

ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

2019 CLEARING HOUSE “CLEARIE” AWARD SUBMISSION

CATEGORY

Election Worker Competition

TITLE

Election Judge Video Training

SUBMITTED BY

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EL PASO COUNTY

Summary

Innovation

Election Judges are the lifeblood of the election process. They support our foundational democratic right as citizens to vote. Their professional, knowledgeable performance instills confidence in voters that they are represented and the election process accurately reflects their votes.

The commitment of the El Paso County Clerk and Recorder's Office to conduct fair, transparent, accurate, secure elections relies on the caliber of people working for the election. Election Judges must have the technical skills and principled character to meet our standards. Recruiting, training and retaining those individuals to serve our voters is one of our crucial priorities.

An innovative program was developed in 2019 to improve and enhance this component of the election process. Election Judge Video Training.

Our office continually implements innovations and in 2019 utilized 21st Century technology to create a video classroom.

Collaboration – Cooperation – Coordination - Outreach

Outreaching to El Paso County's Public Information Office, we collaborated with field experts in video filming and designing. These individuals are:

Blake Nielsen, Public Communications Office
Joe Yates, Audio/Visual Technical Supervisor
Christian Wright, Public Communications/ Audio/Visual Department
Nancy Nelsen, Public Communications/ Audio/Visual Department

Blake and Joe worked together with our team shooting the videos for each segment of the training process. Blake edited the videos in consultation with our PIO, Kristi Ridlen, ensuring each segment encapsulated the election content. Christian and Nancy helped behind the scenes, lending their film expertise.

"Participating in the development of election training for the Judges was rewarding, interesting and fun with the election team. They took direction well, facilitating our job of shooting the scenes and capturing the daily routine. Their pride in conducting the elections and knowledge of the process show through in the finished product. It was a great collaborative effort with Kristi and the Election crew!"

The contributions and advice of the PIO staff members were invaluable. The finished product is excellent quality, clear/concise audiovisual, professional appearance. Blake and Joe accommodated our timeline, scheduling the project into their already congested calendar. They were committed and responsible in executing the process of filming, editing, analyzing, and re-shooting when necessary. They graciously worked with our "amateurs" to ensure the video classroom would provide our Election Judges with the tools to support the election and voters.

The El Paso County Clerk's Election Department staff applied their experience and knowledge of the process to develop scripts. These individuals are well qualified to develop the video training. Director

Angie Leath has achieved the CERA (Certified Elections Registration Administrator) certification. All the other staff participants are in the process of obtaining their certification. In addition, Election staff members are Certified Colorado Election Officials through the Colorado Secretary of State. It was a coordinated effort among them to write, review, proof and edit the scripts. Getting input from the team reinforced their own understanding and uniformity of the process, ensuring instructions and regulations for each category were accurate and followed the real-time step-by-step guidelines for the jobs.

Election staff members also appeared in the videos and the strong, comprehensible voice overs were spoken by Election Specialist Greg Chandler. By watching our staff in action, Judges appreciate their expertise, respect their capabilities and become familiar with them on a more personal level. Once hired and working in proximity of the staff members, Judges are attuned with what staff expects of them and cooperate in a friendly, professional manner.

Directing the project and correlating with our county PIO collaborators was Kristi Ridlen, the Clerk and Recorder's Public Information Officer. Her public relations adeptness ensured the videos were developed and marketed correctly to the audience they are intended. Kristi coordinated the diverse project features with County PIO and our staff members.

The Elections Director, Angie Leath, appeared in the welcome video and helped monitor the progress of the project. She scheduled staff to allow them time for the project, along with their regular election duties.

The Clerk and Recorder's staff members working on the project were:

Kristi Ridlen, PIO, Clerk and Recorder's Office

Angie Leath, Elections Director

Greg Chandler, Elections Specialist

Rebecca Roberson, Voter Outreach & VSPC Coordinator

Project Development

Twelve videos are categorized in "chapters" encompassing each phase of the Judges' responsibilities. Videos may be viewed by clicking the links.

Chapter: Program Overview Videos

[Welcome to Ballot Judge Training](#)

[Your First Day – Opening and Setup](#)

Chapter: Greeter Judge Video

[Daily Duties](#)

Chapter: Supervisor Judge Video

[Nightly Closing Procedures](#)

Chapter: Ballot Judge Videos

[Processing a Mail Ballot Voter](#)

[Processing an In-Person ICX Voter](#)

[Processing an In-Person Paper Voter](#)

[Nightly Closing Procedures](#)

Chapter: WebSCORE Judge

[Issuing a Mail Ballot Packet](#)

[Issuing an In-Person ICX Ballot](#)

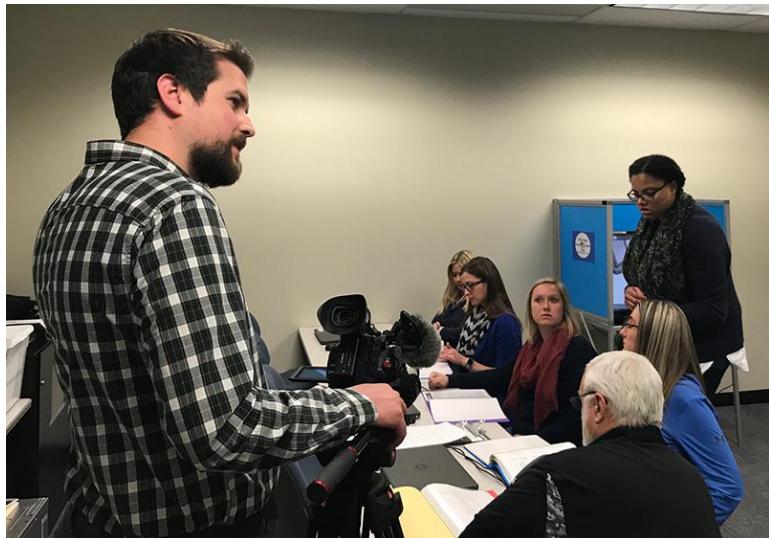
[Issuing an In-Person Paper Ballot](#)

[Nightly Closing Procedures](#)

Process

Scripts for each of the videos were written by the Election staff. A schedule was developed for filming each video by the County PIO crew, coordinated by our PIO. With the expertise of the film crew, our staff was directed on the logistics for each segment. The room was set up for optimum visibility and clarity. The objective was to make the visual instruction methodical, easily understood and followed.

The film crew then edited, re-shot if necessary, and polished the final product with headings and graphics. The finished videos were ready to be implemented with classroom training.



Recruitment – Outreach

The “Welcome” videos will be used during the hiring process to give applicants a better understanding of what the job entails, and what will be expected of them. Although the welcome video is a brief overview, it will help the applicant decide *before accepting* the position whether they have the capability to do the job and are committed to fulfilling the requirements. This reduces turnover, subsequently reducing the cost of hiring, training/retraining, the time element to continually go through the hiring steps, and subsequent stress on staff.

During the 2020 presidential election cycle, the training videos will be instrumental in securing qualified, dedicated Election Judges. It is imperative the Judges’ competence, professionalism and integrity are irrefutable. The videos will be used for the recruitment process. The Clerk and Recorder’s website will contain a page with links to the videos for accessibility to the general public.

Our office is committed to assisting the political parties identify affiliated members to assign as Election Judges. We will make the training videos available to the parties to use for their own recruitment process. This will enable people considering working as a Judge to understand the parameters and prerequisites of the job.

Classroom Training

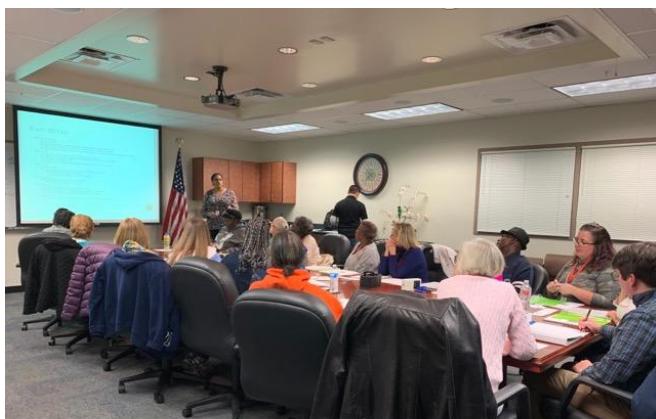
Traditional training includes verbal instruction and PowerPoint presentations. Innovative training introduces reality based videos, not generic mass produced.

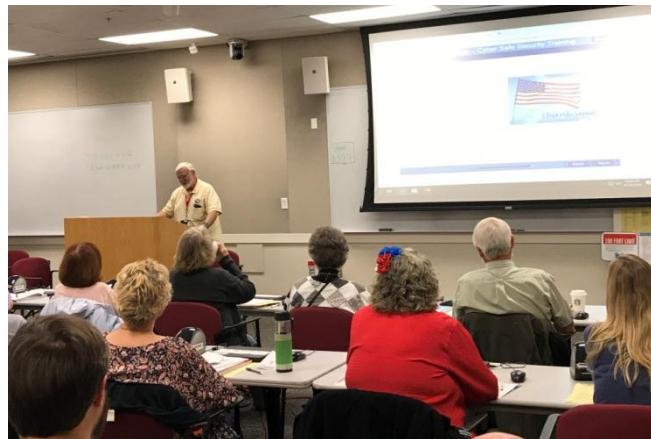
Actual staff members work with the equipment, supplies and processes of the “real situation.” By watching and learning, trainees become familiar with what the equipment actually looks like, where items are stored, how to assist voters, what is the end result. They have a much better comprehension than by listening primarily to a PPT presentation. Quick Reference Guides and Procedures in binders, though, still supplement the videos and are a good backup reference.

The new training process follows the format:

- PowerPoint Presentation
- Video
- Hands-on Scenarios
- Quiz

Videos transform what can be a stagnant classroom environment not conducive to attentiveness into a dynamic interactive format. Hands-on scenarios give Judges an opportunity to learn by doing, thinking through the situation to ensure the voter is enfranchised.





SUSTAINABILITY

Replicability

Video training is a reusable tool with long-term sustainability. The videos provide consistency and uniformity from election to election. When procedures change, they can be re-filmed in whole or in part to update.

In the classroom, regardless of the instructor's presentation style, the video ensures the message is the same and no component is inadvertently overlooked. The digital format allows staff members and Judges to view videos at any time and maintain for reference. Instructors can use the videos to refine their verbal message and be in sync with the video directions.

Replicating the videos allows our office to share this innovative resource with other interested counties.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Production of a video can be expensive. From developing scripts to staging environments, shooting the video, designing the graphics, editing, finessing and guaranteeing the product reflects the message.

Our office is fortunate to have audio/visual experts within the County PIO Division. This was a collaborative project with the County and there were no expenses incurred for the video production. Staff time was allocated during regularly scheduled days, with no additional labor cost. We had two Election staff members spend about three days working with the PIO Office and our own Clerk and Recorder PIO to film and edit the videos.

In this inaugural year of utilizing training videos, we kept the same schedule as previous years, three days of training, to ensure Judges (many of whom have been serving for years) responded well to the new format. The feedback was enormously positive. For future training, we anticipate reducing the training to 2.5 days.

CREATING POSITIVE RESULTS:

Experience of the Voter

Many of the positive results of the Election Judge Video Training have been mentioned.

- Message consistency and uniformity
- Better trained Judges, retention
- Increased Quality Control of the Election
- Security is heightened with a well-trained staff

Videos also can be used for archival documentation on how elections have been conducted. They are a useful tracking device from year to year on the who/what/why/when training took place.

Perhaps one of the most important results is strengthening the voter and Judge experience. And this translates to a more transparent/secure/accurate election process.

The videos enhance the training system of Judges. Better trained Judges = confidence. Confidence of the Judges in their own ability, knowledge and capability in executing their election responsibilities. Confidence = pride in supporting our democracy and the right of voters to have a voice in government. Judges are confident in their ability to conduct their portion of the election.

Judges' confidence ensures an efficient, accurate, well-run process. It bolsters the experience of voters, instilling confidence in their perception of the election process, its security, transparency and accuracy. Judges are more knowledgeable. Their performance has consistency. They have all received the same communication. Voters experience a streamlined operation with professionals. Judges' temporary status with the Election Department is not a consideration.





CONCLUSION

Election Judge Video Training is an effective, innovative tool to ensure elections deliver to the voting public a bulwark system of our representative democracy. By reinforcing the standards of professionalism, technical skills and character expected of our Election Judges, we guarantee an election process fortified by security, accuracy, transparency.

Through collaboration between our own staff and our County PIO film crew, the video project drew on the expertise of all those involved. The outreach made the project cost effective for the initial development as well as sustaining this format into the future. The successful video project also is available as a template to other counties who may want to implement this approach to training.