2020 Election Practices

MONICA H. EVANS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DC BOARD OF ELECTIONS
2020 Election Challenges

- The Pandemic
- Funding
- Lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- New Legislation
- Shortage of Election Workers
- Recruiting Election Workers
- Online App
Reality Check

- June 2 Primary Election
- June 16 Special Election
- November 3 General Election
- Criticism
  - Council
  - Media
  - Public
- Implementation of New Legislation (Restore the Vote)
- Interference (Bad Actors)
- Election Worker Shortage
Solutions

• Vote by Mail
• Vote Centers (Required Ballot on Demand Technology)
• Mail Ballot Drop Boxes
Vote By Mail

• We Already Had “No Excuse” Absentee Voting
• Registered Voters Had to Request an Absentee Ballot
• There Was No Time to Procure a Mail House
Vote By Mail 2020

• Warehouse Converted to a Mail House
• Hired Temporary Employees
  • Prepared Mail Ballot Packages
  • Produced Mailing Labels
  • Delivered Ballots (USPS, FedEx, and by Hand)
  • Typically Process Between 5,000 and 6,000 Absentee Ballot Requests
  • Processed Over 90,000 Absentee Ballot Requests for the Primary Election (all by hand from our warehouse)
The Result (Primary)

- Voters Were Able to Vote
- Voters Wanted Absentee (Mail) Ballots
- We Opened Vote Centers (no precinct-based voting)
- Limited Number of Vote Centers (20)
- Voters Did Not Take Advantage of Early Voting
- Long Lines
The Big Pivot for the General Election

- Contracted with a Mail House (K&H)
- Ballot Mailed to Every Voter
- Opened 32 Vote Centers for Early Voting (Including Super Vote Centers)
- Opened 95 Vote Centers on Election Day
- Purchased 55 Mail Ballot Drop Boxes
- Ballots Could be Deposited at any Vote Center
- Major Media Campaign
November 3 General Election Day

• No Lines

• Voting By Mail Was Most Popular Voting Method
  • 325,145 Ballots Cast
  • 67% Used Mail Ballots
    • 46% Ballots Cast by Mail Ballot Drop Box
    • 21% Ballots Cast by US Postal Service
Post Election

- Solicited Feedback from the Public
- Held Town Hall Meetings with Voters and Election Workers
- Developed an After-Action Report to Capture Election Cycle Practices
- Received Positive Press
Post Election Feedback

• Voters Liked Mail Ballots (Continue the Practice)
• Voters Liked the use of Vote Centers (Continue the Practice)
• Voters Liked the use of Mail Ballot Drop Boxes (Continue the Practice)
Election Modernization Amendment Act of 2021

• Introduced by the City Council on November 8, 2021
• The legislation would make “the most successful approaches from the 2020 Election Cycle permanent.”
• Requires Ballots to be Mailed to Everyone
• Requires the use of Vote Centers
• Requires the use of Mail Ballot Drop Boxes
• Was Not Introduced to be Effective for the 2022 Election Cycle
2022 Election Cycle

• No Funding to Mail Ballots
• Received Funding from the Mayor’s Contingency Fund to Mail Ballots
• Office of Contracting and Procurement Awarded Contract to K&H for the June Primary
• We Will Have 40 Vote Centers for Early Voting (Primary)
• We Will Have 90 Vote Centers on Election Day
• We Will Use 55 Mail Ballot Drop Boxes
• Requested Funding in our FY23 Budget to Mail Ballots for November (The 2022 General Election is in FY23.)
June 2022 Primary

Election practices enjoyed in 2020 will continue in 2022. Passage of Election Modernization Amendment Act will make successful practices from 2020 permanent.
The Election Modernization Amendment Act

- Should be in place during FY 23
- Passage Will Ensure Appropriated Funds