

County of Berks response and actions taken to address recommendations in the 2022 primary election investigation report (as of 8.8.22)

The County of Berks is firmly committed to correcting the issues that occurred during the May 17 primary election and following the recommendations outlined in the report from outside counsel's investigation. As noted in last week's Election Board meeting, the County has already taken the following action steps toward correcting these issues and creating a better overall system to ensure our elections remain free and fair.

Recommendations from the investigation report and the action steps taken thus far:

- *Employees from Elections Services must attend additional ES&S training.*

Management staff in the Office of Election Services underwent two days of training with ES&S on July 28-29 with more trainings scheduled between now and November election.

- *Poll workers should receive expanded hands-on training on the use of the EPB.*

The Office of Election Services held three additional trainings on the electronic pollbooks so far this summer. Those trainings were held July 19, July 30 and August 4, with between 64-75 poll workers in attendance at each. A fourth training is scheduled for August 20 with 75 poll workers signed up. These trainings included opportunities for the poll workers to set up and use the pollbooks directly.

Additional trainings will be held this fall for electronic pollbooks and standard poll worker and interpreter training. The County also plans to create refresher videos for poll workers to review.

- *All County election officials have an essential and functional knowledge of the Pennsylvania Election Code prior to attending training and L&A testing.*

This is being addressed internally with staff and future Logic & Accuracy (L&A) testing will include County Elections staff, consultants and ES&S personnel.

- *Request that ES&S have someone present at all L&A testing that has a basic understanding of the Pennsylvania Election Code.*

ES&S has agreed to have staff present at L&A testing that are familiar with Pennsylvania Election laws and will follow a mutually agreed upon L&A testing checklist. ES&S noted that while as a vendor that cannot take responsibility nor have the authority to be an expert on any specific state's election laws, they are committed to working closely with county staff to help ensure that all entities are complying with the requirements applicable in Pennsylvania. ES&S will also work with Berks County's officials to develop a service and support plan that clearly defines roles and responsibilities for on-site ES&S personnel to ensure that the issues that were outlined do not occur in future elections.

- *A direct line of communication is established between Elections Services and the 202 polling precincts, i.e., chatroom, website, etc., to facilitate group and individual communications are received and addressed in a timely and efficient manner.*

The Election Board has established an Elections Communications team led by the Department of Emergency Services through its Director, Brian Gottschall. The team also includes the Justin Loose, the County's Chief Information Officer for the Information Systems Department, Election Services staff and our Chief Operations Officer.

- *Ensure that the cell phones for each Judge of Elections are turned on and operational prior to each election.*

This item is closely tied into the previous item and will be addressed as part of the complete Elections Communications plan. Judges of Elections will be instructed on how to use County-issued cell phones as part of their Judge of Election training classes.