class. This requirement is so strict that ***not even verifiable emergencies will qualify as an exception.*** If you miss any portion of the course work, you must repeat the course in order to obtain credit. ***Fees will not be returned*** to those who are absent (for any reason) during the class, nor will financial credit be carried forward. Missing part of the class constitutes forfeiture of both financial and CERA/CERV/CEM credit for that course. It does not, however, affect any other requirements nor does it constitute prejudice against the applicant for any other courses.

Our associations with universities to offer these classes for college continuing education units mandate that no credit be given unless full contact hours are achieved. By eliminating all opportunities for abuse we satisfy both the institutions of higher learning and eliminate the potential for abuse by a few students.

4) CERA/CERV/CEM applicants must attend professional conferences and workshops that are elections/registration oriented. Although the majority of study for the CERA Program is in classroom hours with professional educators, the Certification Board agreed a limited amount of credit should be given for conference and workshop attendance because learning from peers is important. Credit for attendance at workshops and conferences for CERA/CERV/CEM status can be obtained through verifiable attendance at **two** Election Center conferences or workshops (events), or **one** Election Center event **and one** from one of the other associations listed in the Conference Attendance Requirements Section of the CERA/CERV/CEM PEP Manual.

Note: Attendance at the required events in the preceding paragraph must occur during the period between your acceptance date and June 1st the year you are graduating. Conference credit, for any single Election Center conference, may be used to complete graduation requirements OR renewal requirements, but not both.

5) CERA applicants must have completed one of the appropriate experience requirements (for their particular office responsibility):

- a) Registration officials: administration* of voter registration in one jurisdiction wide election;
- b) election officials: conducted* one jurisdiction wide election;
- c) officials having dual responsibilities: one jurisdiction wide election.

* This means for your particular responsibility within your office

6) The annual deadline to submit an Application for Graduation is June 1. CERA/CERV/CEM applicants must complete and return the graduation application along with a check or non-cancelable purchase order for \$175 to cover the certification fee. (This amount covers the original fee for certification, for maintaining official records, and to offset partial costs of issuing Election Center transcripts and awards.) If a graduate is unable to attend the conference and graduation ceremony, the fee is \$275. (The additional amount is to defray costs of the graduation ceremony plus staff time and expense to ship graduation awards.) Checks are made payable to: Election Center-Certification Fee. As with the application fee, no billings and/or vouchers accepted for the same reasons as before. You must meet the June 1st deadline in the graduation package or graduation may be delayed for another year. Final CERA/CERV/CEM certification will be issued only upon completion of all course and financial requirements. Auburn University also keeps records and continuing education unit certificates will be given on successful completion of the required course work. Transcripts of your CEU credits can be ordered directly from Auburn for a nominal fee.

7) CERA/CERV/CEM graduates must agree to adopt, sign, and adhere to the *Principles and Standards of Conduct of Elections/Registration Officials*. (See inside of back cover and on the outside of the back cover of this manual.) These two documents are our common bond in this profession. While the words may change slightly for international professionals, the basic documents will be the same for all. The *Principles and Standards of Conduct of Elections/Registration Officials* were created by Certified Elections and Registration Officials in Kansas City, Missouri, March 15 through 17, 1997.

8.) **State Certification Credit:** A graduate of the Registered Election Official (REO) program for State Certification conducted by The Election Center is entitled to choose credit for one of the Core Courses in the Professional Education Program. The student may choose any one of the 12 courses (but only one) and must complete a form (found in this manual) which tells The Election Center which course you are claiming as credit. The form must be completed and submitted to the address indicated on the form.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at state and national election conferences and workshops is a requirement for the Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA/CERV/CEM) designation. A minimum of two must be attended: two from Section One or one from Section One plus one from Section Two (see next page). Verifiable attendance records must be submitted with your CERA/CERV/CEM Graduation Application, showing date of conference or workshop, specific subject matter covered (conference program or brochure is permissible), and receipts showing paid registration. *Subject matter at such conferences or workshops must be voter registration or election specific* for a minimum of five hours actual instruction time; generic sessions in management skills, personnel issues, records management, etc., do not count.

Proof of conference attendance is required and all materials submitted will be reviewed for compliance. The following are acceptable:

- 1) a receipt for payment of registration fee and a copy of the program;
- 2) any other evidence of attendance

Note: Except in case of dispute, it is not necessary to provide documentation for Election Center events if you can verify the date and location, The Center will verify the attendance. Receipts from all other organizations will be required.

Section One:

The Election Center

National Conferences (You cannot use the Conference when you graduate as one of the required conferences.)

Special Workshops (**JEOLC attendance can not be used as one of the conference requirements**)

Section Two: [ALL MUST HAVE A MINIMUM OF FIVE HOURS ACTUAL INSTRUCTION TIME.]

U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC)

- Advisory Board meetings
- Standards Board meetings
- Informational conferences and workshops

The National Association of County Recorders, Elections Officials and Clerks (NACRC)

- Legislative conferences
- Regional meetings (if five hours instruction & specific to elections and voter registration.)
- Annual meetings

International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC)

- Annual meetings

International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT)

- Annual meetings
- Regional meetings (if five hours instruction & specific to elections and voter registration)

National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS)

- Annual or semi-annual conferences

National Association of State Election Directors (NASED)

- Annual or semi-annual meetings
- Regional meetings (if five hours of instruction & specific to elections and voter registration)

State workshops/conferences for elections/registration officials held in your state
(whether by the State Elections Office or by State Association)

*NOTE: Regardless of which group in Section Two sponsors meetings, sessions, seminars, workshops or conferences, **the subject matter must be directly related to election or voter registration administration and must have a minimum of 5 hours actual instruction time.** Generic topics on general, or training, etc., which are not specifically oriented to elections/registration issues, will not be allowed by the Certification Board.*

EXPERIENCE

It is anticipated that most applicants for admission to the CERA/CERV/CEM Program will be accepted without question, however, applicants need to meet the following conditions:

Condition 1:

- A) Must be a full-time election or registration official
- OR
- B) Must have a full-time job where election administration or registration of voters is a portion of their full-time job
- AND

Condition 2:

- A) Must have administered (or assisted in the conduct of) one jurisdiction wide election or voter registration program in preparation for such an election
- AND
- B) Must have two years elections or voter registration experience by the time of CERA/CERV/CEM graduation.

There will be atypical applicants, however, such as part-time commissioners, applicants from states, which employ elections/registration officials only part-time, international elections monitors and others.

The Certification Board wants every applicant seeking certification to be considered for admission. However, since it is impossible to anticipate all atypical categories, the Certification Board requires applicants who do not meet the above criteria to ask the state election director or state voter registrar (whichever is appropriate in your state), to certify the experience and qualifications of the applicant or provide other appropriate verification.

If the applicant feels that an improper review of qualifications by a state official has occurred, the applicant may appeal directly to the Certification Board. The Board will then make a determination of eligibility and notify the applicant.

There will be some state election directors or state voter registrars who do not wish to participate in this process, and in this case, the applicant should file a written experience exception document, giving:

1) detailed information concerning the applicant's experience (including dates, locations, position titles, position duties, along with names, addresses and phone numbers of those who can verify such information)

AND

2) the applicant's reasons for admission to the program.

The document should be submitted to the CERA Administration Office in care of:

Connie Schmidt, CERA

P. O. Box 478

Spring Hill, KS 66083

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1) CERA/CERV/CEM applicants must keep their own records of courses and conference/workshop attendance. The Election Center will also keep records and any conflicts between the two sets of records will be handled by the CERA Administration Office. Appeals of any discrepancies must be submitted in writing to The Election Center's Certification Board. Decisions of the Certification Board are final.

2) Additional requirements to obtain CERA/CERV/CEM status will be added to the program from time to time. However, it will only affect new applicants. All students will graduate by the program requirements in effect at the time of their applications.

GRADUATION

Upon successful completion of all requirements and approval of the CERA Administration Office, you will receive the following:

- 1) Graduation ceremony at the national conference in August;
- 2) Printed CERA/CERV/CEM Certificate suitable for framing;
- 3) An official media announcement sent directly from the Election Center Executive Director for your distribution to your news media announcing your status as a CERA/CERV/CEM graduate along with informational material describing the depth and level of preparation required to obtain the CERA/CERV/CEM status;
- 4) A distinctive pin that can be worn only by those achieving CERA/CERV/CEM status;
- 5) Special recognition at conferences and workshops sponsored by The Election Center; we will especially honor CERA/CERV/CEM members at The Election Center's National Conferences.

The Election Center also maintains a list of active CERA/CERV/CEM status available on its website (www.electioncenter.org)

Graduation conditions:

- 1) Graduation must occur:
 - a) within twelve years allotted for your completion date, or
 - b) within one year from the completion of your final required core course, whichever is sooner (this date may be extended within the same calendar year if the date of The Election Center's National Conference is after that date)
- 2) Graduation ceremonies will only be held in conjunction with The Election Center's National Conference in August.

3) Graduates who do not attend the national conference scheduled for their graduation will be assessed a special handling fee of \$100 (minimum) to cover increased costs including shipping, staff time, and insurance for delivery of graduation items, plus the pro rata share of graduation ceremonies. The total fee for graduation is then the normal \$175 PLUS the additional \$100 handling fee for a total of \$275.

Because of potential liability, only the graduate will be authorized to pick-up graduation materials at the conference.

4) Graduates who choose to attend graduation ceremonies only (and not attend The Election Center's National Conference) will be assessed an additional \$100 (minimum) fee to cover hotel space rental for the ceremony, meal and refreshment costs, decorating, pro rata share of travel for staff and speakers, public address equipment, etc. The total fee for graduation is then the normal \$175 PLUS the additional \$100 additional fee for a total of \$275.

Your achievement of CERA/CERV/CEM status will be one of the most important accomplishments in your professional life. We will do our part to honor the work and commitment it takes to obtain such a high honor. There will be programs and projects directed only to those who have obtained CERA/CERV/CEM status, so take great pride in your accomplishment.

RENEWING AND MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

(Note: Renewal courses taken prior to the graduation ceremony may be audited but cannot be taken for credit.)

Once you have obtained CERA/CERV/CEM status, your initial certification is good for a period of three years, as evidenced by an expiration date printed on your certificate. All future renewals will also be for three years.

You have 30 calendar days from your CERA/CERV/CEM expiration date to complete your application for renewal. These must be accompanied by a payment of \$100 each renewal period to cover the costs of maintaining accurate records on each CERA/CERV/CEM participant and to partially cover the costs of communication with CERA/CERV/CEM members each year. *It is your responsibility to keep track of your expiration date; notices sent by the CERA Administrator are as a courtesy to you and lack of notification will not be allowed as a basis of appeal.*

ELECTIVES

You must complete at least one additional course AND attend at least one Election Center national conference or special workshop within the renewal period. Additionally, you must also attend at least one elections or voter registration specific workshop in your state (minimum of five hours actual instruction), if offered in your state. Attendance at Section 2 events can be substituted when no state conference is offered (but cannot be substituted for an Election Center attendance requirement).

Conference credit, for any single Election Center conference, may be used to complete graduation requirements OR renewal requirements, but not both. Election Center courses for renewal may be taken at any time between the date you are certified for graduation and the deadline date for renewal.

Documents verifying attendance must be submitted just as for graduation. CERA/CERV/CEM graduates should keep records of courses for renewal. However, they are not required with renewal applications unless there is a discrepancy with Election Center records. As in original certification, The Election Center's CERA Administration Office will be the final determinant of whether requirements have been met.

LAPSES IN CERTIFICATION STATUS

Failure to maintain continuing education and other requirements as specified here or by the Certification Board, will be grounds for losing your CERA/CERV/CEM status. Once the CERA/CERV/CEM status has been lost, you will have **to make up courses missed** AND **attendance at events missed in order to be re-certified**. Attendance at events may be accomplished by doubling up on Election Center conferences and workshops. **No substitutions can be made for required courses**. It is of no advantage for you to let your certification lapse. During a period when your CERA/CERV/CEM status has lapsed, your name will not appear on any publication of CERA/CERV/CEM graduates. *Don't lose out - keep your certification.*

5. Frequently Asked Questions

CERA GRADUATION

Frequently Asked Questions

- **The Application for Graduation is due June 1st, but I will not meet all requirements until I complete courses taken in July. Can I still graduate in August?**

Yes — submit your application noting which courses are required in July. Approval for graduation is granted provisionally.

- **I meet all requirements for graduation except one Election Center conference/workshop. I plan to attend the National Conference at which graduation will take place. Can I use this on my Application for Graduation and still graduate?**

No — all conference and workshop credit must be in place prior to submitting your graduation application, which is **due June 1st** the year you are graduating.

- **Can I graduate if I am unable to attend the National Conference?**

Yes - Graduates who attend the graduation ceremony only and not the conference will be assessed an additional \$ 100 to cover pro rata share of the ceremony. Graduates who do not attend the conference or the ceremony will be assessed a shipping handling fee of \$ 100 to cover shipping costs and pro rata share of the ceremony.

- **How do I apply for graduation?**

The Application to Graduate is on page 39 of this manual. Print the application, complete it, and mail the graduation fee before the annual deadline of June 1st.

- **Do I need to include a list of the courses I have taken?**

No. The Election Center has records of all courses that you have attended. It is always a good idea to send copies of your Certificates of Completion for all CERA course work.

If I am an elected official, who do I have sign off on my Application for Experience credit? Can I sign it myself?

You need to obtain a signature from someone within your organization that oversees your position, i.e. County Administrative Officer, State Director of Elections, Secretary of State, etc.

- **I attended an Election Center conference before taking my first PEP course. Can I use this for credit towards graduation?**

No. Experience and conference attendance must occur within the time frame of taking courses.

- **I have just returned to the elections profession, can I use my prior election experience on the Application for Experience Credit portion of the graduation packet.**

No. You can use your experience beginning immediately prior to beginning courses and must meet the requirement for two years or a jurisdiction wide election.

- **How do I know when my Application for Graduation has been approved?**

You will receive written notification from the Election Center Executive Director in mid to late July

- **What can I do if my Application for Graduation is not approved and I dispute that finding?**

A procedure for appealing denied applications is included in this manual.

CERA RENEWAL

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I renew my CERA status?**

The CERA Renewal Application is posted on the Election Center's web site at <http://www.electioncenter.org> and in this manual . Print the renewal application, complete, and send the renewal fee to the Election Center Office, 12543 Westella, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77077. All renewals are due on December 31st.

- **How do I know when my CERA will expire?**

The date is on your CERA certificate and can be found on the Election Center website www.electioncenter.org.

- **How often do I need to renew my CERA and what is the deadline?**

You must renew every three years. The deadline is 30 calendar days after the expiration date on your CERA certificate.

- **What happens if I miss the deadline for renewal?**

You will not be listed as an active CERA graduate until your renewal is brought up to date.

- **What if I am unable to attend a required course during the renewal period?**

You must complete at least one CERA renewal course every three years. If you fall behind, CERA graduates are encouraged to complete a renewal course as soon as possible in order to keep their CERA status in good standing.

- **What happens when my Application for Renewal is approved?**

You will receive a letter confirming your renewal status from the CERA Administrator's office. The annual renewal recognition luncheon occurs every April at the Election Center workshop event. Renewal certificates and lapel pins are awarded at that time. If you are not able to attend the recognition luncheon, your certificate and lapel pin will be mailed to you immediately after the April Workshop.

6. Core Courses

COURSE I:

INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

COURSE II:

MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

COURSE III:

PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

COURSE IV:

ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

COURSE V:

ETHICS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

COURSE VI:

COMMUNICATIONS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

COURSE VII:

FACILITATING VOTER PARTICIPATION

COURSE VIII:

*IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS IN VOTER
REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION*

COURSE IX:

LEADERSHIP IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

COURSE X:

THE LAW OF ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

Course XI:

THE HISTORY OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS I- ANTIQUITY TO THE 1600S

Course XII:

THE HISTORY OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS II - 1600S TO MODERN ERA

Note: Courses do not have to be taken in sequence., To expedite CERA/CERV certification, we encourage enrolling in the courses whenever they are offered.

COURSE I:

**INTRODUCTION TO ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS
ADMINISTRATION**

(1&1/2days, 9 hours of instruction)

Although United States election and registration laws vary from state to state, all elections in this country require certain basic functions, often involving multiple procedures performed by different agents, such as private vendors or departments of motor vehicles. This course takes a systems approach, breaking the electoral process down into sub-systems and showing how to diagram, analyze and benchmark them. Studying these functions allows us to improve administrative systems within jurisdictions and to compare procedures across jurisdictions.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. The importance of documenting procedures
2. Flow charting
3. Evaluation
4. Systems in election administration
5. Analyzing sub-systems in election administration
6. Performance measurement
7. Identifying risks

COURSE II:

MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

While the United States is becoming increasingly aware of the role that election and voter registration administration plays in a democratic society, there is still a lack of discussion about management concepts that are specific to the profession. Working to understand and develop these management concepts will enable election and voter registration administrators to become more specialized in their field. This course examines the core role and functions of election administration with a focus on how to enhance citizen services; recruit, motivate, and assess office staff; and manage office time and resources effectively and efficiently.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Differences between public and private management
2. Core roles and functions of Election Manager/ Supervisor
3. Citizen service in election administration
4. Managing the office environment

COURSE III:

PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR ELECTIONS & VOTER REGISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

This course covers strategic management and budgeting. The learning objective is to provide participants with the knowledge and skills required for effective strategic planning and the various budgeting techniques seen in practice. This course links the skills and knowledge of effective planning and budgeting techniques to total quality improvement for elections and voter registration.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Discussion of strategic planning and total quality improvement
2. Technical and management aspects of budgeting for total quality improvement
3. Benchmarking

COURSE IV:

ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Effective use of modern technology has become a vital part of election and voter registration administration. Automation can greatly improve productivity and efficiency, but needs and solutions must be properly evaluated if expensive and potentially catastrophic problems are to be avoided. The course will focus on types of technology available and will expose participants to types of uses for the technologies. Technology will be examined for the ways it can be used to more effectively serve both the external publics as well as the internal needs of our employees and other governmental offices. One principle focus, however, will be to look at how technology changes the nature of the way tasks are accomplished and how to manage those tasks in a changed environment.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Using technology to enhance workflow
2. Rethinking work, redefining methods, and transforming the process
3. Computers in the office
4. Voting Systems

COURSE V:

ETHICS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

As with all professionals, Election Administrators and Election Officials may not fully understand or appreciate their duties and obligations without also understanding the disciplinary rules and ethical mandates governing their professional activities. Yet professional codes of ethics may have the complexion of arbitrary prescriptions and proscriptions unless those parameters are founded upon well reasoned and generally accepted ethical precepts. This course will be concerned with identifying and explaining those precepts and with connecting those precepts to the Principles and the Standards of Conduct for Elections and Registration Officials.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Principles of reasoning.
2. Ethical foundations.
3. Ethical Theories: Utilitarianism and non-Utilitarian theories.
4. Principles and Standards of Conduct for Elections and Registration Officials.

COURSE VI:

COMMUNICATIONS IN ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Effective communication with the media, state legislatures, and local boards and other entities involved with elections and voter registration is critical to maintaining budget and public support for the electoral process and for effective voter outreach and other public relations purposes. This course discusses effective communication with the media, state legislatures, local boards, and other entities involved with elections or voter registration is critical to maintaining budget and public support for the electoral process and for effective voter outreach and other public relations purposes. This course will provide the skills and principles important to effective representation of elections/registration departments and offices.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Knowing ourselves and others
2. Developing a plan to effectively communicate our programs
3. Relating to news media and public relations
4. Communicating with your legislature, state board, or local government
5. Developing a news release and news conference

COURSE VII:
FACILITATING VOTER PARTICIPATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

In the United States, participation in elections is essential to the proper functioning of the democratic process. This course discusses who votes, who doesn't, and why. It enables officials to measure participation and why it is important to the democratic process. It also gives suggestions on how administrators might motivate citizens in their area to register and vote.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. The importance of voter participation rates
2. Comparisons of registration and voting procedures and voting rates
3. Examples of voter outreach programs
4. Measuring the effects of voter registration programs

COURSE VIII:
IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROGRAMS IN VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Knowing what needs to be done is only the beginning. Implementation is a system of organizational structures, processes, and routines that put an idea into action. Without implementation, no real change occurs. Unless implementation is successful, the good idea quickly takes a turn for the worse. This course works with actions taken to carry out policies related to election administration and voter registration such as a new one-time project, a new continuous program, or a change to an existing program.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Definition of implementation
2. Relationship between ideas, design and implementation
3. Implementation perspectives (legal, organizational, networked, and political)
4. Structured approaches (top-down, bottom up, interactive)
5. Common implementation problems
6. Change management

COURSE IX:

LEADERSHIP IN ELECTION & VOTER REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

It has been said that leaders are born and not taught. Even conceding an element to that contention, it is certainly undeniable that effective leaders do exhibit common traits and characteristics which can be learned. It is also true that individual leadership styles can differ widely and yet be effective. This course will focus on identifying and assessing individual leadership styles, maximizing individual leadership effectiveness, and learning techniques of leadership particularly needed in the public sector. It will also explore building a leadership team.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Definitions of leadership
2. Qualities of effective leaders
3. Emotional intelligence
4. Situational leadership
5. Building effective teams

COURSE X:

THE LAW OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Although there are a number of different ways to politically participate, most Americans do so by voting. Questions of voter eligibility and ballot access have thus stirred controversy almost from the earliest days of our republic. Where states endeavored to restrict voting rights, Congress and the Supreme Court have generally attempted to expand the voting privileges. This course focuses on the law that has emerged from both judicial and legislative efforts to expand the voting privilege. It provides the larger legal framework within which election administrators carry out their responsibilities.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. The right to vote
2. The right to ballot access and the Supreme Court
3. Federal statutory efforts
4. Current controversies

COURSE XI:

The History of Elections and Voter Registration I (Antiquity to 1600s)

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

The best way to understand American democracy is to understand the events that led to its creation. That process begins, in this course, with a survey of the original Greek democracy of 27 centuries ago. Historical evidence from that era and the Roman republic that followed suggests that our democratic ancestors had similar concerns as present-day election administrators about election procedure, voter eligibility, potential fraud, and promulgation of election results. The desire of citizens to participate in the governing processes of their day can be seen in the Scandinavian “ting” before the end of the first millennium, the Italian city-states of the middle ages, and the emergence of Parliament in Great Britain.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Definitions and forms of government
2. Athenian democracy
3. The Roman republic
4. Italian city-states and Scandinavian political process
5. Emergence of Democracy in England
6. Voting procedures and representative government in colonial America

COURSE XII:

THE HISTORY OF VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS II - THE MODERN ERA

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

This course covers the history of elections and voter registration from the Colonial Period until the Civil Rights era. Understanding developments of the past which have led to the present can help elections and registration professionals interpret both the intent and the influence of laws and procedures on voter registration. By understanding the reasons for the decisions which impacted both voter registration and elections administration, we can more clearly understand why we administer the process the way we do in the present. It also provides a better basis for anticipating changes for the future and can help to predict the outcome of changes to the system as they are proposed.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Constitutional provisions and amendments pertaining to elections
2. Suffrage and voter registration
3. Conduct of elections
4. Campaigns and parties

7. Renewal Courses

*COURSE XIII:
THE POLICY PROCESS*

*COURSE XIV:
CRISIS MANAGEMENT*

*COURSE XV:
TRAINING IN ELECTIONS:
REACHING ALL LEVELS*

*COURSE XVI:
CONTRACTS FOR ELECTION SYSTEM EQUIPMENT*

*COURSE XVII:
COMPARATIVE DEMOCRACY*

*COURSE XVIII:
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT*

*COURSE XIX:
ELECTION LAW - CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES*

*COURSE XX:
FEDERAL IMPACT ON ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION- 1960'S TO PRESENT*

*COURSE XXI:
THE INTEGRITY OF ELECTION*

*COURSE XXII:
BENCHMARKING*

*COURSE XXIII:
RESEARCHING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION*

*COURSE XXIV:
EXPANDING THE FRANCHISE: PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM*

Note: Courses do not have to be taken in sequence, but to expedite CERA/CERV/CEM certification, we encourage enrolling in the courses whenever they are offered. Renewal courses are only offered to CERA/ CERV/CEM graduate

COURSE XIII:
THE POLICY PROCESS

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Today more than ever, election officials at all levels of government are becoming involved in the public policy process as new laws and regulations are proposed across the states and in Washington, DC. As election and registration officials, public policy affects what you do and how you do it. This course examines the policy process as a system of change within the American political environment that applies to all public policy decisions. The course looks at how you are affected and can effect various stages in the policy process—getting problems on the agenda, helping lay our rational alternatives to problems, impacting policy decisions and influencing policy adoption.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. The political environment of public policy
2. Theories of the policy process
3. Defining public problems
4. Public attention and agenda setting
5. Choosing alternatives and making decisions
6. Policy adoption

COURSE XIV:
CRISIS MANAGEMENT

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Crises come in many forms: natural disasters, last-minute changes in election law, failure of a key supplier, allegations of error or misconduct accompanied by media attention and political pressure, etc. This course draws upon the broader literature on risk management, disaster management, and crisis management to set up discussions of mitigation strategies for election administration. It examines the elements contributing to a crisis and effective decision-making processes to emerge out of a crisis situation relatively successfully.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Types of crises
2. The continuum of crisis management
3. Pre-crisis strategies
4. Crisis strategies
5. Recovery strategies
6. Crisis exercises

COURSE XV:
TRAINING IN ELECTIONS

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Training is critical, not just for poll workers but for everyone in the elections process. This course draws upon recently published material on elections training, best practices, and existing knowledge of adult education to offer principles and examples applicable to election administration. This is a graduate class for the PEP program, and participants will be expected to share their own experiences and actively participate in discussions and projects and to employ training techniques appropriate for the various training situations in the administration of elections and voter registration.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Setting training objectives
2. Analyzing audiences
3. Choosing training methods
4. Presentation tips
5. New Techniques
6. Application

COURSE XVI:
CONTRACTING

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Election officials acquire many goods and services from private vendors. The largest and most complicated contracts are usually for voting systems equipment and support. Successful procurement is affected by a variety of factors, such as governmental rules, funding decisions, and market conditions. The emphasis in this course is on the role of election officials and the factors that they can control or influence within the overall process.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Contract design goals
2. Roles in the contracting process
3. Types of procurement
4. Key steps in RFP procurement
5. Dos and don'ts for voter system acquisition and contract administration

COURSE XVII:
COMPARATIVE DEMOCRACY

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

There are many democracies in the world. Most of them do not hold elections in the same manner as the U.S. While people vote in all of them, the authorities that administer elections and the rules and procedures for calling elections, registering voters, voting, counting, and determining winners vary across nations. Alternatives include: national election commissions, state-initiated registration, proportional representation, and the single transferable vote. This course will provide an overview of electoral systems around the world and discuss the implications of different systems for politics and administration where they are used.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Types of electoral systems used in the world's democracies
2. The organization of election administration in different countries
3. Comparison of suffrage and registration requirements
4. Comparison of procedures for voting and vote counting
5. Comparison of procedures for determining election outcomes
6. Evaluation of election systems

COURSE XVIII:
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

The responsibilities of elections and voter registration officials take place in a high stress environment with demands and pressures from voters, candidates, legislators, media and other government agencies. Most of those who interact with elections officials know little about the process of administering elections, the deadline pressures, the budget constraints, and the staffing problems. Election officials are expected to be efficient, thorough, fair, open, understanding. In a given election cycle, candidates can err, voters can ignore instructions, the media can present inaccurate information, yet all parties expect election and voter registration administrators to perform flawlessly. This course discusses how to operate in such an environment—where expectations are so high, buck-passing is rampant, and stress is maximized. It will focus on conflict management—how to take the regular crises (and the really big one) of work in elections and handle them with professionalism, tact, and wisdom. The workshop will include a number of exercises to develop skills in active listening, communication, and conflict resolution.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Types of conflict and means of resolving conflicts
2. Trust building
3. Listening skills
4. Styles of Communication
5. Communication skills
6. Putting conflict management into practice

COURSE XIX:
ELECTION LAW: CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

The right to vote is a fundamental, constitutional guarantee evidencing an inchoate principle of democracy. To wit, an equal opportunity to participate in the making of public law. This course will be concerned with how the laws governing elections further or hinder the attainment of that democratic goal. Special attention will be devoted to the analysis of constitutional requirements and prohibitions applied to federal and state statutes.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Voting: e.g., barriers to voting, the right to equally weighed votes, etc.
2. Districting: e.g., Racial and political gerrymandering, etc.
3. Primaries: e.g., closed, semi-open, open partisan and nonpartisan blanket, etc.
4. Campaigning: e.g., truth in campaigns, financing campaigns, etc.

COURSE XX:
FEDERAL IMPACT ON ELECTIONS AND VOTER REGISTRATION: 1960S TO PRESENT

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

A new wave of federal involvement in elections and voter registration is underway, even though elections have historically been administered through local election officials. Behind the scenes, the role of the federal government is shaped by the American system of federalism and particular relationships between the federal government and the states. These relationships organize government in all areas of public policy and will shape the federal role in elections in the future. This course examines the forces that shape federal involvement in election administration and voter registration, with a focus on the federal role from the 1960s to the present. Large scale trends suggest new roles and relationships for elections officials.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Definition and arrangement of the American federal system
2. American federalism compared to other governing arrangements
3. Theories of federalism over time
4. Tools of federalism
5. Theories of state response to federal action
6. The accountability movement
7. The role of networks

COURSE XXI:
THE INTEGRITY OF ELECTIONS

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

The 2000 presidential elections brought unprecedented public scrutiny to the elections process. Close elections had been contested and recounted before, but none were analyzed by more Americans using more sources for their information. In the aftermath of that election, newspapers, television news programs, and Internet bloggers raised questions about not only the elections process itself, but also the integrity of those administering the elections. A veritable cottage industry has since emerged which seeks to use film to mold public opinion regarding the fairness of elections and election administrators. Relying upon documentaries, television clips, K-12 educational films, and other sources, participants in the course examine, critique, and learn from the way elections in America are portrayed in film.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. Stereotypes of elections and election administrators
2. Accuracy of film portrayals
3. Impact of film coverage of an election on election administration
4. Impact of film coverage of an election on democracy

COURSE XXII:
BENCHMARKING

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

Elections and the administration of elections have garnered increasing attention since 2000. Of particular importance to legislators and the citizenry they represent is administrative accountability. One way to ensure this public accountability, while concomitantly improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness, is a process known as “benchmarking.” Hence, this course covers the basics of benchmarking as it relates to elections administration. The course begins with a general overview of the benchmarking process focusing on its general use in the field of public administration. Next, the course covers several appropriate, common benchmarking strategies and methodologies available to elections administrators. Finally, the course explores how elections administrators can apply the aforementioned types of benchmarking to various elections administration issues.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. 12 stage methodology, product benchmarking
2. Best practices benchmarking
3. Local systemic elections processes
4. Outsourcing

COURSE XXIII:
RESEARCHING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

The election system is receiving greater scrutiny today than ever before. Researchers from a variety of organizations are studying many aspects of election administration, sometimes in isolation from other parts of the system. Their findings, which show up in academic journals, government reports, and popular press, can influence policy makers and public opinion. This course is a summary of methods and findings for election administrators. The goal is to help practitioners discern what is useful, critique what is not, and identify gaps that need to be filled.

Examples of topics that may be covered in this course:

1. An only-slightly-technical review of methods commonly used in election research.
2. Selected topics of election research
 - a. Appointment/election of election officials
 - b. Voter registration and turn out
 - c. Voting equipment
 - d. Poll officials
 - e. Ballots
 - f. Voting sites
 - g. Polling place operations
 - h. Alternative voting (mail, early, etc.)

COURSE XXIV:
EXPANDING THE FRANCHISE: PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION AND PROFESSIONALISM

(1&1/2 days, 9 hours of instruction)

This course covers the development of contemporary American election administration from the historic moments of the 1960s to the present day. The course begins with the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965) and traces key legislation, court decisions, regulatory developments, and political events alongside the launching of new organizations and activities that have shaped the growing professionalism of election administration during this time. The course concludes with a discussion of current key developments in the states that present professional challenges.

Major national milestones include:

Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act and reauthorizations (including language requirements), National Voter Registration Act, Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act and MOVE Act. Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped and Americans with Disabilities Act, Help America Vote Act

Professionalism of the field includes the launching of new organizations and activities, such as the Elections Administration Reports, the Election Assistance Commission, The Election Center, and others. The course will also consider current professional concerns that have evolved during this time, including issues raised by administration of the following types of issues:

Voter ID	Election day Registration
Felon voting status	Third party voter registration
Voter registration databases	

8. *Important Things to Remember*

First step is to complete the Program Admission Form on Page 41 and mail with the \$50 filing fee directly to the Election Center, 12543 Westella, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77077.

- The deadline to submit your Application to Graduate from the CERA Program is June 1st every year. The fee to attend the graduation conference in August is separate from the graduation application fee.
- All conference/workshop event requirements for graduation must be completed after the date of your first CERA course and prior to June 1st of the year you expect to graduate. Be sure to keep copies of all receipts for payments, a copy of the conference/workshop programs and certificates of completion.
- The CERA courses taught at Election Center conferences and workshops run concurrently. CERA courses taught at Auburn in May and at the Summer Session run consecutively. Any CERA courses completed during the Summer Session can be used to qualify for graduation at the August conference. These courses must be noted on the graduation application, which is due by the June 1st deadline.
- **IMPORTANT:** For each class that you complete you will receive a *CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION* approximately 4-6 weeks after the classes end. These certificates are additional proof of attendance. Please keep them for your records.
- A completed certificate from an Election Center sponsored State Registered Election Official (REO) training/certification program can be used as credit for any one of the twelve CERA courses.
- After you have completed all twelve CERA courses, you have one year to submit your Application to Graduate.
- The official CERA graduation date is the date of the graduation ceremony held in conjunction with the annual August Election Center conference event.
- The CERA program requires renewal every three years. Within this three year period, you must complete one CERA renewal course and attend two Election Center workshop/conference events or one Election Center workshop/conference event plus one from another association.
- CERA renewal courses are not eligible for credit towards renewal until after your official CERA graduation date.

<p>If you have questions about CERA graduation and/or renewal contact Connie Schmidt, CERA Administrator at 913-206-7395 or email at scjschmidt@aol.com or the Election Center at 281-293-0101, e-mail services@electioncenter.org</p>

9. FORMS

Application for Admission - CERA/CERV/CEM Program

Procedure:

1. Complete the application below and sign.
2. Include a check for \$50, payable to: The Election Center.
3. Mail Application for Admission and \$50 to: The Election Center, 12543 Westella, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77077
4. If you have questions, contact The Election Center, phone (281) 293-0101

Application for Admission - CERA/CERV/CEM Program

NAME: _____	DATE: _____
TITLE: _____	
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: _____ _____	
BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(City, State, Zip)</div>	
BUSINESS PHONE: (____) _____	FAX: (____) _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____	
HOME ADDRESS: _____ _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(City, State, Zip)</div>	
HOME PHONE: (____) _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(In case of emergency)</div>	
CURRENT POSITION: (please check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELECTION/REGISTRATION ADMINISTRATOR	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELECTION/REGISTRATION VENDOR	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELECTION BOARD MEMBER	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELECTION MONITOR	

Election Center Use Only

- _____ *Application Received*
- _____ *Fee Received*
- _____ *E-mail or letter sent to applicant*

RECORD KEEPING

CORE COURSES

Use these forms to keep track of when and how each requirement for certification is obtained. (Save receipts and certificates of completion.) These are for your personal records. Official records are kept by The Election Center and Auburn University.

Course #	Course Title	Instructor	Date	Location

Application for Graduation – CERA/CERV/CEM Program

Procedure:

1. Look at your records to verify that you have completed the required PEP Courses I through XII.
2. Mail forms and fees to: Connie Schmidt, CERA, P.O. Box 478, Spring Hill, KS 66083. Phone (913) 206-7395.
3. Deadline for submission is June 1 in the year you are graduating.

Application for Graduation – CERA/CERV/CEM Program

NAME: _____
(As to appear on graduation materials)

TITLE: _____

JURISDICTION OFFICE/
FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT: _____

BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _(____)_____ - _____ FAX: _(____)_____ - _____

E-MAIL: _____

ENCLOSED ARE: _____ Check for \$175.00 if attending conference and graduation ceremony, OR
_____ Check for \$275.00 if not attending conference and graduation ceremony or if attending graduation ceremony ONLY
_____ Application for graduation
_____ Experience Category Credit Information
_____ Experience Verification Credit Information
_____ Conference/Workshop Credit Information
_____ Documentation
_____ Miscellaneous: _____

CHECK: PEP courses you plan to complete between June 1 and July 31 of this year:
___ I ___ II ___ III ___ IV ___ V ___ VI
___ VII ___ VIII ___ IX ___ X ___ XI ___ XII

CHECK: I am requesting approval for graduation as:
___ CERA (or) ___ CERV (or) ___ CEM

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

Experience Category Credit for Graduation

Procedure:

1. Check the Experience Category that applies, i.e., Category 1 OR Category 2.
2. Note: Qualifying experience must occur immediately preceding entrance into PEP program or during time in the program, and be met by the deadline for submitting the Application for Graduation.

_____ **CATEGORY 1**

_____ I have administered, been involved in the conduct of, or maintained voter records for, at least one jurisdiction-wide election. This means statewide unless you do not have such authority. An example is a city clerk who does not administer statewide elections but does administer jurisdiction-wide - i.e., for the entire city

AND

_____ I am a full-time election or registration administrator/official, or
_____ I am employed full-time in a job where election administration or registration of voters is a portion of my full-time job

AND

_____ I have completed 2 years of election or voter registration experience (by graduation date).

OR

_____ **CATEGORY 2**

_____ I do not meet the requirements of Category 1 above.
This might include those with authority for jurisdiction-wide elections, i.e., local election boards who do not actually conduct elections but oversee staff with election responsibilities, or vendor representatives. However, I am submitting certification/verification of experience that qualifies me for CERA/CERV/CEM approval

AND

_____ I have completed 2 years of election or voter registration experience (by graduation date).

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

Experience Category Credit for Graduation

Procedure:

1. Complete one page for each position you have held that qualifies you for CERA/CERV/CEM approval. Duplicate as many forms as necessary. Please print.

Experience Verification Credit for Graduation

(Name of Organization/Jurisdiction) _____

EMPLOYED BY: _____

(Address) _____

(City, State, Zip) _____

Date: _____

(From /To)

Brief Description of election/registration duties/experience:

Statewide or jurisdiction-wide elections you have administered or been involved in the conduct of, or maintained voter records for, during the dates of employment listed above:

Election Title	Date	Election Title	Date

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

The following is to be completed by person certifying/verifying the above information. This cannot be the applicant.

Note: If you are an elected official, the verification should be a person in a position to verify that you were in that position during the dates stated, i.e., County Administrative Officer, State Director of Elections, Secretary of State, etc.

Certified by: _____

(Signature)

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Phone: () _____

Title: _____

Fax: () _____

Address: _____

(City/State) (Zip)

APPLICANT'S NAME _____

Conference/Workshop Credit for Graduation

Procedure:

1. Conference/Workshop Requirements (2 events):
 - (1) Attend 2 Election Center conferences or workshops; OR
 - (2) Attend 1 Election Center conference or workshop **PLUS** attend 1 event from another association (minimum of 5 hours of election or voter registration subject matter).
2. Conference/Workshop attendance must occur between the admission date and June 1st in the year you are graduating. **NOTE:** PEP courses do not count for conference/workshop credit - you must have attended the actual conference/workshop to receive credit.

Conference/Workshop Credit for Graduation

Organization	Title of Event	Location	Date	Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No documentation required for Election Center events Other events - documents required: program or written description PLUS receipt or cancelled check
APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____				Date _____

State Certification Class Substitution Form - CERA/CERV/CEM Program

Procedure:

1. After graduating from a State Certification Program, complete the form below and sign.
2. Mail form to: The Election Center, P. O. Box 965, Elk Grove CA 95759
3. Additional information of State Certification PEP Course Credit can be found in the PEP manual on page 10.
4. If you have questions, contact Connie Schmidt, CERA. Phone (913) 206-7395; Fax (281) 293-0453; e-mail: scjschmidt@aol.com

NAME: _____	DATE: _____
TITLE: _____	
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT: _____ _____	
BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(City, State, Zip)</div>	
BUSINESS PHONE: (____) _____	FAX: (____) _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____	
HOME ADDRESS: _____ _____ <div style="text-align: center;">(City, State, Zip)</div>	

IN LIEU OF A PEP COURSE, I HAVE ATTENDED A STATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM SPONSORED BY THE ELECTION CENTER AND WOULD LIKE TO SUBSTITUTE THE PEP COURSE SPECIFIED BELOW.

State Certification Program Information:

State: _____ Dates of Program: _____

Substituted PEP Course: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

Application for CERA/CERV/CEM Renewal

Procedure:

1. Renewal status is required every three years following your graduation date. Renewal fee is \$100.
2. Course Requirement: Complete one PEP renewal course during your three-year renewal period.
3. Conference/Workshop Requirements (two events): (1) Attend two Election Center conferences/workshops, **OR** (2) Attend one Election Center conference/workshop **PLUS** one event from another association (minimum of 5 hours of election or voter registration subject matter). This must occur between the graduation date and the three-year renewal deadline.
4. Deadline for submission is December 31 of your renewal year. Mail to the Election Center, 12543 Westella, Suite 100, Houston, TX 77077

Application for CERA/CERV/CEM Renewal

NAME: _____ TITLE: _____ BUSINESS ADDRESS: _____ _____ _____ (City, State, Zip) PHONE: (____) _____ - _____ FAX: (____) _____ - _____ E-MAIL: _____	DATE: _____ HOME ADDRESS: _____ _____ _____ (City, State, Zip) PHONE: (____) _____
ENCLOSED ARE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Check for \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Application for Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> Course Credit information <input type="checkbox"/> Conference/Workshop Credit information <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous: _____
I AM REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION STATUS AS: _____ CERA (OR) _____ CERV (OR) _____ CEM _____ DATE OF CERA/CERV/CEM GRADUATION _____ DATE CURRENT CERA/CERV/CEM EXPIRED (from Certificate)	
SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____	
Election Center Use Only	
_____ <i>Application Received (Date)</i> _____ <i>Fee Included</i> _____ <i>Renewal Issued (Date)</i> _____ <i>Membership Number</i> (Election Center Member #)	

For more information...

Connie Schmidt
CERA Administrator
P.O. Box 478
Spring Hill, Kansas 66083
Phone: (913)206-7395
Fax: (913) 856-2143
E-Mail: scjschmidt@aol.com

or

Election Center
12543 Westella, Suite 100
Houston, TX 777077
Phone: (281)293-0101
Fax: (281) 293-0453
E-Mail: services@electioncenter.org

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTION/REGISTRATION OFFICIALS

My Personal Pledge to Freedom, Democracy and My Profession:

I uphold the Constitution of the United States and the laws, policies, and court decisions of federal, state and local jurisdictions;

I commit to excellence and competence by maintaining the highest level of knowledge of expertise in the elections process through continuing education and self evaluation;

I am accountable for maintaining public confidence in honest and impartial elections which I conduct in a fair, efficient and accurate manner;

I dignify voters by providing equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process;

I am responsible for just and equitable treatment of the general public, elected officials and members of my profession;

I manifest a positive role in community relations by being accessible and receptive to both individuals and groups;

I have the courage and stamina to protect the public's interest from manipulation for personal or partisan gain while respecting the rights of all;

I am flexible and innovative within the framework of the law in carrying out my duties on behalf of the public's interest;

I conduct all fiscal responsibilities with wisdom and integrity, and I am accountable for all funds and resources committed to my charge;

I maintain a productive and efficient operation through a well managed elections environment;

I endeavor to maintain the highest level of integrity in performing all duties of my profession.

PRINCIPLES OF ELECTION/REGISTRATION OFFICIALS

We subscribe to these Principles:

- Freedom is an inherent human right, but it is also fragile and can be lost through neglect or misuse.
- Freedom requires responsibility.
- Freedom can best be maintained and nurtured through the democratic process. The success of the democratic process requires fair and open elections which accurately reflect the intent of the electorate.
- Therefore, it is our unique role as election officials to serve as gatekeepers of Democracy.

It is our sacred honor to protect and promote public trust and confidence by our conduct of accurate and fair elections.

As the public's guardians of freedom within a democratic society, we are responsible for the integrity of the process. Our role demands that these principles must be placed above personal or partisan gain.

Nurturing and protecting Democracy is a team effort in the profession of elections administration. Our task requires wisdom, courage and the desire to remain focused on our vision of free and impartial elections despite changes in our society and its laws.

By dedicated adherence to these Principles and Standards of Conduct, we demonstrate our loyalty to freedom, pride in our profession and a commitment to the excellence of the democratic process.