UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

Thursday, July 21, 2022

SUBJECT: 2022 Election Mail Preparedness

Dear Election Official,

This letter is a follow-up to the 2022 Official Election Mail™ Program Kit (Kit 600), which was mailed to election officials in March 2022. The Postal Service™ developed Kit 600 to help Election Officials in the planning and preparation of election-related mail. Kit 600 is part of our continued commitment to provide you with the tools necessary to use the U.S. Mail™ as a secure, efficient, and effective way to facilitate the election process. This letter provides an overview of the Postal Service's Election Mail organizational structure and highlights some of the mailing best practices found in Kit 600. These longstanding recommendations, which have been shared directly with election officials for years, are designed to help election officials create high-quality mailpiece designs that increase Election Mail visibility through the postal network, generally improve mail processing, and enhance Postal Service customers' experience.

<u>Organizational Structure & Resources</u>

In January 2022, the Postal Service established the Election and Government Mail Services team, which formalized the organization's commitment to and support structure for Election Mail. As the Director of Election and Government Mail Services, my team works to deepen the understanding of Election Mail policies and procedures among the Postal Service's 644,000 employees. Election Mail is an organizational priority, and the Election and Government Mail Services team leads the Postal Service's nationwide cross-functional effort to ensure operational preparedness across Logistics and Processing Operations, Retail and Delivery Operations, and other postal departments.

Collaboration and coordination between the Postal Service, election officials, their mail service providers, and other Election Mail stakeholders are critical for a successful election season. My team has developed tools and resources for state and local election officials that explain how to effectively use the mail and provided recommendations that election officials are encouraged to incorporate into their Election Mail programs. The Postal Service also has a dedicated nationwide network of postal experts, led by local Customer Relations Managers (formerly known as Election and Political Mail Coordinators) to assist each election jurisdiction with its

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Election Mail program. Customer Relations Managers are your primary point of contact to help you answer questions about mailpiece design, mail entry, processing, delivery, and mailing best practices. You can find your designated Customer Relations Managers, as well as Election Mail resources and mailing guidance, on our website usps.com/electionmail. Our website also includes key publications like Kit 600 and Publication 632, *State and Local Election Mail – User's Guide*, which outline our key considerations and recommendations about how to ensure efficient and timely handling of Election Mail.

Election Mail Security

Election Mail Security and Postal Inspection Service

The United States Postal Inspection Service® is the federal law enforcement organization assigned to protect the mail, including ballots mailed to and from voters domestically and abroad. Postal Inspectors nationwide secure the postal network on which the nation's critical election infrastructure depends. As the law enforcement experts on mail security, Postal Inspectors are a primary point of contact for election officials on Election Mail security matters and can help identify and address security risks involving the mail. Postal Inspectors also work with state and federal authorities to investigate threats to election officials. The United States Postal Inspection Service serves as a member of the Department of Justice Election Threats Task Force. Postal Inspectors respond to any reported criminal incidents involving Election Mail, including mail theft, mail fraud, and incidents involving threatening, suspicious, or dangerous mail. To report suspicious mail and election mail-related security or criminal incidents, election officials can call the Inspection Service's 24-hour law enforcement communications center at 877-876-2455 *(select option 4 for Election Mail issues)*. They can also visit us at www.uspis.gov. Postal Inspectors also coordinate with the USPS Office of Inspector General when allegations of Postal Service employee misconduct arise.

The United States Postal Inspection Service: Election Crimes Coordinators (ECCs)

The United States Postal Inspection Service's Election Crimes Coordinators (ECCs) are designated Postal Inspectors that address Election Mail and other election-related issues, as described above, that require law enforcement attention. The Postal Inspection Service's ECCs coordinate closely with the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, USPS Office of the Inspector General, and local and state law enforcement when appropriate. Additionally,

the Postal Inspection Service's ECCs coordinate with local and state election officials in instances where Election Mail is recovered as part of a criminal or security incident. The Postal Inspection Service's ECCs are located throughout the United States.

Mailing Recommendations

Below are some of the Postal Service's recommendations to help ensure that ballots and other Election Mail are identified correctly and handled efficiently, providing our customers with quality service and prompt delivery.

Consult with the Postal Service Mailpiece Design Analysts BEFORE Printing Mailpieces

The Postal Service recognizes that there have been supply chain disruptions in the paper industry. In light of those disruptions, if you are considering utilizing a new paper type, please consult with a Mailpiece Design Analyst before you buy to ensure that the proposed paper meets Postal Service Standards. in addition, the Postal Service strongly recommends that all Election Mail envelopes, including previously approved designs, be reviewed by a Postal Service Mailpiece Design Analyst each year prior to printing. Mailpiece Design Analysts will provide guidance to election officials on how to create envelope designs that increase mailpiece visibility, facilitate the application of postmarks, and are consistent with the Postal Service's processing requirements. Mailpiece Design Analysts can also provide advice on available postage discounts. Mailpieces that do not adhere to the Postal Service's requirements may experience processing problems, which could result in longer delivery times. You may reach a Mailpiece Design Analyst by calling the Mailing & Shipping Solutions Center (MSSC) between 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM Central Time toll-free at 877-672-0007 (select option 2 for mailing and shipping, then option 2 for MDA) or by sending an email to MDA@usps.gov.

Use All Available Postal Service Visibility Tools

The Postal Service offers several visibility tools designed to increased insight and trackability of your mailpieces within the postal network. For ballots, the Postal Service strongly recommends the use of green Tag 191, *Domestic and International Ballots*; Ballot Mail Service Type Identifiers (STIDs); and serialized Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMbs). In addition, the Official Election Mail logo and the Election Mail checkbox should be used for all Election Mail, including ballots. Tools like Tag 191, the Election Mail logo, and the checkbox alert Postal Service

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employees to the presence of Election Mail and distinguish Election Mail from the millions of other mailpieces that are moving through the network. Serialized IMbs with Ballot Mail STIDs allow you to track the delivery and return of individual ballots and can play a key role in identification, tracking, sorting, and payment.

Mail Class

The Postal Service continues to recommend that election officials use First-Class Mail for their outbound ballot mailings to voters. Using First-Class Mail allows for faster service while providing high visibility as the ballot moves through the mailstream (when used with Postal Service visibility tools, like serialized IMbs). Nevertheless, the Postal Service has long engaged in several practices to prioritize ballots that are entered as Marketing Mail, regardless of the paid mail class, when capacity permits and mailpieces are identifiable as ballots by the Official Election Mail logo or other Postal Service visibility indicia. The Postal Service will continue to process and deliver all identifiable ballots expeditiously, as we have done in past elections, with the result being that ballots commonly receive delivery timeframes equivalent to First-Class Mail even when mailed as Marketing Mail.

These are just some of the important recommendations from the Postal Service on how to use the mail efficiently and effectively as a part of the voting process if you choose to utilize the mail as a part of your election system. The Postal Service is proud of its role in the nation's democratic process, and we remain committed to providing the resources needed to support our customers. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues across the election community to deliver a successful election season in 2022.

Sincerely,

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