



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney
Purpose: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected
Keywords:

AGENDA ITEM #1
October 1, 2020
Discussion

SUBJECT

Briefing: Board of Elections

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Those expected to attend this worksession include:

Members of the Board of Elections
Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Election Director
Gilberto Zelaya, Community Engagement/Public Information Officer

Board members are:

James Shalleck, President
Nahid Khozeimeh, Vice President
David A. Naimon, Secretary
Diane Nash Dillon, Board Member
Elisse W. Barnes, Board Member
Jacqueline L. Phillips, Substitute Board Member
Alan Banov, Substitute Board Member

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- None

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Today, the Council will receive a briefing from the Board of Elections regarding their preparations for the November 3 General Election.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- None

This report contains:

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| Grant information | ©17 |

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MEMORANDUM

September 29, 2020

TO: County Council

FROM: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: **Briefing:** Board of Elections

PURPOSE: Receive briefing and have discussion – no vote expected

Those expected to attend this worksession include:

Members of the Board of Elections
Alysoun McLaughlin, Deputy Election Director
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Board members are:

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Diane Nash Dillon, Board Member
Elisse W. Barnes, Board Member
Jacqueline L. Phillips, Substitute Board Member
Alan Banov, Substitute Board Member

2020 General Election

Today, the Council will receive a briefing from the Board of Elections regarding their preparations for the November 3 General Election. On September 14, 2020, the Council sent a letter to the Board requesting a briefing “to inform us of the various steps the Board has taken to secure that every voter will receive a ballot and that each ballot will be properly counted” (see letter on ©1-2). Subsequent to this, Council staff collected specific questions from Councilmembers and sent them to the Board of Elections for response. (see ©3-4 for a list of Councilmember questions and ©5-14 for the Board’s response). Also attached at ©15-16 are a list of drop box locations. Board staff notes that the Board arranged, with the consent of the State Board, to have small vote by mail

containers at Leisure World, Asbury, and Riderwood Village that are only available to voters who are authorized to access these locations.

Council staff wants to highlight one specific question submitted to the Board: what steps can the Council take to aid the Board in ensuring the election runs smoothly. In response Board staff noted the following:

- **Messaging.** Please continue to fact check messages to voters with the Board so that messaging is consistent and every voter can understand how to cast their ballot and have it counted.
- **By-mail ballots.** For the next two weeks, encouraging voters to request a by-mail ballot by texting VOTE to 77788. Social distancing presents very real challenges to accommodating a high turnout in person, so we do want every voter who can, cast their ballot by mail.
- **Early voting.** The deadline for the Board to receive a request for a by-mail ballot is October 20. After that date, spread the word about early voting. Board staff recommends voting in the middle of the day during the week, not on the first or last day of early voting when lines are longest.
- **Returning mail in ballots.** If a voter has requested a ballot, they need to return their ballot by mail, or bring it to a drop box in person. If they show up at the polls, they will have to cast a provisional ballot.
- **Election Day.** Help encourage voters to take their by-mail ballot to an official drop box at any voting center, or take it in person to a U.S. Post Office and ask for it to be postmarked in person.

Budget

As the Council is well aware, the Board of Elections often has budget challenges due to state mandated costs and unanticipated expenditures. Before the COVID-19 health emergency, the Board of Elections was projecting a deficit; the pandemic has exacerbated that projected deficit. Board staff notes that:

- The Board of Elections achieved some modest savings in training fewer Election Judges and opening fewer polling places, but these savings were outweighed by unanticipated expenditures, including both state mandated costs and the onsite differential and overtime expenditures necessary to conduct the election properly.
- The Board of Election is already close to exhausting its overtime budget, with just 15% remaining a month before Election Day and with approximately two months remaining until election certification.
- The Board of Elections has additional unanticipated state mandated costs, including printing and postage for by-mail ballots, the costs of PPE, and the new requirement that unique ballots be printed for every one of our 40 voting centers in all 255 ballot styles used across the county.
- Overall, Board staff estimates that the deficit could reach \$3.5 million, including \$778,000 in overtime, \$600,000 in temporary seasonal staff costs, \$1.4 million in costs billed by the state, and potentially as much as a million in additional costs for canvass pay stipends depending on the length of the canvass and the number of canvassers.

Board staff is hopeful that some of these expenses are covered by any upcoming federal funding. Additionally, the Board of Elections is making a concerted effort to use County employees from other departments to minimize expenses. Finally, the Board of Elections has submitted a grant application to the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL). CTCL, through a \$250M commitment made by Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, will regrant to local election jurisdictions across the country to help ensure that there is adequate staffing, training, and equipment necessary so that for the 2020 Presidential General Election every eligible voter can participate in a safe and timely way and have their vote counted. Montgomery County Board of Elections submitted a grant application to CTCL's COVID-19 Response Grant on September 25, 2020 (©17-22). Funding award levels are expected to be announced in October 2020.

This packet contains:

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Jim Shalleck
Chair, Montgomery County Board of Elections
18753 N. Frederick Avenue, Suite 210
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

September 14, 2020

Dear Chair Shalleck:

Thank you for your diligent work to ensure that Montgomery County is prepared for the November 3 election. One of the most important responsibilities of local government is to ensure the sanctity and security of the electoral process, especially in the midst of a global pandemic. In order to support your efforts, we request the Board of Elections to brief the County Council on the measures and progress the Board has taken to ensure a free and fair election. Traditionally, this presentation happens before the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee. However, given the unique circumstances we find ourselves in, we believe a briefing before the full Council is merited.

Considering the numerous ways the upcoming general election will be different than prior elections, which include a drastic reduction in the number of polling locations, a robust mail-in ballot system, and doubts cast by President Donald Trump on the efficiency of the United States Postal Service, it is not surprising that many county residents are anxious, confused and concerned. Many of our constituents have contacted us asking for clarity on mail-in ballots, early voting sites and health precautions voters can take to ensure they are both safe and able to successfully participate in our electoral process.

We appreciate the Montgomery County Board of Elections' diligent steps to adapt the variety of barriers the pandemic has placed in the way of how elections are normally administered, including the State's plan for consolidated polling places on election day and the County Board's approval of our request for a larger number of ballot drop boxes throughout Montgomery County.

In order to support your efforts, we request that the Board provide a briefing for the Council to inform us of the various steps the Board has taken to secure that every voter will receive a ballot and that each ballot will be properly counted.

This upcoming election is expected to have the highest turnout in recent memory, which is why it is essential we take every measure to ensure that voters can safely and securely make their voices heard.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Thank you again for your work,

Sincerely,

Evan Glass
Councilmember, At-Large

Sidney Katz
Council President, District 3

Tom Hucker
Council Vice President, District 5

Andrew Friedson
Councilmember, District 1

Craig Rice
Councilmember, District 2

Nancy Navarro
Councilmember, District 4

Gabe Albornoz
Councilmember, At-Large

Will Jawando
Councilmember, At-Large

Hans Riemer
Councilmember, At-Large

Councilmember Questions

Mail-in ballots

- The status indicators for mail in/absentee ballot requests on the State's website are not easy to discern, on the best of days. What has your team been doing to help clarify some of the confusion that has arisen among residents?
- Can you please go into more detail regarding what steps are being taken to ensure that mail-in ballots are counted in a timely manner? We all want to ensure that Montgomery County's results are as complete as possible, as soon as possible.
- Can the BOE detail the process of mailing out requested ballots? When should people expect their arrival? When does the board expect all requested ballots to have been sent to voters?
- If someone has sent in a mail in ballot and it is rejected are they notified that it was rejected and why? Are they allowed at that point to go vote in person?

Dropboxes

- For those concerned about using the ballot drop box, what message would you like to send? What can you say to assuage concerns about security?
- While the possibility of a problem during this is remote, what steps are being taken to ensure that ballots are physically delivered from drop boxes and voting centers safely and securely?
- Has there been any update on the supply of drop boxes? Will all advertised drop boxes be delivered by the state reasonably close to when expected?

Election day

- Are there enough poll worker volunteers to staff the limited polling locations that will be open on Election Day? If not what steps are being taken to address the shortfall?
- What contingency plans are being made if an election judge is either diagnosed with COVID-19 or shows up to a voting center exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms? What about if a voter shows up with COVID-19 symptoms?
- What plans are in place to combat instances of voter intimidation like was seen recently in Fairfax County? What happens if 100 people waving flags and chanting slogans decide to show up at a voting center with little intent on following the rules regarding electioneering?

Election Results

- Please review the canvassing process. When can ballots begin to be counted? Can they be counted before polls close?
- Is the State BOE allowing local BOEs to begin counting mail-in ballots prior to election day or will counting begin on Election day?
- When can results be expected to be tabulated on the County and State Level?

- What plans are being made to accommodate requests by the media to observe the ballot counting process?

General

- What has been the overall response from the community to current election procedures? Social media comments are one thing, but has the Board noticed a trend in overall attitude during its direct interactions with voters?
- Can you please update us on efforts to recruit bilingual election judges? Have you seen a sufficient number apply, or does there need to be a larger push? What role can the Council play in this effort?
- Can you please give an overview of outreach efforts to households where English is not the primary language spoke?
- Are there concerns regarding the state's change in ballot printer? If so what concerns are there and what steps are being taken, if not, why?
- What, if any, steps can the Council take to aid the Board in ensuring the election goes smoothly?

MEMORANDUM

September 29, 2020

To: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney
From: Margaret Jurgensen, Election Director
Subject: Questions for Briefing on October 1, 2020

Below are my responses to the questions that you forwarded in preparation for the briefing on October 1, 2020, on preparations for the 2020 Presidential General Election. Board members and staff look forward to answering these and any other questions that may arise at the briefing.

1. Can the BOE detail the process of mailing out requested ballots? When should people expect their arrival? When does the board expect all requested ballots to have been sent to voters?

The first important thing for voters to know for the general election on November 3 is that ballots are NOT being mailed unless the voter requests a ballot.

To prevent crowding at polling places during the pandemic, all voters are encouraged to request a ballot by mail by texting VOTE to 77788 or visiting elections.maryland.gov.

The first ballots were mailed to military and overseas voters on Friday, September 18, and we received the first ballot back on Thursday, September 24. That day, the state vendor mailed ballots to voters whose requests we had received through approximately the end of August. At this time, we are up to date on data entry for online applications and entering paper applications received through mid-September. Ballots are being mailed daily. The number of new requests we are receiving each day has subsided, and the backlog is shrinking. We are grateful to voters for submitting their requests early so we could flatten the request curve before the deadline to request a ballot.

The last day to request a ballot by mail is Tuesday, October 20, and it is important for voters to know that they cannot wait until that day to put it in the mail. We must RECEIVE their request by that day, so that they will have enough time to get their ballot and get it postmarked or return it to a drop box by Election Day. The last day that ballots requested by October 20 will be mailed is on Saturday, October 24.

2. *The status indicators for mail in/absentee ballot requests on the State's website are not easy to discern, on the best of days. What has your team been doing to help clarify some of the confusion that has arisen among residents?*

The ballot tracking information on the state website was originally designed in the early 2000s to meet a federal law requirement to inform voters of whether their provisional ballot was counted or rejected. It was designed to show only information that is logged into the statewide voter registration database, not tracking information from other systems for that application or ballot. We expect that the state and its vendors will be looking at this in the future and might design the system differently if they were building it today.

There are two limitations of the current system that prompt phone calls to our office.

The first is that the system does not show the status of an application in process. The system only picks up a status on an application when it has been reviewed and accepted, not when it is pending. The longer it takes for us to process that application, the more likely it is that a voter will submit multiple requests "just in case".

At this time, there is no backlog of online requests. However, during the first and second week of September, the Board of Elections was inundated with paper applications that take approximately three minutes each to process. We are currently finishing our work on the second week of that backlog and are grateful to the Department of Recreation for loaning more than 20 Recreation Specialists who have done an incredible job of learning the intricacies of voter registration laws and procedures to assist us in this work. Community Use of Public Facilities and the Department of Health and Human Services have also loaned staff to the effort, and last week we began training staff of the State Comptroller's Office to help process applications at an MVA training center.

As of today, we have received ballot applications from nearly half of the registered voters in Montgomery County and have completed the data entry on approximately 80% of those requests. By the end of next week, we can expect that around 300,000 voters in Montgomery County will have received their ballot. The deadline to request a ballot is Tuesday, October 20, and the last day that ballots will be mailed is Saturday, October 24.

The second issue that prompted phone calls to our office in the primary election is that ballots still show in the system as "received" even when the envelope has been opened

and the ballot has scanned. Changing the status of a ballot from “received” to “accepted” is currently the last thing that occurs in the system, after all quality checks and audits are completed and we can verify that the final number of ballots issued and accounted for equals the final number of ballots received. We have discussed this issue with the State and there may be a way to update individual voters’ records during the election to show that their ballot has been accepted. However, we have not yet found a way to do this without complicating our quality checks and audits. If we can do so, we will. In the meantime, a voter can be confident that their ballot will be accepted if it shows in the system as “received” and we have not contacted them to cure any deficiency with their ballot.

3. *If someone has sent in a mail in ballot and it is rejected are they notified that it was rejected and why? Are they allowed at that point to go vote in person?*

Voters’ anxiety about whether their ballot will be accepted is understandable, in light of national news reports about the rejection of ballots in other states. However, there are very few reasons for a ballot to be rejected in the State of Maryland. In the primary election, there were 13 ballots rejected due to identifying marks written on the ballot, a law that was written to prevent vote buying. There were 30 ballots rejected because the voter also cast a ballot in person. 79 ballots were rejected because the voter’s registration was pending and we were unable to verify necessary information such as their driver’s license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. We had asked those voters to return an ID or other information with their ballot and they did not. 441 ballots were rejected because the voter did not sign the oath at all; we do not reject ballots due to handwriting. This is approximately 2 tenths of 1 percent of the 264,284 ballots that were counted for the election.

In the rare instance that we receive a ballot that cannot be accepted, as long as it is before the deadline we will contact the voter to offer them the opportunity to cure the issue. First, we try to contact them using any telephone number or email address that they have provided to our office. If we cannot reach them by phone or email, we will send a notice through the U.S. Postal Service. We strongly recommend curing any issue directly with our office. If a voter chooses instead to vote in person at a vote center, when they already requested a ballot by mail, they will need to cast a provisional ballot which takes much longer to cast and count.

4. *Has there been any update on the supply of drop boxes? Will all advertised drop boxes be delivered by the state reasonably close to when expected?*

We have 53 drop box locations, including one at every high school in the county. All deliveries are occurring on schedule and as listed in the sample ballot that was mailed to all voters. This includes the additional drop boxes that the Council requested and that we worked with the county to obtain through an emergency procurement. Because of

security concerns and the need for scheduled pickup and 24-hour video surveillance, we are unable to install more drop boxes at this time.

5. ***For those concerned about using the ballot drop box, what message would you like to send? What can you say to assuage concerns about security? While the possibility of a problem during this is remote, what steps are being taken to ensure that ballots are physically delivered from drop boxes and voting centers safely and securely?***

All drop boxes are under 24-hour surveillance. Ballots are picked up several times a day by bipartisan teams of workers who have cleared a background check and are required to follow strict procedures for collecting the ballots and documenting the chain of custody.

Voting by mail, and the use of official drop boxes, is new for most voters in Maryland, but there are established processes for picking up ballots from drop boxes that election officials follow across the country. We have had a drop box at our office for more than 10 years and voters across the west coast have been using drop boxes for many years without incident. Anyone who tries to tamper with a drop box will be caught on video and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Once ballots arrive at our office, the chain of custody documentation is inspected and the envelopes are logged, counted, sorted and prepared for the canvass process.

6. ***Are there concerns regarding the state's change in ballot printer? If so what concerns are there and what steps are being taken, if not, why?***

We have no concerns regarding the change in the ballot printer. An additional printer was selected because of concerns about ballots being mailed late for the primary election. When the new vendor was chosen, the old vendor chose to withdraw. The new vendor comes highly recommended and their work so far appears to be high quality.

7. ***Please review the canvassing process. When can ballots begin to be counted? Is the State BOE allowing local BOEs to begin counting mail-in ballots prior to election day or will counting begin on Election Day? Can they be counted before polls close? What plans are being made to accommodate requests by the media to observe the ballot counting process?***

State law does not normally allow ballot envelopes to be opened until after Election Day. Due to the pandemic, however, and the extraordinary volume of by-mail ballots that we are receiving for this election, the Governor granted emergency authority for the by-mail canvass process to begin before Election Day.

On Tuesday, October 6, at 10:00 a.m. at the Plum Gar Recreation Center, we will have socially distanced teams of bipartisan Election Judges begin opening the envelopes of

ballots that have been received so far and preparing ballots for scanning. The canvass process will be open to the public on a space-available basis. If there are more observers who want to witness the process than we have available seats, we expect to institute a first-come first served appointment process with seats prioritized for representatives of the political parties and the candidates on the ballot, then the media, and then additional members of the public.

Election Judges will open batches of 100 ballot envelopes along with documentation that each envelope corresponds to a unique record of a registered voter in the statewide voter registration database. They will count both the number of envelopes and the number of ballot pages inside and note any discrepancy.

After logging that the number of pages removed from each envelope, the Election Judges will conduct a facial review of each ballot to make sure there are no evident issues with the ballot, such as a tear, a coffee stain, or a handwritten note giving instructions to the Board of Elections to change the vote on their ballot. Ballots that require a referral to the Board for a decision will be set aside for a webcast public meeting.

If the bipartisan team is able to remedy an issue, such as a tear or a canvass stain, by hand duplicating the ballot and marking the original and the corresponding duplicate of the ballot, they will do so as a team. Every “web delivery” ballot that has been printed at home by a voter will need to be duplicated, because the Board’s scanners cannot read ballots printed on 8 ½” x 11” paper. The original ballots are retained for audit and to be used in the event of a recount.

When batches of ballots are prepared for scanning, they will be returned to the Board of Elections to be scanned. Public observation of this process normally occurs only behind glass, where the equipment is permanently installed, in the most sensitive area of the building. Voting equipment is currently being prepared and tested for vote centers during early voting and on Election Day in this area. To protect the security of the voting equipment, for the safety of workers and the public, and to protect the staff of the Board of Elections from exposure to COVID-19, the staff has recommended video streaming of the tabulation of ballots on the high speed scanners as it was done for the primary election. The Board of Elections has worked hard to make sure that the office is not operationally impacted by unnecessary exposure of staff, including moving all Election Judge training classes offsite to other locations. Closure of the office would be devastating to election preparations. Throughout the process, all documentation is preserved and can be made available for public inspection by appointment.

8. ***Can you please go into more detail regarding what steps are being taken to ensure that mail-in ballots are counted in a timely manner? We all want to ensure that Montgomery County’s results are as complete as possible, as soon as possible. When can results be expected to be tabulated on the County and State Level?***

The emergency authorization from the Governor allowing us to begin the process earlier will allow us to report results for by-mail ballots on Election Day, which we have never been able to do in the past. The number of ballots we can count early will depend on how many voters not only request their ballot, but also return it, before the start of early voting. We will need to slow down the process of canvassing ballots during early voting and on Election Day, because of controls that we have in place to make sure that no voter successfully casts more than one ballot. The first results that will be reported on Election night will be for mail-in and early ballots, before we post results for Election Day.

The canvass will continue until the last ballot has been scanned, which normally takes several weeks after Election Day. Four years ago, when we were not allowed to begin this early, the last ballot was not scanned until December 7. Because of the earlier start and the additional manpower, we are expecting to be able to finish the canvass earlier this year than we have at times in the past.

9. *Are there enough poll worker volunteers to staff the limited polling locations that will be open on Election Day? If not what steps are being taken to address the shortfall?*

Yes. The response has been extraordinary, and we have more Election Judges willing to serve than we have positions to fill. At this time, we are working to schedule as many Election Judges as possible to complete their training early. Normally, we must continue training during early voting, but we are hoping to finish training early so that once voting begins our trainers can focus on supporting the vote centers.

10. *Can you please update us on efforts to recruit bilingual election judges? Have you seen a sufficient number apply, or does there need to be a larger push? What role can the Council play in this effort?*

At this time, we have a sufficient number of Election Judges who are bilingual in English and Spanish, although we can always use more substitute Election Judges to serve on an on-call basis. We do need more Election Judges who speak Chinese, Korean, Amharic, and American Sign Language and would be grateful for assistance from members of the Council in helping us to recruit workers who can assist in these languages and to get them signed up for training quickly.

11. *What contingency plans are being made if an election judge is either diagnosed with COVID-19 or shows up to a voting center exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms? What about if a voter shows up with COVID-19 symptoms?*

The right to vote is paramount. We must assume that some voters who will show up to vote will be carriers of the coronavirus, and we cannot deny any voter the opportunity to cast their ballot due to a temperature, a sneeze or a cough. Rather than assuming we can

take effective measures that would exclude voters with COVID-19, we must prepare as if every voter might have COVID-19. This is the reality of conducting an election during a pandemic, this is what we are preparing Election Judges for in performing their duties, and it is the reason we are aggressively marketing voting by mail.

Having said that, we are doing our utmost to protect Election Judges and voters. Masks must be worn at all times, a policy that will be strictly enforced. Each vote center is set up with equipment spread out to allow for social distancing, with plexiglass barriers on the tables and face shields available for use by Election Judges. Strict procedures will be followed for voters who refuse to wear a mask, including directing those voters to the Board of Elections to cast their ballot.

We are assigning a much larger than usual list of substitute Election Judges, who will serve on an on-call basis on Election Day. Election Judges who are assigned to work at a vote center will be strictly instructed not to report to work if they are symptomatic, as they were for the primary election. And we will work with public health officials to do contact tracing in the event of any identified exposure and make decisions accordingly about staffing and facilities.

12. What plans are in place to combat instances of voter intimidation like was seen recently in Fairfax County? What happens if 100 people waving flags and chanting slogans decide to show up at a voting center with little intent on following the rules regarding electioneering?

We contacted the staff of the Fairfax County Office of Elections after the incident that received national attention at the Fairfax County Government Center and learned that the group that assembled did not violate their rules regarding electioneering. Our authority extends only to the “no electioneering” boundary, and with six feet of social distancing, a 100-foot “no electioneering” zone will accommodate only 16 voters. In the event that there is a public disturbance or complaint, however, we will work with the Montgomery County Police to address the incident as was done in Fairfax County.

13. Can you please give an overview of outreach efforts to households where English is not the primary language spoken?

The Montgomery County Board of Elections has won several national awards for its multicultural outreach program, including multilingual outreach for voters who speak a primary language other than English. Most recently, the Board of Elections was recognized as a 2020 winner of a NACo Achievement Award for its multigenerational voter empowerment program serving nursing home residents, middle school students, and every generation in between.

The rules for voting have changed several times this year, creating confusion for voters of every language and cultural background who have had to learn two very different ways of voting. Voting methods have changed. Deadlines have changed. The spread of misinformation on social media is a concern, as are well-intentioned efforts to assist voters that unfortunately raise fears because they assume our challenges are the same as other states. For example, there are very few by-mail ballots rejected for any reason in Maryland, and we have not experienced any significant delays in the U.S. Postal Service.

As with every other department of county government that does public outreach, we have had to shift our methods for communicating with voters. We have not been able to set up tables at community events as we did in the past. Instead, we have taken a range of approaches including distributing thousands of fliers and palm cards at food distribution locations, conducting hundreds of Zoom meetings, and dramatically expanding the reach of our social media accounts. We have received positive feedback on the sample ballot that we mailed to voters last week, which is bilingual in English and Spanish, and believe that it will help reduce confusion among voters about their options for how to vote in this election. We translated our Frequently Asked Questions into Chinese, Korean, and Amharic for the primary election and are about the launch those materials for the general election as well.

14. What has been the overall response from the community to current election procedures? Social media comments are one thing, but has the Board noticed a trend in overall attitude during its direct interactions with voters?

I would characterize the overall attitude of voters as worried, but appreciative. Voters are often surprised to hear that we are in our office and working on evenings and weekends when we return their calls and email messages.

Unfortunately, there have been a small number of voters who have been abusive toward our staff and unfortunately, we know there will be voters who will direct their anxieties toward Election Judges at the voter centers during Early Voting and Election Day. We would appreciate any efforts that members of the Council can make to help remind voters that Election Judges are people too, and deserve appreciation for putting themselves at risk to help their neighbors participate in this historic election during a pandemic.

15. What, if any, steps can the Council take to aid the Board in ensuring the election goes smoothly?

The assistance from members of the Council in spreading the word on social media about our work, and to help feed inquiries to our office, has been much appreciated by our staff. Our staff are working very long hours responding to email messages and telephone calls, and every hour that they spend on the telephone reassuring worried voters is one less hour that they can spend doing data entry on ballot requests.

Please continue to fact check your messages with our office so we can help make sure that the information you are putting out there is consistent with the messages that we need to get out to voters to make sure that every voter understands how to cast their ballot and have it counted.

For the next two weeks, we ask you to continue encouraging every voter who can to request a by-mail ballot by texting VOTE to 77788. Social distancing presents very real challenges to accommodating a high turnout in person, so we do want every voter who can to cast their ballot by mail.

The deadline for our office to receive a request for a by-mail ballot is October 20, so after that date we will ask you to help us spread the word about early voting. If a voter has requested a ballot, we want them to return their ballot by mail, or bring it to a drop box in person. We do not want them to show up at the polls in person, where they will have to cast a provisional ballot.

If a voter has not requested a ballot by then, we will want to direct voters to our early voting locations. Early voting is much preferred to waiting until Election Day, when our resources are spread much thinner across more sites on the deadline to cast a ballot. We recommend voting in the middle of the day during the week, not on the first or last day of early voting when lines are longest.

On Election Day, we will ask you to help encourage voters to take their ballot to an official drop box at any vote center, or take it in person to a U.S. Post Office and ask for it to be postmarked in person. If they have not cast their ballot by then, they should not rely on it being postmarked that day. Lines are usually at their longest first thing in the morning and in the evening.

On election night, we will ask you to assist in urging patience, whether voters are casting their ballot in person or waiting for election results that night. Please do not interpret long lines as an indication of a problem, but as a sign of high turnout, especially since voters will be able to go to any vote center and can go to any site, not necessarily the high school nearest their residence. Please help us remind voters that just because the media is predicting winners in contests across the country, that does not mean the results are final. Results are never final on election night, especially in a state like Maryland where ballots postmarked on Election Day can still be received by our office.

Moving forward, as we approach the end of the fiscal year, we will seek your support and work with the Office of Management and Budget in meeting our personnel needs. We were projecting a significant deficit for this fiscal year before the pandemic. While we did achieve some modest savings in training fewer Election Judges and opening fewer polling places, these savings were far outweighed by unanticipated expenditures,

including both state mandated costs and the onsite differential and overtime expenditures necessary to conduct the election properly.

While the department is extremely grateful to the Departments of Recreation, Community Use of Public Facilities, and Health and Human Services for loaning us personnel who otherwise would be on administrative leave during business hours, we needed to spend a significant amount on onsite differential pay and overtime to manage the extraordinary workload of this election. While we have not exhausted our overtime budget yet, we are close to doing so, with just 15% remaining a month before Election Day and with approximately two months remaining until we can certify the election.

In addition, we have unanticipated state mandated costs, including printing and postage for by-mail ballots, the costs of PPE, and the new requirement that unique ballots be printed for every one of our 40 vote centers in all 255 ballot styles used across the county. Overall, we are at risk of being more than \$3.5 million over budget, including \$778,000 in overtime, \$600,000 in temporary seasonal staff costs, \$1.4 million in costs billed by the state, and potentially as much as a million in additional costs for canvass pay stipends depending on the length of the canvass and the number of canvassers. We hope that this is a high estimate and are striving to keep our costs down as much as possible while meeting expectations for this election, but we want you to be aware of the likelihood that our department budget could show a significant deficit before the end of the fiscal year.

Please let us know what additional questions you have.

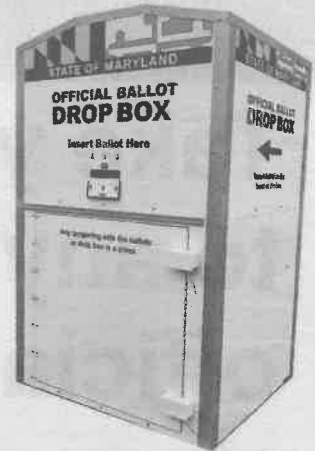
Bring your ballot to a drop box...

Drop boxes available now:

Board of Elections
18753 N. Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850
(City Hall Parking Lot)

Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, MD 20850



Drop boxes available by Thursday, October 1:

Activity Center at Bohrer Park
City of Gaithersburg
506 South Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Marilyn J. Praisner
Recreation Center
14906 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Potomac Community
Recreation Center
11315 Falls Road
Potomac, MD 20854

Clarksburg High School
22500 Wims Road
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Mid-County Community
Recreation Center
2004 Queensguard Road
Silver Spring, MD 20906

Sandy Spring Volunteer
Fire Department
17921 Brooke Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

Col. Zadok Magruder HS
5939 Muncaster Mill Road
Rockville, MD 20855

Montgomery Blair HS
51 University Boulevard East
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Silver Spring Civic Building
1 Veterans Place
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Watkins Mill High School
10301 Apple Ridge Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Damascus Community
Recreation Center
25520 Oak Drive
Damascus, MD 20872

Montgomery Co. Conf. Ctr.,
Marriott Bethesda North
5967 Executive Boulevard
North Bethesda, MD 20852

Springbrook High School
201 Valley Brook Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Wheaton High School
12401 Dalewood Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20906

Germantown Community
Recreation Center
18905 Kingsview Road
Germantown, MD 20874

Nancy H. Dacek North
Potomac Recreation Center
13850 Travilah Road
Rockville, MD 20850

Takoma Park
Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Wheaton Library &
Recreation Center
11701 Georgia Avenue
Wheaton, MD 20902

Jane E. Lawton Community
Recreation Center
4301 Willow Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Poolesville High School
17501 West Willard Road
Poolesville, MD 20837

Walt Whitman High School
7100 Whittier Boulevard
Bethesda, MD 20817

White Oak Community
Recreation Center
1700 April Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Drop boxes available by Thursday, October 15:

Albert Einstein High School
11135 Newport Mill Road
Kensington, MD 20895

James Hubert Blake HS
300 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

Paint Branch High School
14121 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Seneca Valley High School
19401 Crystal Rock Drive
Germantown, MD 20874

Bethesda-Chevy Chase HS
4301 East-West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

John F. Kennedy High School
1901 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Quince Orchard High School
15800 Quince Orchard Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Thomas S. Wootton HS
2100 Wootton Parkway
Rockville, MD 20850

Damascus High School
25921 Ridge Road
Damascus, MD 20872

Northwest High School
13501 Richter Farm Road
Germantown, MD 20874

Richard Montgomery HS
250 Richard Montgomery Dr.
Rockville, MD 20852

Walter Johnson High School
6400 Rock Spring Drive
Bethesda, MD 20814

Gaithersburg High School
101 Education Boulevard
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

Northwood High School
919 University Boulevard W
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Rockville High School
2100 Baltimore Road
Rockville, MD 20851

Winston Churchill HS
11300 Gainsborough Road
Potomac, MD 20854

Drop boxes available by Saturday, October 24:

Bette Carol Thompson
Scotland Recreation Center
7700 Scotland Drive
Potomac, MD 20854

Friendship Heights Village Ctr
4433 South Park Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Longwood Recreation Center
19300 Georgia Avenue
Brookeville, MD 20833

Sherwood High School
300 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd.
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

East County Recreation Ctr.
3310 Gateshead Manor Way
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Gwendolyn E. Coffield
Recreation Center
2450 Lyttonsville Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Schweinhaut Senior Center
1000 Forest Glen Road
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Upper County Community
Recreation Center
8201 Emory Grove Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

For the nearest drop box, text BOX
and your ZIP code to 77788.

BOX 20879

Robertson Park Youth Center
801 Rabbitt Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20878





Election Officials / September 1, 2020

Apply for COVID-19 Grant: CTCL Receives \$250M Contribution to Support Critical Work of Election Officials



If 2020 had been a typical election year, a County Clerk would have asked a team of CTCL staff to huddle up in a rural county courthouse to help the Clerk build a new election website. A state association of election officials would have invited us to their annual summer conference to lead a session on a topic like poll worker management or election cybersecurity best practices. If we were lucky, there would have been a lip sync contest.

But this hasn't been a typical election year for us, or for election officials.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact every aspect of American civic life, especially the administration of safe elections. While [experts estimate it will take ~\\$4 billion in funding to successfully administer 2020 elections](#), Congress has allocated \$400 million to date. Sadly, election officials are not only facing unprecedented operational and budget challenges in 2020, but they are also dealing with

unprecedented [personal attacks and death threats that are prompting some election officials to step down](#).

Election officials make democracy happen. Through our work at the Center for Tech and Civic Life, we are grateful to witness the incredible public service of our country's election official's year round.

And this year we've seen election offices already move mountains to provide a safe, secure, and inclusive process for voters. They are offering drive-up voting, applying the latest public health guidelines to provide safe in-person voting options, and partnering with libraries to repurpose book drops into ballot dropboxes. [Election officials are rising to the occasion](#), and now it's our turn.

[Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg have committed \\$250M to CTCL](#), which we will regrant to local election jurisdictions across the country to help ensure that they have the staffing, training, and equipment necessary so that this November every eligible voter can participate in a safe and timely way and have their vote counted.

We all depend on election officials to provide safe and secure voting options to the public. The expansion of our COVID-19 Response Grant program provides our country's election officials and poll workers with the critical resources they need to safely serve every voter.

This is an open call to every local election office in the country. If you are interested in receiving grant funds, [learn more and apply for a grant](#).

RECENT NEWS

CTCL Grant Program Receives Over 1,100 Applications and Counting

CTCL Statement on the Amistad Project

Stanford – MIT Healthy Elections Project: Resources

CTCL Announces COVID-19 Response Rural Grant Program



Thank You!


Thank you for submitting your CTCL COVID-19 Response Grant application. You will receive an email confirming receipt of your application from grants@techandcivicliflife.org via JotForm.com. Please check your spam folder if you are unable to find it.


After reviewing your request and confirming eligibility, we will be in touch to discuss next steps. We expect to reach out within 2 weeks. If we experience delays to our timeline, we will post updates at <https://www.techandcivicliflife.org/grants/>


For answers to Frequently Asked Questions please visit <https://www.techandcivicliflife.org/grants/>

Now create your own JotForm - It's free!

Create a JotForm

|  Montgomery County, Maryland Board of Elections | FY 2021 Budget (as of September 1, 2020) | FY 2021 Projected Expenditures (Certification of Election on December 7, 2020) |
|---|---|---|
| <u>PERSONNEL COSTS</u> | 4,392,773 | 4,392,773 |
| Total Salaries & Wages | 3,518,079 | |
| Full Time Salaries | 2,443,547 | |
| Part Time Salaries | 81,019 | |
| Seasonal Temps | 753,353 | |
| Overtime | 240,160 | |
| | | |
| Total Benefits | 874,694 | |
| FICA, Insurance, Retirement | 874,694 | |
| | | |
| <u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u> | 3,891,333 | 6,180,972 |
| Services and Contracts | 1,457,545 | 3,299,345 |
| Legal/Attorney Services | 100,000 | |
| Temporary Office Clerical | 133,000 | |
| Background Checks | 4,400 | |
| Maintenance - Electrical | 200 | |
| Maintenance - Computer Systems | 20,000 | |
| Repair/Maintenance - Office Equipment | 9,210 | |
| Maintenance - Painting | 9,995 | |
| Moving Services | 60,000 | |
| Other Professional Services - Election Judge & Canvasser Stipend | 1,064,240 | |
| Temporary Staffing - Hazard Pay for Election Judges | | 400,000 |
| Additional Canvassers to Expedite Mail Ballot Processing | | 1,441,800 |
| Other Non-Professional Services (includes Election Judge module) | 56,500 | |
| | | |
| State Board of Election Fees | 1,531,571 | 1,531,571 |
| Fees from Others | 1,531,571 | |
| | | |
| Rentals/Leases | 60,200 | 60,200 |
| Furniture Rentals | 10,000 | |
| Other Vehicle | 8,200 | |
| Bldg or Space Rental/Leases | 42,000 | |
| | | |
| Office Supplies & Equipment | 168,981 | 616,820 |
| General Office Supplies | 65,478 | |

|  Montgomery County, Maryland Board of Elections | FY 2021 Budget (as of September 1, 2020) | FY 2021 Projected Expenditures (Certification of Election on December 7, 2020) |
|---|---|---|
| Computer Supplies | 7,000 | |
| Computer Equipment - Non Capitalized | 26,434 | |
| Computer Software | 10,400 | |
| Paper and Supplies for Copiers | 11,500 | |
| Other Supplies & Equipment | 46,669 | 494,508 |
| Personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff, poll workers, or voters | | 64,869 |
| Ballot Drop Boxes & Ballot Box Security Cameras | | 151,025 |
| Vote-by-mail/Absentee voting equipment or supplies - Ballot Sorter Machine | | 231,945 |
| Office Furniture - Non Capitalized | 1,500 | |
| | | |
| Books, Videos, and Subscriptions | 5,500 | 5,500 |
| Books/Reference Materials | 2,500 | |
| Other Books, Videos, and Subscriptions | 3,000 | |
| | | |
| Other Supplies/Materials/Equipment | 18,000 | 18,000 |
| Cellular Phones | 12,000 | |
| Keys and Locks | 6,000 | |
| | | |
| Printing/Central Duplicating Services | 153,847 | 153,847 |
| Imaging | 4,000 | |
| Office Machine/Copier Leases | 18,760 | |
| Other Central Duplicating Services - Printing | 131,087 | |
| | | |
| Outside Printing | 91,000 | 91,000 |
| Outside Printing/Copying | 1,000 | |
| Sample Ballot Printing | 90,000 | |
| | | |
| Mail | 125,581 | 125,581 |
| Central Dup - Postage - Bulk | 40,000 | |
| Central Dup - Postage - Individual | 3,081 | |
| Inter-Office Mail | 2,500 | |
| Other - Mail (Sample Ballot Postage) | 80,000 | |
| | | |
| Outside Postage and Mail | 92,647 | 92,647 |
| Outside Mail Services | 90,000 | |
| Other Outside Mail Services | 2,647 | |

|  Montgomery County, Maryland Board of Elections | FY 2021 Budget (as of September 1, 2020) | FY 2021 Projected Expenditures (Certification of Election on December 7, 2020) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| Motor Pool | 37,261 | 37,261 |
| Assigned Motor Pool Vehicles | 24,066 | |
| Daily Rental Motor Pool | 12,695 | |
| Motor Pool EZPASS Charges | 500 | |
| | | |
| Communications Services | 34,300 | 34,300 |
| Cellular Phone Line Charges | 6,400 | |
| Other Communication Services | 27,900 | |
| | | |
| Charges from Others | 6,500 | 6,500 |
| Charges for Facility Maintenance | 6,500 | |
| | | |
| Travel | 24,000 | 24,000 |
| Metropolitan Area Travel | 20,000 | |
| Non-Metropolitan Area Travel | 4,000 | |
| | | |
| Education, Tuition, and Training | 6,125 | 6,125 |
| Local Conference Related | 2,000 | |
| Other Education, Tuition, & Training | 4,125 | |
| | | |
| Dues/Memberships | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Professional Memberships (Individual) | 3,000 | |
| | | |
| Advertising | 70,375 | 70,375 |
| Advertising - Marketing/Sales | 70,375 | |
| | | |
| Miscellaneous Operating Expenses | 4,900 | 4,900 |
| Board Expenses | 900 | |
| Other Misc Operating Expenses | 4,000 | |
| | | |
| DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL | 8,284,106 | 10,573,745 |
| Additional Projected Expenditures for 2020 General Presidential Election | | 2,289,639 |