



## Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) Frequently Asked Questions

### **A. ERIC Basics: Origins, Mission, Governance, and Funding**

#### **1. What is ERIC?**

ERIC is a public charity non-profit membership organization comprised of 24 states and the District of Columbia. ERIC’s mission is to assist states in improving the accuracy of America’s voter rolls and increasing access to voter registration for all eligible citizens.

#### **2. Who created ERIC?**

A bipartisan group of chief election officials from seven states formed ERIC in 2012, with assistance from The Pew Charitable Trusts. These seven states were Colorado, Delaware, Maryland, Nevada, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

#### **3. Which states are members of ERIC?**

A full membership list is available on the “About ERIC” page and the “Who We Are” page at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org).

#### **4. Who controls ERIC?**

The members. The chief election official from each member jurisdiction designates a Member Representative to the ERIC Board of Directors. Each Member Representative serves as a voting member of the board. Refer to the Bylaws and Membership Agreement on the “About ERIC” page at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org). Want to learn more about what a “chief election official” is? Check out this [guide](#).

#### **5. How is ERIC Funded?**

Members fund ERIC. New members pay a one-time membership fee of \$25,000, which is reserved for technology upgrades and other unanticipated expenses. Members also pay annual dues. Annual dues cover operating costs and are based, in part, on the citizen voting age population in each state. Thus, large jurisdictions pay more in annual dues than smaller ones. Members approve their dues and the annual budget. Dues for the 2024-25 fiscal year range from about \$37,000 to about \$117,000. ERIC’s 2024-25 operating budget is about \$1,673,000. ERIC conducts annual independent audits of its financial statements.

## **6. Where are the ERIC offices located?**

ERIC's Washington, D.C. address is a mailing address only. Like other organizations, employees work remotely. ERIC members are aware of this arrangement. It reduces operating costs without sacrificing security or our ability to serve our member's needs. ERIC's servers are housed in a managed, secure data center located in the U.S. Secure remote access to the data center is limited to only employees who need it to perform their duties.

## **7. Why did election officials create ERIC?**

Keeping voter rolls up to date is a challenge because, every day, voters move or die. Voters don't always remember to update their registration. ERIC was created to address these challenges. [Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient](#), published in 2012, found that approximately 1 out of 8 voter registrations in the U.S. were no longer valid or significantly inaccurate, more than 1.8 million deceased individuals were listed as voters, and approximately 2.75 million people had registrations in more than one state. Additionally, the report estimated there were at least 51 million eligible U.S. citizens who were not registered - about 24 percent of the eligible population. The seven states that founded ERIC believed using state-of-the-art data matching technology, a robust data sharing program built on widely accepted information security standards, and an unprecedented commitment to cooperation would vastly improve their ability to maintain accurate voter rolls. It would also have the added benefit of allowing them to reach out to unregistered, but likely eligible, individuals more efficiently than anyone else.

## **8. Why are accurate voter rolls so important?**

As the official record of all eligible voters in a state, a state's voter registration rolls are the foundation of free, fair, and accurate elections. Most states are required by the federal National Voter Registration Act to "conduct a general program that makes a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters" from the rolls. States not subject to this federal law have state "list maintenance" laws aimed at keeping voter records up to date. Illegal voting is exceedingly rare but maintaining accurate voter rolls reduces the opportunity for such behavior and it helps build confidence in election outcomes.

## **B. How Members Use ERIC**

### **1. What do ERIC and its members do?**

At least every 60 days, each member submits their voter registration data and licensing and identification data from motor vehicle departments (MVD) to ERIC. ERIC refers to these data as Member Data. ERIC's technical staff uses sophisticated data matching software to compare Member Data from all member states, sometimes with data from other sources, to create the following four "list maintenance" reports.

- a. Cross-State Movers Report: Identifies voters who appear to have moved from one ERIC member to another using voter registration data and MVD data.
- b. In-State Updates Report: Identifies voters who appear to have moved within the jurisdiction, or who recently updated their contact information, using voter registration and MVD data.
- c. Duplicate Report: Identifies voters with duplicate registrations in the same state using voter registration data and MVD data.
- d. Deceased Report: Identifies voters who have died using voter registration data and Social Security death data known as the Limited Access Death Master File and MVD data.

In addition, ERIC offers three other reports:

- a) **Eligible but Unregistered Report:** Identifies individuals who appear to be eligible but who are not yet registered by matching voter registration data against MVD data.
- b) **National Change of Address (NCOA) Report:** Identifies voters who have moved using official data ERIC licenses from the US Postal Service.
- c) **Voter Participation Report:** For each federal general election, members can request reports identifying voters who appear to have voted more than once in the member jurisdiction in the same election, in more than one member jurisdiction in the same election, or on behalf of a deceased voter within the member jurisdiction.

Address validation is important and there are other tools available to help election officials identify addresses that may not be valid for the purposes of voter registration. Currently, ERIC does not investigate the validity of an address in a member's voter registration record. Simply put, ERIC compares a member's voter records to other members' voter records, MVD records, and to federal deceased data and national change of address data, for the purposes of flagging differences that indicate a member's voter record may be out of date or inaccurate. This is different from analyzing an address in a voter record to determine if the address is valid.

Refer to the "How Does It Work" page or access the Bylaws and Membership Agreement on the "About ERIC" page at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) for more information on the reports.

## **2. What are members required to do with the list maintenance reports ERIC provides?**

ERIC's four list maintenance reports identify voters who have moved within the jurisdiction or who recently updated their contact information (In-State Updates Report), voters who have moved from one member to another (Cross-State Movers Report), voters who have died (Deceased Report), and voters with duplicate registrations in the member jurisdiction (Duplicate Report). These list maintenance reports help members improve the accuracy of their voter lists.

Members must request at least one of these reports at a minimum of once a year, though the ERIC Membership Agreement strongly encourages members to establish a regular schedule for requesting these reports. The ERIC Membership Agreement requires members to act on these reports in a manner consistent with applicable state and federal law, including taking action to remove ineligible voters.

Pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Membership Agreement, when a member receives an ERIC list maintenance report "indicating that information in an existing voter's record is deemed to be inaccurate or out-of-date, the Member shall, at a minimum, initiate contact with that voter in order to correct the inaccuracy or obtain information sufficient to inactivate or update the voter's record. Members have 90 days from when they receive this information from ERIC "to initiate contact with at least 95% of the voters on whom data indicating a record was inaccurate or out-of-date...was provided."

## **3. What are members required to do with the Eligible but Unregistered report ERIC provides?**

The Eligible but Unregistered Report identifies individuals who may be eligible to vote, but who are not yet registered. This report helps increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. This report is generated by comparing MVD data to voter data and includes only individuals who have a driver's

license or state ID card issued by the member jurisdiction's MVD. These reports do not include political party affiliation, age, or racial data. No other entity or vendor is involved in generating these reports.

At least once every two years members send voter registration information to individuals identified in the Eligible but Unregistered Report. Information must be mailed by October 1 or 15 days before the state's voter registration deadline, whichever is earlier. In preparing the mailing, members use other state data sources to filter out individuals they believe are not eligible to vote. For example, they remove ineligible felons, persons deemed mentally incompetent to vote, and known noncitizens. These mailings clearly identify the state's voter eligibility requirements, as determined by law, including that the applicant must be a U.S. Citizen to register.

## **C. Eligible but Unregistered Reports – Informational Voter Registration Mailings Sent by ERIC Members**

### **1. What is the Eligible but Unregistered Report (EBU)?**

The EBU Report identifies individuals who may be eligible to vote but who are not yet registered. This report helps increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. It is generated by comparing voter registration data against Motor Vehicle Department (MVD) Data. Only individuals who have a driver's license or ID card, but who do not appear to have a voter registration record are included in the report.

### **2. What does ERIC require members to do with the EBU Report?**

At least once every two years members must use the EBU Report to send voter registration information to individuals they believe may be eligible to vote but who are not registered. The informational mailing must go out by October 1 or 15 days before the member's voter registration deadline, whichever is earlier. These mailings clearly state the voter eligibility requirements, as determined by law, including that the applicant must be a U.S. Citizen to register.

When using the EBU Report to prepare the mailing, ERIC advises members to use data sources not available to ERIC to filter out individuals they believe are not eligible to vote. For example, they are advised to remove ineligible felons, persons deemed mentally incompetent to vote, and others they deem ineligible based on state law. Again, these mailings clearly state the voter eligibility requirements, as determined by law, including that the applicant must be a U.S. Citizen to register.

Members do not add individuals from the EBU Report to poll books, poll pads, or their voter rolls. EBU Reports are not used to create fake voters. These actions are illegal. A person who receives the informational mailing must follow their state's voter registration procedures to register.

### **3. Why does ERIC require members to use the EBU Report?**

In 2012, ERIC's founding members – a bipartisan group of state election officials from seven states – established ERIC's dual mission: *Help states improve the accuracy of America's voter rolls and increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens.* ERIC's mission mirrors part of Congress's stated purposes for passing the [National Voter Registration Act](#):

- 1) "to...increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote in elections for Federal office" and
- 2) "to ensure that accurate and current voter registration rolls are maintained."

To support its mission, members established requirements for using the various reports ERIC provides its members. The EBU Report helps members increase access to voter registration information, and its voter list maintenance reports help members keep their voter rolls more accurate and up to date. The requirements can be found in Section 4 of the [ERIC Membership Agreement](#).

**4. Are all ERIC Members required to use the EBU Reports?**

No. As of August 2024, ten (10) members are exempt from the requirement to use the EBU Report. These members did not receive the report or send informational mailings based on the report in 2024. These states are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Section 4 of the [ERIC Membership Agreement](#) includes a provision that allows a member to apply for an exemption from the EBU requirements if certain conditions are met. The general exemption process is specified in the Membership Agreement.

**5. What do ERIC members do to reduce the possibility that ineligible individuals receive the informational voter registration mailing?**

There are several actions ERIC members must take or are advised to take to reduce the possibility that individuals who are ineligible to register to vote receive the informational mailing.

First, to ensure known noncitizens do not receive the informational mailing, the ERIC Membership Agreement prohibits members from submitting MVD data for known noncitizens. Members are responsible for filtering out known noncitizens from their MVD data prior to submitting the data to ERIC.

Second, once members receive the EBU Report, Members use data sources not available to ERIC to filter out other individuals they believe are not eligible to vote. For example, they remove ineligible felons and persons deemed mentally incompetent to vote. After conducting their internal filtering processes, members send an informational mailing to the remaining individuals.

Third, the informational mailing tells recipients they may only register if they meet *all* voter registration eligibility requirements. In addition, the informational mailing includes a specific warning that you must be a U.S. Citizen to register to vote. This information helps guard against inadvertent registration in states where MVD data may contain unknown noncitizens.

**6. What kinds of data are included in the EBU Report?**

The EBU Report only contains information necessary to contact an individual, such as name and address. The EBU Report only contains data for the member state receiving the report. ERIC does not have information on political party affiliation, race, or ethnicity. Therefore, the reports never include these data.

**7. Does ERIC add people from the EBU Report to its members' voter registration rolls, systems, poll pads, etc.?**

No. ERIC is never connected to any state's voter registration system; it cannot add voters to a state's voter registration system or equipment. Refer to the "[Technology and Security](#)" page on our

website at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) to learn more about how members securely transmit data to ERIC and how members receive reports from ERIC in a secure manner.

**8. Does ERIC use outside contractors, vendors, government agencies, or nonprofits to create the EBU Reports?**

No. ERIC uses highly efficient customized data matching software developed by Sensing and licensed through IBM to analyze the data it uses and produce all its reports. Just two ERIC employees process all the data ERIC receives and generate all the reports ERIC provides, including the EBU Report. The software is installed on ERIC’s servers. IBM and Sensing never have access to ERIC’s data.

Visit ERIC’s [Security](#) page to learn more about its approach to data matching. Visit ERIC’s [Stats](#) page for point in time statistics on the number of records, by category, ERIC has identified for its members.

**9. Do the EBU-based informational voter registration mailings benefit one political party over another?**

No, according to recent research on Nevada and Pennsylvania’s EBU-based mailings prior to the 2016 Presidential Election. Researchers concluded both states experienced increased registration but the increase “did not disproportionately benefit either major party” and “turnout among registrants did not significantly differ by partisanship.” Further, the researchers stated “[o]ur best estimates suggest ERIC’s efforts did not consistently favor either party or affect the election outcome in either state.”

Citation: McDonald, J., Safarpour, A., Hanmer, M. J., & Bryant, L. (2024, September 17). *Evaluating Partisan Registrations Amid the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) Controversy*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/7wr8g>

**10. Do minors appear on the EBU Report?**

As a matter of data security, ERIC does not have date of birth data in plain text because every member applies a cryptographic one-way hash to date of birth data (and other sensitive data) prior to submitting the entire data file to ERIC. This means ERIC staff cannot determine the age of **any** individual for whom it has data. ERIC does not receive any other data indicating an individual’s age.

Visit ERIC’s [Security](#) page to learn more about how ERIC and its members use cryptographic one-way hashing to protect privacy and strengthen data security. To learn more about what data ERIC uses, and how ERIC protects these data, refer to Section D of this FAQ.

ERIC does not require members to submit data for minors. However, most states allow some form of pre-registration—i.e., their laws permit individuals under 18 to register so they are eligible to cast a vote after they turn 18. Therefore, whether an EBU Report contains minors (even though ERIC can’t discern that information because of its cybersecurity hashing practices) depends on decisions made by the member in compliance with its laws. Each member works with their Motor Vehicle Department to determine an age cutoff for MVD data submitted to ERIC based on their voter registration requirements such as whether minors can pre-register before they turn 18 and other factors as determined by the member. As such, all voter and MVD records are treated equally, there is no age-specific functionality.

## **D. Use of Data; Data and Privacy Protections**

### **1. Why does ERIC need driver's licensing data?**

Keeping voter rolls up to date is a challenge because voters move or die. Voters rarely remember to update their voter registration when they move, but they do update their license or ID with the motor vehicle licensing agency. While not perfect, driver's licensing data is official government data, and it is a reliable data source for identifying people who have moved or changed their name. It just makes sense to compare these data to voter data to spot out-of-date voter registrations. These data are also highly useful for comparing against Social Security death data to identify deceased voters more accurately, even if these data are not included in the Deceased Report.

Refer to the "Technology and Security" page at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) to learn more about how ERIC compares data.

### **2. Do members submit data from other state agencies, such as social service or health care departments?**

No. Members submit only voter registration and MVD data. In addition to these two data sets, ERIC is certified to use the Limited Access Death Master File from the Social Security Administration and is a certified subscriber of National Change of Address data from the U.S. Postal Service. These are the only four data sets ERIC uses to provide services to its members.

### **3. Why does ERIC require members to submit sensitive data?**

Members submit dates of birth, driver's license/ID card numbers, and Social Security numbers to ERIC after applying a cryptographic one-way hash to these data points. Hashed data is not human readable. ERIC only accepts voter registration and driver's license data files if these sensitive data points have been hashed.

These hashed data are included in the comparison and matching process because they are essential to accurately identifying voters who are no longer eligible to vote, have moved, are deceased, who may have voted illegally, or to identify potentially eligible but unregistered individuals. Because all states use the same cryptographic one-way hashing tool, these hashed data can still be compared against each other. Responsible, secure, and legally compliant use of these data ensure ERIC reports are more effective than reports prepared without using these data.

Refer to the "Technology and Security" page at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) to learn more about the cryptographic one-way hash and how members and ERIC protect the data we utilize.



#### **4. What steps does ERIC take to keep data secure?**

Data privacy and security is the top priority for ERIC and its members. ERIC's Bylaws and Membership Agreement include numerous provisions addressing the protection of the data ERIC utilizes and the reports ERIC creates for its members. ERIC also follows an Information Security Management Plan and extensive set of security policies and procedures approved by the Board of Directors annually. In 2017, 2020, and 2023, ERIC successfully completed a third-party assessment of how it handles protected data in the Social Security Limited Access Death Master File. In 2023, ERIC successfully completed a Type 1 SOC 2 audit. SOC 2 audits are intended to assure ERIC members and the public that their information is protected and secure. In 2020, another independent cybersecurity assessment confirmed that ERIC complies with security standards.

Refer to the Bylaws and Membership Agreement on the "About ERIC" page and the review the "Technology and Security" page on our website at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) for more details about our approach to data security, the audit, and these assessments.

#### **5. Is the ERIC Organization or its members permitted to share ERIC's List Maintenance and Eligible but Unregistered Reports with outside parties?**

It depends on the report and applicable federal law. Because ERIC's List Maintenance reports (Cross-State Movers, In-State Updates, Duplicate, and Deceased reports) and Eligible but Unregistered Report are all generated using licensing and identification data from motor vehicle departments (MVD) and because ERIC additionally relies on Limited Access Death Master File ("LADMF") data to create the Deceased Report, the two federal laws of central concern to ERIC are the Driver's Privacy Protection Act ("DPPA") and Section 203 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 and associated regulations administered by the National Technical Information Service ("LADMF Regulations"). MVD data is generally protected against release under the DPPA. LADMF data is generally protected from release during the three-calendar year period starting from the date of death. The ERIC Bylaws and Membership Agreement include provisions intended to ensure compliance with these federal laws. What follows explains ERIC's position on how these laws apply to each of ERIC's List Maintenance reports and its Eligible but Unregistered Report. This same information is summarized in the attached chart.

**In-State Updates, Cross-State Movers, and Eligible but Unregistered Reports and the DPPA:**

These reports are created by comparing voter registration data with MVD data, and the reports themselves contain MVD data from motor vehicle records. Under the DPPA, these reports cannot be released unless a statutory exception applies.

**In-State Duplicate and Deceased Reports and the DPPA:**

MVD data plays an important role in creating these two ERIC list maintenance reports. Specifically, MVD data is used in the background to help strengthen the matches identified in these two reports, but such data does not actually appear in the reports. ERIC's position is that these two reports do not fall within the scope of the DPPA. This means members may, if they deem it appropriate, disclose data from the In-State Duplicate Reports and Deceased Reports, consistent with provisions in Section 3 of the ERIC Membership Agreement.



**6. Has ERIC shared data with third parties for partisan purposes?**

No. As a 501(c)(3), ERIC is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. ERIC complies with applicable IRS regulations and federal data handling laws.

In compliance with federal data handling laws, there has been independent research and evaluation of the effectiveness of the eligible but unregistered mailings and list maintenance reports. Independent evaluation is important to ensuring the organization is accomplishing its mission.

In 2018 and 2020 individual members voluntarily participated in third-party research projects to evaluate the effectiveness of the members' eligible but unregistered mailings. All members were invited to participate in these voluntary research projects, which were conducted in compliance with applicable federal data handling laws and IRS regulations governing 501(c)(3) organizations. ERIC acted as a secure pass-through for the data used in these projects, facilitating the secure transit of members' data at the members' request.

**7. Is ERIC connected to state voter registration systems?**

No. ERIC is never connected to any state's voter registration system. Members retain complete control over their voter rolls. Refer to the "Technology and Security" page on our website at [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org) to learn more about how members securely transmit data to ERIC and how members receive reports from ERIC in a secure manner.

ERIC Reports: Legal Protections and Disclosure V1.1 (June 4, 2024)

Report name and description	Is Motor Vehicle Department Data (MVD) in the report?	Are there other data sources in the report?	Is the data in the report protected under the Driver's Privacy Protection Act?	Do other Federal data protection laws apply to the data in the report?	Is there a legal requirement to withhold the report under federal data protection laws?
<b>Eligible but Unregistered</b> Identifies individuals with an active MVD record but who are not registered to vote	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Cross-State Movers</b> Identifies voters who appear to have a more recent voter registration/MVD record in another ERIC state	Yes	Voter Registration Data	Yes	No	Yes
<b>In-State Movers</b> Identifies voters who appear to have more recent activity in their MVD record, e.g., driver's license address appears more current	Yes	Voter Registration Data	Yes	No	Yes
<b>In-State Duplicates</b> Identifies voters with more than one voter registration in the same state	No	Voter Registration Data	No	No	No
<b>Deceased Voters</b> Identifies voters who appear on the Limited Access Death Master File (LADMF)	No	LADMF Data	No	Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013/LADMF regulations.	Yes, in accordance with Section 3 of the Membership Agreement.