

Elections Audit
Follow Up Report

August 2008



LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Multnomah County Auditor

Sarah Landis
Principal Auditor

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.



LaVonne Griffin-Valade Multnomah County Auditor

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MEMORANDUM

Date: August 29, 2008

To: Ted Wheeler, Multnomah County Chair
Maria Rojo de Steffey, Commissioner, District 1
Jeff Cogen, Commissioner, District 2
Lisa Naito, Commissioner, District 3
Lonnie Roberts, Commissioner, District 4

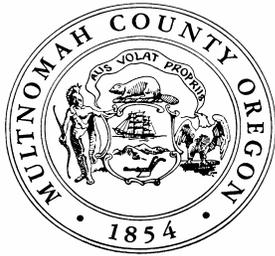
From: LaVonne Griffin-Valade, County Auditor
Sarah Landis, Principal Auditor

Subject: Elections Audit Follow Up Report

Attached please find the report on our formal follow up of the June 2007 *Elections Audit*. The primary purpose of the audit follow up was to review the progress on implementation of recommendations made in the original audit. Recommendations were focused in seven general areas, with 17 specific recommendations for strengthening processes. Of those 17 recommendations, we found that 11 are implemented, five are partially implemented or in process, and one is no longer applicable. Elections took steps to implement a number of recommendations even before the original audit report was issued and has put forth considerable effort over the past 14 months to complete this work and address other areas of improvement noted during the audit.

As discussed in the follow up results section of the attached report, Elections also made additional positive changes to election processes. These changes augmented the improvements made through implementation of audit recommendations and helped ensure Elections' success in managing the May 2008 primary election. Additional areas of minor concern were noted and have been discussed with management.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from Elections staff, particularly given their involvement in the busy primary election.



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Audit Staff
Sarah Landis, Principal Auditor

Elections Audit Follow Up Report

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Background

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office released the *Elections Audit* in June 2007. The objective of the audit was to determine, through observation and testing, whether the Multnomah County Elections Office (Elections) had the proper controls in place to ensure an accurate, fair, and efficient election. Our overarching conclusion was that Elections administers its work effectively and that the public should have confidence in its ability to conduct elections fairly and accurately.

Elections must balance three primary and sometimes conflicting purposes: ensuring that elections are secure and accurate, providing convenience and high quality services to voters, and controlling costs. The audit made recommendations for some shifts in this balance, while also recognizing those areas where Elections is strong. The recommendations also focused on ways to document the practices that were already in place and ensure that the experience and knowledge of staff can be passed on.

Follow Up Results

Accomplishments in the Primary Election

During the primary election in May 2008, we observed that Elections had made significant improvements to its work processes, resulting in an election that ran smoothly. Specifically, Elections implemented audit recommendations and made additional improvements in the following areas:

- **Traffic:** better coordination and planning with Roads crews and others, additional ballot boxes around the Elections Building, and hand-collection of ballots from cars during high traffic periods helped ensure that congestion was minimized.
- **Workspace Reconfiguration:** front office operations were rearranged to move the phones and the ballot assembly work upstairs, diminishing the noise and activity levels downstairs. This created a less chaotic environment and allowed for better concentration and more organization, decreasing the likelihood of errors. The ballot chute that was installed between the second and first floors to convey the assembled ballots requested by voters contributed to faster service and a calmer environment.
- **Customer Service:** installation of terminals at the front counter allowed permanent and highly experienced temporary staff to work with voters on the spot, without having to take information back to desks to check on voter registration status and do other research. Having this ability means that voters are likely to get accurate and complete information. This arrangement, together with moving the ballot assembly process upstairs, significantly cut down on the amount of time voters had to wait to get service and receive their replacement ballots.



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Audit Report: *Elections Audit Follow Up*
Report #08-07, August 2008
Sarah Landis, Principal Auditor

The mission of the Multnomah County Auditor's Office is to ensure that county government is honest, efficient, effective, equitable, and fully accountable to its citizens.

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office launched the **Good Government Hotline** in October 2007 to provide a mechanism for the public and county employees to report concerns about fraud, abuse of position, and waste of resources.

The **Good Government Hotline** is available **24 hours a day, seven days a week**. Go to GoodGovHotline.com or call 1-888-289-6839.



The Multnomah County Auditor's Office received the **2007 Bronze Knighton Award** from the Association of Local Government Auditors for the *Elections Audit* issued in June 2007.