



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: February 10, 2023
RE: Director's Report: February 15, 2023, 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 January 18, 2023.

I. The Department prepared its draft FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 budget proposals.

- A. On January 27, 2023, the Department submitted its FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 draft budget proposals to the Budget and Oversight of Public Elections Committee (BOPEC), with all budget forms required by the Mayor's Office of Public Policy and Finance and the Controller's Office and a memorandum, both of which are attached to this memorandum, and describe the citywide budget process, priorities and fiscal outlook, and provides an overview of the budget proposals as well as information requested by the Commission. These proposals were reviewed at the BOPEC meeting on January 31.
- B. Following BOPEC's review of the budget proposals, the Department made the following changes: 1) modified the amount of outreach grant funding in each fiscal year from \$300,000 to \$400,000, 2) included \$150,000 and \$300,000 in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25, respectively, to secure additional radio, TV, print, and social media advertising, 3) included \$4,000 for one-time purchase of Chromebooks for each member of the Commission and Commission Secretary, and 4) budgeted additional \$12,600 in each fiscal year in the IDS account with the Department of Children, Youth & Their Families to provide work based learning opportunities for 11th and 12th graders through the San Francisco YouthWorks program.
 - i. The Department intends to seek funding for the San Francisco Arts Commission to administer a grant, in partnership with the Department, to redesign San Francisco's "I Voted" sticker, and has consulted with the City Attorney's Office on the steps involved.
- C. The Department will enter the final drafts of its FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 budget proposals into the City's Budget Formulation and Management System and submit the necessary budget forms to the Mayor's Office and the Controller's Office no later than the Charter-mandated deadline of February 21, 2023.
- D. The Elections Commission's budget is contained within the Department budget under a separate account (see section F, pages 14-15 of the memo) -- should the Commission need to submit any other proposed changes to its budget, it must submit those changes, along with justification for each proposed change, to the Director by February 17, 2023.

II. The Department is in the process of transitioning its website to the *sf.gov* domain.

- A. The Department continues to attend meetings with the City's Digital Services staff, take required trainings, and review relevant materials to prepare for transitioning its current website to the new *sf.gov* domain. Department staff have also completed two of the seven phases required by Digital Services for this transition. During these two phases, the Department collaborated with Digital Services staff to establish the project scope, roles, and timelines, conducted an evaluation of user needs and a review of priority pages, and discussed content development and translation strategy.
- B. Next week, Department staff will embark on the third phase, which will consist of writing new content and building landing pages, collaborating closely with Digital Services and focusing on the most often visited pages of the website.
- C. The Department expects to launch the first elements of its new *sf.gov* website in May 2023, and then to finalize the transition and archive the current *sfelections.org* sometime in the summer of 2023.
- D. As a parallel project, the Department will refresh certain pages of its website that will continue to be hosted internally on the Department's servers, including election results pages and the eData tool, which allows the public to view data such as voter registration, ballot statistics, operations (e.g., polling place and poll worker recruitment), and to download various datasets in text and excel formats. In undertaking this project this year, the Department intends to make these pages of the website more engaging and comprehensive.

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

- A. The Department's outreach team continues to participate in neighborhood events, host resource tables, and distribute outreach materials to provide information about voter registration options. Most recently, Department staff have hosted resource tables at the San Francisco Pretrial Diversion Project, which serves justice-involved individuals who are referred to its services rather than being subjected to money bail, pretrial incarceration, and/or prosecution; the Richmond Neighborhood Food Pantry, which provides over 1,000 Richmond District residents with free produce and groceries; the Southeast Asian Community Center Food Pantry, which provides food to low-income immigrants living in the Tenderloin; the City Hope Café, which provides food and support for Tenderloin District homeless and housing insecure individuals; the DAS Benefits and Resources Hub, a Service Center for older adults and people with disabilities; the Dream Keeper Initiative conference, organized by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission; the Chinese New Year Festival; and the Job Fair at the Tenderloin Recreation Center.
- B. The Department has begun drafting a new Request for Proposals (RFP) with the goal of partnering in FY 2022-23 with local nonprofits to supplement outreach efforts to actively and formerly justice-involved individuals. Through this RFP, the Department intends to identify partners well-positioned to assist in 1) disseminating information about the conditions under which justice-involved people can register to vote and vote (e.g., those on parole) and the voter registration process after completing a felony sentence, and 2) facilitating voter registration for eligible justice-involved individuals. To administer this RFP, the Department intends to utilize the approximately \$100,000 remaining in its grant fund account following the paying of final invoices for the 15 grants awarded last year.
- C. The Department has contacted the Department of the Environment to inquire about their interest in collaborating on this year's *It's fast! It's free! Request a digital VIP and save a tree!* campaign. The Department is also working on a new webpage and outreach materials to support this campaign and help get the message out to community partners and local voters. Through this program, the Department intends to increase the number of people who receive a digital copy of the Voter Information Pamphlet and to reduce printing and mailing costs for the 2024 election cycle.

IV. The Department continues to work on numerous short, mid, and long-term administrative projects.

- A. The Department has entered the last approval stages necessary to exercise a contract extension with Dominion Voting Systems, which will allow local voters to continue using the same system for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary and the November 5, 2024 Consolidated General elections. Shortly after certifying the March Primary in the spring of 2024, the Department plans to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure the City's next voting system.
- B. In accordance with Ordinance No. 188-19 (passed by the Board of Supervisors in 2019), the Department must submit its annual Racial Equity Progress Report to the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) annually, using a template provided by the ORE. Last week, the ORE indicated that the deadline to submit annual progress reports will be extended to Monday, May 8, 2023 and that it intends to soon distribute a template for this year's progress reports.
 - i. The Department will provide a copy of the template to the Commission as soon as it becomes available. Should the Commission choose to provide an update on their last year's work, it must submit that update to the Director by Thursday, May 4, 2023 for inclusion with the Department's submission.
- C. The Department has begun drafting a timeline for the mailing of voter notices in the March 2024 Presidential Primary Election cycle, which will allow any returned notices to be processed in the Election Information Management System before ballot mailing commences. In addition to various notices the Department sends as part of its Voter Notification Program, for the presidential primary election the Department will also send notices to registrants who left party preference field blank on their registration forms or provided an unqualified party. These notices will explain the effect a voter's party preference, or lack thereof, will have on the type of ballot that voter receives in a primary election and encourage voters to update their registrations. Then, after each qualified party announces whether they will allow No Party Preference (NPP) voters to "crossover" vote for their presidential candidates, the Department will send notices to the approximately 134,000 local NPP voters explaining their options and how to request a crossover ballot.
- D. The Department has recently received notice that a vacancy occurred on the City's Retirement Board on February 8, 2023, which means the Department will need to conduct an election to fill the vacancy within 120 days of that date. The Department is thus now waiting for the Retirement Board to issue the election schedule, including a timeline of activities (i.e., filing period, mailing of ballots, canvassing duties, etc.) necessary to conduct the vacancy election.
- E. The Department continues to carry out voter file maintenance, including the processing of online and paper affidavits of registration and the sending of notices on a weekly basis to voters who have recently registered or re-registered.
- F. The Department continues to provide routine services to members of the public who visit the Department's office in-person as well as those who contact the Department via email or phone.

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

- A. *Upcoming or outstanding Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from the Department (including the dollar amount or range).* The Department will issue a Request for Proposals to partner with local nonprofits to provide outreach to actively and formerly justice-involved individuals this spring. The approximate total distribution amount is \$100,000 for all grantees combined, not to exceed \$50,000 per grantee.
- B. *Sole-source contracts for which the Department has requested approval from the Office of Contract Administration (OCA) (including the dollar amount).* There are no new items to report under this section.

- C. *Proposed projects, local legislation, or proposed positions on state legislation within San Francisco government that are related to elections and that have come to the Director's attention, especially those related to topics the Commission has adopted a policy position on, like open-source voting and internet voting. There are no new items to report under this section.*