



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: July 12, 2024
RE: Director's Report: July 17, 2024, 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 June 5, 2024.

I. The Department continues to facilitate candidate filings for the November 5, 2024 election.

- A. The nomination period for mayoral and supervisorial candidates closed on June 11. Accordingly, the Department has posted all final candidate lists, along with Chinese-character-based names and transliterations and ballot designations on <https://www.sf.gov/candidates>. In total, 13 candidates qualified to appear on the ballot for the mayoral contest; five for District 1 Supervisor; six for District 3 Supervisor; five for District 5 Supervisor; four for District 7 Supervisor, seven for District 9 Supervisor; and seven for District 11 Supervisor.
- B. The signature-in-lieu of filing fee period for City Attorney, District Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, Board of Education, and Community College Board candidates closed on July 10. The nomination period for these same offices will be open from July 15 through August 9.
- C. The Department is now facilitating the intake of local ballot measure paperwork for this election. The Department posts information about status of each local ballot measure at <https://www.sf.gov/measures-and-ballot-arguments>. For the November 5 election, local ballot measure lists will become final as follows: Initiative Measures: July 8, Local Measures: August 2, District Measures: August 9.
- D. On August 12, in accordance with applicable law, the Department will assign letters to identify all local ballot measures to appear on the November 5 ballot. This public process will take place at the Department's office in City Hall, Room 48. The Department will also livestream the event and post a recording of it on its website.

II. The Department is now in the main preparatory phase of the November 5, 2024 election cycle.

- A. The Department has begun hiring and onboarding seasonal employees to aid its full-time staff in completing essential tasks for the November 5 election cycle. Over the next three months, the Department expects to hire approximately 200 temporary employees to assist with vote-by-mail ballot envelope signature comparison tasks, poll worker recruitment and training, preparation of supplies, and provision of early voting services.
- B. The Department has begun preparing for the public Ballot Simplification Committee (BSC) meetings scheduled to commence on Monday, July 22. At these meetings, BSC members will prepare a fair and impartial summary of each November 5 local ballot measure for publication in the Voter Information Pamphlet. These meetings will likely continue through Monday, August 12.

- C. The Department has begun work on the November 5 Election Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP). In addition to covering topics such as voting options, election dates, contests on the ballot, and the availability of translated and accessible voting resources, the VIP will also include pages explaining 1) how to mark a ranked-choice voting (RCV) contest and how votes are counted in such a contest and 2) why an accurate and complete vote count takes time.
- D. The Department has also begun work on the quadrilingual Voter Information Booklet (VIB), which will be mailed to all registered non-citizen voters and made available on the Department's website in early October. The VIB will include a sample ballot listing only Board of Education contests, along with general information about the election.
- E. The Department has been updating its Poll Worker Manual and training curriculum for the November 5 election.
 - i. These updated poll worker training materials will reflect the Department's commitment to preparing each poll worker to respectfully and efficiently serve both citizen and non-citizen voters.
 - ii. The curriculum will also educate poll workers on non-citizen voter registration eligibility requirements, cover procedures for processing both non-provisional and provisional NCV voters using job cards, and direct poll workers not to discuss any voter's citizenship or immigration status.
- F. The Department is processing a steady increase in email correspondence from Military and Overseas (MILOS) voters.
 - i. Over the last month, the Department has received and responded to more than 250 emails from Military and Overseas (MILOS) voters. Most such voters are seeking to confirm their registration status, updating their registration, submitting Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA) to obtain MILOS status, or requesting details related to the Department's expected issuance of ballots to MILOS voters for the upcoming election.

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

- A. The Department has chosen the November 5 election outreach theme, which will be featured on the cover of the November VIP, the citywide outreach mailer, the banner on the Department's website, various flyers and presentations, and Muni bus and newspaper ads, as well as many other outreach materials.
 - i. *One city, many voices. Cast your ballot, make your choices!* theme was chosen to celebrate the historical importance of voting and to evoke the concepts of unity, diversity, and democratic action.
 - ii. The first part of the first clause of November's election theme, "One city," emphasizes and highlights the unifying nature of voting. Starting with these words is meant to encourage voters to begin with the premise that - whatever the outcome of this election - they form collective "we" in our representative government.
 - iii. The next part, "many voices," acknowledges that San Francisco's electorate is made up of a very diverse group – with different familial, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, different gender identities, and wide ranges of ages and immigration statuses – each with their own set of political views. It also reminds voters that voting is an opportunity to make their preferences known.
 - iv. The third part, "Cast your ballot," was chosen to focus on the most vital step in the process of voting: returning a ballot. Given that the Department can only accept a voter's expressions of preference via a timely return of their ballot, this is meant to evoke a quiet yet clear directive and an uncomplicated call to action.

- v. Finally, the last part of the new theme, "make your choices," was chosen to prompt voters to consider getting started early in the process of completing what will likely be a long ballot this fall. In other words, this part subtly notifies voters that they may have many, many choices to make this fall.
- B. To promote voter registration among both citizen and non-citizen residents, and to encourage voter participation, the Department will send over 300,000 quadrilingual notices (to every household in San Francisco) next month.
- i. This citywide mailer summarizes the five steps necessary to participate in this election: 1) register, 2) confirm home address, 3) chose a voting method, 4) understand how to mark an RCV contest, and 5) vote on time.
 - ii. This mailer will also remind recipients that the Department continues to be a trusted source of information with accurate answers to elections questions, including those about non-citizen voting rules and options.
- C. Following its recent issuance of Requests for Proposals to supplement the Department's voter outreach on 1) ranked-choice voting and 2) non-citizen registration and voting in the Board of Education contest, the Department selected nine and six organizations, respectively, as grant recipients.
- i. Out of the 22 proposals received, the selection panel chose the following 15 non-profits as grantees: RCV - [Asian Pacific American Community Center](#), San Francisco Shanghai Association, Glide Foundation, Curry Senior Center, [Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation](#), [Coleman Advocates](#), [Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice](#), [A. Philip Randolph Institute](#), [League of Women Voters- San Francisco](#); NCV - [Chinese for Affirmative Action](#), [Chinese Newcomers Service Center](#), [San Francisco Parent Coalition](#), [Mission Economic Development Agency](#), [Asian Pacific Islander Family Support Services](#), and [Mission Graduates](#). (Other RFP proposals were deemed non-responsive because the applicant organizations either failed to comply with state registration requirements for non-profits as established by the State Attorney General's Office or failed to score enough points to proceed to contract negotiations.)
 - ii. Following the close of the RFP protest period on July 15, the Department will start executing grant contracts and introducing grantees to the messaging and materials they will be using over the course of the grant term.
 - iii. Grantees will begin their activities on September 3 and continue up through Election Day. November 5.
- D. Last month, the Department held its Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) meeting.
- i. At this meeting, the Department reviewed planned outreach activities related to non-citizen registration and voting in the November 5 Board of Education Election and gathered attendees' feedback on those activities.
 - ii. LAAC members recommended that the Department feature the relevant definition of caregiver – an eligibility criterion for NCV registrants -- across outreach materials and highlight the availability of letters to NCV voters confirming they have registered for a Board of Education election in accordance with current local law.
 - iii. The Department has since implemented the LAAC's feedback across its outreach materials and website.
- E. The Department's Outreach team has begun its November 2024 voter education campaign on ranked-choice voting (RCV) through distribution of multilingual digital and print materials.
- i. All of these materials, including an RCV brochure, RCV ballot practice tool, and RCV video presentation are available in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino and are posted at sf.gov/voter-outreach.

- ii. With the goal of explaining RCV in easy-to-understand terms, the newly developed RCV video presentation compares the action of marking an RCV contest to making everyday decisions, such as choosing what type of sandwich to order or choosing where to go on a hike.

F. The Department recently debuted its new "San Francisco Elections: Safe and Secure" outreach brochure, which is now available in print format as well as at <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/San%20Francisco%20Elections%20Safe%20and%20Secure%20Brochure.pdf>. This brochure is part of the Department's effort to address misinformation, disinformation, mal-information, and AI issues about local elections, to establish itself as a trusted source for accurate election information, and to inform voters about steps they can take to help.

IV. The Department is responding to fiscal and legislative changes that may impact its operations and services.

- A. On June 11, 2024, the Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance, [FILE NO. 230868](#), amending the SF Administrative Code to amend the Language Access Ordinance (LAO) and clarify City departmental responsibilities.
 - i. These amendments to LAO lowered the threshold of Limited English Proficient San Francisco residents for which departments must provide translated materials and services from 10,000 persons to 6,000 persons.
 - ii. According to this new determination, and based on the current city demographic data, the Department - along with many other City agencies - will be required to offer translated physical and digital copy of its official materials (e.g., ballots, the Voter Information Pamphlet, website) in Vietnamese (starting in January 1, 2026.)
- B. On July 3, 2024, the Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance, [FILE NO. 240397](#), amending the SF Municipal Elections Code to update the qualifications and procedures for the translation or transliteration of the names of candidates for local office into Chinese character-based names to appear on the ballot. These final amendments are consistent with draft amendments that were included in the Director's report to the Elections Commission dated February 9, 2024.
- C. On July 3, 2024, the Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance, [FILE NO. 240434](#), amending the SF Municipal Elections Code to provide that the names of supporters and opponents of a local ballot measure submitted to the voters be listed in the ballot statement or question, unless such action would cause the ballot to run longer than six cards.
- D. The Department's FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 budget was approved without major cuts, allowing the Department to continue to provide the same level of service and facilitate its key programs as it has in prior years. Budget categories where reductions were made include overtime expenses, grant funding, professional and interdepartmental services.

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

Data on registration rates and outreach events: 1) Total new registrations, 2) New registrations by supervisory districts, 3) Tactics employed (outreach, community engagement, grant funding, etc.) and in which districts, 4) Tactics employed by districts.

- A. Between June 1 – June 30, the Department processed affidavits for 2,984 new registrants, residing in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 183, SD 2 – 306, SD 3 – 306, SD 4 – 184, SD 5 – 464, SD 6 – 343, SD 7 – 185, SD 8 – 290, SD 9 – 255, SD 10 – 280, SD 11 – 188.
- B. Between June 1 – June 30, the Department conducted 22 outreach events; which had approximately 13,840 people in attendance collectively. The number of such events by Supervisorial District was: SD 3 – 5, SD 5 – 5, SD 6 – 1, SD 8 – 1, SD 9 – 2, SD 10 – 3, SD 11 – 5.