



## Memorandum

To: Elections Commission  
From: John Arntz, Director  
Date: September 11, 2020  
RE: Director's Report: September 16, 2020, 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 July 15, 2020.

- I. **The Department continues to hire and onboard temporary personnel and to procure services and materials necessary to conduct the November 3 election.**
  - A. Following Department of Human Resources' (DHR) procedures, the Department hired and onboarded, mostly remotely, nearly 160 temporary employees to aid the full-time staff with maintenance of voter records, signature comparison on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, preparation of polling place supplies, facilitating voting during the early voting period, and ballot processing. Over the next month, the Department expects to hire nearly 100 additional temporary employees to assist with supporting polling places on Election Day and the conduct of post-election Official Canvass.
    - i. In a proactive effort to avoid potential staffing issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department intends to hire additional reserve personnel with flexible employment start and end dates, focusing on positions that perform key functions, such as processing voted ballots or maintaining voter records.
  - B. In accordance with the City's procurement policies, the Department continues to purchase materials and supplies, and procure services required for the upcoming election.
- II. **The Department has been engaged in planning and executing the many processes required to conduct the November 3 election while protecting the health and safety of employees, voters, and the general public.**
  - A. The Department has nearly completed the layout and proofing of all precinct-specific and ballot-typed versions of the Official Ballot. The November 3 ballot will consist of four cards per voter in supervisorial districts 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11; those voters residing in supervisorial districts 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 will receive three-card ballots. The Department has also finalized a quadrilingual single-card ballot with only the Board of Education contest that will be used to facilitate voting for non-citizen voters. In addition to paper ballots, the Department has been working on producing touchscreen and audio versions of the ballot for voters using the accessible ballot-marking devices, and a screen readable version for voters using the accessible vote-by-mail system.
    - i. The Department will transmit ballots to voters serving in the military or residing overseas no later than September 21 via the voters' selected method of delivery (email, postal mail, or fax).
  - B. The Department has secured 574 facilities to serve as polling places on Election Day. The Department expects to finish poll locating by September 16, in time for transmitting a voter extract to the Voter Information Pamphlet printing vendor in time for including polling place information specific to each recipient on the back cover of the Voter Information Pamphlet.

- i. The Department will inform any voter affected by last minute polling place cancellation and relocation via a mailed "Notice of Polling Place Change" and by posting "Polling Place Change Signs" at cancelled sites.
- C. The Department has recruited over 3,000 poll workers to assist voters at the polls, with bilingual volunteers still needed. To assist members of the public in evaluating the decision to serve as poll workers, the Department revised its poll worker application to include a link to the CDC website with information regarding vulnerable populations who are considered at high risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. To mitigate exposure during the hiring process, the Department is facilitating a remote sign-up process for individuals interested in serving as poll workers.
- D. The Department has nearly completed a poll worker online training course that will be launched on October 1 and will substitute in-person training classes. To supplement equipment operating instructions in the online course, the Department will offer optional small group in-person training labs where poll workers will have the opportunity to practice working with the voting equipment. The Department will also establish weekly conference calls with Department trainers during which poll workers will be able call in with any questions. As in previous elections, the Department will produce and post online a Poll Worker Training Manual; regular print or large print versions will be available per request.
  - i. Many procedures included in the Poll Worker Training Manual and the online training course have undergone changes to reflect new health and safety protocols the Department has adopted at all polling places.
- E. The Department has been working on compiling the Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot (VIP). The Department has introduced several new VIP pages that highlight election changes, including the mailing of ballots to all registered voters, expanded access to the accessible vote-by-mail system, and safe in-person voting options. The VIP will also feature vote by mail tips, links to online self-help voter tools, and a "Quick Guide to the November 3, 2020, Election."
- F. The Department has been engaged in planning and preparing for many logistical, weather, health, and security-related concerns presented by the relocation of the City Hall Voting Center to an outdoor area in front of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. In collaboration with the Office of the City Administrator, the Department has been coordinating the street closures, fire inspections, security and custodial services, installation of Plexiglass partitions, fire extinguishers and first aid kits. The Department has also been engaged in planning deployment of voting equipment and supplies, including voter processing technology and materials, tents, lighting, voting booths, and ballot collection boxes, necessary to set up and maintain the Voting Center in its new outdoor location.
  - i. The Voting Center will be divided into a ballot-issuing area, located on the sidewalk adjacent to the Civic Center Plaza on Grove Street between Polk and Larkin Streets, and a ballot-marking area, located in the section of Grove Street between Polk and Larkin Streets. In total, the outdoor Voting Center will measure approximately 17,200 square feet and will extend from the Grove Street in front of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium on the south side of Civic Center plaza on the north side and will be bounded by Polk Street on the west side and Larkin Street on the east side.
- G. The Department has secured three additional facilities to serve as vote-by-mail ballot drop off stations, which will be open beginning October 31 and through November 3. These facilities include the Bayview/Linda Brooks-Burton Library in (5074 3rd Street), Chase Center (1655 3rd Street), and Excelsior Branch Library (4400 Mission Street). Any voter may return a vote-by-mail ballot to one of these sites on or before Election Day.

- H. The Department has been preparing to commence Logic and Accuracy testing of the voting equipment on Friday, September 18 and has posted a detailed schedule, including testing dates and locations, on [sfelections.org/observe](https://sfelections.org/observe).

**III. The Department continues to process voter forms and registration affidavits, and perform voter file maintenance activities, in preparation for sending vote-by-mail ballots to all active voters.**

- A. The Department continues to stay current with all voter file maintenance activities, including the processing of voter forms and registration affidavits, change of address notifications, and requests submitted through the Department's Voter Portal.
- B. On September 9, the Department transmitted a voter extract, containing approximately 510,000 active voter records, to its ballot printing and assembly vendor, to commence the preparation of official vote-by-mail ballot packets. The Department will continue to transmit supplemental voter extracts to the vendor in September and October, containing voter records of new registrants and those who have updated their registration information after the first voter extract.
- C. To supplement ongoing outreach efforts to notify residents who submit registration affidavits that are missing required information, such as date of birth signature, about remedial actions that the registrant can take to complete the registration process, the Department re-contacted approximately 3,000 voters who submitted incomplete affidavits in the past year who have not taken action to complete the registration process.

**IV. The Department continues to provide information to City voters and potential registrants about options for safely participating in the upcoming election.**

- A. In August, the Department mailed a quadrilingual voting options notice to 376,482 households in San Francisco, informing City residents of the three ways to vote in the upcoming election (by mail, at the City Hall Voting Center, or at a polling place). This notice provided essential information about each voting method, encouraged registered voters to double-check information in their voter records, advised eligible residents to register to vote, and described some of the new health and safety protocols that will be in place at all in-person voting sites. The Department also sent digital versions of the notice to nearly 250,000 voters who provided email addresses as part of their registration records.
  - i. In September, shortly before vote-by-mail ballot packets are mailed out, the Department will send a second notice to every household. This second notice will focus on how to vote by mail, including reminding voters to sign their ballot envelopes, encouraging voters to return their voted ballots as early as possible, and describing available return options (postal mail, in person drop-off, and authorized third party return).
- B. The Department created two sets of educational videos, both of which are available in English, Cantonese, Filipino, and Spanish. The first video focuses on general election topics such as registration qualifications, how and when to register, and voting options. The second video covers ranked-choice voting (RCV), including how to mark an RCV contest, how RCV contests are counted, and how voters can practice marking an RCV contest. Both videos have been posted on the Department's website and distributed to community partners.
- C. The Department developed a number of new print materials for distribution to City residents. These include multilingual flyers, posters, and door hangers, all of which highlight essential information about voting options and key election dates. Commencing in August, these materials have been distributed to City residents and merchants for display in their storefronts, at in person outreach events, and tabling opportunities in various City neighborhoods.

- D. The Department updated its website to make it easier for voters to access key election information and voter tools.
- i. The Department debuted My Election Navigator, a digital self-help tool that guides voters through the process of thinking through and creating a voting plan for the upcoming election. This tool can be accessed from the Department's homepage or by visiting [sfelections.org/navigator](https://sfelections.org/navigator).
  - ii. The Department is in the final stages of developing a new interactive Voting Sites Wait Time Tool that will allow voters to view last reported wait times at the Voting Center and at polling places across the City.
- E. In June, the Department issued a Request for Proposals (RFP), seeking to identify local non-profit partners who could communicate with the City's vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations about how members of such populations can safely participate in the November 3 election. In July, the RFP selection panel identified eight outreach partner grantees: 1) A. Philip Randolph Institute of San Francisco, 2) Chinatown Community Development Center, 3) Chinese Newcomers Service Center, 4) Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, 5) Filipino-American Development Foundation, 6) San Francisco Rising, 7) San Francisco Shanghai Association, and 8) San Francisco Study Center. Subsequently, in August, the Department conducted training and supplied grantees with a variety of ready-to-use, multilingual, multi-format, outreach materials, including posters, brochures, digital presentations, and videos on topics such as voter registration and voting options, ranked-choice voting, poll worker recruitment, and key dates and deadlines. Grantees commenced their outreach activities on August 24 and will continue to deliver November 3 messaging to City residents through Election Day, providing reports on their efforts on a regular basis.

**V. The Department has been involved in assisting the City with future elections planning.**

- A. In July, the Department issued a Request for Information (RFI), seeking to identify firms that may be qualified and interested in providing services to support the expected redrawing of district boundaries associated with the offices for the Board of Supervisors in the City and County of San Francisco. Subsequently, the Department received five responses from interested firms and is now preparing a Request for Proposals to be issued this year with the goal of formally selecting the contractor.
- B. The Department has begun assessing the potential implementation of the Voter's Choice Act in San Francisco, as required by [Ordinance No. 200400](#) enacted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors earlier this year. Among other things, the ordinance directs the Department to submit a written report to the Board of Supervisors and the Elections Commission by February 28, 2021, regarding the potential implementation of the Voter's Choice Act in San Francisco for future elections held in 2021 and later. The report must address the following topics: (1) voter outreach, education, and services; (2) staffing and staff training; (3) voting equipment and capacity; (4) ballot collection and processing; and (5) location and operation of potential vote centers.