



## Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) FAQ

### 1. What is ERIC?

ERIC is a public charity non-profit membership organization comprised of 31 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?

State 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?

Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia are members of ERIC. A full membership list is available on the ERIC website – [www.ericstates.org](http://www.ericstates.org).

### 4. Who controls ERIC?

The states. The chief election official from each member state designates a Member Representative to the ERIC Board of Directors. Each Member Representative serves as a voting member of the board. For more on ERIC's governance and membership requirements, read the [ERIC Bylaws and Membership Agreement](#). Just looking for a quick overview? Check out the [ERIC Summary of Membership Guidelines and Procedures](#). Want to learn more about what a "chief election official" is? Check out this [guide](#).

### 5. How is ERIC Funded?

New members pay a one-time membership fee of \$25,000, which is earmarked to help cover expenses for technology upgrades and expansions necessary to support a growing membership. States 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 states pay more in annual dues than small states. Members approve the dues and the annual budget. Dues for the 2021-2022 fiscal year range from about \$15,000 to about \$74,000. ERIC's 2021-22 operating budget is about \$1,037,000. ERIC conducts annual independent audits of its financial statements.

### 6. Is ERIC made up of election officials from mostly one political party?

ERIC had seven founding members in 2012. Four of these were led by a Republican and three by a Democrat, when looking at the party affiliation of each state's chief election official. ERIC's current membership of 32 is divided almost evenly between states led by a Republican and states led by a Democrat, excluding states where the position is nonpartisan.

### 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 far more accurately and 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.

## **9. What does ERIC 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.

- 1) **Cross-State Movers Report:** Identifies voters who appear to have moved from one ERIC state to another using voter registration data and MVD data.
- 2) **In-State Movers Report:** Identifies voters who appear to have moved within the state using voter registration and MVD data.
- 3) **Duplicate Report:** Identifies voters with duplicate registrations in the same state using voter registration data.
- 4) **Deceased Report:** Identifies voters who have died using voter registration data and Social Security death data known as the Limited Access Death Master File.

In addition, ERIC offers three other reports:

- 1) **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.
- 2) **National Change of Address (NCOA) Report:** Identifies voters who have moved using official data ERIC licenses from the US Postal Service.
- 3) **Voter Participation Report:** After each federal general election, states can request reports identifying voters who may have cast ballots in more than one state or more than one ballot in the same state.

More information about all of ERIC's reports is available in the [ERIC Bylaws and Membership Agreement](#).

## **10. What are member states required to do with the data ERIC provides?**

ERIC's four list maintenance reports identify voters who have moved within the state, voters who have moved from one ERIC state to another, voters who have died, and voters with duplicate registrations in the



state. These reports help states improve the accuracy of their voter lists. They must request at least one of these reports at a minimum of once a year, though the ERIC Membership Agreement strongly encourages states to establish a regular schedule for requesting these reports.

At least once every two years Members are required to send voter registration information to potentially eligible residents who are not registered to vote, as identified in the report produced by comparing motor vehicle licensing data to voter data. This report helps increase access to voter registration for all eligible citizens. These mailings must be conducted by October 1 or 15 days before the state's voter registration deadline, whichever is earlier. These mailings clearly identify the state's voter eligibility requirements. Prior to conducting the mailing, states review the data to remove any known ineligible individuals, as per state law.

Members must act on all these reports in accordance with federal laws that protect the data contained within the reports, as well as with applicable state and federal laws regarding voter registration and voter list maintenance.

### **11. Why does ERIC need a state's voter registration and 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 or change their name, 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. Learn more about how the organization compares data by reading [ERIC's Technology and Security Overview](#).

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

Data privacy and security is the top priority for ERIC and its member states. [ERIC's Bylaws and Membership Agreement](#) include numerous provisions addressing the protection of the data states submit to ERIC and the data reports ERIC creates for the states. ERIC also follows an extensive set of security policies and procedures approved by the Board of Directors in its Information Security Management Plan. In 2017 and 2020, ERIC successfully completed a third-party review of how it handles protected data in the Social Security Limited Access Death Master File. In 2020, another independent cybersecurity assessment confirmed that ERIC complies with security standards. For more details about the organization's approach to data security and these assessments, read [ERIC's Technology and Security Overview](#).

### **13. Is the ERIC organization or its member states 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 and Eligible but Unregistered Reports are all created 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 [this chart](#).

In-State Movers, 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. As part of its ongoing review of its data protection policies and procedures and applicable law, 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 (after the LADMF protection expires).

Deceased Report and the LADMF Regulations:

The National Technical Information Service has certified ERIC to receive LADMF data for the purpose of preparing Deceased Reports for member states. The LADMF Regulations define LADMF data as death master file data for individuals who died within the three-calendar period beginning on the date of death. By way of example, this means that if an individual died on March 3, 2022, their data is protected until March 3, 2025. Once that period expires, the LADMF data becomes what the regulations call Open Access DMF data and is no longer protected. Therefore, under the LADMF regulations, neither ERIC nor its member are permitted to disclose data in the Deceased Reports within the three-year period of protection. Once that period expires, however, ERIC members may disclose unprotected data contained in Deceased Reports.

#### **14. Is ERIC connected to state voter registration systems?**

No. ERIC is not connected to any state system. ERIC is not a "national voter registration database." Read [ERIC's Technology and Security Overview](#) to learn more about how states securely submit data to ERIC and how states receive reports from ERIC in a secure manner.

#### **15. Have ERIC members removed ineligible voters from their voter rolls?**

Yes. States subject to the federal National Voter Registration Act are required to remove ineligible voters from the voter rolls. The ERIC Membership Agreement requires members to act on the reports it provides in a manner consistent with the law, including taking action to remove ineligible voters. The headline of a recent story about ERIC stated, "The Largest U.S. Counties Removed Only Zero to Two Ineligible Voters from Their Voter Rolls the Last 4 years." The story leads readers to believe these counties are in states that are members of ERIC. In fact, the counties listed are in states that are NOT members of ERIC.