

Doña Ana County Election Advisory Council Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Council on March 15, 2016

1. Introduction

This Strategic Plan has been developed by the Election Advisory Council to provide a systematic and disciplined approach to the organization and activities of this group.

1.1 Background

The Doña Ana County Election Advisory Council was conceived and initiated by the Doña Ana County Clerk's office. The intent, as stated in the original organizational meeting on March 25, 2015, was to be a non-partisan volunteer group with the purpose of promoting the community's understanding and involvement in activities related to the elections. The group would aim to increase awareness and understanding of the voter registration process, increase the distribution of election-related information, educate the county's citizenry on why voting matters and to help improve the implementation of election laws. A number of goals were identified – these are listed below in Section 5.

An initial Executive Committee of five individuals – a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and one appointed representative of each major political party, a non-major party representative – was proposed to manage the Council. The Council's members would be individuals who were interested in improving voter turnout and the election cycle process, and would include poll workers. The volunteer members should have the desire and willingness to:

- Access social networks to engage community residents and advocates
- Make one-on-one contacts with residents and leaders
- Attend community meetings and events to promote and share educational materials regarding elections
- Communicate clearly with voters
- Engage with diverse populations
- Help develop consistent messages and elections materials (it is expected that most of the voter education materials will be generated in both English and Spanish)

Fluency in Spanish is desirable but not required for Council members. It is expected that most of the voter education materials generated will be made available in both English and Spanish.

1.2 Recent History

The Council went into an unavoidable hiatus between April and November of 2015. The Council resumed with a meeting of the Acting Executive Committee on November 2015. At this meeting, the decision was made to expand the Executive Committee by adding a second Vice Chair. This meeting was followed on December 16 with a meeting of the full Council, at which Dolores Connor was elected as Chair. A decision to proceed with the development of a Strategic Plan was made. The following meeting, on January 22, 2016, was a brainstorming session aimed at laying a foundation for a Strategic Plan, led by Shakti Rising staff. At a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee, Vision and Mission statements were developed – these are incorporated in this document.

1.3 Document Overview

The next two sections document the agreed-upon Vision and Mission statements. Section 4 lists the Council's Core Values that had been discussed in several of the meetings. Section 5 outlines the major, high-level goals, while Section 6 identifies specific measurable objectives.

Section 7 documents the Advisory Council's organizational and operational structure. The high-level strategy for accomplishing the Council's goals and for getting its work done is described in Section 8. Section 9 contains an overall summary of the approach outlined in this plan.

2. Vision

The Doña Ana County Election Advisory Council's ultimate achievement of all its goals is contained in this Vision statement:

Doña Ana County will achieve the highest voter registration and voter participation rates of all counties in the US.

3. Mission

The Election Advisory Council's mission is as follows:

The Doña Ana County Election Advisory Council is a voluntary group that promotes a variety of efforts aimed at maximizing voter registration and voter participation in the county.

Among the efforts included in this mission are:

- Promoting public awareness via traditional and social media of the "how, when, and where" to register and to vote
- Developing and distributing educational materials about elections and voting, and why voting is important
- Coordinating the efforts of community groups and agencies with regard to voter registration and voter turnout
- Engaging with specific, targeted community populations to encourage voter registration and voting
- Developing instructive materials for potential candidates

4. Core Operating Values

The Doña Ana County Election Advisory Council has identified the following fundamental values and ideals. It aims to be:

- A Volunteer Group – the membership consists of dedicated volunteers
- Non-partisan, unbiased – the members will hold themselves accountable (per the Member Pledge) as neither promoting nor opposing any candidates or parties or ballot issues
- Welcoming of organizations and individuals involved in any aspect of voting and elections – the Elections Advisory Council welcomes all individuals and representatives of organizations who wish to improve the elections process in Doña Ana County
- Transparent – the Elections Advisory Council's meetings and the meetings of all of its committees shall be open to the public
- Respectful – the members of the Elections Advisory Council will treat each other and all community members with whom they interact with respect and dignity

5. Major Goals

The Elections Advisory Council has set these major goals:

- (1) Increase voter registration
- (2) Increase voter turnout

- (3) Improve media exposure of elections and election-related issues
- (4) Improve poll worker recruitment and training
- (5) Improve the implementation of election laws

6. Specific Objectives

In order to achieve the cited goals, a number of specific objectives are identified. The characteristics of effective/well-written objectives are: (1) Be challenging but achievable, (2) Be specific, (3) Be measurable, (4) Be time-bound (e.g., you need to know when you are done). The objectives cited here are for the current election cycle, March 1 – November 8, 2016. At the end of this election cycle, the objectives should be reviewed and revised for the next election cycle.

| No. | Objective | When (all dates in 2016) | Measure |
|------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Increase overall voter registration by 30% since March 1, 2016 | By October 11 (closing of voter rolls) | Number of new voters registered per month |
| 2 | Increase voter registration among young (18-29 year-olds) by 40% over 2014 data (26,000) | By October 11 | Number of new voters registered per month |
| 3 | Increase voter participation by 30% over 2012 participation | By November 8 | Total number of Doña Ana County voters in 2016 election |
| 4 | Contact 10,000 voters in person, concentrating on low voter turnout areas | August 1 – November 8 | No. of voters contacted per week |
| 5 | Place 10 ads in newspapers reminding people to vote | October 1 – November 8 | No. of ads per week |
| 6 | Place 50 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on radio and TV | October 1 – November 8 | No. of PSAs per week |
| 7 | Develop detailed video regarding how to register to vote; include all the special circumstances, such as former felons. | July 1 – August 15 | Weekly milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline • Script • Draft Version • Etc... |
| 8 | Recruit 50 additional poll workers | July 1 – September 15 | No. of poll workers recruited per week |
| 9 | Schedule and conduct 4 poll worker training sessions | October 1 – October 30 | No. of training sessions conducted per week |

| No. | Objective | When (all dates in 2016) | Measure |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 10 | Develop and implement 5 changes that make voting easier (new/different Voting Convenience Centers, pro-actively mailing ballots to older voters, ...) | August 1 – October 30 | No. of changes identified and proposed per month No. of changes implemented per month |

7. Membership, Organization and Management

7.1 Membership

All members are volunteers. Participation of individuals from numerous community organizations is encouraged, since these bring a variety of viewpoints to the Council. Members are not, however, official “representatives” of other organizations – membership is on an individual basis. Council members must be at least 16 years of age, and must have the consent of their parent or guardian if they are under the age of 18. Council members must sign a Pledge that their membership commitment is non-partisan, that they have no conflict of interest, and that they will keep all information, particularly personal voter information, strictly confidential.

7.2 Organization

The Election Advisory Council is organized on the basis of committees, each of which has a specific mission and specific assignments. The following committees have been designated:

- Executive Committee
- Community Outreach
- Media and Marketing (includes Message Development)
- Polls and Poll Workers (Location, Infrastructure, Tools, Procedures, Poll Workers)

Committees other than the Executive Committee are termed “Operational Committees” in this plan.

7.3 Management

Management of the Election Advisory Council rests with the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will assign specific tasks and objectives to the other committees, and will monitor their performance. The Executive Committee will be responsible for the resolution of issues that arise in the operational committees, if such issues cannot be resolved within these committees. The Executive Committee will manage the coordination of actions and of information flow among committees. Members of the Executive Committee will be available to the leaders of the operational committees for advice and guidance as needed.

8. Strategic Approach

The approach for executing the work of the Council starts with this Strategic Plan.

8.1 Strategic Plan Development and Acceptance

This Strategic Plan is developed within a well-defined cycle of reviews and updates. It has been reviewed by both the Executive Committee and the entire Election Advisory Council, and has been approved by both. It is expected that a new version of the plan will be developed after the conclusion of the current election cycle in preparation for the next election cycle. However, the goals and some of the objectives cited in this plan are of a generic nature to the mission of the Advisory Council, and are expected to be maintained in future editions of the Strategic Plan.

8.2 Allocation of Objectives to Committees

Specific Objectives cited in this Strategic Plan and accepted by the Advisory Council will be allocated to one or more of the operational committees. The operational committees may modify or tailor such objectives in order to ensure the likelihood of successful achievement. The operational committees may develop additional objectives for themselves, but these must be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval.

8.3 Administrative Requirements of Operational Committees

Each operational committee shall elect a Chair or Leader and a Secretary or Note-Taker. Each committee shall designate a standard time and date for meetings, which should take place at least monthly. During the intense part of the election cycle, more frequent meetings will likely be required. Discussions and decisions made at each meeting shall be documented, and shall be distributed to all Election Advisory Council members.

Each operational committee shall develop short-term and long-term goals. To the extent possible, such goals should also be translated into measurable objectives. Each operational committee shall provide a monthly status report to the Executive Committee. This report shall describe its activities during the past month, its planned activities in the next month, and its progress on its measurable objectives. Any collaboration or coordination required among committees shall be done through the Executive Committee.

Any materials developed for potential voters shall be made available in both English and Spanish.

8.4 Role of the County Clerk's Office

The Doña Ana County Clerk's office is the sponsor of the Election Advisory Council, and will provide the following services:

- Logistics

The County shall provide meeting space and needed supplies for Election Advisory Council meetings. The County shall arrange and prepare the meeting space.

- Budget

The County shall provide the budget to accomplish the mission of the Election Advisory Council. This budget is contingent upon the annual budget of the County Clerk, and will be determined when the Election Advisory Council has formalized at least three achievable and shared goals in the community. A "shared goal" is defined as a goal that both the County has an interest in achieving and the Advisory Council members have agreed to via this strategic planning process.

- Administrative Support

The County shall facilitate communications channels for the Election Advisory Council members, including sending meeting notices and meeting reminders. The County shall hold the signed Membership Pledge forms, and shall maintain an up-to-date list of members and their contact information. The County shall provide a single point of contact for Election Advisory Council needs. County Clerk staff, other than the Chief Deputy County Clerk and the Elections Outreach Coordinator should not participate in the Advisory Council's email conversations. County Clerk staff (as well as the public) may attend any meetings of any Election Advisory Council committees, but shall not have the right to vote in such meetings.

9. **Conclusion**

This Strategic Plan lays out the vision, mission and projected implementation pathway for the Election Advisory Council. This Strategic Plan is a living document – it is expected to be revised and tailored as needed in order for the Election Advisory Council to achieve its goals and

objectives. At the end of each annual election cycle (after the November election), the plan should be reviewed and tailored as needed for the next year's election cycle.