GUIDE TO PURCHASING
VOTER INFORMATION

Overview

In today's world of powerful, inexpensive, and user friendly computer products, a growing number of political campaigns are purchasing voter files and software programs to generate products that had been traditionally generated by their data vendor. Many campaigns currently use voter files to facilitate field program tasks such as printing walk/phone lists, small mailings (less than 5,000 pieces), and the collection of voter information based on communication between the campaign and voters. Most campaigns are able to manage these tasks with moderate success.

Where most campaigns fail to effectively use the voter file is when they try to use it as a means to generate mail files and avoid purchasing additional products. At first glance, this may appear to be a cost effective strategy, but the reality is that campaigns increase their costs by thousands of dollars and get an inferior quality product when generating their mail files in-house. The reason why managing data in-house works for a field program and not a mail products is simple. The costs associated with a field program are the voter file, campaign management software, computer hardware, and paid staff.   These costs can be kept relatively low and will not vary depending on the quality of the data. In fact, campaigns often benefit by data imperfections such as identifying voters who have moved.

Mail files, on the other hand, have associated costs in excess of 20 times the cost of the voter data. If a mailer costs $.42 per piece, $.02 will go to data while the remaining $.40 pays for graphic design, printing, and postage. These costs make it imperative to use the most current and highest quality data available. By using Non-traditional householding and removing voters who have moved according to the National Change of Address registry, Political Data can reduce the number of pieces in a mail universe by 15%-20% while still reaching every intended recipient. For every 1,000 pieces of mail a campaign does not send, they save approximately $425.00.

When a campaign processes a mail file in-house, they are not taking advantage of enhancements and services that are available in mail files processed by Political Data. In almost every situation, the amount of money a campaign saves by having it generated by Political Data far exceeds to the cost for the mail file. Before deciding to generate a mail file in-house, we strongly recommend you consider the following items.

- Is the mail universe criteria based on the most comprehensive and current data available?
- Has the data been screened for NCOA matches? The NCOA (National Change of Address registry) match removes voters who no longer live at the address at which they are registered to vote.
- Does the mailer use Non-Tradional Householding? This reduces the number of mail pieces by householding voters with different last names at an identical address.
- Is the file CASS certified for bulk mail? Political Data will route sort and provide a CASS certificate of all purchase mail file at no additional charge. This reduces postage costs.
- Is your mail file generated by an individual with many years of experience with political demography and geography as well as postal regulations?   All Political Data mail files are guaranteed to be accurate to your specifications.

If you answered no to any of these questions, you should not be generating your own mail files. Political Data has created a process that is convenient, accurate, and extremely cost effective for campaigns to utilize for their mail files.

Sample Cost Analysis

Voter universe of 14,000 voters in 10,000 households
● Estimated number of mail pieces: 10,000
● Estimated cost per piece: $.40
● **Cost of mailing: $4,000**

After removing individuals who no longer live at the address listed in the county voter file and consolidated Non-Traditional households, we can reduce approximately 1,500 households from the mailing.

● Cost of 1,500 pieces of mail at $.40 per piece: $600.00
● **Cost of having Political Data generate mail file of 8,500 pieces: Approx. $200.00**

Results for Campaign
● **$400.00 savings**
● **More accurate and current data**
● **File comes route sorted (if requested)**
 ● **File is generated by an experienced PDI consultant.**

Breaking Down the Costs

Campaigns should take a moment to estimate all of the products they will likely need. They will then make an accurate cost assessment to determine how the various data management options fare. Call Political Data for assistance with pricing and complete this form.

Costs associated with Data Products from PDI	$$$$
Walk Lists 1	
Walk Lists 2	
Phone Lists 1	
Phone Lists 2	
Phone file 1	
Phone file 2	
Mail file 1	
Mail file 2	
Mail file 3	
Mail file 4	
Mail file 5	
Limited Use Voter File	
Misc Item 1 (AV chase files / Polling Place file)	
Misc Item 2	
TOTAL	

Costs associated with Managing Data	$$$$
Unlimited Use Voter File	
Cost of Computers	
Printer with adequate capacity for printer large lists	
Miscellaneous office supplies to facilitate creating list, labels, etc…	
Computer operator/Staff– Salary or time away from more important tasks.	
Campaign Management Software	
TOTAL	

PHONE - TELEPHONE NUMBER (AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER) ENHANCED
This field contains our enhanced phone number. We perform various tests to identify inaccurate numbers. This removes about %10 of numbers from ROV data. We also match the file to third party phone files. This adds about 25% additional numbers.
$5.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

SBPLACE - (STANDARDIZED BIRTH PLACE)
The standardized birthplace field provides ROV data with coding that is consistent statewide. The original birthplace field will have different codes for identical geographies.
$1.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

EBPLACE - ENHANCED STANDARDIZED BIRTHPLACE
The EBPLACE field contains ROV file and manually acquired data with coding that is consistent statewide. About 500,000 records in LA County.
$50.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

ETHNIC - ETHNICITY (SURNAME BASED-SEE CODES)
File matched to our ethnic surname dictionary
$10.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

INCOME - MEDIAN HOUSEOLD INCOME (IN DOLLARS)
From 2000 census data at block group level.
$2.50 per thousand

PARENTS - IDENTIFIED PARENTS
File matched to commercial parent list
$30.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

EMAIL - EMAIL ADDRESS
Matched email address.
$45.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

**CENSBLK - INCLUDES FIPS COUNTY, CENSUS TRACT, BLOCK GROUP, BLOCK
XCOORD - LONGTUDE COORDINATES (FOR GIS APPLICATIONS
YCOORD - LATITUDE COORDINATES (FOR GIS APPLICATIONS)**
Census geography and geo-coordinates. Sold as an enhancement package
$10.00 per thousand

HOME - HOMEOWNER (H=HOMEOWNER)
Assessor file match. Frequency dependent on county but always less than 12 months.
$12.50 per thousand IDENTIFIED

RESTYPE - RESIDENCE TYPE (SEE CODES)
Identifies institutional addresses and mobile home parks.
$100.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

NCOA – NATIONAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS
This field indicates that a voter's name and address was matched to the USPS National Change of Address registry during the last 4 years. Matches are performed within weeks of creating files.
$50.00 per thousand IDENTIFIED

***VOTE HISTORY FIELDS
Some of our vote history data for local elections was acquired manually. Any field containing manually acquired vote history is considered to be an enhanced field.