

## PROCEDURES FOR ELECTION OF TARGET AREA COMMISSIONERS

These policies and procedures are intended as a guide to an orderly, fair, and open Board of Commissioner's nominations and election process for Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission.

### TARGET AREA COMMISSIONERS

Target Area Commissioners shall be elected by members of the respective areas hereinafter "Target Area", under elections which are supervised by staff. Emphasis should be given to providing maximum participation of low income persons in the election process of Target Area Commissioners, who shall be duly elected from areas shown in the Target Area Maps adopted by the Commission. In all cases, attention should be given to the fair representation of significant minority groups.

### TARGET AREAS

Target Area maps will be produced every ten years as new census data is available. The maps will be approved by the Bylaws Committee and subsequently the full board. If, due to the updating of the maps, a current Target Area Commissioner is put into a different target area, the Commissioner may choose to run in their new target area or serve out the rest of their term, whichever comes first.

### NOTIFICATION

It is the Agency's intent to recruit qualified low-income candidates and provide low-income residents the opportunity to fully participate in the election process. There will be a focus on grass roots, strategic recruitment of candidates and voters.

- A. The Board Secretary shall develop a general timetable that allows adequate time for each stage of the election process.
- B. The Agency shall make reasonable efforts to provide the public with notice of the vacancy, nomination and election process.
- C. Flyers and public notices will be distributed at a variety of community meetings. Posters and information will be distributed at Fresno EOC sites, including Head Start classrooms and WIC offices; libraries, churches and community centers and upon request.
- D. Social Media will be used to communicate the process to both potential candidates and voters.
- E. Election packets shall include Public Notice, nomination form, voter registration form, and target area map.

### NOMINATIONS

- A. A person can only put their name forward as a nominee under one Target Area or Community sector.
- B. Candidate nominations shall begin in September and continue through the month of October.



- C. Target Area nomination forms should be filled out completely and returned by mail to Fresno EOC, Target Area Nominations, c/o Board Secretary, PO Box 992, Fresno, CA 93714-0992, in person at Fresno EOC 1920 Mariposa Mall Suite 300, Fresno CA 93721 or by email to [elections@fresnoeoc.org](mailto:elections@fresnoeoc.org). Faxes will not be accepted.
- D. Target Area nominations must be either hand delivered, emailed or postmarked by the designated deadline date.
- E. The Internal Audit Office will be responsible for verifying the completeness of each Candidate Nomination packet submitted.
- F. Disqualified nominees shall be notified of his/her disqualification by mail.
- G. At the end of the candidate nomination period, the Internal Audit Office will determine the qualified candidates.
- H. If there is only one qualified candidate in a Target Area, that candidate is considered the elected representative for that Target Area and is forwarded to the Board for approval. An election will not take place.

## **CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Resident of the Target Area in which seeking election
- B. Low income or representative of low income residents
- C. Be at least 18 years of age
- D. Neither be an employee of Fresno EOC nor a member of the immediate family of an employee of Fresno EOC.
- E. Must submit valid candidate nomination form

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

- A. Recruitment for registered voters shall be ongoing. Voters wishing to vote in the current year's election must submit their registration form before the deadline, at least 2 weeks before the election.
- B. Voters must reside in the Target Area for which they are registering and be at least 18 years of age.
- C. Voter registration forms must be filled out completely and returned by mail to Fresno EOC Target Area Registration, c/o Board Secretary, PO Box 992, Fresno, CA. 93714-0992, in person at Fresno EOC 1920 Mariposa Mall Suite 300, Fresno CA 93721 or by email to [elections@fresnoeoc.org](mailto:elections@fresnoeoc.org).
- D. Voter registrations must be either hand delivered to the Fresno EOC Executive Office, emailed or postmarked by the due date.



- E. Upon receipt, the voter registration will be date stamped and entered into a Voter Registration Master List. The Master List contains the name, address, date of receipt and designated target area of all voter registrations received.
- F. A voter may indicate if he/she would like to be permanently registered for future elections by checking the appropriate box on the registration form. Failure to vote in three consecutive elections will cancel the permanent voting status.
- G. After the Voter Registration has been entered into the master list, the voter registration form will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Voter Registrations that are illegible or do not contain addresses will not be entered into the master list, but they will be retained by the Internal Audit Office.
- H. The Internal Audit Office will verify that the address provided on each voter registration form is within the boundaries of the Target Area for which the voter has registered.
- I. Disqualified voters will be notified by the Internal Audit Office of his/her disqualification by mail.
- J. The Internal Audit Office will be responsible for receiving and housing all voter registration forms.

## **BALLOTS**

- A. Ballots will be printed on Fresno EOC letterhead and marked with the official Fresno EOC seal.
- B. Qualified candidates will be placed on the ballot in alphabetical order. Incumbent candidates will have the word “Incumbent” in parentheses after his/her name on the ballot.
- C. Each ballot packet includes the correct ballot and inserts for the Target Area in which the voter resides and a stamped return envelope. The “Candidate Statement of Qualifications” will be transferred verbatim from the nomination form to the Statement insert and placed in the same alphabetical order as on the ballot

## **VOTING PROCESS**

- A. When a voter registration form is received by the Fresno EOC Internal Audit office and voter information is verified, a ballot packet will be sent to the voter. Ballot packets will be automatically mailed to all permanent registered voters in the applicable target area.
- B. Once a voter has received the ballot packet in the mail, they can vote their ballot and return it by mail or in person to the Fresno EOC Internal Audit office. The return envelopes will be addressed to Fresno EOC, PO Box 992, Fresno, CA 93714-0992. In order to be counted, ballot must be **postmarked** no later than the deadline.
- C. Voter must print and sign his/her name on the outside of the provided, stamped envelope where indicated. The Internal Audit Department will verify the signature against the voter’s registration form. In order to ensure votes are anonymous, the ballot and envelope are separated for counting. This process and the processing and counting of ballots shall be performed by the Fresno EOC Internal Audit office and shall be open to the public.



- D. A ballot that is marked or signed by the voter in such a way that it can be identified from other ballots must be voided and none of its votes counted. Examples of such markings include, but are not limited to: voter signature, initials, voter name, voter address, messages or unusual markings not related to indication of the vote of choice. Generic text meant to clarify the voter's choice regarding a contest, such as the word "yes" or "no," shall not be sufficient cause to void a ballot.
- E. If two valid ballot envelopes (signature verified against voter registration form) are received from the same person, the ballot arriving first will be counted.
- F. The Fresno EOC Internal Audit office keeps a data entry record of each registration form received and of each ballot sent and received.
- G. A provisional ballot will be issued when a person wants to (register and) vote and the voter's eligibility has not yet been verified. The Internal Audit office will verify the voter's eligibility and if determined to be eligible then the ballot will be opened and counted as a regular ballot.

### **COLLECTING BALLOTS**

- A. During the election, a member of the Internal Audit staff will pick up the mail from the post office box and sort out all the envelopes that contain election ballots, thus ensuring the proper chain of custody.
- B. All ballots will be stamped with a date stamp on the day that they are received.
- C. All envelopes will remain unopened and kept secure (in a locked drawer or cabinet) until the time of the count.
- D. Ballots must be either hand delivered to the Fresno EOC Executive Office or postmarked by deadline date.

### **BALLOT COUNTING**

- A. Counting of the ballots will take place during the week following the voting deadline in the Fresno EOC Board Room.
- B. The Internal Audit Office will be responsible for counting the election ballots.
- C. On the day of the count, all ballots (envelopes) will be opened, and the ballots will be separated from the envelopes. At this time, the Internal Audit Office will verify that each voter ballot contains the Fresno EOC seal; thereby ensuring that the ballot is indeed a legitimate ballot.
- D. Once all ballots have been separated, the ballots will be tallied by hand. The count will be recorded on tally sheets.
- E. A ballot will be voided if the voter intent is not clear or if too many candidates have been selected for an office.



- F. At least two people will be involved in the count. The ballots for each target area will be counted twice; the second count will be performed by someone other than the person who performed the first count. Once ballots for all target areas have been counted twice, the results of the two counts will be compared to ensure that they match. All tally sheets will be given to the Board of Commissioners' Secretary, so that they can be recorded on a master tally sheet.
- G. The Board of Commissioners' Secretary and a representative from Fresno EOC's External Auditor will be present during the count and will be responsible for the following:
  - o Observing the Internal Audit Office during the count
  - o Verifying the tally counts completed by the Internal Audit Office
- H. At the completion of the count, the Internal Audit Office will ensure that there are not more total votes than the number of ballots that were mailed out.
- I. The candidate with the most votes will be elected to represent that Target Area. In the event of a tie, the Selection Committee will make a recommendation to the Board amongst the candidates on the ballot. The Board will then choose the representative.
- J. Preliminary results will be posted in the reception area of the Executive Office and on the Fresno EOC website.
- K. Resolution of any challenged ballots will be made by the Internal Audit Department.
- L. Presence of observers will be allowed but observers may not handle any envelopes or ballots.
- M. Internal Audit will return to the post office at a later date and pick up any ballots received after the deadline. Internal Audit will void (but not open) any ballots received after the ballot return deadline, marking the ballot envelopes with "Void – Received after Deadline." Voided ballots will be retained with other election records.
- N. Internal Audit Office will be responsible for housing the ballots and election materials for a minimum of six months following the election.

## **ELECTION RESULTS**

Election results will be presented to the Bylaws committee and subsequently to the Board of Commissioners for approval. A letter to the candidates will be sent informing them of the election results. New board members will be seated at the January board meeting.

## **SPECIAL ELECTIONS**

A Target Area special election may be called when a vacancy occurs during the term of office or if no nominations are received during the candidate nomination timeframe. Should the special election be called due to a vacancy, the special election term would be for the remainder of the current term.

All forms can be found at [www.fresnoeoc.org/board](http://www.fresnoeoc.org/board).