Mapping and Modeling Best Practices in Election Certification and Training Programs

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Endorsed by the Election Workforce Advisory Council

Executive Summary

Training programs for election officials prepare them to successfully carry out their duties and reinforce shared norms and values across the field, foster professional connections, and encourage continuous evaluation and improvement. Currently, the training programs' design and availability are highly inconsistent across states. This report draws on the best practices in election official training programs around the country and the expertise of the Election Workforce Advisory Council to identify and explain the necessary principles and practices of a successful program. It also provides a framework for building a professionalized, cohesive, and well-resourced election workforce across the country.

We examine the components of program design and governance—including purpose, participation, management, and administration—as well as course content and instructional design, including laws and regulations, participation engagement, and assessments. Within each component, specific practices are rated according to how critical they are to a successful training program.

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Introduction

Training for election administrators is a cornerstone of secure, trustworthy, and accessible elections, and recent research underscores the need for standardized training and professional development in election administration. This report addresses the lack of educational and experiential standards in the election administration field and outlines a matrix of foundational policies to support training programs for election officials.

To guide the evolution of existing programs and the creation of new ones, the matrix defines practices for both Program Design and Governance and Course Content and Instructional Design. It identifies and defines key components and subcomponents of certification and training programs, and provides case studies and explanations to support implementation and growth.

A recognized national credentialing authority for election official training does not yet exist, although promising efforts like the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's certification program are underway. State-to-state disparities make progress toward achieving shared knowledge, norms, and consistent practices challenging. By providing a framework for program and coursework excellence, this report is designed to inform the 50-plus organizations conducting professional development for election officials and to lay the groundwork for strengthening the field.

Election Workforce Advisory Council

The report's methodology, content, and recommendations are endorsed by the Election Workforce Advisory Council.

The Election Workforce Advisory Council is an effort to enhance and innovate recruitment, retention, and training within election administration. It is dedicated to fostering a sustainable talent pipeline and preserving institutional knowledge; improving job performance, safety, and satisfaction; and ensuring that elections continue to be run by experienced professionals.

The Election Workforce Advisory Council is a joint project of the Bipartisan Policy Center and The Elections Group. The council's collective expertise will provide a holistic perspective to inform research, generate new solutions, and serve as a central convening ground for this critical work.

This project is supported by the [Election Trust Initiative](#), a nonpartisan grant-making organization working to strengthen the field of election administration guided by the principle that America's election systems must be secure, transparent, accurate, and convenient.

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Methodology

A subcommittee of the Election Workforce Advisory Council met over six months to assess existing election official training and certification programs and to identify the principles and practices of a successful training program. The subcommittee identified the big-picture principles and specific practices necessary for a successful program in two areas: **design and governance**, and **content and educational techniques**. The subcommittee rated each practice as "core" or "exemplary."

Using This Model

The goal of this report is to support election officials and training providers who are building or updating training programs. The model can be used either as a self-assessment of existing training programs or as an aid in designing a new program.

The **components** of each matrix are the fundamental principles that should guide a training program's design, governance, and content. The **subcomponents** are the specific best practices, rated core or exemplary, that operationalize each principle.

This report also provides examples of how the core and exemplary subcomponents can manifest in practice. A long-form annotation of the matrix provides examples and explanations demonstrating the meaning of each component and subcomponent and how to implement them. For added insight, the examples and explanations draw on the experiences of existing programs.

KEY

- **Core** is a label applied to the important or necessary subcomponents of a training program. These are subcomponents that every program should include.
- **Exemplary** is a label applied to subcomponents of outstanding programs. Although these subcomponents are not necessary for every program, they are the hallmark of excellent programs. Programs should strive to include these subcomponents, particularly after they have included all core subcomponents.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE

Successful training programs will address these components:

- Purpose
- Participation
- Tailored Training
- Continuous Improvement
- Effective Format
- Reasonable Time Commitment
- Clear Requirements

- Budgeting and Resourcing
- Partnerships
- Management and Administration

COURSE CONTENT AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNIQUES

Effective courses will address each of these components:

- Knowledge of Laws, Regulations, and Policies (where applicable)
- Application of Laws, Regulations, and Policies
- Resource Awareness
- Assessments
- Rigor
- Student Engagement
- Instructional Design

COURSE LIST

The Appendix includes a sample course list that states can draw on when they are designing their training program.

Program Design and Governance

MATRIX

Program Design		
Components, Descriptions, and Subcomponents	**Core**	**Exemplary**
(1) PURPOSE **The program has a clear and appropriate purpose.**		
(1.1) The program's purpose is clear, and training offerings are consistent with the program's purpose and scope, as defined in its governing documents.	X	
(1.2) The program reinforces shared values of election administrators, as established through initiatives like the **Election Center's Standards of Conduct for Election & Registration Officials** and the **U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's Standards for Excellence**.	X	
(1.3) The program's offerings are rounded, covering both election administration and professional development topics.	X	
(1.4) The program is flexible enough to address new and emerging topics, consistent with the program's scope.		X
(1.5) The program prepares students for career growth and promotion.		X
(2) PARTICIPATION **The program is broadly available to members of the election community.**		
(2.1) The program is open to chief local election officials.	X	
(2.2) The program is open to deputy local election officials.	X	
(2.3) Recertification requirements keep experienced election officials engaged and connected with colleagues in their state.	X	
(2.4) The program is open to election staff.		X
(2.5) The program—in whole or in part—is open to others involved in election administration, such as election system providers and other vendors.		X
(3) TAILORED TRAINING **The program is tailored to the needs of all program participants, including both new and experienced election officials.**		
(3.1) The training addresses new or changing laws, policies, and procedures.	X	
(3.2) The program provides training and resources tailored to support election officials administering their first election.	X	
(3.3) Advanced and elective training is available for experienced election officials, covering topics related to leadership and professional development.	X	

Program Design		
Components, Descriptions, and Subcomponents	**Core**	**Exemplary**
(4) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT The program continuously improves by incorporating current industry best practices and responding to participants' feedback.		
(4.1) The program solicits participants' feedback on the training course content.	X	
(4.2) The program solicits participants' feedback on training course format and design.	X	
(4.3) Feedback is implemented into the program.	X	
(4.4) The program uses assessment data to evaluate the knowledge and skills gained by participants.		X
(4.5) The program researches and incorporates resources and guidance from industry experts, including the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the Bipartisan Policy Center, The Elections Group, the Election Center, the Center for Tech and Civic Life, and the Center for Civic Design.		X
(4.6) The program uses data to evaluate how the skills gained by participants improve election administration. This may include qualitative and quantitative data collected from surveys or other available data about job performance.		X
(4.7) The program shares information, including data and programming details, with other programs for comparative analysis.		X
(5) EFFECTIVE FORMAT The course delivery format meets the needs of program participants.		
(5.1) The program provides in-person coursework.	X	
(5.2) The program posts resources online so they can be accessed at any time. These resources may include video recordings of courses, guides, forms, articles, and checklists.	X	
(5.3) The program provides hybrid coursework, with some elements of individual courses online and others in person.		X
(6) REASONABLE TIME COMMITMENT The program can be completed with a reasonable and appropriate time commitment.		
(6.1) The length of individual training sessions is appropriate to support learning.	X	
(6.2) The program offers enough training courses to meet the program's goals and the needs of its participants.	X	
(6.3) Travel and time away from work to participate in the program is not overly burdensome for participants.	X	
(7) CLEAR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS The program has explicit and appropriate requirements.		
(7.1) The program has a governing document available to participants that clearly states the program's requirements.	X	
(7.2) Requirements are appropriately rigorous for the program's goals and practicable for participants.	X	

Program Design		
Components, Descriptions, and Subcomponents	**Core**	**Exemplary**
(8) BUDGETING AND RESOURCING The program has a budget designed to meet the program's goals and minimize burdens on participants.		
(8.1) The program has a written budget that accounts for costs. These may include administrative and instructive labor, facilities, materials, and software licensing.	X	
(8.2) The cost to participate in the training program is not prohibitive to individuals.	X	
(8.3) Resourcing and sponsorship opportunities are explored and considered.		X
(9) PARTNERSHIPS Partner organizations help improve program administration and delivery.		
(9.1) The program seeks opportunities to partner with educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, or third-party providers with elections expertise.		X
(9.2) The program seeks to explore reciprocal training credit or otherwise incentivizes training in national programs, such as Auburn University's Certified Elections Registration Administrator (CERA) program or the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs' certificate in election administration.		X
(10) MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION The program has strong management and administration structure.		
(10.1) The program has a designated program manager and governing authority.	X	
(10.2) The program, especially when working with partners, clearly defines roles and responsibilities for program managers, program administrators, and other partners.	X	

Narrative Review

PURPOSE

Focusing on a program's purpose ensures there is a reason for the program and that the program calibrates itself to that purpose. Every program should have a clearly defined mission that guides its structure, activities, and outcomes.

Subcomponent (1.2) The program reinforces shared values of election administrators, as established through initiatives like the Election Center's Standards of Conduct for Election & Registration Officials *and the* U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's Standards for Excellence.

Grounding a program's purpose in broadly shared values creates and strengthens shared norms. Reinforcing shared norms through training supports the election administration profession and ensures that values are consistent across the country.

In practice, this could mean grounding charter documentation in values. For example, a program's charter or bylaws can be updated to reflect their rooting in the values listed by the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence: **high integrity, comprehensive preparedness, voter-centricity, proactive transparency, and continuous improvement**.

A program's charter could explicitly state the purpose of supporting election officials' shared values with programming designed to support these norms.

Another source of shared norms that a program can draw on is the Election Center's Standards of Conduct. A program's charter could adopt the language in the code of conduct as a set of values upon which the program operates.

PARTICIPATION

Clearly identifying the target audience helps focus the program and ensures that programming is designed to serve its purpose and the needs of participants. Most programs serve chief election officials, deputies, and staff members. Some programs expand their availability to vendors, law enforcement, and other relevant parties.

Although knowledge transfer is a primary goal, a first-order effect of a training program is to maintain and foster a strong and resilient professional community network. New members join these professional communities every year, while others become seasoned veterans. Managing the program to ensure full participation is important for the growth and maintenance of the professional community network.

Subcomponent (2.5) The program—in whole or in part—is open to others involved in election administration. This may include election system vendors, law enforcement, attorneys, other government officials, etc.

Offering courses or opening program participation to relevant stakeholders provides an opportunity to educate these groups on issues pertinent to election administration. Colorado, for example, offers training courses for election vendors.

When programs offer courses to additional audiences, it is important to determine what information is most relevant to participants' needs; programs should consider their interest level and likelihood to actively engage in courses. Tailoring the content and delivery to align with participants' priorities and motivations will ensure the effectiveness of these courses.

Continuous improvement is a goal of nearly every organization and is considered a key value in election administration by the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, the American Law Institute's Ethical Standards for Election Administration, and the Election Center's Standards of Conduct for Election and Registration Officials. Assessing a program's impact and gathering feedback are critical to ensuring that election training and certification programs remain relevant and valuable.

Dynamic legal and regulatory requirements, as well as evolving threats and challenges, require election officials to be highly flexible. Programs must adapt over time to support the changing needs of participants.

Subcomponent (4.4) The program uses assessment data to evaluate the knowledge and skills gained by participants.

Providing value to participants is key to a program's credibility and viability. Measurement can take the form of tests or evaluations. More-intensive demonstrations of skill and knowledge gained—such as exhibiting the ability to create a certain type of documentation or communication—are additional means of assessing value.

Programs should also use accepted social science methods to evaluate a program's efficacy, including pre- and post-training surveys of participants and randomized controlled trials piloting new training with a select group of participants.

Subcomponent (4.5) The program researches and incorporates resources and guidance from industry experts, including the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the Bipartisan Policy Center, The Elections Group, the Election Center, the Center for Tech and Civic Life, and the Center for Civic Design.

Given the highly decentralized nature of election administration—with significant variations in operating environments and shared authorities between states, counties, and, in some cases, cities—it can be challenging to establish a unified set of performance norms. Although some national programs, such as the Election Center's CERA program and the Humphrey School's certificate program, help create a shared perspective, regularly reviewing resources and literature in the field offers another way to promote cross-collaboration and the rapid adoption of nationally recognized best practices.

Subcomponent (4.6) The program uses data to evaluate how the skills gained by participants improve election administration. This may include qualitative and quantitative data collected from surveys or other available data about job performance.

One method for evaluating a program's efficacy is to determine the success of election officials in delivering services expected by voters and other stakeholders. Although no single tool for such measurement exists, there are opportunities to find places where such measures are possible. For example, adopting the standards set by the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence provides concrete ways to measure an office's success in achieving and reinforcing election administration standards and values.

To evaluate the efficacy of a training program over a long period of time, a program could use the MIT Election Data and Science Lab's Election Performance Index to assess how a state performs on a larger scale, identify perceived deficiencies in the state's performance, and develop targeted training programs to address those gaps. Tracking progress over time helps ensure that programs remain focused on continuous improvement.

Subcomponent (4.7) The program shares information, including data and programming details, with other programs for comparative analysis.

The Election Workforce Advisory Council and other initiatives aimed at understanding associations across the country, particularly in their training, certification, and state-based programs, highlight the high value of information-sharing. When these programs operate in isolation—each learning its own lessons and developing independently from the other—it slows the pace of professionalization and innovation. Creating an environment where these organizations can collaborate and share information would significantly enhance opportunities for programs' rapid growth and development.

EFFECTIVE FORMAT

Every training format has its strengths and weaknesses. In-person training is highly effective, particularly in fostering community-building and networking. It also allows for advanced learning experiences, such as workshops, capstone projects, and small-group activities. However, in-person training comes with logistical and financial challenges.

Online training greatly improves accessibility and gives election officials more access to resources. Nevertheless, the online learning environment reduces opportunities for hands-on engagement and interactive, peer-to-peer learning.

Subcomponent (5.2) The program posts resources online so they can be accessed at any time. These resources may include video recordings of courses, guides, forms, articles, and checklists.

Regardless of the format or whether online training is delivered synchronously or asynchronously, the resources used to develop these trainings should be accessible to election officials online so that they can review materials as needed.

Additionally, the choice of communication tools or networks can foster a deeper sense of community among election officials. Election officials increasingly use platforms such as Civic Roundtable to share information, best practices, and responses to challenges in real time. This helps to ensure that election officials across a state are not working in isolation, but instead are functioning as a connected community. Such collaborative spaces are a valuable complement to traditional training and certification programs by strengthening professional development and knowledge-sharing efforts.

Subcomponent (5.3) The program provides hybrid coursework, with some elements of individual courses online and others in person.

One relatively novel approach is a hybrid model in which election officials complete preparatory work and foundational learning online before attending in-person training. This model allows trainers to optimize in-person sessions for activities best suited for face-to-face settings, such as hands-on exercises, group discussions, and advanced skills-building. By shifting essential but less interactive learning to an online format, in-person training time can be used more effectively, ensuring that core concepts are reinforced through practical application.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with other training programs, civil society organizations, and educational institutions can help build a set of national norms around excellence in training.

Subcomponent (9.1) The program seeks opportunities to partner with educational institutions, such as colleges and universities or third-party providers with elections expertise.

[Six election official training programs](#) are either owned or administered by an institution of higher education. These partnerships offer institutional credibility, ensure high-quality training, and, in some cases, ease the administrative burdens of a training program by relying on existing institutional infrastructure.

Subcomponent (9.2) The program seeks to explore reciprocal training credit or otherwise incentivizes training in national programs, such as Auburn University's Certified Elections Registration Administrator (CERA) program or the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs' certificate in election administration.

National training and certification programs foster the professional connections that make the election administration workforce resilient. To incentivize participation, a state program might offer reciprocal credit for individuals who take a course with CERA or complete the University of Minnesota's certificate.

Ownership of a training program and accountability for its management rest with the organization whose members benefit from programming.

Subcomponent (10.1) The program has a designated program manager and governing authority.

The program manager, ideally one individual, runs the day-to-day operations of the program and ensures its success. A governing authority—such as a board of directors drawn from the membership of participants or a state association committee on training—ensures the appropriate calibration of needs. This governing authority should manage any larger modifications to the program structure over time.

Course Content and Instructional Design

A training and certification program serves as both a vehicle and a framework for delivering content, ensuring effective learning, and meeting the needs of the election community. Program developers can select various course topics or focus on a specific topic to deliver to election officials, and coursework authors often make key decisions about content during development.

Below is a list of components and subcomponents identified as useful for course designers. These principles and practices aim to help designers create appropriate and effective learning content and experiences for their members. The following matrix provides a structured approach to guide course production and content development.

Course Content and Instructional Design		
Components, Descriptions, and Subcomponents	**Core**	**Exemplary**
(11) LAWS AND REGULATIONS Courses provide a statutory and regulatory framework.		
(11.1) Courses train on federal laws, state laws, regulations, and administrative codes.	X	
(11.2) Courses are updated regularly to provide training on new and changing laws and regulations.	X	
(11.3) Courses train on other sources of law, including court cases and relevant opinions or guidance.	X	
(11.4) Courses provide background and history to help understand current practices.		X
(11.5) Courses are delivered, crafted, or reviewed by attorneys familiar with election administration, where applicable.		X
(12) APPLICATION OF LAW AND RULES AND BEST PRACTICES Courses highlight successful applications of regulations.		
(12.1) Courses train on how to apply laws and regulations—not just what they say.	X	
(12.2) Courses highlight local best practices in implementing state and federal laws.	X	
(12.3) Courses identify where local variance in practices is appropriate or inappropriate.	X	
(12.4) Courses train on the legal duties and responsibilities of local election officials, their staff, and other audiences.	X	
(13) PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT Courses keep participants engaged in learning and building community.		
(13.1) Participants work in small groups to discuss election administration and build community.	X	
(13.2) Participants collaborate to build or update standard operating procedures (SOPs), forms, guides, and other materials.	X	
(13.3) Courses allow participants to practice new skills and demonstrate acquired knowledge.	X	
(13.4) Courses engage participants with case studies and simulations.	X	
(13.5) Online courses include a discussion board or other engagement tools.	X	
(13.6) Participants collaborate to give presentations to their peers.		X
(13.7) Courses include activities throughout to keep participants engaged.		X
(14) AWARENESS AND ADVANCEMENT Courses make participants aware of resources and services developed by leaders and experts in the field.		
(14.1) Courses reference and cite the work of industry experts, including nongovernmental organizations, nonprofits, professional organizations, and academics.		X
(14.2) Coursework is developed with consideration of the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's Standards for Excellence or the Election Center's Standards of Conduct for Election & Registration Officials.		X
(14.3) Participants gain exposure to emerging issues, statewide best practices, national best practices, and forms, guides, and resources from peers and other experts.		X

Course Content and Instructional Design		
Components, Descriptions, and Subcomponents	**Core**	**Exemplary**
(15) ASSESSMENTS **Courses assess participants' understanding.**		
(15.1) Participants are assessed for mastery of course material.	X	
(15.2) Assessments are tailored to a course's learning objectives.	X	
(15.3) Assessments encourage participants to consider how lessons apply in the real world, through hypotheticals and case study questions.	X	
(15.4) Each course offers a reassessment process or other option for students who do not pass a course assessment.		X
(16) RIGOR **Courses are sufficiently rigorous for mastery of covered topics.**		
(16.1) Courses address emerging issues and new trends in the subject area covered.	X	
(16.2) Courses encourage participants to engage with relevant resources, including laws, regulations, guidance, forms, SOPs, articles, and research.	X	
(16.3) Courses give participants relevant prereading and assignments.		X
(16.4) Participants are encouraged to complete a capstone project to improve election administration within their state or local jurisdiction.		X
(17) INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN **Course design supports learning objectives.**		
(17.1) Courses use design and adult education best practices.	X	
(17.2) Courses give students access to additional reading and resources.	X	
(17.3) Course content uses plain language and plain design.	X	
(18) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT **Courses continuously improve by incorporating current industry best practices and responding to participants' feedback.**		
(18.1) Participants' feedback is used to improve course content, design, and delivery.	X	
(18.2) Courses are updated regularly to include information and resources from industry experts, including The Elections Group, the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, the Election Center, and the Election Assistance Commission.	X	
(18.3) Courses are updated regularly to reflect current laws, regulations, and policies.	X	

Narrative Review

Because understanding relevant laws is essential to compliance, most election training courses include a legal component. Courses should cover applicable federal, state, and local laws to ensure election officials are well informed; courses should place special emphasis on key federal laws, such as the National Voter Registration Act, the [Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act](), the Help America Vote Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Grounding training in these legal frameworks reinforces their significance and helps officials to effectively navigate regulatory requirements.

Subcomponent (11.2) Courses are updated regularly to provide training on new and changing laws and regulations.

Coursework should be updated regularly to ensure that new participants receive the most current information. Offering periodic updates to experienced election officials who have already completed training is equally important. These updates could be delivered in short online modules or through a dedicated New Laws course, which provides an overview of recent changes across all relevant topics. In cases where significant changes occur, it may be necessary to require both new and veteran officials to complete a fully revised course as part of their certification. This approach ensures that all election officials remain informed and up to date on evolving laws and best practices.

Subcomponent (11.4) Courses provide background and history to help understand current practices.

Although the primary focus of technical election training is compliance and execution under current laws, understanding the history of these laws and practices adds significant value. Election officials enter the field from diverse backgrounds and without a standardized professional or educational path, making it crucial to establish a shared baseline of knowledge and language.

For example, training on mail ballot processing might cover requirements for voter anonymity, such as the use of secrecy sleeves or separating ballot verification from ballot extraction. Referencing state laws or regulations that mandate secrecy is essential, but exemplary training would provide historical context on how these safeguards arose in response to the levels of voter fraud and coercion that existed before the adoption of the secret ballot.

This broader understanding empowers officials to provide better explanations to their staff and the public, fostering greater confidence in the electoral process. By incorporating historical context and scholarly sources, training not

only reinforces best practices but also strengthens the professionalization of election officials.

APPLICATION OF LAW AND RULES AND BEST PRACTICES

Course content can be a vehicle for showing how to implement regulations correctly and successfully.

Subcomponent (12.2) Courses highlight local best practices in implementing state and federal laws.

This is one of the most important opportunities in election training. Even in states with strong central authority and "top-down" administration, election officials have considerable discretion in how they implement laws while remaining compliant. At a basic level, training can demonstrate what minimal compliance looks like. At its best, training can serve as a tool to guide officials toward an ideal standard of election administration by showcasing high-performing jurisdictions.

It is also essential to acknowledge the diversity among election offices: Differences in size, resources, and equipment mean that training programs may need to adapt best practices to fit various operational models. Effective training should highlight these different models to ensure that all jurisdictions, regardless of their circumstances, have practical pathways to excellence.

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

Nearly as important as knowledge transfer is the development of a professional network and sense of community. Shared experiences deepen appreciation for the field and strengthen professional support systems—an especially critical factor in election administration.

Because of this need, programs should design their training not only to impart knowledge but also to build relationships among election officials and expand professional networks. One effective approach is to incorporate small-group work that requires interpersonal communication and collaboration. A best practice is to assign group work randomly, ensuring that participants interact beyond their familiar circles. This diversification helps election officials broaden their networks, strengthening the profession as a whole.

Subcomponent (13.3) Courses allow participants to practice new skills and demonstrate acquired knowledge.

Courses should include dedicated time for participants to practice newly learned skills. For example, in a ballot proofing course, participants could proof mock ballots using their state's ballot proofing standards. A session on ballot management could have participants review documentation to identify inconsistencies. Research on adult education shows that hands-on practice is as important—if not more so—as lecture-based learning for improving comprehension and retention. Providing interactive, applied learning opportunities ensures that participants can confidently apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Subcomponent (13.4) Courses engage students with case studies and simulations.

Anchoring lessons in real-world scenarios makes the content more relevant and accessible, enhancing participants' understanding and retention. It also increases engagement during in-person sessions, where interactive formats like tabletop exercises or workshops can foster collaboration and hands-on learning. These approaches not only reinforce key concepts but also strengthen connections among participants, making the training more impactful.

Subcomponent (13.5) Online courses include a discussion board or other engagement tools.

Online courses should include opportunities to encourage active involvement and engagement with the course material, including interacting with one another. Incorporating the benefits of synchronous in-person courses into the online environment can help provide the networking and community-building benefits of in-person training.

AWARENESS AND ADVANCEMENT

Training should equip election officials with the tools and resources they need to continuously improve their knowledge and skills. A number of academic and nonprofit organizations in the election administration field provide rigorous, evidence-based resources and research on best practices from different states and jurisdictions, emerging issues in the field, and other topics. These resources and research should inform course content.

Subcomponent (14.2) Coursework is developed with consideration of the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's Standards for Excellence or the Election Center's Standards of Conduct for Election & Registration Officials.

Election administrators share a sense of values, standards, and ethics in the profession. The U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence's list of values demonstrates how one might go about thinking of grounding courses in shared values.

HIGH INTEGRITY

We are ethical public servants committed to fair, accurate and secure elections. We act with professionalism and nonpartisanship. We follow all local, state and federal laws governing elections. We are responsible stewards of resources.

COMPREHENSIVE PREPAREDNESS

We build and implement plans to effectively administer elections, navigate challenges, and manage crises. We document written procedures to support secure and efficient processes. We establish controls to prevent and detect errors—and when they occur, we are able to identify and correct them. We address the unexpected and support voters in the case of an emergency.

VOTER-CENTRICITY

We provide voters with an exceptional election experience. We deliver excellent service to make voters feel confident as they participate in the democratic process. We help voters navigate all stages of voting, from learning about their options to verifying their ballot was counted. We make voters feel welcome and support voters with different needs and barriers to voting.

PROACTIVE TRANSPARENCY

We engage our community and other stakeholders to support understanding of the election process. We communicate information about elections so it is readily available and easy to access. We identify and pursue opportunities for public education on election processes. We invite observers, answer questions and provide verified public information.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We pursue opportunities to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of election operations. We prioritize professional development to build capacity and learn from new approaches. We seek feedback from our team, the community we serve and other stakeholders to inform changes. We collaborate with election departments, both in our state and across the nation, to share resources, support each other and celebrate our successes.

Course developers can thoughtfully explore how to train around key values. For example, in a course focused on poll worker management, they might demonstrate how conducting surveys and debriefs with workers and staff reflect a commitment to continuous improvement. Creating well-crafted written procedures, job aids, and checklists for poll workers can reinforce comprehensive preparedness. Incorporating a customer service mindset and expanding focus beyond the execution of tasks can emphasize voter-centricity. Ensuring that workers are trained to support and facilitate election observation can showcase proactive transparency.

To deepen this approach, course developers should consider anchoring the course in existing standards or consulting them where applicable. For instance, the U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence has established standards related to poll workers that cover four key areas: training, recruitment, management, and retention.

Encouraging the sharing of best practices can also advance the field. For example, participants in a communications course could share their favorite social media posts. Others could present their chain-of-custody documentation and explain how they maintain election integrity. Peer-to-peer training fosters stronger connections and knowledge sharing within the community.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are important for reinforcing learning objectives and testing knowledge transfer. They are also a standard part of many training programs.

Subcomponent (15.2) Assessments are tailored to a course's learning objectives.

Assessments should ask questions that test participants on the intended level of understanding. For example, memorizing every regulation is likely unnecessary so long as election officials know how to find and interpret regulations in their state's administrative code. In contrast, election officials need a deep understanding of how to input, update, and manage voter registration information. Assessments should reflect the level of knowledge participants need to succeed in their roles.

Conclusion

Training for election officials is foundational for a professional election administration workforce. As election officials and their professional associations build and improve their training programs, this matrix provides election officials and trainers with a framework to develop training based on best practices from the field.

Appendix - Course List

The following course list demonstrates an overall approach to training on election administration. Not all courses are relevant to all jurisdictions, so course developers should combine or skip topics as needed.

COURSE TOPICS

The program's courses cover a combination of topics that:

1. Meet the program's purpose (broadly or narrowly).

2. Substantially train participants for their job duties.

3. Instill professionalism and leadership skills.

Election Administration Topics
The Americans with Disabilities Act and accessibility in elections
Audits and recounts
Ballot management
Ballot proofing and design
Candidate qualification
Chain of custody
Early voting
Election night reporting
Elections 101
Election worker management
History of elections
Managing election technology
Pollbooks and e-pollbooks
Poll watchers and observers
Redistricting
Signature verification and other means of voter authentication
Vote-by-mail
Voter list maintenance
Voter registration
Voting sites and facilities
Voting systems

Cross-Disciplinary Skills
Cybersecurity and elections
Election communications
Election law
Emergency preparedness in elections
GIS systems for elections
Human resources and elections
Media relations for election officials
Physical security and risk in election administration
Public records management
Voter outreach and education
Leadership and Values
Budget development
Conflict resolution
Continuity of operations
Customer service
Ethics
Mental wellness and resilience
Team building
Time management

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