TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Karen Brinson Bell, Executive Director
RE: Ballot Quantities in Municipal Elections
DATE: August 17, 2021

This numbered memo provides updated information about the minimum number of ballots that must be ordered for municipal elections. It replaces Numbered Memo 2019-06. This guidance is intended to be used for elections in 2021 and future odd-numbered-year municipal elections.

The amounts of ballots required in this memo are a minimum. County boards must always consider the unique needs of the county and expected turnout on Election Day in determining how many pre-printed ballots to order. Factors may include, but are not limited to, considerable changes in population or special ballot items like referenda.

In determining the number of ballot styles to prepare and distribution of ballots by ballot styles to voting locations, all county boards should exercise sound judgment, including reviewing turnout in similar past elections. The distribution of ballots to Election Day precincts should take into account the turnout at one-stop locations during that election. All counties must ensure pre-printed or ballot-on-demand quantities are adequate to fill absentee ballot requests and factor in these requests when placing an order for ballots or ballot stock.

For the purpose of this memo, a previous comparable election is a previous election when the same or similar offices were on the ballot. For example, Municipality A will be electing its mayor and two city council members in 2021. The two previous similar elections would be the elections when those offices were on the ballot. A previous election when the mayor was not on the ballot would not be comparable.

County boards of elections shall prepare ballots as follows:

For counties that use pre-printed ballots for one-stop early voting (if the municipality has authorized absentee voting) AND Election Day:

- Prepare pre-printed ballots in an amount at least equal to 200% of higher turnout of the two previous comparable elections in the municipality. When calculating the number of ballots to order, apply the percentage turnout to the current number of registered voters qualified to vote in the election. For example, Municipality B elects all its members every
two years. In 2017, the turnout was 10%. In 2019, the turnout was 12%. Because the higher turnout of these two elections was 12%, the county board will order pre-printed ballots equal to 24% of currently registered voters qualified to vote in Municipality B’s election.

For counties that use ballot-marking devices and/or ballot-on-demand as their primary method of voting for one-stop early voting (if the municipality has authorized absentee voting) AND Election Day:

- Have blank ballot stock on hand in an amount at least equal to 200% of higher turnout of two previous comparable elections in the municipality. When calculating the amount of stock to order, multiply the percentage turnout by the current number of registered voters qualified to vote in the election.
- Prepare pre-printed ballots in an amount at least equal to 100% of the Election-Day turnout of the higher of the two previous comparable elections in the municipality. When calculating the number of ballots to order, apply the percentage turnout to the current number of registered voters qualified to vote in the election.
- Pre-printed ballots must be distributed to every voting site, especially Election Day polling places, so that voting may continue uninterrupted in the event ballot-marking devices or ballot-on-demand become inoperable.
- Counties that use ballot-on-demand must have backup ballot-on-demand printers ready to deploy to voting sites in order to apply this section for ballot ordering quantities. If a single ballot-on-demand printer is used to produce adequate ballot quantity, the county board must have a backup unit or make arrangements with a certified ballot printer to ensure compliance with needed ballot quantity.

For counties that use ballot-marking devices and/or ballot-on-demand as their primary method of voting for one-stop early voting and use pre-printed ballots on Election Day:

- Have blank ballot stock on hand in an amount at least equal to 200% of higher turnout of two previous comparable elections in the municipality. When calculating the amount of stock to order, apply the percentage turnout to the current number of registered voters qualified to vote in the election.
- Prepare pre-printed ballots in an amount at least equal to 150% of the Election-Day turnout of the higher of the two previous comparable in the municipality. When calculating the number of ballots to order, apply the percentage turnout to the current number of registered voters qualified to vote in the election. For example, Municipality C had its previous comparable elections in 2017 and 2013. In 2013, the overall turnout was 20%, with 85% of voters voting on Election Day; this means 17% of qualified registered voters voted on Election Day (.2 x .85). In 2017, the overall turnout was 28%, with 70% of voters voting on Election Day; this means 19.6% of qualified voters voted on Election Day (.28 x .7).
The current number of qualified registered voters in Municipality C is 5,000. The county board will prepare at least 1,470 pre-printed ballots (5,000 x .196 x 1.5 = 1,470).

- Counties that use ballot-on-demand must have backup ballot-on-demand printers ready to deploy to voting sites in order to apply this section for ballot ordering quantities. If a single ballot-on-demand printer is used to produce adequate ballot quantity, the county board must have a backup unit or make arrangements with a certified ballot printer to ensure compliance with needed ballot quantity.