



Elections Department Business Plan

Fiscal Years: 2024 and 2025*
(10/1/2023 through 9/30/2025)


Approved by:



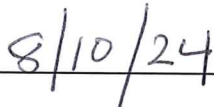
Christina White, Supervisor of Elections



Date



Jimmy Morales, Chief Operating Officer



Date

Plan Date: 12/21/2023

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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Department Mission

We pledge to instill trust and confidence by conducting elections that are fair, accurate, transparent, and accessible for all voters of Miami-Dade County.



Departmental Business Plan and Outlook
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Table of Organization

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

<p><u>OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS</u> Formulates and directs overall policy for departmental operations; ensures adherence with federal, state and local election laws</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 3</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 4</p>
<p><u>INFORMATION SYSTEMS</u> Manages ballot programming and coding, Vote-by-Mail mailing and processing, tabulation of election results and departmental information management</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 23</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 23</p>
<p><u>ADMINISTRATION</u> Responsible for budget coordination, accounts payable, procurement, election billing, grant monitoring and human resources</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 12</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 17</p>
<p><u>VOTER SERVICES</u> Oversees voter registration services; manages the statewide voter registration system; manages absentee voting and departmental mailroom activities; processes petitions</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 29</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 31</p>
<p><u>OPERATIONS</u> Oversees warehouse activities, including elections equipment logistics, ballot tracking and asset management; secures polling places countywide and ensures ADA compliance</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 24</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 25</p>
<p><u>OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS</u> Monitors federal, state and local legislation; coordinates Elections Canvassing Board activities, candidate qualifying, ballot preparation and proofing and liaison activities with candidates and municipalities</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 12</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 14</p>
<p><u>POLL WORKER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING</u> Manages recruitment, training and payroll processes as well as coordination of collection centers and administrative procedures for early voting and election day</p>	
<p><u>FY 22-23</u> 19</p>	<p><u>FY 23-24</u> 20</p>

The FY 2023-24 total number of full-time equivalent positions is 134



Our Customer

In the implementation of its core mission, the Elections Department serves various customer groups including the County's 1.53 million registered voters, potential voters, poll workers, County candidates, political committees, third-party voter organizations, and municipalities. The most important needs of the Department's primary customer, registered voters, are to be "Election Ready" through education to provide a fair, accurate, transparent, and convenient voting experience. The cyclical nature of elections drives up the demand from customers in even numbered years when state and federal countywide elections are held and in odd years for municipal and special elections.

Satisfaction is measured differently among the different customer groups:

- Before and after large elections, the Supervisor of Elections meets with various community groups, local political parties, and other stakeholders to solicit feedback and discuss elections logistics.
- Municipalities are surveyed after the Department conducts their local elections; the results are distributed to senior staff and tracked on the Department's scorecard.
- After large elections, poll workers are surveyed via online platform regarding their experience with poll worker training and their readiness for Election Day duties.

The Department will explore the feasibility of conducting voter and candidate satisfaction surveys upon the conclusion of large elections.

Strategic Alignment, 4E, and Thrive305 Summary

The Elections Department primarily supports the following goals and objectives from the General Government portion of the Miami-Dade County Strategic Plan:

GG1: Accessible, equitable, transparent, and responsible government.

GG1-1: Support a customer-focused organization by providing convenient access to information and services, and by ensuring processes are easy to navigate.

GG1-2: Facilitate community outreach and engagement to promote better decision-making in County government.

GG1-3: Ensure involvement of local organizations to help address priority needs of our residents.



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GG2: Excellent, engaged, and resilient County workforce.

Strategic Alignment, 4E, and Thrive305 Summary (continued)

Selected Measure Name	4E (Environment, Equity, Economy, or Engagement)	Thrive 305 Priority or Action
Wait Time for Poll Workers Calling in for Election Day Assistance	Equity	Priority 1
Successful Public Testing of Voting Equipment for Scheduled Elections (Logic & Accuracy Test)	Engagement	Priority 1
Number of New Voter Registrations Processed	Engagement	Priority 1
Number of Elections Where Results were Completely Reported and Published Online by Midnight	Equity	Priority 1
Number of Outreach Events to Promote Voter Education	Engagement	Priority 2
Number of Media Requests Fulfilled	Engagement	Priority 1
Number of Public Records Requests Completed	Engagement	Priority 1
Overall Municipal Clerk Satisfaction with the Elections Department's Conduct of their Election	Engagement	Priority 1
Number of Newly Recruited Poll Workers	Engagement	Action 2.2
Number of Poll Workers Who Received Election Readiness Training	Engagement	Action 2.1
Percentage of Voters Who Renewed their VBM Request	Equity	Action 12.1
Percentage of initiative petition batches processed within 45 days	Equity	Action 12.1
Resolve Customer Inquiries by Phone Within 4 Minutes (Registration)	Equity	Action 2.1
Average Wait Times During Early Voting	Equity	Priority 1
Average Wait Times on Election Day	Equity	Priority 1
Number of Days to Process Vote by Mail Requests	Equity	Priority 1



KEY ISSUES

There are several significant factors critical to the Department's successful implementation of the business plan. The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats have been identified:

Strengths - The Department has a reputation for integrity and accountability in the conduct of every election regardless of size or scope. This is accomplished through doing as much public outreach as possible, communicating key messages and successes through social media and traditional media outlets, ensuring voter registration is easy and accessible, offering three convenient ways to vote, conducting incident-free elections, and reporting results accurately and timely.

A comprehensive review of procedures with staff prior to each election ensures the integrity, reliability, accuracy, timeliness, security, and confidentiality of data, information, and knowledge. Detailed written procedures are adhered to by our workforce followed by quality assurance protocols to ensure success.

The Department maintains an agile and results-oriented business focus to accomplish the highest levels of productivity and address changing business needs. This is a high priority since election laws are continuously changing and impacting operational policies and procedures. Microsoft Project, as a planning tool, and multi-layered quality assurance checklists are used within each division to synchronize the workforce through the election cycle, ensuring all necessary steps are performed according to a defined set of standards. The management staff focuses on the importance of redundancy and completing quality assurance checks in all its operations. This is a culture that is embedded at all levels of the organization.

The Department's ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances, often with time to react, is a major strength. Early Voting availability, number of polling places, temporary staffing needs and availability, and equipment allocation must be reviewed and modified depending on the size and scope of the election. There is a constant need to keep up with changing technology and security measures.

The Department's use of projections to ensure staffing and equipment are commensurate with the size of the election has been integral to confirm resources are allocated appropriately, voter wait times are minimal and the overall experience pleasant and convenient.



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The permanent workforce of this Department is highly goal oriented and takes a tremendous amount of pride in their work. Since an engaged workforce is paramount to success, this is considered one of the biggest strengths of the Department.

Weaknesses – Ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels. Department vacancies, turnover due to work-from-home opportunities, uncertainty brought by transition to a Constitutional Office and the dependence on a large temporary workforce forces upper management to focus on streamlining business processes, incorporating technology, identifying needs that can be met with minimal fiscal impact, and sustaining employee morale. Being able to recruit and onboard the needed quantity and qualified temporary workforce continues to strain operations. Twenty percent of the department's workforce is composed of employees who started this fiscal year with no elections experience, which comes with a steep learning curve. This is a major weakness considering there is zero tolerance for error in the field of elections administration.

Voter convenience is a top priority for the Department and with that comes the aspirational goal of minimal wait times for elections. To that end, the Department has taken a more analytical approach to resource allocation. In addition, the registered voter count at polling places has been more evenly distributed, and the voter check-in process has been greatly expedited. These are major improvements that will go a long way in managing wait times. However, there are so many external variables that impact wait times, such as the length of the ballot, voters' preparation and knowledge of ballot content, education of the process or their registration status, and time in which voters arrive at the polls. Importantly, we are going into an election cycle with the fewest number of people registered for a Vote by Mail ballot. We are making every effort to increase this number, relieving in person voting. These factors make it difficult to predict and consider for planning purposes. To combat this, the Department focuses heavily on voter education.

The Department must continue to invest in technology to ensure statutory compliance, technological advancement, and cyber security resilience. The lack of reinvesting in technology may lead to the Department's inability to comply with federal and state law as well as conduct operations efficiently.

While the Department responds promptly and appropriately to all customer concerns, there is no uniform and systematic method to track or determine various customer requirements or trends. A voter satisfaction survey will be conducted by the Department to track customer feedback and internal responses, giving the Department a broader view to continue improving direct service to customers.

Legislative changes can place pressure on the workforce and existing operations, particularly since these changes sometimes have short implementation timeframes. Additional tracking and reporting requirements make voluminous and detailed-oriented work even more difficult



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considering strict timelines, and changes close to an election can also be confusing for voters, requiring additional education. We will continue to work with the Florida Supervisors of Elections Association to work with and communicate impacts to Florida law makers.

Poll workers are essential to elections support, and our annual, successive Poll Worker Recruitment Campaign has contributed to strengthening our poll worker database. However, to maintain a viable and robust database of qualified poll workers, we must continue to stay abreast of market changes and provide competitive compensation as incentive for experienced poll workers to take on leadership roles, to retain poll workers, and attract new talent. This has become a growing issue since COVID.

As a result of a change in Florida law requiring voters who have a Vote-by-Mail request on file to renew it after every General Election, we are investing heavily in encouraging voters who want to continue voting using this method to renew as soon as possible. The sooner we understand the number of voters planning to vote by mail, the better our ability to project patterns related to in person voting and plan resources accordingly. Not having a reliable number in a timely manner is a vulnerability for the department.

Opportunities - By all accounts, the 2022 election cycle was a success for Miami-Dade County. Technological and operational enhancements resulted in a well-organized and effective election where voter convenience, accessibility, and reliability were top priorities. The Department's goal is to continue providing a pleasant voting experience for all Miami-Dade County voters to build trust and confidence.

To that end, the Department will also focus on:

- Promoting Vote-by-Mail and Early Voting to relieve the pressure from Election Day turnout.
- The continuation of cybersecurity initiatives and improvements to ensure election infrastructure is protected and secure.
- Communicating the impact from reprinting to affected voters to ensure there is no confusion regarding their election day polling location.
- Expanding the use of new technology will assist the department in completing the ballot duplication process more timely.
- Providing overseas voters and voters with disabilities a more convenient option for voting by mail. This will significantly reduce voter error.
- Expand the use of new technology that will allow the department to complete post-election audits more thoroughly. Growing our student poll worker program to create opportunities and engage youth in the electoral process.
- Completion of the new leased elections building space to allow for a more efficient organization, preparation, and testing of voting equipment and allow reconfiguration of



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existing space at Elections Headquarters for administrative needs and enhanced public viewing areas.

The increasing demands on elections administration including enhancing voter convenience and accessibility; reducing wait times and line management; and decongestion of polling facilities threatened the Department's ability to work within the confines of the existing building. At the height of a countywide election, the Department operated out of three locations: headquarters, an auxiliary administrative space and warehouse space. Current warehousing space is inadequate and the ability to store efficiently and effectively, repair, test and stage voting equipment and supplies was constantly being stressed. The need for warehouse and administrative space was crucial to the needs of the department with the acquisition of the new location, the Department is excited to address our growing needs in FY 23-24 and 24-25 by reconfiguring Elections Headquarters and retrofitting the new warehouse to suit needs.

Threats - State legislative changes remain a threat to the business environment of elections. The Department will continue to closely monitor legislative changes, advocate for legislative priorities, and hope to educate the Legislature on the negative operational impacts of certain proposed changes.

In recent years, there has been a spike in last-minute legal action resulting in court orders amid elections as well as extensive and complex public records requests that require legal review. This strains the Department's planned operations, causes unforeseen operational impacts, diversion of resources and can have budgetary implications as we are forced to adjust resource needs.

The number, frequency, and complexity of public record requests that the department receives has grown exponentially. In addition, the sensitivity of the information being requested continues to evolve. There are even circumstances where the department is being threatened with legal action in relation to public record requests. The length of time required to fulfill requests, the need for the County Attorney's Office to review for guidance, and the expertise needed to ensure we are following State Statute requirements has become particularly burdensome for the department.

Within recent election cycles, the number of Special Elections has grown. Due to stringent municipal charter timelines, this poses a possible threat as overlapping dates and resource allocations are spread thin to accommodate unplanned elections, and often leave little time to educate voters and provide adequate time to Vote-by-Mail.

Municipal runoff elections scheduled within weeks of General Elections are also problematic for the Department. This conflicts with our ability to simultaneously comply with statutory deadlines for recount, certification, and post audit procedures. It also limits voters' opportunity



to timely receive, review and return their Vote-by-Mail ballot. Early Voting for these runoffs cannot be accommodated due to the potential state mandate countywide, districtwide, or municipal recounts as well as volume of municipal run-offs.

Securing facilities that are available for poll worker training is difficult given the number of days/weeks needed at each location. The Department must train more than 6,000 poll workers in a matter of months. We will continue to work with ISD and other County partners to better solidify training locations year to year.

The Elections' community has endured cybersecurity concerns for years and most recently threats to election mail. To ensure there is no impact to our day-to-day operations the Department is working to establish safety protocols and provide staff training by collaborating with the Department of State's Cybersecurity Navigators, United States Postal Inspection Service, and our local law enforcement partners.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

- Ensure all municipal, special elections, and the three County-wide elections in 2024 are conducted fairly, accurately, transparently, and accessible for all voters with election night results completely reported timely.
- Ensure ongoing security of voting processes and mail room operations by taking advantage of federal and state programs and trainings designed to further enhance cyber resiliency and provide feedback on implementation of established safety protocols and regularly monitor Qualys reports/address vulnerabilities on a routine basis.
- Continue education and outreach campaigns that will increase voter awareness to include the impact of reprecincting, voter registration, education on the three ways to vote, "how to" videos, and messages from the Supervisor of Elections. The campaigns will include the Elections Department's new catchphrase "Your Voice. Your Vote," which engages voters by highlighting that their involvement in the voting process is their opportunity to have their voice heard.
- Continue to heavily invest in encouraging voters who want to Vote by Mail to renew their request as soon as possible. We will continue a multi-faceted approach - direct communication with voters, social media, non-paid publicity utilizing media outlets, paid advertising, outreach events and community partnerships.
- Provide accurate and prompt information to county candidates and political action committees regarding qualifying and campaign finance; and conduct in-person and/or virtual quarterly workshops and seminars to assist candidates in their 2024 campaigns.
- Work cooperatively with the Florida Supervisors of Elections Association and the County Attorney's Office on proposed legislation throughout the legislative session.



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- Continue to expand youth poll worker participation and continue to engage all poll workers in the electoral process by providing a thorough and effective training curriculum.
- Completion of the new leased elections building space to allow for a more efficient organization, preparation, and testing of voting equipment and allow reconfiguration of existing space at Elections Headquarters for administrative needs and enhanced public viewing areas.
- Continue working with the new Temporary Agency to ensure they can accommodate the Department's demands.
- Continue to incentivize experienced poll workers to take on leadership roles, to retain poll workers, and attract new talent.
- Invest in professional development, succession planning, and employee recognition programs to include certification courses for managers and employee events.
- Launch Elections University for employees to cross train throughout the Department.
- Work with OMB on the transition agreements between the County and an independent Supervisor of Elections office Request necessary funding for transitional items required for the independent Supervisor of Elections office.
- Ensure current Elections Department employees receive transitional information and assistance during the transition process to the independent Supervisor of Elections office.
- Transition of the department budget, procurement, human resources, and financial operations to its own INFORMS Business Unit.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

The Department looks forward to an enthusiastic and engaged electorate during the 2024 election cycle, which will include three countywide elections. We are positioned for success once again by focusing on and accomplishing the priority initiatives listed above.

Continue education to affected voters due to reprecincting with ample outreach will be critical to a successful voter experience.

The Department's ongoing maintenance of the voter rolls is also key. This will be accomplished by partnering with the Department of State and the Miami-Dade County Clerk's Office to implement additional requirements recently mandated by state law. These processes continue to be refined and are more thorough, and the voter rolls are more accurate and up to date than ever.

The Department's process to track and report wait times at Early Voting locations and Election Day polling locations will continue to be used to confirm the Department's distribution of voting equipment, staff, and other resources needed to meet our aspirational goal that no voter waits in line for more than one hour for future countywide elections.



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Continuing the staffing and resource levels necessary to ensure elections are conducted in a manner that is secure and free of error is critical. This includes the continued support of County Departments and use of County employees in key roles within precincts, not just in 2024, but also sustained after the Department transitions into a constitutional office. This will remain critical for the continued success of Election Day operations.

Poll worker recruitment and performance continues to be at forefront of the department's outlook expanding on our communication plan, community partnerships, new recruitment/retention initiatives and ensuring funds continue to be allocated under the Poll Worker Recruitment campaign.

The Department will routinely review the elections cybersecurity program, consult with other election offices, and law enforcement partners at the federal, state and local levels, and take advantage of the variety of Federal and State programs designed to further enhance cyber resiliency.

Focusing on these initiatives, and others, becomes possible due to the expansion of space. Completion of the new leased elections building space to allow for a more efficient organization, preparation, and testing of voting equipment and allow reconfiguration of existing space at Elections Headquarters for administrative needs and enhanced public viewing areas.

Lastly, the transition to the Office of the Supervisor of Elections as an independent elected office in 2025 requires planning and coordination. The initiatives stated above will remain a bigger focus in the successful implementation of this transition.

To date, the Department has been very successful in maintaining high voter confidence by ensuring voter registration and all three voting methods are as convenient as possible, conducting all aspects of election administration fairly and transparently, with results reported accurately and timely. Voters can expect to receive the same level of election integrity looking ahead to the 2024 election cycle and beyond.

ATTACHMENT 1

BUSINESS PLAN REPORT

