

Glossary

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This glossary is a collection of terms commonly used in the administration of elections.

Acknowledgement notice

A term originally used by the Federal Election Commission (now the Election Assistance Commission) to refer to a notice sent to a person who has applied for voter registration. In Kansas it is called a notice of disposition. The NVRA requires the election officer in charge of voter registration list maintenance to “send notice to each applicant of the disposition of the application.” [NVRA, Section 8(a)(2)] The notice either informs the applicant that he/she is now a registered voter, or it informs the applicant that they do not meet the requirements or that more information is needed to process the application. [KSA 25-2309(e), NVRA Section 8(a)(2)]

Apportionment

The allocation of elected representative seats in government among jurisdictions. Strictly speaking, apportionment refers to the dividing of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives among the states based on population. Periodic adjustment of districts in subsequent years to accommodate population shifts is referred to as reapportionment.

Authorized poll agent

A candidate, party official or one of their designees who is entitled by law to observe the voting procedure and canvassing. Commonly referred to as a poll watcher. [KSA 25-3004, 25-3005, 25-3005a]

Certificate of registration

A card mailed by a county election officer to a successful voter registration applicant informing the applicant that their application has been processed and their name added to the official list of registered voters. This term was commonly used in the days before NVRA; since the NVRA has been implemented, the certificate has been replaced by the notice of disposition, which in some cases informs the applicant that the application has been denied for some reason. [KSA 25-2309(e)]

Chief state election officer

A state official charged with overseeing the electoral process in a given state. In Kansas, as in many states, it is the Secretary of State. The NVRA required designation of a chief state election officer if states had not already done so. [KSA 25-2504]

Confirmation notice

A notice mailed by a county election officer to confirm the address of a voter. The notice is sent when the election officer receives indirect evidence (from a source other than the voter) that the voter’s address has changed, either within the county or outside

the county. The notice gives the voter an opportunity to update the address information on file in the election office. [KSA 25-2316c(e), NVRA Section 8(d)(2)]

County election officer

The person who conducts official elections in a given county. In 101 of 105 counties in Kansas, it is the county clerk, who is elected by the voters in the county. In the four largest counties--Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee and Wyandotte--it is the election commissioner, who is appointed by the Secretary of State. [KSA 25-2504]

CVR

Abbreviation for centralized voter registration. CVR is the statewide voter registration file established by the Secretary of State under the authority of KSA 25-2304(b).

DRE

Abbreviation for direct recording electronic voting system. A computerized system in which the voter records votes by pressing buttons or touching a screen. [KSA 25-4401 through 25-4414]

Duplicate check

An annual computerized review of the statewide voter file conducted by the Secretary of State. Each name in the file is compared to all other names in a search for possible duplicates. The apparent duplicate records are sent to the respective county election officers for review and cancellation if they prove to be duplicates.

EAC

Abbreviation for Election Assistance Commission. The EAC was created by HAVA to be a clearinghouse of information on election administration and to provide assistance to the states and localities. It is partially composed of the former Office of Election Administration in the FEC.

Elector

A person who possesses the constitutional qualifications to vote. An elector may be entitled to participate in some political activities, such as signing certain petitions or voting in certain specific types of elections, but generally electors must also be registered to vote in order to participate. See also "Qualified elector." [Kansas Constitution Article 5]

ELVIS

The name of Kansas' centralized, computerized voter registration system developed to comply with the requirements of HAVA. ELVIS stands for **EL**ection **V**oter **I**nformation **S**ystem.

FEC

The Federal Election Commission, which oversees campaign finance for federal offices.

Federal services voter

A military person or U.S. citizen living abroad who qualifies under the UOCAVA to vote an absentee ballot. [KSA 25-1214, 42 U.S.C. 1973ff]

FPCA

Abbreviation for federal post card application. Prescribed by the FVAP, this form is used by federal services voters to apply for ballots. Also referred to as Standard Form 76. [KSA 25-1216(a), 42 U.S.C. 1973ff]

FVAP

Abbreviation for Federal Voting Assistance Program. This federal agency is part of the Department of Defense and is charged by federal law (see UOCAVA) with administering the federal services voting program. [42 U.S.C. 1973ff]

HAVA

Abbreviation for Help America Vote Act of 2002. HAVA made significant changes in various aspects of election administration to address the issues arising from the contested presidential election in 2000.

MOVE Act

The 2009 federal Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act that facilitates voting by overseas UOCAVA voters by allowing them the option to obtain all voting information and ballots electronically.

NCOA

Abbreviation for National Change of Address. NCOA is a database of residential address changes maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. For purposes of updating counties' voter registration files, the NCOA database is compared to the statewide voter file annually to identify registered voters who have moved. [KSA 25-2354]

NIST

Abbreviation for National Institute of Standards and Technology. Under HAVA, this federal agency has responsibility for approving Independent Testing Authorities to test voting equipment and for adopting voluntary voting systems standards.

Notice of disposition

A notice sent by a county election officer to a voter registration applicant informing the applicant of one of two things: (1) the application was complete and valid, and the applicant is now a registered voter, or (2) the applicant does not meet the qualifications to be a registered voter, or more information is needed because the application was incomplete or illegible. Also referred to as an acknowledgement notice (see above). Before NVRA was implemented in Kansas, the notice of disposition was referred to as a certificate of registration. [KSA 25-2309(e), NVRA Section 8(a)(2)]

Optical scan system

A voting system with a paper ballot and an electronic scanner. The scanner reads the voter's marks on the ballot and automatically tallies the votes. [KSA 25-4601 through 25-4613]

Permanent advance voter

A registered voter with a permanent sickness or disability who has applied for inclusion on the permanent advance voting list. Such a voter automatically receives an advance ballot in the mail before each election. [KSA 25-1124(d)]

Precinct

A geographic entity established by the county election officer composed of contiguous and compact areas with visible boundaries complying with requirements established by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and state law. In most cases the precinct comprises a voting area for purposes of conducting elections. [KSA 25-26a02 et seq.]

Qualified elector

A person who possesses the constitutional requirements to vote. The requirements in the Kansas Constitution are: (1) U.S. citizenship, (2) residency in the state, and (3) eighteen years of age or older. Kansas statutes impose an additional requirement of registration in the county of residence before voting. [Kansas Constitution Article 5]

Redistricting

The process of redrawing boundary lines of election districts. In Kansas, the Legislature redraws boundary lines for U.S. House of Representatives, Kansas Senate, Kansas House of Representatives, and Kansas State Board of Education every ten years in the year ending in 2, after the previous decennial census. Local governmental units redraw their district lines occasionally according to general statutory guidelines. [Kansas Constitution Article 10 Section 1]

Registration

The act taken by a qualified elector in becoming eligible to vote in official elections. A qualified elector, possessing the constitutional qualifications to vote, files an application for registration with the county election officer of the elector's residence. If the election officer determines that the qualifications are met and the application is valid, registration is complete and the applicant is a registered voter. Registration is considered proof of the right to vote. [KSA 25-2302, Kansas Constitution Article 5 Section 4]

Residency

The act of inhabiting an abode or other site in a specific governmental jurisdiction. Residency in the state is one of the constitutional requirements for voting in Kansas. The county, city and precinct where one resides determines what offices a person is entitled to vote for, what ballot the person receives at the polling place, and who represents the person in various governmental entities. [KSA 25-407]

Safe at Home

This is an address confidentiality program that provides substitute addresses to victims of domestic violence to restrict public access to their records. It allows program participants to vote without disclosing their physical locations.

Suffrage

The right to vote. [Kansas Constitution Article 5 Section 1]

UOCAVA

Abbreviation for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. This is the federal law providing for federal services voting. It guarantees that military personnel and U.S. citizens living outside the United States may vote absentee ballots in the counties they consider their home counties, regardless of state registration requirements. [42 U.S.C. 1973ff]

Verification notice

An optional notice mailed by a county election officer to a voter registration applicant to verify the applicant's residential address before adding the applicant's name to the official voter registration list. Once the name is on the list, often the only way to remove an ineligible applicant is to initiate the time-consuming and expensive confirmation mailing procedure. The verification notice is neither required nor prohibited by either state law or the NVRA.

Voter

A person possessing the constitutional qualifications to vote and who is properly registered. Such a person is eligible to participate in various political activities, including voting, signing petitions, and running as a candidate for office. Often the term is applied to a person with the necessary qualifications who actually casts a vote in an election.

Voting area

The geographic area served by one voting place. A voting area is often a single precinct, but it might be part of a precinct or more than one precinct. [KSA 25-2506(c), KSA 25-2701]

Voting place

A place designated by the county election officer for voters to vote. Also referred to as a polling place. [KSA 25-2506(b), KSA 25-2701]

VTD

Abbreviation for Vote Tabulation District. This is a term used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. VTDs are in many cases the same as the traditional precincts used by counties in conducting elections. The VTD is a geographic entity for which the Bureau tabulates population totals for use in reapportionment and redistricting.