

Alabama Office of Voter Registration

Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority

**Revision
Presented to the
State Records Commission
January 25, 2001**

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Functional and Organizational Analysis of the Alabama Office of Voter Registration

Sources of Information

Staff of the Office of Voter Registration

Anita Tatum, Director
Linda Nelson, Executive Secretary
Deanne Jeames, Clerk

Code of Alabama, 1975, sections 17-4-210 through 17-4-214, and 17-4-253 through 17-4-255
Alabama Government Manual (1994)
General Disposition Authority
ALVIN User's Guide (1996)
Postcard Voter Update Process (1996)
Alabama Election Handbook, 6th edition

Agency Organization

The director of Voter Registration is governed by the Board of Appointment, which is composed of the Governor, Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, and the State Auditor. The Board unanimously selects the director of Voter Registration who serves at the pleasure of the Board. The director may employ personnel as needed.

Agency Function and Subfunctions

The mandated function of the director of Voter Registration is to oversee the registration process of the State; to establish, operate, and maintain a centralized statewide voter registration file; to serve as a liaison between the state, the Board of Appointment, and the county boards of registrars on implementation of existing and future laws pertaining to voter registration; and to work with the Secretary of State to implement the National Voter Registration Act. The Office of Voter Registration is one of the agencies responsible for the Regulatory function of government of Alabama.

In the performance of its mandated function, the agency may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Overseeing Statewide Voter Registration File.** The Office of Voter Registration is responsible for the maintenance of a centralized statewide voter registration file. The Advisory Board is composed of nine members. Each of the three members of the Board of Appointment appoints three people to the Advisory Board for four year terms. The Advisory

Board gives advice to the director of the Office of Voter Registration regarding the voter registration file. The Office of Voter Registration also creates statistical reports based on information sent in by the counties.

The Alabama Voter Information Network (ALVIN) is the state's centralized voter registration file. At present there are 41 counties connected to ALVIN. The purpose of this network is to unify the voter registration process. It prevents registration in more than one county. User counties directly enter information on registered voters into the statewide database and can also purge names from the active voter list. ALVIN provides immediate access to the lists of registered voters for verification of voter eligibility. The director oversees this operation by having agency staff make trips to the counties to train county staff in the proper operation of ALVIN. All funds for the setup, repair, and maintenance of ALVIN come out of the budget of the Office of Voter Registration. The 26 counties that do not use ALVIN must enter registration information into their own databases in their county. This information cannot be checked against the information in ALVIN.

When an individual who is registered in Alabama registers in a new state, the state sends to the Office of Voter Registration and the Secretary of State a cancellation notice. The Office of Voter Registration then sends the notice to the appropriate county so the county can purge the name from its list. Counties are also notified by the Office of Voter Registration when someone has been charged with a felony.

ALVIN is the state voter list. Copies of the voter list can be obtained by the public from the Office of Voter Registration for a fee.

Each county sends statistical information on the people who have registered in that county for the month. The Office of Voter Registration compiles the information from the counties and prints out totals for the state. These totals are broken down by race and by county. A running total of the number of newly registered voters in the state is kept in a database for a year and is also printed monthly.

In 1995 the Legislature passed a new voter file maintenance act. This act provides an additional method to maintain the voter file by establishing a postcard notification method that will be implemented in January 1997. This system of notification begins with a distribution of postcards from the state using lists submitted by the boards of registrars. The postcards are non-forwardable, so successful delivery will indicate that the address on file is valid. Local boards of registrars will compile a list of those voters whose postcards were returned as undeliverable. A second, forwardable, address confirmation notice will be sent to these voters. The address will be updated based on information obtained by returned notices. If the notice is not returned within 90 days, the name of the registrant will be placed in a suspense file. Voters can reidentify to change their status to active. Names of unidentified voters to be purged will be printed during November and December 2000. Voters will be purged from the list in January 2001. The Office of Voter Registration, with

the Secretary of State, has published a manual detailing this procedure and will update it over the next four years.

- **Conducting Studies/Recommending to the Legislature and Governor.** The Office of Voter Registration makes studies of conditions and problems pertaining to voter identification and registration in the state and recommends to the Legislature and Governor any needed improvements or legislation in regard to voter registration.

The Boards of Registrars are allowed a set number of days to work according to the law. If it becomes necessary to change the law to allow more working days, the director of the Office of Voter Registration lobbies in the legislature for changes in the law. The director also works with the Secretary of State to make changes in the law and also reviews, for the Office of the Governor, other changes in the laws concerning voting, registration, and election practices.

- **Ensuring a Valid Registration Process.** The director is responsible for ensuring that the registration process is carried out in accordance with the law. This includes providing information in regard to laws concerning registration and voting. If a violation of a law regarding the registration process is reported to the director by a member of the public, the director will write or call the violating party to try and rectify the situation. If the violation persists, the director can turn the matter over to the Attorney General's Office.

The director is responsible for ensuring that the registrars carry out their duties properly. This can involve organized meetings or onsite visits by the director or just answering questions by phone. When changes are made in the law that affect registrars, the director is responsible for notifying the registrars and explaining the changes to the registrars and training them in any new procedures.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the agency's work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support the programmatic areas of the agency.

Managing the agency: Activities involved in managing the agency may include general administration such as corresponding/communicating, meeting, and directing; representing the agency; lobbying on behalf of the agency; reporting; publicizing; managing records; and managing information systems and technology.

Managing finances: Activities involved in managing finances may include the following: budgeting, which encompasses preparing and reviewing a budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget, and reporting in established budget status categories to the Department of Finance; purchasing, which encompasses requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products

received; accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting the Examiners of Public Accounts in the audit process.

Managing human resources: Activities involved in managing human resources may include the following: recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill vacant positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits, and administratively supported but employee-funded benefits such as additional life and health insurance and tax-deferral and savings plans; and supervising employees, which includes promoting, demoting, evaluating performance, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave.

Managing properties, facilities, and resources: Activities involved in managing properties, facilities, and resources may include the following: inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the Office of State Auditor; leasing/renting offices if the agency does not own their office space; and securing and maintaining state property in the care of the agency, including vehicles.

Attachment: Organizational Chart

Analysis of Record Keeping System and Records Appraisal of the Alabama Office of Voter Registration

Agency Record Keeping System

The Alabama Office of Voter Registration operates a hybrid system composed of paper and electronic records.

Computer Systems: The Office of Voter Registration maintains monthly statistics of registration on a Lotus database. The monthly statistics are printed out and then the information in the database is written over on a monthly basis. A running total of people who have registered in the state each month is maintained on the database for one year before being written over. This information is printed out each month. ALVIN is not a record keeping system. The counties are responsible for all records that are input to ALVIN. The counties only send monthly statistics to the Office of Voter Registration.

Paper-based System: The printouts of monthly totals from the Lotus database are kept in the office of the employee who operates the database. The records of the director of the Office of Voter Registration are kept in the office of the director in paper form. All other records for the current year for the Office of Voter Registration are in drawers and hanging files in the office of the Executive Secretary of the agency. Non-current year records are kept in boxes in the various offices of the agency. At present, according to the agency, no records of this agency have been destroyed.

Records Appraisal

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by the Office of Voter Registration: Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

I. Temporary Records. Temporary records should be held for what is considered their active life and be disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met.

- **Voter Registration File.** This file includes the names of all registered voters registered in a county that participates in the ALVIN network. The Code of Alabama, section 17-4-210, requires that this file be maintained by the agency.
- **Advisory Board Minutes.** These are minutes of meetings of the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board has no authority over the director of the Office of Voter Registration. These minutes do not document the function of the Office of Voter Registration and are not deemed of permanent value. They are needed for reference use by the director and are required to be maintained by the Office of Voter Registration according to the Code of Alabama 1975, sections 17-4-210 through 17-4-211.

II. Permanent Records. The Government Records Division recommends the following records as permanent.

Overseeing Statewide Voter Registration File:

- **Voter Registration Statistics from Counties.** These records are sent in monthly from the counties and are used to create statistics for the state as a whole. These statistics retain research value because they document the number of people who register in a county in a given month. The record copy of these statistics should be found in the counties, but because it can not be guaranteed at this time that the counties are maintaining these statistics, the copies found in the Office of Voter Registration are deemed permanent.
- **Voter Registration Total Printouts.** These printouts include the total number of people who registered in a county in a given month broken down by race. Running totals of registrants in the state for the year are also printed out monthly. Because these printouts provide a total number of people who registered in the state in a given month, they retain research value and are deemed permanent.
- **Policy Manuals.** These manuals include the ALVIN Manual and updates, which explain the proper operation of the ALVIN system, and Postcard Voter Update Process manuals and updates, which explain the new voter update process. These records document how the agency carries out its mandated function of overseeing the registration process of its state.

Administering Internal Operations:

- **Director's Files.** The files of the director include correspondence of the director, pre-clearances from the Justice Department, and Public Service Announcements. These files best document the director's role as liaison to the county boards of registrars, the implementation of laws pertaining to voter registration, and the agency's role in conducting studies and making recommendations to the legislature and governor and ensuring a valid registration process.

Permanent Records List
Alabama Office of Voter Registration

Overseeing Statewide Voter Registration File

1. Voter Registration Statistics from Counties
2. Voter Registration Total Printouts
3. Policy Manuals

Administering Internal Operations

1. Director's Files

Office of Voter Registration Records Disposition Authority

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 41-13-5 and 41-13-20 through 21. It was compiled by the Government Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Office of Voter Registration. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Office of Voter Registration in carrying out its mandated functions and activities. It establishes retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Office of Voter Registration to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and made available to members of the public. Under Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-40, "every citizen has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public writing in this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by statute." Records must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334) 242-4452.

Explanation of Records Requirements

- This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules governing the retention of the Office of Voter Registration's records. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and should be discarded.
- The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept.
- Electronic mail is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.
- Some temporary records listed under the Administering Internal Operations subfunction of this RDA represent duplicate copies of records listed for long-term or permanent retention in the RDAs of other agencies.
- Certain other records-related materials need not be retained as records under the disposition requirements in this RDA. They may be disposed of, without notice of destruction, in whatever way the agency determines best. Such materials include: (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document government activities; (3) stocks of blank

stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term, internal purposes, may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages, drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value, copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business, and internal communications about agency social activities, such as a note to a group going to lunch.

Records Disposition Requirements

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Office of Voter Registration and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained by the agency as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

■ **Overseeing Statewide Voter Registration File**

Statewide Voter Registration File

Disposition: Retain in Office. (Code of Alabama 1975, 17-4-210)

Advisory Board Minutes

Disposition: Retain in Office. (Code of Alabama 1975, 17-4-210 through 17-4-211)

ALVIN Records (not training manual)

Disposition: Retain for useful life.

VOTER REGISTRATION STATISTICS FROM COUNTIES

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

VOTER REGISTRATION TOTAL PRINTOUTS

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

POLICY MANUALS

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

■ **Administering Internal Operations**

Managing the Agency:

DIRECTOR'S FILES (correspondence, user group minutes, Public Service announcements, meeting minutes, preclearances from Justice Department)

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Routine Correspondence (includes requests for information)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Mailing Lists

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Administrative Reference Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Records documenting the implementation of the agency's approved RDA (copies of transmittal forms to Archives or the State Records Center, evidence of obsolete records destroyed, and annual reports to the State Records Commission)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Copy of RDA

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the RDA is superseded.

Computer System Documentation (Y2K Records, hardware/software manuals and diskettes, warranties, records of access/authorities, file naming conventions)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain documentation of former system 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to a new system.

Managing Finances:

Records documenting the preparation of a budget request package and reporting of the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records of original entry or routine accounting transactions such as journals, registers, and ledgers; and records of funds deposited outside the state treasury, including bank statements, deposit slips, and cancelled checks

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting requests for authorization from supervisors to travel on official business and other related materials, such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Contractual records established for the purpose of services or personal property
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the contract.
Records documenting the bid process, including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses
Disposition: Retain in office (Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 41-16-24).

Agency Audit Reports
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Managing Human Resources:

Job Recruitment Materials
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Application Materials
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Position Classification Records
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after reclassification of the position.

Certification of Eligibles for Employment
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

Records documenting payroll (e.g. pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers)
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the agency.

Records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes (including Form 941)
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of year in which the records were created.

Records documenting employee hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting leave donations
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records of final leave status

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the agency.

Records documenting an employee's work history - generally maintained as a case file

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of an employee from the agency.

Employee Flexible Benefits Plan Files (applications and correspondence)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of participation in program.

Records documenting the State Employee Injury Compensation Trust Fund (SEICTF) Claims

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

Employee Administrative Hearing Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

Weekly Activity Reports

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Records Documenting agency provision of training and professional development

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:

Semiannual Inventory Lists

Disposition: Retain in office (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-16-8[1]).

Agency Copies of Transfer of State Property Forms (SD-1)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Property Inventory Cards and/or Computer Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Receipts of Responsibility for Property

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

Records documenting the lease or rental of office or warehouse space for the department

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the lease.

Approval of Records Disposition Authority

By signing this agreement the Office of Voter Registration acknowledges its responsibilities in the proper management of its records and agrees to abide by the implementation guidelines listed below:

- The Office of Voter Registration will designate a managerial position as the agency records officer. This position is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, submitting an annual report on records management activities to the State Records Commission in January of each year, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency's approved RDA.
- Permanent records in the Office of Voter Registration's custody will be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.
- Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis—for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA's provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the state Sunset Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.
- The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records' permanent preservation and accessibility.
- The Office of Voter Registration agrees to allow the staff of the State Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts to examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the agency and to inspect records destruction documentation. Government Records Division archivists are available to train the agency's staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the agency in implementing its records management program.

This records disposition authority is hereby adopted.

By: _____ Date: _____
Anita Tatum, Director
Office of Voter Registration

By: _____ Date: _____
Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman
State Records Commission