EARLY VOTING PLAN

AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION

AUGUST 4, 2020

Office of Maricopa County Recorder Adrian Fontes & Elections Department

Contents

Early Voting Plan Overview

The Maricopa County Elections Department Early Voting Plan outlines the background, constraints, strategies, and tactics that staff will use to prepare for the upcoming 2020 **August Primary Election.** Pursuant to the Arizona Revised Statutes, the elements of this plan are directly under the purview of the Maricopa County Recorder and the Director of Early Voting and Election Services. In the spirit of collaboration and coordination, this plan was developed in conjunction with the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan prepared by the Director of Election Day and Emergency Voting and approved by the Maricopa Board of Supervisors in June 2020.

This plan serves to ensure that the Recorder's Office and Elections Department provides voters with a reliable, secure and accessible Voter Registration and Early Voting process for the Primary Election. This plan also provides to the Board, Maricopa County voters and key stakeholders information related to Voter Registration and Early Voting activities with the goal of transparency and increased voter participation in the election. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department is committed to improving the voter experience and increasing voter turnout by providing the most accessible and voter-centric voting processes available.

Voter Registration and Eligibility for the August Primary Election

The Recorder's Office is the custodian of the voter registration database for the County and, as such, is committed to a robust education and communication effort in order to help all voters understand the unique registration and eligibility rules of each election. The voter registration deadline for the August 4 Primary Election is July 6, 2020. If a voter wishes to participate in the August Primary Election, they must register to vote on or before July 6, 2020.

Though address and name changes can be updated at the voting location environment via our SiteBook check-in system when voting in person, by law, political party changes cannot be made after the July 6 deadline.

Unlike the recent Presidential Preference Election (PPE), where only those registered as "Democrats" could participate, all Maricopa County voters are eligible to vote in the August Primary election. Pursuant to A.R.S. 16-542, however, voters who are not registered with a recognized political party (e.g. "independents") must choose which political party's primary ballot to receive. The Elections Department must be notified of this selection by July 24 if the voter wants a ballot mailed to them. Voters who are not registered with a political party can vote in person early or on Election Day and make their partisan ballot selection.

All voters on the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) were sent a 90-day notice in May to confirm their correct address. In that mailing, voters who are not registered with a political party were also notified of the requirement to select which partisan ballot they want if they choose to participate in the August Primary election. If there are nonpartisan jurisdictional elections occurring in an individual voter's area, those "independent" voters also have the option to select a ballot containing only the nonpartisan races.

Because the recent PPE had different requirements for voters not registered with a political party, there is concern that "independent" voters will be confused about their ability to participate in this election. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department have included a strong emphasis on educating voters not registered with a political party about this process and key deadlines in the communications plan.

Early Voting

Maricopa County's voters historically vote early by mail in large numbers. Currently, 74% of all active voters are on the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) and are sent ballots by mail automatically for every election in which they are eligible to participate. In recent countywide and federal elections, voters on the PEVL turnout to vote in proportionately larger numbers than those voters that are not on the PEVL, traditionally making up a larger percentage of the overall vote.

In light of COVID-19, the Recorder's Office and the Maricopa County Elections Department want to ensure all voters are aware of their voting options for the upcoming elections. Whether the voter decides to vote by mail or in-person, our goal is to provide safe and accessible choices that make it easier for a voter to participate. On the Early Voting side of providing options, a voter can request a one-time Early Ballot mailing or sign up for the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) by visiting **BeBallotReady.Vote**.

To expand upon the early voting option, a voter can as always make a one-time Early Ballot request to have a ballot mailed to them but just for a specific election, without having to sign up to permanently have ballots mailed. However, for those voters that do want to have a ballot sent to them automatically for every election they are eligible to vote in, a new Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) "**Online Portal**" was recently developed to offer a secure yet simpler way for a voter **to sign up for this status.** Previously, Maricopa County voters could only sign up for the PEVL with a paper form or online through the state Motor Vehicle Division website via a process more specifically designed for registering new voters. Now already registered voters have another option to meet their needs.

In addition, for this August Primary Election, unaffiliated or independent voters can participate. Arizona has an open Primary Election and this means that a voter registered without a party preference can cast a ballot but will need to select a ballot. These voters may choose from:

⬤ Republican   ⬤ Democratic   ⬤ City/Town Only (when available)

In addition to being able to visit **BeBallotReady.Vote** to make any of the above selections, voters can also visit **Request.Maricopa.Vote** to go straight to the "**One-Time Request**" option or the new "**Permanent Early Voting List Request**" page.

The popularity of Early Voting among Maricopa County voters continues to hold steady and appears to be trending-up in smaller turnout elections, such as a primary.

Election and year	Total number of votes cast in that election	Number of early votes cast (by mail or in-person)	Percentage of total votes that came from early ballots
2016 PPE	621,976	533,772	85.8
2016 Primary	555,844	485,221	87.3

2016 General	1,608,875	1,251,975	77.8
2018 CD 8 Special Primary Election	116,732	108,238	92.7
2018 CD 8 Special General Election	184,201	164,939	89.5
2018 Primary	699,636	598,154	85.5
2018 General	1,454,103	1,184,261	81.4
2020 PPE	732,376	321,870	89.8

Below is a graphical representation of turnout for past elections that shows the upward trend and popularity of the Early Voting Ballot by Mail process (blue) versus the In-Person Voter turnout (gold).

Early Voting Laws and Key Dates

By state law, the Early Voting period begins 27 days before Election Day for both mailing and in-person early voting. For the upcoming August 4 Primary Election, that "27 days before" falls on July 8, 2020. Early ballots are mailed out on this date and will begin to arrive in eligible voters' mailboxes as soon as July 9, 2020. State law requires that all voted ballots be received back by 7 p.m. on Election Day and the US Postal Service recommends that ballots be mailed at least 6 days before Election Day to guarantee timely delivery. Voters will be guided to place their ballots in the mail by July 29, 2020 to ensure delivery by Election Day. Ballots received after Election Day, even if they are post-marked as mailed on Election Day, are not valid by law and are not counted. Traditionally, a proportionately small number of ballots are received after Election Day despite robust efforts to educate voters about the recommended mailing timelines (approximately 1,500 ballots in each of the last two General Elections were received late, or roughly 0.1% of votes).

In-Person Early Voting

In addition to returning ballots by mail, voters have several options to submit their completed early ballot including:

- Dropping off voted ballot at any Early Voting location
- Utilize ballot drop-boxes located throughout Maricopa County, including Vote Centers on Election Day
- Vote early in-person

Considering the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 virus, the Elections Department, in partnership with and support of the Maricopa County Recorder's Office, is moving to a "vote-anywhere" Vote Center model for Election Day, complimented by 27 days of Early Voting. Voters will be able to choose the date, time, and location that is most convenient for them to vote during this Primary Election season.

There will be between 75-100 Vote Centers available on Election Day, August 4, with most locations opening prior to Election Day through a phased approach to significantly expand early voting options. This expansion will include opening vote centers during evening hours and the weekends of July 25-26 and August 1-2. Each phase will see an additional number of in-person early locations open from that scheduled date through Election Day. The phased opening schedule for the geographically dispersed Vote Centers is listed below. A final list of Vote Centers and hours of operation will be published at **Locations.Maricopa.Vote** approximately 30 days before the election. More information about factors contributing to the shift to a Vote Center model and safety protocols for in-person voting locations in response to COVID-19 can be found in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan.

Phase	Number of "Vote Anywhere" Vote Centers	Scheduled dates
Phase 1	5 Vote Centers (28-day sites)	Open 7/8/2020 - 8/4/2020
Phase 2	55 additional Vote Centers (14-day sites)	Open 7/22/2020 - 8/4/2020
Phase 3	15-25 additional Vote Centers (7-day sites)	Open 7/29/2020 - 8/4/2020
Phase 4	5-20 additional Vote Centers (1-day sites)	Open on Tuesday, August 4, 2020 (Election Day)

New Early Voting ID Requirements

Due to a change in law during the 2019 legislative session, voters voting early in-person will be required to show identification the same way that is required on Election Day at a voting location. This requirement will be new to many in-person early voters. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department plans to incorporate education about this new requirement into its paid and earned media plans (discussed later in this document). Additionally, Poll Workers in Early Voting centers and Special Election Board staff who assist voters to cast early ballots will be trained on this requirement. The new ID requirement for in-person Early Voting does not alleviate the requirement that a voter sign the affidavit envelope for an early ballot, and the Elections Department is still required to verify the signature on that affidavit envelope before tabulating the ballot.

Early Vote Processing

For the August Primary Election, early ballots will be automatically assembled and mailed out to all eligible voters on the PEVL that are registered with a recognized party (Republican, Democrat and Libertarian). The number of recognized party voters receiving early ballots for this election is approximately 1.3 million voters. In addition, all independent or unaffiliated voters are also eligible to participate in this August "open" Primary Election, but those voters will need to provide us with the party ballot they want to receive, or select the non-partisan city/town only version when applicable, as noted earlier in this plan. There are, as of this report, over 490,000 PEVL voters that fall into this independent or unaffiliated category and approximately 290,000 Non-PEVL independent or unaffiliated voters. With the active campaign to inform voters of their voting options (early by mail, early in-person and in-person on Election Day), we expect to see an increase in use of the early voting process for both PEVL signup and one-time mail ballot requests. For planning purposes, the Elections Department is preparing for up to 700,000 voters in the August Primary Election. Using this high-end forecast will ensure enough resources are allocated and available to efficiently and quickly process early ballots received by mail or dropped-off, and to accommodate voters who choose to vote in person either during the Early Voting period, emergency voting or on Election Day. Based on past voter behavior in primaries and smaller special elections, we are further preparing for up to 86% of the votes (or up to 600,000 ballots) in the August Primary Election to be cast early by mail, in person or dropped off on Election Day.

Number of Projected Registered Voters (Active Voters Only)	Turnout Percentage Overall (Active Voters Only)	Anticipated turnout in August 4 Primary (for planning purposes)*	Anticipated number of early ballots to be cast based on 86% early vote estimate (for planning purposes)*
2,395,738	29.23%	700,318	602,276

*The Elections Department looks at past voting data and assumes an enhanced level of voter participation to ensure staff and other resources are available to accommodate the highest level of potential voter participation. More information about the voter turnout model is detailed in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan. These figures should not be construed to be official voter turnout predictions.

The Early Voting program creates a large volume of mail and all ballot packets must be carefully accounted for. The Elections Department and our printing and mail-processing vendor, Runbeck Elections Services (Runbeck or RES), maintain a very close and positive relationship with the US Postal Service facility to ensure mail and postal issues impacting the sending or receipt of ballots can be quickly identified and addressed.

As early ballots are returned by mail, Elections Department staff pick-up the mail and deliver it in hand-documented batches to Runbeck. Upon receipt, Runbeck conducts an inbound sort of this mail to place these packets into an automated batch system and scans each affidavit envelope received, capturing a digital image of the voter signatures on those ballot packet envelopes. To ensure all ballots are accounted for, the batch system is continuously audited systematically in addition to being validated by Elections Department staff and Citizen Boards through audit tray reports that accompany the batches. After the initial inbound scan pass, Runbeck then stores the unopened ballot packets in their facility in a secure, water and fireproof room, while Elections Department staff review the digital images of voter affidavit signatures – thus eliminating the need to handle the actual physical ballot packet multiple times.

Once signatures are verified for a given digital batch, the disposition is sent back to Runbeck to perform a sort on those corresponding ballot packets to create actual physical batches of the packets based on their

status (e.g. Good Signature, No Signature, Need Packet, etc.). Those physical batches, with matching audit reports inserted in each batch, are then secured for transport by Elections Department staff back to our Maricopa County Tabulation and Election Center (MCTEC) facility for future processing and tabulation. The delivery and receipt of ballot packets between the Post Office, Runbeck and MCTEC happen on a regular and regimented schedule to ensure that processing timeframes needed to tabulate ballots in a timely manner can be maintained.

At the staffing levels anticipated for the August Primary Election, the Elections Department can process in a regular shift up to 50,000 ballots daily to prepare them for tabulation (e.g., sorting, signature verification, removing from the envelope). This processing activity includes the individual verification, referenced above, by trained staff of the signature on each affidavit envelope to ensure it matches a signature on file for the respective voter that returned the ballot. Four permanent and 20 temporary staff will be dedicated to this Signature Verification work for the August Primary Election, but several other Recorder's Office and Elections Department staff will need to take a break from their regular job duties to work for a few hours on Signature Verification each day to meet the 50,000 daily processing goal.

Additionally, the early vote ballot processing requires a methodical separation of those affidavit envelopes from each ballot to ensure ballots are anonymous when tabulated. This separation process is done by hand, by Citizen Boards consisting of two people each representing different political parties. For the August Primary Election, there will be 38 boards of two people each and two room attendants (or 78 temporary employees) assigned to this task. As ballots are separated from envelopes and prepared for tabulation, ballots are kept in batches for organizational and review purposes. Continuous audit of the batches and process steps ensure that all ballots are accounted for.

In addition to the processing work described above, Elections Department staff respond to a very large volume of voter inquiries by phone, email and social media, "flagging" concerns about their early ballot delivery (such as address issues) or requesting one-time delivery of a ballot by mail for non-PEVL voters. The Flagging staff also proactively reach out to voters when processing staff identify concerns about a signature or other ballot packet validation issues in order to resolve issues in time for the voter's ballot to be counted.

Voters do not return ballots in consistent numbers over the course of the 27-day Early Voting period of any election. If the trends remain the same as in past, we will see a substantial portion of the early ballots returned, being returned closer to Election Day and dropped-off on Election Day at the various Vote Centers.

The Elections Department is gearing up for large numbers of ballots to be returned in the week before the election and dropped-off on Election Day. On average, approximately 30% of all early ballots returned for a given election are received in the last few days leading up to the election. Using the high-end early ballot return forecast noted earlier at 602,276 early ballots for the August Primary, 30% of that would be 180,683. With the Elections Department able to process 50,000 ballots per day, we then are set to handle upwards of 300,000 early ballots within the 3-6 day closing period which is more than projected.

Special Programs

In addition to the standard Early Vote program available to all voters, the Elections Department administers two special programs designed to facilitate voting for special populations. The **Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) program** provides military personnel (domestic and stationed abroad) as well as any eligible voter overseas (temporarily or indefinitely), extra time to receive and return their ballots. As required by federal law, ballots are mailed or otherwise delivered to UOCAVA status participants 45 days before the election, allowing voters in distant areas of the world extra time to receive and return their ballot. Ballots must be received back to the Department by 7 p.m. on Election Day for these and all early voters.

Pretrial detainees and other inmates in correctional facilities whose voting rights have not been terminated due to a felony conviction may request their ballot be mailed to them at the facility. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department works with the County Sheriff's office to ensure detainees are able to make phone calls to the Elections Department to discuss their ballot request free of charge to the detainee.

The Elections Department also administers the **Special Election Boards (SEB) program**, designed to assist individuals who have a disability, are ill, institutionalized or otherwise incapable of traveling or using the traditional Early Voting process to cast or mark their ballot. Under this program, a Special Election Board, made up of two individuals of different political parties, will offer the voter options on casting their ballot. In response to COVID-19, the SEB program will be expanding the voting platforms available to voters. Voters may choose to cast their vote in person, on the phone, or on a video call. The types of voters the SEB teams typically serve are those that live temporarily or permanently in nursing homes, hospitals, and homes or institutions for people with disabilities or those who cannot live independently.

The expanded voting ID requirement adopted by the legislature in 2019, requiring voters who vote early in-person to show ID, creates significant challenges to serving the SEB population as many people who are living, even temporarily, in these types of facilities do not have ready access to their government-issued ID or other forms of ID that the law allows be presented to satisfy the ID requirement.

Processing Provisional Ballots and Curing of Signature Issues

The Recorder's office is also responsible for researching voter information for any provisional ballots cast on Election Day and determining if those ballots are eligible to be counted. Provisional ballots are provided to voters who vote in person but do not have the required ID or there is a question about their eligibility to vote. Voters casting provisional ballots often end-up in standard categories for each election regardless of the type of election, such as "not registered" or "registered too late/after the cutoff."

For any ballot cast in person where sufficient ID was not provided in accordance with A.R.S. 16-579, the voter will have five business days after Election Day to present the required ID to validate their conditional provision ballot.

Any early ballots that are received by 7 p.m. on Election Day with signatures that are inconsistent with the elector's signature (questionable) must be researched and reasonable efforts must be made to contact the voter, advise the voter of the inconsistent signature and allow the voter to correct or the County to confirm
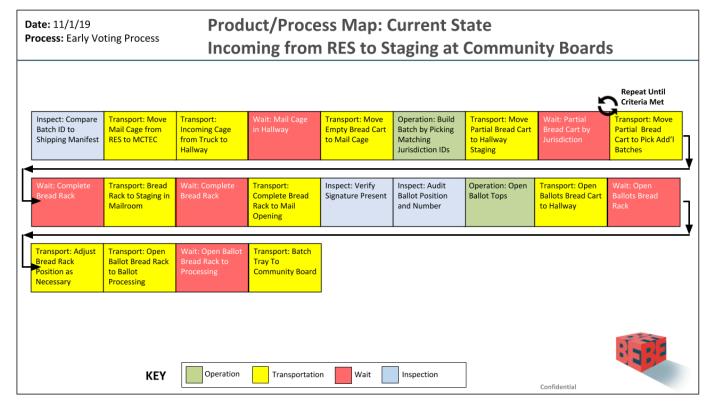
the inconsistent signature. State law (A.R.S. 16-550.A) allows voters up to five business days after a primary, general or special election that includes a federal office, such as the August Primary Election, to "cure" their signature on ballots where the signature validity is in question.

The extra "cure" time allowed to voters, coupled with the time needed to research and process the above noted post-election provisional ballots or questionable signature ballots, may result in an extended ballot-counting timeframe.

Process Improvement Initiatives

The quality improvement and process improvement consultant team utilized the Current State process in the Fall/Winter of 2019 to derive an Improved Future State process for EV Ballot Processing. EV Ballot processing is the point in time that ballots enter the building from Runbeck Election Services (RES) and are delivered to tabulation for counting. The improved process was piloted during the February/March election.

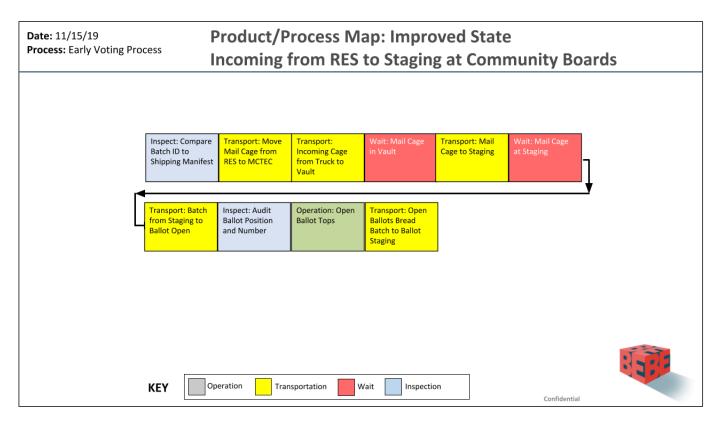### Examples of work product from Process Improvement Analysis

Date: 11/1/19
Process: Early Voting Process

Product/Process Map: Current State
Incoming from RES to Staging at Community Boards

Repeat Until Criteria Met

| Inspect: Compare Batch ID to Shipping Manifest | Transport: Move Mail Cage from RES to MCTEC | Transport: Incoming Cage from Truck to Hallway | Wait: Mail Cage in Hallway | Transport: Move Empty Bread Cart to Mail Cage | Operation: Build Batch by Picking Matching Jurisdiction IDs | Transport: Move Partial Bread Cart to Hallway Staging | Wait: Partial Bread Cart by Jurisdiction | Transport: Move Partial Bread Cart to Pick Add'l Batches |

| Wait: Complete Bread Rack | Transport: Bread Rack to Staging in Mailroom | Wait: Complete Bread Rack | Transport: Complete Bread Rack to Mail Opening | Inspect: Verify Signature Present | Inspect: Audit Ballot Position and Number | Operation: Open Ballot Tops | Transport: Open Ballots Bread Cart to Hallway | Wait: Open Ballots Bread Rack |

| Transport: Adjust Bread Rack Position as Necessary | Transport: Open Ballot Bread Rack to Ballot Processing | Wait: Open Ballot Bread Rack to Processing | Transport: Batch Tray To Community Board |

KEY ▢ Operation ▢ Transportation ▢ Wait ▢ Inspection

Confidential

Figure 1: EV Process 2019 Current State – Incoming Mail Processing from RES through Staging at Community Boards
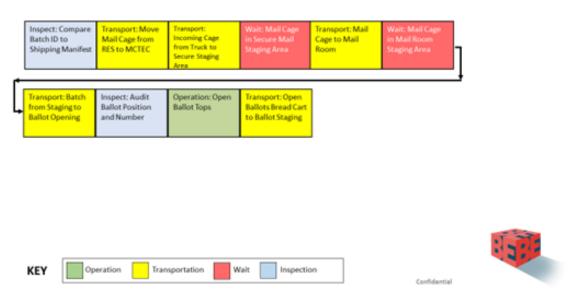

Figure 2: EV Process 2020 Improved State – Incoming Mail Processing from RES through Staging at Community Boards

EV Process Summary of Improvements:

- Reduction in the number of times the ballots are handled or touched by more than 50% resulting in a reduction in batch processing time - maximum output achieved by processing boards was just under 17 trays/day (appx. 3400 ballots)
- Improved processing time for citizen boards and ballot opening, maximum output achieved
- Removal of variation from process flows and shifting decision making from processing boards to higher-level experienced staff to reduce errors
- Reduction in the number of pieces of paperwork completed by processing boards
- Controls to enhance security and visual management tools to quickly identify what stage of the process the ballots are in
- Additional tools to support the work of the processing boards and mailroom for workplace safety and health

Observation of the process during the pilot yielded additional opportunities to enhance, modify, and streamline the EV Process. Additional procedural efficiencies are being tested to further support streamlining and reducing waste in the EV Process. Logistics and space utilization modifications will be implemented to support distancing and spacing due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Final modifications will be implemented prior to July.
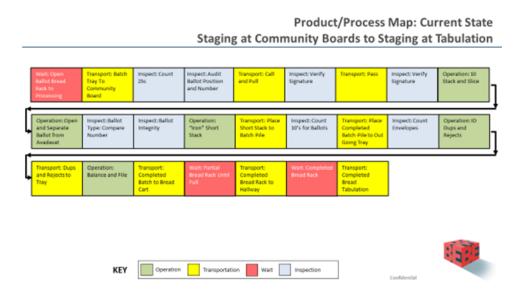

Figure 3: EV Process 2019 Current State – Staging at Community Boards through Staging at Tabulation
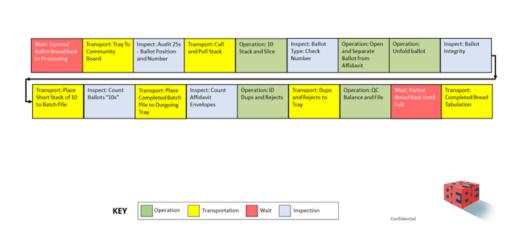
Product/Process Map: Improved State
Staging at Community Boards to Staging at Tabulation

KEY: ▢ Operation (green) ▢ Transportation (yellow) ▢ Wait (red) ▢ Inspection (light blue)

Figure4: EV Process 2020 Improved State – Staging at Community Boards through Staging at Tabulation

Voter Registration Clerk (VRC) Training and Certification

Detailed staffing plans for voting locations are contained in the Election Day and Emergency Voting plan. The SiteBook check-in system will be utilized in all in-person voting locations to speed-up and enhance the voter check-in experience. The SiteBook was created by the Recorder's Office IT and Elections Department in 2017 and is the recipient of the National Association of Counties' Achievement Award for Innovation. In addition to the traditional Poll Workers that will be hired and trained by the Elections Department's Recruiting and Training Division, every voting location will have at least one "Voter Registration Clerk" (VRC). The VRC will be certified by the Recorder's Office to assist voters who need to update or make corrections via the SiteBook to their name or address on their voter registration record.

The SiteBook is an "ePollbook" that is securely tied into the County voter registration system through a virtual private network (VPN). The SiteBooks, with direct access to the voter registration data, allow the VRC and other trained poll workers to make updates to the voter's residential address to ensure that the voter receives the correct ballot. Coupled with the use of Ballot on Demand (BOD) printers that print the correct ballot, this bolsters the security of the election and significantly reduces the number of provisional ballots due to out-of-precinct voters. Use of the SiteBook also allows workers to see, in real time, whether a voter has already voted by mail or at another site. This ensures that even with multiple "Vote Anywhere" vote center voting locations on Election Day and 80-85 percent of Maricopa County voters requesting to have ballots mailed to their home, no voter would be able to vote twice in an Election.

The VRC position will be certified by the Recorder's Office because this staff person will have special access to the voter registration database. Though the Board of Supervisors has statutory authority over the staffing and general operations of the Election Day polling places, the Recorder's Office is the legal custodian of the County's voter registration records and ultimately is responsible for the integrity of the voter registration database. The VRC position will bridge the two areas of statutory authority to provide the best voter registration service to voters in the voting location on Election Day. The training and certification process will

provide accountability for the integrity of the database and the SiteBook will provide an auditable trail of any voter information changes made by the VRC and other Poll Workers. Though the VRC will be the primary staff person in the polling place performing this function, in order to provide back-up, at least one other Poll Worker will be trained and certified.

The VRC position will also be trained in other general polling place duties and will work in partnership with the other Poll Workers to administer the Election Day tasks. Training will cover emergency procedures and how to implement the sealed "Break-in Case of Emergency Kit." This kit includes emergency voter check-in procedures, blank paper check-in roster, transfer tickets, and transfer forms. In the event there is a loss of power or connectivity, the VRC will assist the other Poll Workers in checking-in and processing voters with these paper materials.

The Recorder's Office administers a Deputy Registrar program (explained in more detail in the Communications and Community Outreach section) which trains voters who wish to assist with public voter registration efforts. Deputy Registrars are encouraged to take on the VRC positions due to their familiarity with voter registration issues. Poll Workers who are not Deputy Registrars, however, are eligible to serve as the VRC as long as they complete the special training and certification process.

Communications and Community Outreach Plan

Introduction

The following communication plan outlines the Recorder's Office's communications and community outreach approach to educating Maricopa County voters during the August 2020 primary election. The purpose of this plan is to outline strategies and tactics that help the team accomplish the following communication goals:

- Inform voters of their options to vote by mail or in-person, in light of COVID-19
- Communicate general instructions for voter registration
- Promote the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) and one-time early ballot request portal
- Ensure voters not registered with a political party are knowledgeable about specific Primary election voting requirements
- Educate voters about the elections planning process and increase transparency

The Recorder's communications and community outreach staff will implement specific communications and outreach strategies to educate voters about their early voting options. Additionally, the Recorder's Office will work closely with the Elections Department communications team to collaboratively manage and strategically plan the August 2020 Voter Options campaign. This joint effort between the Recorder's Office and the Elections Department ensures consistent, accurate, and reliable information is disseminated to the public. Furthermore, this collaboration will help amplify a uniform message that emphasizes the options voters have this year to vote early by mail or in person.

Along with goals and strategies, this plan highlights the following:

- Official Communications Channels
- Voter Options Campaign, Approach & Strategy
- Early Voting Strategy
- Earned and Paid Media
- Social Media
- Targeted Voter Communication
- STAR Call Center
- Voter Outreach and Community Relations
- Crisis Communications Planning

Official Communications Channels

The public and the media can find official communications from the Recorder's Office through the following channels:

- Website:
    - Recorder.Maricopa.Gov
    - Maricopa.Vote
- Social Media:
    - Recorder's Office: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
    - Additional information may be shared from Elections Department (Facebook, Twitter)
- Phone: 602-506-1511
- News Releases and Media Alerts
- Recorder's Email Newsletter

Voter Options Campaign, Approach & Strategy

In light of COVID-19, it is critical that Maricopa County provide voters with a safe and secure primary election. We understand that now, more than ever, voters need flexibility to choose how they would like to vote—whether in person or by mail at home.

The Recorder's Office shares a campaign messaging strategy with the Elections Department that communicates how Maricopa County is making it easier for voters to choose how and when they want to vote in the Primary Election. The August 2020 Voter Options campaign incorporates both Early Voting and Election Day messages as a comprehensive Primary Election plan.

The Early Voting Plan outlines the strategy to inform voters about their options to sign up for a one-time early ballot or permanent options to vote by mail at home. With COVID-19 precautions in place, the communications strategy will also inform voters about in-person voting available for all our Early Voting and Election Day sites. See the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan for more information.

In particular, the primary audience for this communication plan is as follows:

- All eligible Maricopa County voters

- Maricopa County residents who are eligible to vote, but are not yet registered
- Non-PEVL voters who may be interested in requesting a ballot in the mail
- Historically underserved communities with histories of voter disenfranchisement

Early Voting Strategy

COVID-19 has created several concerns for public health and has raised specific considerations for government functions, including elections. During this on-going health crisis, the Recorder's Office understands that voters need flexible options to meet their voting needs. While the Voter Option campaign emphasizes both in-person and ballot at home options, the Recorder's Office will be especially engaged in promoting early voting. In particular, the communications team will promote the recently created Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) portal.

Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL) Portal

Maricopa County voters can visit Request.Maricopa.Vote in English or Solicitud.Maricopa.Voto in Spanish to sign up for the PEVL or a one-time mail ballot for the primary and general elections.

To continue to educate the public about their early voting options, the Recorder's Office will:

- Hold Facebook Lives and pre-record videos focused on early voting options.
- Push social media content about the online PEVL portal.
- Share a social media toolkit (created with Elections Department communication staff) with community organizations and agency partners that includes digital collateral emphasizing Voter Option campaign overarching messages.

Beyond the PEVL portal, voters can find important information about the upcoming election on two other critical web pages:

- BeBallotReady.Vote: One-stop shop for voters to get their personalized voter information. The Election Day and Emergency Voting plan can provide more detail on how this platform can be utilized by voters. Additionally, the Early Voting strategy involves promoting BeBallotReady.Vote to independent voters. Independent voters need to select a ballot in order to vote in the primary. The Voter Option paid ad campaign and in-house social media from the Recorder's Office will educate independent voters on how to use this online platform to select their ballot.
- Locations.Maricopa.Vote: In collaboration with the Elections Department, we will promote this feature across all of our outreach. With a "vote anywhere" election model, this will be an important tool for voters to search and find Vote Center locations.

"I Voted" Stickers

The Recorder's Office and Elections Department are implementing a plan to distribute a redesigned "I Voted" sticker to all voters that are on the PEVL or request a ballot by mail. The new stickers will also be provided to voters who choose to vote in person early or on Election Day. "I Voted" stickers are very popular with voters and instill a sense of civic pride and community awareness about voting. Several years ago, it was determined that providing stickers to early voters via mail ballot packets was cost-prohibitive. Recent upgrades in technology and printing and processing techniques now make providing stickers in mail ballots more economically feasible. Maricopa County's new "I Voted" stickers leverage and reinforce other

messaging themes and images (such as Phil the Ballot) that are included in the voter education and communications plan.

Including "I Voted" stickers in mail ballots also contributes to the efficient operation of in-person voting sites by reducing the number of voters that drop-off (instead of mailing) their ballot on Election Day to "get a sticker." Fewer individuals in the in-person voting locations helps enable physical distancing protocols. Additionally, if voters who desire a sticker mail back their ballots instead of dropping them off on Election Day, those ballots can be signature verified, processed and tabulated in advance of Election Day, accelerating the ability to finalize election results.

The new "I Voted" sticker will be promoted via social media strategies.

Earned and Paid Media

Earned and paid media will be important to amplify awareness of early voting options. The Recorder's communication team will use earned and paid media to reach as many voters as possible.

Earned Media

The Recorder's Office will be available to conduct media interviews to promote public awareness about voter options during this upcoming election.

- Main Agency Spokesperson: Recorder Adrian Fontes is available for media interviews in both English and Spanish. Recorder Fontes will inform the public about the options voters have to vote safely and securely by mail or in person.
- News Releases: The Recorder's Office will send out news releases in collaboration with the Elections Department to promote elections deadlines, early voting registration, mail-in ballot requests, mail-in ballot deadlines, and polling locations and dates.

Paid Media

The Recorder's Office and the Elections Department contracted with Commit Agency through a Contract Task Order to develop a well-rounded paid media campaign for the August Primary Election. The approved budget includes $190,600 for the creative design, production of advertising materials, and other costs associated with the marketing plan for all mediums in English and Spanish as well as an estimated $377,000 for direct ad buys in both English and Spanish across multiple platforms (television, streaming services radio, social media, digital display and billboards).

This strategy has three phases:
- Phase 1 (May 15-June 28): Focuses on informing voters of the option to vote by mail at home.
- Phase 2 (June 29-July 20): Focuses on informing independent voters of the need to select a ballot and how to get ready for the Primary Election.
- Phase 3 (July 21-August 4): Focuses on safe in-person voting options, including some weekends, and the Election Department's efforts to implement physical distancing and cleaning standards at voting locations.

Social Media

The Recorder's Office plans to implement a proactive social media campaign leading up to the August Primary Election. All social media content will serve to inform voters, cultivate conversations about relevant elections topics, and continue to build transparency and increase voter satisfaction in the elections system. Our robust social media effort will include:

- Live and pre-recorded videos
- Visual collateral and graphics that promote the early voting, voting options, and access, security and safety at voting locations
- Status updates about early voting and the elections process

Social Media Monitoring and Listening:

As the campaign progresses, we anticipate an increase in social media activity, including questions and comments from members of the public as they relate to the election. In order to provide quality service to voters, the Recorder's communication team will:

- Monitor social media comments
- Track public sentiment and make recommendations to fill information gaps
- Respond to questions with actionable voter information and resources

Targeted Voter Communications

While social media, web, and paid and earned media are helpful tools to communicate to large audiences, the Recorder's Office understands that it is essential in this election year to also provide tailored messaging to specific groups of voters in order to ensure they are informed of the options available to them for the Primary Election.

Direct Mailers

- Ballot by Mail – Due to COVID-19, it's critical voters know all of their options. Since 1996, Arizona has provided all voters the option to vote by mail. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department will send an PEVL sign up to all non-PEVL voters, informing them of their options and providing a direct way for voters to sign up to vote by mail at home.

- Sample Ballot – As outlined in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan, we plan to use this mailer as a tool to inform voters of the Vote Center locations they can choose from and the extended evening and weekend hours available to them.

Email Communication

Non-PEVL Voters – We will send two emails to voters who have email addresses on file, informing them of their options and providing a direct way to sign up to vote by mail at home. As outlined in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan, we will also send additional emails to these voters closer to Election Day to educate them on the Vote Center model.

PEVL Independents – We will send these emails to voters with email addresses on file who have not yet requested a ballot type and will direct this group of voters to BeBallotReady.Vote to make their ballot choice.

Text Messages

In an effort to ensure we meet voters on the platforms they are using, we plan to round out our voter outreach using the Twillio text messaging tool currently in place for voters to get early ballot status updates. We will use this tool to inform non-PEVL voters of their options and to inform PEVL Independents of the need to request a ballot type.

STAR Call Center

The STAR Call Center is an important member of the Recorder's Office and Elections Department Team. The STAR Call Center is a shared resource between the Maricopa County Recorder's, Treasurer's and Assessor's Offices. They maintain a call center to serve all three offices. The STAR Call Center has seen a significant increase in volume around elections. As a result, they are planning an increase in staff to reduce wait times to speak to a live agent. Additionally, they are collaborating with the Recorder's Office and Elections Department staff to ensure their recorded messages are up to date and accurately reflect information voters may be seeking.

Voter Outreach Key Messaging Summary

Some of the key messages the Recorder's Official proactive earned media strategy for the August Primary Election may include are:

- Promotion of the BeBallotReady.Vote website and accompanying marketing materials (such as the new "I Voted" stickers and "Phil the Ballot") as a vehicle to direct voters' attention to key voter information;
- Promotion of voter registration, including deadlines and accuracy and completeness of voter registration on forms;
- Information about Early Voting, the Permanent Early Voting List and the ability of voters to make a "one-time" request for an early ballot for a specific election;
- Information about how voters not registered with a political party can participate in the August Primary election;
- Promotion of the Recorder's Office text service that provides automatic updates on the status of a voter's early ballot (text JOIN to 628-683);
- Information about the new ballot design and instructions for filling out the ballot;
- Education about Early Voting procedures and deadlines, including how and when to return early ballots;
- Information about Early Voting locations and education about the new ID requirements; and
- General information about voting administrative procedures and ballot processing.

Community Relations Team (CRT)

The Community Relations Team (CRT) provides community-oriented voter outreach. Our purpose is to enhance and build further connections with community organizations, schools, businesses, political parties and other various sectors within Maricopa County. Through innovative communication and outreach strategies, the CRT creates an ongoing feedback loop with our community partners about important

information from the Recorder's Office and Elections Department and shares pertinent community feedback with our office. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CRT has restructured our platform from in-person to virtual community outreach engagement. In an effort to continue to advance messaging and education about the Primary Election, the CRT is currently focused on the following goals:

- Engage and educate community organizations involved in voter registration efforts
- Engage key stakeholders through the Roundtable Project and Town Hall meetings
- Enhance student outreach focused on voter registration, vote by mail options and voter ID education
- Inform community partners about all voter and PEVL registration services available
- Utilize Deputy Registrar volunteers for projects that will ensure voters are prepared to engage in the August Primary

Roundtable Project

Connecting with communities directly is an essential part of educating voters. The CRT conducts an extensive Roundtable Project to identify opportunities to build relationships and engage with underrepresented and historically disenfranchised communities in the elections process. Meetings are held quarterly with various stakeholder representatives. Each roundtable meeting consists of an informational presentation from the Recorder's Office and Elections Department, and a guided discussion with attendees. The program has led to tangible policy changes and positive results in increasing voter engagement while allowing the office to receive direct feedback about community-specific access needs. The Maricopa County Recorder's Office Community Relations Team is proud to have received a 2019 Clearinghouse 'Clearie' Award from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission in the category of 'Outstanding Innovations in Elections' for their successful work with this program. Only six of these awards were given out of more than 1,000 submissions. The overarching goal of this project is to ensure that elections are free, fair, and accessible for all Maricopa County residents. The Roundtable Project currently works with six groups:

- Voters living with a disability
- Native American Tribal Communities
- African American community members
- Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community members
- College and University students and staff
- Hispanic/Latino American community members

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Roundtable meetings were held via Zoom, and particular accommodations were made for sign language interpreters and captioning to be available for the Disability Advocates roundtable discussion. Recent quarterly roundtable meetings (May and June) focused on the following topics: An overview of the Presidential Preference Election and the plan for the August Primary Election. Discussion of these areas focused on specific strategies that will be implemented to address the health and safety risks posed by the COVID-19 virus.

The Roundtable series will culminate in a larger Town Hall discussion in July that will be open to the public and live-streamed online.

Student Outreach Campaign

The Community Relations Team has recently identified a need to specifically target college and university students to ensure that they are Ballot Ready for the Primary Election. Maricopa County has some of the largest community college and public universities in the country and many students reside in on-campus housing or stay in temporary accommodations during the school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several schools have closed their physical campuses and moved instruction and services online for the foreseeable future. As a result, many students no longer reside where they were previously registered to vote and may not be aware that their registration may not be up to date. While the most likely impacted will be students who resided in on-campus housing, CRT believes that the communication should be expanded to all current college and university students.

Voter outreach in this model will focus on encouraging student voters to check their registration, re-register if necessary, and encourage students to sign up for the Permanent Early Voting List or request a temporary ballot as appropriate.

The CRT has identified the following outreach tactics in efforts to inform and engage our student voter population:

- Partner with Colleges and Universities, Political Groups and 3rd Party Advocacy Groups
- Email Communications
- Direct Mail
- Phone Contact (including text messaging)
- Social Media

Deputy Registrar Volunteer Projects

The Community Relations Team maintains a unique corps of non-partisan Deputy Registrar volunteers whose primary focus is to supplement our voter outreach efforts. These individuals are registered Maricopa County voters and are trained by the CRT and certified on aspects of voter registration. They support the County efforts at events, naturalization ceremonies and various voter education opportunities. The volunteers are currently executing three projects that directly impact voter access to the full Arizona Primary ballot and the timeliness of voter registration updates and operations. The three projects consist of the following:

- Phone banking Maricopa County Federal-only registered voters. Voters who did not provide proof of citizenship at the time of registration are only eligible to vote the Federal-Only Ballot (US President, US House, and US Senate). The Deputy Registrars are following-up on a letter sent to these voters providing them the opportunity to update their registration status with documented proof of citizenship. This would enable them to vote the full state ballot for the upcoming Primary Election. The call list consists of newly registered voters (since March 2020) and voters who have voted the Federal-only ballot within the last two election cycles. The Phone banking project focuses on the following:
  - Confirm voter has received letter from Maricopa County enabling them to provide documented proof of citizenship ensuring access to full state ballot

- o Confirm voter information and ensure any corrections are immediately transmitted to the Voter Registration Department
- o Respond to questions about the letter or documents required and document follow-up opportunities with the voter
- Phone banking to voters that need to update their address. The Recorder's Office and Elections Department recently mailed a PEVL sign-up form to all voters who are not currently on the PEVL. Unlike other election mail, we specifically directed the post office to forward this piece of mail to new addresses and included information in the mail piece about the importance of updating address information for the upcoming Primary Election. Deputy Registrars will be conducting phone follow-up to the voters who require address updates, based on the information given to us by the post office, to encourage them to update their voter registration information.
- Mail sorting and voter registration form review
  - o Ensure increased volume of mail is opened in a timely manner and categorized for expeditious processing
  - o Review incoming voter registration applications for accuracy and ensure all mandatory fields are complete including documented proof of citizenship

Other Community Relations Team Programs

In preparation for the August Primary and General Election, the CRT will continue working with many nonprofit and political groups in addition to community leaders that are involved in large-scale voter registration efforts. These groups submit thousands of voter registration forms to the Recorder's Office and there will likely be increased efforts over the next few months in advance of the upcoming elections. Incomplete or incorrectly completed forms can lead to delays in processing the registration forms and may affect a voter's ability to cast a ballot. Therefore, educating community partners about this process remains a key objective of the CRT.

The CRT is planning virtual voter registration trainings in addition to providing printable materials on the Recorder's website for groups to use in their voter registration efforts.

The Recorder's Office CRT also may provide additional assistance and resources to the Elections Department as is appropriate and coinciding with the strategic initiatives and goals of the Community Relations Team set for 2020.

Crisis Communications Planning

Elections officials are facing new challenges in 2020. While the risk of attacks has increased public mistrust in elections generally, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an even more complex environment for managing public sentiment. Since 2017, elections have been categorized as critical infrastructure by the US Department of Homeland Security. Because of this increased vigilance towards maintaining the security of elections, the Recorder's Office is working to develop a comprehensive crisis communications response plan for a variety of high risk or potential threat/attack situations. This plan will entail:

- Pre-planned messaging for a variety of emergency situations
- Established protocols with partner agencies for releasing public information
- Plans for disseminating critical information through traditional media and social media

Risk Management, Contingency Planning and Disaster Recovery

The Recorder's Office has developed this Risk Management and Contingency Plan in conjunction with the Elections Department's Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan to ensure a seamless structure and joint efforts. As stated in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan, risk management is a continuous, forward-looking process that is an important part of conducting an election. Our Office performs risk management activities to identify potential risks that may adversely impact any part of the election process beginning with voter registration, and develop strategies that can mitigate these risks if they occur. Much of the risk management and contingency plan outline for Election Day and Emergency Voting would be applicable for Early Voting, including Early Voting locations, and those same contingencies would be adopted.

In addition to the operations identified in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan, the following activities have also been identified as critical to the success of the election process and Early Voting:

Voter Registration

Voters register to vote throughout the year, both as newly registered voters and existing voters updating their information, particularly their residential address. While the Recorder's Office works continually to keep these records up to date, these efforts are especially important as it gets closer to the start of Early Voting, even before the 29-day Voter Registration statutory deadline. In order for early ballots to be ready to mail out 27 days before the election, packets begin to be assembled approximately 52 days before the election. It is important for this reason that voter registration rolls be updated before this time, to ensure that voters on the PEVL receive the correct ballot in the mail. Additionally, this is the division responsible for researching and determining the eligibility of provisional ballots, so correct and current data is paramount to this process. The Voter Registration division has 16 permanent staff and a number of temporary staff that are housed in the Recorder's Downtown Office location. In the case that the Downtown Office became uninhabitable, staff would be moved to the MCTEC facility, where computer and other office provisions could be provided to allow the division to continue with these vital activities.

Early Voting Flagging and Signature Verification

As described in the earlier section, ensuring that voters' requests for early ballots are flagged and fulfilled quickly is required by statute. The four permanent and 20 temporary employees that fulfill this role are also tasked with verifying the signatures of the early ballot affidavits that are returned, and contacting voters regarding any signatures that are questionable. This work takes place across the 27 days that Early Voting is being conducted and ballots are returned to MCTEC for processing. Further, this work continues after the election for early ballots that are mailed in the final days leading up to the election and/or dropped off on Election Day. The employees who conduct this work are located at the MCTEC facility. If the MCTEC facility became uninhabitable, staff would be moved to either the Recorder's Downtown Office location or the STAR Call Center workspace, where computer and other office provisions could be provided to allow the division to continue with these vital activities.

UOCAVA Program

Similarly, the two permanent staff and 6 temporary staff that ensure our military and overseas citizens voters (*aka "Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act" qualified voters or UOCAVA Voters*) are able to vote, would be moved to our Downtown office and computer and other office provisions would be provided in the case that the MCTEC office where they regularly work became uninhabitable. The work of these employees spans a longer time-period before the election. They prepare ballots to be sent out to military and overseas voters beginning at least 55 days prior to the election and these ballots are sent 45 days before the election. This staff processes the return ballots during that 45-day period and through Election Day.

Printing of Ballots & Production of Early Voting Packets for mail out

Preprinted ballots and early ballot mail-out packets including ballots, early ballot affidavits, and voter instructions, are printed and assembled at our current local vendor's office, Runbeck Election Services (Runbeck). This location has state-of-the-art security as well as fire detection and suppression systems. If, however, this building became uninhabitable, our contract provides that Runbeck, through their Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) submitted as part of the contract, would be responsible for providing business continuity through local and non-local alternatives and facilities. The goal of a business continuity plan is to minimize disruption of all mission critical production process. Within Runbeck's DRP, locations, materials and human resources are identified and outlined to ensure we are meeting all deadlines and conducting elections as planned.

Early Voting Supplies and Equipment

If an Early Voting location's supplies or equipment are missing or inoperable, Poll Workers, Trouble Shooters and Observers will use hotlines and newly established mobile applications to advise the Department. Replacement supplies and equipment will be dispatched from the MCTEC facility and other strategically established locations throughout the county that will serve as "supply hubs".

The Department has addressed on-site contingencies with the use of multiple SiteBooks and ballot-on-demand (BOD) printers at our "vote anywhere" Vote Center locations. All Early Voting locations have at least six SiteBook check-in terminals, one accessible voting device and two BOD printers. If other equipment

malfunctions, the MCTEC facility and supply hubs contain back-up equipment, which Trouble Shooters and other technical support staff will deliver.

In the case of a power outage, voters would be directed to other Early Voting locations until power could be restored. If the power outage covers multiple Early Voting locations or if the Early Voting Election Director decides it is advisable, the MCTEC facility and supply hubs will be outfitted with "emergency site kits" that include electric inverters (generators) that can be deployed to the Early Voting location.

Early Vote Center Poll Worker Absences and Emergencies

The Election Department Division for Recruitment & Training is responsible for ensuring that an adequate number of Poll Workers, including bilingual workers, are hired and trained to work at the Early Voting locations (Vote Centers). In addition to hiring 6-8 Poll Workers for each Early Voting location, we are hiring 10 back-up workers should an Early Voting location have insufficient or absent Poll Workers.

If a Poll Worker does not report for work, the Inspector is trained to call the Early Voting Hotline to request the Department hire and/or dispatch a replacement/backup worker. If the Inspector does not report, a Judge will assume temporary Inspector responsibilities of the early Vote Center and call the Hotline for further instructions, including the request for a replacement Inspector and/or additional workers.

If a Poll Worker becomes ill during the Early Voting period or has a personal emergency, the worker will be allowed to leave and will be replaced. If a health emergency occurs with a Poll Worker or any other individual in the Early Voting location, the Inspector is trained to call 911 and then the Early Voting Hotline.