

## REMINDERS AND PREPARATION CHECKLIST

# Provisional Ballots

*Is your office prepared for a potential surge in provisional ballot voters?*

Provisional ballots are required when voter eligibility cannot be determined at the polls. In many states, provisional ballots can also be issued to mitigate a number of problem scenarios ranging from pollbook outages to problems with mail-in voting to larger disruptions to operations.

Plan ahead. Hurricanes, foreign interference, registration errors, and mass challenges are all looming as potential Election Day disruptions that could cause a surge in provisional ballot submissions. Provisional ballots take time and resources to process. Delays or misunderstandings in provisional ballot reporting can introduce confusion and anxiety amongst voters and candidates.

As part of your resiliency planning, we recommend the following:



## VOTING

- Order sufficient provisional ballots, envelopes, and necessary supplies and materials. Base your order on contingency planning needs rather than the previous year's turnout.
- Verify that your official provisional affidavits and envelopes are the correct, current versions.
- Train your poll workers on provisional ballot voting. Create an effective job aid to help them assist voters efficiently.
- Provide a provisional voting FAQ for your call center.
- Ensure polling places are supplied with transfer bags, seals, and log sheets to maintain the chain of custody for provisional ballots.

## PROCESSING

- Reserve adequate space, tables, and chairs. Consider your throughput needs in case of a surge in provisional voting.
- Have additional staffing on standby.
- Prepare job aids and training materials for processing provisional ballots, including:
  - Entering provisional ballot voter information into the state database.
  - Explaining the criteria for accepting and rejecting provisional ballots.
- If your state has a cure process for issues like missing signatures or identification, prepare those letters and a tracking system for incoming cures.
- Prepare a clear watcher/observer guide so they understand the process.
- If required, plan how to accommodate watchers, observers and members of the press.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Prepare a handout for voters at the polls explaining why they are voting provisionally and what happens next (including how to check if their ballot was counted).
- Ensure your office has a plan to communicate en masse via chat, e-pollbooks, text, or calls to alert poll workers of emerging or emergency situations.
- Update your website or phone system so provisional ballot voters can check their status. Be sure to communicate when that information will become available.
- Prepare an Election Night holding statement for the press and campaigns with the estimated number of provisional ballots and how long it will take to process them.
- Communicate with your canvass board or certifying body about their role in counting provisional ballots.