



COUNTY OF YOLO

ACE – ASSESSOR/CLERK-RECORDER/ELECTIONS
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JESSE SALINAS
ASSESSOR/CLERK-RECORDER/REGISTRAR OF VOTERS



August 18, 2023

The Honorable Daniel M. Wolk
Superior Court of California, County of Yolo
1000 Main Street
Woodland, CA 95695

Steven A. Oldham
Foreperson
Yolo County Grand Jury 2022-23
P.O. Box 2142
Woodland, CA 95776-2142

VIA U.S. MAIL AND VIA EMAIL TO GrandJury@yolocounty.org

RE: Safe and Secure? A New Look at the Yolo County Elections Office

Dear Judge Wolk:

On June 27, 2023, the Yolo County Grand Jury released a report entitled, “Safe and Secure? A New Look at the Yolo County Elections Office.” This report directed specific responses to findings and recommendations to the Yolo County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters. The requested responses are set forth below:

F-1 The Yolo County Elections Office will need stable funding in coming years for upgrades and maintenance of electronic voting equipment.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

F-2 The Yolo County Elections Office makes extensive efforts in voter outreach, through media communication and visits with various citizen groups, and by operating a mobile vote center. While it has goals, they are not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-specific) nor are metrics in place to determine how closely the goals are achieved.

Response: The respondent disagrees partially with the finding. According to the Voters Choice Act (2016), counties conducting elections are required to update the Election Administration Plan, which includes setting outreach goals. Although these goals aren't entirely SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), they do serve

as initial reference points. As the Grand Jury recognized, the Yolo County Elections Office makes extensive efforts in voter outreach, and it is always looking for additional ways to reach voters and will continue do so by researching additional metric methods, such as SMART, that would further support elections offices and their outreach programs.

F-3 The Yolo County Elections Office lacks consistent training to help staff and poll workers respond directly to violence (physical, guns and knives or bomb threats).

Response: The respondent disagrees partially with this finding. Emergency preparedness is already a component of our in-person physical pieces of training. Additional workplace safety trainings are also offered to staff through the County's Human Resources Department. However, the County and the Elections Office are always striving to enhance staff and poll worker training and recognizes that there may be additional training options to consider. The Yolo County Elections Office will continue to explore additional training options like those addressing the areas identified by the Grand Jury.

F-4 The Yolo County Elections Office needs additional and more flexible space to meet staff productivity needs. In addition to appropriate space, additional training is needed to meet minimum ergonomic standards.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

R-2 The Elections Office should create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-specific) goals for its outreach efforts, including metrics and a timeline for reviewing such efforts and determining how closely the goals are achieved. In addition, the Elections Office should complete a final report on responses to its voter survey. Both the SMART goals and metrics and the voter survey final report should be submitted to the Yolo County Grand Jury by December 31, 2023.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The deadline of December 31, 2023, is not reasonable since the election must be certified by April 4, 2024. As noted above in response to F-2, the Elections Office will continue to research such metric methods, including SMART. Once a metric method is identified, our office can compile the metrics results and the final voter survey report. We anticipate compiling the results of both by the end of the fiscal year and can provide those results to the Grand Jury.

R-3 Active shooter and bomb threat risks should: 1) be assessed thoroughly utilizing appropriate resources (such as local law enforcement, YCPARMIA, safety staff, etc.), relevant policies updated and communicated to all new staff and poll workers. 2) Trainings should be updated and implemented at least annually for all Elections staff and at the beginning of each election for all poll workers. To implement these recommendations, a detailed plan for completing the assessment and changes to workplace safety-related policies and trainings with an implementation plan should be completed by December 1, 2023, with full implementation prior to the next scheduled election (March 5, 2024).

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation.

R-4 A thorough assessment of the Yolo County Elections Office (front and back areas) by Human Resources staff and knowledgeable Yolo County third-party providers, such as YCPARMIA, should be conducted by January 1, 2024. During the assessment, input should also be gathered from Elections staff about how equipment and storage needs impact work spaces during election periods. At minimum, such assessment should determine: 1) whether the current space is adequate to meet the Election Office's growing needs; 2) how the work spaces can be reconfigured to address day-to-day and election period needs; 3) the furnishings or equipment that should be purchased, installed and training provided for appropriate use to reduce the possibility of MSDs and other injuries; 4) how the funding will be made available to complete these changes; and 5) how ergonomics training should be updated and implemented for regular staff at least annually and poll workers at the beginning of each election.

Response: The respondent agrees with the recommendation.

Sincerely,



Jesse Salinas

Yolo County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters