



Implementation Plan and Timeline for The Elections Group Report Recommendations

TEG Operational Review for 2022 Elections





Objective: How we got here

- Washoe County contracted with The Elections Group (TEG) to provide an operational review of the 2022 election processes and staffing and make recommendations to the County Manager.
- The project goal is to improve the operational effectiveness and accuracy of the Washoe County Election process.
- The project objective and Scope of Work were shared with the NV Secretary of State Elections Division which encouraged our efforts for an objective operational review.



Scope of Work for the Registrar of Voters (ROV)

- Ballot development and proof-reading process
- Ballot mailing process and printing
- Ballot distribution process with the USPS
- Best practices options for tracking mailed ballots
- Best practices for documenting standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Managing automatic voter registration and voter record maintenance
- Optimal Washoe County ROV staffing model
 - Includes full-time and temporary staff training



Scope of Work for ROV (Continued)

Communications and coordination with

- Nevada Secretary of State (SOS) office
- Internal stakeholders
- Voting locations

Washoe County elections technology Infrastructure

- Electronic pollbooks
- Voting machines
- Ballot sorter
- Election software platform and applications



Deep Dive into County Election Operations - Feedback and Insights

- Some of the feedback is uncomfortable and expected based on observations and feedback from new leadership – it reveals areas where we can do better – but it gives a direction and guide for getting to where we want to be.
- Some recommendations were improvements we recognized and have already implemented or planned to be implemented.
- The scope is large – includes more than 250 observations and recommendations focusing on 8 areas in the elections process.
- The NV Secretary of State Elections Office is supporting the implementation efforts and assisting where appropriate.



Final Assessment Report – 8 parts

Timeline

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Staffing, organizational structure and training | Jul - Oct |
| 2. Ballot mailing and distribution process | Oct - Dec |
| 3. Election Worker Management & Training | Oct - Dec |
| 4. Voter Registration Tech Upgrades (SOS Top Down) | Mar 1 |
| 5. Communications and coordination externally & internally | Ongoing |
| 6. Elections Technology Infrastructure | Oct - Mar |
| 7. ROV Space | Fiscal Year 2025 |
| 8. Standard Operating Procedures (Coordinating with SOS) | Jul - Dec |



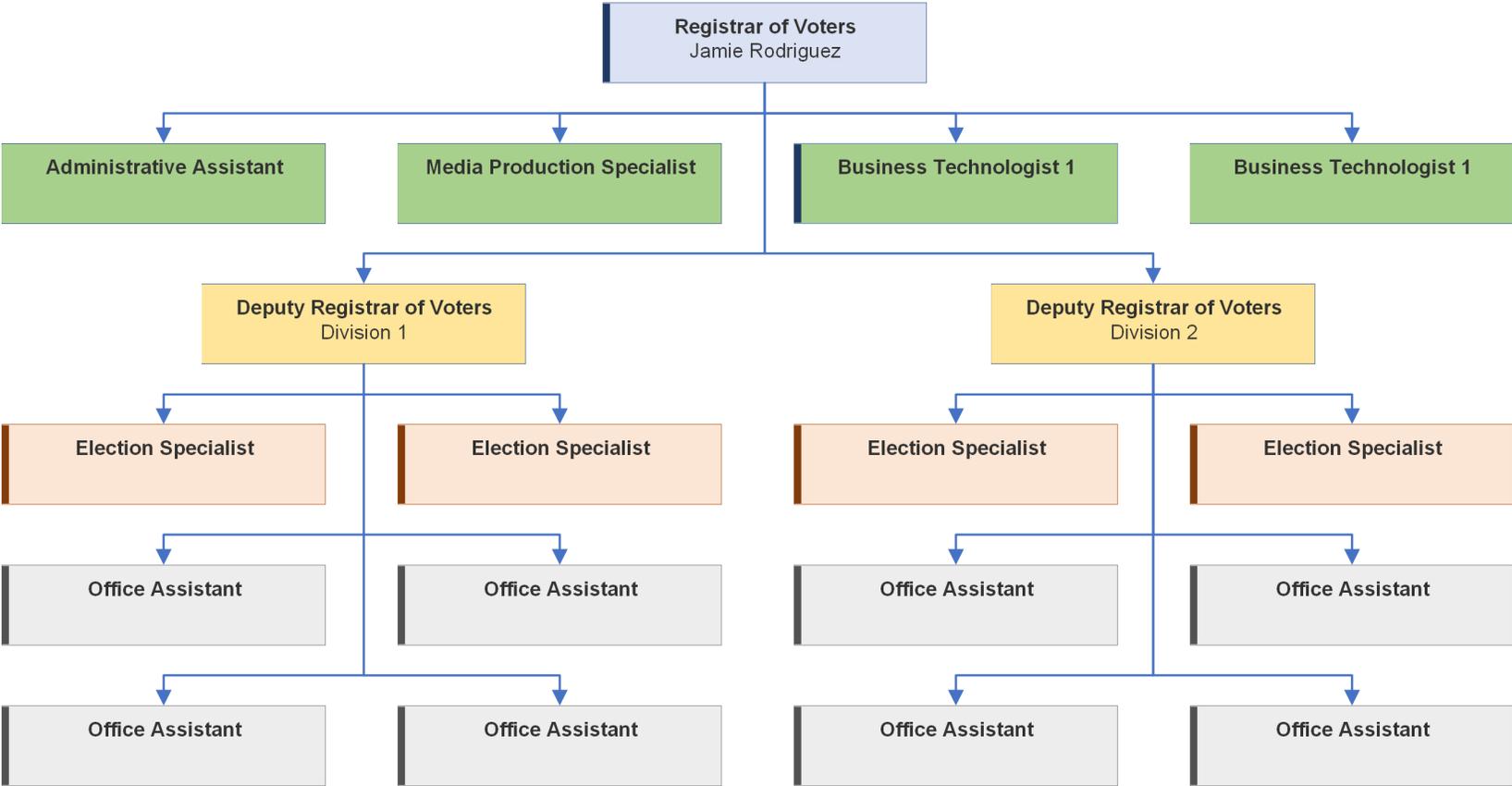
Staffing, Organizational Structure and Training

Staffing and Organizational Structure:

- TEG confirmed the Washoe County ROV is, and historically has been severely understaffed.
- Understaffing has been a key contributor to employee burn-out, high turnover and disappointing service levels.
- The ROV staff has fully turned over since the 2020 election.
- We have begun implementing the budgeted FY2024 staffing plan which aligns with TEG recommendations.
- We will also consider the recommendations to revisit how we implement various functions.
 - Example: Process and equipment to be used for opening envelopes, or ballot batch sizes.



Staffing, Organizational Structure and Training





Establishing SOPs and improved processes

- The State of NV transitioned to an all-mail ballot format in 2020 (along with other structural changes).
- Partially due to this, ROV has not had SOP reference materials to conform with these changes for the last two elections.
- This is in part due to the timing of the implementation of the structural changes by the State/legislature has not allowed sufficient time for our understaffed office to document them and develop training and SOP materials.
- Low staffing levels and high turn-over have prevented adequate documentation of process and procedures.



Establishing SOPS and improved processes

- Now that the 2023 legislative session has concluded, we know the most recent legislative changes affecting election operations.
- Some of the SOP development and processes will be assumed by the SOS. We are in the process of understanding that better to avoid duplication of efforts.
- Per TEG recommendations, given the scope of what needs to be done, we will retain outside help to begin development and documentation of updated standard operating procedures that will be used for staff training and operations.
- The ROV has begun conducting working groups, starting with vote center workers, to improve training and processes and will be conducting working group with observers to respond to vote count observation concerns.
 - 14 Workshops
 - Excellent feedback and stakeholder collaboration



Replace and upgrade election technology

- Washoe County voter registration and pollbook technology platforms are outdated, no longer supported by the vendors and need to be replaced.
- When we presented to the Commission at the Strategic Plan Workshop in January, we were preparing to contract with the voting registration system vendor that would support the new State system alone similar what Clark County has done to replace this platform.
- The SOS has contracted with the vendor for the VREMS transition to provide a platform for all 17 counties. This prevents us from moving forward with our deployment ahead of the state for a planned implementation date of March 1, 2024 which means the platform will not be available for the presidential primary election to be held on February 6th.
 - Washoe County will be forced to utilize its current software and process thru the February Primary



Replace and upgrade election technology

- Consistent with the TEG recommendations, we will have to get through the February presidential preference primary with the existing technology until the State can institute the new platform which is now targeted to happen by March 1 of next year, ahead of the June primary election.
- We have engaged a project manager to maintain the current technology platforms prior to the presidential primary election.



Space

Recommendation: Conduct a detailed space evaluation and redesign for a single consolidated elections operations center to accommodate voter demand, improved public observation, and more efficient and timely election administration.

- Will be implemented after 2024 elections, in the interim also working on the recommendations to consider immediate and short-term space changes to improve ballot processing.
- Incorporate transparency and public observation as a guiding principle of spatial redesign.

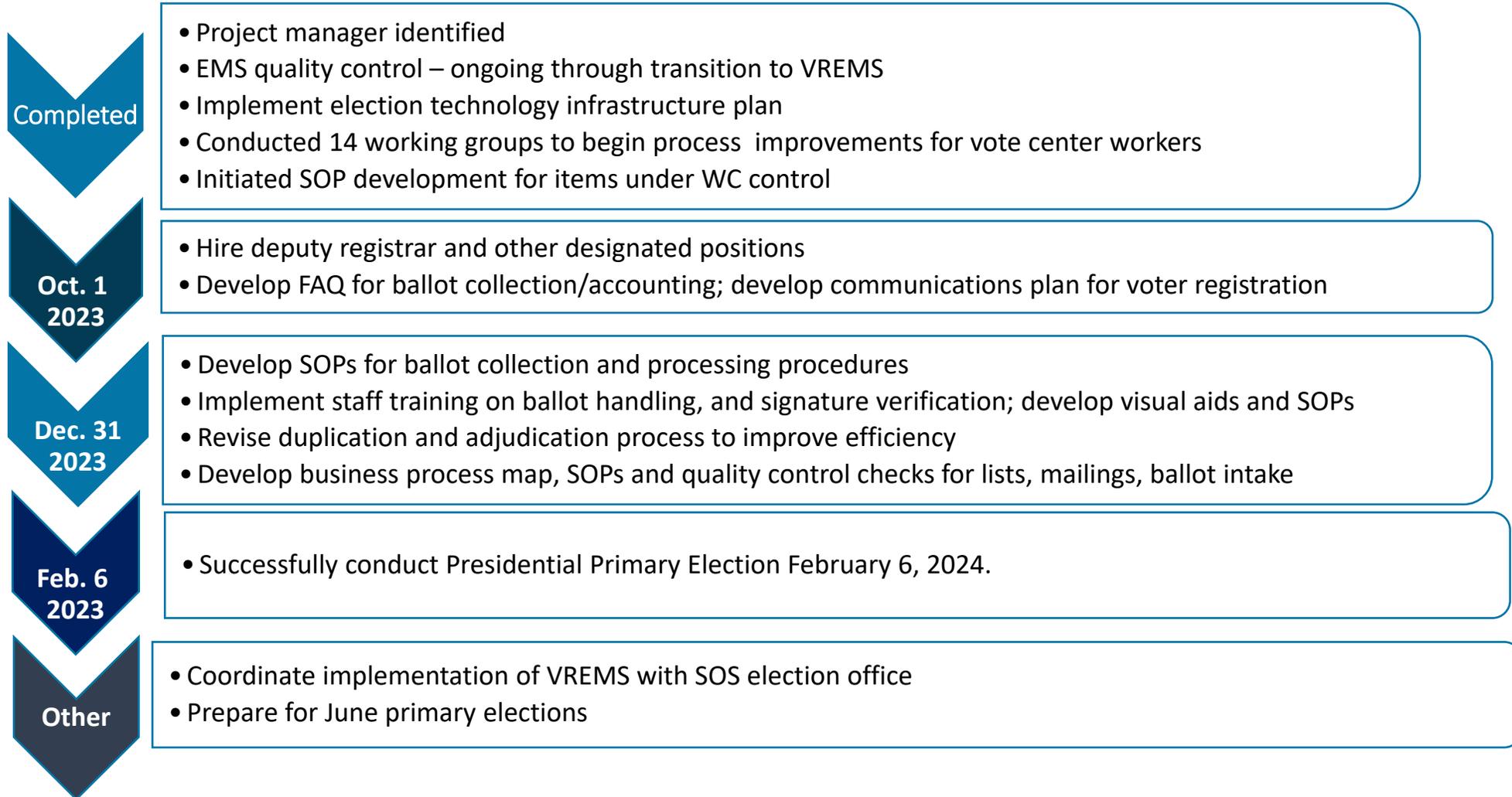


What We Are Not Acting On Right Away

1. The recommendations advised that we stop sorting ballots by precinct. We feel strongly that this practice allows us to more easily and quickly identify and address issues.
2. The recommendations advised that we provide more warehouse and ballot processing space. While we agree with this recommendation, we will need to implement after the 2024 elections and identifying funding through the FY25 budgeting process.
3. The recommendations suggested the addition of two positions that are not already included in the FY24 budget staffing plan:
 - Public Information Officer – Plan to include in FY25 budget process.
 - ROV Cybersecurity Chief – This function is already being addressed through Tech Services department. We will continue to monitor the need for more resources going forward.



Registrar of Voters: Timeline of Proposed Duties





ROV Timeline

- Developed an extensive implementation plan and timeline for TEG recommendations.
- Including report for those who want a more comprehensive deep dive into the plan.
- Include a visual timeline/calendar of deadlines to identify now
 - Completed recommendations
 - Oct 1 – SOPs (only 8 weeks for this deadline)
 - Feb 6 (PPP) - SOS tools/support
 - June primary



SOS Support

- **Training and education:** Make appropriate revisions in order to maximize the usefulness of both the training and EPM support for the Washoe County staff.
- **Funding:** They will communicate any and all funding opportunities that might assist in developing increased capacity or otherwise address recommendations of the report.
- **Advocacy:** Secretary of State's Office is available to advocate as needed.
- **VREMS:** Continued collaboration in the State plan for the implementation of the State top down platform for Voter Registration and Election Management System.



Next Steps and Full Report

- Next Steps:
 - BCC Accepts the Action Plan
 - Audit Committee comments
 - TEG support and guidance
 - Staff support and guidance
 - SOS support and guidance
 - Election Citizens Advisory board (CAB) to review implementation of these recommendations, including the status and direction being taken, and provide updates to the Board of County Commissioners.

Part 1- Staffing, Organizational Structure and Training

Breakdown (if applicable)	Response	Assigned to	Timeline
Recommendation 1: Increase executive team management capacity and overall team size.			
Option 1: Hire an additional deputy registrar of voters.	In process as part of the approved FY24 budget	ROV/HR	To be completed by 11.1.2023
Option 2: Reclassify specialist positions as managers.	This will be considered for the next (FY2025) budget cycle	HR, Budget	FY25 budget year consideration
Recommendation 2: Hire a full-time public information officer.			
This will be implemented after the essential budgeted operational positions have been filled in time for the February 2024 Presidential Preference Primary.		ROV/HR	FY25 budget year consideration
Recommendation 3: Hire a senior-level election security office or allocate funding for this function as a contracted position.			
<p>Considering the sizable national risk profile of elections, the ROV should strongly consider hiring a senior level election security officer or planning to fulfill these duties through a contracted position. This can take the form of a chief technology officer (CTO), a chief information security officer (CISO), a program manager with critical infrastructure experience, or some hybrid of these. Whether this position is housed in the ROV, within TS, or added to the duties of the new development systems supervisor position proposed in Option 2 above, the focus on this area is critical.</p>			
This function now resides in Tech Services which is working with CISA to ensure compliance with Homeland Security best practices. We will continue to monitor and evaluate appropriate staffing needs.		Tech Services	Completed
Recommendation 4: Hire an administrative assistant for the executive team.			
This was part of the current budget process and is in process for the position to be filled. This will free time of the deputy registrar of voters and registrar of voters to focus on the department and ensure timely response of billing, HR and help in managing PRR.		ROV- Jamie Rodriguez	Completed
Recommendation 5: Hire additional office assistants.			
This was part of the current budget process and is in the process of hiring 6 additional office assistants to have better support and put permanent staff in more critical jobs currently handled by temporary employees as described in the report.		ROV- Jamie Rodriguez	To be completed by 10/1/2023

Thank you

