Centre County Board of Elections Ballot Return and Collection Plan
2024 General Election

Date: July 23, 2024
Version 1.0
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1 Establishing a Ballot Return and Collection Plan

1.1 BALLOT RETURN SITES FOR CURRENT ELECTION

For the 2024 General Election, the Centre County Board of Elections ("CCBOE") will again establish a plan and adopt procedures for how Centre County voters may return their own voted absentee ballots and mail-in ballots. The plan will follow the previously adopted plans.

1.2 LOCATION OF BALLOT RETURN SITES

1.2.1 Location

The CCBOE has identified the following locations for Secure Ballot Return Sites ("SBRS") and has already placed a secure ballot return receptacle ("SBRR") at these locations. A SBRR will be mounted to the ground, floor, and/or wall. The receptacles will be located outside the buildings.

1. Willowbank Office Building, 420 Holmes Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
2. Patton Township Municipal Building, 100 Patton Plaza, State College, PA 16803
3. Ferguson Township Municipal Building, 3147 Research Drive, State College, PA 16801
4. State College Borough Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA 16801
5. Spring Township Municipal Building, 1309 Blanchard Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823
6. Magisterial District Office 49-3-03 (Philipsburg MDJ Office), 118 Enterprise Drive, Philipsburg, PA 16866
7. Magisterial District Office 49-3-04 (Centre Hall MDJ Office), 2795 Earlystown Road, Centre Hall, PA 16828
8. HUB-Robeson Center, 100 Pollock Rd, University Park, PA 16802

The SBRR at all locations will be operational no later than the day ballots are mailed.

1.2.2 Hours of Operation

The hours of operation for all SBRS will be 24/7.
1.2.3 Advertising and Promoting

The CCBOE will post on the County Elections’ website, social media, and legal advertisements pertinent information regarding all SBRS, including, but not limited to, hours of operation, addresses, maps, specific placement, parking, photographs, signage, rules and regulations.

1.2.4 Additional Transportation Option

The Centre County Office of Transportation ("CCOT") will provide rides free of charge to individuals 60 and older who would like to return their own voted ballots to a SBRS. Rides can be scheduled by calling the CCOT at (814) 355-6807.

1.3 PROVIDING NOTICE OF LOCATION OF COUNTY ELECTION OFFICES AND BALLOT RETURN SITES

The CCBOE will make a list of the SBRS and the location of the Centre County Elections Office ("CCEO") at the Willowbank Building public as early as possible, including the dates and hours of operation.

Within ten days after CCBOE approval, the CCBOE will post a notice of the plan on the home page of the County website (centrecountypa.gov) and the main webpage of the Elections & Voter Registration Office (centrecountyvotes.gov). The notice posted on the websites will be in a format that is accessible for voters with disabilities. If there are changes to the site location operations, the CCEO will post updated information on the website with 24 hours. A copy of the plan will also be available at the CCEO.

The public notice, at a minimum, will include:

• The ballot return deadline.
• List of county election offices and ballot return sites, including building names and street address.
• Days and hours of operation.
• Contact information for the county board of elections.
• Accessibility information.

1.4 BALLOT RETURN SITES HISTORY

For the 2020 General Election, the CCBOE established a SBRS at the Willowbank Office Building – the main administrative office building for Centre County
Government – as an option for voters to return their own voted absentee ballot or mail-in ballot. The SBRS was in front of the Willowbank (SEE IMAGES A & B.1).

For the 2020 General Election, the CCBOE approved a Ballot Return and Collection Plan, with eight SBRRs, to achieve four main objectives:

- Afford voters greater access to returning their own voted absentee ballots and mail-in ballots.
- Decrease the wait time for in-person voting on Tuesday, November 3, 2020.
- Provide voters another safe option for voting during COVID-19.
- Allay concerns regarding potential delays with the United States Postal Service.

The CCEO is located at the Willowbank Building at 420 Holmes Street in Bellefonte, PA 16823. The CCEO allowed voters to return their own voted absentee ballots and mail-in ballots in-person to Elections staff for the 2020 General Election. The CCBOE designed the front entrance of the Willowbank Building with safety measures in place for COVID-19, efficiency considerations, and ease of access to voters. The CCBOE also worked with the Pennsylvania Department of State to establish a satellite elections office ("SEO") at the Ticket Center of the Bryce Jordan Center (BJC) at 127 Bryce Jordan Center, University Park, PA 16802.

The Centre County Board of Commissioners finalized a contract for a lease of the Ticket Center at the BJC for use as a SEO. The CCBOE designated the location for voters to request and cast an absentee or mail-in ballot over the counter. The CCBOE successfully worked with the Pennsylvania Department of State to establish and approve a secure connection at the SEO capable of connecting to the Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors ("SURE") system. The Centre County Elections staff assisted in the training of temporary election workers that processed the absentee and mail-in ballot applications. The SEO had copies of every ballot style available to be voted in each of Centre County’s precincts. Lastly, the SEO had a secure ballot collection receptacle to store voted absentee or mail-in ballots submitted at the location.

The 2020 General Election, Ballot Return and Collection Plan, the CCBOE was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Election Security and Technology ("BEST"). The BEST approved of the CCBOE plan in October of 2020.

For the 2020 General Election, a total of 20,269 ballots were returned via SBRRs and 2,202 voters used the SEO at the BJC to cast their ballot.
2 Ballot Return Site Design and Requirements

2.1 TYPES OF BALLOT RETURN SITES

For the 2024 General Election, the CCBOE will continue to use SBRS utilized in prior elections where voters may return their own voted absentee ballots and mail-in ballots. All SBRS have a SBRR which was left in place and secured following the 2023 Municipal Election. As mentioned in section 1.2.2, voters will be able to return their own voted ballots 24/7 to all ballot return receptacles. Return sites will have the same features, and be of substantially similar design, color scheme, and signage to easily facilitate identification by voters.

2.2 SECURE RECEPTACLES

Each SBRS has a SBRR that permits voters to return their own voted ballot. A postage stamp is not needed on the return envelope when a voter deposits their ballot into a SBRR.

Each SBRR has a metal flap that opens with ease – requiring no more than 5 pounds of pressure to operate – to provide voters enough space to insert their own voted ballot (SEE IMAGE E). The ballot deposit slot opens to no more than one inch as to not allow tampering or removal of ballots. The opening of the ballot deposit slot also minimizes the ability for liquid to be poured into the SBRR or rainwater to seep in. The ballot deposit slot is within reach-range of no less than 15 inches and no more than 48 inches from the floor or ground.

Each SBRR has one slot for voters to return their own voted ballot. The location of the slot is identified with a sign stating, “PUSH HERE to INSERT BALLOT”.

2.3 SIGNAGE

The SBRS and SBRR are official and secure. The CCBOE has marked each SBRR with official signage reading “OFFICIAL CENTRE COUNTY BALLOT RETURN” (IMAGES B.2, F, G, H, I, J, K). The CCBEO does not display “VOTE HERE” signage at the SBRS.

Additional signage includes statements that:

- The SBRS is being monitored by a video security surveillance system or internal camera.
- Counterfeiting, forging, tampering with, or destroying ballots is a second-degree misdemeanor pursuant to sections 1816 and 1817 of the Pennsylvania Election Code (25 P.S. §§ 3516 and 3517).
• Third-party return of ballots is prohibited unless the person returning the ballot is rendering assistance to a disabled voter or an emergency absentee voter. Moreover, such assistance requires a declaration signed by the voter and the person rendering assistance. Declarations to assist a voter can be obtained from the CCEO.

• Requests that the designated CCEO should be notified immediately in the event the receptacle is full, not functioning, or is damaged in any fashion, and provides a phone number and email address for such purpose. The non-emergency number (1-800-479-0050) for the Centre County Emergency Communications Office will serve as the phone number and will be listed on the SBRR signage.

2.4 ACCESSIBILITY OF BALLOT RETURN SITES

The CCBOE ensures that all SBRS are accessible to voters with disabilities and that the design and placement of each site meets accessibility requirements.

2.5 SECURITY

The CCBOE ensures the following at each SBRS:

• Only personnel authorized by the CCEO will have access to the ballots inside of SBRR.
• Each SBRR is mounted to the ground, floor, or wall in a manner to prevent its unauthorized removal.
• All SBRR are secured by a lock and sealed with a tamper-evident seal. Only authorized election officials designated by the CCEO will access the keys of the lock.
• The Centre County facilities management ensures adequate lighting is provided at all SBRS when in use.
• All SBRS and SBRR will be monitored by a video security surveillance system. Video surveillance will be retained by the CCEO for 6 months following each election. Video surveillance will be retained from the first day each SBRR is opened for ballot deposit.
• To prevent physical damage and unauthorized entry, each SBRR is constructed of durable material able to withstand vandalism, removal, and inclement weather.
3 **Ballot Collection and Chain of Custody Procedures**

CCBOE has developed ballot collection and chain of custody procedures for ballots returned to the CCEO or a SBRS. These procedures will be consistent with Pennsylvania law and Pennsylvania Department of State directives and/or guidance.

### 3.1 BALLOT COLLECTION AT BALLOT RETURN SITES

- Ballots will be collected from ballot return sites only by personnel authorized by the CCEO and at times determined by the CCEO, at least every 24 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.
- The CCEO will designate at least two election officials to collect voted ballots from a ballot return site. Each designated election official will carry identification or an official designation that identifies them as an election official authorized to collect voted ballots (See IMAGES L & M).
- Election officials designated to collect voted ballots by the CCEO will sign a declaration declaring that they will timely and securely collect and return voted ballots, will not permit any person to tamper with a ballot return site or its contents, and that they will faithfully and securely perform their duties. These declarations will be stored at the CCEO for 11 months after the certifications of the official election results.
- Election officials designated to collect voted ballots will receive training from the CCEO prior to retrieving ballots.
- Election officials will follow the directions outlined in the Ballot Return Site Collection Form (ATTACHMENT A) when retrieving the voted ballots from the ballot return receptacle and when returning the voted ballots to the CCEO.
- The CCBOE, as it deems necessary, may provide security to accompany the ballot collection staff on daily retrievals.

### 3.2 TRANSPORT AND RECEIPT OF RETRIEVED BALLOTS TO THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

- Ballots collected from any ballot return site will be transported to the CCEO.
- Upon arrival at the CCEO, county election official(s) will note the time of arrival on the Ballot Return Site Collection Form.
- The elections officials retrieving ballots will inspect the secure ballot transfer container for evidence of tampering and should receive the retrieved ballots by signing the retrieval
form and including the date and time of receipt. In the event tampering is evident, that fact must be noted on the retrieval form and appropriate action be taken.

- The completed Ballot Return Site Collection Form will be maintained in a manner prescribed by the CCBOE to ensure that the form is traceable to its respective secure ballot container.
- The elections official at the CCEO should note the number of ballots delivered on the Ballot Return Site Collection Form.

### 3.3 FINAL CLOSURE AND POST-ELECTION PROCEDURES

- The CCEO will arrange for election officials to retrieve ballots at 9:00 A.M. the day before election and transport them to the CCEO at the Willowbank Building.
- Election officials will be at the ballot return receptacles immediately prior to 9:00 A.M. on the Monday before Election Day.
- At 9:00 A.M. on Monday, November 4, 2024, all ballot return sites and receptacles will be closed, covered and locked.
- Election officials will be accompanied by a member of the Centre County Sheriff’s Office to provide security. The member of the Sheriff’s Office will not assist with the retrieval of voted ballots but will be present during the retrieval process.
- Election officials will ensure that no voted ballots are returned to the ballot return receptacles after the close of polls. Each receptacle’s ballot deposit slot will be sealed, shut, and locked with a “defeater” bar. Additionally, a cover will be placed over each receptacle and locked. At each site, a notice will be posted by the election officials that the site is closed for the election.

### 4 Processing of Collected Ballots

All ballots collected from a return site will be processed in the same manner as absentee ballots and mail-in ballots personally delivered to the CCEO at the Willowbank Building by the voter and ballots received via the USPS or any other delivery service.
## Version History

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Approved</th>
</tr>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>7/23/2024</td>
<td>Updated Plan to Reflect General Election dates and change for final closing</td>
<td>Centre County Board of Elections</td>
<td>7/23/2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6 Images

IMAGE A – Willowbank Secure Ballot Drop Box (2020 General Primary) - Far
TLP: WHITE

IMAGE B.1 – Willowbank Secure Ballot Drop Box (2020 General Primary) - Near

IMAGE B.2 – Willowbank Secure Ballot Drop Box (2020 General Primary) - Near
IMAGE C – Locations of Secure Ballot Drop Boxes

[Map of Centre County, Pennsylvania showing locations of secure ballot drop boxes]

IMAGE: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fc/Map_of_Centre_County%2C_Pennsylvania_No_Text.png

IMAGE E – Close up of Ballot Deposit Slot (2020 General Primary)
TLP: WHITE
THIRD-PARTY RETURN OF A BALLOT IS PROHIBITED

UNLESS THE PERSON RETURNING THE BALLOT IS RENDERING ASSISTANCE TO A DISABLED VOTER OR AN EMERGENCY ABSENTEE VOTER. MOREOVER, SUCH ASSISTANCE REQUIRES A DECLARATION SIGNED BY THE VOTER AND THE PERSON RENDERING ASSISTANCE.

INSERT BALLOT HERE

PUSH HERE to INSERT BALLOT

OFFICIAL CENTRE COUNTY BALLOT RETURN

IF THIS SECURE BALLOT DROP BOX IS FULL, NOT FUNCTIONING, OR DAMAGED IN ANY FASHION, PLEASE PROMPTLY CALL 1-800-479-0050 OR EMAIL ELECTIONS@CENTRECOUNTYPA.GOV.

THIS SECURE BALLOT DROP BOX IS MONITORED 24/7 BY A VIDEO SECURITY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.

COUNTERFEITING, FORGING, TAMPERING WITH, OR DESTROYING BALLOTS IS A SECOND-DEGREE MISDEMEANOR PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 1816 AND 1817 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ELECTION CODE (25P.S. §§ 3516 & 3517).

TO REPORT ANY ISSUES, PLEASE USE THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS:
- CENTRE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE: 814-355-6735
- CRESSON TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT: 814-237-1172
- CENTRE COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE: 814-355-6703

FOR EMERGENCIES, DIAL 9-1-1.
Under Pennsylvania Law, **ONLY YOU** can return your ballot. Returning someone else's ballot is **PROHIBITED**

*Unless the person returning the ballot is rendering assistance to a disabled voter or an emergency absentee voter. Moreover, such assistance requires a declaration signed by the voter and the person rendering assistance.*

Any person who is convicted of willfully violating provisions relating to absentee or mail-in electors ballots is subject to a penalty: misdemeanor of the first degree, with a max fine of $10,000 or imprisonment for up to five (5) years, or both. Election Code 25 P.S. 3553

Additional signage added for the General Election 2022
Ballot Return Site Election Official

I, __________, will timely and securely collect and return voted ballots, will not permit any person to tamper with a ballot return site or its contents, and that I will faithfully and securely perform my duties for the 2024 General Election

Signature  Date

We, the Centre County Board of Elections, do hereby designate ______________ to collect voted ballots from ballot return sites for the 2024 General Election

Amber Concepcion
Steven G Dershem
Mark Higgins

Page 17 of 25
TLP: WHITE

- **Centre County Elections Office** – 814-355-6703
- **Willowbank Site** (Bellefonte Police – 814-353-2320)
- **Patton Site** (Patton Township Police – 814-234-0271)
- **Ferguson Site** (Ferguson Township Police - 814-237-1172)
- **State College Site** (State College Police – 814-234-7150)
- **Spring Twp Site** (Spring Twp Police – 814-355-5134)
- **Philipsburg & Centre Hall - Magisterial District Offices** (Pennsylvania State Police – 814-355-7545)
- **HUB** (Penn State University Police – 814-863-1111)
- **ALL SITES** (Centre County District Attorney – 814-355-6735)

7 **Attachments**

- Attachment A – Secure Ballot Return Receptacle Installation Form
- Attachment B – Ballot Return Site Collection Form
- Attachment C – Election Night Ballot Return Site Collection Closing Form
Attachment A
Secure Ballot Return Receptacle
Installation Form
Secure Ballot Return Receptacle Installation Form

Secure Ballot Return Receptacle (Drop Box) Installation Team Members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (circle):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Centre Hall – MDJ Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ferguson Township Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HUB-Robeson Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patton Township Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Philipsburg – MDJ Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spring Township Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State College Borough Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willowbank Office Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Completion of installation of Drop Box Date & Time

Inspect for destruction of exterior of the drop box

Inspect slot for ballots

Inspect for ballots on the walls and floor of the drop box

Inspect for ballots in the bin

Inspect for ballots in the bag

Insert the bag into the bin and place the bin into the drop box

Return bin and close door of the drop box

Confirm drop box is locked

New Seal ID#

Sign off

Departure from drop box Date & Time

Final sign off

COMPLETE BACK SIDE
UPON RETURN TO ELECTIONS OFFICE
All keys are returned to the Elections Office
Complete information below and place in the secure ballot drop box folder at Elections Office

Form completed and submitted by Ballot Installation Team:

Print Name
Signature
Date & Time

Print Name
Signature
Date & Time

Form received in the Centre County Elections Office by:

Print Name

Signature

Date & Time

Elections Office Timestamp below

COMPLETED FORM RECEIVED
Attachment B
Secure Ballot Return Site
Collection Form
Secure Ballot Return
Collection Form

Ballot Retrieval Team Members: ___________________ ___________________

Location (circle):
- Centre Hall – MDJ Office
- Ferguson Township Building
- HUB-Robeson Center
- Patton Township Building
- Philipsburg – MDJ Office
- Spring Township Building
- State College Borough Building
- Willowbank Office Building

Arrival at Drop Box Date & Time ___________________

Inspect for destruction of exterior of the drop box

Security Seal Sticker Intact
Seal ID# ___________________

PLACE USED SEAL HERE

Remove seal and open box
Inspect slot for stuck ballots
Remove bag and bin from box
Inspect for ballots on the walls and floor of the drop box
Remove bag from bin and inspect for ballots in the bin
Confirm all ballots from box are in bag

Pull drawn string and tighten top of bag with rope and metal cinch
Secure padlock in cinch
Secure metal rope cinch with steel cable wire security seal
Steel cable wire security seal ID# ___________________

Return bin, with new bag, and close door of drop box
Confirm drop box is locked
New Security Seal Sticker ID# ___________________

Place bag in container of vehicle
Sign off

Departure from drop box Date & Time ___________________

Final sign off ___________________

COMPLETE BACK SIDE UPON RETURN TO ELECTIONS OFFICE
Ballot bag received by the County Elections Office:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Elections Office staff member confirm steel cable security seal ID# ______

Elections Office staff member remove padlock from cinch and steel cable security seal.

Ballot retrieval team removes ballots from bag and confirms bag is empty ______

Ballot retrieval team counts the following:
- Return Envelope Ballot Count: ______ Other: ______ Ballot Count: ______
- Secrecy envelopes w/o return envelope: ______ Other County Ballot Count: ______
- Ballots w/o any envelope ______
- Initials: ______

Elections Office staff member independently verifies totals listed above
- Return Envelope Ballot Count: ______ Other: ______ Ballot Count: ______
- Secrecy envelopes w/o return envelope: ______ Other County Ballot Count: ______
- Ballots w/o any envelope ______
- Initials: ______

All keys, padlocks, and credentials are returned to the Elections Office.

Complete information below and place in the secure ballot drop box folder in Elections Office.

Form completed and submitted by Ballot Retrieval Team:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print Name</td>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date &amp; Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Form received in the Centre County Elections Office by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Voted Ballots Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Elections Office Timestamp
COMPleted Form Received
Attachment C
Ballot Return Site Collection Closing Form
Drop Box Site Closing Form

Ballot Retrieval & Site Closing Team Members:

Location (circle):
- Centre Hall – MDJ Office
- Ferguson Township Building
- HUB-Robeson Center
- Patton Township Building
- Philipsburg – MDJ Office
- Spring Township Building
- State College Borough Building
- Willowbank Office Building

Arrival at Drop Box (Date & Time): Monday, November 4, 2024 TIME:

Inspect for destruction of exterior of the drop box

Security Seal Intact

Seal ID#

PLACE SECURITY SEAL HERE

Remove Seal and open drop box door
Inspect slot for stuck ballots
Install "Defeater" Bar and lock ballot deposit slot
Confirm ballot deposit slot is locked

Remove bag and bin from box, inspect for ballots on the walls and floor of the drop box, remove bag from bin, and inspect for ballots in the bin

Confirm all ballots from box are in bag

Pull drawn string and tighten top of bag with rope and metal cinch
Secure padlock in cinch
Secure metal rope cinch with steel cable wire security seal
Steel cable wire security seal ID#

Remove bin and take picture of empty drop box
Replace bin and close door of drop box and lock
Confirm drop box is locked

Place bag containing ballots in vehicle
Sign off

Cover drop box and lock – Place Drop Box is now CLOSED sign on cover

Departure from drop box (Date & Time)

Final sign off
Security bag received in the County Elections Office by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Elections Office staff members confirm steel cable security seal ID# _______ _______

Elections Office staff members remove padlock from cinch and steel cable security seal

Ballot retrieval team removes ballots from bag and confirms bag is empty

Ballot retrieval team counts the following:
- Return Envelope Ballot Count: _______ Other: _______ Ballot Count: _______
- Secrecy envelopes w/o return envelope: _______ Other County Ballot Count: _______
- Ballots w/o any envelope _______
- Initials: _______ _______

Elections Office staff independently verifies totals listed above
- Return Envelope Ballot Count: _______ Other: _______ Ballot Count: _______
- Secrecy envelopes w/o return envelope: _______ Other County Ballot Count: _______
- Ballots w/o any envelope _______
- Initials: _______ _______

All keys, padlocks, and bags are returned to the Elections Office

Send photo of empty ballot drop box to Elections Staff with the location of drop box

Complete information below and place in the secure ballot drop box folder at Elections Office

Form completed and submitted by Ballot Retrieval & Site Closing Team:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
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Form received in the Centre County Elections Office by:

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</table>

Elections Office Timestamp
COMPLETED FORM RECEIVED