



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: November 10, 2023
RE: Director's Report: November 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 October 18, 2023.

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

- A. This month, the Department's Outreach Team co-hosted a wide array of local community events, providing election resource tables and distributing official materials about San Francisco's current voting and registration options. Events included Sunday Streets, Excelsior, offering entertainment activities and resources to city residents; Voting Workshop for SFUSD Access Students, offering resources to students with disabilities; Scaregrove at Stern Grove and Thrill-O-Ween at Chase Center, Halloween celebrations for people of all ages; 36th Annual Convention, National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Voter Empowerment Workshop, celebrating community's collective power, the 4th Annual D10 Pride Ride, celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month; Food Pantry at Ship Shape Community Center, providing meals and services to Treasure Island residents; several United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Naturalization Ceremonies; and GLIDE Memorial Church, Free Meals Program.
- B. The Department concluded its "I Voted!" Sticker Design contest and announced the winning designs.
 - i. During the public selection period, the Department received nearly 10,000 nominations for San Francisco's next "I Voted!" sticker. On October 26, the Department held a ceremony to announce the winning sticker design, as well as the 2nd and 3rd place winners.
 - ii. The first-place design was created by local artist Hollis Callas and is now featured on the Department's home page at sf.gov/elections. The design will also be featured in March outreach materials and on the cover of the Voter Information Pamphlet, included in vote-by-mail ballot packets, and provided to in-person voters.
- C. On October 25, the Department issued its *2024 Equitable Voter Participation Outreach: Request for Proposals (RFP)* with the goal of maximizing outreach to a) the young adult (18 - 29) population, b) people with disabilities, c) the AAPI, BIPOC, and Latinx communities, d) limited-English speaking communities, and e) low-income communities.
 - i. The three main purposes of the grant program are to: 1) disseminate information about the March primary to members of focus populations, 2) increase local voter registration rates in at least one of these populations, and 3) promote civic engagement by recruiting San Franciscans to serve as poll workers.
 - ii. The approximate total distribution amount will be \$100,000 for all grantees combined, not to exceed \$20,000 per grantee. In addition to posting the RFP on [the City's open bidding website](#), the Department also sent this RFP to nearly 200 outreach contacts with grant proposals due Friday, November 10, by 5 p.m.

iii. The Department will identify organizations selected under the RFP on November 14 and will begin contract negotiations shortly after. Following contract execution, the Department will train chosen grantees, reviewing all of the outreach messages and materials they will be using over the course of the grant. Grantees will be expected to begin their outreach activities on January 4 and continue through March 5, 2024.

D. The Department notified voters registered with no party preference (NPP) regarding their March ballot options.

i. On October 23, the California Secretary of State's (SOS) office notified county officials that the Green, Peace and Freedom, and Republican political parties will conduct "closed" March presidential primaries, meaning only voters registered with a preference for those parties may participate in those primaries. The SOS also notified county officials that the American Independent, Democratic, and Libertarian political parties will hold "modified closed" March presidential primaries, meaning that they will allow NPP voters to participate in those primaries as well.

ii. This week, the Department sent a notice to approximately 130,000 NPP voters, explaining how such voters can request a ballot with the American Independent, Democratic, or Libertarian presidential primary contest. The notice also explained how any voter can re-register with a qualified political party preference to get a ballot with the Green, Peace and Freedom, or Republican presidential primary contest - or any central county committee contest.

iii. To request a ballot, recipient NPP voters can opt to complete and return the attached postage-paid postcard, log into sfelections.org/voterportal, or call the Department. The Department has also implemented a new texting service—authorized under Assembly Bill 292 that goes into effect in 2024—NPP voters can use to submit their ballot requests. The Department intends to process every NPP ballot request within three days of receipt and will regularly update the data in its Voter Portal so that voters can confirm that their ballot request has been received and processed.

E. In the months leading up to the March primary, the Department will deploy a myriad of outreach strategies, including the distribution of print and digital media, the organization of in-person presentations across San Francisco, and advertisement on local radio and television stations, and social media. The Department will also work with its many outreach partners to advise local voters about primary rules and explain how party preference affects ballot contests.

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

A. The Department has been hiring and onboarding temporary employees to assist its full-time employees in completing various election tasks. More specifically, over the next month, the Department will hire nearly 80 employees to assist with maintenance of voter records, translation of materials, outreach, poll worker recruitment, and ballot processing.

B. The Department continues to purchase a variety of necessary materials and supplies, and to procure essential vendor services in support of the upcoming election's programs and processes.

C. The Department launched a new website page and online voter tool for the March primary election.

i. The March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Readiness Toolkit, at sfelections.org/primary, is conveniently linked to the Department's homepage. It serves as a launching point for voters seeking information about the upcoming election and allows NPP voters to quickly submit party-specific ballot requests.

- ii. The new Toolkit also makes it easy for local voters to check their registration information, visit the Secretary of State's online voter registration application, read the online Voter Information Pamphlet (once available), review a page with Frequently Asked Questions about the March 2024 election and/or a page explaining ways to vote, and access the new Vote Ready tool (which can also be accessed directly via sfelections.org/voteready).
 - iii. Vote Ready Tool users answer three quick questions to get a customized voting plan: 1) Are you registered to vote in San Francisco? 2) Which party preference did you select when registering to vote? and 3) How are you planning to vote in this election? If the tool user is not sure they are registered to vote in San Francisco, or does not remember their party preference, the tool explains how to check and/or register as necessary. If the tool user is not sure how they will vote (by mail or in person), the tool will describe current voting options.
 - iv. If the tool user affirms they are registered to vote in San Francisco, knows their party preference, and knows how they plan to vote in the primary, the tool will generate one of 32 voting plans. Each plan explains what contests will be on the voter's ballot and how they can get a ballot with different contests as well as how and when to vote, given their method preferences. For example, if a Green Party voter plans to vote in person, their plan will explain what contest will be in their ballot and provide polling place hours and locations.
 - v. All plans explain how to re-register to get a different ballot (and, for NPP voters, how to request a party-specific ballot). All plans also encourage the user to read the Voter Information Pamphlet to research candidates and measures on the ballot and to consider opting out of paper version of the Pamphlet. To increase awareness of both voter registration and participation in the upcoming election, all plans also invite the user to encourage their friends and family members to register to vote and to cast their ballot.
- D. The Department has been preparing for the Ballot Simplification Committee (BSC) meetings. These meetings are scheduled to begin on Monday, November 27. During these public meetings, the Committee will prepare a fair and impartial summary of each local ballot measure for publication in the March Voter Information Pamphlet.
- E. The Department continues to facilitate candidate filings for the March 5 election. The nomination period for state and federal offices, as well as for Superior Court Judges, will run from November 13 to December 8. December 8 will also mark the end of the nomination period for county central committee candidates. A list of nearly 120 candidates who have filed so far is available at sf.gov/reports/march-2024/candidates-march-5-2024-presidential-primary-election.
- F. The Department is also facilitating the filing of Declarations of Candidacy for the November 2024 general election. A list of approximately 60 candidates who have filed so far is available at sf.gov/reports/november-2024/candidates-november-5-2024-consolidated-general-election.
- G. The Department has begun work on its March 5 Election Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP), with a focus on the content to be included in the common pages. In addition to covering regular topics such as voting options, key election dates, contests on the ballot, and the availability of translated and accessible voting resources, the March 5 VIP will also explain how registered party preference will impact presidential and county central committee contests on voters' ballots.

- i. The element of party preference adds another layer of complexity to VIP production, assembly, and mailing processes as the Department will need to produce six party-specific and one NPP version of every VIP type, which already vary according to recipient voter ballot type, language preference, and use type (e.g., mailed VIPs, VIPs distributed to polling places). The combinations of all these elements will necessitate the Department to produce nearly 90 VIP versions for the March election.
- H. The Department has been working on March ballot templates and production timelines, with most work scheduled to be completed in December. These tasks include: organizing the matrix of jurisdictional ballot types, processing ballot information from the Secretary of State for state measures and state and federal candidates, formatting the official ballot, proofing ballot content and layout, and providing final ballot templates to printing vendors. In early January, the Department will focus on producing audio, touchscreen, and downloadable ballot formats. All ballot formats must be produced by January 20, 2024 to meet the statutory deadline of transmitting ballots to voters serving in the military or living overseas.
- I. The Department has sent letters inviting former polling place hosts to provide their facilities in the March 5 election. For the March election, the Department will organize 501 polling places, all of which will provide both in-person voting and ballot drop-off services. Since the Department anticipates having to locate approximately 60-80 new facilities to serve as polling places, its team of poll locators has already begun their field work.
- J. As instructed by the Mayor's Budget Office, the Department has recently submitted its proposed mid-year reductions totaling \$169,450. To identify these reductions, the Department reviewed its printing and translation needs for the current fiscal year and identified areas where cuts could be made without any major adverse impacts to services or programs.

III. 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 October 1 – October 31, the Department processed affidavits for 2,544 new registrants, residing in the following supervisory districts: Supervisorial District (SD) 1 – 194, SD 2 – 303, SD 4 – 189, SD 5 – 268, SD 6 – 249, SD 7 – 219, SD 8 – 276, SD 9 – 219, SD 10 – 210, SD 11 – 193.
- B. Between October 1 – October 31, the Department conducted 27 live outreach events; these collectively had approximately 5,170 people in attendance. Following are the numbers of outreach events conducted in each supervisory district: SD 3 – 3, SD 4 – 1, SD 5 – 4, SD 6 – 7, SD 8 – 2, SD 9 – 5, SD 10 – 2, SD 11 – 1. Outreach tactics employed were consistent throughout all districts, as described in section I of this Report.