



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: September 12, 2025
RE: Director's Report: September 17, 2025, 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 August 20, 2025.

I. The Department entered the last week of the voting period for the September 16 Recall Election.

- A. The Department has been facilitating voting in the Recall Election through both in-person options and the vote-by-mail (VBM) program. Voters may choose to cast their ballots in person at the Department's office in City Hall or return their ballots through the mail or official drop-off box.
- B. To date, the Department has received and processed approximately 14,000 returned VBM ballot packets.
 - 1. All ballot processing takes place in public areas that are open to observers and livestreamed at sfelections.gov/observe.
 - 2. When processing vote-by-mail ballots, Department personnel follow 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).
 - 3. To ensure transparency in election processes, the Department publishes daily ballot processing statistics, including the number of ballots issued, returned, accepted, awaiting voter action, and challenged. These updates, along with additional data sets, are available through the Department's Election Data (EData) tool at sfelections.gov/edata
- C. On Election Day, the Department will operate 20 polling places within District 4. Each site will provide in-person voting with an accessible ballot-marking device, same-day voter registration, and ballot drop-off services. To assist voters, the Department has recruited and assigned poll workers at each site to provide language assistance, answer questions, and guide voters through the voting process.
- D. The Department will issue its first preliminary results report at approximately 8:45 p.m. on Election Night. This initial report will include vote-by-mail ballots received and processed prior to Election Day.
 - 1. Following this release, the Department intends to publish a second—and final—Election Night update before 10:00 p.m., once all vote totals from the 20 polling places have been received and uploaded.
- E. On Wednesday, September 17, the Department will release the number of ballots remaining to be counted. These ballots include vote-by-mail ballots returned on or after Election Day through the mail, drop-off boxes, and polling places, as well as provisional ballots cast on Election Day.

F. On September 17, the Department will commence the Official Canvass. Among the legally mandated tasks that will occur later in the Canvass process is the manual tally of 1% of ballots cast at polling places, as well as 1% of vote-by-mail and provisional ballots, all selected at random. This manual tally serves to confirm that San Francisco's voting equipment has accurately tabulated ballots and reported results. The process is open to public observation, both in person and via livestream at sfelections.gov/observe.

1. On Wednesday, September 24, at 9 a.m., the Department will randomly select 1% of the ballots cast in the September 16 election for the manual tally and will begin tallying those ballots the same day.
2. The Department intends to certify the results of the election by September 26.

II. The Department is preparing for the November 4 Statewide Special Election.

- A. The Statewide Special Election was called on August 21, 2025, when Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Senate Bill No. 280](#), which set the election date and procedures. At this election, voters will decide on Proposition 50, a legislatively referred constitutional amendment (ACA 8, Chapter 97, Statutes of 2025 – Rivas) concerning congressional redistricting.
- B. With less than two and a half months to prepare, the Department reallocated resources, adjusted schedules, and prioritized tasks to meet deadlines for both the September 16 and November 4 elections.
 1. The Department created a polling place consolidation map in compliance with requirements of the California Elections Code while ensuring voter access, and began recruiting sites and poll workers immediately by sending confirmation letters in late August to secure commitments.
 2. The Department expedited ballot design and production, drafting, proofing, and finalizing the quadrilingual single-card ballot in time to meet the federally mandated September 20 ballot distribution deadline for military and overseas voters.
 3. The Department also accelerated production of the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP). To avoid duplicating content included in the statewide Voter Information Guide, the local VIP focuses on San Francisco-specific information, including voting options and resources. To reduce costs and production timelines, the VIP is being produced in a foldable 8.5 x 14 format and mailed with each voter's ballot in a single envelope.
 4. The Department developed outreach messaging to raise awareness of the November 4 election that is clear, motivating, and accessible, while maintaining impartiality and neutrality. The theme—"Choose California's Direction. Vote in the November 4 Statewide Special Election"—emphasizes that the decisions made in this election will shape the state's future. Building on this message, the Department's outreach strategy is designed to ensure every eligible voter has the information and support needed to participate. Outreach will include multilingual presentations, voter registration pop-up events, and participation in community events, supported by partnerships with local organizations and the monthly Outreach Community Newsletter.
 5. The Department updated its digital tools, including the Voter Portal and the Voting Site Wait Times Lookup Tool, and created a dedicated webpage (<https://www.sf.gov/november-4-2025-statewide-special-election>) to provide voters with information and resources for the November 4 election

- C. As required by the San Francisco Charter §13.103.5, the Department developed an Election Plan for the November 4 election (see Attachment 1).

- 1. The Plan outlines how the Department will conduct the election in a free, fair, and functional manner, and details several modifications to existing practices and procedures as well as new practices for this election.

III. The Department continues outreach for the September 16 Recall Election and the November 4 Statewide Special Election, promoting voter registration and election services.

- A. The Department's outreach team continues to engage vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities, including individuals with disabilities, language-diverse populations, justice-involved residents, people experiencing housing insecurity, and youth.

- 1. In August, staff partnered with several local community-based organizations, including Mo'MAGIC, B'MAGIC, the GLBT Historical Society, and the Latino Task Force, to provide registration assistance and share information on upcoming elections, accessible resources, and youth civic engagement opportunities. Staff also hosted voter resource tables at the Pistahan and Nihonmachi Street Festivals and the EDD Job Fair, sharing information on language and accessible services and poll worker service opportunities with interested residents.

- B. The Department has been advancing several youth civic engagement initiatives, including the Fall 2025 Elections Ambassador Program, the Pre-Registration Card Design Contest, and the new "*Get Ready to Vote*" educational presentation for elementary and middle school students.

- 1. In August, the Department completed preparations for the Fall 2025 High School Elections Ambassador Program, which will run during California's Fall 2025 High School Voter Education Weeks, from Monday, September 16, through Friday, September 25. This year, more than 55 students from 17 public and private high schools have joined the program. Student Ambassadors will receive training and support from Elections staff as they host outreach events in their schools and neighborhoods, raising awareness about pre-registration and civic engagement opportunities for San Francisco youth..
 - 2. In August, the Department launched its first-ever Pre-Registration Card Design Contest. Beginning September 29, this initiative will engage high school students while raising awareness about pre-registration opportunities available to 16- and 17-year-olds and their future role as voters. Students will design a new image for the Pre-Registration Card, used at outreach events to encourage youth pre-registration.
 - 3. To expand civic engagement opportunities for younger audiences, staff developed a new "*Get Ready to Vote*" presentation for elementary and middle school students. This brief presentation introduces students to elections and voting in a simple and engaging way, explaining who can vote, how voting works, and why it matters. Following the presentation, students may complete a demonstration ballot and cast it into a ballot scanning machine, simulating the experience of voting on Election Day.

- C. The Department continues to engage with community partners through its monthly *Outreach Community Newsletter*.

- 1. The August 2025 edition provides key updates on the November 4 Statewide Special Election and highlights the Department's youth civic engagement initiatives. The newsletter also offers a recap of recent outreach events held in the City, showcasing the Department's efforts to connect with diverse communities. In addition,

the August edition features Partner Spotlight on the GLIDE Foundation for Social Justice. The August newsletter is available at <https://www.sf.gov/outreach-community-newsletter-august-2025>

IV. The Department continues to carry out its operations and administrative functions.

- A. The Department continues its voter roll maintenance to ensure that voter records remain accurate and up to date. This work includes processing registration updates and cancellations, issuing voter notices and address confirmation postcards, and integrating data from state and local agencies. As part of this process, the Department incorporates updates from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which captures address changes and new voter registrations, information from the National Change of Address (NCOA) system, which provides address updates for voters who have moved, reports from the Department of Public Health that identify records of deceased individuals, and weekly updates from the Secretary of State that include information on prison commitments and conservatorships.
- B. The Department has completed drafting its annual Racial Equity Progress Report and will submit the draft report to both the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) and the assigned Deputy City Attorney by September 30 for joint review..
 - 1. As noted in the Director's Report dated July 11, 2025, if the Commission wishes to provide an update for inclusion in the Department's Progress Report, it must submit the update to the Director by September 26, using the template provided by ORE.

V. 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 August 1 and August 31, the Department processed a total of 2,572 affidavits of new registrants. The new registrants reside in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 193, SD 2 – 257, SD 3 – 252, SD 4 – 217, SD 5 – 267, SD 6 – 348, SD 7 – 184, SD 8 – 254, SD 9 – 221, SD 10 – 230, and SD 11 – 149.
- B. Between August 1 and August 31, the Department conducted 27 outreach events, reaching an estimated 9,005 attendees. These events were distributed across Supervisorial Districts (SD) as follows: SD 2 – 1, SD 5 – 11, SD 6 – 2, SD 7 – 5, SD 8 – 1, SD 9 – 4, and SD 10 – 2, SD 11 – 1.