

**RESPONSE TO REPORT 2303  
BY THE 2022-23 CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY**

Prepared by:  
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The Clerk-Recorder-Elections' staff appreciates the Grand Jury's well-researched, comprehensive evaluation of the state of Election Security, Voter Outreach, and the Voter Guide in Contra Costa County. We thank the Grand Jury for the consideration and respect demonstrated to the elections staff, elections volunteers, and operations during its evaluation process.

## **FINDINGS**

***F1. The elections division outreach efforts using CBOs in the months before the 2020 general election had a measurable impact on voter participation in those areas where resources were deployed.***

F1. The respondent agrees with the finding. Look for additional information on outreach efforts in the discussion of the recommendation about measuring the impact of our outreach efforts.

***F2. For those cities targeted by the elections division's CBO outreach program, voter participation was 15% above the overall county increase from 2018 to 2020.***

F2. The respondent agrees with the finding. Look for additional information on outreach efforts in the discussion of the recommendation about measuring the impact of our outreach efforts.

***F3. The elections division reaches out to the public using online "how to" videos on their website, including videos describing the many ways to cast your vote, how elections are certified, and how you can research candidates and measures.***

F3. The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F4. The elections division provides a candidate guide for potential candidates that describes the process of running for an elected office within the county.***

F4. The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F5. A candidate is not required to submit a candidate statement for the voter guide.***

F5. The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F6. The elections division levies a fee for the candidate statement in the voter guide, to offset printing and distribution costs.***

F6. The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F7. The fee for a candidate statement ranges from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the number of voter guides printed with that candidate's information.***

F7. The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F8. The elections division has implemented safeguards to prevent physical and cyber security breaches as well as unauthorized, fraudulent, and duplicate ballots.***

F8. The respondent agrees with the finding.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

***R1. The grand jury recommends that the elections division continue to seek out and apply for grant funding for voter outreach efforts including mailers, community meetings and telephone outreach.***

R1. The recommendation has been implemented. Being selected as one of just sixteen Centers for Election Excellence for 2023-24 is a point of pride for the Elections Divisions that will result in nearly \$2 million in funding. Part of this funding likely will be spent on increasing our outreach efforts.

***R2. The grand jury recommends that the elections division establish a means to quantify (measure) the impact of outreach efforts on voter registration and participation and make those results available to the public after each major election via its website.***

R2. The recommendation requires further analysis. Leadership at every level of the Election Division is committed to developing quantifiable measures of our outreach efforts on voter registration and participation that we can share with the public. In developing these measures, it will be important to control for the impact of automatic voter registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles implemented statewide in 2018, as well as the differences in participation during gubernatorial and presidential election cycles. We are investing in additional GIS resources which will be deployed by December 2023 to ensure that our registration efforts are targeted at underserved and under-registered parts of the county as part of the department's commitment to equity.

***R3. The grand jury recommends that the fees for providing candidate statements in the voter guide be eliminated to promote candidate transparency.***

R3. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department does not have sufficient resources to implement this change. Additionally, to make this change would mean that public funds would be used for this campaign purpose which would violate California Government Code Sec. 54964(a) which states, "An officer, employee, or consultant of a local agency may not expend or authorize the expenditure of any funds of the local agency to support or oppose the approval or rejection of a ballot measure, or the election or defeat of candidate, by the voters."

Both Los Angeles County and Santa Cruz County give candidates the option of including a candidate statement in the online only version of the Voter Information Guide for a significantly lower fee because it does not incur printing costs. The Election Division staff will explore the feasibility of implementing this change on an appropriate timeline.

***R4. The grand jury recommends that the elections division add a video to its website describing the physical and cyber security measures it employs to safeguard facilities, ballots, and election data.***

R4. The recommendation has been implemented. The Department has a video from 2020 about election security available on our YouTube Channel [here](#). We will be creating new videos for 2024 and will publish them to our website, as appropriate. Staff is committed to producing videos and other outreach tools to describe our security measures in a way that instills confidence while not undermining our security measures. We also are helping to produce public information in conjunction with the 11-county Bay Area Votes coalition to effectively communicate why voters should be confident that their votes will count.