



# **Division of Elections**

**Joint State Affairs Committee Presentation**

**January 23, 2025**

**Carol Beecher, Director**

# Division of Elections Staff

- 33 Permanent Staff
  - Appointed by the director or hired by division managers
  - Required to remain neutral and sign an oath of impartiality
- Five Regional Offices
  - Region 1 – Juneau (House Districts 1 – 6)
  - Region 2 – Anchorage (House Districts 9 – 24)
  - Region 3 – Fairbanks (House Districts 31 – 36)
  - Region 4 – Nome (House Districts 37 – 40)
  - Region 5 – Wasilla (House Districts 7 – 8 and 25 – 30)

# Voter Registration (AS 15.05.010)

- A person may vote at any election who is:
  - A citizen of the United States;
  - 18 years of age or older;
  - A resident of the state and of the house district at least 30 days before election day; and
  - Not registered to vote in another jurisdiction.

# Voter Registration and Citizenship

- National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)
  - Voter registration forms may not include “any requirement for notarization or other formal authentication”
  - Requires states to include voter registration as part of an application for a driver’s license and driver’s license renewal
- Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) registration forms:
  - Person may ‘opt in’ to be registered to vote and must affirm citizenship
- PFD Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)
  - Division of Elections receives a list from the PFD Division for only those applicants who marked they are a U.S. citizen
  - Person is automatically registered to vote if they mark they are a U.S. citizen
  - If so marked and the application is new or the address has changed:
    - Person is notified that they will be registered if they don’t opt out within 30 days

# PFD Automatic Voter Registration

PROCESS: (AS 15.07.070(j)-(m))

- DOE will only receive information from PFD applicants who stated on their application that they are a U.S. citizen
- New applicants and those with address changes are sent a notice informing them they will be automatically registered to vote unless they opt out within 30 days of notice
- Filing for a PFD is defined as “appearing to vote” for purposes of remaining active in the Voter Registration System

# Residence (AS 15.05.020)

- For purposes of determining residence for voting:
  - The address of a voter as it appears on the official voter registration record is presumptive evidence of the person's voting residence
  - The presumption is negated only if the voter notifies the director in writing of a change of residence

# Voter Registration List Maintenance

AS 15.07.130

- Yearly notification to voters (51,119 mailed in 2024)
- Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) lists
- Duplicate voters
- Vital Statistics
- List Maintenance Statistics
  - [www.elections.Alaska.gov/research/statistics/](http://www.elections.Alaska.gov/research/statistics/)
  - 19,857 inactive records removed in 2025

# Methods of Voting

## ✓ ABSENTEE

- Must apply for an absentee ballot to vote by mail
- May vote absentee in person
  - Required voter to fill out envelope verifying information and goes through the review board process

## ✓ SPECIAL NEEDS

- Requires a personal representative

*Review Boards begin review of absentee and special needs ballots 7 days before Election Day*

## ✓ EARLY

- Vote in person beginning 15 days before Election Day
- Requires verification of registration in the Voter Registration & Election Management System (VREMS)
- Review Board reviews early vote ballots that were cast after registers were printed

## ✓ ELECTION DAY

- Vote in person on Election Day
- Must be on the register or vote a questioned ballot



# Ballots

## OUTGOING:

- Printed and shipped to Regional Offices
- Tracked and follow chain of custody
- Numbered and provided in pads of 25
- Logged and stored before Election Day in a secured room
- Mailed with USPS tracking to some locations

## ELECTION DAY:

- Voter signs register, shows ID (AS 15.15.195)
- If name is not on register or no ID – Questioned Ballot (AS 15.15.198-215)
- No ballots? Precinct uses unmarked substitute ballots or other election materials to mark the intent of the voter (AS 15.15.140)
- Spoiled Ballots – voter destroys, places in envelope (AS 15.15.250)

## POST-ELECTION:

- Ballots mailed to Juneau Director's Office
- Stored 22 months

# Ballot Receipt Timeframes

AS 15.20.081(e) and (h)

(e)...the [absentee] ballot may not be counted unless it is received by the close of business on the **10<sup>th</sup> day** after election

(h)...an absentee ballot returned by mail from outside the U.S. or from an overseas voter...may not be counted unless the ballot is received by...the close of business on the

(1) **10<sup>th</sup> day** following a primary election or special election

(2) **15<sup>th</sup> day** following a general election or special election

*These deadlines have been in law for decades*

# Ballot Chain of Custody

- Precinct Election Boards (poll workers) – Alaska citizens appointed by each Regional Election Supervisor
  - Bi-partisan – a *minimum* of three members
  - Each Precinct Election Board certifies that the tabulation equipment received from the Regional Counting Board shows zero results before the opening of the polls
  - Verify that all security seals and chain of custody documents are completed
- Boards and employees must complete chain of custody any time documents leave their physical possession
  - Verify the sequentially numbered stub on every ballot and every security seal and tamper-evident seal match the receipt and ensure material transfers are signed for
  - Maintain chain of custody and security logs according to the division's records retention schedule

# Election Results

- Scanner results are transmitted to Juneau DOE Office
  - Secured, encrypted pipeline, encrypted package
  - Air-gapped server – onsite
- Hand count results are called in to the Regional Offices
  - Tallies are scanned, and filed to Juneau DOE Office election night
  - Voted ballots and registers are mailed to Juneau DOE Office

# Election Audits and Accountability

- Hand count of a randomly selected precinct in each House District
  - One precinct with at least 5% of the total votes cast in each of the 40 HD's
  - If there is a discrepancy of more than 1% in the hand-count verification, the board hand counts ALL the ballots cast in the district
- Absentee/Questioned Review Boards
  - Review absentee and questioned ballots – observers are in attendance
- State Review Board
  - Logic and Accuracy Testing (LAT) before election
  - Review all ballot tallies/results from every precinct post-election
- DOE Post-Election Debrief
- Off-year procedures evaluation

# Election Security and Voter Protection

- DOE Technology
  - User workstations
  - Voter Registration and Election Management System (VREMS)
  - Ballot tabulation system
  - Webserver
- Methods of Maintaining Security
  - SOA State Security
  - Quarterly Security Training
  - US Dept of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
  - U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (EAC)

# Lessons Learned and Improvements

## Lessons

- Communications
- Mailing challenges
- Early voting
- Rural – Region 4

## Legislation

- Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) elections
- PFD Automatic Voter Registration
- Election administration
- Ballot counting and receipt
- Official Election Pamphlets
- Voter residence
- By-mail voting
- Postage paid return envelopes for absentee ballots

# Thank You

Carol Beecher, Director

[carol.beecher@alaska.gov](mailto:carol.beecher@alaska.gov)

907-465-4611

[elections@alaska.gov](mailto:elections@alaska.gov)

<https://www.elections.alaska.gov/>