



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: October 16, 2023
RE: Director's Report: October 18, 2023, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on September 20, 2023.

I. The Departments of Technology and Elections received a CIO 100 award in August for development of an open source program for conducting risk-limiting auditing on ranked-choice voting contests.

- A. The CIO 100 awards recognize organizations that innovatively use technology to add value to processes and relationships with customers.
- B. The risk-limiting auditing (RLA) program is unique since it can audit ranked-choice voting contests.
- C. The RLA program will become the only auditing tool that can incorporate both vote-by-mail and polling place ballots within the same review processes.
- D. The program is being developed using open source software and will become available to other jurisdictions and developers.
- E. A brief synopsis of the City's development efforts regarding the RLA program are provided in Attachment 1.

II. The Department continues to provide voter outreach and education to communities across the City.

- A. This month, the Department's Outreach Team co-hosted a wide array of local community events, providing election resource tables and distributing official materials about San Francisco's voting and registration options. Events included Sunday Streets – Western Addition, offering entertainment activities and resources to city residents; Project Homeless Connect, Community Day of Service, offering resources and services to people experiencing homelessness; Art Walk SF – Glen Park, celebrating art, music, and local communities; several United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Ceremonies; University of San Francisco vs Santa Clara Women's Soccer Match; and GLIDE Memorial Church, Free Meals Program.
- B. The Department has been co-planning several community events scheduled through the end of this month, prioritizing those to be held in communities with lower than average voter registration and/or turnout. In the spirit of the Halloween holiday, the Outreach Team will display pumpkins carved with "Register to Vote!"; distribute chocolate with a custom "register to vote" message and an online registration QR code; set up a custom photo wall ("selfie station") featuring election-related props and images of "I Voted!" sticker contest submissions, and encourage event attendees with Halloween-inspired messaging (e.g., "Don't be scared to register to vote today!") Following this Halloween-themed outreach, outreach staff will co-host citywide events held in celebration of Día De Los Muertos and Veterans Day.
- C. The Department's "I Voted!" Sticker Design Contest moved into the public selection phase on October 10, 2023.

- i. The selection panel has reviewed more than 500 sticker designs, evaluating each design for its artistic skill and uniqueness of design, as well as the design's relevance to San Francisco.
 - ii. The panel narrowed down the submissions to nine finalists, and the public now has the opportunity to participate in choosing the sticker given to voters starting in the March 2024 election.
 - iii. San Francisco residents are invited to participate in the public selection phase using the [online survey](#) or by making their selection in person at City Hall, through Tuesday, October 17.
 - iv. To advertise this process, the Department issued a press release, sent an email to its community partners, and has been promoting the selection phase of the contest via its social media channels.
- D. The Department continues to educate voters about options to receive their Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP). Since its April launch of the "Go Green!" outreach campaign, nearly 2,200 San Francisco voters have opted out of paper delivery of the VIP in favor of reading it online. The Department's mixed media advertising drive resulted in more than 4,189,103 impressions from online banners, commercial-style animated videos, radio advertisements, and user-generated content videos.
- E. The Department is currently developing outreach strategies and messaging for the upcoming March 2024 election. To incorporate local community input into its March outreach planning, the Department created a short survey for its outreach partners. This survey was designed to tap into the expertise of local organizations and agencies, inquiring about strategies they believe would work best for engaging eligible but not registered San Franciscans as well as strategies for reaching residents who are registered but still do not regularly participate in elections.
- F. The Department concluded its Fall High School Ambassador program with a ceremony at City Hall for ambassadors and their families on Friday, October 13. Mayor London N. Breed attended the ceremony to present Certificates of Honor to each ambassador. During the course of this fall's ambassador program, students held nearly 120 registration events at school cafeterias and gyms, local cafés, grocery stores, and malls. Students also used social media channels to promote registration and voter education, collectively submitting over 700 Voter Registration Forms, all while sharing wonderful testimonials about their experience participating in the program.
- G. The Department continues to support its 2023 Vote Restoration outreach grant partners in their outreach and registration activities (the grant term will run through November 1). Since the start of the grant term on June 1, grantees have conducted many in-person outreach and registration events to focus populations, partnering with other local community organizations and agencies, including Harbor Lights Reentry Center, Delancey Street Foundation, San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project, Recovery Survival Network, the Minna Project, and several Navigation Centers. Some of these events were conducted in collaboration with the Department's Outreach Team, enabling the Department to establish new outreach contacts and further streamline messaging to focus populations.
- III. The Department continues to work on numerous short, mid, and long-term administrative projects.**
- A. The Department is finalizing its staffing plan for hiring approximately 250 as-needed personnel for the March 5, 2024 election. As part of this process, the Department has been collaborating with the Department of Human Services to finalize a timeline for fingerprinting appointments, submission of paperwork, and orientation session schedules.

- B. The Department will hold an Employment and Volunteer Opportunities Job Fair on Friday, December 8th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 49 South Van Ness. The Department is now working to identify the staffing resources necessary to support administration of the Job Fair and preparing the relevant promotional materials.
- i. In conducting this event, the Department hopes to fill many seasonal positions quickly while offering more convenient access to opportunities to city residents, further diversifying its employee and poll worker pools.
 - ii. This event will be a one-stop shop for local job seekers, with the possibility of applying, interviewing, receiving a conditional offer of employment, and starting onboarding process, all onsite.
 - iii. Those applying to serve as poll workers can take a test, schedule a training class, and receive an assignment.
- C. The Department continues to facilitate candidate filings for the March 2024 election. The nomination period for County Central Committee and County Council candidates commenced on September 29 and will run through December 8. The submission period for signatures in lieu of filing fee for candidates for Superior Court Judge, and for statewide and federal offices, opened on September 14 and will run through November 8. A current list of nearly 70 candidates who have filed to date is available at <https://sf.gov/reports/march-2024/candidates-march-5-2024-presidential-primary-election>.
- D. The Department has also been facilitating the filing of Declarations of Candidacy for the November 2024 election. A current list of nearly 50 candidates who have filed to date is available at sf.gov/reports/november-2024/candidates-november-5-2024-consolidated-general-election.
- E. The Department launched a new version of its “EData” tool at www.sfelections.org/tools/election_data/
- i. This tool features an updated design, simplified content, and a modernized interface, incorporating guidance received from the City’s Digital Services during the website transition earlier this year.
 - ii. This new tool also optimizes compatibility across devices including desktop, mobile, and screen-readers, and provides a smooth and user-friendly experience for website any users visiting the Department’s Data page. (Because *sf.gov* templates do not support customized applications, the Department develops and maintains all of its own public-facing tools, calendars, and results pages on its internal website, *sfelections.org*.)
 - iii. In addition to improved usability features, the revised tool provides several new datasets and charts, including a new “Outreach Events” section that provides data on the number of outreach events attended, the primary audience of those events, and the estimated attendance. The Department has also added charts showing the percent of vote-by-mail ballots returned compared to the number of ballots issued for each election, and plans to update this chart daily during the early voting period of future elections.
 - i. Any member of the public can provide feedback on the tool or suggest new datasets via the Feedback tab.
- F. The Department has been collaborating with members of its Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) to expand accessible materials and tools for the 2024 presidential election cycle.

- i. Following up on suggestions and input from the VAAC, the Department will begin providing a Signature Guide tool at all polling places. This tool, with non-slip materials and rounded edges, features braille and tactile guides to help voters with sight-related disabilities navigate and sign the roster.
 - ii. The Department will also deploy new braille instructions on ballot-scanning machines; these will help voters locate the slot on the machine and insert their ballot cards. This new signage supports ongoing efforts to help all voters cast their ballots privately and independently, rather than with poll worker assistance.
 - iii. The Department is also updating its "Vote Here" sign, which gets placed outside each polling place on Election Morning. The new double-sided sign will be much larger and more durable than the previous sign, and will be readable from both sides, making it easier for the public to locate the polling place entrance from the street or curb from different angles. The sign will also prominently feature key messages about how to request a curbside ballot or home ballot delivery, and polling place hours in large-print, English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish. Department personnel conducted several tests to ensure the sign can withstand various acclimate weather conditions.
- G. The Department has been working on its March 2024 ballot and Voter Information Pamphlet production plans and timelines. As part of this planning, the Department is preparing to implement the provisions of Assembly Bill (AB) 292 and AB 1219.
- i. With AB 292 signed into law, the Department will need to modify its current nonpartisan ballot template with new voter instructions. These revised no party preference (NPP) ballot instructions will need to provide specified information regarding how such a voter may request and vote a partisan ballot.
 - ii. The Department is also currently exploring how to implement AB 292's requirement to expand the options via which NPP voters may request a partisan ballot. In addition to the existing options to submit a request via telephone, mail, or via the Department's website, voters can now also request a partisan ballot by text message.
 - iii. With AB 1219 signed into law, the Department will need to incorporate a number of new ballot-formatting rules, including the requirements related to font size, capitalization of ballot headings, and ballot instructions to voters in primary and general elections.
- H. As instructed by the Mayor's Budget Office, the Department is reviewing its current FY 2023-24 budget to identify and submit newly proposed mid-year reductions by October 26th.
- i. On October 11, the Mayor issued an urgent letter instructing all city departments to identify mid-year budget cuts. The Mayor emphasized that it was "imperative" to begin cutting costs now, rather waiting until the next cycle, in order to address the city's growing deficit, which is projected to be least \$500 million in FY 2025-26.
 - ii. The Mayor's Budget Office, the Controller's Office, and the Budget and Legislative Analyst plan to release a more detailed financial forecast next month, with additional budget instructions following in December.

IV. Responses to the Commission's request for information to be included in the Director's monthly report.

There are no new items to report under this section.