



## Memorandum

**To:** Elections Commission  
**From:** John Arntz, Director  
**Date:** October 11, 2024  
**RE:** Director's Report: October 16, 2024, Elections Commission Meeting

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Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on September 24, 2024.

### I. The Department is now in the primary operational phase of the November 5, 2024, election cycle.

- A. The Department has mailed over 500,000 vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot packets to local voters, including those serving in the military, residing overseas, and non-citizen voters eligible to participate in the Board of Education election.
  - i. From now until October 21, the Department will continue to mail additional ballot packets to new registrants on a rolling basis. Additionally, replacement ballots will be mailed through October 31 on a rolling basis. After October 31, when it is too late to mail a ballot, the Department will direct voters to obtain replacement ballots at the Voting Center, through the online accessible vote-by-mail system, or at a polling place on Election Day.
- B. On October 7, the Department made several additional voting options available for local voters.
  - i. The Department has launched its accessible vote-by-mail systems: [sfelections.gov/access](https://sfelections.gov/access) for traditional voters and [sfelections.gov/ncvaccess](https://sfelections.gov/ncvaccess) for non-citizen voters. These systems enable voters to download and mark their ballot using a screen reader or personal assistive technology, such as a head pointer or sip-and-puff device. For security reasons, AVBM does not transmit vote data over the internet.
  - ii. The Department has opened its City Hall Voting Center, where eligible residents, including non-citizens eligible to vote in the Board of Education election, can register to vote and cast a paper, touchscreen, or audio ballot. Voters can request ballots in English, Chinese, Filipino, or Spanish, with facsimile ballots available in several other languages. Translation services, including American Sign Language and curbside assistance, are also available.
- C. To facilitate ballot returns, the Department has opened 37 accessible outdoor ballot drop boxes in neighborhoods across the City, in addition to offering a postage-paid mail-in option through USPS. Each official drop box will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until the polls close on Election Night.
- D. To date, the Department has received and begun processing approximately 13,500 returned VBM ballot packets.
  - i. Ballot processing begins with capturing an image of the signature on each VBM envelope, which is compared to the signature in the voter's registration record. If the signatures match, the envelope is accepted, and the ballot is removed for scanning and tabulation on Election Night.

- ii. All ballot processing takes place in public areas open to observers. When processing vote-by-mail ballots, Department personnel follow strict rules that ensure the integrity of the election (e.g., one person, one vote) and protect individual rights (e.g., the right to a secret ballot).
  - iii. Ballot processing statistics, including daily updates on the number of ballots sent, returned, accepted, awaiting voter action, and in review, are available along with additional data sets, via the EData tool at [sfelections.gov/edata](https://sfelections.gov/edata).
- E. The Department has delivered over 600 vote-by-mail ballot packets and Voter Information Pamphlets to the Sherriff's Office Prisoner Legal Services unit for distribution to registered voters incarcerated in San Francisco County jails. During the voting period, all ballots cast by voters in local jails will be regularly picked up by Department personnel and securely transported for processing.
- F. The Department has delivered Voter Information Pamphlets (VIPs) to locally registered voters via the voters' selected method of delivery (email or postal mail.) All voters receive the pamphlet in English, and those who request election materials in Chinese, Filipino, or Spanish also receive a copy in their preferred language. Voters may also access the VIP in PDF, HTML, XML, and audio MP3 formats on [sfelections.org/vip](https://sfelections.org/vip) or request the VIP in large print, CD audio, USB, or National Library Service cartridge format.
- G. The Department has also mailed Voter Information Booklets to non-citizen registrants eligible to vote in the Board of Education election. The quadrilingual booklet, printed in English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish, provides information about the voting process, details on Board of Education candidates, and a sample ballot.
- H. In anticipation of an increase in public inquiries, the Department has expanded its phone bank to a team of 25 members who will answer telephone calls through Election Day. Phone bank lines will be open during regular business hours and on the last two weekends before Election Day.
- I. To date, the Department has successfully recruited over 3,000 poll workers for the upcoming election, surpassing its recruitment goal. As a result of meeting this goal, the Department is currently only accepting poll worker applications for a waitlist or for future elections.
- J. The Department has launched its online poll worker training program and have commenced in-person training classes to prepare poll workers for Election Day service, with 1,200 poll workers successfully completing their training to date. The Department will commence its voting equipment practice labs on October 27.
  - i. In addition to standard topics covered in every election cycle, this year's curriculum includes expanded sections on managing potential disturbances at polling places and administering voting to non-citizen voters.
  - ii. In addition to in-person training at City Hall, the Department will offer off-site training classes to accommodate poll workers residing in Sunset, Richmond, Excelsior, Portola, Visitacion Valley, and the Mission.
- K. The Department has been preparing 501 sets of supplies, signage, and voting equipment to be delivered to polling places. The Department is currently coordinating with polling place hosts to arrange specific delivery dates and times, ensuring that each location receives its materials in advance of Election Day.

- L. The Department has published its Results webpage (Zero Report), which media outlets and members of the public use to bookmark pages that will feature official election results on Election Night. This Zero Report also serves as an official record, indicating that no votes have been counted yet and establishing a baseline for comparison as preliminary results begin to be published on Election Night.
  - i. The Department will launch a new tool for viewing round-by-round results of ranked-choice voting (RCV) contests. This tool will display the vote totals for the two candidates who received the most votes after applying the ranked-choice method for each contest. This information will be available starting with the first issuance of preliminary results after polls close on Election Night and will continue to be updated daily whenever the Department issues results.
  - ii. To ensure the public and media have an easy access to election results, the Department will revise its homepage on Election Night to feature a clickable invitation to view preliminary election results, along with key, dynamic turnout and ballot processing statistics.
  - iii. Beginning Wednesday, November 6, the Department will display the approximate number of ballots left to be processed on its homepage, updating that number daily.

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

- A. The Department has launched a multilingual, multiformat outreach campaign that aligns with the Department's goal of raising awareness about voter registration and civic participation among hard-to-reach populations. This campaign features city residents sharing empowering messages, such as "Your family. Your city. Your future. Your vote is your voice. Register now. Vote early" and seeks to resonate with the city's diverse communities by empowering them to have a voice in the matters that affect their daily lives.
  - i. The campaign strategies 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) ads on social media.
  - ii. The Department also produced a user-generated content-style video titled "Ranked-Choice Voting in 60 Seconds," which has been posted on social media: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/898163961701424>
- B. The Department has been organizing and conducting voter registration events and neighborhood merchant walks across the City. Approximately 50 such events will be held in a variety of venues, including open air plazas, public parks, and outside of businesses in walkable areas, with a focus on neighborhoods in which residents have been historically less engaged with elections, as based on registration and turnout statistics. At these events, Department staff will offer registration and pre-registration forms, and official election brochures on a variety of topics including information on accessible voting, ranked-choice voting, and language resources.
- C. The Department has sent mailers to its local partners serving people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.
  - i. Nearly 250 reminder packets were mailed to property managers, building superintendents, and front desk staff at Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings and homeless shelters citywide, advising them to prepare

their mailrooms for an increase in election-related mail. Each packet included images of the official U.S. Election Mail logo, the vote-by-mail packet outer envelope, and the Voter Information Pamphlet cover to help staff identify election materials. Two posters were also provided: one with general election information and another detailing emergency ballot delivery options.

- ii. The Department also contacted its partner organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Outreach packets to these contacts included: 1) a letter offering specialized outreach and voter registration services, 2) a flyer with information on how to register and vote without a fixed address, and 3) a poster with emergency ballot delivery options.
  - iii. Prior to Election Day, Department personnel will distribute multilingual posters to local homeless shelters, inviting residents to contact the Department for assistance with voter registration and voting.
- D. 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 issued since the last Commission's meeting include:
- [The Department of Elections Encourages Voters to Check the Status of Their Vote-By-Mail Ballots](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Hosted High School Student Ambassador Ceremony](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Delivers Ballots for the November 5 Election to Incarcerated Voters](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Begins Processing Returned Vote-by-Mail Ballots for the November 5 Election](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Mails Ballots and Voter Information Booklets to Non-Citizen Voters for the November 5 Board of Education Election](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Opens the Voting Center at City Hall on October 7](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Mails Vote-by-Mail Ballots for the November 5 Election to Locally Registered Voters](#)
  - [The Department of Elections Begins Mailing Voter Information Pamphlets for the November 5 Election](#)

### III. The Department has been engaged in other administrative projects.

- A. The Department prepared and submitted its FY 2023-24 Language Access Ordinance (LAO) Compliance Report to the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA). OCEIA will review and compile reports from all City departments and submit an annual report evaluating citywide LAO compliance to the Board of Supervisors and the Immigrant Rights Commission.
- i. In FY 2023-24, the Department successfully achieved its language access goals through various initiatives:
    - a. For the March 5, 2024 Election, the Department launched a comprehensive outreach program with multilingual resources in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino. Key materials included brochures on registration, vote by mail, accessible voting, and language resources. Digital tools (e.g., Election Readiness Toolkit) along with media campaigns and community partnerships, also engaged many local voters.
    - b. The Department enhanced access for non-English speakers by providing translated election materials, including voter guides and ballots. For the March 5 election, notices were mailed to approximately 18,000 local voters from non-English speaking countries, informing them of available translated resources and the option to serve as bilingual poll workers.

- c. Following four elections in 2022, the Department updated polling place signage to improve the visibility of multilingual services. New signage features clearer visuals and multilingual text, ensuring voters are informed about available resources and creating a welcoming inclusive environment on Election Day.
- ii. For FY 2024-2025, the Department has established the following language access goals:
  - a. For the November 5, 2024 Election, develop effective outreach programs to provide accessible, multilingual, and equitable voter education to people whose primary language is not English.
  - b. Incorporate non-citizen registration and voting in the November 5 Board of Education contest into election administration procedures, while also providing outreach on eligibility requirements and voting processes to eligible non-citizens.
  - c. Implement changes resulting from the passage of Ordinance FILE NO. 230868, amending the SF Administrative Code to lower the threshold of Limited English Proficient San Francisco residents for which departments must provide translated materials and services from 10,000 to 6,000 persons. Based on this new determination and current city demographic data, the Department—along with other City agencies—will be required to offer translated physical and digital copies of its official materials (e.g., ballots, the Voter Information Pamphlet, website) in Vietnamese, starting January 1, 2026.

**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 September 1 – September 30, the Department processed affidavits for 7,027 new registrants, residing in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 611, SD 2 – 895, SD 3 – 884, SD 4 – 408, SD 5 – 800, SD 6 – 881, SD 7 – 524, SD 8 – 700, SD 9 – 526, SD 10 – 431, SD 11 – 367.
- B. Between September 1 – September 30, the Department conducted 77 outreach events; which had approximately 10,900 people in attendance collectively. The number of such events by Supervisorial District was: SD 1 – 6, SD 2 – 2, SD 3 – 9, SD 4 – 2, SD 5 – 13, SD 6 – 12, SD 7 – 5, SD 8 – 7, SD 9 – 9, SD 10 – 6, SD 11