

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

By VCS

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# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

Sometimes you don't want a printed list or a set of mailing labels or a report from the voter files. Sometimes you want data in an electronic form that can be further processed by a computer. Maybe you are doing a canvass or a poll, and your phone bank wants a file of your target in electronic form, so that they can put this information into their computers for automated call control. Maybe you are doing a mailing, and your mail house wants an electronic file of the names and addresses you are mailing to so that they can ink-jet this information directly on your piece.

VCS provides data in electronic form. We call it Processed Data. You can get Processed Data on Compact Discs or you can download that data off our Web Site.





## PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

Processed Data means data that has been extracted from the Voter Files and formatted for a specific application. Because VCS cannot anticipate every application for which data may be wanted, there are five formats with a lot of overlap and duplication. Although there are many similarities between the different formats, there are also distinct differences. So when Processed Data is ordered, a good bit of thought needs to be put into the format choice.

In addition to different formats, VCS provides flexibility about what data is included. Each format will provide basic name and address information. Most of the rest of the possible data that can be included is optional. It is important to order only the data that is needed because most of the optional data has a cost associated with it. This allows you to get exactly what you want and at the best price.

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

VCS provides 5 Processed Data Formats called:

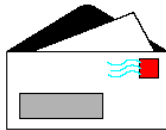
- Short Form Laser
- Phone Bank
- Phone Bank "S"
- Absentee Ballot
- Only Phones



Short Form Laser format is best for mailings and for laser letters.



Phone Bank and Phone Bank S are best for canvassing and polling.  
Only Phones format is just that – a list of phone numbers, good for  
“robo-calls”



Absentee Ballot is best for Vote By Mail projects.

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

What exactly is available in each format?

The following information is available in ALL the formats, except Only Phones:

- Phone Number
- Complete Mailing Information for Carrier Routing and Automation
- Precinct
- 10 Jurisdictions (or up to 10, depending on how many are on the voter file)
- Gender
- Party
- Some form of Name and Address, but these are a bit different in each format.

Other data is available on some formats, but not others. On the next page there is a table that tells what data is available on each format.

Look over the table now, but it probably won't answer all your questions.

Subsequent pages will further explain.

By the way, remember that the price of your processed data file depends on what data you decide to include. Be sure you refer to the current price list when making your choices and estimating the cost of your data.



# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

Data Item	Short Form	Phone Bank	Phone Bank "S"	Absentee	Only Phones
Parsed Address	No	Partial	Yes	Partial	No
Formatted Address	Yes	No	No	No	No
Both Addresses (mail and res)	No	No	No	Yes	No
Phone Number	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Postal Info	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
County Code	Part of Precinct	Part of Precinct	Yes	Yes	No
City Code	Part of Precinct	Part of Precinct	Yes	Yes	No
Precinct	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
All Jurisdictions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cluster Number	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Household Party (R,D,Other,Mixed)	No	No	Yes	No	No
Household Info for # members	One	Seven	Four	Four	No
First Name in Separate Field	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Middle Initial in Separate Field	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Title in Separate Field	No	Female Only	Female Only	Yes	No
Name Suffix in Separate Field	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gender	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Party	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Birth Date	No	No	MMYY only	Yes	No
Registration Date	No	No	MMYY only	No	No
Age	No	Yes	No	No	No
# of Flags	Twenty-one	One	Ten	Six	No
Voter ID (Affidavit)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Email Address	No	No	Yes	No	No

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

What the Heck is?. . . .

A Parsed Address?

A Formatted Address?

An Address looks like this:

**Ms Mary Jones**  
**435 W. Main Street, Apt 12**  
**Santa Clara, CA 95054**

This address could go right on a label for a mailing; it is set up just the way the post office likes it. If we want to do a carrier routed mailing, the address might look like:

**\*\*\*\*ECRLOT\*\*C03**  
**Ms Mary Jones**  
**435 W. Main Street, Apt 12**  
**Santa Clara, CA 95054**

These are formatted Addresses.

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

**A Parsed Address, on the other hand, is an address all taken apart:**

Where before, the address looked fine to go straight on a label, now, if the address is parsed, each element of the address is separated out into a separate field of data:

**Mr, John, Jones, 435, W., Elm Street, Apt 12, Santa Clara, CA, 95054**

Sometimes the name is completely taken apart:

Mr, John, Jones

And Sometimes the name is kept together:

Mr. John Jones

but separated from the address.

Sometimes the address is completely taken apart:

435,W., Elm Street, Apt 12, Santa Clara, CA, 95054

And Sometimes it is only partly taken apart:

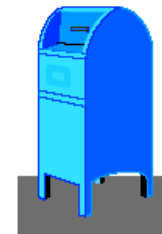
435 W. Elm Street, Apt 12, Santa Clara, CA, 95054

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

## **Both Addresses ? Why Two Addresses?**

For each voter on the voter file, VCS can keep both a residential address and a mailing address. Most voters have residential addresses, but many also have a mailing address which is different from their residence (this is usually a P. O. Box).

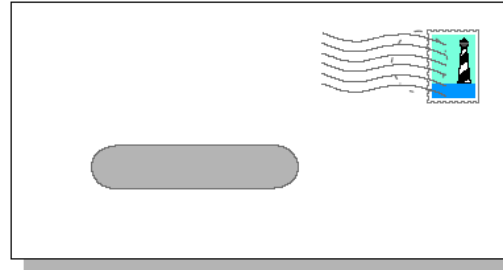
When Processed Data is ordered, the mailing address, if present, is usually provided; if there is no mailing address, the residential address is given. If you want only residence addresses, be sure to specify that when you order. Both addresses are provided on the Absentee Ballot format because you will want to mail the ballot application to the voter, but many ballots require that the residential address appear on the application.



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## Postal Information

### What is it?



The United States Postal Service provides discounts in postage if you do part of the work associated with delivering the mail. VCS provides all the information needed to get these discounts. This includes the following:

**Carrier Route**

**Delivery Point Code**

**Line of Travel (LOT) sequence**

**Line of Travel (LOT) code**

**A code which indicates whether this zip code is eligible for automated discounts**

**9-digit zip code (also called zip+4)**

**9-digit zip code check digit**

For more information on Postal Information, see VCS publication, *Mailing Labels*

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## **County, City, Precinct**

VCS thinks of the county code and optionally the city code as being part of the fully defined precinct, since without the county and perhaps the city indicator, the precincts in a state are not unique.

Some of the formats break the county code and the city code out of the fully defined precinct and some do not. You will always be able to find the county and city codes in all the formats, but it is a little easier when they are broken out.

## **All Jurisdictions**

VCS carries up to 10 jurisdictions for each voter. The first one is always State House (or Assembly or Legislative) District; the second one is always state Senate District (if applicable); the third one is always Congressional District. After that the definitions vary. They can be viewed under The National Political DataBase on the VCS website -- [www.vcsnet.com](http://www.vcsnet.com).

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## Cluster Number - What is that For?

If you are getting Processed Data for a Poll, you may have ordered a clustered sample. The cluster number is just a sequence number (1 - N) to identify the individual clusters. If your sample is not clustered, this field will be blank. Note that cluster number is only available on the phone bank formats.

For more information on Clustered samples, see VCS publication, *Random Samples*.

1



2



3



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## **Household Data and Member Data**

Processed Data can be ordered so that each record is a single voter, but more often it is ordered householded. This means that each record contains the information for an entire household. The record is usually divided into two parts. The first part contains the information that pertains to the whole household, such as address, phone number, and jurisdictions. The second part contains the information that applies to individuals in the household such as age, voter history, gender and party.

Notice that the amount of information on individuals varies from format to format. Also notice that a different number of individuals can be reported on in the different formats. The Phone Bank format has room to report on seven individual members of the household, while the Phone Bank S format has room to report on only four individuals; it will report the first four on the file; and for most households that will be sufficient. Because it reports on fewer household members, the Phone Bank S format has *more* information on each individual than the Phone Bank format has. This makes the Phone Bank “S” particularly favored by pollsters.

# PROCESSED DATA FORMATS

## **Individual Data**

Note that the amount of data that is available for individuals in the household varies quite a bit from format to format.

Complete **Birth date** is available on only one format. Month and year of birth date is available on another format. Another format does not give birth date, but gives age. If you are doing cross tabs on a poll, month and year or age are probably sufficient. But if you want to send birthday cards, you need the whole date.

Notice that **Registration date** is available on only one format, and then it is only month and year.

The number of **flags** that can be reported varies from format to format. You can always reformat flags to get the ones you want, but be sure the format you choose has room for enough flags.

**Voter ID** is available on all but one of the formats. Be sure to choose one of these formats if you are going to be identifying voter information that you later want to post back to a voter file.

**Email Address** is only available on S-type Phone formats.