



# Election Plan

November 5, 2024, Consolidated  
General Election

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## I. Introduction

The mission of the Department of Elections (Department) is to provide equitable access to voting and election-related services and to conduct free, fair, and functional elections for the City and County of San Francisco. In upholding this mission, the Department adheres to all relevant federal, state, and local laws, including the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the accessible voting requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and various other statutes such as the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the California Elections Code, the San Francisco Municipal Elections Code, and Chapter XIII of the City Charter.

The Department is committed to ensuring that every eligible San Franciscan has access to safe, barrier-free registration and voting options. We continuously strive to enhance both our internal operations and public-facing programs, aiming for greater efficiency and responsiveness to the needs of our diverse communities. We also strive to foster a workplace where employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds feel respected, valued, and supported, enabling them to deliver the most fair and inclusive services to San Francisco residents.

Serving a registered voter base of approximately 500,000 residents, the Department:

- Facilitates the filing of local candidate nomination papers, ballot measures, and ballot arguments;
- Produces official ballots and voter information pamphlets in multiple languages and formats;
- Provides voter education and outreach to voters and potential registrants throughout the City;
- Administers a vote-by-mail program for all locally registered voters;
- Secures and operates accessible neighborhood polling places for each election;
- Recruits, trains, and assigns poll workers to administer in-person voting on Election Day;
- Offers early in-person voting opportunities starting 29 days before each election;
- Organizes the collection of ballots and election results data from polling places on Election Night;
- Provides vote count tabulation and election results reports to the public after Election Day; and
- Conducts a canvass (audit) of all votes cast to verify the validity of election results before certification.

In accordance with San Francisco Charter §13.103.5, the Department is required to develop an Election Plan for each election. The Election Plan outlines the Department's strategies for conducting the upcoming election in a manner that is free, fair, and functional. Presented below is the Election Plan for the November 5, 2024, Consolidated General Election.

## II. Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

The Department's mission—to provide equitable access to voting and election-related services and to conduct free, fair, and functional elections for the City and County of San Francisco—guides all decision-making, resource allocation, and employee responsibilities. This mission is central to the work of the Department's eight divisions: Administration, Ballot Distribution, Campaign Services, Election Day Support, Polling Place Operations, Information Technology, Voter Records, and Voter Information.

Among these, three divisions are primarily external-facing, engaging directly with voters, campaigns, and the public: Campaign Services, Election Day Support, and Voter Information. Campaign Services oversees the compliant filing of candidate nomination papers, ballot measures, and ballot arguments. Election Day Support manages the recruitment and training of poll workers and the acquisition of voting sites. Voter Information develops and implements voter outreach and education programs, creates and translates ballots and voter guides, handles public communications, and facilitates Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.

The remaining five divisions focus on internal operations and support: Administration, Ballot Distribution, Information Technology, Polling Place Operations, and Voter Records. Administration manages financial, personnel, and organizational operations. Ballot Distribution oversees the ordering, distribution, and processing of ballots. Information Technology develops and maintains the Department's technological infrastructure. Polling Place Operations handles equipment testing, storage, and the preparation of voting supplies. Voter Records maintains the accuracy of the voter roll, supports early voting, and verifies signatures for vote-by-mail ballots and petitions.

Successfully organizing and executing all necessary election processes is undoubtedly a complex undertaking. This task demands expertise across multiple areas: a thorough understanding of election laws and regulations, skills in project management and public relations, technical knowledge of systems and security standards, and familiarity with human resources and city labor practices.

In addition to conducting elections for approximately 500,000 registered voters, the Department handles ongoing tasks such as managing facilities, data entry, processing inquiries, and managing payroll and accounting. Each fall, the Department also prepares budget proposals for the upcoming two fiscal years, a task that can be particularly challenging when it coincides with an election cycle, thereby intensifying the Department's workload.

Meeting this unique combination of responsibilities, often in the context of numerous moving logistical and legal parts, necessitates the Department attracting and retaining a reliable team of full-time and seasonal staff, and poll workers. Given the significant fluctuations in workload and scheduling due to the election cycle, all Department employees must be more than just dependable—they need to be fully committed to public service and prepared to dedicate their time to work that extends beyond a traditional 8-to-5 schedule.

To effectively integrate the hundreds of seasonal employees who join the Department each election cycle, we ensure that all new staff members: 1) understand their roles as official representatives of the City and County of San Francisco, and 2) receive the necessary resources and support to contribute effectively to the Department's mission.

To this end, the Department provides comprehensive orientation and training programs for all new employees. These programs emphasize: 1) understanding voter rights, tools, and options, 2) safeguarding voter data and maintaining the integrity of the voting system and sensitive materials, 3) maintaining professionalism, 4) remaining politically neutral, 5) delivering responsive service, 6) being mindful of equity and inclusion, and 7) using clear and straightforward language in all communications.

In summary, the Department's organizational structure is designed to support its core mission of ensuring equitable access to voting and conducting free, fair, and functional elections. The synergy between the eight divisions, each with its distinct yet complementary responsibilities, alongside the seamless collaboration between full-time and seasonal employees, is essential to managing the complexities of election administration. From engaging directly with voters and campaigns to overseeing internal operations and support functions, every aspect of the Department's work reflects a steadfast commitment to excellence, transparency, and integrity.

### **III. New and Modified Practices**

When planning and preparing for any election, the Department is dedicated to continually improving its programs and adopting more effective methods to serve city voters. This commitment includes implementing innovative practices and operational efficiencies, aimed at enhancing voter experience and ensuring the successful conduct of the election. This section highlights several new practices and enhancements to existing programs and processes that will be in effect for the November 5 election.

#### **A. November 5 Election Theme: One city, many voices. Cast your ballot, make your choices!**

As it has in most recent elections, the Department developed a theme for the November 5 election—a visual identity that can be used across various platforms and materials, helping reinforce the election message.

In developing the theme for the November 5 election, the Department aimed to honor the historical significance of voting while emphasizing the city's unity, diversity, and collective action. The theme, "One city, many voices. Cast your ballot, make your choices!" underscores both the unity and shared responsibility inherent in voting, while celebrating the city's diverse electorate.

Following is a screenshot of the Department's website homepage featuring the theme:



**November 5, 2024  
Consolidated General  
Election**

One city, many voices.

**Cast your ballot, make your choices!**

Help decide the future of our city, state, and country by participating in this election and encourage your friends and family to do the same!

[Visit the Election Readiness Toolkit](#)

The first part of the first clause of November’s election theme, “One city,” was chosen to emphasize the unifying nature of voting. These words are meant to encourage voters to begin with the premise that—whatever the outcome of this election—they share a collective duty in electing our representatives in government.

The second part of the first sentence of this election theme, “many voices,” reflects San Francisco’s diverse electorate, encompassing various familial, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, a wide range of philosophical and cultural perspectives, different gender identities, ages, and immigration statuses. This part of the theme underscores that voting is an opportunity for each individual to express their unique preferences and contribute to the collective decision-making process.

The first part of the second clause, “Cast your ballot,” was chosen to emphasize the critical step of returning a ballot. Since the Department can only accept voters’ expressions of preference via their timely ballot return, this part of the theme is meant to serve as a clear directive and a call to action.

Finally, the second part of the second clause of the theme, “make your choices,” was chosen to subtly remind voters that they will have many decisions to make this fall, prompting them to start early.

To amplify the message of unity, diversity, action, and personal choice, the theme is presented against a red, white, and blue background, featuring several panels that highlight San Francisco’s skyline and its residents.

The first panel, in the top left, shows a picture of voters in front of a blue and white version of San Francisco’s iconic skyline. Overlaying the skyline are several stars and the phrase, “One city, many voices.” This combination is designed to evoke a sense of being a distinct yet harmonious part of one of the world’s most diverse and inclusive cities.

The second panel, positioned center-right, features the call to action: “Cast your ballot, make your choices!” This panel serves as a visual prompt for voter engagement.

The next three panels showcase images of city residents that are meant to evoke further conceptualizations of the unity and diversity echoed in the words, “One city, many voices.”

This theme will be prominently featured on the cover of the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) and on the mailer sent to every San Francisco household. The theme will also appear on various outreach materials, including a banner on the Department’s homepage, flyers, and presentations. Additionally, large posters highlighting this theme will welcome visitors to the Department’s office and the City Hall Voting Center.

By prominently featuring the theme on key materials and in high-visibility locations, the Department aims to inspire and engage voters, helping them recognize their role in shaping the future of our city.

## **B. Ranked-Choice Voting Outreach and Education**

With several ranked-choice voting (RCV) contests on the November 5 ballot, the Department will undertake an extensive outreach and education campaign to inform voters about this voting method. This campaign will be multilingual and will include the following strategies:

1. **Dissemination of a topical presentation:** Presentations will be held to explain the key points of RCV, helping voters understand how to mark RCV contests on their ballots.
2. **Provision of multiformat multilingual materials:** Outreach materials on RCV will be available in various formats, including print, digital, and video, to cater to different learning and language preferences and accessibility needs.
3. **Grant-based collaborative outreach:** The Department will partner with local community organizations through a grant-based initiative to conduct targeted outreach. These organizations, serving diverse City residents, will help disseminate accurate information about RCV.

**Dissemination of a topical presentation.** As part of its effort to deliver RCV education to City voters, the Department will conduct multilingual "[Ranked-Choice Voting in San Francisco](#)" presentations at various community gatherings and events in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco. The 2024 updates to this presentation focus on simplicity and relatability, ensuring that all viewers, including new voters, are well-equipped with RCV-related knowledge for the November 5 election.

Specifically, the 2024 RCV presentation features a fictional narrator named Alex who explains RCV using everyday examples. Alex begins with a brief history of RCV and an explanation of how this voting method eliminates the need for run-off elections, then lists RCV contests on the November 5 ballot. To make the concept of RCV relatable, Alex links it to everyday decisions, such as choosing what type of mustard to put on a sandwich or where to go on a hike. For instance, Alex uses the example of ranking mustard choices to demonstrate key RCV points, such as not needing to rank all choices and there being no benefit to ranking a choice more than once. Alex concludes the presentation by explaining how votes are counted.

**Provision of multiformat multilingual materials.** To supplement the 2024 RCV presentation, the Department has also developed the "Ranked-Choice Voting in San Francisco" brochure. This brochure explains how to mark an RCV contest, provides key RCV points, and shows how votes are counted. It also includes a list of helpful RCV resources, such as an RCV Practice Tool, which is described in more detail later in this section.

To ensure broad distribution of the "Ranked-Choice Voting in San Francisco" brochure, the Department will implement a comprehensive distribution plan. This brochure will be included in the informational packets sent to over 300 outreach partners. Copies will also be available at public libraries, community centers, the Department's office and other public spaces for residents to access at their convenience. Additionally, the brochure will be distributed through the Department's 15 grantee partners, reaching their networks, including hard-to-reach communities and areas with historically lower voter turnout. Finally, the brochure will be available on the Department's website in all available languages, allowing voters to view or print it as needed.


Below is the English version of the "Ranked-Choice Voting in San Francisco" brochure:

**Questions? We are here to help you!**

**Department of Elections**  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
City Hall, Room 4B  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Email: [sfvote@sfgov.org](mailto:sfvote@sfgov.org)  
Phone: (415) 554-4375  
Fax: (415) 554-7344  
TTY: (415) 554-4386

中文: (415) 554-4367  
Español: (415) 554-4366  
Filipino: (415) 554-4310



[sfelections.org](https://sfelections.org)

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [@](#) /sfelections

**Ways to learn about and practice RCV**

- 1 Practice ranking your favorite candidate now
- 2 Use the RCV practice tool at [sfelections.org/rcv](https://sfelections.org/rcv)
- 3 Refer to RCV info in your Voter Pamphlet.
- 4 Learn about RCV in the insert enclosed with your mail ballot.
- 5 Review RCV instructions on your ballot before marking your choices.

**Demonstration Ballot**

**INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS / 選民須知**

Use a pen with black or blue ink.

Fill in the oval to rank candidates in the order of your choice.

- In the 1st column, select your 1st choice candidate.
- In the 2nd column, select your 2nd choice candidate.
- In the 3rd column, select your 3rd choice candidate, and so on.
- Do not fill in more than one oval in the same row.
- Do not fill in more than one oval in the same column.

You may only vote for one candidate on this ballot. If there are fewer than three candidates for an office, you may mark your choice of choice and leave the remaining columns blank.

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the candidate's name in the space at the end of the candidate list and fill in the oval for the rank.

If you make a mistake, you may request a new ballot.

選民須知：請用黑色或藍色鋼珠筆。

按序填列候選人姓名及序號。

- 在第一列，選擇您的第一選擇候選人。
- 在第二列，選擇您的第二選擇候選人。
- 在第三列，選擇您的第三選擇候選人，以此類推。
- 請勿在同一行填列多個選擇。
- 請勿在同一列填列多個選擇。

您只能投票給一位候選人。如果候選人名單上的人數少於三人，您可以填列候選人名單，並在候選人名單末尾填列您的選擇。

如果您犯錯誤，您可以要求更換新選票。

投票資格：您只能投票給一位候選人。

**FAVORITE VEGETABLE**  
我最喜愛的蔬菜

Rank up to 5 candidates. Fill in no more than 1 oval in each column.  
最多可填序五個選擇。每列不可填列超過一個選擇。

	1st Choice 第一選擇	2nd Choice 第二選擇	3rd Choice 第三選擇	4th Choice 第四選擇	5th Choice 第五選擇
PEPPER 紅椒	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
BROCCOLI 西蘭花	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CARROT 胡蘿蔔	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SPINACH 菠菜	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ONION 洋蔥	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>


**RANKED CHOICE VOTING**

★ in San Francisco ★

San Francisco voters use ranked-choice voting (RCV) to fill many local offices.

RCV allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference.

Learn more, inside! →



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

**Marking a RCV Contest**

Starting on the left side, fill in one oval per column:

Mark the 1st column for your 1st choice candidate

Mark the 2nd column for your 2nd choice candidate

Mark the 3rd column for your 3rd choice candidate

And so on...

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Pepper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Broccoli	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carrot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spinach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carrot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

To vote for a write-in candidate, write the name in the space at the end of the candidate list and fill in the oval for the rank.

**Ranking Tips**

You can rank as many candidates as you like, up to 10.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You do not have to rank all the candidates. (You can leave columns blank.)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do not fill in more than one oval per column. We will not be able to count either vote.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do not rank the same candidate multiple times. We will only be able to count your first ranking and will disregard all the others.

**How RCV Contests are Counted**

We begin by counting all first-choice votes.

Carrot	20%
Broccoli	55%
Pepper	25%

Broccoli is the winner because Broccoli received a majority of votes (50%+).

**What if no candidate receives a majority of first-choice votes?**

We eliminate the candidate with the lowest number of votes.

If you voted for the eliminated candidate, your vote moves to your second choice.

Pepper	20%
Broccoli	40%
Carrot	40%

The vegetable in last place (Carrot) is eliminated. Voters who chose Carrot as their first choice will have their vote moved to their second choice.

We count the votes again. If a candidate now has a majority of votes, that candidate wins.


Pepper	45%
Broccoli	55%

The votes are counted again. Pepper is now the winner because Pepper has a majority of votes.

**What if there is still no winner (no candidate has a majority)?**

The process of eliminating the candidate(s) with the lowest number of votes continues until a candidate has a majority.

View official election results at [sfelections.org/results](https://sfelections.org/results)





To maximize the reach of its 2024 RCV educational materials, the Department will feature its RCV resources in the November 5 Voter Information Pamphlet and the vote-by-mail ballot packet instructions, both of which will be distributed to all City voters in early October. Additionally, voters who choose to vote in person will find RCV information at their polling places. An RCV poster will be placed inside every voting booth, and poll workers will be trained to offer RCV reference materials to those who request assistance.

As a key component of its outreach strategy, in September, the Department will send an RCV-focused mailer to every household in the city. The mailer will list the local offices up for election using RCV this fall and provide instructional content and practical resources to help voters understand this voting method.

A copy of the mailer is shown below:

**Get ready to vote in the November 5, 2024 Election**

San Francisco voters will use **ranked-choice voting** this fall to elect Mayor, City Attorney, District Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, and Board of Supervisors members in Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11.

**Learn more inside!**

**What is ranked-choice voting?**  
Ranked-choice voting allows you to rank up to ten candidates for each municipal office. This method makes it possible to elect local officials by majority vote without needing a separate run-off election.

**How do I mark a ranked-choice contest?**  
Rank candidates in order of your preference by filling in the ovals from left to right, as in the example to the right.

**Keep in Mind:**

- You can rank as many or as few candidates as you want.
- Only mark one candidate per column.
- If you make a mistake on your ballot, you can request a new one at [sfelections.gov/voterportal](https://sfelections.gov/voterportal), by calling (415) 554-4375, or by asking a poll worker or Voting Center representative.

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice
Pepper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Broccoli	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carrot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spinach	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How can I learn more about ranked-choice voting?**

- Practice marking a ranked-choice voting contest and learn how your choices would be counted in a real election at [sfelections.gov/practice](https://sfelections.gov/practice).
- View the presentation on ranked-choice voting at [sfelections.gov/rcv](https://sfelections.gov/rcv).
- Review details in your Voter Information Pamphlet (mailed in early October).

**What if I have more questions?**  
For accurate and up-to-date election information, contact the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375, email [sfvote@sfgov.org](mailto:sfvote@sfgov.org), or visit our office in City Hall, Room 48. To receive official election news and updates directly in your inbox, subscribe at [sfelections.gov/trustedinfo](https://sfelections.gov/trustedinfo).

*Help decide the future of our city, state, and country by participating in the November 5, 2024 election! Register to vote at [registertovote.ca.gov](https://registertovote.ca.gov) or contact us to get a paper form.*

For voters who prefer to receive their election information online, the Department’s website will offer resources related to RCV. These resources include an interactive [RCV Practice Tool](#), which allows voters to practice marking an RCV contest with ten rankings and provides feedback on how their ballot would be counted in a hypothetical election.

Screenshots of both the tool and its response to a specific marking are shown on the next page:

# Election Plan – November 5, 2024, Consolidated General Election

**Ranked-Choice Voting Practice Ballot**

English

To rank the candidates in order of your preference, select the oval in each column...

- In the 1st column for your 1st choice.
- In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice.
- In the 3rd column for your 3rd choice, and so on.

You may rank as many candidates as you like.

Do not select more than 1 oval in the same column. Your vote in that rank and later ranks will not count.

Do not select more than 1 oval for the same candidate. Your vote can be counted only once for that candidate.

When you are finished marking the practice ballot, press "Submit" to receive feedback on how the ballot will be counted.

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice	6th choice	7th choice	8th choice	9th choice	10th choice
Ocean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mountain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Forest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Beach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Desert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waterfall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Valley	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
River	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Canyon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glacier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You ranked multiple candidates, Desert and Waterfall, as your first choice. This is called an overvote.

When a first choice is overvoted, the vote cannot be counted because the voter's intent is not clear.

To make your ballot count, change your selections and resubmit your ballot. To clear your selections and start over, click on "Reset".

Similarly, to help voters assess their knowledge of RCV and map out their voting plan, the Department has developed its [Election Readiness Tool](#). This tool presents three simple questions to each user: (1) "Are you registered to vote in San Francisco?", (2) "Have you decided how you will vote in the November 5 election?"; and (3) "Are you familiar with ranked-choice voting that allows voters to rank up to ten candidates in local contests?". For each of these questions, the user can choose from one of several multiple-choice options. Then, based on the voter's response, the tool will provide a tailored response and helpful resources. For example, a user who is unsure if they are registered will be encouraged to check their information using the

Voter Portal or to contact the Department, while a user new to RCV will be invited to read more about this voting method and to practice marking an RCV contest.

Below is a screenshot of the tool's response to a hypothetical user:

### 3. Are you familiar with ranked-choice voting that allows voters to rank up to ten candidates in local contests?

Yes	That's okay, we'd be glad to provide information and resources about this voting method!
No	Ranked-choice voting allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference (1st choice, 2nd choice, etc.) and eliminates the need to conduct runoff elections. Voters can, but do not have to, rank up to 10 candidates. If voters do not want to rank some of the candidates, they can leave columns blank.
Somewhat	In this election, voters will use ranked-choice voting to fill the offices of Mayor, City Attorney, District Attorney, Sheriff, and Treasurer. In addition, voters in odd-numbered Supervisorial Districts (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11) will use ranked-choice voting to choose their supervisors. To learn more, visit the <a href="#">Ranked-Choice Voting</a> page or try our <a href="#">Practice Ballot tool</a> .

**Grant-based collaborative outreach.** To supplement its direct outreach, the Department has selected 15 grantee partners through the City's RFP process: the 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, and League of Women Voters - San Francisco.

The selected grantees were chosen for their demonstrated ability to effectively engage with populations that would benefit from targeted RCV outreach. These include residents from neighborhoods with below-average turnout, seniors, voters with disabilities, limited-English proficiency residents, and first-time voters. To equip grantees with accurate RCV knowledge, the Department has conducted training sessions, introducing grantees to the official RCV messaging and materials for their outreach efforts. This outreach will occur from September 3 to November 5.

By employing a range of outreach strategies and resources described in this section, the Department is dedicated to making RCV education clear and accessible for every voter, regardless of language or learning style, and ensuring that San Franciscans are well-prepared to mark RCV contests on their ballots this fall.

### C. Non-Citizen Registration and Voting

In the November 5 election, City voters will fill four seats on San Francisco's Board of Education. Thus, in accordance with local law, the Department will incorporate non-citizen registration and voting into its election administration procedures; provide outreach on eligibility requirements and voting processes; offer the same voting options to local non-citizen voters as it offers to local citizen voters (i.e., voting by mail, in-person at the City Hall Voting Center any time in the early voting period, and at the polls on Election Day); and incorporate all valid votes cast by NCV voters into final Board of Education election results. This section provides brief descriptions of the main components of the NCV program administered by the Department.

**Voter registration.** In order to be eligible to register and vote in a local Board of Education Election, a non-citizen resident has to be: 1) 18 or older on Election Day; 2) not imprisoned for a felony conviction; 3) not found incompetent to vote by a court; and 4) the legally-recognized parent, guardian, or caregiver of a child under 19 who also lives in San Francisco.

Current law requires any non-citizen resident who plans to participate in a Board of Education election to submit a voter registration application valid only for that election. Such a voter cannot, for example, register to vote by completing the California Secretary of State's online application, by making a qualified transaction (e.g., obtaining a driver license or registering a vehicle) at the DMV, or by completing the state paper application, because these applications require an attestation of U.S. citizenship.

Therefore, the Department has produced a registration form specifically for non-citizens wishing to participate in the November 5 Board of Education election. This form includes a statement reminding non-citizen applicants that its completion does not entitle them to vote in any other local, federal, or state contests. It also includes the IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR NON-UNITED STATES CITIZENS (IMPORTANT NOTICE), as mandated by law, which alerts potential NCV voters that the Department may be required to disclose some of their data to Immigrations and Custom Enforcement and other agencies, organizations, or individuals.

The NCV registration form is available in Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Arabic, with the IMPORTANT NOTICE available in the 49 languages specified by local law. The form is available in print and via download on the Department's website and serves as the only means by which non-citizens can register to vote in the November 5 Board of Education election.

**Maintenance of voter records.** For the November 5 Board of Education election, the Department has again organized its separate Election Information Management System (EIMS) to maintain records for NCV voters. This separate EIMS allows Department personnel to conduct the following processes for non-citizen voters: generate ballot types and assign polling places, issue Voter Information Booklets and vote-by-mail ballots, produce rosters and street indices, process returned vote-by-mail and provisional ballots, and record voters' voting histories.

**Dedicated webpage.** The Department has launched an updated NCV webpage at [sfelections.org/NCV](https://sfelections.org/NCV). This webpage includes links to the NCV registration form and the NCV voter information portal as well as information on NCV eligibility, registration, and voting options.

This webpage also prominently features a statement that the Department can provide letters of NCV eligibility and registration upon request. The page also provides information about recent changes to the federal government's N-400, "Application for Naturalization". (In Part 9 of the latest version of form N-400, applicants are asked whether they have registered to vote in any federal, state, or local election in the United States. Applicants who have only voted in a local election where noncitizens are eligible to vote, such as San Francisco Board of Education elections since 2018, may answer "No" to this question.) Additionally, this page includes links to immigration-related resources and outreach materials.

**Outreach strategies.** The Department’s outreach team will conduct a comprehensive educational campaign on the NCV program, disseminating information on voter registration eligibility, voting options, and resources.

To educate as many eligible non-citizen residents of San Francisco as possible about their right to register and vote in the November 5 Board of Education election, the Department will utilize a wide variety of outreach strategies. These will include: digital distribution of NCV information, NCV resource tables hosted at various local neighborhood events, virtual and in-person NCV voter education presentations, specialized NCV training workshops for community-based outreach partners serving immigrant communities, and interviews with media outlets such as Telemundo 48, Univision, KTSF, KPIX, KCBS, KRON, and KIQI 1010 AM.

The Department will also facilitate collaborative NCV outreach with local organizations and agencies. In particular, the Department will collaborate with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA), the Latino Task Force (LTF), and the Immigrant Parent Voting Coalition (IPVC), as well as with grantee organizations selected to support NCV outreach.

**Outreach materials.** To ensure the dissemination of accurate information about NCV program, the Department produced two materials that serve as the foundation for all NCV outreach efforts.

First, the Non-Citizen Registration and Voting Guide provides key information about NCV in twelve easy-to-read pages. The guide provides the Department’s contact information, key election dates, an NCV eligibility checklist, and detailed instructions on the registration process. Readers will also find information on how to learn about Board of Education candidates and voting options. Additionally, the guide features a list of voting rights and contact details for local organizations that serve immigrant communities.

Second, the NCV flyer offers a concise summary of NCV eligibility and voting processes, designed for potential voters who prefer a simpler format.

A copy of the flyer is shown on the following page:

**Non-Citizen Voting  
in San Francisco**

**November 5, 2024  
Board of Education (School Board) Election**

**Eligibility Requirements**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you must meet all of the requirements below to be eligible to register to vote in the November 5, 2024 School Board Election.

- ✓ You will be at least 18 years on Election Day
- ✓ You are the parent or guardian of a child who will be under 19 on Election Day
- ✓ Both you and your child are living in San Francisco
- ✓ You are not in state or federal prison for conviction of a felony
- ✓ A court has not found you incompetent to vote

**Steps to Participate**

To vote in the November 5, 2024 School Board Election, complete these steps.

- 1 Review the Important Notice and Eligibility Requirements on this poster
- 2 Fill out a Non-Citizen Voter Registration Form and return it to the Department of Elections
- 3 Read the Voter Information Booklet to learn more about voting in the School Board Election
- 4 Decide how you will vote: either by mail or in person

For more information, go to [sfelections.org/NCV](https://sfelections.org/NCV) or contact the Department of Elections.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR NON-UNITED STATES CITIZENS**

Any information you provide to the Department of Elections, including your name and address, may be obtained by immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other agencies, organizations, and individuals. In addition, if you apply for naturalization, you will be asked whether you have ever registered or voted in a federal, state, or local election in the United States. You may wish to consult with an immigration attorney, an organization that protects immigrant rights, or other knowledgeable source before providing any personal information to the Department of Elections and before registering to vote in San Francisco Board of Education Elections. You can find a list of nonprofit organizations that specialize in protecting the rights of immigrants on [sfelections.org/NCV](https://sfelections.org/NCV).

Both the NCV Registration and Voting Guide and the flyer are available on the Department’s website and in print format. Additionally, outreach staff will distribute these materials at various community events. The Department will also provide these materials to its extensive network of outreach partners.

**Outreach partnerships.** The Department will coordinate NCV education efforts with hundreds of schools, organizations, and agencies. This coordination will involve working closely with educational institutions to integrate NCV information into their announcements and materials. Additionally, the Department will partner with community organizations and agencies to ensure that outreach materials are distributed to reach a broad audience. These partnerships are described below.

1. Local schools

The Department is partnering with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) to disseminate information related to NCV. Through this partnership, the Department will utilize SFUSD’s communication channels, including the OASIS newsletter (distributed to school staff) and the weekly Family Announcement Bulletin (sent to families). Additionally, the Department will provide printed NCV materials, such as flyers and registration forms, to the SFUSD main office on Franklin Street for display. The Department will also collaborate with local private schools, including the Chinese American International School, the French

American International School, La Scuola, and the Lycée Français de San Francisco. As with its public school partnerships, the Department will supply these schools with NCV materials to reach more families.

## 2. Local preschools

To expand its NCV outreach to non-citizen parents, guardians, and caretakers of very young children who are not yet enrolled in elementary school, the Department has reached out to several public agencies and community-based organizations that serve these families. These include the San Francisco Department of Early Childhood, the Children’s Council of San Francisco, Safe & Sound, Recess Collective, and the San Francisco Child Care Planning & Advisory Council. Through these partnerships, the Department will provide ongoing outreach about NCV, clarifying that local law allows most non-citizen parents of children residing in the SFUSD to vote, even if their children do not attend SFUSD schools.

## 3. City agencies and community-based organizations

As a key component of its NCV outreach, the Department will continue to leverage its longstanding partnerships with local government agencies and community-based organizations that serve immigrant populations. These include the City’s Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs, the Latino Task Force, the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families, and the Immigrant Parent Voting Collaborative.

These partners will, in turn, coordinate with numerous other organizations, such as the African Advocacy Network, the Arab Resource and Organizing Center, the Central American Resource Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, La Raza Community Resource Center, the Mission Economic Development Agency, and Mission Graduates. As trusted sources of information for local immigrant communities, these outreach partners play a vital role in helping the Department inform and engage residents about NCV.

## 4. Language Accessibility Advisory Committee

In its NCV outreach efforts, the Department will continue to collaborate with the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC). This volunteer group, formed in 2017, collaborates with the Department to make voting in languages other than English easier. This collaboration is particularly valuable because the Department uses LAAC meetings to gather community input on its planned outreach strategies and messaging.

## 5. Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs

The Department will continue to work closely with San Francisco’s Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA), with which it has maintained a successful partnership for many years. OCEIA is a policy, compliance, direct services, and grant-making office dedicated to fostering immigrant assistance programs that promote civic, economic, and linguistic integration.

As in previous elections, the Department will conduct training workshops with members of OCEIA's Community Ambassador Street Team. These workshops will prepare the ambassadors to educate non-citizen residents about the upcoming Board of Education Election. OCEIA ambassadors play a crucial role in reaching non-citizens who might not receive essential election information through traditional channels.

#### 6. Latino Task Force

The Department will continue to strengthen its partnership with San Francisco's Latino Task Force (LTF), which connects local low-income and non-English speaking communities with vital services and opportunities for cultural, economic, social, and civic engagement. Through this collaboration, Department outreach staff participate in LTF's weekly meetings, where they share information about upcoming events relevant to Spanish-speaking and other non-English speaking communities and provide details on NCV and other election topics. Additionally, three times a month, outreach staff set up NCV resource tables and answer questions at LTF's community hubs: the Mission Hub on Alabama Street, the Executive Park Hub in the Bayview, and the Excelsior Hub at Casa de Apoyo.

#### 7. Immigrant Parent Voting Collaboration

The Department will leverage its partnership with the Immigrant Parent Voting Collaborative (IPVC) to extend NCV outreach to non-citizen residents who might not access election information through other channels. The IPVC is a curated network of community-based organizations, including the African Advocacy Network, Arab Resource and Organizing Center, Central American Resource Center, Chinese for Affirmative Action, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, La Raza Community Resource Center, Mission Economic Development Agency, and Mission Graduates.

#### 8. Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families

Similarly, the Department is also expanding its collaboration with the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) to provide information about NCV to community-based organizations who work with DCYF. The DCYF creates and facilitates citywide policies and projects in support of children, youth, and families. As part of this expanded joint effort, the DCYF will publish information about NCV in their monthly newsletter, which they send to approximately 300 grantees who work with children and families in San Francisco. The DCYF will also highlight NCV via its social media accounts and [sfkids.org](http://sfkids.org), which together reach approximately 4,000 followers.

#### 9. Other organizations and stakeholders

Finally, the Department is collaborating with various community-based organizations that serve local immigrant populations to provide their staff with information needed to assist non-citizen residents interested in registering to vote. The Department will provide these organizations with presentations on NCV eligibility, voting options, available resources, as well as hold voter registration pop-ups at their facilities.



**Media.** During this election cycle, the Department will partner with local media to conduct interviews in Chinese, English, Filipino, and Spanish. These interviews will aim to inform city residents about NCV registration and voting and provide guidance on where to find additional information.

**In-person outreach.** The Department’s outreach team will carry out an extensive in-person outreach effort. To effectively address the needs of local schools, government agencies, and community-based organizations, the Department will offer voter education presentations, resource tables, registration pop-up events, and training workshops, described below.

#### 1. Presentations

NCV-specific presentations will be a central component of the Department’s in-person voter outreach efforts. These NCV presentations, delivered to members of community-based organizations, schools, and agencies that serve immigrant populations, will cover topics such as the history of NCV in San Francisco, registration eligibility requirements, voting options, and accessible voting resources.

#### 2. Resource tables

The Department’s outreach team will set up resource tables at various community events in neighborhoods across the city. At these tables, multilingual personnel will answer questions about NCV registration and voting processes, assist with NCV registrations, and provide “to-go” information through printed materials, including the NCV flyer and the Registration and Voting Guide.

#### 3. Workshops

The Department will maintain close collaboration with community-based organizations, providing their staff with the training, tools, and information needed to educate non-citizen residents about the eligibility requirements of non-citizen registration and voting. Additionally, Department staff will conduct training workshops with governmental and non-governmental partners to ensure their teams are prepared to provide accurate and effective NCV outreach to San Francisco’s immigrant communities.

#### 4. Merchant walks

The Department’s outreach team will conduct “merchant walks” in neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants and non-English speakers. During these walks, staff will distribute printed NCV materials to local business owners and request that they display the materials in their storefronts.

**Voting materials.** The Department will produce both the NCV ballot and the NCV Voter Information Booklet (VIB) without explicit references to citizenship status in their titles. Instead, these items will be referred to as the “EDU ballot” and the “EDU VIB,” respectively.

The VIB will be mailed to all non-citizen registrants and will also be available online on the Department's website in early October. Each VIB will include a sample ballot, general information about the election and Board of Education candidates, and the voter's polling place address (based on their home address). It will also indicate whether the polling site has accessible entrances and voting areas.

The official quadrilingual EDU ballot will list only the Board of Education contest. The ballot will include instructions and content in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino. In addition to paper ballots for use with ballot-scanning machines, the Department will also provide accessible touchscreen and audio versions of the ballot. Both paper and accessible versions will be available at all voting sites.

As with past Board of Education elections, the Department will include EDU ballots in Logic and Accuracy testing to ensure that all ballot-scanning machines can accurately read and tabulate ballots for both non-citizen and citizen voters.

**Voting options.** The Department will offer the same voting options to non-citizen voters as are available to citizen voters: by mail, at the City Hall Voting Center, or at a polling place. Non-citizen voters may mail in their ballots, use the Non-Citizen Accessible Vote-by-Mail System to cast an EDU ballot, or submit their ballots at the City Hall Voting Center or their assigned polling place.

Approximately one month before Election Day, the Department will mail ballot packets to non-citizen voters, along with instructions for completing and returning their ballots. Voters may return their ballots by mail, to the City Hall Voting Center, any local official ballot drop box, or any local polling place.

Both citizen and non-citizen voters can visit the City Hall Voting Center to register to vote, update their registration, drop off their vote-by-mail ballots, request a new ballot, or receive personal assistance.

Polling place voting procedures for non-citizen voters will align with those for standard voters. Upon arrival, a non-citizen voter will provide their name and address to a poll worker, who will locate them in the precinct roster. Each roster will include a separate section for EDU voters registered in that precinct.

**Poll Worker training.** The Department will develop a comprehensive training curriculum and update its Poll Worker Manual to ensure that every poll worker is well-prepared to administer voting to non-citizen voters on Election Day.

The training curriculum will provide detailed instructions for issuing EDU ballots, educate poll workers about NCV eligibility and rights, and instruct them to avoid discussing any voter's citizenship or immigration status.

In alignment with the ballot and Voter Information Booklet (VIB), the Poll Worker Manual and training materials, including official scripts for interacting with voters, will use the term "EDU" instead of "non-citizen." The precinct roster, which voters sign on Election Day, will also list non-citizen voters as "EDU."

To ensure support to voters who prefer to receive election information in a language other than English, the Department will establish a multilingual phone bank offering assistance in English, Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, and hundreds of additional languages via interpreters. Additionally, approximately 70 field support staff will be assigned to assist poll workers and act as liaisons between polling places and the Department on Election Day. All field support personnel will be well-versed in voting procedures for both citizen and non-citizen voters.

**Election results.** The Department will utilize the same voting equipment to tabulate ballots cast by both citizen and non-citizen voters. The preliminary and final election results reports will aggregate counts from both groups, reflecting the total participation in the Board of Education election.

#### **D. Engaging Young Residents (Ages 16-24)**

This fall, the Department will collaborate with San Francisco high schools, colleges, and youth groups to provide students with opportunities to engage in election processes. These efforts will focus on three key concepts: civic participation, civic engagement, and community partnerships.

**Civic participation.** In accordance with California law, otherwise eligible residents aged 16 or 17 can pre-register to vote using the state's paper registration form or by submitting an online form at [registertovote.ca.gov](https://registertovote.ca.gov). The Department will activate these pre-registrations on the applicant's 18th birthday.

The Department's Outreach team works year-round to promote pre-registration opportunities to local youth through schools, community groups, and various media channels. As a part of this program, the Department sends weekly notices to residents who have turned 18 in the preceding week to acknowledge the important milestone they have reached and encourage them to begin their life-long journey of voting.

To further boost young voter participation in the upcoming election, this fall the Department will send supplementary notices to 1) registrants who reached voting age shortly after the March election earlier this year and 2) pre-registrants who will reach voting age before the November 5 election. These notices will help ensure that young individuals who are newly eligible to vote or who have recently reached voting age are aware of their eligibility to participate in the upcoming election. Additionally, these notices will provide essential information about the voting process, including voting options and resources for first-time voters.

Starting in early September, the Department will also distribute notices to college students in local dormitories. These notices will remind college students about voter registration options and encourage them to participate in the upcoming election. The notices will also highlight that California law allows students to register at either their school or home address.

To support student voting, the Department will set up convenient ballot drop boxes on several college campuses beginning 29 days before Election Day. Drop boxes will be available at the University of California Law, University of California, San Francisco, University of San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and the City College of San Francisco's Chinatown, Downtown, and Mission campuses.

The Department will boost its youth outreach efforts by leveraging social media platforms to post engaging content tailored to younger audiences. This will include user-generated content and weekly “Fun Fact Friday” posts. Additionally, all City voting sites will feature “selfie” spots, encouraging voters to share their voting experiences on social media and inspire their peers.

**Civic engagement.** To foster civic engagement, the Department will offer its High School Student Poll Worker Program. Eligible students must be at least 16 years old, maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher, be a U.S. citizen or permanent legal resident, and complete a mandatory training. Through this program, students gain hands-on experience with the voting process and earn a stipend, while assisting members of their communities on Election Day.

For fall 2024, the Department will also facilitate its High School Elections Ambassador program, aligned with High School Voter Education Weeks, occurring this year from September 16 to 27. This program trains students to engage in civic outreach within their schools and neighborhoods, offering pre-registration and registration services, promoting poll worker opportunities, and disseminating essential election information. This fall, the program has seen its highest level of student participation to date, with 90 students from 21 public and private schools across the city signing up.

The Department will provide the students with the training, information, and resources necessary to address any questions during their outreach activities. To ensure a successful experience for each student, every Ambassador will be paired with a Department mentor who will offer support and guidance throughout the development and execution of their outreach plans. At the program’s conclusion, the Department will host a ceremony to express gratitude to the students and recognize their contributions toward fostering an informed and engaged student electorate in San Francisco.

**Community partnerships.** The Department will focus on educating young residents about elections by leveraging its established relationships with local high schools and colleges. To reach students, the Department will conduct presentations at school-wide assemblies during the fall semester, distribute outreach packets to all local schools, affix outreach posters in classrooms and on bulletin boards, collaborate with school administrators to disseminate information through digital newsletters and student packets.

Additionally, the Department will contact local school administrators to encourage participation in the California statewide student mock election on October 8. This initiative aims to cultivate voting habits among future voters. Participating schools will receive supply kits containing mock ballots, voter information guides, posters, “I Voted” stickers, pre-registration brochures, and High School Student Poll Worker flyers.

To extend this initiative beyond schools, the Department will partner with various agencies and non-profit organizations serving local youth and families. Staff will conduct multi-format presentations and host office hours with organizations such as Mobilization for Adolescent Growth in Our Communities, the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, and San Francisco Juvenile

Hall. These partnerships aim to reinforce the importance of election participation among youth, particularly those facing challenging circumstances.

By utilizing these partnerships and outreach strategies, the Department is committed to educating and engaging San Francisco's youth, fostering a lifelong commitment to civic participation and developing a well-informed future electorate.

### **E. Expanding Vote-By-Mail Ballot Cure Methods**

When a voter casts their ballot by mail, state election law requires an election official to verify the voter's identity by comparing the signature on the return envelope to signatures in the voter's registration file. When a signature does not compare to any of the signatures on a voter's file or does not appear at all, the ballot must be challenged. Voters can "cure" their challenged ballots by submitting a signed form under penalty of perjury to the Department at least two days prior to the certification date.

For the November 5 election, the Department will expand services to such voters by providing a secure portal through which voters can submit their signatures over the internet. This new digital option, which is described in more detail later in this section, builds on past Department's efforts to reduce rates of challenged ballots by pairing robust voter outreach with thorough signature verification processes aimed to ensure no ballots are challenged erroneously.

For over a decade, San Francisco has been a leader in the state with respect to reducing rates of signature-related ballot challenges. The Department's success in this area is reflected in the data; for example, in the March 2024 election, the percentage of San Francisco ballots challenged for signature-related reasons and left uncured was 0.18%, lower than the rate in neighboring counties of Alameda, Marin, and San Mateo, and far below the statewide average of 0.44%.

To maximize the number of ballots that can be cured and counted, the Department has developed three main strategies. The first is to conduct thorough signature review to ensure no ballots are erroneously challenged. The second is to communicate quickly and effectively with voters whose ballots are challenged and require action. The third is to provide convenient methods for voters to cure their challenged ballots.

**Thorough voter signature review.** In every election, USPS delivers returned vote-by-mail ballots to the Department on a daily basis during the early voting period as well as after Election Day. Department staff begin processing these ballots after they arrive, using a multi-stage signature review process. The Department created this process in 2016 to ensure no vote-by-mail ballot would be challenged for signature-related reasons unless the envelope signature had been reviewed by three different staff members and compared to all signatures in the voter's record.

In 2021, the California Secretary of State (SOS) issued detailed regulations for conducting signature review, clarifying state law and providing guidance to county elections officials. One of these regulation states that a

ballot *“shall only be rejected if two different elections officials unanimously find beyond a reasonable doubt that the signature differs in multiple, significant, and obvious respects from all signatures in the voter’s registration record.”* While state regulations require only two people to review each signature, the Department has found that a three-person review process improves early acceptance rates of ballots, leading to greater efficiency in ballot counting processes.

To optimize the efficiency of this multi-stage review process, the Department uses several systems and internally developed tools. First, the Department uses three coordinated systems to process envelopes and review signatures: a mail sorter system; the Election Information Management System (EIMS); and a Ballot Review program. The mail sorter reads the barcode on each envelope and captures a digital image of the signature. After that, the envelope scan is uploaded into EIMS so staff can review the signature capture side-by-side with the main signature in the voter’s file. This is the “first pass”.

If, during the first pass of the ballot review, the staff member cannot accept the signature, they will forward it for a second pass, and, if necessary, for a third pass. Staff conduct the second and third passes using EIMS and the internally developed Ballot Review program. More specifically, the Ballot Review program queries data inputted into EIMS during the first pass and routes ballots requiring voters’ actions to designated reviewers. This digital process eliminates the need to manually transfer ballot envelopes. Only after a voter’s ballot envelope has undergone all stages of the review process, reviewed by three trained staff members, and compared to the voter’s signatures on file, can it be finally considered as challenged.

**Effective voter notification methods.** When any ballot is challenged, the Department immediately initiates its multi-pronged contact process. First, if the voter has signed up for automatic text notifications, the voter will receive a text notification almost immediately after their ballot has been challenged. Second, within one day of the ballot challenge, the Department will 1) send a cure form in the voter’s preferred language preference, along with a postage paid-return envelope; 2) send an email with a link to the digital version of this notice; and 3) update the voter’s profile in the Voter Portal with a parallel notice. Third, if the Department has the voter’s phone number on file, staff will call the voter in their preferred language within 24 hours to provide notice.

For the November 5 election, the Department will continue its efforts to reach voters with challenged ballots who may have difficulties receiving or sending mail or accessing the internet. This will involve hand-delivering notices to voters who are in custody, hospitalized, or homebound. The Department will also offer confidential methods for these voters to review the signatures on their registration records and will send reminder emails and make phone calls to those who have not responded to the initial correspondence.

**Convenient ballot cure process.** As in previous elections, voters will have many paper-based options in the November 5 election to cure their challenged ballots. Voters with challenged ballots will continue to receive forms in the mail which they can sign and return by mail using the postage-paid envelope included with the form, scanning and returning the form via email, faxing the form, or returning the form in person to a voting site or ballot drop-box.

For added convenience, in this election cycle, the Department will also introduce a new, fully web-based mechanism for voters to submit their forms electronically, without the need to sign a paper form. This new online submission method was made permissible by the passage of Assembly Bill 1037, which amended §3019 of the California Elections Code to allow voters to submit their signature statements using any of the existing methods or *“by other electronic means made available by your local elections official.”*

The Department’s new secure and accessible *Ballot Cure Tool* will be available in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino, 24/7 between the start of the voting period and two days before election certification. Voters will be made aware of the online method when they receive the Department’s correspondence via mail, email, or phone call, or via the Voter Portal.

On the first screen of the *Ballot Cure Tool*, voters will see a login page featuring a set of login instructions. To log into the tool, voters will need to enter their house number, date of birth, and zip code. These inputs will allow the tool to validate the voter’s record and display relevant information on the subsequent screens.

On the second screen, the tool will explain why the ballot was challenged (e.g., voter did not sign their return envelope, the signature did not compare, the voter printed their name instead of signing, or the envelope was signed under power of attorney). Under this text, voters will need to type their full name and address, and may also type their phone number and email address (in case additional follow-up is necessary).

On the third screen, voters will be able to review their submissions, and edit them if necessary.

On the fourth screen, the tool will display a penalty of perjury statement and a digital pad for voters to provide their signature. On a touchscreen device, such as a smartphone or tablet, voters may use their finger, stylus, or accessible touchscreen marking device, while on a non-touchscreen device, such as a desktop computer, voters can sign with a mouse or assistive tool such as a joystick or trackpad. After signing, the system will generate a digital form containing the voter’s digital signature and their inputs from earlier screens.

On the fifth screen, voters will be able to review their digital form and make edits if necessary. The voter may then download a copy of their submission for their records if they so choose before submitting the form.

Once a voter has submitted their form using the *Ballot Cure Tool*, the system will automatically generate an email to a dedicated Department email account containing a copy of the form. Department personnel will download each form, print a hard copy, and review it following state rules and regulations. For example, elections officials must consider explanations for discrepancies in signatures, noting that a signature *“may have been written with a stylus pen or other electronic signature tool that may result in a thick or fuzzy quality.”* In other words, small differences in the quality and/or preciseness between a voter’s wet and digital signatures should not constitute the sole cause for rejection of the signature.

Following election certification, the Department will attach these forms to voter records for use in future elections.

The Department is dedicated to enhancing the convenience, accessibility, and reliability of vote-by-mail services. By doing so, we aim to boost public confidence in the electoral process and encourage greater voter participation. Our multistage ballot cure process, combined with our ongoing efforts to simplify and enhance the process, reflects our commitment to enfranchising as many voters as possible.

#### **F. Data-Driven Polling Place Resource Allocation Plans**

While most San Francisco voters have chosen to vote by mail in recent elections, some voters – including those who may need to utilize conditional voter registration or certain types of language and/or accessibility resources – opt to continue to utilize in-person voting service at local polling places.

In fact, while for the elections held at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, only about 9% of ballots cast in San Francisco were in-person, San Francisco's last couple of elections have shown gradual increases in in-person voting: 10% in June 2022, 11% in November 2022, and 12% in March 2024.

The upcoming November 5 election is expected to have one of the highest voter turnouts in the City's history, with more voters casting ballots by mail and at the polls. To minimize the possibility of wait times on Election Day, the Department has conducted an analysis to identify polling sites likely to experience increased in-person voter turnout, and allocated additional resources to those sites to ensure a seamless voting experience for both voters and poll workers on Election Day.

To identify sites with a strong likelihood of high in-person turnout, Department staff developed a multi-step methodology. First, we projected aggregate city-wide turnout, using a cyclical time-series regression model based on election data spanning the past four decades. This model incorporated most election types (midterm primary, midterm general, presidential primary, and presidential general) and was weighted toward more recent elections. Second, we projected voting distribution pattern across polling places, using turnout data from the last election. Finally, we applied the projected aggregate turnout to the normalized distribution of voters across precincts to estimate turnout for each precinct in the next election.

Consequently, based on data analysis, the Department has modified its standard resource allocation (six voting booths and four poll workers at each site), increasing it as follows:

- 84 polling places will receive a single additional voting booth and no extra poll workers
- 65 sites will receive two additional voting booths and will be assigned one extra poll worker
- 31 sites will receive three additional voting booths and will be assigned one extra poll worker
- 16 sites will receive four additional voting booths and will be assigned two extra poll workers
- 3 sites will receive five additional voting booths and will be assigned two extra poll workers
- 1 site will receive nine additional voting booths and will be assigned two extra poll workers\*
- 1 site will receive 11 additional voting booths and will be assigned two extra poll workers\*
- 1 site will receive 19 additional voting booths and will be assigned two extra poll workers\*

\* These last three sites are located at San Francisco State University and the University of San Francisco.



To ensure all city polling places could physically accommodate additional booths, poll workers, and voters, the Department reviewed their square footage. While the Department identified three sites that will need to be relocated due to space constraints, all others were found to have sufficient space for the increased resources and expected voter turnout.

Further, the Department has developed an application for Field Election Deputies who support polling places on Election Day. This application enables Field Election Deputies to report real-time wait times at voting sites, providing immediate data on voter flow and site congestion. Department staff will continuously monitor the data collected throughout Election Day. By analyzing this data, the Department can identify polling locations experiencing high volumes of voters and swiftly allocate additional resources as needed.

By strategically allocating resources and ensuring polling places are well-prepared, along with developing internal tools to monitor their capacity on Election Day, the Department aims to facilitate a seamless voting experience for all voters who choose to cast their ballots in person.

### **G. Expanded Poll Worker Curriculum**

The Department has updated its poll worker curriculum to include new or expanded practices to better support poll workers and ensure a smooth voting experience on Election Day. These updates focus on handling potential disturbances at polling places, administering voting to non-citizen voters, and issuing ballots with new ballot receipt, each of which is described in this section.

**Handling disturbances effectively.** To address potential disturbances at polling places, the Department has enhanced training on de-escalation techniques and protocols. The updated curriculum now provides detailed guidelines for handling situations where voters may be agitated or frustrated. This training emphasizes effective communication while ensuring that voter rights are protected. It also outlines procedures for when to involve inspectors, field support staff, or law enforcement. Enhanced training on de-escalation techniques is essential for maintaining a calm and respectful voting environment. With Election Day often being a high-stress period, the Department's clear protocols for managing agitated or frustrated voters help prevent conflicts and ensures that all voters are treated fairly and respectfully.

**Administering voting to non-citizen voters.** In preparation for administering non-citizen voting at the polls, all clerks and inspectors will receive specific training on assisting non-citizen voters. This training will cover the procedures for checking in these voters and issuing the Board of Education ballot. Non-citizen voters will be listed on a separate set of blue-colored pages in the voter roster and will have the option to use a quadrilingual paper ballot or a touch-screen/audio ballot. Poll workers will be trained to uphold voter confidentiality and to provide equitable service regardless of citizenship status.

**Introducing new ballot receipt and ballot-issuing procedures.** The poll worker curriculum also includes updated procedures for issuing the revised paper ballot receipt. Unlike previous ballots that used individual stubs, the November 5 ballot will feature a single receipt that serves as a cover sheet. This change allows

the ballot length to be extended to 18 inches, reducing the number of separate ballot cards. The larger receipt also benefits voters, providing multilingual reminders about available voter assistance, including accessible tools, translated materials, and options for personal help. It also includes instructions for requesting a new ballot if needed. The introduction of a revised paper ballot receipt that combines the ballot stubs into a single sheet is designed to simplify the voting process for both voters and poll workers and reduces the risk of issuing an incomplete ballot.

These updates reflect the Department’s dedication to preparing poll workers to effectively fulfill their roles and ensure a smooth voting experience. For the upcoming election, as in previous elections, the Department has focused on developing a comprehensive training program, designed to equip poll workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage Election Day processes effectively, assist all voters efficiently and respectfully, and uphold the integrity of the voting process.

#### **H. Informing the Media and the Public about Ballot Counting Process and Timeline for Finalizing Election Results**

Due to the anticipated high voter turnout and the multi-card ballot for the November 5 election, the Department anticipates that the counting of ballots cast could extend to the full 30 days allowed under state election law. The Department is legally obligated to report the final election results by December 5.

To enhance public understanding of the ballot counting process and manage expectations for final election results, the Department will launch a public awareness campaign. This campaign is designed to meet several key objectives:

1. Educating the media and the public about the reasons why final election results will not be immediately available and detailing the impact of the high voter turnout and the multi-card ballot on the ballot-counting timeline.
2. Emphasizing that preliminary results are subject to change as the ballot-counting process continues after Election Night.
3. Informing the public about opportunities to observe the ballot counting processes in the weeks between Election Day and election certification.

This campaign will use both print and digital strategies to reach a broad audience, aiming at keeping the media and the public well-informed about ballot-counting process and its timeline throughout the canvass period. These strategies are described in this section.

First, the Department has launched a new webpage titled “An Accurate and Complete Vote Count Takes Time”. This page is accessible through the November 5, 2024, Election Readiness Toolkit and directly via the link: <https://www.sf.gov/reports/november-2024/accurate-and-complete-vote-count-takes-time>.

This page provides 1) information on why the ballot counting process may extend up to 30 days, with links to the Department’s Results Reporting Schedule and Elections Observation page; 2) an explanation of the high volume of ballots expected, with nearly two million ballot cards to be counted; 3) insights into the multi-step process of counting vote-by-mail ballots, including signature verification steps and the acceptance of valid ballots postmarked by Election Day or ballots cured by voters; 4) information on the many steps involved in verifying and counting provisional ballots.

A condensed version of this information will be included in the Voter Information Pamphlet, which will be mailed to over half a million registered voters in the city in early October.

Second, the Department will debut an enhanced versions of the Results webpage designed to provide a more intuitive, visually engaging, and comprehensive view of election results and voter turnout data.

The page will now include a dropdown menu for streamlined navigation through numerous ballot contests, and a direct link to statewide results for comparison. New visual cues will highlight leading candidates, with their names displayed in bold and separated by a prominent gray line to improve clarity.

The presentation of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) results has been also refined. Previously, voters had to navigate to a separate page to view round-by-round RCV results. Now, the Summary page will feature a new column showing totals from the “Last Round,” where a candidate receives more than 50% of the votes. Enhanced RCV results reports will be available in HTML format, with translations in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino, featuring color-coding to track candidate eliminations and a glossary for clear definitions of election terms.

To facilitate comparisons with previous elections, the Department has also improved the Election Turnout Comparison tab. The new functionality allows users to filter and view turnout data from different election types, such as general and presidential elections, providing a clearer historical perspective.

The Results webpage will now feature a new Ballot Processing and Turnout Graphs tab which will present voter turnout data through a series of graphs. These graphs will be updated in real-time with each preliminary results report and offer insights into the following election data:

**Ballot processing:** This graph will display the number of counted ballots, as well as the approximate number of vote-by-mail and provisional ballots remaining to be counted.

**Ballots cast by type:** This visual break down the number and percentage of vote-by-mail versus in-person ballots cast.

**Ballots cast as a proportion of registered voters:** This graph will offer a breakdown of processed ballots, remaining ballots, and the number of registered voters who did not participate.

Third, the Department will contact all of its existing media partners, encompassing both English-language and non-English language media outlets. This outreach will aim to ensure that every media partner has a clear understanding of the Department's results reporting schedule and ballot counting process. The Department will provide a schedule outlining when preliminary results will be available and highlighting that the results may change over the counting period and the date by which the Department is required to finalize and report the final election results. Media partners will be invited to contact the Director for any questions or clarifications regarding the results or reporting schedule. This proactive engagement will aid in resolving any uncertainties and ensuring that media coverage accurately reflects the current state of the election results.

Finally, the Department will issue regular press releases to subscribers, which include interested members of the public, media, and non-profit organizations. These press releases will provide updates on preliminary results, the number of ballots remaining to be counted, and any other relevant information. The Director will also emphasize these updates during daily media briefings following each release of preliminary election results.

Starting on Election Night, the Department will prominently display a notice on its homepage to inform both the media and the public that preliminary election results are not final and are subject to change as the Department counts the many remaining ballots. A direct link to the preliminary results will be also be featured prominently on the main page of sf.gov to ensure continuous public access and transparency.

By adopting these strategies, the Department aims to keep all stakeholders—media, voters, and the general public—well-informed about the ballot counting process and the timeline for finalizing election results. By clarifying the reasons for the extended ballot counting period and providing transparent insights into the counting procedures, the Department is committed to upholding confidence in the integrity of the election results and ensuring accurate results reporting.

### **I. Maintaining Election Integrity in the Face of Emergencies, Including Misinformation Campaigns**

In times of crisis, it is essential for election officials to ensure that the integrity of the voting process is upheld, regardless of the challenges faced. This fact was especially evident in 2020, when the Department confronted a myriad of operational and staffing challenges while conducting both a primary and general election at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department has spent the past year building on the many lessons learned in 2020. Department personnel have diligently reviewed and updated all emergency preparedness plans and procedures to ensure that every election task and voting-related activity can proceed in an orderly manner, even in the face of unexpected disruptions.

Thus, the Department's current emergency procedures outline the exact steps staff should take in the face of disruptions and emergencies such as fire, flood, pandemic, riot, earthquake, terrorist act, and other

catastrophic events that pose a threat to public safety. All of these procedures are detailed primarily in two key documents: 1) the 2024 Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), and 2) the 2024 Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-information Evaluation and Response Plan (MERP). Each of these documents is described below in turn.

**The 2024 COOP.** The Department's 2024 Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is structured into 12 key sections:

1. Introduction
2. Applicability and Scope
3. Authorities and References
4. Plan Review and Distribution Schedule
5. Assumptions
6. Response Plans, Lines of Succession, and Delegation of Authority
7. Activation Stages
8. Equipment Response Plan
9. Data, Database, and System Applications Response Plan
10. Cybersecurity Measures
11. Mail Handling
12. Test, Training, and Exercises

Following those sections are 15 appendices (A through P), each corresponding to one of the Department's divisions or units, providing detailed emergency operational plans.

The **Introduction** briefly notes that the Department developed the COOP to ensure that every division has a specific framework to fulfill mission-critical and disaster-related responsibilities, even if their staff, resources, systems, or offices are negatively impacted by a disaster or emergency.

The **Scope** section outlines the types of disasters and emergencies covered, namely a) natural disasters, b) evacuations of work sites, or c) loss of essential equipment, technology, or data. This section further explains that the COOP will explain how each division can address those challenges, with a special focus on logistical issues involving: a) primary service locations, b) equipment, and c) data, databases, and systems applications.

The **Authorities and References** section clarifies that Department staff will maintain operational responsibility until and unless the Governor declares a state of emergency.

Accordingly, the **Plan Review and Distribution Schedule** states that the COOP must be revised for each election cycle and identifies the Department's COOP coordinators.

The **Assumptions** section notes the conditions under which the COOP will be activated, i.e., when there is an emergency but not a state of emergency, and to the extent it is feasible to do so.

The **Response Plans, Lines of Succession, and Delegation of Authority** section details the steps each division should take during an emergency. This process begins with event assessment, followed by all necessary notifications, evacuations and relocations, the commencement of alternative operations, and, finally, a return to normal operations and reassessment.

The **COOP Activation Stages** section elaborates on each of the initial steps. For example, it explains that “notifications” may involve the use of several modes of communication, including cell phones, USPS, email, website postings, and the call center.

Similarly, the **Equipment Response Plan** section provides detailed guidance on the steps related to voting and ballot processing equipment.

Functioning in parallel to the first few sections of the COOP, the **Data, Database, and System Applications Response Plan** section operates in parallel with the earlier sections, providing detailed instructions on how to properly maintain the Department’s internal data systems in the event of an emergency. These systems include parts of the voting system, as well as Election Information Management System (the voter database), PollChief (asset tracking), and Government Election Assistance Reporting System (Election Day communications).

The **Cybersecurity Measures** addresses technological challenges, with the focus on defense against intentional threats. To this end, Department System administrators, for example, will monitor network traffic, employ firewalls to block malicious traffic and use malware defense strategies. They will also develop policies, provide employee training, and use tools like Cyber Alarm and Health Agent to detect and stop malware, monitor suspicious activities, patch systems, and ensure compliance with security standards.

In the wake of several events related to elections mail security last year, the Department updated its mail handling protocols to protect both staff and voters. The **Mail Handling** section of the COOP outlines the current protective measures, which include: 1) universal training for staff about suspicious mail during onboarding, 2) the deployment of USPS informational posters and posting of the Sheriff’s Control Room phone number on all staff phones and in key office areas, and 3) the requirement for Department staff to wear gloves when handling mail.

The last main section of the 2024 COOP, **Test, Training, and Exercises**, highlights the vital nature of using the COOP to train and prepare all Department staff for emergencies. More specifically, it directs all COOP coordinators *“to develop a schedule to test the policies and procedures of this plan and all accompanying [appendices] on a regular basis. Within two weeks of implementing an exercise, the Department will conduct an after-action review so that participants will understand what they did well and ways they can improve their responses. The Department will write an after-action report that summarizes the points raised during the after-action review.”*

As noted above, the COOP appendices detail division-specific tasks and actions for crucial categories of operations (e.g., ballot collection and processing). After describing critical tasks and the resources needed to complete them, these appendices list contacts for technology and partner agencies (e.g., for the Sheriff's Department, whose deputies must be present for ballot transfers).

**The 2024 MERP.** The Department's Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-information (MDM) Evaluation and Response Plan (MERP) was developed to provide clear, easy-to-use guidance for Department personnel on how to evaluate and respond to MDM incidents during the November 5 election cycle. More specifically, the MERP includes a comprehensive table listing departmental guidelines for evaluating and responding to the most anticipated types of MDM events and incidents, including, but not limited to, AI-generated MDM. While it is impossible to predict every potential incident, the MERP is designed to provide staff with a clear foundation for assessing and responding to most MDM scenarios. The MERP categorizes potential threats into three levels:

1. Level One: MDM spread by sources with little to no established credibility or reach, or with minimal engagement.
2. Level Two: MDM spread by sources with some established credibility in one or more local communities.
3. Level Three: MDM spread by highly trusted sources, such as major media outlets, government entities, NGOs, influencers, or a widely circulated "deepfake" that has the potential to affect many voters.

Each level of threat requires a different response. While certain tasks – such as reporting and responding to false or misleading media posts with official, verified facts – are always recommended, more intensive actions, like reassigning staff to the MDM response team, are typically reserved for higher-level threats.

In addition to the list of actionable items, the MERP provides step-by-step instructions for creating an MDM Incident Report. This ensures that all involved Department staff can track and coordinate their efforts effectively during any MDM incident. Finally, the MERP outlines procedures for archiving reports and finalizing the resolution of MDM incidents. In short, the MERP serves as a practical, convenient, and efficient reference for managing all MDM incidents.

Together, the COOP and the MERP ensure that Department is well-poised and fully prepared to handle emergencies while maintaining continuity of critical operations and safeguarding election integrity.

## IV. Public Observations

Ensuring transparency is a key aspect of maintaining election integrity. Consequently, the Department provides access to election observation to the fullest extent possible with consideration of legal and logistical requirements necessary to preserve voting system security and voter privacy.

For the November 5 election, to encourage involvement in public observation of election activities, the Department will send invitation letters to representatives from political party central committees, the Civil Grand Jury, League of Women Voters, the media, and other interested groups or individuals to join the Official Observer Panel.

As in previous elections, the Department will publish a schedule of observable activities, including those occurring in the weeks and months leading up to Election Day, those on Election Day, and those that occur after Election Day (see Appendix A). Election activities that can be observed by the public include, but are not limited to, the Logic and Accuracy testing of voting equipment, the processing of vote-by-mail and provisional ballots returned by voters, in-person voting activities at the City Hall Voting Center and neighborhood polling places, Election Night ballot tabulation and reporting, and the post-election Canvass.

To familiarize observers with election processes and observation guidelines, the Department provides an Observer Guide that includes observer rights and responsibilities, as determined by the California Secretary of State and California Elections Code. This Guide also provides a calendar of observable activities along with schedule and locations of such activities.

In addition to facilitating public observation in person at the Department's office in City Hall and the warehouse on Pier 31, the Department live streams election processes online at [sfelections.gov/observe](https://sfelections.gov/observe).

## **V. Online, Telephone, and In-Person Services**

The Department is committed to providing clear and up-to-date information to San Francisco residents who prefer to obtain information in-person and those who prefer to interact with the Department online or via telephone.

The Department provides an array of online tools and informational pages on its website. When visiting the website, voters can access their registration information, view their Voter Information Pamphlet and sample ballot, track the journey of their vote-by-mail ballot from printing to counting, find locations of official ballot drop boxes or their polling places, or request translated election materials.

The Department's website features nearly 50 pages translated into Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino. To ensure easy access for people who prefer to receive election information in languages other than English, the site displays language options prominently and consistently, allowing for easy toggling between languages. The website ensures usability across different devices, browsers, and operating systems, and is designed to meet web accessibility standards.

To assist members of the public with additional questions, the Department administers a public email response mechanism: [SFVote@sfgov.org](mailto:SFVote@sfgov.org). Voters living overseas who have questions can send their inquiries via [SFVoteAbroad@sfgov.org](mailto:SFVoteAbroad@sfgov.org).



For voters who prefer to call for information, the Department staffs public telephone lines during business hours, with dedicated lines for Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Filipino speakers. The Department also contracts with a vendor to provide year-round over-the-phone interpretation in over 200 languages.

For each election cycle, the Department expands its phone and email assistance staff to ensure expeditious answering of telephone inquiries and managing of email correspondence through Election Day. All phone bank staff are trained for several days prior to beginning work, are provided with a comprehensive set of materials related to commonly-asked questions, and are supported by one or more leads with extensive knowledge of elections processes and procedures.

To provide in-person services at its office in City Hall, the Department staffs its public counter during regular business hours. As in prior elections, the Department will extend its hours of operation on the registration deadline, October 21, and will also be open during the two weekends prior to Election Day to provide in-person services and assistance.

## **VI. Candidate and Ballot Measure Filings**

To facilitate candidate and ballot argument filing for the November 5 election, the Department prepared a Mayor and Board of Supervisors Candidate Guide, a Guide for All Other Candidates, a Guide to Qualifying Initiative Measures, and a Guide to Submitting Ballot Arguments. To further assist candidates and campaigns, the Department posted a calendar that outlines statutory dates for this election cycle and applicable code references. The guides and calendar can be viewed at: [www.sf.gov/candidates](http://www.sf.gov/candidates).

For the November 5 election, candidate filing activities commenced on March 18, when the submission period opened for signatures in lieu of filing fee for candidates running for Mayor and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The nomination period for Mayor and Board of Supervisors seats began on May 17 and ran until June 11. The submission period for signatures in lieu of filing fee for candidates running for City Attorney, District Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, Community College Board seats and Board of Education seats began on May 16 and ran through July 10, followed by the nomination period for these offices and BART Board which began on July 15 and ended on August 9.

When the nomination periods closed for local offices, the Department posted final candidate lists on its website.

The Department also facilitated the intake of local ballot measures to be submitted to voters in the upcoming election. Ballot measures may be submitted to the Department by the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, four or members of the Board, or by voters through the initiative petition process; certain agencies may also submit ballot measures, such as the San Francisco Board of Education or the Community College Board. The submission deadlines varied depending on the type of measure, and submitter, with most falling in July and early August.

On August 12, the Department selected and assigned letters to identify each local measure that will appear on the ballot for the November 5 election. The Department assigns letters to measures according to [CAEC §13109](#) and [MEC §505](#). (This ballot measure letter selection process was recorded and broadcast live via the Department’s website.)

In August, the Department facilitated the intake of the ballot arguments (proponents’, opponents’, rebuttal, and paid) for inclusion in the Voter Information Pamphlet, in accordance with [MEC §530](#).

All candidate materials and ballot arguments are subject to a 10-day public examination period following the filing deadline. These public examination periods allow an opportunity to review and possibly challenge candidate materials or a proposed ballot argument before it is published on the ballot or in the Voter Information Pamphlet. As authorized by state election law, during each 10-day public examination period, registered voters may seek a court order requiring changes to or removal of materials related to a ballot measure on which they are eligible to vote.

Filing activities for the November 5 election will draw to a close on October 22, which is the deadline for any write-in candidates to file their Declarations of Write-in Candidacy and nomination paperwork.

## VII. Official Ballot

For every election, the Department produces the official ballot in English and Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish, in both paper and digital formats, along with paper and digital facsimile (reference) ballots in Burmese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese.

The November 5 paper ballot will consist of four double-sided cards, listing contests for federal, state, and local offices, as well as state propositions and local ballot measures:

- President and Vice President
- United States Senator (full term beginning January 3, 2025, through January 3, 2031 and remainder of the current term ending on January 3, 2025)
- United States Representative, Districts 11 and 15
- State Senator, District 11
- State Assembly Member, Districts 17 and 19
- Board of Education Member (four members)
- Trustee, Community College Board (four trustees)
- BART Board of Directors, Districts 7 and 9
- Mayor
- Board of Supervisors Member, Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11
- City Attorney
- District Attorney

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- Sheriff
- Treasurer
- State Propositions 2-6 and 32-36
- City and County Measures A-O

Additionally, the November 5 ballot will include a notice, as per requirements of the California Secretary of State (SOS), explaining why there are two contests for the same seat in the United States Senate.

The November 5 ballot will also include ballot labels detailing official supporters and opponents for local measures. These labels were not to exceed 125 characters in length. The label text appearing on the ballot was supplied by the official argument submitters when they submitted their arguments to the Department.

For the November 5 election, the Department has produced thirty-eight ballot types. Different ballot types are necessary in part because San Francisco is comprised of overlapping federal, state, and local voting districts; voters living in different parts of the City are eligible to vote for different combinations of contests. In addition, state law requires the rotation of candidate names on the ballot to mitigate the statistical advantage of a candidate's name appearing at the top of the candidate list for a contest. Approximately 85 days before an election (unless there is extended filing for a contest), after the candidate nomination period ends, the Department determines how many ballot types will apply for the election and how many of each type and party and language version will need to be printed.

In addition to the ballot with federal, state, local offices, and state propositions and local ballot measures, the Department has produced the ballot that contains only the Board of Education Members contest. This version of the ballot is known the EDU ballot, contains text in all four languages on the same ballot card, and is used to facilitate non-citizen voting in local Board of Education elections.

For the November 5 election, ballot drafting and translation activities began approximately 120 days before Election Day. On August 12, the Department assigned letters to 15 local ballot measures. Following the SOS's random alphabet drawing on August 15, the Department drew a random alphabet to apply to candidate rotations for the State Senate District 11 and Assembly District 19 contests. The Department began formatting the ballots on August 27.

The Department finalized ballot files on September 5, and sent the files to its ballot printer. The ballot printer then initiates the many processes required to mail ballot packets to over 10,000 voters serving in the military or residing overseas no later than September 21 and to nearly 500,000 local voters by October 7.

In addition to printing official paper ballots, the Department's printing vendor assembles, addresses, and mails vote-by-mail ballot packets. This series of processes requires careful coordination between Department staff and the printing vendor because each ballot envelope must contain a ballot that correctly corresponds to the recipient voter's ballot type and language preference. Only after this coordinated process can ballot

packets be packaged for delivery to the mail facility, scanned into the USPS mail tracking system, and finally delivered by postal carriers to the voters.

Simultaneous with work on paper ballots, the Department develops ballots for use with the online Accessible Vote-By-Mail (AVBM) System, which by law must be open to voters serving in the military or residing overseas on September 21 and to all voters on October 7. In addition to the AVBM system, the Department will also produce touchscreen and audio versions of the ballot to be used on accessible ballot-marking devices provided at the City Hall Voting Center and each polling place.

## **VIII. Ballot Simplification Committee**

Section 600 of the San Francisco Municipal Elections Code requires that for each election, a Ballot Simplification Committee creates plain-language summaries of proposed City measures that will appear on the ballot. These summaries, or “digests,” which are prepared at public meetings, are printed in San Francisco’s Voter Information Pamphlet, which is provided to every registered voter before the election.

For the November 5 election, the Ballot Simplification Committee meetings commenced on Monday, July 22 and continued through Friday, August 2.

In accordance with public meeting laws, the Department facilitates the Committee’s meetings by publishing meeting times and agendas, and by compiling, posting, and sharing with the Committee members various materials before and after the meetings. Interested members of the public may view this information on [sfelections.gov/bsc](https://sfelections.gov/bsc) and may attend meetings of the Committee. The Department also requests analyses on the Committee’s behalf from City departments likely to be affected by passage of proposed ballot measures and responds to inquiries from City agencies and the public about meeting logistics and procedures.

At the meetings, Committee members review the legal text of local ballot measures, which can range from a few paragraphs to many pages, as well as draft digests written by the Deputy City Attorney. They then collaborate in a public forum to distill the main ideas of the text into simple and neutral summaries for inclusion in the Voter Information Pamphlet. Interested representatives of City departments and members of the public often provide real-time or written comments and clarifications, which the Committee may incorporate into its final digests.

The Ballot Simplification Committee consists of five voting members, each of whom must be a San Francisco resident and registered voter. Committee members are volunteers and have backgrounds in fields such as journalism, education, and written communication. The Board of Supervisors appoints three members and the Mayor appoints two members of the Committee.

## **IX. Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot**

For every election, the Department develops a Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) with information about local candidates and ballot measures, voting options in San Francisco, and a sample ballot. The VIP is produced in hard and digital copy in English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish, all in PDF, HTML, XML, and large-print formats; it is also available by request in English in MP3 and other audio formats, including USB flash drive, CD, and National Library Service (NLS) cartridge.

Elections law sets forth VIP content requirements for all elections. For the November 5 election, the VIP will be nearly 300 pages long, primarily due to the inclusion of legally required information such as 262 ballot arguments submitted to the Department and the legal text for each of the 15 local ballot measures.

The VIP will include general information about voting and ballot contests, key election dates, a sample ballot, availability of translated and accessible voting resources, and other information required under state and local law. In addition to covering regular topics, the November VIP will also 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.

The VIP will be provided to voters via their preferred delivery method (mail or email) in early October. To allow for maximum voter convenience when preparing for voting the official ballot, the mailing of the VIPs will coincide with voters receiving their vote-by-mail ballot packets.

All voters will receive a VIP in English. Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, and alternate-format VIPs will also be provided to those who have requested them. There will also be several supplemental mailings to voters who register after the initial mailing.

In addition to mailing and emailing the VIPs, the Department will distribute copies to public libraries and make them available at its Voting Center and all polling places.

For the November 5 election, the Department will also produce a quadrilingual Voter Information Booklet (VIB) for non-citizen voters. This booklet will feature a sample ballot that includes only the Board of Education contest, along with general election information. Similar to the VIP's distribution timeline, the VIB will be provided to NCV voters in early October.

## **X. Outreach Objectives and Strategies**

The Department's outreach program for this election has been developed with three main objectives in mind: 1) to encourage voter participation through voter education, 2) to promote accessible voter registration and 3) to engage with hard-to-reach and vulnerable communities about the upcoming election. Such communities include: a) seniors and people with disabilities, b) first-time voters, c) people whose primary language is not

English, d) non-citizen residents eligible to vote in the Board of Education election, e) unhoused or housing insecure individuals, and f) individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

The Department' will employ various direct and indirect outreach strategies to meet these objectives, disseminating information on topics such as voter registration, voting options, ranked-choice voting in local contests, language and accessible voting resources, poll worker service, and non-citizen registration and voting. (The Department's outreach strategies related to non-citizen registration and voting are described in detail in the New and Modified Practices section of this Plan.)

Direct strategies will include sending official notices, distributing printed materials at community events, conducting in-person and virtual presentations, placing advertisements in print and digital media, broadcasting public service announcements on television and radio, and publishing election information through the Department's website and social media channels.

Indirect outreach strategies will involve collaborating with the extensive network of government agencies and non-profit partners that consistently support the Department's outreach efforts across the City.

Following is a brief summary of the Department's outreach strategies for the November 5 election.

#### **A. Print and Digital Materials**

The Department has developed a range of multilingual and multi-format materials, listed below, for distribution to voters and community outreach partners. These materials will be available in print format and for download at [www.sf.gov/voter-outreach](http://www.sf.gov/voter-outreach) in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino. Large-print versions are available upon request, and the Accessible Voting in San Francisco brochure will also be offered in Braille.

- November 5 Election brochure provides information about registration, voting options, contests on the ballot, and poll worker service.
- Accessible Voting brochure describes types of accessible voting resources and services.
- Experiencing Homelessness flyer explains how to register and vote without a permanent home address.
- Justice-Involved Voter flyer explains how to register (including after incarceration) and vote in the next election.
- Pre-Registration card details pre-registration and poll worker options for young (16-17) San Franciscans.
- Ranked-Choice Voting brochure explains how to mark an RCV contest and how RCV votes are counted.
- Vote by Mail flyer provides step-by-step explanation for voting by mail and how to avoid common mistakes.
- Career card highlights employment and volunteer opportunities available at the Department of Elections.

- Non-Citizen flyer/poster/guide provides information about NCV registration and voting in the November 5 Board of Education Election.
- Poll Worker Service flyer invites persons to apply and serve as poll workers on Election Day.
- Go Green flyer encourages voters to access the Voter Information Pamphlet online to save paper and costs.
- San Francisco Elections: Safe and Secure brochure provides detailed information about the steps taken to ensure the integrity of San Francisco elections.

## **B. Live and Virtual Presentations**

Engaging voter education presentations continue to be a core element of the Department's outreach efforts in 2024. Outreach staff will be conducting comprehensive, multilingual, in-person and virtual voter education presentations at venues throughout San Francisco including community centers, schools, places of worship, non-profit facilities, and neighborhood meetings.

The Department will offer outreach presentations by request on many election-related topics, including all of the following:

- The November 5 Election presentation covers essential election topics such as registration eligibility requirements and ways to register to vote, upcoming election dates and deadlines, voting options (by mail and in-person), language and accessibility resources, and poll worker service.
- The Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) presentation explains which local offices voters will fill using RCV in the upcoming election, how to mark an RCV contest, and how votes in RCV contests are counted.
- Accessible Voting Resources presentation describes the different types of accessible resources San Franciscans can use to participate in elections privately and independently. After this presentation, attendees are invited to practice marking a demonstration ballot using a ballot-marking device.
- Voter Registration Drive presentation explains how to conduct a registration drive in full compliance with California state law. After this presentation, attendees are invited to request copies of voter registration affidavits by completing a Statement of Distribution, the Digest of Penalties for Improper Voter Registration Actions, and the Statement of Circulator's Responsibilities and Liabilities.
- Non-Citizen Voting in San Francisco (NCV) presentation covers the history of NCV in San Francisco, eligibility requirements, how to register to vote, and voting options and resources.

## **C. Resource Tables and Voter Registration Pop-Up Events**

Outreach staff will set up voter resource tables at community events throughout neighborhoods across the city. At these tables, multilingual staff will be available to answer questions about registration requirements and the voting process, as well as assist with both citizen and non-citizen registrations.

Additionally, the Department will host voter registration pop-up events at various public locations around the city to provide convenient access to registration for eligible residents.

#### **D. Traditional and Social Media**

The Department will utilize multilingual media to communicate key information to San Francisco residents, publishing press releases about key election dates and conducting interviews with local media outlets to reach both English and non-English speaking audiences. To communicate with as broad an audience as possible, the Department will also produce a radio and television public service announcements (PSAs).

In tandem, the Department will launch a multilingual advertising campaign with key election information in local print media.

To reach residents who commute via San Francisco's public transit, the Department will place advertisements with election messages on Muni buses and bus shelters.

The Department will also continue to regularly provide essential election information via its social media channels X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and NextDoor. These social media posts will highlight important deadlines, news from the Department, voting options, and FAQs. To fully serve readers who want additional, more comprehensive information, many of these social media posts will also include links to detailed informational pages and online self-help voter tools (e.g., the Voter Portal).

Through its MythBuster Monday series (debuted earlier this year), the Department will continue addressing many common misconceptions related to voting and elections. This series provides accurate, official information designed to dispel trending misinformation or confusion.

#### **E. Direct Mail Campaign**

Prior to the Election Day, the Department will conduct a multilingual direct mail campaign, providing election information to all city residents. (These citywide mailers are described in *Section III. New and Expanded Practices* of this Plan.)

#### **F. Community Partnerships**

Community partnerships are an essential component of the Department's goal to educate and engage eligible residents about voting and elections. To that end, the Department will again partner with hundreds of nonprofits and community-based organizations, along with many local government agencies, businesses, schools, places of worship, and public and private care facilities, to share information about the upcoming election. To initiate such partnerships for the November election cycle, in September, the Department mailed packets of multilingual outreach materials to over 700 local organizations and agencies, inviting them to collaborate with the Department and offering support for their own outreach efforts.



**Grant partnership.** The Department supplemented its outreach through grant program with 15 grantees that were selected to conduct voter outreach on 1) ranked-choice voting and 2) non-citizen registration and voting in the Board of Education contest between September 3 and Election Day

**Advisory committees.** The Department continues to work with its Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC), a group comprised of language access leaders and members of the public, to reach and disseminate election information to voters from minority communities and improve language-related services and materials offered by the Department. Similarly, the Department also continues working with its Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), a group comprised of accessibility experts and members of the public, to improve its materials and services for voters with disabilities and seniors.

**Hospitals and care facilities.** The Department works with many local care facilities and hospitals to provide election-related services. Prior to the November 5 election, the Department will contact such facilities to provide resources to help their patients and residents register to vote and cast ballots.

Then, in the last week of the voting period, when it is too late to mail ballots, the Department will activate its Emergency Ballot Delivery program to facilitate Emergency Ballot Pickup and Delivery for voters who find themselves unable to travel including patients at the UCSF Emergency Department, Zuckerberg San Francisco General, and Kaiser Permanente hospitals.

**SRO housing.** The Department will provide a number of local single room occupancy (SRO) facility operators with a list of reminders on how to receive and handle election mail at their facilities as well as a poster to be affixed in the mail room of each facility. This poster will provide SRO tenants with information about voting by mail, including deadlines and options for returning their ballots by mail or in person.

**Government entities.** The Department continues to collaborate with various government entities to reach local residents, including the San Francisco Public Library, the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, the San Francisco In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA), and the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

**Local businesses.** To increase the visibility of election-related materials at locations which provide essential goods and services, the Department will work with many merchants and grocery store owners across the City to hold registration events and display posters in their storefronts (with a focus on lower turnout areas).

**Prisoner Legal Services and Juvenile Hall.** In collaboration with the Prisoner Legal Service (PLS) unit of the Sheriff's Department, the Department continues to facilitate the Incarcerated-Person Voting Program to provide tailored outreach materials, registration forms, and ballots to eligible San Franciscans involved in the justice system.

In addition, the Department will continue to collaborate with a number of local agencies and organizations who serve justice-involved individuals, including the Delancey Street Foundation, Five Keys Schools and

Programs, and the Reentry Council. Through these collaborations the Department will facilitate registration, provide information about participating in the upcoming election, and encourage justice-involved and crime-affected individuals and families to engage in community service through volunteering as a poll worker.

**Schools and colleges.** The Department continues to work with local high schools, colleges, and universities to disseminate election information and recruit poll workers.

The Department works year-round to promote pre-registration for residents aged 16 and 17, activating these registrations on their 18th birthday. This fall, the Department will send notices to newly eligible voters about their voting options and resources for first-time voters.

Starting in September, the Department will also distribute notices to college students in local dormitories, reminding them of their voter registration options and emphasizing that they can register at either their school or home address.

To support student voting, the Department will place ballot drop boxes on several college campuses starting 29 days before Election Day. Drop boxes will be available at the University of California Law, University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco State University, and the City College of San Francisco's Chinatown, Downtown, and Mission campuses.

To enhance civic engagement, the Department will once again offer its High School Student Poll Worker Program. This program encourages students aged 16 and older to gain hands-on experience with the voting process while earning a stipend and assisting their communities on Election Day. Each election, between 500 and 800 students from local high schools participate in this program.

Additionally, from September 16 to 27, the Department will also facilitate its High School Student Ambassador Program, which trains students to conduct civic outreach within their schools and neighborhoods. This program has seen a record 90 students from 21 public and private schools across the city participating this year. Each Student Ambassador will be paired with a Department mentor for guidance throughout the program. At the program's conclusion, the Department will hold a celebration to acknowledge the students' efforts in engaging their peers in the electoral process.

The Department will also leverage its longstanding relationships with local high schools and colleges, conducting presentations and distributing outreach materials to students. Collaborations with community organizations and agencies such as Mobilization for Adolescent Growth in Our Communities, Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, and San Francisco Juvenile Hall will further enhance the Department's outreach, particularly to those facing challenging circumstances.

**Employment centers.** The Department continues to work with a number of local job training and vocational service providers. In addition to providing election materials, the Department distributes materials designed to inform program participants about election employment opportunities and serving as a poll worker.

## **G. Plan Assessment**

Following the November 5 election, the Department will evaluate how well each of its strategies appear to have worked, with total effectiveness analyzed in terms of both quantitative data, such as the number of community events attended, the number of outreach materials distributed, and the number of partnerships established, as well as qualitative data, including surveys of San Francisco voters, feedback from outreach partner organizations, and outreach event attendees.

With voter equity in mind, the Department will also aggregate data by communities reached and will seek correlations between relevant datasets and election outcomes, such as registration levels and turnout patterns in the November 5 election. This assessment will enable the Department to more effectively shape its future outreach, and to intelligently consider the funding and resources necessary to enable the continuation and/or refinement of outreach strategies going forward.

## **XI. Polling Places**

For the November 5 election, the Department will support 501 polling places to serve San Francisco voters on Election Day.

The process of identifying polling places begins by contacting providers of facilities used as polling places in the previous election to determine which facilities are available in the upcoming election. Based on the availability of previous sites, the Department develops a list of precincts in which polling places must be relocated. To identify new sites in these precincts, a team of two poll locators is dispatched to the precinct to identify a centrally located site that complies with the ADA and other laws pertaining to accessibility. Each poll locator is trained on how to use surveying tools, such as a digital slope level, laser distance measure, door pressure gauge, and a voltage tester for checking power outlets. These tools help identify the most convenient and accessible path of travel, entrance, and placement of the voting area at sites that have multiple rooms and/or entrances. Locators are also trained to identify potential temporary solutions (i.e., threshold ramps) that the Department may use to mitigate accessibility obstacles at otherwise suitable sites, and whether additional signage might be useful for directing voters to the entrance.

Once a site has been identified, the Department works with facility providers to develop site-specific plans that ensure that all polling places and voting equipment are secure and properly functioning from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. These plans include mutually agreed upon steps for unlocking the facility (e.g., provision of keys or door codes to Department staff), schedules for the delivery and retrieval of polling place supplies, and emergency contact(s) that can be reached in the event an issue arises at a facility throughout Election Day (e.g., site is not open for setup at 6 a.m.)

## **XII. Facilitating Voting in Person**

**Voting Center services.** The City Hall Voting Center will be open for in-person services during the early voting period. Between Monday, October 7, and Monday, November 4, the Voting Center will be open weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except for Indigenous Peoples' Day, October 14. Weekend voting will be available on the two weekends before the election, October 26-27 and November 2-3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Election Day, November 5, the Voting Center will observe the same voting hours as polling places, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The Voting Center will serve all City residents who wish to obtain personal assistance, use accessible voting tools such as the ballot-marking device, pick up or drop off ballots, cast their ballots in person, register to vote, or update registration. At the Voting Center, in-person voters will cast their ballots, enclosed in vote-by-mail envelopes, into official ballot drop-boxes, rather than scanning them through a ballot-scanning machine. As with any vote-by-mail voter, those who cast their ballots at the Voting Center can use the Voter Portal or contact the Department to check the date the ballot was accepted, extracted from its envelope, scanned by the voting equipment, and counted.

**Polling place services.** Each of the City's 501 polling places will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. All polling places will offer bilingual paper ballots in English and Chinese, English and Spanish, and English and Filipino, and provide language assistance from bilingual poll workers on request. The Department will also provide facsimile (reference) ballots in Burmese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese. All polling places will also offer accessible ballot-marking devices with touchscreen and audio ballot formats, personal assistive device compatibility, and accessible voting tools such as page magnifiers, pen grips, and seated voting.

At all polling places, the Department will offer same-day, conditional voter registration for those who miss the registration deadline or who need to make updates. Those who want to update language preference at the polls can do so in order to receive a ballot with their language.

At all polling places, the Department will provide ballot-scanning machines that tabulate votes onsite. Voters listed on the polling place Roster of Voters and who are eligible to cast a standard (non-provisional) ballot can scan their ballots issued at the polling place using the ballot-scanning machines. Anyone whose eligibility to cast a standard ballot cannot be verified by the poll worker (e.g., voters not listed on the Roster) may vote provisionally.

## **XIII. Facilitating Voting by Mail**

In accordance with state election law, the Department will mail vote-by-mail ballot packets to all registered voters in the upcoming November 5 election. Each ballot packet will contain a bilingual ballot corresponding

to the voter's language preference. The Department will continue mailing packets to new registrants and those who need replacement ballots up until four days before Election Day.

As in previous elections, voters will be able to track their ballots by inputting their credentials into the Department's online lookup tool or by contacting the Department by phone or email. When checking the status of their ballots using the Department's Voter Portal, voters will be provided with current information as their ballots move through the following production, delivery, and processing steps:

1. The ballot is printed
2. The VBM packet has been assembled and is ready for mailing
3. The VBM packet is delivered to the USPS en route to the voter
4. The Department is in receipt of the voter's voted ballot packet
5. The Department has verified the signature on the return envelope
6. The return envelope has been accepted and is ready to be opened
7. The Department has removed the ballot from the return envelope
8. The Department has counted the ballot.

The Department will continue to provide voters with an additional option to track the status of their ballots through the Secretary of State's *Where's My Ballot?* tool at [wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov](https://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov). This tool allows voters to sign up to receive automatic ballot notifications via email, text, or voice message.

**Vote-by-mail ballot drop box infrastructure.** For the November 5 election, San Francisco voters will have 24/7 access to 37 secure, access ballot drop boxes located in various neighborhoods across the City. Any voter may choose to use an official drop box in San Francisco to drop off their ballot or the ballot of another California voter who has authorized them to do so.

Voters can find a map of all official drop box locations in their local Voter Information Pamphlet or at [sfelections.org/balldropoff](https://sfelections.org/balldropoff).

Each ballot box bears an American flag and the official seal of the City and County of San Francisco and is clearly marked as an "Official Ballot Drop Box". Each ballot box is located outdoors, placed on an accessible path of travel, and features a ballot deposit slot, which is positioned approximately 42 inches from the ground in order to provide maximally convenient access to voters using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. All notices on every box utilize a high-contrast and large-print font with an anti-glare finish designed to be legible to all voters, along with Braille-embossed instructions to guide voters to identify the location of the ballot deposit slot. All instructions are printed in English, Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, Burmese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese.

**Accessible Vote-By-Mail System.** Any California voter may choose to use an accessible vote-by-mail (AVBM) system to access and mark their ballot.

The Department will open its AVBM system to all registered San Francisco voters starting 29 days before the election. (In accordance with federal election law, the AVBM system will be open for voters serving in the military or residing overseas no later than 45 days before the election.)

The AVBM system allows voters to download and mark screen readable vote-by-mail ballots, and is compatible with many personal assistive devices such as head-pointers and sip and puffs. For security reasons, the AVBM system does not store or transmit votes over the internet. Consequently, voters must have access to a printer to print and return their AVBM ballot printouts by mail or in person in a timely manner, just as VBM voters who use official paper ballots must do.

Voters may return AVBM ballot printouts by using the official ballot return envelope enclosed with VBM ballot packets or their own envelopes. If using their own envelopes, voters will need to complete and enclose a Voter Oath and Ballot Return Form (available through the AVBM system), which will allow the Department to conduct the required signature comparison on the envelope with the signature in a voter's registration record while protecting the secrecy of the ballot during processing.

**Voters serving in the military or residing overseas.** By law, the Department may begin sending ballots to military and overseas voters via their selected method of delivery 60 days before the election and must complete such deliveries no later than 45 days before Election Day. Military and Overseas voters can choose to receive their ballot via email, fax, or postal mail.

All military and overseas voter will be able access their ballot via the accessible vote-by-mail system beginning no later than 45 days before Election Day. Those with email ballot preference will automatically receive a link to the system via email when it becomes available. Concurrently, the Department will send ballots to military and overseas voters by mail and fax in accordance with voters' preferences.

While most voters can only return their ballots in person, by mail, or via an authorized representative, military and overseas voters residing outside the territorial limits of United States may also return their voted ballots to the Department by fax. Voters who return a ballot by fax must also sign and transmit a Voter Oath and Ballot Return Form.

The Military and Overseas page on the Department's website provides detailed information on how such voters can register and vote in a variety of specific circumstances. This section also provides a link to the Federal Voting Assistance Program, which can provide voters who do not receive a San Francisco ballot on time with a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (backup ballot) instead.

**Voters residing in mail ballot precincts.** As authorized by state election law, precincts with fewer than 250 registered voters do not have assigned polling places. For the November 5, election, there are 13 precincts designated as mail ballot precincts. Voters in these precincts will receive VBM ballot packets in the mail and may choose to vote by mail or in-person. Since these voters do not have an assigned polling place, the

Department provides tailored instructions with their VBM packets that include the addresses of the two nearest polling places with the same ballot type.

## **XIV. Facilitating Voting for Eligible Persons Detained in Local Jails**

Any otherwise eligible person detained in county jail remains eligible to vote under California law provided they are not currently serving a sentence for a felony conviction. The Department protects the voting rights of those detained in San Francisco's currently operating jails – County Jail #2 and County Jail #3 – through its Incarcerated Voting Program (IVP), offering outreach, registration and voting services.

In all recent elections, the IVP program has been conducted in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office's Prisoner Legal Services (PLS), a law enforcement unit unique to San Francisco. Both those currently housed in jails and those recently released may request assistance from PLS. In addition to assisting justice-involved persons with access to courts, notary services, housing, and child custody issues, PLS also works with the Department to provide registration and voting services to this population.

As in any election, administration of the November 5 election IVP program will necessitate management of three activities: 1) Maintenance of voter records, 2) Voter outreach and registration, and 3) Delivery of official elections materials and notices to voters. Following is a brief description of the three activities undertaken by the Department to facilitate IVP.

**1. Maintenance of voter records.** Approximately three weeks before the start of each early voting period, the Department sends PLS a list of voters who registered through the IVP in the previous election cycle and have not subsequently updated their registration. PLS then determines who on the old list is either still in custody or has been recently released and provides the Department with an updated list. Using the new PLS list, the Department updates the voter records in its Election Information Management System and prepares for printing, assembly, and delivery of ballots and Voter Information Pamphlets (VIPs) to voters on the new list – including both those currently in custody and those recently released.

Accurate maintenance of the records of voters in custody throughout each election cycle requires near-daily attention, as some voters who are part of the IVP before the start of the early voting period may be released at any time before vote-by-mail ballots are set to be delivered, while others may become involved with the justice system at any time up through Election Day. Given this dynamic situation, the Department keeps in nearly constant contact with PLS staff throughout the election cycle to ensure those who are either still in San Francisco County jails or have recently been released receive their ballots and Voter Information Pamphlets.

**2. Voter outreach and registration.** Various safety rules are currently in place at local county jails to protect facility staff and visitors, as well as the incarcerated individuals themselves, some of which limit the extent and type of outreach activities the Department may conduct. To comply with these rules and provide outreach, the Department develops and provides to PLS staff various materials at the start of every election cycle. These materials include multilingual flyers with key election information, posters on the value of civic engagement and voter rights for justice-involved people, and pocket-size cards that explain the conditions under which justice-involved people can register to vote and vote (e.g., those on parole), as well as those under which justice-involved people may neither register nor vote (e.g., those currently serving a state or federal prison term for the conviction of a felony). PLS staff, in turn, place these election outreach materials in jail housing areas where they can be easily accessed by incarcerated individuals.

The Department also provides PLS staff with paper voter registration forms and training on how to help register individuals and conduct voter registration drives. This in-depth training covers voter registration eligibility requirements, key election dates and deadlines, and relevant laws about assisting others in completing voter registration forms. In addition to covering how to help someone register using a paper form, the Department also trains PLS staff to help incarcerated persons register using the Secretary of State's online registration form.

**3. Delivery of official election materials and notices.** The Department provides vote-by-mail ballot packets and Voter Information Pamphlets to all registered local voters detained in San Francisco county jails, as it does for all other registered local voters. However, the method of delivery of these materials to incarcerated voters is different; instead of mailing vote-by-mail ballot packets and pamphlets to the jailhouse – which could lead to delays in distribution of materials to detainees – the Department arranges for PLS personnel to pick up these materials from the Department's office at City Hall and hand-deliver them directly to IVP voters in jail. PLS staff make several such pickup and delivery trips in each voting period, also collecting marked ballots and delivering replacement vote-by-mail ballots as necessary.

Given that voters in jail may not be able to easily call the Department or access its online tools to inquire about their ballot status, the Department coordinates with PLS staff to provide notice to IVP voters whose ballots were received and counted. This notice is provided to any IVP voter who either successfully cast a vote-by-mail ballot, or successfully cured a ballot challenge.

To make the experience of casting a vote-by-mail ballot from jail as close as possible to the experience of other voters, the Department deploys official red ballot boxes used by other San Francisco voters to the City's jails. These ballot boxes are placed in jail housing areas and supervised by a deputy sheriff at all times during the voting period. To ensure expeditious processing of ballots returned by individuals in custody, the Department works with PLS staff to establish procedures and processes to support several secure ballot transfers at predetermined dates throughout the voting period up until 8 p.m. on Election Night.

In the November 5 election, the Department anticipates providing registration and voting services to approximately 600 people housed in San Francisco jails. Although the Department has been partnering with



PLS to conduct the IVP for many years, the Department continues to look for ways to improve access to election services for justice system-involved individuals, to expand education for those who may be unaware or unsure about their right to vote, and ultimately, to increase voter participation.

## **XV. Facilitating Emergency Ballot Delivery Program**

In the last week of the voting period, the Department provides emergency ballot delivery and pickup service to eligible residents who have yet to vote. Through this program, the Department works with local hospitals and other short-term and long-term care facilities, as well as with individuals, to provide ballots and official voting materials to voters who are hospitalized or otherwise unable to travel to in-person voting sites, and those who need assistance with returning their mailed ballots.

In facilitating this program, the Department also partners with Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital Department of Emergency Medicine and the UCSF Emergency Department to provide ballot delivery service to those admitted to emergency rooms on Election Day.

Before the election, the Department reaches out and provides informational packets to hospital and care facilities to provide information and resources for helping their patients and residents register to vote and request ballots. Each packet includes a letter describing San Francisco's accessible voting services, including the accessible vote-by-mail system, third-party ballot pickup and return options, and emergency ballot delivery and pickup service for those unable to travel.

Such a proactive contact provides an opportunity for facilities to request additional assistance, such as scheduling on-site events where the Department's staff can assist with completing registration applications and provide information about contests appearing on the ballot.

All Department staff involved in ballot deliveries are trained to respect voter privacy, uphold the right to cast a secret ballot, and offer translation assistance. Delivery driver training materials include detailed explanations regarding 1) how to set up accessible ballot-marking devices in homes and facilities, 2) how to communicate effectively with voters who wish to use touchscreen or audio ballots, 3) how to provide helpful and respectful assistance to voters with completing forms or marking ballots, and 4) how to refrain from engaging in any conversations to provide political opinions and/or help make voting decisions.

For the November 5 election, as for all past elections, the Department remains committed to increasing awareness of not only its Emergency Ballot Delivery program, but of all of the voting services available to local voters with disabilities and/or experiencing unexpected illness or mobility limitations, highlighting in particular the accessible vote-by-mail system and curbside voting (by request at any in-person voting site), and at all times leveraging the expertise of members of the Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) while incorporating public feedback.

## XVI. Poll Workers

For the November 5 election, the Department will recruit and train approximately 2,000 poll workers to staff 501 polling places and 50 standby poll workers for dispatch to precincts that may require additional assistance on Election Day.

**Recruitment.** The process of recruiting poll workers begins by contacting former poll workers to identify those who are available to serve in the upcoming election and establish recruitment goals for the upcoming election. With recruitment goals in place, the Department implements an array of strategies to recruit a wide and linguistically diverse group of poll workers. These strategies include partnering with local organizations to disseminate information about the opportunity to serve as a poll worker to new prospective applicants, running advertisements on local radio and newspaper, printing information in voter notices and mailings, and sending notification emails to voters residing in precincts where volunteers are needed.

**Assignment.** For the upcoming election, each polling place will be staffed with at least three poll workers: one inspector and two clerks. When determining precinct assignments, the Department considers several factors, such as where the poll worker lives, how the poll worker will travel to the site, the bilingual staffing requirements required at the site, and the poll worker's requested preference for specific neighborhood(s).

In determining polling places for bilingual poll worker placements, the Department employs multi-step criteria that originate from a variety of sources, including an analysis and application of local voter data, application of data provided by the Secretary of State, and input from local community-based organizations and advocacy groups. As in previous elections, the Department will make a concerted effort to go beyond legal requirements in recruiting and deploying bilingual poll workers at locations where language assistance is likely to be needed.

Poll workers can use their online Poll Worker Profile to access the most up-to-date personalized election information at any time. By logging into their profiles, poll workers can view their training course, access the addresses of their assigned polling places and door-to-door directions from their homes, and review their Site-Specific Plans with custom layout diagrams intended to help set up accessible and efficient polling places on Election Morning. Inspectors can also view contact information for poll workers assigned to serve on their teams and be reminded to contact each clerk before Election Day.

**Training.** The Department will continue providing both in-person and online training courses, through which newly recruited and returning poll workers can acquire necessary knowledge to serve on Election Day. Poll workers will have the choice of accessing online training in October by logging into their Poll Worker profiles, or attending any in-person training class. For the convenience of poll workers who prefer in-person training but do not reside near City Hall, the Department will continue to provide several off-site training opportunities in other City neighborhoods.

A poll worker training course begins with a consideration of the role of a poll worker, which is to help fulfill the Department's mission by 1) providing equitable service to voters of all backgrounds and ethnicities, 2) protecting the right of every voter to freely cast a secret ballot without any interference, 3) safeguarding election fairness and integrity by securing all voter data, voting equipment, and voted ballots, and 4) ensuring that every election is functional by closely following all procedural instructions. These topics are then followed by the 1) proper setup and operation of voting equipment, 2) processing of voters, including standard, vote-by-mail, and provisional voters, 3) de-escalation techniques that may prove useful when a voter becomes agitated or creates a potential disruption at a polling place, and 4) custody procedures for voted ballots and other election materials.

For the November 5 election, the training course will also cover procedures for issuing the one-card ballot to non-citizen voters eligible to vote in the Board of Education election.

To reinforce training curriculum, the Department will provide Poll Worker Training Manuals in digital, hard-copy, and large-print hard-copy formats. The November 5 election edition of the Manual will consist of several chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the fundamentals of serving as a poll worker on Election Day, describing the poll worker mission, standards for assisting voters, and pre-election day duties. Chapters 2-4 walk poll workers through specific procedures, including setting up an accessible polling place, processing voters during voting hours, and securing and transferring ballots and results after the polls close. The job cards in these chapters detail tasks that must be completed in each period of the day and the order in which those tasks should be done.

The Department will also administer optional bilingual courses to help prepare bilingual poll workers to serve voters who require assistance in a language other than English. This online training, which can be completed remotely or in person, covers common election terms, language assistance resources available at the polling places, and polling place procedures. The course features a voice-over in the target language, interactive activities in English and the target language, quizzes, and a final quiz.

The Department will also offer small group practice labs to all poll workers so that they have the opportunity to practice working with the voting equipment. While these labs are optional for clerks, inspectors are required to attend a lab prior to serving on Election Day. During labs, poll workers have the opportunity to independently complete the voting equipment procedures outlined in the Poll Worker Manual, as they will on Election Day. Participants set up both voting machines, print the zero reports on the ballot-scanning machine, perform hardware tests on the ballot-marking device, activate a touchscreen or audio ballot, run the end-of-day results tapes, and close the polls.

**Distribution of ballots to Inspectors.** As in previous elections, Inspectors will be responsible for picking up supply bags from City Hall prior to Election Day and transporting them to their assigned sites on Election Morning. These supply bags will contain official ballots, the Roster of Voters, keys, and other essential items to facilitate voting at the polling place. Upon picking up the bags, Inspectors and Department staff will conduct

an inventory of all contents to make sure all required items are included, and then complete a Custody Transfer Form to document the transfer of ballot custody.

## **XVII. Election Day Field Support Personnel**

For the upcoming election, the Department will hire and train approximately 70 roving Field Election Deputies (FEDs) to provide support to poll workers and deliver supplies on an as-needed basis, and to serve as liaisons between poll workers and Department staff in the Election Center. The Department will also hire and train approximately 22 roving District Support Drivers (DSDs) to monitor accessibility at polling places.

To prepare for Election Day, FEDs and DSDs must complete several training sessions. The primary FED training session will consist of a course addressing a variety of common and less common Election Day situations, and how to properly address them. FEDs will also be required to complete an online poll worker training course and attend an in-person voting equipment practice lab, to gain a thorough understanding of voting procedures and poll worker duties. The primary DSD training involves comprehensive training on how to properly set up an accessible polling place and the requirements under ADA. Both FEDs and DSDs will also complete online training on safely operating city vehicles and a half-day route driving session, in which they familiarize themselves with assigned territories.

On Election Day, FEDs serve from 4 a.m. to approximately midnight, first confirming polling places are set up and opened on time, then monitoring procedural compliance and ensuring poll workers are carrying out their tasks properly. Each FED is responsible for a territory of approximately 7 to 9 polling places and is provided with a van and a smartphone, containing a custom-built application created for managing FED-specific tasks. These tasks include confirming that bilingual staffing requirements for each precinct are satisfied, that ballots have been dropped off, that signage is adequate, etc. Throughout the day, FEDs use the application to mark tasks as complete for each precinct, allowing Election Center personnel to monitor the status of FED's tasks in real time. On Election Day, FEDs will also use their application to report wait times at polling places, which will then be made available to users of the Department's online polling place lookup tool.

DSDs serve from 5 a.m. to approximately 11:30 p.m. Each DSD is responsible for a territory of approximately 20-25 polling places and is provided with a van supplied with a variety of ADA compliance items, such as directional signage, cones, clamp lights, electrical adapters, extension cords, caution tape, and extra voting booths and chairs. Over the course of Election Day, DSDs complete a priority sheet for every polling place in their territory. These priority sheets detail tasks for each site, such as installing any necessary ADA improvements before the polls open at 7 a.m., confirming polling places have opened on time, and verifying that poll workers maintain polling place operations in full compliance with the ADA.

On Election Night, following completion of their duties, FEDs and DSDs return their vans and supplies to the Department's warehouse at Pier 31.

## **XVIII. Logic and Accuracy Testing of Voting Equipment**

The Department conducts Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing of all vote-tabulating equipment prior to each election. L&A testing is the process by which voting equipment is configured, tested, and certified for accuracy. All testing is open to public observation; before L&A testing commences, the Department will issue a press release and post a public notice with information on observation methods and testing dates and locations.

The voting machines that currently comprise San Francisco's voting system are the ImageCast Evolution ballot-scanning machine, ImageCast X ballot-marking device, and ImageCast Central (ICC) scanner, all of which are subject to testing. The testing verifies that the specific ballot information for each precinct is correct, checks the performance of the vote tabulating and marking equipment, and ensures that the equipment properly records and accurately tabulates all votes.

The Department appoints a Logic and Accuracy Testing Board, composed of registered voters from different fields, to oversee the testing. Once the Board is formed, Department staff host several meetings with the members. The first meeting provides an opportunity for the Board members to review and approve the test plan and schedule before the testing commences.

The test plan includes a timeline for voting equipment testing and a description of tests to be conducted on each voting machine. The Board members will reconvene once the testing is complete, no later than seven days before the election as authorized by [CAEC §15000](#), to review and certify the testing results.

**Testing of ballot-scanning machines.** The testing of ballot-scanning machines takes place in the Department's warehouse at Pier 31, where the machines are stored. Throughout the testing and the duration of the election cycle, all voting equipment is labeled with unique asset tags that allow tracking of each item by location.

There are two phases to the testing of the ballot-scanning machines. The first phase begins with a predetermined set of test ballots being run through each machine to generate a tabulation results report. Once the test ballots have been processed, the report is compared with the expected results by a team of proofers. If the results do not match with 100% accuracy, any discrepancies are investigated until the issue can be resolved.

Once the first test phase is successfully completed on each machine, the results data stored in the memory card is uploaded into the election database system and tabulation of the test ballot results occurs. A second review team proofs the combined tabulation results report for accuracy.

When the testing of the ballot-scanning machines is complete, staff return the memory cards to the machines and attach serialized tamper-evident seals to the memory card covers. Next, the machines are closed and

secured with another set of tamper-evident seals and stored in a secured staging area at the warehouse in preparation for delivery to the polling places.

**Testing of equipment used to tabulate vote-by-mail, provisional, and remake ballots.** The ICC Scanners are located in the Department's ballot processing room in City Hall, where testing takes place.

The testing of the scanners is similar to the testing of the ballot-scanning machines. A predetermined set of test ballots that cover all ballot types are run on each scanner. Then, a results report is generated and compared for accuracy with the expected results.

**Testing of ballot-marking devices.** The testing of the ballot-marking devices involves three steps. The first step involves manually marking a predetermined set of ballots using the touchscreen interface, and confirming that the selections match those recorded on the ballot printouts. Secondly, the printouts are tabulated using either a ballot-scanning machine or an ICC scanner to confirm that the ballot is accurately tabulated. The last step involves testing of other components including audio and the connectivity of the audio-tactile interface (ATI) controller, to ensure that all components are working properly.

After the results have been verified by a team of proofers, the ballot-marking devices and their components are sealed, packed in transport bags, and transferred to a secured staging area at the warehouse where the machines are staged for polling place and Voting Center delivery.

In addition to testing all voting machines and associated components that will be deployed to polling places and the City Hall Voting Center, the Department tests any machines that will serve as back up in case a replacement machine is needed on Election Day.

## **XIX. Delivery of Equipment and Supplies to Polling Places**

Beginning seven days prior to Election Day through the day before Election Day, the Department will deliver voting equipment, tables, signage, and other supplies to the City's 501 polling places. The Department coordinates with polling place facility staff to determine dates and times when staff will be available to accept deliveries, and then uses a mapping program to determine the most efficient schedule and routes.

To account for voting equipment at all times, the Department affixes asset tags containing a unique barcode indicating the precinct number to which each piece of equipment is configured and assigned, and employs an asset tracking database system, to track custody of voting equipment.

Beginning 11 days prior to the election, all personnel involved in polling place deliveries receive training on procedures and instructions on how to use the asset tracking system to capture delivery and custody transfer. Staff are trained that they must scan voting equipment whenever it changes custody, such as when equipment is loaded into trucks for delivery and when it is delivered to the site. This process ensures that all

equipment is tracked and accounted for, and delivered to the correct precinct. Delivery staff will also photograph the voting equipment to provide photographic record of delivery as well as to assist poll workers in identifying the location of the equipment on Election Morning, if necessary.

All voting machines are affixed with tamper-evident seals when they are delivered to ensure they remain secure prior to Election Morning. Upon delivery, the serial numbers are recorded on the precinct route sheet. The recipients of the equipment sign the route sheets, confirming their receipt of the machines and other election materials. The security seals are verified again by poll workers on Election Morning to confirm that none of the equipment has been tampered with between delivery and Election Day.

During the seven days following Election Day, Department staff will retrieve the voting equipment from every polling place. On retrieval, voting equipment is scanned again by retrieval staff to record the transfer of custody back to the Department. When the equipment is unloaded, it is scanned one final time to capture the final transfer of custody back to the Department's warehouse.

## XX. Pre-Election Day Ballot Processing

As authorized under state election law, the Department can commence vote-by-mail ballot processing 29 days before Election Day. The Department will begin processing returned vote-by-mail ballots as soon as it receives the first such ballot. The processing of vote-by-mail ballots involves four sub-processes that are performed in succession: 1) envelope scanning, 2) signature comparison, 3) ballot extraction, and 4) votemark scanning.

**1. Envelope scanning.** San Francisco's official vote-by-mail return envelopes include barcodes with an ID number of the voter to whom the enclosed ballot was mailed. Upon receipt of each official return envelope, the Department uses an Agilis Ballot Sorting system to read the envelope's barcode and to scan, upload, and link the signature on the envelope to the voter's record in the Election Information Management System (EIMS). Staff also use the Agilis system to divert unreadable return envelopes, separating them for manual review.

Vote-by-mail return envelopes successfully processed by the Agilis system, as well as those processed by manual envelope review teams, will be forwarded to the signature comparison team.

**2. Signature comparison.** The Department utilizes a multi-stage review process to compare each ballot envelope signature with the signatures on file for that voter. Using this method, no ballot is challenged for a signature-related reason unless the signature in question has been reviewed by three different staff members and compared to all signatures in the voter's record.

In the first stage, a staff member compares the signature on a given return envelope to the signature image from the corresponding voter's affidavit of registration and determines whether these two signatures compare

by looking for common characteristics. If the signatures compare, the ballot is accepted and transferred to the extraction team for opening and tabulation. If the signatures do not compare, the ballot is placed on pending status and proceeds to the second stage.

In the next stage, a different staff member compares the voter's signature on the return envelope to all other signatures in the voter's file. Only when the signature does not compare to any signature on file, will the ballot proceed to the third stage. In this final stage, another staff member again compares the signature to all signatures in the voter's records. If, after three attempts to find a comparable signature, staff still cannot verify the signature on the return envelope compares with one on any form signed by the voter to whom the ballot was sent, the ballot must be challenged and the voter notified.

As part of Step 2, Department staff attempt to notify any voters who have submitted ballot return envelopes with missing or mismatched signatures, encouraging such voters to submit new signature samples so their ballots can be accepted.

**i. Voter Notification Program.** The Department attempts to contact voters with challenged ballots using several methods. First, the Department mails a bilingual cure form regarding the challenge and actions the voter must take to allow the Department to count the ballot, and a postage-paid return envelope. Second, the Department provides notification to voters with challenged ballots via the Department's online Voter Portal, which offers a digital version of the cure form. Finally, if the voter has an email address or telephone number on file, the Department attempts to contact the voter by email and/or telephone, generally within one working day of challenging the ballot.

Voters may return challenge cure forms by mail, email, fax, in person to any polling place or the City Hall Voting Center, or submit online using the signature cure portal. Upon receipt of a challenge cure form, a staff member scans the voter's signature sample, links the scan image to the voter's file for future reference, accepts the voter's ballot, and forwards the ballot envelope on to the ballot extraction team.

**3. Ballot extraction.** After undergoing envelope scanning and signature comparison, accepted vote-by-mail envelopes will proceed to ballot extraction phase. The ballot extraction team will begin inserting ballot envelopes into the Opex high speed envelope extractors. After ballot envelopes are processed (slit open) by the machine, staff will manually remove and flatten individual ballot cards and ready them for scanning. Throughout the extraction process, staff will protect vote secrecy by keeping envelopes face down so that voter information is removed from view. After extraction and flattening, boxes of accepted ballots will be transferred to the votemark scanning team.

**4. Votemark scanning.** After ballot cards have been removed, staff will scan the cards for tabulation using ImageCast Central (ICC) scanners. When scanned ballots contain potentially valid over-votes, under-votes, blank contests, marginal marks, or write-in votes, ICC scanners divert such ballots for manual review and adjudication.



As part of Step 4, dedicated teams “adjudicate” (interpret ambiguous marks using standardized rules) or “remake” (duplicate valid votemarks on irregular ballots onto new ballots for counting). Each of these four and two ancillary ballot processing steps are described below.

**i. Ballot adjudication and remake.** State law requires the Department to count irregular votemarks, provided the intent of the voter is clear. Therefore, when an ICC scanner detects a ballot with marginal or irregular markings or a write-in vote, an image of the ballot is sent to an adjudication team for review and interpretation.

Some types of irregularly marked ballots require Department staff to remake ballots on ballot-marking devices so votes can be read and tabulated properly by ICC scanners. These include provisional ballots with invalid votes (e.g., those cast by voters using ballot types containing contests in which they are not eligible to vote) and physically damaged vote-by-mail ballots (such as partially torn ballots).

To ensure consistent processing, both tasks, adjudication and remake, are completed by two-person teams using illustrated guides with standardized rules.

After processing and tabulation, original, adjudicated, and remade ballots will be securely transferred and stored at the Department’s warehouse for the duration of the archival period.

## **XXI. Election Center**

For every election, the Department organizes the Election Center, comprised of approximately 50 employees. Election Center staff liaise with poll workers and field support personnel on Election Day via a telephone and computer network to provide remote assistance and to dispatch in-person assistance and supplies to polling places as necessary. The Election Center is organized into multiple units:

- The incoming phone bank answers procedural questions from poll workers and dispatches field support personnel as necessary.
- The outgoing phone bank proactively monitors polling place activity and supports field support personnel who, in turn, support polling places.
- The precinct services phone bank monitors polling place accessibility and dispatches district support drivers to monitor accessibility and provide any necessary supplies.
- The Voting Systems phone bank, overseen by Dominion Voting Systems, is on standby to assist with technical questions and to dispatch technicians to polling places as necessary.
- The dispatch team, located in City Hall, South Light Court, receives and fulfils requests for back-up poll workers or supplies relayed by the incoming phone bank.
- The campaign services team, stationed at the Department’s front counter, receives and resolves calls from campaign representatives and questions related to electioneering.
- The IT team, stationed in the Department’s office, provides as-needed technical support to personnel at the Election Center and ensures the proper functioning of communication systems.

Election Center coordinators use the custom-built Government Election Assistance Reporting System (GEARS) database to log new issues, route issues to appropriate teams, update progress on open issues, and close issues as they are resolved. Open issues are displayed on a screen in the Election Center, which allows observers to monitor polling place activities. All logged issues become a part of the public record.

To prepare for Election Day, incoming and outgoing phone bank coordinators complete approximately 16 total hours of instruction, taking an online poll worker training course and/or a field support personnel training course, completing two or more GEARS training sessions, and taking part in a mock Election Day. Coordinators receive resource binders containing detailed instructions and procedures, copies of various forms, and essential reference information for Election Day.

Throughout Election Day, incoming phone bank coordinators typically respond to many calls from poll workers in quick succession. Whenever an issue requires assistance of other teams (e.g., a poll worker calls out sick and a replacement must be dispatched), staff must route this issue to the correct team. If the coordinator is able to address the poll worker's issue over the phone (e.g., clarify a procedural question), it does not need to be logged.

Every Election Center team has at least two supervisors who are available at all times to help answer more difficult questions or resolve less common scenarios. Election Center coordinators use brightly colored paper flags to get their supervisors' attention quickly and easily.

Election Center staff are taught to follow the guiding principle that voting must continue nonstop, 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. at each polling place. To this end, coordinators are instructed to confirm with all callers that voting is in fact continuing and, if necessary, to guide poll workers and field support personnel through emergency voting procedures using the relevant section(s) of their resource binders.

Election Center activities generally conclude shortly before midnight, when all polling places have reported the successful collection of memory devices and voted ballots by MTA and Deputy Sheriff Officers.

## **XXII. Retrieval and Receipt of Vote Data and Ballots**

The Department deploys ballot-scanning machines to all polling places that tabulate votes onsite. When the polls close on Election Night, poll worker inspectors print two copies of a report listing all votes tabulated at that precinct, one of which is posted publicly, and one of which is kept for the Department's records.

After printing these reports, the inspector breaks the ballot-scanning machine's security seals, removes its memory cards, and seals the memory cards in a secure transport bag. Meanwhile, members of the poll worker team collect, count, and secure paper ballots from the scanning machine and the red box and place these ballots in closing bags. Poll workers also reconcile the number of roster signatures with the number of

voted ballots and complete the Posted Ballot Statement (PBS), an itemized account of all of ballots at the polling place. A copy of the PBS is posted outside the polling place, as required by SF Charter §13.107.5.

When these steps are all complete, poll workers transfer memory cards from the scanning machine, ballots, and other vital election materials to Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA) Officers and Deputy Sheriffs. Custody Transfer Forms document all such transfers.

The Department organizes two collection points to facilitate the return of voted ballots and election materials from the polling places on Election Night. The Data Collection Center, which receives memory cards from the ballot-scanning machines, is located at City Hall's McAllister Street entrance. The Processing Center, which receives voted ballots, rosters of voters, and other vital election materials, is located at the Department's warehouse at Pier 31. These two sites are staffed by approximately 50 workers who unload, log, and organize materials delivered by nearly 200 Municipal Transportation officers and Deputy Sheriffs.

## XXIII. Election Results

On Election Night, the Department will publish the election results on its website and make printed copies available at its office. Results will also be available at the North Light Court of City Hall and broadcast via the ticker on SFGTV (Channel 26). Official statewide election results will be available on the Secretary of State's website.

The Department will report local election results as follows:

**Election Night Reporting (Preliminary).** After the polls close, the Department will release four preliminary results reports:

1. At approximately 8:45 p.m., a report consisting of results from vote-by-mail ballots received before Election Day.
2. At approximately 9:45 p.m., a report incorporating Election Day results from polling places that have reported as of that time.
3. At 10:45 p.m., a report incorporating additional Election Day results from polling places that have reported as of that time.
4. As soon as all polling places have reported, a report incorporating Election Day results from all 514 city precincts.

All of the election results released on Election Night will be preliminary and will change in the following days as the Department counts several tens of thousands of ballots. These will include all valid provisional and vote-by-mail ballots received on Election Day, as well as all valid vote-by-mail ballots received within one week of Election Day and postmarked by Election Day.

**Canvass Period Daily Reporting (Preliminary).**

1. Beginning Wednesday, November 6, the Department of Elections will publish a report of the approximate number of ballots still to be counted at approximately 4 p. m. daily.
2. Beginning Thursday, November 7, the Department of Elections will release updated preliminary election results reports at approximately 4 p.m. daily.

On days the Department does not count ballots and no updated preliminary election results reports are available, the Department will post a notice to that effect.

**Report formats.** First and last Election Night reports, as well as all daily canvass period reports, will include both a) the Statement of the Vote, with data sorted by precinct, district, and neighborhood (PDF and Excel), b) the Cast Vote Record, showing raw vote data (JSON), and 3) Ranked-choice reports for the ranked-choice voting contests, showing elimination of candidates until only two candidates remain.

**Final results reporting.** The Department of Elections will release final election results by December 5, 2024.

After certifying the election results, the Department will deliver the certified statement of the results and associated attachments to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and the Secretary of State, and will post the documents on its website. Additionally, the Department will issue a press release and post notices on its social media channels that the election results are certified.

Along with final results, the Department will post images of voted ballots, allowing members of the public to view each voted ballot cast in the City.

The Department will apply SHA512 cryptographic function to all results files, ballot card images, and transaction logs to establish the integrity of the results in a verifiable manner.

**Voting system transparency.** The Department will again post a “Cast Vote Record”, which lists how votes for all contests and ballot measures were recorded on each ballot card. Data provided in the Cast Vote Record is captured from ballots as they are scanned by the voting equipment and before vote tabulation occurs, allowing members of the public to tabulate votes from specific precincts, districts, etc. and compare against the official election results.

The Department will also post images of voted ballots, allowing members of the public to view images for each voted ballot cast in the City. In addition to capturing images of voted ballot cards during processing, the voting system appends an “audit log” showing how the voting system interpreted and tallied each vote mark appearing on the images, and when applicable, how the markings were adjudicated by Department personnel. These “AuditMarks,” available alongside ballot images at [sfelections.gov/results](https://sfelections.gov/results) provide interested members of the public with information about how the voting system operates and counts votes,

and enables the comparison of each digital image to the individual ballot card's Cast Vote Record in order to verify that the system correctly tallied ballots.

Prior to posting ballot images, the Department will again redact any identifying information voters may have placed on their ballot cards. Redacted ballot files will be sorted by precinct and type (vote-by-mail or in-person voting) and posted with election certification documents.

The Department will also post transaction logs from the voting equipment used in the November 5 election. These logs record the operation of equipment during scanning and processing tasks, further informing members of the public regarding the system's operation.

## **XXIV. Post-Election Ballot Processing**

Department staff continue to process ballots after Election Day, including vote-by-mail ballots returned in person at the Voting Center, polling places, or drop boxes on Election Day, polling place ballots with write-in votes, and provisional ballots, until all such ballots have been counted. In addition, after Election Day, the Department will process vote-by-mail ballots postmarked or dated on Election Day and received within seven days of Election Day, any challenged ballots timely cured by voters, and any vote-by-mail ballots issued to San Francisco voters that were returned to a different county's election official (counties are required to mail such ballots back to the "home county" within 7 days of Election Day for inclusion in the home county's election results).

## **XXV. Canvass**

California Elections Code requires an Official Canvass, which is an internal audit of the election to ensure the accuracy and validity of the results. The Canvass entails numerous processes that verify the accuracy of the computer count, including a hand tally of random ballot samples. For the November 5 election, the deadline to complete the official canvass and submit final results to the Secretary of State is December 5.

Canvass processes include the inspection of materials and supplies returned by poll workers, reconciliation of the number of signatures in the rosters of voters with the number of ballots recorded, and tallies of ballots cast in one percent (1%) of precincts participating in an election, as well as 1% of the vote-by-mail ballots and other ballots cast in an election. Approximately 30 employees assist with these processes, which are primarily conducted at the Department's warehouse at Pier 31. All processes are open to observation, in person or remotely via live-streaming. During the entire Canvass period, the area is secured 24/7 by the Sheriff Department and is accessible only to authorized personnel and observers. Sheriff Department personnel also provide security during the transportation of ballots to and from the warehouse.

**Inspection of materials.** Department staff use a tablet-based application to account for all inspector transport bags returned from the polls by Sheriff personnel on Election Night. Each team processes materials

from one polling place at a time, recording the presence of all closing bags inside the transport bag, whether each closing bag is empty or includes ballots, and for some bags, the number of ballot cards inside the bag. All transport bags and field support bags are emptied and thoroughly checked for any loose materials. Any items that should have been delivered to City Hall on Election Night, such as vote-by-mail ballots or provisional ballots are given to the supervisor for transfer to the ballot processing room in City Hall.

**Reconciliation of signatures in the rosters with ballots recorded on the Posted Ballot Statement.**

Department staff begin processing Rosters of voters the morning after Election Day. First, teams prepare the rosters by removing alpha tabs, binding, and staples, and then scanning them using high speed scanners. Next, software analyzes the roster pages and captures voter ID barcodes for which a signature and a filled-in bubble are present. If a signature or a bubble is missing or the software cannot interpret the mark, the record is marked for manual verification. Once the roster has been verified, information is uploaded into EIMS to update the voters' voting history.

For each precinct, the Canvass team compares the count of signatures with the number of ballots cast listed on the Posted Ballot Statement (PBS). If the number of roster signatures does not match the number of ballots on the PBS, the team takes steps to reconcile the ballots received from that precinct's polling place with the number of ballots cast.

**Ballots from auxiliary bins.** During the Canvass process, Department staff review any ballot cards that were inserted into the auxiliary bin of the ballot-scanning machine and transferred to the warehouse on Election Night. Ballots that have not yet been counted are transported to the ballot processing room in City Hall and processed using the ICC scanners.

**One percent manual tally.** As part of the Canvass, a one percent manual tally is conducted to verify the accuracy of the machine count of votes.

The Department uses a 10-sided dice rolling process to randomly select ballots for manual tally. After rolling the dice, the Department compares the numbers facing up to the numbers assigned to an itemized list of precincts, for which the Department will manually tally cards voted at those polling places, equal to one percent of all precincts.

Next, the Department will roll the dice to select a number of batches of vote-by-mail and other ballots that equals one percent of the batches processed. These batches most likely include ballots from multiple precincts. For this latter category of ballots, the numbers from the rolled dice are referenced to a list of batch numbers.

The selection of ballots can be viewed in person or via live stream on [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe). Following the selection of ballots, the Department will post a recording of the process on [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe).

Once the ballots for the one percent manual tally have been selected, the Department conducts a manual count of the results, and compares these against the results reports issued from the voting system. The purpose of conducting the manual count and then comparing those results to vote totals tabulated by the voting equipment is to verify that the equipment properly tabulated ballots.

## **XXVI. Record retention**

Upon certification of election results, the Department secures ballots and other election materials in labeled boxes, each safeguarded with a tamper-evident seal. The boxes are labeled with the election title and date, the contents, the destruction date set by state law, and a box reference number. The sealed boxes are stored inside a secure fenced area in the warehouse for the retention period required under state law.

## Appendix A: November 5, 2024 Election Calendar of Observable Activities

Before Election Day			
Activity	Details	Time	Location
<b>Voter Outreach Presentations</b>	For details and schedule, contact (415) 554-4375.		
<b>Designation of Letters for Ballot Measures</b> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>	Designation of letters to identify each local measure that will appear on the ballot.	August 12, 9 a.m. (E-85)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Random alphabet drawing</b> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>	The resulting order of letters is used for determining the order of candidates' names on the ballot. CAEC sections <a href="#">13111(e) and (j)</a> , and <a href="#">13112</a>	August 15, 9 a.m. (E-82)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Proponent and opponent argument drawing</b> <a href="#">Video Recording</a>	Selection of official proponent and opponent arguments if more than one proponent's or opponent's argument are submitted.	August 15, 2 p.m. (E-82)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Logic and Accuracy Testing</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Testing of ImageCast Central (ICC) Scanners and other media devices	September 23 - until complete (E-43)	City Hall, Rm 48
	Testing of ImageCast X Ballot-Marking Devices	September 23 – September 27, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (E-43)	Warehouse, Pier 31
	Testing of ImageCast Evolution Ballot-Scanning Machines	September 23 – October 9, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (E-43)	Warehouse, Pier 31
<b>Poll Worker and Field Support Training</b>	For details and schedule, contact (415) 554-4375		
<b>Voting Center</b>	Any voter may vote or drop off their vote-by-mail ballot at the City Hall Voting Center beginning 29 days before the election.	October 7 – November 4, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. October 26 – 27 & November 2 – 3, Saturday – Sunday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	City Hall, in front of Rm 48
<b>Vote-by-Mail Ballot Processing</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Sorting, scanning, and verifying signatures on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes in preparation for ballot counting.	October 7 – until complete (E-29)	City Hall, Rm 48
	Opening of vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, ballot extraction, ballot scanning in preparation for tabulation.	October 10 – until complete (E-26)	City Hall, Rm 48
	Ballot tabulation	October 10 – until complete (E-26)	City Hall, Rm 48
	For activity on a specific day, contact (415) 554-4375.		
<b>Ballot Remake</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	When necessary, including cases when ballots are torn, bent, or otherwise damaged and unreadable, ballot remake is conducted.	October 10 – until complete (E-26)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Ballot Adjudication</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	When necessary, including cases in which a ballot has been irregularly marked or contains write-in votes, the Department reviews and adjudicates these ballots.	October 26 – until complete (E-10)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Official Ballot Drop Boxes</b>	Any voter may return their vote-by-mail ballot to any of San Francisco's official ballot drop boxes.	October 7 – November 5 at 8 p.m. (E-29 through E-Day)	For locations, visit <a href="https://sfelections.gov/balлотdropoff">sfelections.gov/balлотdropoff</a>



Election Plan – November 5, 2024, Consolidated General Election

### On Election Day

Activity	Details	Time	Location
<b>Voting Center / Polling Places</b>	The City Hall Voting Center and 501 polling places are open to local voters who wish to register to vote or vote in person, use accessible voting equipment, receive personal assistance, or return their vote-by-mail ballots.	7 a.m. – 8 p.m.	For locations, visit <a href="https://sfelections.gov/MyVotingLocation">sfelections.gov/MyVotingLocation</a>
<b>Official Ballot Drop Boxes</b>	Any voter may return their vote-by-mail ballot to any of San Francisco's official ballot drop boxes.	Open until 8 p.m.	For locations, visit <a href="https://sfelections.gov/balлотdropoff">sfelections.gov/balлотdropoff</a>
<b>Election Day Support Center</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Provides support to poll workers and dispatches in-person assistance to polling places when needed.	5:30 a.m. to approximately midnight	Rm adjacent to City Hall café
<b>Processing Center</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Receives voted ballots, rosters of voters, and other materials from polling places.	Begins after 8 p.m. and continues until all polling place materials have been received	Warehouse, Pier 31
<b>Data Collection Center</b>	Receives memory cards from polling places.	Begins after 8 p.m. and continues until all polling place memory cards have been received	City Hall, McAllister St. entrance
<b>Election Night Results Reporting</b>	Results are available at: <a href="https://sfelections.org/results">-sfelections.org/results</a> -Department of Elections, City Hall, Rm 48 -San Francisco Government Television SFGTV, Channel 26	First preliminary results released at approximately 8:45 p.m. with updates released at approximately 9:45 p.m. and 10:45 p.m.	City Hall, North Light Court

### After Election Day

Activity	Details	Time	Location
<b>Ballot Processing and Tabulation</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Ballots include vote-by-mail ballots that voters returned to polling places and official ballot drop boxes, and that the Department received in the mail within seven days of Election Day; vote-by-mail ballots that were timely remedied by voters; provisional ballots; and ballots with write-in votes.  For activity on a specific day, contact Matthew Selby (415) 554-4376	Continues until all ballots have been counted (no later than E+30)	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>Results Reporting after Election Night</b>	The Department holds press briefings and posts updated results on its website on any day ballots are tabulated.	Daily at approximately 4 p.m.	In front of Rm 48 and at <a href="https://sfelections.gov/results">sfelections.gov/results</a>
<b>Canvass</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	An internal audit of the election to ensure the accuracy of results.	November 7 until complete, but no later than December 5, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Warehouse, at Pier 31
<b>1% Manual Tallies Random Selection</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Random selection of precincts and batches for manual tallies.	TBD	City Hall, Rm 48
<b>1% Manual Tallies</b> <a href="#">Live Stream</a>	Manual count of ballot cards from random selection.	November 18 until complete, but no later than December 5, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Warehouse, at Pier 31