



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

John Arntz, Director

Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: July 16, 2021
RE: Director's Report: July 21, 2021, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on June 16, 2021.

I. The Department has been engaged in planning and executing the many processes required to conduct the September 14 recall election.

- A. On July 1, 2021, the Lieutenant Governor issued a proclamation setting the date of the recall election as September 14, 2021. The Department has been implementing changes to logistical timelines required to properly administer the upcoming election since June 16, following notification of the anticipated recall date.
- B. The Department worked with Department of Human Resources (DHR) personnel responsible for fingerprinting and other onboarding processes to establish new recruitment and onboarding timelines for over 200 seasonal employees. From late June through the first week of July, the Department worked with DHR personnel to post job announcements for all critical elections jobs, including those for official election materials translators, bilingual voter outreach personnel, poll worker staffing coordinators, and poll locators.
 - i. In advertising job announcements, the Department strives to reach a broad pool of job seekers by utilizing various methods, including via social media, the City's official employment page, private recruitment sites, and correspondence with local community partners. To supplement its recruitment efforts, the Department developed a new "*Careers at the San Francisco Department of Elections*" video. This video features several Department employees sharing their testimonials about working in the Department and highlights the Department's focus on accessibility, language access, and equitable public service, as well as its commitment to building an inclusive workplace in which employees can thrive and succeed. The video is included in job announcements and posted at: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities>.
- C. To secure both polling places and poll workers, the Department contacted all former polling place hosts and poll workers in order to gauge their availability for the recall election. Simultaneously, to locate as many voting sites as possible before the Voter Information Pamphlet is printed (this pamphlet provides each recipient's assigned polling place), the Department significantly expanded its poll locating teams. As of the date of this report, nearly 1,200 poll workers and 460 polling places hosts have confirmed their availability.
- D. To initiate its recall election voter outreach program, the Department has developed and will mail a multilingual notice to approximately 380,000 San Francisco households during the week of July 19. This notice will include an explanation of the recall election, key dates such as the registration deadline, the first day to vote and the last day to vote, brief descriptions of in-person and mail voting options, and links to the Department's online self-help tools.
- E. The Department is developing the official ballot. On July 12, following receipt of information from the Secretary of State (SOS), the Department transmitted the recall ballot's official title, ballot instructions, and contest language, along with legally required translations of those sections to the voting system vendor who assists with formatting the ballot.

The Department will transmit candidate names and ballot designations shortly after they are received from the SOS following the close of the nomination period on July 16. There will be approximately ten days between receipt of candidate information from the SOS and the deadline to mail vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots to voters serving in the military and living overseas on July 31. Factoring in the time needed to complete internal testing, the Department will need to finalize the paper ballot within four days of receipt of information from the SOS. To accommodate this truncated schedule and to meet both internal operational deadlines as well as statutory deadlines, the Department has expanded its ballot production team and extended staff work hours to include evenings and weekends.

- F. The Department's VBM program for the recall election is informed by two bills passed since the last election, Senate Bill (SB) 29 and SB 152. As a result, the Department will: 1) mail VBM packets to all locally registered voters; 2) facilitate universal access to the Accessible VBM system (instead of limiting it to voters with disabilities, in the military, or living overseas), 3) begin processing VBM ballots 29 days before Election Day (instead of 15 business days), and 4) accept timely postmarked VBM ballots received up to seven days after Election Day (rather than three days).

In preparation for mailing VBM packets, the Department updated the designs of both its inner and outer ballot envelopes, contracted with its printing vendor to produce nearly 1.2 million ballot envelopes, collaborated with the United States Postal Service to ensure that these envelopes would meet current guidelines for official election mail, and scheduled voter data extract transmissions to the VBM ballot assembly vendor. With this work complete, the Department will be ready to work with its ballot assembly vendor to mail VBM packets to approximately 10,000 military and overseas voters on July 31 and approximately 500,000 local voters on August 16.

- G. The Department has been collaborating with the Sheriff's Department Prisoner Legal Services Unit (PLS) to facilitate an Incarcerated-Person Voting (IPV) Program for the upcoming election. Through this program, the Department provides election services, such as tailored outreach and materials, registration forms, and ballot delivery, to those in county jail or otherwise involved in the justice system who are eligible to participate in the election.

- H. The Department has been planning for early voting activities to commence on August 16. Since capacity limits on businesses, gatherings, and activities have been removed, the Voting Center will be set up in City Hall to facilitate in-person services during a 29-day early voting period.

- I. The Department has been revising its poll worker training curricula, incorporating latest health and safety protocols into polling place processes and updating contents to reflect recall election specific procedures. The Department will again offer poll worker training in both online and in-person formats, and organize in-person voting equipment labs.

- J. The Department is developing the Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot (VIP). Although state law would permit the Department to mail a VIP for the recall election as late as ten days before Election Day, the Department has been working toward a goal of mailing the VIP around August 16, when voters start receiving their VBM packets.

- i. On July 16, the Department sent an email to nearly 215,000 voters with emails on file to inform them about the opportunity to opt out of hard copy VIP mailing and receive an email link to digital copy instead.

II. In accordance with state law, the Department has been facilitating candidate filings for the recall election and continues to provide information to the general public, voters, and campaigns.

- A. Between July 1 and July 6, the Department processed petitions from gubernatorial replacement candidates to secure signatures in lieu of all or part of their filing fees.
- B. Commencing on July 9 and through July 16, the Department has been facilitating the candidate nomination period, during which replacement candidates can file declarations of candidacy and ballot designation worksheets. As of July 14, there are 93 candidates listed in the unofficial candidate filing status report. On July 21, the SOS will provide a

- certified list of the names, ballot designations, and party preferences of gubernatorial replacement candidates, arranged for appearance on the recall ballot according to the randomized alphabet drawing held two days prior.
- C. Up until July 16, Governor Newsom may file a statement and political parties can submit official replacement candidate endorsements for inclusion in the local VIP.
 - D. Between July 19 and August 31, the Department will facilitate the filing period for candidates seeking to run as write-in candidates in the recall election.
 - E. The Department contacted approximately 300 community-based organizations sharing the Department's plans for conducting the recall election, encouraging opportunities for collaborative outreach work, and inviting to propose sites to serve as ballot drop-off stations in City neighborhoods in the last four days of the voting period.
 - F. The Department has finalized its Voter Outreach and Education Plan (VOEP) for the recall election. The Department's main outreach objectives are to inform City residents about: a) vote-by-mail and in-person voting options, and b) how to mark the recall contest. Outreach materials will also provide details such as when and how to register to vote, which language and accessible voting resources are available and how to access the accessible VBM system, and how voters in certain circumstances, such as those experiencing homelessness or involved in the criminal justice system, can participate in the election. The Department plans to execute as many outreach strategies as practical over the course of the next six to eight weeks. These include both direct methods such as distribution of print and digital materials, official mail notifications, placement of newspaper ads, broadcasting of public service announcements on television and radio stations, utilization of the Department's website and social media channels, and indirect methods such as collaboration with some of the nonprofit organizations who are best poised to assist in disseminating election information to vulnerable populations. The VOEP can be viewed at: https://sfelections.sfgov.org/sites/default/files/Documents/VoterEducation/2021/S21_VOEP_202107.pdf
 - G. The Department continues the many activities associated with the maintenance of the voter roll. These include the processing of registration affidavits received by mail, dropped off in person, or submitted online; updating voter records based on notification received through official sources, such as the USPS, Department of Motor Vehicles, and the state Department of Public Health; and other ongoing activities that ensure the continual accuracy of the voter roll in accordance with relevant laws. The Department continues to provide outreach, including mailing of voter notification cards and address confirmation postcards, to voters who register or update their information on file.

III. In compliance with Governor's Executive Order No. N-09-21, which implements new State Division of Occupational Safety and Health rules effective June 17, 2021, the Department has revised its health and safety protocols for onsite employees.

- A. Most Department full-time employees have returned to onsite work. In the upcoming weeks, the Department will recruit and onboard nearly 100 temporary employees to assist its full-time staff in conducting the recall election, all of whom will also be working onsite.
- B. In light of new policies on masking and vaccination issued by the City's Department of Human Resources, the Department revised its New Employee Orientation program, incorporating such policies into curricula, and distributed copies of these policies to all of its employees.
- C. Given that most physical distancing requirements have been lifted, the Department has returned its workspace to its pre-pandemic layouts and will no longer conduct poll worker recruitment, ballot distribution, and ballot processing activities from different office areas/facilities.