

Montgomery County Board of Elections Election Director's Report – September 2024

Notice and Distribution of Materials

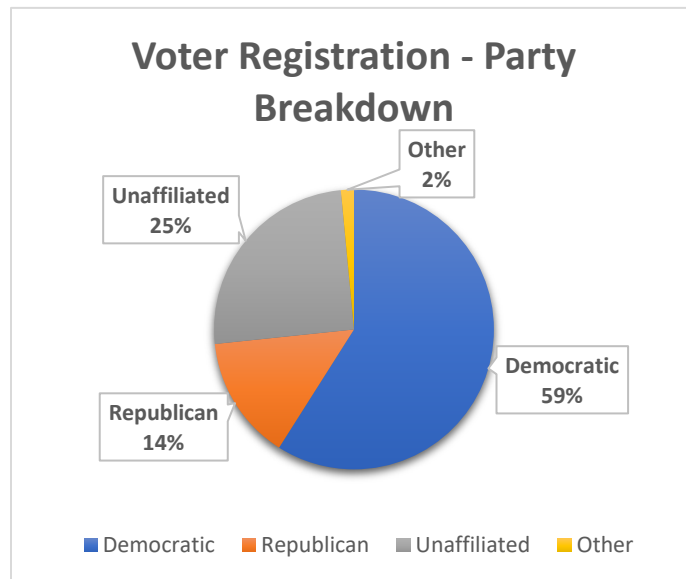
Draft minutes of the July 15, 2024, Board meeting were distributed to the Board members on August 30, 2024.

The Agenda for the September 16, 2024, Board meeting was posted on the Board of Elections website on September 1, 2024, and shared with the Board members.

The Director's Report, the Expenditure Tracking Report, and meeting materials were shared with the Board members and posted on the website on September 12, 2024.

Voter Registration Statistics:

The Voter Registration Monthly Statistical Report for August 2024 was distributed to the Board members on September 3, 2024, and published on the BOE's website. As of the end of August 2024, there were 683,963 active registered voters in Montgomery County and 76,827 inactive voters, for a total voter count of 760,790.



Voter Registration – Active Voters Status:

DEM: 403,515

REP: 98,129

UNA / Other Parties: 182,319

State Board of Elections (SBE):

Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE) on its July 23, 2024 session approved Montgomery County Board of Elections Bylaws.

SBE, in cooperation with the Department of Emergency Management organized a tabletop exercise on August 13, 2024, for all Maryland Board of Elections. The exercise focused on preparedness in case of potential disruptions in the election process.

Personnel

Permanent positions:

On August 1, 2024, Montgomery County Government launched a new and improved job application system through GovernmentJobs.com, called NEOGOV to streamline recruitment and improve efficiency in the onboarding of new employees.

BOE currently has an active ad for the Election Aide II positions, and some Sections are working to fill vacant temporary positions.

Staff is currently interviewing candidates for the Deputy Election Director position.

The Vote By Mail Program Manager I position will be advertised as of the week of September 16, 2024.

Staff is working with the OMB and OHR to prepare the Manager of Recruitment position to be advertised.

Temporary positions:

While the number of the onboarded temporary team members peaked around the 2024 Primary election day, the overall number has been reduced in the post-election period. However, as we are approaching the General Election, we have increased the number of temporary team members in the office to 44.

Budget

The shared Expenditure Tracking Report reflects the approved Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and the Department's overall spending for the fiscal year 2025. Both historically and per the calendar of election tasks, most expenditures are expected in the first two quarters of the fiscal year.

Board of Elections voter communication efforts

Staff cooperated with the County's Department of Technology and Business Solutions (TEBS) to send targeted emails to over 410,000 Montgomery County voters. Emails alerted voters to check their voter registration and update it if necessary, request a mail-in ballot or change the delivery method of their mail-in ballot. All of these emails had open rates of above 50%, while the email

that reminded voters of the necessary steps to vote their web-delivery print-at-home ballots had open rate of 71%.

BOE recorded a spike in the number of various requests following the dissemination of the emails, amounting to several thousands of voter registration updates and cancellations, mail-in ballot requests, cancelations or changes of the preferred delivery method (from web-delivery to mail).

Sections' Activities

Voter Services

On June 21, 2024, and on July 12, 2024, the Montgomery County Board of Elections received two separate batches of petition signatures collected and submitted by the Committee for Better Government. The petition was to amend the County Charter of Montgomery County, Maryland to bar any County Executive from serving more than two full or partial consecutive terms of office.

On July 5, 2024, the Montgomery County Board of Elections completed the validation of the first batch of 12,130 signatures, and on July 24, 2024, completed the validation of the second batch of 8,759 petition signatures.

The Board of Election processed each submitted signature as per legal requirements and determined that the Committee for Better Government submitted a total of 20,889 petition signatures for validation and

- 15,956 submitted petition signatures were validated and
- 4,933 submitted signatures were rejected.

The number of validated signatures exceeded the legally required 10,000 petition signatures to place the question on the 2024 Presidential General Election ballot. Therefore, the Election Director of the Montgomery County Board of Elections issued a Notice of Petition Determination confirming that the Committee for Better Government successfully gathered a sufficient number of legally valid petition signatures.

On August 5, 2024, the State Board of Elections forwarded 4,071 signatures for verification, collected to recognize the Green Party within the state. SBE also sent 2,405 petition signatures collected to add Robert F. Kennedy, Jr to the ballot for the General election. The SBE certified both petitions.

After focusing on verifying the petition signatures within the legally required timeframe, the Voter Registration Team then processed the backlog of voter registration requests and updates that had been generated while the three petitions were processed over the course of the summer. The Team processed 63,000 voter registration requests and updates. As a part of its regular list maintenance, the team processed updates received through ERIC – Electronic Registration Information Center, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and the Administrative Officer of the Court (AOC).

Additionally, in August, the Voter Participation Center, a nonpartisan organization that works to register and engage eligible voters, mailed voter registration applications throughout the State of Maryland. The mailing included a letter, an instructions page, a voter registration application pre-filled with name and/or address, and a pre-paid return envelope to the county election office. We have received over 1,150 of those envelopes containing new and updated registrations.

The Vote By Mail Team completed processing all backlogged requests for mail-in ballots to enable mailing of over 146,000 mail-in ballots starting 45 days before the election. The Team is preparing for implementation of the Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Program.

IT / Training Section

IT Staff completed Post Election Maintenance (PEM) on the voting equipment and electronic pollbooks as directed by SBE. IT Staff completed the preparation of the election equipment and set up the warehouse for Logic and Accuracy testing. Logic and Accuracy testing for the voting equipment (ballot marking devices and scanners) began on September 11th.

Training staff completed the development of new classes for returning election workers who attended training and served as an election worker for the Primary Election. These classes provide training with more individualized pacing and include a brief review of specific position duties, presentation of updates, and independently conducted exercises. The existing classes for new election workers were updated to incorporate changes from the Primary election.

Training classes began on August 26, 2024. The Training staff has conducted 61 classes and trained 880 election workers as of September 11, 2024.

Operations Section

The Operations Team prepared and submitted the ballot order to the SBE for printing.

The assembly of materials for supply bags and carts for Early Voting and Election Day is a significant part of preparations and is ongoing.

Operations Team has concluded shredding of the bulk of unvoted 2024 Primary ballots and the archiving of Primary Election materials per the State-mandated retention period.

Delivery and installation of 58 ballot drop boxes are scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, 2024. The staff has onboarded and cleared 44 Dropbox attendants and anticipates onboarding additional attendants in the coming weeks. All drop boxes will open to voters on Friday, September 20, 2024, when Dropbox attendants will begin picking up voted mail-in ballots once a day.

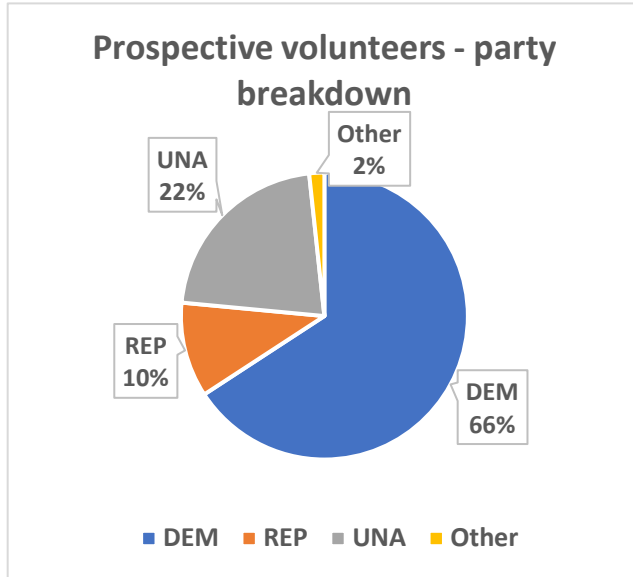
Recruitment and Election Support

The Recruitment Team continues to process received applications from voters who are interested in serving as Election Workers and Election Judges in the General Election. Recruiters are assisting Election Workers and Judges with the EJ Connection Portal. As the training and staffing of polling places began in August, the Recruitment Team is processing online training results and building polling place rosters of trained volunteers for Election Day and Early Voting.

Recruiters supported outreach events by representing the Board of Elections at over 40 community and high school events since August 1st. The Recruitment Team will continue to support outreach events planned for the remainder of the Election Cycle.

Recruitment statistics:

- 6,702 prospective volunteers available to serve in the general election
- 1,421 of the 6,702 prospective volunteers renewed or completed an application since the Primary Election
- 880 volunteers have completed in-person training by September 11, 2024
- 1978 volunteers have signed up to attend in-person training from September 12th – October 5th



Party affiliation breakdown of prospective volunteers:

- Democrats – 4410
- Republicans – 717
- Unaffiliated – 1461
- Other – 114

Meetings / Events

On August 20, 2024, Staff attend the annual meeting of the Maryland Association of Election Officials in Baltimore County. At the meeting, MAEO elected new leadership, with Erin Perron, Election Director for Carrol County, as the new MAEO President.

On September 10, 2024, the Board President, Board Secretary, Election Director, and Voter Services Team met with Montgomery County Postmasters to discuss various aspects of the election process and the role that USPS has in enabling timely delivery of the mail-in ballots. The focus was on the preparation for the upcoming election, including timely postmarking and delivery of mail-in ballots, schedule for mailing of the sample ballots, and timely return of undeliverable election mail to support BOE's list maintenance efforts.

On September 11, 2024, Election Director was invited to address the Board of Directors at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, together with representatives of the Washington DC and Arlington County Boards of Elections. The briefing and following conversation focused on election preparation, security, and coordination in the region in advance of the November elections.