



The
Elections
Group

THE ELECTION DEBRIEF HANDBOOK

Reflecting on Successes and
Identifying Opportunities



View this guide online

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FOREWARD

The Elections Group developed this guide to help election officials lead their teams through debriefs of the most recent election. This document relies heavily on research and work product from expert organizations in the field, including the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and The Elections Group.

INTRODUCTION

Election officials, congratulations on administering another fair and free election. Election season is coming to a close, and many of you are reflecting on the successes and challenges of this election. This period of reflection is the perfect time to hold a post-election debrief with your team.

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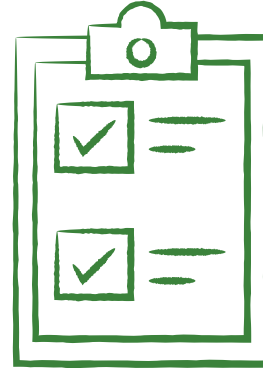
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ABOUT A POST-ELECTION DEBRIEF

A post-election debrief is a structured reflection and feedback session for you and your team to discuss the successes and challenges you faced during the most recent election. Throughout the debrief, your team's primary goal is to learn from this election so you can improve for future elections.

During a debrief, your team will:

- Celebrate what went well.
- Document lessons learned.
- Refine processes and training.
- Reinforce best practices.
- Enhance communication and team cohesion.



Looking ahead,

a debrief can provide a valuable resource to guide training for new staff or to clarify or adapt procedures. It can also help to identify gaps in resources or staffing to help teams more accurately estimate future needs. Overall, a debrief helps teams build trust and accountability that's essential for tackling future elections.

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide begins by explaining how to prepare for and hold a post-election debrief. It outlines the primary steps for debriefing your team and how to engage in a productive conversation.

The sections that follow walk you through debriefing various election administration topics, from ballot proofing to cybersecurity. For each topic, this guide provides:

- A set of suggested questions to ask your team, focusing on common election issues. Use these questions as a starting point but feel free to customize them or add your own questions based on your jurisdiction's specific challenges and successes.
- Recommended action items that your office can implement to improve operations. We have provided space to list additional action items for each topic, based on the conversation your team has during the debrief.
- Finally, this guide's appendix includes a list of recommended resources to help improve operations after the debrief. These resources are from expert organizations, including the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and The Elections Group. They include template press releases, checklists for physical and cybersecurity, de-escalation posters and many other materials that can improve your election operations and address common issues.

Facilitating a Post-Election Debrief



Facilitating a Post-Election Debrief

PREPARING THE DEBRIEF

Scheduling

When planning a post-election debrief, timing is essential. Ideally, your debrief should take place within three to four weeks of the election, while details are still fresh in the minds of your team. Holding it promptly allows the team to discuss challenges and successes with clarity.

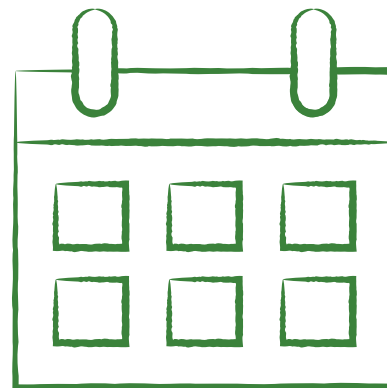
In some cases,

it may be difficult to hold a debrief immediately after the election, due to the holidays, the certification process, audits, recounts and other post-election activities. In this case, election officials should aim to hold the debrief as soon as possible, within one to two weeks of completing all major post-election activities.

Time Management

When planning your debrief, consider how much time you have available. We recommend planning for at least four hours, but a full workday is ideal. You want to engage in meaningful discussion about each topic without feeling rushed.

For shorter debriefs (one to two hours), prioritize the most pressing issues or challenges. Focus on areas where changes or improvements will have the most significant impact.



Prioritizing Topics

Later in this document, we provide debrief questions for several common election administration topics. However, you and your team may find that there are other issues that are more relevant to your office. Consider allowing team members to suggest debrief topics ahead of time. You may also want to make your own list of debrief topics based on what you heard and saw during the election.

You may not be able to cover every topic in the time you have dedicated for your debrief. That is okay. Remind yourself and your team that a debrief is just the beginning of an ongoing process of continuous improvement. Be transparent and assure your team that while you will make every effort to include their suggestions and cover each topic, time constraints may require prioritizing certain topics over others.

Determining Participants

Consider the size and structure of your team when determining participants. For smaller teams, where each member was likely involved in multiple aspects of the election, it may be necessary for everyone to attend the entire debrief to ensure comprehensive input across all topics.

For larger teams, it may be more effective to divide the debrief into sessions relevant to specific teams or areas of responsibility. For example, you could spend the first half of the debrief discussing broader topics with all staff, and then break into smaller, more focused groups for the second half to address specific processes. This approach allows for more targeted feedback while still ensuring that all team members are involved in broader discussions.

Selecting the Facilitator

This guide is written with the assumption that the head election official will lead the post-election debrief. However, there are other options for structuring the session that may promote a more honest dialogue. One consideration is to have an external facilitator, such as a leader from another government office or a trusted third party, lead the session. This may create a neutral environment and help team members feel more comfortable offering candid feedback.

Another consideration may be to use a neutral third-party facilitator to cover only the more sensitive topics, like management and leadership.

If a third-party facilitator is not an option, consider gathering anonymous feedback before the debrief to help staff feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts on certain topics.

Materials and Format

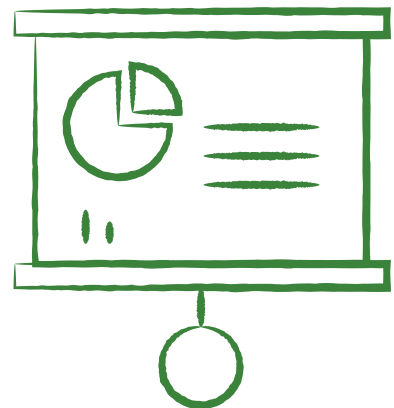
Consider how you will capture and present information during the session. Visual tools, like whiteboards, flip charts, poster boards or Post-it notes, can be effective for tracking ideas and discussion points in real time. Do not forget to supply your team with pens, pencils, markers, highlighters or other writing instruments.

For more structured collaboration, consider using applications such as Miro, Slido or Google Forms to facilitate interactive feedback and data collection. These tools can help organize input and streamline the process of analyzing information, making it easier to share actionable insights post-debrief.

Before the debrief, assign one or two team members to serve as notetakers to ensure all key points, takeaways and next steps are documented accurately. If possible, consider selecting individuals who may not be actively participating in certain segments of the debrief, allowing them to focus solely on capturing the discussion.

Planning Follow-Up

After the debrief, there will be a need to review the gathered feedback, create summaries and plan for next steps. The specifics of these follow-up actions will be detailed in the section “[*Actioning the Debrief*](#)” but it is helpful to think ahead about how the insights gathered will be turned into improvements and who might be responsible for each task.



CONDUCTING THE DEBRIEF

1. Make the agenda clear

Give your team access to the agenda at least a day before the meeting. Encourage team members to review the agenda ahead of time so they are prepared to engage thoughtfully with the debrief questions. Set a time limit for each topic so you can cover all topics within the debrief time frame. If you expect to discuss particular forms, standard operating procedures (SOPs), manuals or other resources during the debrief, have copies available.

2. Create a safe and comfortable environment

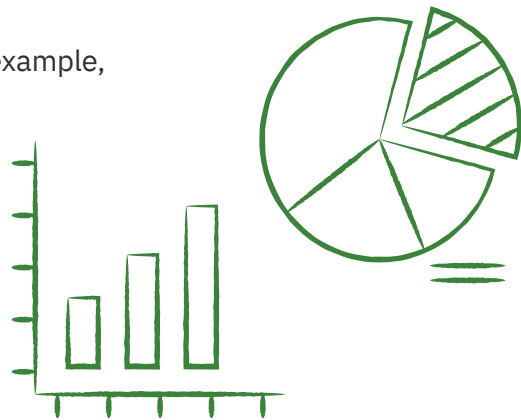
Set the tone for the debrief right away. Explain that your team is having an open discussion and encourage honesty and participation. Remind your team that the conversation is meant to be positive, productive and focused on solving problems rather than airing grievances. You are all working toward the same goal: administering the most accurate, secure and accessible election possible.

3. Start on a positive note

Before asking your team questions, lead with positivity. Celebrate your team's achievements during the last election. Did you have record turnout? Did you deploy any new voting technologies or voter communication tools? Remind team members of their successes and clarify that this debrief is about finding opportunities to improve.

4. Use visuals and data, where helpful

Some topics may benefit from data or visuals. For example, data about polling place wait times may help your team identify where additional election workers are needed. A pie chart of the most common voter questions might help your communications team consider how to improve their education and outreach efforts. Research and organize relevant data ahead of time to facilitate an efficient debrief.



5. Cover the essentials, cultivate continuous feedback

Encourage ongoing feedback by letting your team know this debrief is just the start of a continuous improvement process. Explain how team members can share insights moving forward, by email or using other channels, to help address future challenges. Use a “parking lot” for topics outside the agenda, reassuring staff that all contributions are valuable and that this session is not the only chance to share feedback or solutions.

6. Help your team stay focused

Changing topics quickly can hinder productivity due to “attention residue,” which means team members are still focused on the previous topic. Pace yourself, take breaks and give your team an opportunity to shift their focus between topics. Encourage team members to take a moment to “shift gears” between topics, whether that means taking a quick break, grabbing a drink or simply pausing before brainstorming about the next topic.

7. Document the debrief

Record notes, insights, action items and other observations during the debrief. Emphasize the importance of thorough note-taking before the debrief starts. After the debrief, you or another leader should review your team's feedback and create a summary of lessons learned and actionable insights. Share this information with your team so they can see the value of the debrief and work toward process improvements.

8. Adjust the format as needed

This guide provides questions to ask your team and actions to take. However, be flexible during the debrief. If a team member raises an interesting point, ask follow-up questions. If a certain topic was especially challenging for your team, be open to amending the agenda to allow for more discussion of that topic.

Make it interactive!

This guide walks you through leading a question and answer style debrief. However, you may wish to add interactive elements to get your team moving and engaged. Below are a few activities that might help!

- **Post-it Activity:** Begin by dividing a whiteboard or wall into sections for each agenda topic. Encourage your team to write what went well, what could be improved or any other relevant feedback on Post-it notes. You can also use different colors to represent specific types of feedback (e.g., green for what went well, yellow for areas to improve and blue for general observations or ideas). Team members can then place their notes in the appropriate section, creating a visual display that highlights feedback by topic.
- **Timeline Mapping:** Use a large wall poster or whiteboard to create a timeline of key activities or milestones from pre- to post-election. Have participants walk up to the board and add Post-it notes or write directly on the board to indicate where they think there were challenges, successes or potential improvements.
- **Gallery Walk:** Post large paper sheets or whiteboards around the room with each topic and a list of the planned questions. Have your team walk around and write down their responses to the questions or add Post-it notes. Later, the team can regroup to discuss the main takeaways.



ACTIONING THE DEBRIEF

As soon as possible after the debrief, take time to organize your notes into an **action plan**. Within that action plan, identify themes from the conversation, challenges the team faced and solutions the team proposed. The action plan should:

1. Identify challenges faced this election

Clearly name the areas where improvements or changes are needed. This ensures your team understands the focus of the action plan. This could include processes that were identified as problematic, tasks that were not completed as expected or any recurring issues that need attention. This may mean:

- a. Updating election or management calendars
- b. Scheduling new training or updating training materials
- c. Building or updating forms
- d. Creating, reviewing or updating SOPs
- e. Improving physical security or cybersecurity of existing and new assets



2. Detail implementation solutions

Outline specific steps for each action item. Detail what resources may be needed and who is responsible for each task. For tasks that require more than one individual, name one person to serve as the lead.

3. Provide deadlines for implementing those solutions

Clearly define deadlines for each task to ensure timely completion. For bigger tasks, establish milestones to help track progress and ensure accountability.

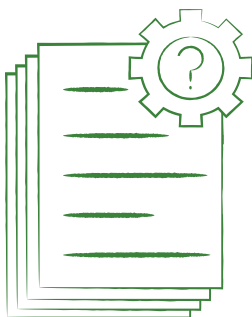
4. Create follow-up and feedback mechanisms

Include ways to provide feedback on the action plan. You may also want to include regular check-ins or status updates to assess progress. This can help in refining strategies and adjusting actions as needed to better meet objectives.

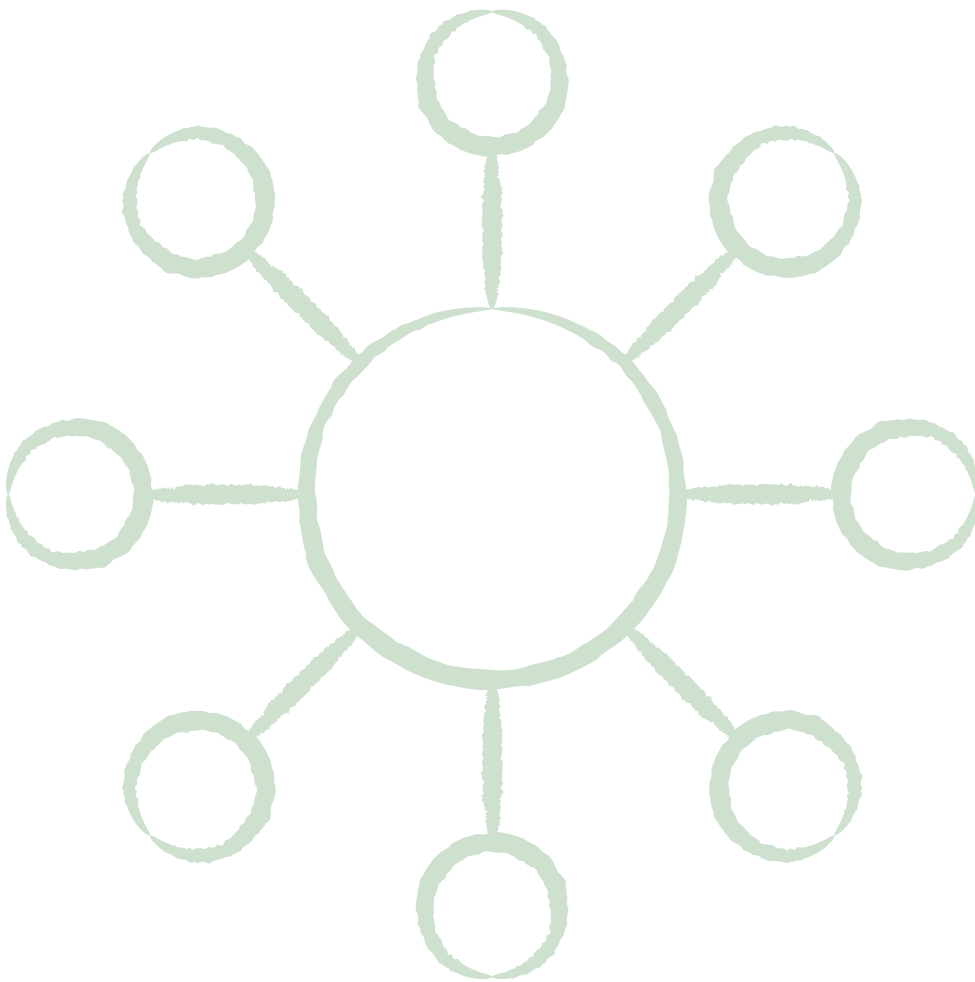
Once you have finished drafting the action plan, **share it with your team.**

When sharing the plan, be sure to distribute the document in a clear, accessible format (e.g., printed document, email, document link in a shared drive, etc.) and set a time to review it together. This allows for a more interactive approach where team members can ask questions and offer feedback. Clearly explain the purpose of the action plan, highlighting the relationship between each action and the broader goals identified during the debrief.

Finally, remind your team that this debrief is not only a way to conclude the most recent election, but also the beginning of preparing for success for the next election.



Debrief by Topic



Debrief by Topic

The remainder of this guide will walk you through specific election topic areas. It provides a set of questions you can ask your team for each topic area. The questions will help team members identify their successes and opportunities for improvement. Each section also provides a list of action items to help you improve operations. At the end of this guide, see [Appendix A](#) for a list of helpful resources by topic area. [Appendix B](#) is a template for creating your own debrief questions and action items. [Appendix C](#) is a facilitator guide to make asking questions easier for the individual leading the debrief.

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Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Ballot Proofing

- What about our ballot proofing went really well this year?

- Did we include participating jurisdictions, candidates, political parties, etc., in our proofing?

- To meet dual language requirements, did we use translators who are fluent? Did we involve community organizations that represent language minority voters?

- What did not go well? Did we have any errors after printing? If so, how were they discovered?

- Who was on our ballot proofing team and how were roles defined? Did any ballot proofers take part in designing the ballot?

- Was all proofing done against source materials from the state and participating jurisdictions?

- What do we want to do differently in the next election?

- Can we create or update an organized plan with checklists and a timeline for proofing?

Ballot Organization

- What about our ballot organization (central count facility, storage location, etc.) worked well this election?

- Was our ballot processing work and storage space(s) sufficient to keep ballots secure and organized?

- Did we make good use of labels and other visuals to make sure ballots remained organized?

- What didn't go well?

- Could our workspace be better organized? Were team members able to easily locate needed ballots and supplies?

- Were team members easily able to identify anything missing or out of place?

- What do we want to do differently in the next election?

- Do we need to purchase additional equipment to securely store and transport ballots? Do we need new or additional shelving, wire racks/cages, ballot transfer cases, etc.?

Ballot Audits

- Overall, what went well during our post-election tabulation audits?

- Did the audit affirm the accuracy of the count?

- Did our audit draw from all precincts and voting methods?

- Did we have good SOPs to conduct the audit, including technical steps?

- What did not go well?

- Did we maintain independence between the individuals who counted the ballots and the individuals who conducted the audit?

- Were watchers able to meaningfully observe the audit?

- If a risk-limiting audit (RLA), did we have any problems locating individual batches or ballots?

- For an RLA, did we have any difficulty using the RLA software?

- What would we like to do differently in the next election?

- Do we have a clear understanding of what we would have done if any part of our audit failed?

- Could we improve how we educate the public on audit processes and outcomes? Did we publish a user-friendly report or simply complete the audit?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

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- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft (or update) a ballot proofing SOP. As a starting point, see page 11 of Ballot Proofing: Ensuring Accuracy in Elections by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a plan to include all relevant parties in ballot proofing, from staff to vendors to candidates. For help deciding who should be involved, see page 6 of Ballot Proofing: Ensuring Accuracy in Elections by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft (or update) a ballot organization SOP. Include details about labeling, layout, and security protocols.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order any needed equipment, including shelving, wire racks/cages, ballot transfer cases, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Registration and Voting

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Voter Registration Rolls

- What went well in our voter registration efforts this year?

- Did we complete all list maintenance activities in a timely manner and in accordance with state requirements for deceased voters, NVRA cancellations, duplicate voters, etc.?

- Did staff have the training and/or SOPs they needed to complete all required list maintenance activities?

- What challenges did we face with voter registration? Focus here on daily data entry of new and updated registrations.

- Did we experience any backlogs?

- How well did list maintenance activities go this election cycle?

- As we restart our routine voter registration efforts, what do we want to do differently in the months ahead?

- Do our staff and temporary employees have the training and technology resources to complete all voter registration activities?

Mail Ballot Operations

- Overall, how successful was the mail ballot program (outgoing and central count) this past election?

- Were ballots delivered to voters in a timely manner?

- Did voters have a way to track their ballots?

- What did not go well?

- How were relationships with our print and mailing partners?

- How well did we facilitate meaningful observation for official watchers and/or members of the public?

- How successful were our mail ballot processing operations? Think about each individual process (receiving ballots, signature verification, opening ballots, tabulation, adjudication and duplication)?

- Did voters have safe and secure ways to return mail ballots? Did we have sufficient drop boxes? How did our monitoring and security efforts go?

- What should we do differently in the next election?

- Do we need to procure new equipment or change staffing levels?

In-Person Voting Operations

- What went well at polling places/vote centers this past election?

- Did voters find our locations accessible and did our layouts allow for efficient check-in and voting as well as accommodate meaningful observation for watchers?

- Did we have in place signed agreements with each location, establishing important dates, points of contact, liability/indemnification, etc.?

- What did not go well?

- Did we struggle to secure enough voting locations? Did we secure them well enough in advance of the election?

- Did we have any conflict at the polls? If so, did poll workers have the training to de-escalate those situations?

- How well did we communicate any last-minute changes to voters and poll workers?

- What do we want to do differently in the next election?

- How well did we organize important information, such as building contacts, table/chair needs, delivery/pickup times, etc.?

Results Reporting

- What went well with results reporting?

- When did we report our first set of unofficial results? Was this within a reasonable, expected time frame after voting locations closed?

- Did we test our system or our ability to upload to the state system prior to Election Day?

- Did we proactively educate the public about expectations for election night results?

- What did not go well with our results reporting?

- Did we have any errors or difficulties uploading results? If so, how can we improve on that?

- Did we have a good system in place to track batch uploads, memory card uploads, etc.?

- Did we have a good backup system in case the main results reporting system did not work?

- What would we like to do differently in the next election?

- Can we improve how we communicate about outstanding ballots, such as provisional ballots, military ballots and mail ballots, that might impact the final, unofficial results?

- Do we need better step-by-step instructions to navigate the more technical elements of results reporting?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update your SOPs for data entry and list maintenance. Make sure all your state guides are current. Ask other counties to share their SOPs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify training opportunities through the state or your association of local officials. Enroll staff in training or ask a state trainer to come to your office.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use our recent election experience to create a timeline of key tasks to be completed for a successful outgoing mail ballot campaign and/or central count. For a sample, see The Elections Group's General Inbound Ballot Processing Guide .
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify key items that can be tracked in a polling place database or spreadsheet and begin building it out.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create step-by-step procedures for uploading election night results into the reporting module.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build out some sample communications to inform voters about election night reporting expectations. For sample templates, see The Elections Group's Ballot Counts and Election Results Communications Toolkit .
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Communications

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Voter Education

- What are the most common questions that we received from voters this election cycle?

- Did we satisfactorily address those questions?

- Are answers to those questions easily available online? Did we share answers to those questions on social media? How else did we address them?

- What is our office's process for communicating key dates and deadlines to voters? Is that process recorded in an SOP?

- What tools does our office use to communicate with voters?

- How did we use social media in the last election? What kind of engagement did we receive? How many people engaged with our posts? Could we have done a better job with social media? How can we improve our use of social media moving forward?

- How do we use our website? Could we have done a better job with the website this election?

- Are there other ways we should be reaching out to voters and community members? What are those?

- How many community events did we attend? Did we keep a list?

- Did we offer any presentations to civic organizations or other groups in the community?

- Did we do any outreach to local schools?

Media Relationships

- What questions did reporters ask our team during this election? Are we satisfied with the answers we gave and the media coverage we received? How can we improve this moving forward?

- Do we have a designated staff member responsible for media relations? Who is it? If that individual were out of the office for an extended period of time, would we be prepared to engage with the media?

- Do we maintain a directory of key media in the market who cover elections? If not, how should we go about building that directory? Who should we include?

- How well do we communicate with the media? Do we have strong contacts at local media outlets? How can we improve our relationship with local media?

- Did we issue press releases? Did we issue them at times when they were relevant? Did our press releases provide the right information and answer the right questions?

- Did we proactively pitch positive stories about our work to the media? Were any of those stories told?

Accessibility

- Did we ensure that all web posts made during this election are usable and accessible for people with disabilities?

- Did we make sure that our web materials are screen reader accessible? This can be done using many popular web browsers, including Chrome, Edge and Firefox.

- Did we make the sample ballot available in audio format?

- Did we include alt text for every graphic featured in a social media post?

- Did we quality check written and online materials for usability and accessibility?

Crisis Communications

- Were there any election-related crises in our jurisdiction this year? If so, how did we communicate about those crises?

- How do we record important information in the event of a crisis? Do we have a form for this? Do we have an SOP for this?

- Do we have a crisis communications plan? If so, does it provide enough information that our whole team knows what to do in an emergency? If not, how will we go about building a crisis communications plan?

- Do we have prepared holding statements to share with the media in the event of common emergency situations?

- Do we have prepared social media post templates for common emergency situations?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) an SOP for creating social media posts and other communications ahead of key election dates and deadlines.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) an FAQ that answers common voter questions. Post the FAQ on the elections website and share the FAQ on social media at key times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review online materials to make sure they are screen reader accessible. This can be done using many popular web browsers including Chrome, Edge and Firefox.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review our online and printed materials for usability and accessibility. Consider using the Usability and Accessibility Checklist by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that team members have access to crisis communications intake response forms. You can build your own or use the Crisis Communications Intake Response Forms developed by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) a crisis communications plan. Ensure that it addresses all emergency scenarios discussed in the debrief as well as other common scenarios. Consider starting with The Elections Group's Crisis Communications Toolkit .
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Security

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Physical Security

- Does our office adequately secure sensitive areas, including where election materials are stored?

- Does our office have procedures for handling suspicious mail or packages? Do team members know what steps to take in such an event?

- Do we have a continuity of operations plan? If yes, does it provide solutions for scenarios like a polling place or office losing power? Do team members know where to access this plan?

- Did our team have any issues with the safety or security of ballot drop boxes? How well did we handle those issues?

- Did our team use chain of custody forms when retrieving ballots from drop boxes? Were those forms completed timely and accurately by all individuals who attended to drop boxes? Do we have a procedure for retaining those forms?

Cybersecurity

- How are we protecting our office's cybersecurity? What do we do to protect the voter registration system?

- Did our IT department (or contractor) implement all state cybersecurity requirements, such as multifactor authentication, complex passwords, running updated malware detection applications, etc.?

- What is our team doing to protect election technology? Are we following the [Election Technology Security](#) best practices from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission?

- Have we trained staff to spot and report phishing emails and other suspicious emails? Do team members feel confident in their ability to spot phishing emails?

- Did our team experience any cyber incidents during the last election? How did we resolve those? How could we better prepare for future incidents?

- Do we maintain backups of our critical systems and data? How do we maintain those backups?

Personal Security

- Do team members feel safe and supported in their roles? If team members have concerns about security or safety, how can the office address them?

- Were there any conflicts at polling locations? Other customer service issues? If so, do we have de-escalation resources we can deploy to assist election workers?

- Do team members feel comfortable with their level of personal security? Do team members know how to protect themselves against doxxing and other privacy issues?

Law Enforcement

- What role did law enforcement play during the last election? Were we able to cooperate with law enforcement when we needed their assistance?

- Was there a need for increased (or decreased) law enforcement presence at polling locations? At our office?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the Secure Headquarters Checklist by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enroll staff in cybersecurity training sponsored by federal, state or county government agencies. Set a deadline for all staff to complete or renew their cybersecurity training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set a meeting to review a doxxing prevention guide such as Protecting Yourself from Doxxing by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review CISA's Suspicious Mail or Packages poster for tips to determine if a piece of mail or package seems suspicious and the steps to follow if it is suspicious.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refer to the Five Steps to Safer Elections and arrange a meeting with law enforcement to discuss a way to move forward. Provide law enforcement officials with copies of the Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guides developed by the Committee for Safe and Secure Elections.
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Poll Workers

The “[Guide for Debriefing Elections](#)” from the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence offers election officials a structured framework for post-election evaluations with specific recommendations to acquire feedback from poll workers. The guide outlines the process in a few key steps and includes suggested questions and discussion prompts. It emphasizes gathering and analyzing feedback using surveys and examining key areas, such as logistics, resources and personal experience, before diving into group discussions.

The questions below are meant to compliment the information presented in the guide, which we encourage you to review.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Subject?

- Were our poll workers given foundational safety and security training?
 - Did our poll workers have access to [de-escalation resources](#)?
 - Did our poll workers have an easy-to-access [contact list](#) to use in a situation requiring additional assistance (e.g., direct number for local law enforcement contact)?

- Did our poll workers have an understanding of state law and regulations regarding challenges to a voter's right to vote?

- Did we use a formal intake process for observers?
 - Were observers given any sort of training?

- Did poll workers receive standards of conduct training or information?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review poll worker training for content, length and format. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure de-escalation is included as part of training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create (or review) poll worker pocket contact cards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create (or review) observer intake process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Management and Leadership

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Hiring, Onboarding, Training

- Did we hire enough staff in enough time to accomplish the various jobs and processes?

- Were relationships productive with our hiring partners, such as our city or county human resources and payroll departments or any external hiring agencies? Did you identify ways to make the hiring process more efficient and impactful?

- Did staff have the appropriate skills or training required for their specific job responsibilities?
 - Did job descriptions define clear role expectations?

- How comprehensive was onboarding?
 - Did new staff have all the credentials, logins, etc., they needed to begin work as soon as they started?

- How effective was training for new staff?
 - What could have been done differently to improve staff readiness?
 - Were there any gaps in training that affected performance on Election Day?
 - Did training content align well with actual tasks and challenges encountered?
 - How were staff trained or prepared for security-related issues?
 - Were staff trained on de-escalation?
 - Were staff trained on managing observers?

Communications and Team Coordination

- Was the election, and each of the specific topic areas, managed through use of a project management tool or management calendar?

- How well did leadership communicate and provide direction throughout election preparation and Election Day?
 - How well was the team supported during their shifts?

- Were key decisions made in a timely manner? How were they communicated to the team?

- What could we have improved in terms of decision-making and visibility?

- Were teams able to effectively collaborate and share information across departments?

- How well did leadership foster collaboration and resolve conflicts?

Budget and Resource Management

- How efficiently were resources allocated (people, time, budget, equipment, supplies, etc.)?

- Were there any resource shortages (envelopes, ballots, etc.) or overages that affected operations?

Incident Management

- Were there any unexpected challenges during the election process? If so, how did leadership manage them?
 - How could leaders have responded differently to improve team effectiveness?

- Did leaders remain calm under pressure? Were their responses timely and effective?

Team Morale and Engagement

- How would we describe the morale of the team during the election?
 - How did we support mental wellness throughout the year / election cycle?

- Were there opportunities to recognize and motivate team members effectively?

- How were first-time workers thanked for their service?

Additional Questions

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

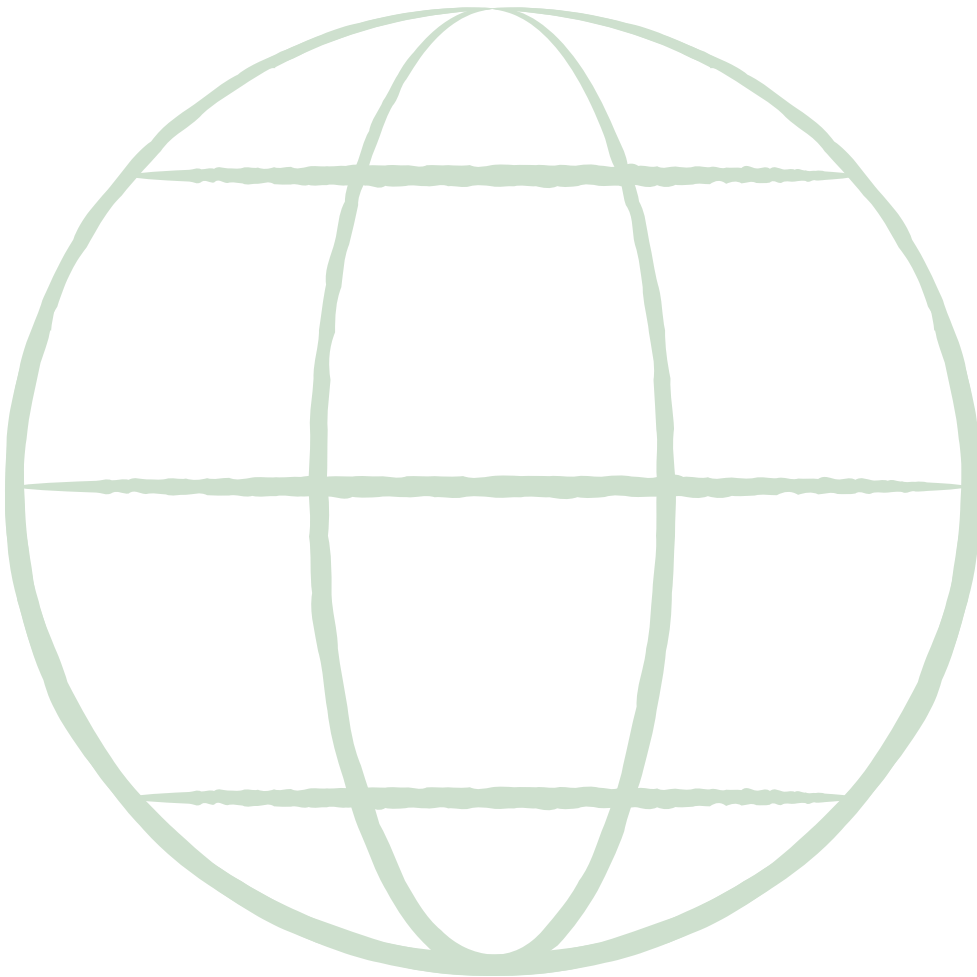
- *Add your own question*

- *Add your own question*

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review and, if needed, update or develop ways to recruit and onboard temporary and permanent staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure job descriptions are up to date and accurate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review and refine training resources for clarity, accessibility and effectiveness in preparing staff for critical tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set deadlines for training schedules.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refine process documentation. Update or create detailed process documentation to ensure all leaders can execute tasks consistently, even under pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write SOPs where necessary. • Review existing SOPs for accuracy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there were issues with communication, schedule regular check-ins during election periods to catch and address challenges in real time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer specific management training to prepare leaders for the complexities of managing teams under time-sensitive conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating a quick reference guide for professional development training and opportunities at your office.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop contingency plans or ensure existing plans are current. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAC provides a list of items to consider when <i>contingency planning</i>, including natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, severe snow and rain storms, fires, etc.), technology disasters (e.g., power outages), political and social events (e.g., war, civil unrest, medical emergencies, etc.), and election-related emergencies (e.g., lack of poll workers or polling places, shortage of ballots or voting systems, charges of voter intimidation, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update election management calendars or schedules of events for your upcoming elections.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Appendix



Appendix A: Resources

The following resources are great for improving operations after your debrief. For each resource, the table lists the resource name, the topic covered by the resource, the organization that produced the resource, and a brief description of how the resource can improve your operations.

To access a resource from the table, open this guide on your computer and click on the name of the resource you want to open.



Resource Name	Resource Topic(s)	Source	Description
<u>4 Tips for Communicating About Election Results Reporting</u>	Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	These tips are designed to help election officials set public expectations by communicating when election results will be released and why they might change in the hours and days after the polls close.
<u>5 Tips to Strengthen Your Election Workforce</u>	Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This document outlines five key strategies to enhance your election team. It assists with recruiting, training and retaining dedicated personnel who can meet the demands of modern electoral challenges.
<u>7 Strategies for Enhancing Ballot Drop Box Security</u>	Registration and Voting; Security	The Elections Group	These strategies can be used to enhance the physical security of drop boxes in your jurisdiction.
<u>12 Tips for Retaining Election Workers</u>	Poll Workers; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This set of tips will help offices improve election worker retention.
<u>2024 General Election Sample Social Media Schedule</u>	Communications	The Elections Group	This social media calendar provides ready-to-go posts for important dates and messaging. It can help election offices keep the public engaged and allow staff to focus on other topics for content creation.
<u>Audit Report Templates</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	Communicate audit processes and outcomes to your voters through informative infographics and plain language reports.
<u>Ballot Counts and Election Results Communications Toolkit</u>	Registration and Voting; Communications	The Elections Group	This resource will keep you in communication with voters, candidates and the media about ballot counts and election results.
<u>Ballot Creation</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence	Election officials and their partners developed this principles-based approach to ballot creation.

Resource Name	Resource Topic(s)	Source	Description
<u>Ballot Drop Box Implementation</u>	Communications; Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	This guide explains the planning, voter outreach and communications needed to implement ballot drop boxes.
<u>Ballot Proofing: Ensuring Accuracy in Elections</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	This guide offers a structured approach to ballot proofing, focused on inputs and outputs with the goal of limiting mistakes.
<u>Ballot Reconciliation Troubleshooting Guide</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	This guide covers the most common scenarios for ballot reconciliation balancing issues at polling places and central count facilities.
<u>Ballot Replication Guide</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits; Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	This guide provides election administrators with principles, considerations and best practices for ballot replication.
<u>Chain of Custody</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	This guide offers best practices and sample forms to maintain evidence of secure ballot management.
<u>Confident Voices in Critical Times: A Crisis Communications Toolkit for Before, During and After a Critical Elections Incident</u>	Communications; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This is a crisis communications starter toolkit, complete with easy-to-use plans for problems local election officials may face.
<u>Contingency Planning and Change Management</u>	Management and Leadership	U.S. Election Assistance Commission	This resource provides election officials with general guidelines on how to identify, assess and respond to events that may disrupt elections and voter registration services in their local jurisdiction.
<u>Crisis Communications Intake Response Forms</u>	Communications	The Elections Group	Crisis communications readiness helps election offices respond promptly, accurately and confidently during an emergency or significant event. Download and use these intake response forms to supplement your plans and help manage your office's response to critical incidents. Categories are color coded and include a wide range of crisis situations.
<u>De-Escalation Posters</u>	Poll Workers; Communications; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	These employee-facing posters remind staff and election workers of techniques to assist with de-escalating tense situations.

Resource Name	Resource Topic(s)	Source	Description
<u>De-Escalation Resources</u>	Communications; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	These guides and employee-facing posters remind staff and election workers of techniques to assist with de-escalating tense situations.
<u>De-Escalation Resources for Election Workers</u>	Poll Workers; Security; Communications	The Elections Group	These resources help election officials foster a respectful environment for election workers, where everyone feels heard.
<u>Drop Box Resilience</u>	Security	The Elections Group	This checklist helps with resilience planning for drop boxes. Use it to prepare for incidents, including attacks, accidents or weather emergencies.
<u>Election Communications Plan</u>	Registration and Voting; Communications	The Elections Group	Offices and officials can use this 60-day communications plan template to prepare for upcoming election cycles.
<u>Election Communicators Community</u>	Communications	The Elections Group	The Elections Group hosts this online hub dedicated to election communications professionals, whether it's their full-time role or one of many responsibilities. This community lives on the Civic Roundtable platform and it's a space for exchanging best practices, innovative ideas and strategies for effective election-related messaging.
<u>Election Infrastructure Cybersecurity Readiness and Resilience Checklist</u>	Security	Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	This checklist helps election security officials and their IT teams quickly review existing cybersecurity practices to protect against some of the most common threats, like ransomware or distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks.
<u>Election Management Calendar</u>	Communications; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This spreadsheet lists important election tasks, describes each task and explains how many days before each election the task should be completed. It is a great tool for setting calendar reminders. It also works as a checklist to ensure that all important election tasks are completed on time.
<u>Election Observer Resources</u>	Poll Workers; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	These templates outline election processes in a uniform way to help observers know what to expect and how to perform their role meaningfully.
<u>Election Security in a Time of Disturbance</u>	Poll Workers; Security; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This guide helps election officials plan defenses against threats from individuals, organized groups and spontaneous groups that threaten the order, safety or integrity of the election.

Resource Name	Resource Topic(s)	Source	Description
<u>Election Technology Security: Best Practices for Election Technology</u>	Security	U.S. Election Assistance Commission	Election officials can use this guide to assess their own processes. It highlights security features that are essential for protecting election technology.
<u>Everything In It's Place: Keeping Ballots Organized</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	This guide applies principles of warehouse organization to ballot management programs.
<u>Guide for Debriefing Elections</u>	Poll Workers	U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence	This guide provides best practices and examples for gathering feedback from poll workers or staff.
<u>Inbound Mail Ballot Processing Guide</u>	Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	This guide takes a comprehensive look at ballot processing, tracing ballots from intake to tally and archiving. It provides election officials with process descriptions, tracking forms, supply lists and work roles.
<u>Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guides</u>	Security	Committee for Safe and Secure Elections	Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guides summarize key penal provisions found within state law for each state and the District of Columbia. They are a great resource to share with local law enforcement officials, particularly at or around the period of in-person voting.
<u>Physical Security Checklist for Election Offices</u>	Security	Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)	This checklist provides a series of questions designed to help election officials identify areas to enhance physical security at election infrastructure facilities and take action to implement low- or no-cost options in the short term.
<u>Polling Place Pocket Contact Card</u>	Poll Workers	The Elections Group	Election officials can use this pocket guide template to quickly and easily create a contact list, so election workers have all of the contacts they need at their fingertips.
<u>Protecting Yourself from Doxxing</u>	Security	The Elections Group	The “Protecting Yourself from Doxxing” checklist provides practical steps to safeguard personal information and enhance online privacy. It covers basics like updating devices, securing social media accounts, practicing password management, and opting out of advertising personalization.

Resource Name	Resource Topic(s)	Source	Description
<u>Results Release Schedule</u>	Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	Clear communication about when election results will be released and updated is essential for an informed and engaged community. Use this graphic to help set expectations about when your community can look forward to updates.
<u>Risk-Limiting Audit Procedures for Local Election Officials</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	The Elections Group	This guide outlines procedures for conducting a risk-limiting audit.
<u>Schedule of Events for an Election</u>	Management and Leadership; Communications	The Elections Group	Use this template to keep teams and the public informed of upcoming election events.
<u>Secure Ballot Management</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence	Election officials and their partners developed this principles-based approach to ballot management and security.
<u>Standard of Conduct for Election Workers</u>	Poll Workers; Management and Leadership	The Elections Group	This guide outlines 1) oath of office vs. standards of conduct; 2) behaviors that violate election law; 3) examples of standards of conduct; 4) the role of training and core competencies; and 5) monitoring and reporting.
<u>Tabulation Audits</u>	Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits	U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence	Election officials and their partners developed this principles-based approach to tabulation audits.
<u>Usability and Accessibility Checklist</u>	Communications	The Elections Group	Jumpstart your content usability and accessibility efforts with this basic checklist.
<u>Voter Registration and Voter List Updates: A Primer</u>	Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	This single-page resource covers the basics of voter registration and voter list updates.
<u>Voter Registration and Voter List Updates: How It Works</u>	Registration and Voting	The Elections Group	This slide presentation (with scripted speaker notes) makes it possible for anyone to explain the basics of voter registration and voter list updates.

Topic:

QUESTIONS

Question

Question

Question

Question

Question

Topic:

ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Add your own action item</i>

Ballots: Proofing, Management and Audits

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Ballot Proofing

- What about our ballot proofing went really well this year?
- Did we include participating jurisdictions, candidates, political parties, etc., in our proofing?
- To meet dual language requirements, did we use translators who are fluent? Did we involve community organizations that represent language minority voters?
- What did not go well? Did we have any errors after printing? If so, how were they discovered?
- Who was on our ballot proofing team and how were roles defined? Did any ballot proofers take part in designing the ballot?
- Was all proofing done against source materials from the state and participating jurisdictions?
- What do we want to do differently in the next election?
- Can we create or update an organized plan with checklists and a timeline for proofing?

Ballot Organization

- What about our ballot organization (central count facility, storage location, etc.) worked well this election?
- Was our ballot processing work and storage space(s) sufficient to keep ballots secure and organized?
- Did we make good use of labels and other visuals to make sure ballots remained organized?
- What didn't go well?
- Could our workspace be better organized? Were team members able to easily locate needed ballots and supplies?
- Were team members able to easily identify anything missing or out of place?
- What do we want to do differently in the next election?
- Do we need to purchase additional equipment to securely store and transport ballots? Do we need new or additional shelving, wire racks/cages, ballot transfer cases, etc.?

Ballot Audits

- Overall, what went well during our post-election tabulation audits?
- Did the audit affirm the accuracy of the count?
- Did our audit draw from all precincts and voting methods?
- Did we have good SOPs to conduct the audit, including technical steps?
- What did not go well?
- Did we maintain independence between the individuals who counted the ballots and the individuals who conducted the audit?
- Were watchers able to meaningfully observe the audit?
- If a risk-limiting audit (RLA), did we have any problems locating individual batches or ballots?

- For an RLA, did we have any difficulty using the RLA software?
- What would we like to do differently in the next election?
- Do we have a clear understanding of what we would have done if any part of our audit failed?
- Could we improve how we educate the public on audit processes and outcomes? Did we publish a user-friendly report or simply complete the audit?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft (or update) a ballot proofing SOP. As a starting point, see page 11 of <i>Ballot Proofing: Ensuring Accuracy in Elections</i> by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a plan to include all relevant parties in ballot proofing, from staff to vendors to candidates. For help deciding who should be involved, see page 6 of <i>Ballot Proofing: Ensuring Accuracy in Elections</i> by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Draft (or update) a ballot organization SOP. Include details about labeling, layout, and security protocols.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order any needed equipment, including shelving, wire racks/cages, ballot transfer cases, etc.

Registration and Voting

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Voter Registration Rolls

- What went well in our voter registration efforts this year?
- Did we complete all list maintenance activities in a timely manner and in accordance with state requirements for deceased voters, NVRA cancellations, duplicate voters, etc.?
- Did staff have the training and/or SOPs they needed to complete all required list maintenance activities?
- What challenges did we face with voter registration? Focus here on daily data entry of new and updated registrations.
- Did we experience any backlogs?
- How well did list maintenance activities go this election cycle?
- As we restart our routine voter registration efforts, what do we want to do differently in the months ahead?
- Do our staff and temporary employees have the training and technology resources to complete all voter registration activities?

Mail Ballot Operations

- Overall, how successful was the mail ballot program (outgoing and central count) this past election?
- Were ballots delivered to voters in a timely manner?
- Did voters have a way to track their ballots?
- What did not go well?
- How were relationships with our print and mailing partners?
- How well did we facilitate meaningful observation for official watchers and/or members of the public?
- How successful were our mail ballot processing operations? Think about each individual process (receiving ballots, signature verification, opening ballots, tabulation, adjudication and duplication)?
- Did voters have safe and secure ways to return mail ballots? Did we have sufficient drop boxes? How did our monitoring and security efforts go?
- What should we do differently in the next election?
- Do we need to procure new equipment or change staffing levels?

In-Person Voting Operations

- What went well at polling places/vote centers this past election?
- Did voters find our locations accessible and did our layouts allow for efficient check-in and voting as well as accommodate meaningful observation for watchers?

- Did we have in place signed agreements with each location, establishing important dates, points of contact, liability/indemnification, etc.?
- What did not go well?
- Did we struggle to secure enough voting locations? Did we secure them well enough in advance of the election?
- Did we have any conflict at the polls? If so, did poll workers have the training to de-escalate those situations?
- How well did we communicate any last-minute changes to voters and poll workers?
- What do we want to do differently in the next election?
- How well did we organize important information, such as building contacts, table/chair needs, delivery/pickup times, etc.?

Results Reporting

- What went well with results reporting?
- When did we report our first set of unofficial results? Was this within a reasonable, expected time frame after voting locations closed?
- Did we test our system or our ability to upload to the state system prior to Election Day?
- Did we proactively educate the public about expectations for election night results?
- What did not go well with our results reporting?
- Did we have any errors or difficulties uploading results? If so, how can we improve on that?
- Did we have a good system in place to track batch uploads, memory card uploads, etc.?
- Did we have a good backup system in case the main results reporting system did not work?
- What would we like to do differently in the next election?
- Can we improve how we communicate about outstanding ballots, such as provisional ballots, military ballots and mail ballots, that might impact the final, unofficial results?
- Do we need better step-by-step instructions to navigate the more technical elements of results reporting?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

☑	Action Item
☐	Update your SOPs for data entry and list maintenance. Make sure all your state guides are current. Ask other counties to share their SOPs.
☐	Identify training opportunities through the state or your association of local officials. Enroll staff in training or ask a state trainer to come to your office.
☐	Use our recent election experience to create a timeline of key tasks to be completed for a successful outgoing mail ballot campaign and/or central count. For a sample, see The Elections Group's <i>General Inbound Ballot Processing Guide</i> .
☐	Identify key items that can be tracked in a polling place database or spreadsheet and begin building it out.
☐	Create step-by-step procedures for uploading election night results into the reporting module.
☐	Build out some sample communications to inform voters about election night reporting expectations. For sample templates, see The Elections Group's <i>Ballot Counts and Election Results Communications Toolkit</i> .

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Communications

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Voter Education

- What are the most common questions that we received from voters this election cycle?
- Did we satisfactorily address those questions?
- Are answers to those questions easily available online? Did we share answers to those questions on social media? How else did we address them?
- What is our office's process for communicating key dates and deadlines to voters? Is that process recorded in an SOP?
- What tools does our office use to communicate with voters?
- How did we use social media in the last election? What kind of engagement did we receive? How many people engaged with our posts? Could we have done a better job with social media? How can we improve our use of social media moving forward?
- How do we use our website? Could we have done a better job with the website this election?
- Are there other ways we should be reaching out to voters and community members? What are those?
- How many community events did we attend? Did we keep a list?
- Did we offer any presentations to civic organizations or other groups in the community?
- Did we do any outreach to local schools?

Media Relationships

- What questions did reporters ask our team during this election? Are we satisfied with the answers we gave and the media coverage we received? How can we improve this moving forward?
- Do we have a designated staff member responsible for media relations? Who is it? If that individual were out of the office for an extended period of time, would we be prepared to engage with the media?
- Do we maintain a directory of key media in the market who cover elections? If not, how should we go about building that directory? Who should we include?
- How well do we communicate with the media? Do we have strong contacts at local media outlets? How can we improve our relationship with local media?
- Did we issue press releases? Did we issue them at times when they were relevant? Did our press releases provide the right information and answer the right questions?
- Did we proactively pitch positive stories about our work to the media? Were any of those stories told?

Accessibility

- Did we ensure that all web posts made during this election are usable and accessible for people with disabilities?
- Did we make sure that our web materials are screen reader accessible? This can be done using many popular web browsers, including Chrome, Edge and Firefox.
- Did we make the sample ballot available in audio format?
- Did we include alt text for every graphic featured in a social media post?
- Did we quality check written and online materials for usability and accessibility?

Crisis Communications

- Were there any election-related crises in our jurisdiction this year? If so, how did we communicate about those crises?
- How do we record important information in the event of a crisis? Do we have a form for this? Do we have an SOP for this?
- Do we have a crisis communications plan? If so, does it provide enough information that our whole team knows what to do in an emergency? If not, how will we go about building a crisis communications plan?
- Do we have prepared holding statements to share with the media in the event of common emergency situations?
- Do we have prepared social media post templates for common emergency situations?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) an SOP for creating social media posts and other communications ahead of key election dates and deadlines.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) an FAQ that answers common voter questions. Post the FAQ on the elections website and share the FAQ on social media at key times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review online materials to make sure they are screen reader accessible. This can be done using many popular web browsers including Chrome, Edge and Firefox.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review our online and printed materials for usability and accessibility. Consider using the Usability and Accessibility Checklist by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that team members have access to crisis communications intake response forms. You can build your own or use the Crisis Communications Intake Response Forms developed by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build (or update) a crisis communications plan. Ensure that it addresses all emergency scenarios discussed in the debrief as well as other common scenarios. Consider starting with The Elections Group's Crisis Communications Toolkit .

Security

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Physical Security

- Does our office adequately secure sensitive areas, including where election materials are stored?
- Does our office have procedures for handling suspicious mail or packages? Do team members know what steps to take in such an event?
- Do we have a continuity of operations plan? If yes, does it provide solutions for scenarios like a polling place or office losing power? Do team members know where to access this plan?
- Did our team have any issues with the safety or security of ballot drop boxes? How well did we handle those issues?
- Did our team use chain of custody forms when retrieving ballots from drop boxes? Were those forms completed timely and accurately by all individuals who attended to drop boxes? Do we have a procedure for retaining those forms?

Cybersecurity

- How are we protecting our office's cybersecurity? What do we do to protect the voter registration system?
- Did our IT department (or contractor) implement all state cybersecurity requirements, such as multifactor authentication, complex passwords, running updated malware detection applications, etc.?
- What is our team doing to protect election technology? Are we following the Election Technology Security best practices from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission?
- Have we trained staff to spot and report phishing emails and other suspicious emails? Do team members feel confident in their ability to spot phishing emails?
- Did our team experience any cyber incidents during the last election? How did we resolve those? How could we better prepare for future incidents?
- Do we maintain backups of our critical systems and data? How do we maintain those backups?

Personal Security

- Do team members feel safe and supported in their roles? If team members have concerns about security or safety, how can the office address them?
- Were there any conflicts at polling locations? Other customer service issues? If so, do we have de-escalation resources we can deploy to assist election workers?
- Do team members feel comfortable with their level of personal security? Do team members know how to protect themselves against doxxing and other privacy issues?

Law Enforcement

- What role did law enforcement play during the last election? Were we able to cooperate with law enforcement when we needed their assistance?
- Was there a need for increased (or decreased) law enforcement presence at polling locations? At our office?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review the Secure Headquarters Checklist by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enroll staff in cybersecurity training sponsored by federal, state or county government agencies. Set a deadline for all staff to complete or renew their cybersecurity training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set a meeting to review a doxxing prevention guide such as Protecting Yourself from Doxxing by The Elections Group.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review CISA's Suspicious Mail or Packages poster for tips to determine if a piece of mail or package seems suspicious and the steps to follow if it is suspicious.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refer to the Five Steps to Safer Elections and arrange a meeting with law enforcement to discuss a way to move forward. Provide law enforcement officials with copies of the Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guides developed by the Committee for Safe and Secure Elections.

Poll Workers

The “**Guide for Debriefing Elections**” from the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence offers election officials a structured framework for post-election evaluations with specific recommendations to acquire feedback from poll workers. The guide outlines the process in a few key steps and includes suggested questions and discussion prompts. It emphasizes gathering and analyzing feedback using surveys and examining key areas, such as logistics, resources and personal experience, before diving into group discussions.

The questions below are meant to compliment the information presented in the guide, which we encourage you to review.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Subject?

- Were our poll workers given foundational safety and security training?
 - Did our poll workers have access to de-escalation resources?
 - Did our poll workers have an easy-to-access contact list to use in a situation requiring additional assistance (e.g., direct number for local law enforcement contact)?
- Did our poll workers have an understanding of state law and regulations regarding challenges to a voter's right to vote?
- Did we use a formal intake process for observers?
 - Were observers given any sort of training?
- Did poll workers receive standards of conduct training or information?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review poll worker training for content, length and format. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure de-escalation is included as part of training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create (or review) poll worker pocket contact cards.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create (or review) observer intake process.

Management and Leadership

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Hiring, Onboarding, Training

- Did we hire enough staff in enough time to accomplish the various jobs and processes?
- Were relationships productive with our hiring partners, such as our city or county human resources and payroll departments or any external hiring agencies? Did you identify ways to make the hiring process more efficient and impactful?
- Did staff have the appropriate skills or training required for their specific job responsibilities?
 - Did job descriptions define clear role expectations?
- How comprehensive was onboarding?
 - Did new staff have all the credentials, logins, etc., they needed to begin work as soon as they started?
- How effective was training for new staff?
 - What could have been done differently to improve staff readiness?
 - Were there any gaps in training that affected performance on Election Day?
 - Did training content align well with actual tasks and challenges encountered?
 - How were staff trained or prepared for security-related issues?
 - Were staff trained on de-escalation?
 - Were staff trained on managing observers?

Communications and Team Coordination

- Was the election, and each of the specific topic areas, managed through use of a project management tool or management calendar?
- How well did leadership communicate and provide direction throughout election preparation and Election Day?
 - How well was the team supported during their shifts?
- Were key decisions made in a timely manner? How were they communicated to the team?
- What could we have improved in terms of decision-making and visibility?
- Were teams able to effectively collaborate and share information across departments?
- How well did leadership foster collaboration and resolve conflicts?

Budget and Resource Management

- How efficiently were resources allocated (people, time, budget, equipment, supplies, etc.)?
- Were there any resource shortages (envelopes, ballots, etc.) or overages that affected operations?

Incident Management

- Were there any unexpected challenges during the election process? If so, how did leadership manage them?
 - How could leaders have responded differently to improve team effectiveness?
- Did leaders remain calm under pressure? Were their responses timely and effective?

Team Morale and Engagement

- How would we describe the morale of the team during the election?
 - How did we support mental wellness throughout the year / election cycle?
- Were there opportunities to recognize and motivate team members effectively?
- How were first-time workers thanked for their service?

SUGGESTED ACTION ITEMS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Item
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review and, if needed, update or develop ways to recruit and onboard temporary and permanent staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure job descriptions are up to date and accurate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review and refine training resources for clarity, accessibility and effectiveness in preparing staff for critical tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set deadlines for training schedules.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refine process documentation. Update or create detailed process documentation to ensure all leaders can execute tasks consistently, even under pressure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write SOPs where necessary. • Review existing SOPs for accuracy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there were issues with communication, schedule regular check-ins during election periods to catch and address challenges in real time.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Offer specific management training to prepare leaders for the complexities of managing teams under time-sensitive conditions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider creating a quick reference guide for professional development training and opportunities at your office.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop contingency plans or ensure existing plans are current. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EAC provides a list of items to consider when <i>contingency planning</i>, including natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, severe snow and rain storms, fires, etc.), technology disasters (e.g., power outages), political and social events (e.g., war, civil unrest, medical emergencies, etc.), and election-related emergencies (e.g., lack of poll workers or polling places, shortage of ballots or voting systems, charges of voter intimidation, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update election management calendars or schedules of events for your upcoming elections.



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