

Updating Your Union's Membership Mailing List



Accurate mailing lists are essential to successful organizations. Unions have a special interest in keeping their membership lists up-to-date in order to comply with the election provisions of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act. This law requires unions to mail election notices to members at their last known home address and to comply with candidates' requests to distribute campaign literature. Unions that conduct elections by mail have an additional responsibility to ensure that membership mailing lists are complete and accurate in order to guarantee that all members receive ballots and are given the opportunity to vote.

As an initial step, union officials should compare the mailing list with membership records to ensure that the names of all members appear on the mailing list including new or transferred members as well as any members whose addresses are known to be incorrect. The union's system for recording addresses and making address changes should also be examined to make certain that address change information is entered in a timely, accurate manner. Following are additional suggestions for updating your union's mailing list:

- Post notices at work sites, web sites, the union hall, bulletin boards, and in the union newspaper requesting members to advise the union of address changes.
- Make any scheduled mailing to members by first class mail several months before nominations so that the post office will return any undelivered mail; obtain better addresses for members whose mail was returned.
- Check listings in local telephone books and through Internet "search engines" to find updated addresses; telephone members to request new addresses.
- Contact the personnel office of employers to obtain corrected addresses.
- Seek assistance from employers in obtaining corrected addresses from members through inter-office mail, mail drop, e-mail, notes from the union which accompany paychecks, contacts with supervisors, or other appropriate means.
- Contact union parent body officials or the pension/benefits plan office to obtain members' most recent addresses.
- Provide business agents and stewards with the names of members with "bad addresses" and ask them to obtain updated addresses when visiting work sites.
- List in the union newspaper and announce at meetings the names of members whom the union has been unable to contact and ask fellow members if they know how to reach them.

Keeping an up-to-date membership mailing list is extremely important and requires ongoing attention. If your union's mailing list is not up-to-date, the procedures outlined above should begin at least three to six months prior to nominations. In addition to updating membership lists, unions should post election notices at all work sites. In the case of mail ballot elections, such notices should advise members how to obtain a ballot if none is received.

For additional information on planning and conducting local union officer elections, contact the nearest Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) field office to request a copy of "Conducting Local Union Officer Elections: A Guide for Election Officials" or review this publication on the OLMS Web site at http://www.dol.gov/esa/olms_org.htm.