



Proposal for Review of DeKalb County Department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE)

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Overview

Together with our colleague Noah Praetz, who will be assisting with this project, our team provides you with over 40 years of experience running high quality elections at the local level. We understand better than most the challenges of planning for and running an election in a highly scrutinized environment. We have overseen the transition to new voting models and voting equipment, and successfully planned for high-turnout presidential elections. Last year we each decided that having setup successful, sustainable operations in our home jurisdictions, we could venture out to help our colleagues around the country. **Our goal is to help election professionals find solutions through policy, process, people and technology.**

Approach and Methodology

We take a holistic approach to running successful elections by focusing on both immediate improvements along with sustained success through long-term planning. At the center of successful elections are the people that run them, coupled with sound policy, excellent processes, and proper technology. Our approach is to document the current state of operations, document and identify policy issues, recommend process improvements and professional training needs, and identify potential technology enhancements. The following subsections further describe our approach and methodology.

Project Initiation and Background Material

We begin each project by identifying, gathering, reviewing and analyzing pertinent engagement information including: current process documentation, voter and election data, organization charts, customer service data including any surveys conducted with voters or staff, technical infrastructure, governance, previous audits (if applicable), news media, stakeholder and public feedback and input, public communications, and current customer forms for all voter transactions.

Stakeholder Process

Specific stakeholders, critical to the successful completion of this project, will be identified, and included in early interviews and focus groups to ensure clear expectations, provide communication about the project, and achieve alignment and support for the outcomes of this engagement.

Focus groups and interviews are an essential part of establishing a sound framework for decision-making that encompasses more than the technical issues, reflects the priorities

and needs of the various stakeholders most intimately affected by the recommendations proposed, and targets impacts and benefits sufficiently into the future to make the best use of resources.

Process Mapping and Analyses

Our approach will include working with appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SME) within the VRE. We understand the on-going operational priorities that staff must attend to, and the constraints of available time afforded to new tasks. Our experience in process mapping and analysis, however, indicates that the insight and involvement on the part of front line SMEs is essential to ensure several objectives.

We believe the knowledge of staff currently doing the tasks is critical for us to understand the structure as it exists today. Additionally, these SMEs have the most effective perspective to identify meaningful redundancies, bottlenecks and constraints that affect overall quality and performance.

Our approach to process enhancement and redesign begins and is guided by detailed process mapping. We do this because process mapping identifies critical features of work processes that are difficult to understand any other way. The mapping process will frame and guide the key goals of the project as outlined below and in the Scope of Work.

Goals for Consulting Project

1. Identify areas to improve VRE functions, efficiency and organizational structure in critical service areas based on industry standards and best practices.
2. Make detailed recommendations for improvement that are based on the anticipated increases in registration and turnout in 2020.
3. Assist VRE with plans for implementing the recommendations prior to the elections beginning in March 2020.
4. Assist the department in planning and preparing for the roll out of the new voting system in 2020.

For example, where mapping identifies those tasks that accomplish the key purpose of the process, we can also map the knowledge and skills required to do those tasks, classify the competencies required of an individual to accomplish the work, count the number of individuals who are competent to do the work, compare the available permanent and temporary workforce with the typical workload, and evaluate training support in these areas. In short, process mapping provides the focus and framework for all the assessment tasks, so that findings from the assessment work can be applied to a greater understanding of the process and how it might be improved.

Technology

Our team has significant experience implementing new voting systems, managing a change in voting models and systems, and creating and implementing various technological tools to support election administration. With that experience we can help VRE management and staff create a project management plan for successful implementation of the new Dominion voting system. Further, we believe that it is important to ensure policy and process are correct before expecting technology to solve issues that might actually be caused by a flawed policy or process.

We will review contracts with current technology providers to analyze the roles and responsibilities established, along with redundancies built into the technical structure and process. It is critical that a technology governance system is established and understood by all stakeholders. Delineating the various responsibilities between parties can help ensure successful use of technology - particularly voting equipment - where vendors are deeply embedded in the successful deployment.

Organizational Analyses

As part of the stakeholder interviews, we will determine the definition of “voter-centric” as it relates to managing the registration and elections process. This input will be used to gather input from VRE management and staff regarding existing policies. Working with the SMEs and building upon the process mapping information, we will identify the critical skills required to carry out the registration and election operations process and compare these skills to the current hiring criteria to identify gaps or opportunities for improvements.

This listing of critical skills will also provide the building block for a training assessment. We will develop an inventory of the current training provided and assess its applicability to the critical skills. We will utilize a simple survey to get staff's input on the adequacy of current training and its applicability to the critical skills. The self assessment results, taken with the overall evaluation of required skills, will support our recommendations.

Process Improvement

When it comes to process improvement, the goal is to innovate, elevate, and repeat. For this portion of the engagement, our goals are as follows:

- Analyze customer data and feedback
- Focus on value and minimize waste (Lean)
- Collect and use data
- Reduce variation (Six Sigma)
- Engage with employees and recommend training programs in process improvement
- Provide goals for continuous improvement

Project Team*

Jennifer Morrell

Amber McReynolds

Noah Praetz

*Resumes provided as an attachment

Availability

Work can begin immediately. Based on our approach, we anticipate spending December requesting and reviewing background information with onsite assessments beginning in January. Given the tight time frame and desired completion deadline of February 2020, the onsite assessments will be compacted into one full week in January.

Project Timeline and Milestones

I. Voter Registration Analysis & Draft Report - end January

Findings from analysis along with written recommendations for changes, improvements, and implementation.

II. Vote By Mail Analysis & Draft Report - end of January

Findings from analysis along with written recommendations for changes, improvements, and implementation.

III. Management/Resource Planning Analysis & Draft Report - end of January

Findings from analysis along with written recommendations for changes, improvements, and implementation.

IV. Dominion Voting System Implementation Analysis & Draft Report - end of January

Findings from analysis along with written recommendations for changes, improvements, and implementation.

V. Final Report - end of February

- Quality assurance and performance metrics.
- Timeline and implementation strategy
- Funding and budgeting recommendations
- Policy and procedure improvements
- User-friendly step-by-step process recommendations
- Sample step-by-step process guides

VI. Assessment Report for Implementation - mid March

Accounting measures for the Department's implementation of the consultant's recommendations.

Rate Structure

Each of our team members will bill at the rate of \$150 per hour offsite and \$200 per hour onsite. All other costs will be absorbed. The total cost of the engagement will not exceed \$60,000

The below data reflects the "not to exceed" cost for each phase of the project.

- Voter Registration Analysis & Draft Report - \$10,000
- Vote By Mail Analysis & Draft Report - \$10,000
- Management/Resource Planning Analysis & Draft Report - \$10,000
- Dominion Voting System Implementation Analysis & Draft Report - \$10,000
- Final Report - \$15,000
- Assessment Report for Implementation - \$5,000

References

All three project team members bring the following experience and qualifications:

- Held the role of Director of Elections in a metro county overseeing the voter registration and elections operation for mid- to large-sized counties
- Certified Elections Registration Administrator (CERA) accredited by Election Center and Auburn University
- Consult with county and state election departments as subject matter experts
- Engage at the national level on specific subject matter areas
- Experience designing new policies and processes in multiple states

- Successfully transitioned legacy voting systems to Dominion Voting System prior to a high-turnout election

Specific Team Member References

Amber

- Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Michigan
- Secretary of State Kim Wyman, Washington
- Neal Kelley, Orange County California, Registrar of Voters

Jennifer

- John Arntz, City and County of San Francisco, Election Director
- Miriam Campbell, Washington Secretary of State, Voter Information Services Manager
- Robert Giles, New Jersey Secretary of State, State Election Director

Noah

- David Orr, Cook County IL, Former Cook County Clerk
- Jean Kazmarek, DuPage County IL, County Clerk

To: DeKalb County Department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE)

From: Jennifer Morrell and Amber McReynolds

Date: January 6, 2020

Subject: VRE Assessment Activities and Timeline

We look forward to beginning our assessment of the DeKalb County Department of Voter Registration and Elections (VRE). Outlined below is a description of the activities we plan to undertake and an approximate amount of time we will spend on each area if we are onsite January 13th-17th.

We understand this is a very busy time for elections staff and want to be respectful of their time. We also want to make sure the VRE director and leadership are active partners in the project and feel it is important to meet with them regularly throughout the assessment to discuss questions, request data and printed material, and get initial reactions to proposed solutions. While we understand that staff, and particularly leadership, may have limited availability it will be important to have a POC during the week to help with questions and transitions from one set of study to the next.

If the January timeframe is not workable, we would propose 3 days onsite in January building initial relationships with VRE team, conducting stakeholder interviews, and doing some initial voter registration and vote-by-mail assessments followed by another week in February as suggested to complete the assessment phase of the project.

We will take any background material in advance of our visit but most beneficial would be an organization chart and corresponding job descriptions. We can also simply gather documents onsite. We also request approval to take pictures during our visit of equipment, forms, signs, rooms, work areas, etc. to assist us in documenting the various processes.

Other than the kickoff meeting with staff on the first day, the daily activities listed below can be completed in any order that is most convenient for VRE leadership.

Day 1

Time/Hours	Activity
1	Meeting with Election Director and other key VRE leadership. Introduce ourselves and goals for the assessment, set expectations, and resolve

	concerns. (Would like one or more members of this group to be available for a 30 minute morning debrief each day we are on site.)
1	<p>Kickoff meeting held the first day we are onsite with all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants introduce themselves and explain how we will document and process map the current state of operations. • Allow time for staff to ask questions and share concerns they might have about the project. <p>(Alternative) If we can't have a full hour with everyone together, we will take about 15 minutes at the start of each observation session to meet with just the staff engaged in that process, make introductions, and explain why we are there.</p>
6	<p>Voter Registration assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe application intake, processing, quality control • Review forms, work area layout • Map skills and competencies for performing the job • Review VR temp hiring plan and training
minimal	End-of-day email for Director to read. Overview of the day and requests for any data or documents we need.

Day 2

Time/Hours	Activity
.5	Morning debrief with VRE leadership
7	<p>Vote by Mail assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe application intake, processing, quality control • Review mail ballot packet and outbound process • Review mail ballot tracking practices/USPS relationships • Observe inbound ballot processing (intake, validation, sorting, opening, scanning, cure process, tracking and reconciliation) • Map skills and competencies for performing the job • Map facility layout • Review process scalability
1	Meeting/interview with Board of Commissioners (can be on any day)

minimal	End-of-day email for Director to read. Overview of the day and requests for any data or documents we need.
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Day 3

Time/Hours	Activity
.5	Morning debrief with VRE leadership
5	DVS Implementation assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review resource allocation formulas • Review policies and procedures • Review plans for staffing and training (poll workers) • Review the plans for voter education and outreach (how, when, and where of voting)
2	External stakeholders focus group (can be on any day) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties • LWV • Disability Community • Others
minimal	End-of-day email for Director to read. Overview of the day and requests for any data or documents we need.

Day 4 (This day will be focused almost entirely on VRE leadership and will require a significant amount of their time. This is one area of the assessment that may be delayed until February.)

Time/Hours	Activity
.5	Morning debrief with VRE leadership
1	Meeting/interview with Board of Registration and Elections (can be on any day)

6	Management & Resource Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review financial and human resource budgeting ● Review planning and forecasting tools ● Review COOP and security plans ● Review training requirements ● Review temporary staffing plan ● Review early voting/Election Day command center & support plan ● Review current quality assurance and metrics used by management
minimal	End-of-day email for Director to read. Overview of the day and requests for any data or documents we need.

Day 5 (This is one other segment of the assessment that could be moved to February if needed.)

Time/Hours	Activity
.5	Morning debrief with VRE leadership
4	Third party coordination - possible meetings with USPS reps and Dept of Drivers Services (these could be moved to any day and split apart)
2	VRE leadership team. This could be broken up over lunch and meeting at the end of the day.