



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: September 20, 2024
RE: Director's Report: September 24, 2024, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on August 21, 2024.

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

- A. The Department has finalized the November 5 ballot. The 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.
 - i. The Department is also preparing ballots for the online Accessible Vote-By-Mail (AVBM) System, as well as touchscreen and audio versions of the ballot for accessible ballot-marking devices.
- B. The Department has been preparing to send voter roll extracts to its ballot printing and assembly vendor so that the vendor can begin assembling vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot packets.
 - i. The Department will transmit ballots to over 10,000 San Francisco voters serving in the military or residing overseas no later than September 21, using their preferred delivery method (email, postal mail, or fax).
 - ii. The Department is on schedule to mail VBM packets to nearly 500,000 registered voters by October 7.
- C. The Department has finalized the November 5 Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP). The paper 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.
 - i. In addition to covering standard topics (e.g., key election dates, availability of translated and accessible voting resources), the VIP will also include pages explaining 1) how to mark a ranked-choice voting (RCV) contest and how votes are counted in such contests and 2) why an accurate and complete vote count takes time.
 - ii. The Department is on schedule to distribute the VIPs to voters in early October, concurrent with VBM packets. All voters will receive the VIP in English via their selected method of delivery (email or postal mail.) Those who have requested election materials in Chinese, Filipino, or Spanish also receive a copy in that language.
- D. The Department has been preparing for early voting, which will begin on October 7 at the City Hall Voting Center. The City Hall Voting Center will serve as a central polling place for all City residents, offering multilingual personal assistance and accessible voting equipment as well as pick up, drop off, and replacement ballot service.

- E. The Department has secured the 501 facilities to host neighborhood polling places, each of which will provide in-person voting and ballot drop-off services on Election Day.
- F. The Department has recruited adequate number of poll workers to staff all 501 polling places. While the goal of staffing each location with four poll workers has been met, the Department will continue to accept new applicants to address potential cancellations and enhance bilingual assistance at polling places on Election Day.
- G. On Monday, September 23, the Department will begin Logic and Accuracy testing of the voting equipment used for the November 5 election. This ensures that the equipment correctly records and accurately tabulates all votes, and is open to public observation in person and via live stream on the Department's website.
- H. On Wednesday, September 18, the Department held its Job Fair, designed as a convenient one-stop shop for job seekers.
 - i. This event was a resounding success, attracting job seekers from all walks of life, including immigrants, retirees, people with prior criminal history, youth, as well as others interested in public service.
 - ii. In a span of six hours, over 220 people attended the Fair. Of those, 154 people were interviewed and 62 began the onboarding process.
- I. For the November 5 election, the Department will expand options for voters to submit signature cure forms to resolve issues with their vote-by-mail ballot envelopes. From the start of early voting on October 7, voters will be able to submit cure forms online through a secure portal (explained in more detail in the New and Expanded Practices of the November 5 Election Plan), in addition to existing methods (mail, fax, email, or in person). The Department will also continue to send hard-copy forms within 24 hours of a ballot challenge, provide forms via email for those with email addresses on record, and make reminder calls to voters with phone numbers on file.
- J. As required by the San Francisco Charter §13.103.5, the Department developed the Election Plan for the November 5 election.
 - i. This Plan provides information about the Department's plans to conduct the November 5 election in a manner that is free, fair, and functional and highlights several new practices and enhancements to existing programs and processes in effect for the upcoming election.
- K. As required by the San Francisco Charter §13.104.5, the Department developed the November 5 Election Alternative Security Plan.
 - i. This alternative security plan, like prior such plans with an incumbent Sheriff on the ballot, places the Chief Deputy Sheriff in charge of the election security duties normally assigned to the Sheriff.
 - ii. Local law requires the Director of Elections to develop an alternative security plan and submit the plan to the Elections Commission for approval whenever an incumbent Sheriff seeks re-election to that office.
 - iii. The Commission is required to provide the approved alternative plan to the Board of Supervisors.

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

- A. 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>.
- i. 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; and 4) information on the various steps involved in verifying and counting provisional ballots.
 - ii. A link to this page will be shared with the public and the media via different channels, and a condensed version of this information will be included in the VIP.
- B. For the November 5 election, 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.
- i. The page will 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.
 - ii. The presentation of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) results has been 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. 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. The Department has included 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, ballots cast by type, and ballots cast as a proportion of registered voters.
- C. The Department has been actively promoting its Go Green! outreach campaign, which encourages voters to opt out of receiving their VIP by mail and instead read it online.
- i. On Wednesday, September 6, the Department issued a press release and sent an email to nearly 206,000 voters, inviting them to switch to the digital VIP. Both the press release and the email highlighted the benefits of reading the VIP online, such as cost savings and reduced paper use, which may appeal to different voters. Additionally, the email suggested that households receiving multiple paper VIPs may consider having all but one voter opt out, allowing the household to share a single paper copy.
 - ii. On Monday, September 9, in collaboration with the City's social media team, the Department posted its Go Green ads across the City's social media channels

- iii. These September communications resulted in approximately 2,500 new VIP opt out requests, increasing the total number of individuals reading their VIP online to over 53,000.
- D. The Department has sent a second citywide mailer to over 300,000 households in the city. The quadrilingual notice, titled "Get ready to vote in the November 5, 2024 Election!" includes key reminders about ranked-choice voting (RCV) in local contests and covers topics such as: contests on the November 5 ballot that use RCV, how to mark an RCV contest, resources for practicing and learning more about RCV, and ways to contact the Department with questions.
 - E. On September 10, the Department held its *Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee* meeting, which primarily focused on reviewing services available to voters with disabilities for the November 5 election.
 - F. The Department has been facilitating its High School Student Ambassador Program, which trains students to conduct civic outreach within their schools and neighborhoods. The fall program that runs from September 16 to 27, has seen a record 60 students from 20 public and private schools across the city participating this year.
 - i. Each Student Ambassador has been 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 pre-registering and engaging their peers in the electoral process.
 - G. The Department is set to launch its multi-messaging advertising outreach campaign on September 23. This campaign aims to reach potential registrants and voters with messages about registering to vote and participating in the upcoming election. Building on the March 5 outreach campaign, it will use messaging that reflects the theme "One city, many voices", emphasizing the personal and urgent nature of voting.
 - i. The campaign will include: 1) Ads on 20 bus shelters; 2) Ads on the sides of 95 Muni buses and 75 Muni bus tails; 3) Advertisements in newspapers including the SF Examiner, SF Neighborhood Newspapers, SF Chronicle, Bay Reporter, SF Bay Times, Wind Newspaper, Sing Tao Daily, and Street Sheets; 4) Radio spots on Sing Tao, KEST, KIQI, and Univision; 5) TV ads on Effect TV, KTSF, and Crossing TV; 6) A user-generated content style video titled "Ranked-Choice Voting in 60 Seconds" to be shared on social media.
 - H. In observance of National Voter Registration Day on September 17 and National Voter Education Week, including the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), which runs from October 7 to October 11, the Department, in collaboration with local voter outreach partners, has been offering numerous voter registration opportunities throughout the City.
 - I. To keep the media and the public informed, the Department continues to regularly issue press releases with updates on election news and highlights of its outreach activities. The most recent press releases include:
 - [The Department of Elections Begins Logic and Accuracy Testing of the Voting Equipment for the November 5 Election](#)
 - [The Department of Elections Starts Sending Ballots for the November 5 Election to Military and Overseas Voters](#)
 - [The Department of Elections Encourages all Eligible City Residents to Register to Vote](#)
 - [The Department of Elections Sends Over 300,000 Notices to Expand Voter Education on Ranked-Choice Voting](#)
 - [The Department of Elections Enhances Youth Engagement for the November 5 Election](#)
 - [The Department of Elections Encourages Voters to Switch to an Online Voter Information Pamphlet](#)

- [The Department of Elections Collaborates with USCIS to Help New Citizens Register to Vote](#)
- [The Department of Elections and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs Collaborate to Provide Election Information to Residents who Speak Languages other than English](#)
- [The Department of Elections Sends Over 300,000 Notices to Encourage Voter Registration and Participation in the November 5, 2024, Consolidated General Election](#)

III. The Department is incorporating changes resulting from the passage of AB 3184 into its operations and services for the November 5 election.

- A. On September 4, [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 3184](#) was signed into law with immediate effect. The law prohibits counties from certifying election results before December 3, 2024, allowing voters 26 days after Election Day to cure signature issues with their vote-by-mail ballots. Consequently, the Department will accept signature cure forms until December 1 and certify results between December 3 and December 5, with December 5 being the statewide deadline.

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

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

- A. Between August 1 – August 31, the Department processed affidavits for 4,886 new registrants, residing in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 374, SD 2 – 651, SD 3 – 581, SD 4 – 288, SD 5 – 561, SD 6 – 557, SD 7 – 368, SD 8 – 532, SD 9 – 408, SD 10 – 304, SD 11 – 262.
- B. Between August 1 – August 31, the Department conducted 34 outreach events; which had approximately 3,828 people in attendance collectively. The number of such events by Supervisorial District was: SD 2 – 1, SD 3 – 7, SD 5 – 6, SD 6 – 6, SD 8 – 3, SD 9 – 2, SD 10 – 5, SD 11 – 4.