

# DEKALB COUNTY VRE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF CONSULTANTS

## 3 Month Implementation Plan

### Executive Summary

These recommendations are possible to accomplish in the next three months and will have an immediate, positive impact on DeKalb's administration of the November 3, 2020 election. They should be implemented quickly, so that November 3 is not a repeat, or worse, of the June 9 election.

1. Increase management, process improvement, planning and voter outreach manpower in time to impact November election cycle.
  - Contract with consultants to plan for and manage process improvement in time for November election, or hire a COO if time permits.
  - Contract with a communications firm to achieve critical voter outreach or hire a Communications Director if time permits.
2. Prioritize security and space investment to identify urgent security deficits and meet the needs of revised and documented policies and procedures.
  - Identify and secure additional space through January 2021 runoff election.
  - Install modern Security system
3. Improve critical voter services and implement a communication plan focused on the November 2020 election
  - Increase Advance Voting locations and hours
  - Contract with firm to complete website changes and assist with voter outreach
  - Document and communicate standard operating procedures
4. Streamline voter registration process
  - Implement the specific process recommendations to improve efficiency and accuracy of voter registration process.
5. Identify process and quality control tracking for Vote By Mail that can be implemented immediately.
  - Contract with an elections consultant to plan, scale up and manage the end to end VBM process and surge of absentee voting through the 2020 elections cycle.
  - Implement the specific quick hit recommendations to improve VBM processing.
6. Conduct a review of the June 9<sup>th</sup> voting system roll out.
  - Assign a project manager to assess system failures from June 9 primary and implement process changes.
  - Begin to identify and recruit tech savvy poll workers for August 11 run off and November 3 general election.
  - Secure and increase early vote and election day locations, in light of Covid-19 concerns.
7. Prioritize short-term implementation of key election day issue tracking and security protocols.
  - Implement key recommendations to improve election day issue tracking, technical support and responsiveness.

# DEKALB COUNTY VRE RECOMMENDATIONS OF CONSULTANTS

## 3 Month Implementation Plan

Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 1</b> Invest in an executive management team with the capabilities to enact meaningful change		Increase management, process improvement, planning and voter outreach manpower in time to impact November election cycle.		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
1.1	Contract with consultants to plan for and manage process improvement OR hire a Chief Operating Officer (COO) <i>with extensive elections experience.</i>	Immediate	High	SSS
1.2	Contract with a Professional Communications Firm OR hire a full-time Communications Director.	Immediate	High	SSS
1.3	Hire a full time Project Manager or assign project management duties to skilled VRE staff.	Immediate	High	SS
Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 2</b> Invest in building a secure and modern workspace.		Prioritize security and space investment to identify urgent security deficits and meet the needs of revised and documented policies and procedures.		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
2.2	Purchase and install a modern, updated security system with badge access, control logs, and remotely accessed cameras. Outsource this task to another county department or outside vendor.	Short-Term	High	SSS
	Secure additional temporary space, even in a different location, through mid-January 2021 (anticipating January Senate run-off)	Short-Term	High	\$

Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 3</b> Create a culture focused on service, transparency, efficiency and security.		Develop a short-term communication plan focused on the November 2020 Election		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
3.3	Increase Advanced Voting locations and hours to match or surpass neighboring counties and show that DeKalb is the most accessible voting jurisdiction in the state.	Short-Term	High	SSS
3.4	Rewrite and redesign the website to increase functionality, usability and service.	Short-Term	High	SS
3.6	<i>Create a system</i> track to incoming calls and provide “scripts” to ensure a factual and uniform message to voters.	Short-Term	High	S
3.7.3	Live Stream board meetings.	Short-Term	High	S
3.8	Document all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and policies and practices into a single set of documents.	Long-Term	High	\$\$
3.9	Delegate responsibilities and accountability to any new staff the Board of Elections and Board of County Commissioners invest in.	Short-Term	High	None
3.10	Executive leadership must drive more direct reporting from managers and supervisors.	Short-Term	High	None
3.11	All activities managed by the VRE Dept. should be supported by mini-project plans and accompanying calendars that are rolled up to executive leadership.	Short-Term	High	\$
3.12	Commit to streamlining processes as listed elsewhere by assigning the improvement plan to your Project Manager <i>or</i> COO.	Short-Term	High	\$

Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 4</b> Streamline the voter registration process while focusing on quality and transparency.		Identify process and quality control tracking that can be implemented immediately		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
4.1	Stop printing out and scanning the online voter registration (OLVR) applications.	Immediate	Medium	None
4.1.1	Request the OLVR processing procedures from neighboring counties to assess how their procedures compare.	Short-Term	Medium	None
4.2	Empower frontline staff for a more efficient quality control process.	Immediate	High	None
4.3	Streamline the “missing information letter” process for efficiency.	Immediate	Medium	None
4.8	Track all voter registration applications by source, date, and method. (including specific recommendations below)	Immediate	High	\$
4.8.1	Ask organizations sending in applications by mail to use a return receipt and tracking.	Immediate	Medium	None
4.8.2	Provide a template for an audit sheet that can be included with the package that includes the total quantity of forms enclosed, who sent the package, and their contact information.	Immediate	Medium	None
4.8.3	Create a mechanism to alert the third party if the contents differ from the audit sheet.	Immediate	Medium	\$
4.8.4	Provide a receipt to third parties or voters that submit forms over the counter.	Immediate	High	None
4.8.5	Improve communication with voters that their form was received and processed.	Short-Term	High	\$
4.8.6	Create a 48-hour turnaround standard for all VR processing.	Short-Term	High	\$

Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 5</b> Create a modern, lean vote-by-mail program		Identify process and quality control tracking that can be implemented immediately		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
	Forecast absentee ballot volume based on experience with June 9 primary, and hire and train additional temporary staff to process applications and ballots in a timely manner	Short-Term	High	\$
5.1	Create a system for tracking applications that are received, verifying receipt, timely processing, and quick and meaningful outreach to voters when there is a problem.	Short-Term	High	\$
5.2	Work with the secretary of state to implement an accessible online absentee application.	Long-Term	High	\$
5.4	Build a more efficient workflow for processing absentee ballot applications	Short-Term	Medium	\$
5.9	Build a data tracking tool to account for the aggregate daily intake of absentee applications and ballots sent out.	Immediate	High	\$
5.10	Invest in modern outbound ballot preparation.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
5.10.1	Or, Invest in ballot-on-demand printers if contracting with a professional mail ballot print vendor is not feasible.	Long-Term	Medium	\$\$
5.11	Sign up with the USPS to use the intelligent mail barcode (IMB) service for outgoing and return mail ballot envelopes.	Short-Term	High	\$
5.14	Implement a Ballot Tracking System.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
5.15	Include a barcode on the return ballot envelope to expedite the process for accepting returned ballots.	Short-Term	High	\$
5.16	Procure and operationalize a high-speed ballot envelope sorter.	Short-Term	High	\$\$\$
5.16.1	Or, purchase an automatic envelope slicer/opener if a high-speed ballot sorter is not purchased.	Short-Term	High	\$\$

5.17	Invest in additional high-speed ballot scanning technology.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
5.17	Invest in additional high-speed ballot scanning technology.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
5.19	Design an appropriate plan for processing returned mail ballots.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
<b>Long -Term Recommendation</b>		<b>3 Month Plan</b>		
<b>SECTION 6</b> Voting system rollout improvement plan		Conduct review of June 9th voting system roll out		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
6.1	Assess system failures from 6/9 primary and correct for Nov 3, 2020. Assign a project manager to lead the voting system improvement and accompanying timeline.	Short-Term	Medium	\$\$
6.2	Consider the health implications of each polling place layout when making decisions about where ballot marking devices and scanners will be located.	Short-Term	High	\$
6.3	Work with the voting system vendor on proper equipment cleaning protocols.	Short-Term	Low	\$
6.6	Poll worker training should be designed around a hands-on, participatory model.	Long-Term	High	\$\$
Additional Action Items				
	Begin now to train and recruit Poll-workers for Aug 11 Run Off and retain poll-workers for November election.	Immediate	High	\$
	Develop a plan to recruit tech-savvy poll workers.	Immediate	High	none
	Identify and confirm more Early Vote sites and precinct sites.	Short-Term	High	\$\$
	Identify new locations for precincts that were combined for 6/9 primary. Plan to separate all dual-precincts for November election.	Short-Term	High	\$

Long -Term Recommendation		3 Month Plan		
<b>SECTION 7</b> Build resiliency into Advanced Voting and Election Day plans		Prioritize short-term implementation of key Election Day issue tracking and security protocols.		
Reference	Detail	Implementation Time Frame	Impact on 2020 Success	Estimated Cost
7.1	Buy or build an election ticketing system to alert the VRE team to issues during Advanced Voting and on Election Day <i>and hire someone technically qualified to manage the system.</i>	Short-Term	High	\$\$
7.2	Outfit field teams and technicians with smart devices such as tablets or smartphones so they have a full picture of the problem as soon as they walk into a voting location and can close out issues in the ticketing system on-site.	Short-Term	Medium	\$\$
7.5	Have poll workers set up the epoll books on Monday night and reseal them.	Short-Term	High	\$
7.8	Build and post a process workflow chart for the tally room similar to the workflows posted for other processes.	Short-Term	Medium	\$