



Virginia Department of Elections

Strategic Plan Update for FY2022

Introduction

This update to the Department of Elections (ELECT) strategic plan defines the goals and objectives we want to achieve through June 30, 2022. In addition to the strategic plan, ELECT developed a separate diversity, equity, and inclusion plan that is referenced in this document and summarized in the appendix.



ELECT Mission & Vision

A mission statement defines the purpose of an organization, while a vision statement focuses on what the organization hopes to achieve when operating in an ideal state.

MISSION

ELECT promotes and supports secure, accurate, fair and open elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

VISION

ELECT envisions a highly modern, efficient and professional electoral process that is secure, trustworthy and uniform at all levels and engages the diverse citizenry of Virginia in exercising their right to vote.

Summary of Strategic Goals

The agency has four strategic goals, which are equally important.

Maintain a diverse, well-trained workforce.

Increase voter confidence in the election process.

Continue to strengthen the security of Commonwealth elections.

Ensure continuity of agency operations through the uniform application of established policies and procedures.

Goal: Maintain a diverse, well-trained workforce.

A diverse workforce provides diverse perspectives, which are essential for effective decision-making and innovation. A well-trained workforce ensures professionalism, accuracy and efficiency in operations and service to constituents.

OBJECTIVE A

Implement the agency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan (2021-2023).

ELECT will take actions to continuously progress toward fostering a fully inclusive and equitable environment both internally and externally.

Responsibility

- Commissioner and Leadership Team

Strategies

- Refer to the DEI Plan for strategies, which are categorized as actions.

OBJECTIVE B

Expand and improve training and cross-training opportunities for staff.

Elections benefit from institutional knowledge, so ELECT must build and maintain a process where institutional knowledge is carried on, despite staffing changes. Cross-training will be used by ELECT to help with continuity and to encourage uniformity and consistency in job functions.

Responsibility

- Director of Operations

Strategies

- Improve the internal staff orientation process.
- Continue DEI training.
- Develop improved education on election administration for the staff.

Goal: Increase voter confidence in the election process.

The ongoing proliferation of misinformation about election processes and outcomes makes it vital that ELECT provide voters access to accurate information about how elections are administered in Virginia.

OBJECTIVE C

Improve voter knowledge of the election administration process.

To assure voter confidence in elections, it is important to provide clear and readily accessible information about how elections are administered. This includes educating citizens on important components of the election process such as how ballots are secured, how voting equipment is tested and secured, and how votes are counted and certified.

Responsibility

- External Affairs Manager

Strategies

- Work to establish a baseline for voter confidence in the election process.
- Continue to conduct and publish the results of post-election audits.

OBJECTIVE D

Increase voter education and outreach.

The dissemination of timely, accurate, and relevant information to citizens can increase public awareness of important election-related information and issues and can serve as an effective tool to encourage voter participation and to combat misinformation.

Responsibility

- External Affairs Manager

Strategies

- Improve the user experience with the agency website.
- Provide factual information to counter misinformation and disinformation.
- Better use external partners to disseminate accurate election information.

Goal: Continue to strengthen the security of Commonwealth elections.

Commonwealth elections are secure, but bad actors continue their attempts to disrupt electoral processes. Diligence is required to maintain the security of election information and technology as well as the physical security of voters, election officers, and poll workers.

OBJECTIVE E

Continue to strengthen and protect the security posture of election information systems.

Information system vulnerability is an ongoing issue that requires periodic re-evaluations of system security. Only through commitment and vigilance can ELECT manage the challenges and potential threats associated with maintaining data security and adopt effective measures that can reassure voters that their votes are secure.

Responsibility

- Chief Information Officer

Strategies

- Continue to harden information systems.
- Maintain agency and third-party compliance with state government security policies and industry best practices.
- Continue information security education and awareness for agency staff.

OBJECTIVE F

Continue to protect constituent privacy.

ELECT is committed to managing the challenges and potential threats associated with maintaining data privacy and will adopt effective measures that can reassure voters that their private information is secure.

Responsibility

- Chief Information Officer

Strategies

- Provide training on data privacy to agency staff.
- Implement programs that further protect voter information.

OBJECTIVE G

Assist localities in strengthening their election information and physical security posture.

Election professionals across the country are making great strides in modernizing and improving their election systems by investing in relevant technologies and implementing the most effective security strategies. ELECT has a role in sharing best practices for election security with localities to ensure they remain effective and resilient to emerging security challenges.

Responsibility

- Election Services Manager and Chief Information Officer

Strategies

- Implement and mature the Virginia Cyber Navigator Program.
- Continue collaboration with localities via the Voter Registration System Security Advisory Group VRSS.

- Assist localities in ensuring adequate security surrounding physical election activity based on established standards.

Goal: Ensure continuity of agency operations through the uniform application of established policies and procedures and effective management of resources.

Changes in leadership and staff are a natural part of the evolution of any organization. To minimize disruption of internal operations when these changes occur, ELECT will document and maintain policies, procedures, and protocols. To ensure ELECT maintains focus on the most important priorities during periods of change, resource management techniques will be standardized, shared among relevant staff, and implemented.

OBJECTIVE H

Work to establish an agency knowledge management system.

To maintain continuity of operations in a rapidly changing environment ELECT will establish a standardized process by which institutional knowledge will be identified, stored, and disseminated to relevant staff through the maintenance of a central library of current policies, processes and procedures.

Responsibility

- Director of Operations

Strategies

- Research potential document management systems.
- Standardize document terminology and templates.
- Create an agency style guide.
- Complete the implementation of the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) process.

OBJECTIVE I

Improve the process for assessing agency resource needs and for managing resources.

ELECT must be able to prioritize work activities requested through various intake sources. This will be achieved by using investment management, capacity planning, resource allocation tools that allow for clear and accurate prioritization of initiatives, and regular review meetings with the executive and senior manager group.

Responsibility

- Director of Operations

Strategies

- Improve the prioritization of agency initiatives.
- Establish an investment management process, including capacity planning and resource management tools.
- Identify accurate resource availability data.

Measures

The following measures will be used to monitor progress in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan.

Measures	Linked to Objective
Overall DEI assessment stage	A
% of surveyed staff members who are satisfied or highly satisfied with agency election administration training	B
% of surveyed voters expressing confidence in election administration – TBD	C
% of post-election audits completed by the end of the calendar year - TBD	C
# of outreach activities completed	D
% of agency staff completing required security training	E
% of agency staff completing data privacy training	F
% of localities that have completed a physical election security assessment	G
% of localities with an overall positive security compliance rating (note: aggregated score based off MSS) Confidential and protected information related to this measure must not be released.	G
% of projects completed on time	I

Appendix – Excerpt from the Agency’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Five goals centered on the following themes form the core of ELECT’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

- Access and Success
- Climate and Intergroup Relations
- Training and Education
- Infrastructure and Accountability
- Community Engagement

The strategic goals, associated action items, and indicators of success are listed below.

Goal One - Access and Success: Recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Actions

- Update the language on our job posting to include a commitment to diversity
- Participate in job fairs and university recruitment programs, particularly at HBCU’s and events coordinated by diversity focused organizations
- Work with DHRM on the implementation of HB2140 which mandates a noncompetitive

- recruitment for people with disabilities
- Advertise positions internally as well as externally
 - Employees don't receive notification of open positions unless their specific supervisor or manager mentions it, or they see it on the agency's social media

Indicators of Success

- Increase in internal applicant interest in open positions (inquiring about positions and applying)
- Capture demographic information on employees who leave as a data point for retention.

Goal Two - Climate and Intergroup Relations: Create and sustain an agency culture that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout daily operations.

Actions

- Continue DEI training and enforce zero tolerance policy on discrimination
- Provide an anonymous outlet for employees to submit suggestions and comments
- Improve our Recognition Policy to allow for more informal "kudos" or "job well done"
- Establish a formal DEI workgroup that will serve a 2-year term. Members should be from different department and areas in the agency, and not include senior management

Indicators of Success

- Quarterly surveys will show the improvement as assessed by employees
- Feedback from discussion groups
- Having the formal process in place for the workgroup, and having that group manage the agency DEI efforts

Goal Three - Training and Education: Engage in learning the concepts of DE&I, and the importance of these concepts in completing the agency mission.

Actions

- Continue DEI training – both online & in person
- Break employees up into teams to have smaller discussion groups and training sessions
 - Teams should not include people within the same division or department
 - Discussion groups should be a "safe space" to foster more authentic feedback

Indicators of Success

- Conduct quarterly, confidential surveys like the one performed July, 2021 to monitor any changes in feedback from employees.
- Procuring training consultants to assist with facilitating the team and group discussions

Goal Four - Infrastructure and Accountability: Create and sustain an agency or departmental infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving diversity goals.

Actions

- Quarterly surveys to continue to check how the agency is doing and receive employee feedback.
- Establish a permanent workgroup or committee to head up ELECT's DEI efforts to provide

- employees with a central point of contact
- Keep management engaged and continue making DEI a priority

Indicators of Success

- Improved feedback on the survey, where we see the agency moving towards stage 6 on the continuum of inclusive and equitable organizational development

 **Goal Five - Community Engagement: Focus community engagement activities on those that provide measurable, direct, equitable, and sustained benefit to all of Virginia's diverse communities.**

Actions

- Expand our website and document translations from the top 3 languages to the top 5 languages in the Commonwealth
- Continue to work with and engage community partners to promote voter registration and education
- Review and continue to adjust media campaigns to ensure we are reaching as many members of the public as possible, and increase efforts to reach historically underserved, under represented communities

Indicators of Success

- Tracking the usage on the non-English websites for engagement
- Tracking the number and diversity (social media, print, radio, etc) of media outreach efforts
- Explore pursuing a contract for long term media services that could assist with identifying the diversity initiatives