

# How to Find a Person's Forwarding Address

## *Without Them Knowing*

If you need to locate a person but that person has recently moved, you may be able to discover his/her new address without him/her knowing you're looking. Here's how, in three simple steps:

**STEP 1:** Prepare a standard, white envelope for mailing. Include:

- A return address where you can safely get your mail;
- A recipient address with the party's name and their last known address;
- **Print** on the envelope the words, "**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**" in all-capital, bold letters, in no less than 8-point type with ¼ inch clear space around all sides.<sup>1</sup>
- Put something in the envelope, even if just a blank piece of paper. Having some weight in it will help prevent it from getting stuck in any machines.

The diagram shows a rectangular envelope with the following text and layout:

- Top Left:** You or Your Friend's Name  
You or Your Friend's Address  
City, State Zip
- Top Right:** Presorted  
First-Class Mail  
U.S. Postage Paid
- Center:** RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
- Bottom Center:** Other Party's Name  
Last Known Address  
City, State Zip

**STEP 2:** Bring the letter to your local U.S. Post Office and ask for it to be sent as either "Priority Mail" or "First-Class Mail." There *should not* be any additional charge. Alternatively, you could just put a stamp on the envelope and mail it yourself. However, going to the Post Office allows you to ensure that it is correctly entered into the system as "RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED" and to confirm with a person that it is properly formatted.

**STEP 3:** Wait for the letter to be returned to the safe return address. How long this takes will depend on the speed of your local Post Office, but expect it to take a week or more. Hopefully, when it is returned, the envelope will have a sticker on the front that includes the recipient party's new address. If not, it will tell you the reason for why, such as the address being "unknown."

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://pe.usps.com/text/qsg300/Q507.htm>