

ELECTION CENTRAL



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What the heck are we doing when it's not Election Day?

A question that election officials get asked often is: "What do you do when there's not an election going on?" The short answer to that question is quite a lot.

This year, there are three elections our office needs to prepare for, one of which happened recently. Regardless of how big or small the expected voter turnout is, we prepare for it like it's a November general election.

After wrapping up each election, we reflect on what we can do better the next time. This could include training the election officers more effectively, creating better signage for polling locations, or brainstorming ways to increase voter registration.

Currently, the team is preparing for the June primary and here's what we do behind the scenes before the big Election Day.

Voter Registration

I have to start out with voter registration because elections don't happen if people aren't registered to vote.

Tina Crump, head of Voter Registration said registration happens year round, there's limited breathing room for her team even after Election Day.

While registering people is a big part for the team, updating the status of a person's eligibility to vote is a big task as well.

The day-to-day job function of the department includes:

- **Removing deceased voters from voter rolls**
- **Canceling voters who are out-of-state**
- **Registering new applicants**

Outreach

This year, our office is doing more community engagement online and in-person.

The marketing and communications team creates content weekly to put on social media platforms. Some information posted are about voter education, voter registration, hiring information for elections officers, and any important office updates.

The team have also appeared in tabling events to hand out some swag at sports events, local college campuses, and festivals. Tabling events are opportunities where the public can ask our staff any questions they have regarding voting or elections.



Marketing and Communications team at VCU Men's Basketball Game Block Party

Elections Officers and Early Voting

The Office of Elections is always looking for election officers.

Recruitment is number priority for Vanessa Floyd, head of Election Officers and Training. After recruitment, Floyd and her team start preparing the officers for Early Voting and Election Day.

Early Voting starts 45 days before each Election Day. Before the first day of in-person Early Voting, training sessions are held in the first days of Early Voting.

Training sessions are also provided for election officers who are assigned to work at one of the 72 polling locations on Election Day.

Absentee Department

Similarly to other departments, the Absentee team reflects on what they can do better for the next election.

Cynthia Johnson, Absentee Coordinator, said for the next few months before voting starts again, her team's day-to-day task will consist of:

- **Post-election research**
- **Auditing**
- **Preparing for newsletters**
- **Set up for the next vote by-mail**
- **Outreach**

Logic and Accuracy Testing

Christian Javins, Head of Technology and Security, and his team is in charge of maintaining the voting machines, poll books, and communicating with polling locations.

Virginia law requires general registrars in each locality to do a Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing before Early Voting starts.

Javins and his team need to test Ballot Marking Devices, or BMD, which are Express Vote machines that voters use to cast their vote during Early Voting. The Express Vote machines were brought in 2015 to reduce waste of ballots and to make voting more accessible to voters with disabilities.

Some other machines are the DS300, a voting machine that is used in every precinct in the city and also the DS450, a machine similar to the DS300 that counts ballots much faster.

"If there are any inconsistencies, the team removes the faulty machine and replaces it with one that works properly," Javins said.

This is done to ensure that every vote counts on Election Day.

After L&A is done, the Electoral Board officially certifies the testing.