Election Administration

Election Administration
Volume I
Managing Elections

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Introduction by the National Clearinghouse on Election Administration

An election system might be compared to an automobile since, in order for either one of them to run well, a series of things must happen—some of them in sequence, some of them simultaneously. The principal difference is that election systems are comprised of living elements (voters, candidates, office staff, and records on all these) instead of the pistons, gears, and bearings that make up an automobile.

But if we look at the election system as an automobile, then we can see the election director as a kind of chief mechanic whose job it is to make the machine run and run efficiently. The ideal mechanic in this case is one who is concerned more with the smooth performance of the machinery than with the partisan direction in which the public (as driver) wants to go.

No chief mechanic begins work on an automobile without first consulting the engineering manual designed for that make and model. Such a manual contains the diagrams, schematics, and specifications which the manufacturer recommends for optimum performance. Up to now, election administrators have lacked this kind of manual partly because each jurisdiction's election system is a slightly different model from the rest and partly because there has been no nationwide study of what things are common to all models.

This four-volume series on election administration is designed as a set of engineering manuals for election officials. They describe the basic elements of the election machinery and offer standard and fairly uniform techniques for planning, managing, and costing out your election functions. When used in conjunction with a companion series of manuals, *election system statistics*, these manuals will provide you the basic tools you need to fine tune and adjust your election machinery to the conditions and demands of your own locality. The volumes in this series are:

I. *Managing Elections* which introduces the basic management cycle and provides a broad overview of essential election functions and tasks.

II. *Planning Elections* which introduces techniques for estimating the demand for election services, provides a series of activity check-off lists for each function and task, demonstrates how to distribute the workload, and suggests ways of spreading the workload over time.

III. *Costing Elections* which provides a basic chart of accounts, suggests ways of planning and accounting for election costs, and relates the election budget to the other functions of local government.

IV. *Memoranda of Law* which summarizes the legal provisions for administering and financing elections in each of the states.

The Manuals are designed to be flexible in two ways. First, since it is impossible for one set of manuals to fit every local make and model of election system, we list only those functions, tasks, and activi-

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ties that are commonly performed. We then leave room for you to make the final adjustments (by adding or eliminating activities) in order to suit your own particular system. Second, we realize that large scale election offices with several units and a big staff are likely to need more elaborate planning, management and costing techniques than do small part-time offices. We have therefore designed these manuals in a kind of graduated way so that, for example, smaller offices can benefit by simply amending and using the checklist in Volume II while larger offices may want to advance into the PERT charts explained later in that volume. Similarly, the basic chart of accounts in Volume III may be adequate for tracking all election costs in smaller offices while larger jurisdictions would most likely benefit by applying it to each election function (or program).

Despite this flexibility, we hope that these manuals will

- help local election officials prepare and defend their budget requests with greater success
- help reduce election crises that drain resources, increase overtime hours, and threaten public confidence in the process
- provide a common language and approach to discussions of election problems and issues
- provide a common basis for comparing the costs and effectiveness of various registration and voting procedures.

In designing and writing these manuals, we relied not only on the expertise of Ernst and Ernst, but also on the practical advice and guidance of several experienced state and local election officials. This project more than most was a team effort. We are therefore deeply indebted for their work to:

Ray Phelps
Director of Elections
Oregon

Joyce Dieffenderfer
Supervisor of Elections
Dade County, Florida

William Durley
Ass't. Secretary of State
California

Marie Garber
Supervisor of Elections
Montgomery County, Maryland

Thomas Wallace
Director, Board of Elections
New York

Tom Walsh
County Clerk
LaSalle County, Illinois

S. H. "Hal" Runyan
State Senator
Arizona

and to dozens of other election officials who donated time to this effort.

Contents

Glossary of Terms

All definitions of accounting terms are compatible with those found in *A Dictionary for Accountants* by Eric Kohler (Prentice Hall, 1975).

1. **Accounting Transaction:** An event or condition that, when recognized, gives rise to an entry in accounting records.

2. **Activity:** A portion of a task that can be assigned to one or more persons.

3. **Demographic Variables:** Factors related to the size and density of population that can be used in demand analysis.

4. **Election District:** A geographic area that is entitled to be represented in the U.S. House of Representatives.

5. **Encumbrance:** An anticipated expenditure that can be related to a contract, purchase order, or specific administrative action.

6. **Expenditure:** The disbursement of cash for the purpose of acquiring an asset or service, liquidating an encumbrance, or settling a loss.

7. **Functions:** The primary responsibilities residing with local government as a result of the election process.

8. **Jurisdiction:** A governmental entity within a State empowered to conduct elections, e.g., county, municipality.

9. **Measures:** Issues appearing on the ballot as a result of the exercise of the right to initiative or referendum.

10. **PERT Chart:** A graphic illustration derived from the Program Evaluation and Review Technique developed by the U.S. Navy to resolve scheduling problems.

11. **Political Subdivision:** A geographic area within a jurisdiction that elects local officials and has access to the ballot to consider local measures.

12. **Potential Electorate:** That portion of the population that is eligible to register to vote in elections.

13. **Purchase Order:** A document authorizing a vendor to deliver described merchandise or materials.

14. **Registration Transaction:** An addition, deletion, or change to the original registration documents that are maintained by a jurisdiction.

15. **Registry:** The authoritative record of individuals who are registered to vote.

16. **Requisition:** A formal written request from one department to another within an organization for specified articles and services.

17. **Service Level (Service Volume):** The product of tasks that can be associated with work performed in specific time periods, e.g., number of voters registered in a given year.

18. **Subvention:** A subsidy from a governmental or foundation source.

19. **Task:** Work efforts that produce a distinct and measurable result.

20. **Workload:** Staff effort, measured in hours, that is required to perform a specific activity, task, or function.
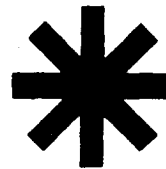
This emblem indicates that a blank of the sample chart is reproduced in the back of the volume for your convenience and duplication.

I. INTRODUCTION

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I. Introduction

To preserve democracy as we know it today, Federal, State, and local elections in all jurisdictions must be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. The public must have confidence in the election process and in the ability of the various jurisdictions to administer the process impartially.

This volume, *Managing Elections,* is the first of three volumes designed to provide practical guidance to election officials in planning, managing, budgeting, and accounting for their election duties. This volume presents an overview of the following eight election functions:
■ Precinct definition
■ Certification of qualifications
■ Voter registration
■ Campaign finance and control
■ Voter information
■ Balloting
■ Tabulation
■ Certification of results.
In addition to discussing the election functions, we focus on the role of the individual responsible for managing the elections. Generally, this is the county or town clerk, although in some jurisdictions it is the director or supervisor of elections.

In the second volume, *Planning Elections,* we focus on techniques that election officials can use to estimate service levels and staffing requirements. We believe that election officials should consider at least the following measures of service levels when they make staff assignments:
■ Number of races
■ Number of registration transactions
■ Voter turnout.

In the third volume, *Costing Elections,* we demonstrate how managers can link budget requests to projected service levels. In addition, we have developed a listing of revenue and expenditure accounts that are useful in controlling funds allocated for the election process.

We anticipate that election officials will review portions of each volume selected to address their specific concerns. This volume is organized into four sections:
■ Introduction
■ The Role of the Election Director
■ The Eight Major Election Functions
■ Monitoring the Election Process.

While we have tried to keep all three volumes free of jargon, we could not avoid using some technical words. We also discovered that many election terms are used differently in different States. To eliminate or at least minimize confusion over meanings, a glossary appears at the beginning of each volume.

II. THE ROLE OF THE ELECTION DIRECTOR

II. The Role of the Election Director

An election director is anyone who is assigned the ultimate responsibility for conducting elections within the political boundaries of a local jurisdiction. In most cases, a county or town clerk assumes the role of election director—typically on a part-time basis among the many other duties that clerks perform. Very often voter registration is the responsibility of yet another local official with whom the clerk must cooperate. Some (usually larger) jurisdictions like Montgomery County, Maryland, or Dade County, Florida, require a full-time election supervisor with a full-time professional staff.

Whatever the administrative arrangement or degree of responsibility, the primary role of an election director is to identify the major things (which we call "functions") that must be done for an election, reduce them into manageable tasks, and ensure that they are accomplished on time. Because public funds pay for the staff and resources required to conduct elections, the election director has the added responsibility of seeing to it that public funds are used efficiently and for their intended purpose. As a result, election directors are thrust into a managerial role that requires not only a knowledge of election technology but also a command of some important administrative skills.

This section examines some critical aspects of good administration in terms of administrative decision making, administering public funds, cost control, and budget justification. While the focus of our discussion is on election administration, you may find these principles and procedures useful in performing whatever other duties you may have.

A. Administrative Decision Making

Election directors, like many other public and private administrators, often fall into a pattern of management by crisis. They find themselves running from crash project to crash project in order to put out whatever fire crops up

next. While this style of management makes for an exciting life (the camaraderie of crisis, the joy of success after long hours of overtime), it can also abbreviate a good life through sheer wear and tear on the nerves or through a career-ending misjudgment.

It is even fair to say that organizations managed by crisis are doomed to ultimate failure. This is true because crises distract the manager's attention from the overall picture toward the single issue at hand and elicit hasty and ill-conceived decisions. Other crises then develop for want of attention or as a consequence of these hasty decisions. In this way crises tend to feed on each other, increasing in number and frequency. And finally (even if the manager holds out and the staff does not rebel), the process will reach a point where either there are more crises than can be handled or the manager will make a hasty decision that proves fatal. In management by crisis, the odds are all against the manager.

You can avoid the management-by-crisis trap by adopting a five-stage administrative decision-making process. This process does not guarantee that there will be no crises. That, after all, depends on how well you follow the process and what else is happening. It will, however, help you avoid foreseeable crises and keep those that occur in perspective. The five stages are:

■ *Planning*—These decisions deal with selecting and testing critical assumptions about such things as the volume of registration activity, the level of voter turnout, and other variables affecting election office work loads. These decisions are made well in advance of the coming fiscal year based on the representative factors defined in Volume II.

■ *Program Development*—These decisions deal with the tasks and activities that must be accomplished to perform the functions of the election board. These decisions are made in advance of the budget and in response to the projected demands defined in the previous step.

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Exhibit II-1

Worksheet for Setting Management Cycle Phase Begin and End Dates

| Ends on the date budgets are submitted to local government | Begin on the first day of the fiscal year and end on the last day of the fiscal year |

| Planning | → | Program Development | → | Budget Formulation | → | Program Execution | → | Program Control |
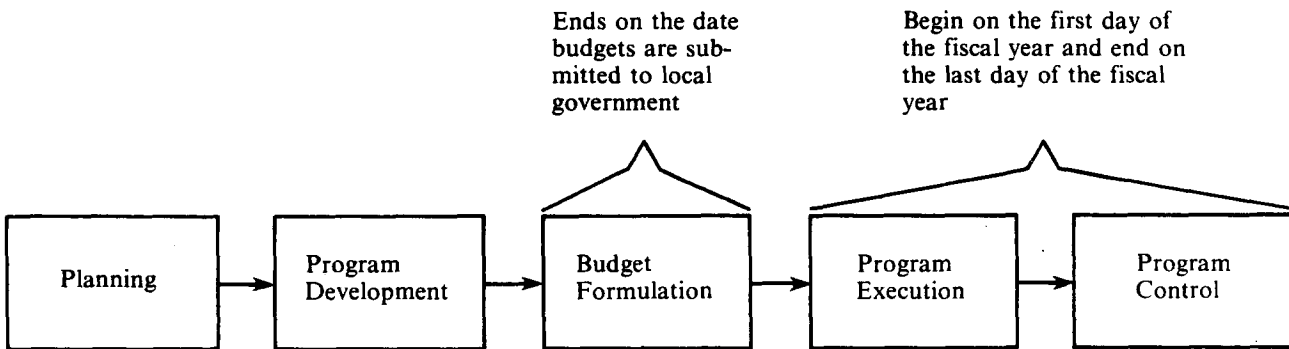
	Begin	End
Planning	_____	_____
Program Development	_____	_____
Budget Formulation	_____	_____
Program Execution	_____	_____
Program Control	_____	_____

Instructions

1. Set "Begin" and "End" dates for Program Execution and Program Control Phases to coincide with the fiscal year.
2. Set the "End" date for Budget Formulation Phase according to instructions received (or expected) from the budget unit.
3. Set "Begin" date for Budget Formulation Phase to provide sufficient time to meet submission deadline. Usually 8 weeks is adequate.
4. Set "End" date for the Program Development Phase just prior to the "Begin" date for Budget Formulation. The "Begin" date for program development should be set to provke 4 weeks of working time.
5. The Planning Function will end just prior to the beginning of the program development function. Set the begin date for the Planning Function to allow about 8 weeks of working time.

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■ *Budget Formulation*—These decisions deal with the staffing and resources necessary to accomplish the tasks and activities identified in the previous step. These decisions are, of course, made in advance of submitting your budget. They may have to be altered in light of your actual vs. your requested budget.

■ *Program Execution*—These decisions relate to day-to-day management problems that arise while the election office is performing its tasks and activities. These decisions continue throughout the year.

■ *Program Control*—These decisions ensure that the election office tasks and activities are performed on time and within budget. As with the decisions previously discussed, these decisions continue throughout the year.

Establishing a decision-making pattern that descends through the list from planning to program control transforms an administrative style into a routine management cycle. This series of manuals offers techniques, worksheets, and instructions to make the implementation of a routine management cycle easier.

The timing of each phase of this management cycle will be determined by two dates:

■ The date budget requests must be submitted to local government
■ The start of the fiscal year.

Exhibit II-1 provides a worksheet you can use to set beginning and ending dates for each phase of the cycle.

The management cycle provides the capability of relating the work load of your staff to the services you deliver. This enables you to justify budget requests in terms of the work you expect to perform or, conversely, to argue against budget cuts by asking budget makers to identify what work they do *not* want you to perform (and imagine their consternation).

Work-load projections and program definitions are also, by the way, useful in setting criteria for staff evaluations.

Such a management cycle organizes decision making in order to avoid the following sources of crisis:
■ Unexpected changes in work load
■ Staff who are unaware of the work load for which they are expected to be responsible
■ Lack of justification for budget requests.
Of course, crises may still develop that no system manager could foresee, but these will be fewer and less intense. Should a crisis arise, these managerial tools will be available to cope with it.

B. Administration of Public Funds

Administering public funds brings with it an obligation to establish accountability. Accountability means, simply, being able to link staffing and resources to the specific tasks or activities for which they were used. This is especially critical when the responsibility for conducting elections resides in the clerk's office, where many related activities occur at the same time.

Your budget is the basic tool for establishing accountability. The costs specified in your budget represent a formal spending plan. As your office performs the proposed tasks or activities, you should be able to compare actual costs to the costs planned in your budget. (For pointers on how this can be done, see Volume III, *Costing Elections*). Differences between planned costs and actual costs usually result from one of the following problems:
■ The resources or staff budgeted for a task were either over-estimated or under-estimated
■ The resources or staff hours consumed to perform a task were either wasted or insufficient to perform the task as well as you intended, or there was a change in the unit cost of staff or resources (inflation, strike, or the like)
■ Additional tasks (Federal or State legislation) became required after you submitted your budget.
Except for the last possibility, these problems diminish

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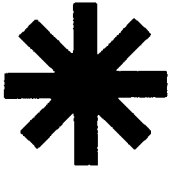
Exhibit II-2

Line Item Actual vs. Budgeted Report

(East Columbia Elections Office, Period: March 1 to March 31)

Object of Expense	Year-to-Date Budget	Year-to-Date Expenditures	Encum- brances	Total Expenditures And Encumbrances	Balance Available	Percent Available
Personnel: Professional	$65,000	$19,500	—	$19,500	$46,500	70%
Support	104,000	10,000	—	10,000	94,000	90%
Fringe Benefits	40,000	6,000	—	6,000	34,000	85%
Total	209,000	35,000	—	35,000	174,000	83.3%
Supplies and Materials	25,000	3,000	—	3,000	22,000	88%
Printing	12,000	500	—	500	11,500	96%
Postage	7,000	75	—	75	6,925	99%
Graphic Arts	10,000	—	300	300	9,700	97%
Advertising	6,000	—	150	150	5,850	98%
Rental Space	8,000	800	—	800	7,200	90%
Office Machine Rental	1,200	200	150	350	850	71%
Total Non-Personnel	69,200	4,575	600	5,175	64,025	92.5%
Total	278,200	39,575	600	40,175	238,025	85.5%

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with experience. They can also be minimized by talking over the budget and its execution with your staff—both initially (in estimating time and resources) and while in progress (by holding periodic review sessions to compare performance with projections). This notion of involving the staff in budget formation and execution introduces another important management concept—participatory management. This approach, although peripheral to our purposes here, has proven to be a very effective way of showing staff members how their jobs relate to the overall picture, why costs and deadlines are critical, and how their own evaluations are related to their performance rather than to some vague personal judgment. You can perceive how, as an employee, it is better to see and understand (and have a part in) the plan of which you are a part than to be an uninformed and neglected instrument of a plan in which you had no voice. Without intending to slight the benefits of such enlightened administration, we return to our central theme.

The obligation to establish accountability extends beyond the comparison of actual expenditures to budgeted costs. The concept of public accountability is based not only on the notion that the public should be able to trace how its money is being spent, but also that the public should be assured of receiving its money's worth in goods and services. To ensure that public money is being spent prudently and efficiently with regard to the election process, you may have to:

■ Reallocate resources among existing budgeted tasks or activities to reduce budget variances or increase program impact.

■ Add or delete tasks or activities to improve cost/-effectiveness of programs.

We provide a more detailed discussion of budgeting and accounting for election functions in Volume III. But before jumping to that more detailed volume, we ask that you continue with this overview.

C. Administrative Cost Control

With a few exceptions (candidate fees and the like), taxes pay for election and other public services. It is therefore perfectly legitimate and reasonable that taxpayers, and therefore legislators and budget makers, be concerned with the efficiency of public services. There is always pressure to reduce costs and increasingly, especially in local government, success as a public administrator is likely to be measured by the reduction or at least the relative control of costs. Cost control programs are generally of three types:

■ Elimination of waste
■ Increases in efficiency
■ Reduction in services.

The success of a cost control program depends, in large measure, on employee motivation. One way to motivate a staff to be cost conscious is to develop realistic cost-saving targets and to designate the use to which accrued savings will be put. Motivating staff toward this end is far easier if you include them in the budget-planning and execution process, as we noted earlier. Before you launch a cost control program, you should first review your spending reports to determine which categories of expenditures appear to be the most likely targets for cost savings. This task is complicated by the fact that most jurisdictions provide a line-item expenditure report similar to the one portrayed in Exhibit II-2. Line-item expenditure reports identify costs according to the object purchased as opposed to the election task that was performed as a result of the purchase. While line-item budgets are not the best of all possible budgets, there are nevertheless several ways to identify targets for cost savings from them:

■ Consider only those costs that you can realistically hope to reduce. Costs such as rent and utilities are usually fixed and cannot be altered in the foreseeable future.

■ Look for plausible relationships among costs (such as the cost of supplies per staff member, or the cost of

Exhibit II-3

Sample Services Associated with each Election Office Function

Function	Services
Precinct Definition	■ Prepare Precinct Boundary Map
Certification of Qualifications	■ Verify petitions ■ Verify candidates ■ Verify ballot items ■ Verify wording and placement on ballot
Voter Registration	■ Process additions to the voter registry ■ Process deletions from the voter registry ■ Corrections or changes among original entries in the voter registry ■ Prepare precinct lists of registered voters
Campaign Finance and Control	■ Report delinquent findings ■ Report aberrant findings
Voter Information	■ Prepare media copy ■ Contact households
Balloting	■ Conduct races
Tabulation	■ Report precinct election results ■ Report district election results
Certification of Results	■ Resolve challenges ■ Publish official election results

overtime per full-time staff). Where these relationships either fluctuate widely from month to month or seem unrealistic, you may be able to save money.

■ Compare your own costs or cost relationships with those in election offices of similar size. Such comparisons often suggest cost saving opportunities.

After selecting cost control targets, you should prepare clear operating procedures instructing your staff how to reduce costs while maintaining a good level of service.

D. Justifying a Budget for Election Services

Local governments fund election services from tax revenues. Those who decide on budgets usually require some explanation or justification of how an election office will spend its funds and what it expects to accomplish during the period for which funds are requested.

There are, generally, two ways of justifying a budget:

■ *An Incremental (or Partial) Budget Justification.* This form of justification identifies an incremental increase or decrease (usually increase) over last year's budget in order to satisfy statutory and public demands. Such a budget request is usually line-item and, hence, untraceable to specific functions, tasks, or activities. The advantages of such a vague, flexible approach are offset by the problem of knowing where to cut back when your actual budget is smaller than what was requested. It is, for the same reason, a little more difficult to defend.

■ *A Program-Based Budget Justification.* Program-based justifications take one of several possible forms—Program Planning and Budgeting Systems (PPBS), Management By Objectives (MBO), Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB), or whatever other designation may be in fashion at the time. All these approaches have in common the ability to trace expenditures to specific activities, tasks, or programs. Such a program-based budget presentation gives the manager a certain advantage, since budget makers who propose a budget reductions might also be asked to specify (and therefore take responsibility for) whatever programs or levels of public service might suffer.

The most advantageous, if somewhat laborious, technique of program budgeting is a two-stage process. The first stage would identify the types and quantities of public services that will result from each election function. (Exhibit II-3 lists some of the election services associated with each function.) The second stage should estimate the cost of delivering each service. Where the cost of a particular service has changed over time, an explanation of why the change occurred should be provided in the justification.

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III. THE EIGHT MAJOR ELECTION FUNCTIONS

III. The Eight Major Election Functions

Up to now, we have talked about administrative functions, or things that good managers must do. In this chapter, we focus on an overview of the system that has to be managed. Our approach is to identify the general things that must be done to conduct an election (which we call "functions"), break down these functions into component tasks, and then break these tasks into specific activities. Volume II provides a more specific breakdown which, as a working document, may be divided up among those responsible for each function. This volume is intended only to give an overall picture.

Eight functions must be performed in order to have an election:

- Precinct definition
- Certification of qualifications
- Voter registration
- Campaign finance and control
- Voter information
- Balloting
- Tabulation
- Certification of results.

The flow diagram in Exhibit III-1 illustrates the sequence in which election officials perform these functions for any single election. The number of times a jurisdiction would perform this cycle in a given fiscal year depends, of course, on the number of elections that are required.

By using these functions to classify the day-to-day work according to the specific purposes, you can plan services that meet statutory requirements and public demand without getting bogged down in analyzing detailed work efforts and assignment schedules. To prepare detailed strategies for delivering election services, you would, however, have to analyze the work efforts and develop assignment schedules for each function.

As many skills are brought to bear on the election process, a vocabulary is required to discuss the divisions of labor. Again, "tasks" represent major divisions of labor within a function that require unique skills or training. Tasks are further subdivided into "activities" representing specific responsibilities that are assigned to one or more people in the election office.

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Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions

```
                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │Certification │   │  Campaign    │
                    │     of       │──▶│ Finance and  │
                    │Qualification │   │   Control    │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │  2           │   │  4           │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘

  ┌───────────┐                                          ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌────────────┐
  │Definition │                                          │Balloting │  │Tabulation│  │Certificate │
 (Begin)──────▶│   of      │●                            │          │─▶│          │─▶│   of       │─▶(End)
  │Precincts  │                                          │          │  │          │  │  Results   │
  ├───────────┤                                          ├──────────┤  ├──────────┤  ├────────────┤
  │  1        │                                          │  6       │  │  7       │  │  8         │
  └───────────┘                                          └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └────────────┘

                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Registration │   │    Voter     │
                    │  of Voters   │──▶│ Information   │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │  3           │   │  5           │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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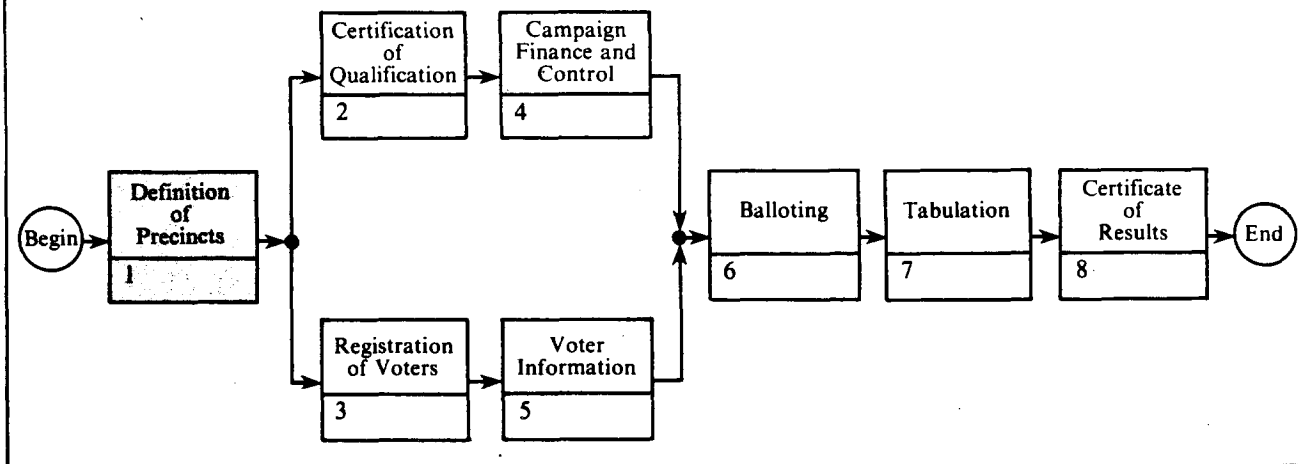
1. Define Election Precincts and Districts

Election districts and precincts form the game board upon which elections are battled out; and before anything else can happen in an election, someone has to draw district and precinct boundaries.

The matter of drawing lines for elections is not as simple as it first seems. Were it merely a matter of drawing convenient voting areas for either Federal, State, local, or special districts, it would not be such a problem. But when there are simultaneous or consolidated elections for U.S. Congress, State legislatures, local county and city offices, and special districts (such as school board, water conservation, environmental, sewage, pest control, new development, and the like), the ballot style becomes a major challenge. Defining precinct boundaries is also complicated by all the factors relating to voter convenience—distance to the polling place, physical barriers (highways, rivers, cohesive neighborhoods, etc.), and the general public visibility of the polling place. The problem is even further exacerbated when, as in most cases, lines are drawn by political bodies (legislatures, county commissions) rather than being left to the professional skill of the election director.

Still, when boundary decisions are made (or can be influenced) by election administrators, it is essential to identify as early as possible the number of precincts required both to meet statutory obligations and to provide the public with reasonable access to the polling place. Many states have statutory requirements regarding the maximum number of electors that may be assigned to a single precinct. Reasonable access usually means that polling places are conveniently located and waiting time to enter the voting station is reasonable. To revise precinct boundaries, you should perform the following tasks:

Task A. Establish Criteria for Reprecincting.
There may be specific criteria for setting precinct

boundaries in your State's election statutes. Check your code and recent legislative actions. In most cases, these criteria identify the maximum number of eligible or registered voters that can be assigned to each precinct. Election officials should respond to these criteria by revising or advocating the revision of precinct boundaries periodically to reflect population changes within their jurisdiction.

The following additional factors influence where precinct boundaries should be set:

■ The number of Federal, State, local, and special elections conducted within the jurisdiction

■ The overlap between election districts and political subdivisions within the jurisdiction

■ The amount of time required to cast votes for all contested offices and issues

■ Natural and man-made obstacles that hinder access to the polling place.

Task B. Set New Precinct Boundaries.
Setting new precinct boundaries begins with an analysis to compare existing precincts to the criteria established in Task 1. In many cases, the work and public confusion involved in setting new precinct boundaries can be minimized by merely revising current precinct boundaries. Every effort should be made to design voting precincts *within* overlapping boundaries so that each precinct has its own distinct ballot. (Different ballot varieties within a precinct create an enormous problem for poll workers who must then identify the physical address of each voter in order to assign the proper ballot or machine to each voter).

Task C. File Public Record of New Precinct Boundaries.
In many jurisdictions you cannot conduct elections until the local legislative or executive body approves the new precinct boundaries. To prevent any misunderstandings, precinct boundaries should be described in surveyor's

terms citing the metes and bounds. Where the 1965 Voting Rights Act pertains, the Justice Department must approve any revision of precinct boundaries before any such change may be instituted.

Task D. Publish Precinct Maps.
It is essential to publish the revised precinct boundaries in order to minimize confusion. This can be done in at least two ways:

■ Publication in the media of precinct maps and polling places. This is a standard approach often required by law. But it is an approach that can be much improved by using larger street maps (or individual precinct maps) where possible so as to minimize boundary confusion that results from fuzzy print or tiny maps in the newspaper. It is also a good idea to try for a special election supplement rather than just an ordinary newspaper article. A two- or four-page supplement gives more space, allows you to provide other information, and gives the public something to keep or carry along.

■ Providing copies of maps to community leaders and groups. You may want to use the local media to inform electors, parties, candidates and community service groups of the availability of revised precinct maps. It may also be useful to post the maps in convenient public locations—post office, etc.

You should take care to print a sufficient number of maps to satisfy all interested groups (which you will learn through experience) and maintain a few extra for archival and historical purposes. You should also remember to set up the arrangements for charging whatever fees are appropriate.

Task E. Notify Registered Voters of Changes in Precinct Assignments.
In many jurisdictions you are required to notify registered voters directly whenever you change the precinct (or polling place) in which they vote. Whether required or not,

it is a good and prudent thing to do. The task can be accomplished in either one of two ways:

■ A targeted mailing to those affected. Targeted mailings are by far the most efficient and inexpensive. This is true since only those registered voters who are directly affected receive a notice (rather than the entire precinct). Targeted mailings do, however, require an ability to sort the list of registered voters by street and sometimes by address or even street number. Here, computers justify their costs. But even manual sorts can be accomplished depending on your filing system—especially since the master file will probably have to be changed anyway to reflect which voters are being moved over to another precinct. An economical measure, by the way, is to mail only one notice to each household name and address (State laws permitting) rather than to each registered voter. Such mailing saves the cost of sending two, three, or more notices to the same household.

■ A general mailing to affected precincts. If targeting proves impossibly complicated or more expensive than a general mailing, then notifying all registered voters in each affected precinct is the obvious alternative. Again, you can economize by mailing notices only to each household name and address in the registry, State law permitting.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions
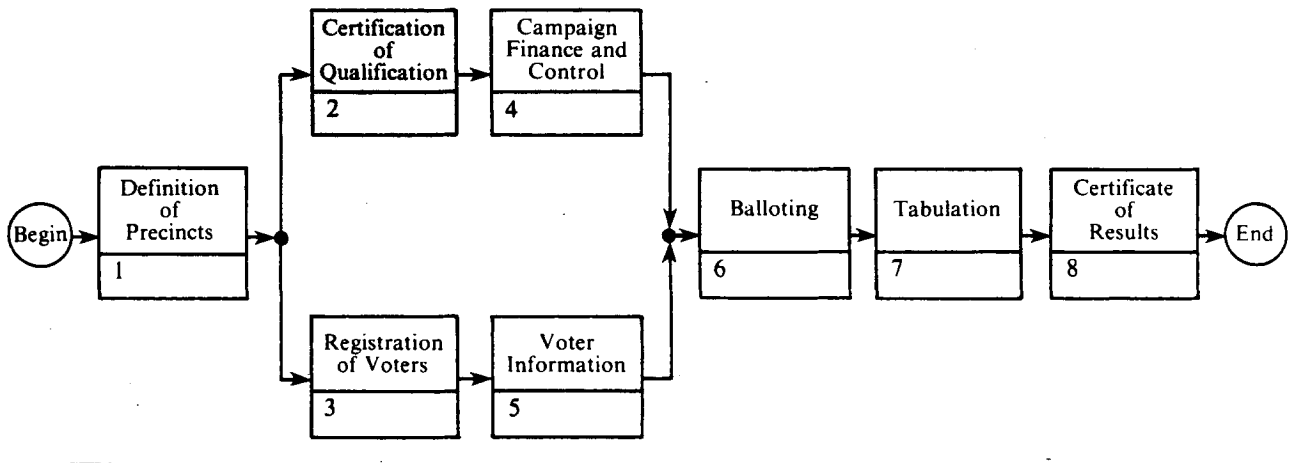
2. Certification of Ballot Qualifications

Elections take place in order to choose candidates, to recall officials, or to approve or disapprove ballot measures. Ballot measures may include:
— Constitutional amendments
— State and local bond issues
— Referenda.

To appear on the ballot, candidates and measures must be certified. "Certification," in this case, refers to the process of determining the eligibility of candidates or measures to appear on the ballot. The various requirements for appearing on the ballot may be found in the following four primary sources:
— The Constitution of the United States
— The State constitution and statutes
— Municipal and county governing charter and ordinances
— Principal act of a municipal corporation.

State and local governments vary widely in their ballot access requirements. (For a further definition of these differences, see *Ballot Access,* a report produced by the National Clearinghouse on Election Administration.) Most require either a deposit or fee, a "pauper's" declaration, or some demonstration of support (such as a petition) before a candidate or party can appear on the ballot.

Whether or not some, all, or none of the deposit or fee is later returned to the candidate is a matter usually spelled out clearly in the State election code. Similarly, the specific requirements for petition and methods of verifying signatures differ not only from State to State, but also from office to office within a State. Let the State election code and the State election officials be your guide. Whether local election officials must verify all petition signatures, a sample of them, or only those challenged by opponents, the business of verifying signatures of registered voters is a major task.

Propositions or measures find their way to the ballot either through the legislative or the initiative process. Statutes provide State and some local legislative branches access to the ballot to resolve constitutional or referendum issues. In most States, citizens or citizen groups can also gain access to the ballot for any measure if they can demonstrate sufficient support among registered voters, again through the petition process.

Candidates for election to Federal offices and some State and local offices may be required to meet age and residency requirements, while candidates for State and local offices may also be required to meet professional licensing requirements. When appropriate, election officials should review each candidate's application to appear on the ballot to determine if indeed these requirements have been met as well as to ensure that all required filing documents are complete. This certification function is accomplished in 10 distinct tasks. Each is discussed below in logical order.

Task A. Review Federal, State, and Local Statutes Regarding Access to the Ballot.

Federal and State codes define specifically what requirements must be fulfilled for a candidate or measure to appear on the ballot. In most States, candidate certification means officially verifying that all forms and affidavits have been submitted demonstrating that these requirements have been met.

Task B. Prepare and Distribute Candidacy Filing Materials.

Federal statutes list the materials candidates must file to run for Federal office. Similarly, State statutes usually specify the filing materials required of State and local candidates. Election officials who provide these forms should, of course, maintain a supply of materials sufficient to honor requests from all potential candidates.

In addition to keeping an adequate supply of required forms, it is probably a good idea to develop a list of

requirements and dates on a separate sheet for each of the following:
- Federal candidates
- State candidates
- Local candidates
- Referenda, initiatives, recalls, or other special issues
- Minor parties and independents.

(The appropriate requirements and dates can be obtained from your State's chief election official or from your State's election calendar). Apart from being a service to candidates, these sheets can serve you as a check-off list when reviewing candidate submissions.

Task C. Review Requests for New Party Recognition.
State statutes establish the criteria for recognizing new political parties. Such recognition enables a party to conduct conventions or primary elections and to place candidates on the ballot. In most States, recognition is accorded parties who demonstrate (either through petition, through registration, or through prior votes obtained for a given office) that they represent some proportion or percentage of the electorate. Both the detailed procedures and the minimum proportion or percentage is usually specified in the election code. Your chief State election official is probably the best guide if you have questions.

Task D. Provide for Public Access to Request Materials.
In States where new party recognition can be handled as a local matter, each election jurisdiction should provide public access to materials accompanying a request for new party recognition. This enables individuals or members of other political parties to prepare challenges to the filing. Only upon resolution of these challenges should you proceed with the certification of new parties.

Task E. Certify New Parties Meeting Statutory Criteria.
Certifying a new party indicates officially that all statutory criteria have been met. The authorized title of the party, for purposes of ballot preparation, appears on the certification document. The certification document also identifies the names, addresses, and titles of party members legally empowered to represent the organization in the event of election challenges or other legal disputes.

Task F. Review Candidate and Committee Filing Submissions.
To run for Federal, State, or local political office, candidates must file a series of documents with the election office. These documents may include, but are not limited to, the following items:
■ Declaration of intention, often with fee or cash deposit
■ Affidavit attesting to residence, age, party affiliation, etc.
■ Personal financial disclosure of assets
■ Campaign contributions and expenditures
■ Loyalty oath
■ Contingent resignations from currently held public offices
■ Demonstrations of public support in the form of a nomination from a certified party and/or a petition of voters registered in the election jurisdiction.

To the extent that they are involved in this process, local election officials should review all forms for completeness before passing the submissions of candidates to the appropriate State election official. If time permits, election officials normally allow candidates to correct or amend deficiencies that have been noticed.

Committees may be authorized by candidates or parties to receive contributions, solicit funds, and make disbursements on their behalf. Often this authorization is submitted to election officials with a candidate's filing statements. But it is important both for candidates and for election officials who are involved in the filing process to understand that filing for office (i.e., to appear on the ballot) is not necessarily the same as filing for the purposes of financial disclosure. Candidates for a Federal office

must, for example, file with the Federal Election Commission for the purposes of campaign financial reports and disclosure. Such a filing does not, however, constitute a filing to appear on the ballot—a thing that must be done at the State level. Moreover, certain States and localities may require personal financial disclosure statements as yet a third type of filing (see Campaign Finance and Control below). In reviewing candidate submissions, you should keep these distinctions in mind. You may want to use the candidate requirements list suggested in Task B above as a kind of check-off list to keep everything straight.

Task G. Review Measures to Appear on the Ballot and Supporting Materials.

Two mechanisms exist that can result in a measure being placed on the ballot:

■ *Initiative*—The process whereby registered voters petition to propose a law and ensure that it is placed before the electorate

■ *Referendum*—The process whereby a constitutional matter or law proposed either by a legislative body or by a specified proportion of the electorate is submitted to popular vote.

Both mechanisms may yield submissions to the local election jurisdiction. Election officials should review submissions for completeness, validate petitions, and, where appropriate, notify supporters of deficiencies. Again, a check-off sheet of required filings and dates is useful to both proponents and election officials.

Task H. Provide Public Access to Candidate (and Measure) Filing Materials.

You should provide public access to materials filed by candidates and in behalf of propositions. This enables individuals or political parties to challenge the validity of any of the filing materials. Challenges must be resolved before candidates or propositions may be certified. It would probably be useful to provide an outline of, or at least be familiar with, the procedures for challenges.

Task I. Certify Candidates to Appear on the Ballot.

The formal document certifying a candidate to appear on the ballot indicates that all filing materials have been accepted as valid. This document also provides the official record of the candidate's name as it will appear on the ballot. If your jurisdiction allows nicknames, titles (such as M.D., Ph.D., etc.), or occupations to appear on the ballot, they, too, should be noted on the candidate certification.

Task J. Certify Measures to Appear on the Ballot.

The formal document certifying a measure to appear on the ballot indicates that the materials filed with election officials posing the measure were accepted as valid. This document contains the wording of the measure as it will appear on the ballot.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions


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                    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Certification│    │   Campaign   │
                    │      of      │───▶│ Finance and  │
                    │ Qualification│    │   Control    │
                    ├──────────────┤    ├──────────────┤
                    │ 2            │    │ 4            │
                    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘

  ┌──────────────┐                                        ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
  │  Definition  │                                        │          │  │          │  │  Certificate │
  │      of      │                                        │ Balloting│  │Tabulation│  │      of      │
  │  Precincts   │                                        │          │  │          │  │   Results    │
  ├──────────────┤                                        ├──────────┤  ├──────────┤  ├──────────────┤
  │ 1            │                                        │ 6        │  │ 7        │  │ 8            │
  └──────────────┘                                        └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────────┘

                    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Registration │    │    Voter     │
                    │  of Voters   │───▶│ Information   │
                    ├──────────────┤    ├──────────────┤
                    │ 3            │    │ 5            │
                    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
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Begin → Definition of Precincts → ... → End
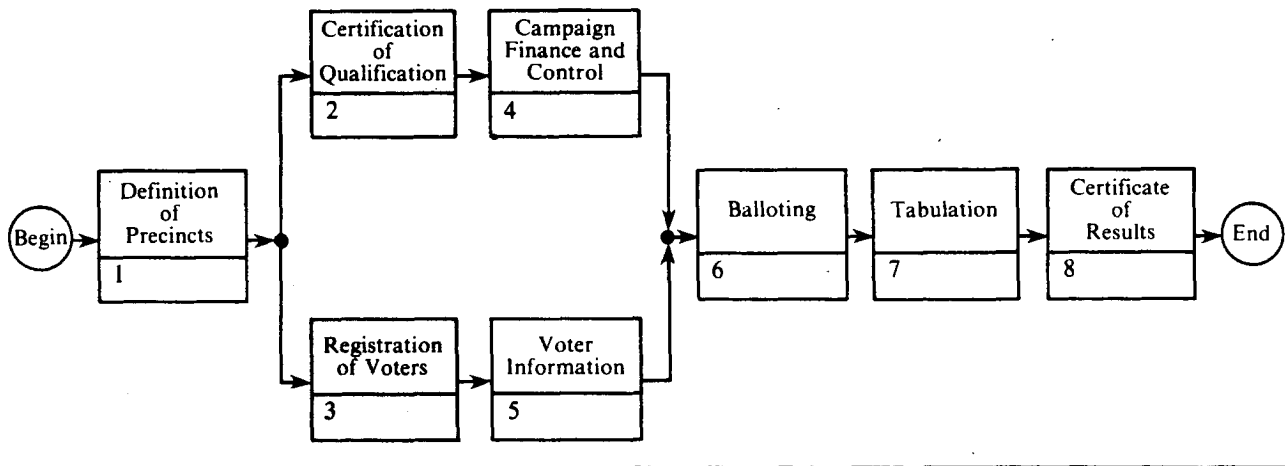
3. Voter Registration

With few exceptions, States and localities require prospective voters to first register as an elector. Where this is so, the job of registering voters and maintaining the file falls either on the local clerk (who is also responsible for all other aspects of the election) or on the local registrar, whose sole purpose is to handle this function. Regardless of who bears the responsibility, the end product of the voter registration effort is the voter registry.

"Voter registry" refers to the file of registered voters. In most jurisdictions this file must be kept manually on registration cards. Many jurisdictions also maintain an additional copy of the registry electronically on computer punch cards, magnetic tape, or magnetic disks. State law usually requires that the original registration document be maintained. Original or master files are normally organized alphabetically and comprise the manual file. Many jurisdictions also maintain duplicate electronic or addressograph files to prepare precinct lists, to produce mail labels, and to facilitate maintaining the registry.

Maintaining the voter registry is a matter of adding, deleting, or changing information on the original registration documents and on the addressograph or electronic files.

Many jurisdictions are active in seeking new registrants. Common techniques for this are:

■ Central office registration
■ Temporary branch registration

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■ Permanent branch registration
■ Mobile office registration
■ Permanent deputy registration
■ Door-to-door registration
■ Mail registration
■ Election day registration.
Jurisdictions must also provide special registration procedures for:
■ Military and related citizens
■ Overseas citizens
■ Interstate movers
■ Disabled shut-in citizens
■ Non-English speaking citizens.
   In addition to adding to the registry, election officials make periodic efforts to delete the names of the deceased, those who no longer reside within the district, and those who are no longer eligible to vote.

   Very few jurisdictions actively encourage changes to original registration documents. Most often, name or even precinct changes are identified only when registrants present themselves at the polling place or when they choose to inform the election office.

   Whether adding, deleting, or changing the registry, the final product of the registration effort is an alphabetical listing by precinct of voters who are entitled to vote for which offices. Additional listings are often prepared for:
■ Authorities responsible for jury selection
■ Candidates and parties
■ Other public officials or agencies.
The voter registration function is accomplished in ten distinct tasks. Each task is discussed below in logical sequence.

Task A. Review Federal and State Voter Registration Requirements.
Voter registration is governed by both Federal and State laws. Federal laws include the 1976 Overseas Voting Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act as amended. The Overseas Voting Rights Act permits American citizens residing overseas (who have not, perhaps, maintained their domestic residence) to register and vote for Federal office in their jurisdiction of prior residence. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, is rather more complicated in its coverage but is designed to facilitate registration and voting by racial and language minorities. It also establishes a 30-day maximum durational requirement for residency in voting for Federal offices and requires some provision for those who change State residence from 30 to 7 days before an election.

   Any questions about the applications of these or other Federal statutes to your jurisdiction should be addressed to your State's chief election official.

   By and large, voter registration is governed by State election laws. State laws address specifically where, when, and how voter registration can be accomplished. Registration programs fall into two general categories:
■ Registration programs required by law (e.g., central office registration, mail registration, election day registration)
■ Registration outreach programs permitted by law but undertaken at the option of each jurisdiction (e.g., mobile office registration, door-to-door drives).
In addition to describing the where, when, and how of voter registration, many States standardize the product of registration efforts by legislating the format for the original registration document.

Task B. Select Registration Programs.
Most jurisdictions have some choice regarding the amount of effort allocated to voter registration activities. Consequently, where statutes permit, you should select voter registration methods that most efficiently enable you to reach your unregistered population. The efficiency of voter registration methods can be described by either of two ratios:
■ *Cost efficiency*—Calculated as (number of new registrants) divided by (dollars spent on registration)

■ *Work efficiency*—Calculated as (number of new registrants) divided by (hours spent on registration).
Of these two, cost efficiency is the more common.

You may, of course, want to try more than one registration method depending on the specific segments of the unregistered population you are after. What works for some subpopulations may not work for others. You can discover for yourself the most effective and efficient methods for your different populations by keeping careful records of costs and results for each method you try, and where.

Task C. Estimate the Quantity of Registration Transactions.

There are three types of registration transactions:
■ *Additions*—New registrants are added to the file of registered voters.
■ *Deletions*—Names of individuals are removed from the file of registered voters
■ *Changes*—Information on the original registration document is made current to reflect changes in name, address, party affiliation, or other pertinent information. In some cases a new document reflecting changes replaces the original.

The estimate of the quantity of registration transactions provides the basis for projecting workloads and resource requirements. History and your own good sense will allow you to estimate fairly accurately (although the better your records and acumen, the better your estimate).

Task D. Conduct Registration Programs.

All States require, at a minimum, that election officials provide central office registration to accommodate individuals who present themselves at the registration office. Many States authorize or require other registration programs as well.

Whatever the registration program, the end product is a series of original registration documents. And care must be taken to ensure that original documents lost or misplaced in the registration process do not deprive an individual of the right to vote. In order to reduce the possibility of lost documents, it is useful to develop batch control procedures that work as follows.

As registration documents are completed and received by registration officials (whether in the offices or in the field), they are counted into small batches of ten or twenty and placed in a numbered envelope. Each envelope is then passed from step to step through the registration recordkeeping process so that at the final step all documents and envelopes are present or accounted for. Depending on the number of steps or processing stations in your office, one or more batch logs should be used to keep track of the envelopes. Such batching and logging reduces the loss of registration documents, especially during peak registration periods.

Task E. Conduct Optional Registration Programs.

In most States, optional registration programs fall into one of two general categories:
■ *Branch Office Registration* refers to registration programs that take official registrars or central office staff out to usually temporary locations in the community. Examples of such programs are mobile vans, shopping center booths, or official visits to schools and other such institutions. Such programs are characterized by the control which the central registration office can exert over the registrars as well as over the distribution and completion of the forms.
■ *Deputy Registration* refers to registration programs that rely essentially on volunteers or deputy registrars in the community. Such programs include door-to-door registration and registration in libraries, schools, banks, and the like. Deputy registration programs are characterized by their voluntary aspects and, hence, by the lesser control exerted by the central registration office.

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Whatever optional program or programs you may undertake (but especially if you use deputy registration programs), you may want to avoid waste and confusion by: (1) offering special training programs for registrars, (2) placing an upper limit (50, for example) on the number of forms any individual or group can take at any one time, (3) provide registration forms in numbered batches in order to monitor the effectiveness of various outlets by counting the returned cards. All these approaches are designed to avoid squandering increasingly costly forms.

As forms are returned from any registration program, they should be counted into batches in the same manner as described in Task 4 above. Similarly, a log of batches submitted should also be maintained.

Task F. Receive Original Registration Documents.
When registration officials receive original registration documents, they should record the batch numbers and the quantity of documents received. They should also periodically compare the log of documents officially received with the log of documents submitted in order to identify any batches that might have been submitted but not logged in.

Task G. Process Additions to Voter Registry.
Additions to the voter registry represent the following:
■ Voters who recently became eligible to vote
■ Eligible voters who recently established residence within the jurisdiction
■ Eligible voters who never chose to register previously
■ Voters who are restored to the registry after being removed.

To add an individual to the registry, a registrar must obtain a completed original registration form from the registrant. When this document is edited for completeness, a precinct assignment is made. The registration information can then be entered into addressograph equipment or into electronic files (where appropriate), and the original registration document should be inserted into the manual file.

Task H. Process Deletions from the Voter Registry.
Deletions from the original registration file result from the following occurrences:
■ Death of a registered voter
■ Notification that a registered voter is no longer a resident of the jurisdiction
■ Failure to vote within a period of time specified by law
■ Request of the voter.

To delete an individual from the registry, you remove the original registration document from the voter registry and place it in the purge file. Purge files are maintained to provide electors the opportunity to appeal if they are unfairly or mistakenly removed from the voter registry.

Task I. Process Changes to Existing Records in the Voter Registry.
Requests for changes to original registration documents (usually in names or addresses) come generally from the voter. Where there is a change of residence, the election office staff should be alert to the possibility that a change in precinct or jurisdiction may also be required.

### Task J. Prepare Registration Lists.
After processing all additions, deletions, and changes, you should compare the total number of registration transactions with the batch control sheets to ensure that no transactions were overlooked.

Voter registration files should be organized to provide lists of registered voters sorted in several ways. The master file of original registration documents is usually maintained in alphabetical order to facilitate file maintenance. Electronic or addressograph files are usually designed to produce lists according to one or more of the following common sort sequences:
■ Precinct by alphabet
■ Political party by precinct by alphabet
■ Street address
■ Party by street address by alphabet
■ Random number (used to produce jury lists).

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Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions
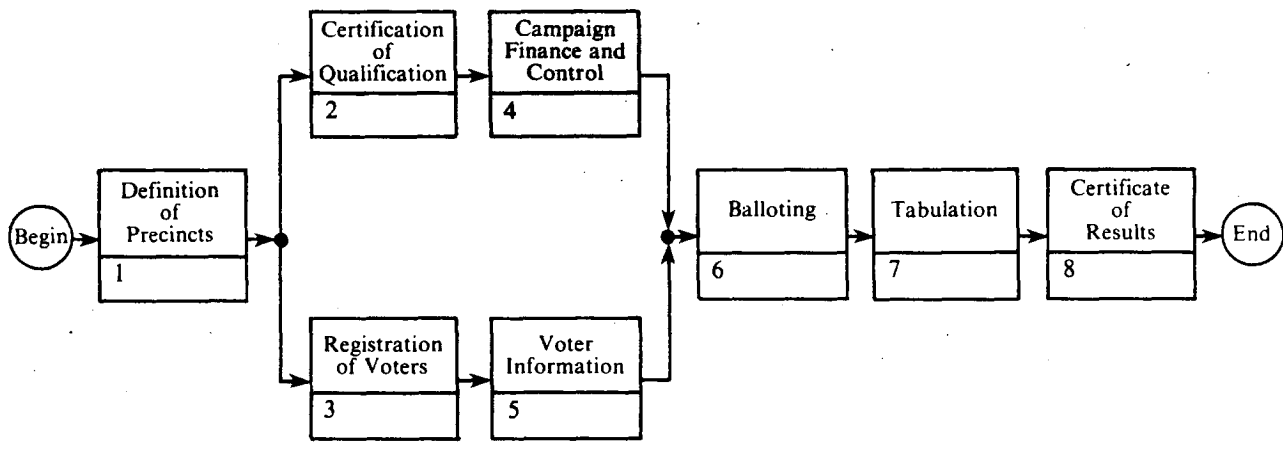
4. Campaign Finance and Control

The role of money in politics has recently been the target of both Federal and State reform legislation. As with most reforms, the first few years are uncertain ones until the courts and the bureaucracy have translated legislation into routine. Campaign finance and personal income disclosures are examples of recent reforms. And their administration is especially difficult as the legislation is amended from year to year in order to achieve a good "fit" with the rest of the election system.

Local election officials may to some extent participate in the administration of State and local personal disclosure and campaign finance statutes. States vary significantly in what they require local election officials to do in this

regard. In most States, however, election officials at least review candidate submissions for completeness and plausibility and notify State officials (usually the office of the attorney general or secretary of state) of delinquent or problematic reports. Some localities and several States go so far as to contract for accountants to audit the reports of winning candidates before certifying the election results.

Election officials may therefore be involved to some extent in at least three campaign finance and control tasks. Each is discussed below in logical order:

Task A. Make Finance and Control Forms Available to Candidates and Committees.

Candidates for Federal office and their campaign committees are required to file with the Federal Election Commission. The Commission makes forms available

along with guidelines, instructions, and even a toll-free information and assistance number—(800) 424-9530. Candidates for Federal office should be referred to the Commission for all campaign finance and disclosure requirements (although filing for the purpose of appearing on the ballot remains a State matter).

Many State and local candidates and their committees are similarly required by State law to file campaign finance disclosure forms with the secretary of state with a State commission, or with local election officials. To the degree that you are involved in the financial disclosure process, you would of course want to keep a supply of the required State or local forms on hand. And even if you are not directly involved, it would be a good service to candidates to provide them with a list of general requirements (perhaps in conjunction with the other filing requirements list suggested in Certification of Ballot QualiAcation, Task B, above). At a minimum, you should be able to refer candidates to the appropriate State or Federal agency.

Task B. Receive Financial Disclosure Forms.

If you are charged with receiving campaign finance reports from State or local candidates, you should ensure that the forms are complete. Candidates and committees should be notified promptly of any deficiencies in their reports so that they can file corrections or amendments. In addition to this review, you may also be required to supply copies of the reports to a State agency or at least make copies available to the public. Even if you are not charged with receiving campaign reports directly from candidates or committees, you may receive copies of such reports that are filed with the State agency. Since campaign finance disclosure is the purpose of these reports, it is important to make the copies conveniently available to the local media and public.

Task C. Process Challenges to Candidate or Committee Submissions.

Campaign finance laws normally permit any member of the electorate to challenge a candidate's or committee's right to solicit or receive certain types of campaign contributions. Laws may even permit a challenge to the winning candidate's right to take office for reason of violating the campaign finance law.

If you are involved in the campaign finance disclosure process, you are well advised to consult your public counsel regarding the challenge procedures. And even if you are not directly involved, your public would be well served if you could on demand provide them information and guidelines (or at least a referral to the appropriate office) for exercising their challenge right.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions
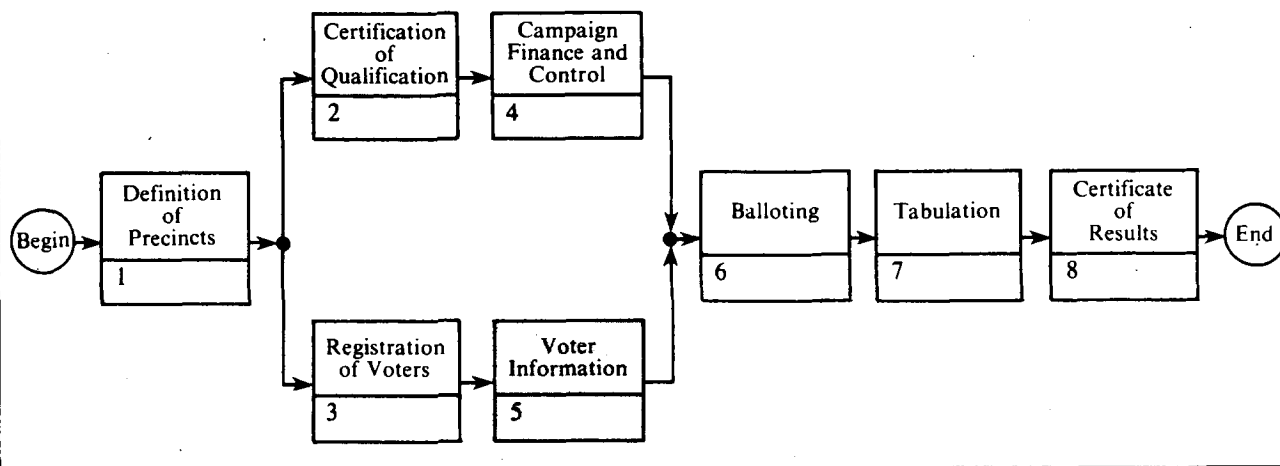
5. Provide Voter Information

Among the many functions that local election officials perform, providing voters with information about the election is one of the most important but least recognized. In fact, there is reason to believe that the more information voters have, the greater the turnout.

States and localities vary, to be sure, in the amount of voter information they offer or are required to provide. At a minimum, most offices publish the date of the election along with the locations and hours of the polling places. The majority also offer sample ballots or pamphlets identifying the offices for which candidates are to be elected, the names of candidates (along with party identification or other data), and the nonpartisan issues

and races to be voted on. Some jurisdictions also publish a voter information booklet containing photographs, brief biographies, and position statements (all supplied by candidates) as well as brief descriptions of, or pro and con arguments about, nonpartisan issues, referenda, or amendments.

In addition to variations in what information they provide, local election offices differ in how actively they provide it. Some are content to make it available on request; some at least publish it in the local media; and a few provide mailings to all registered voter addresses.

In summary, local election offices are a repository of information about elections. It is an important service to provide voters with at least enough of the basics to allow

them to vote effectively. Such service requires at least three tasks:

Task A. Prepare an Election Calendar.

An election calendar is a useful device for informing candidates and the general public of of critical dates in the election process. For each election held during the year the following information should be included:

- Dates by which new parties must file for recognition
- Candidate filing dates
- Proposition filing dates
- Dates by which legislative matters must be submitted to appear on the ballot ·
- Dates registration closes for each election
- Primary election dates
- Election dates for each subdivision in the jurisdiction
- Filing dates for campaign finance and control reports.

Very often, the chief State election official produces and provides such election calendars. If so, you might want to obtain an adequate supply for your office to distribute and/ or publish locally. If the State election office does not produce a calendar or if your locality has a number of additional offices and dates, it is probably a good idea to produce your own calendar.

Task B. Provide Public Access to Candidate, Party, and Committee Filings and Reports.

One of the most important aspects of modern election reform is the disclosure of candidate and committee filings and reports to the media and the public. Whatever official papers you hold—and especially if they include petitions or campaign finance reports—should be readily available to public scrutiny.

There are two critical components to a program allowing public access to election documents:

- An ability to retrieve documents on request
- Proper facilities for reviewing and duplicating documents.

Documents should be filed and maintained in an orderly fashion and the files indexed for prompt retrieval. In addition, there should be set aside appropriate space and copying facilities for the public to review the documents during regular working hours.

Task C. Pblicize Election Contests.

Beyond simply making an election calendar available or even mailing one out to each registered voter, effective election officials have come to design whole media campaigns based on major calendar events—candidate filing, voter registration, absentee balloting, and the like. Such campaigns are designed not only to increase public knowledge and interest, but also to inform special groups of the electorate of the special services available for them—the aged, handicapped, illiterate, or non-English speaking.

The news media is the most efficient way to publicize election contests and ballot measures. However, when using the media, you should be aware that different newspapers, radio stations, and television stations appeal to different segments of the population. The degree to which the general public becomes aware of forthcoming elections and services will depend largely on the following factors:

- The content of the messages about the election
- The selection of media
- The timing of the announcement.

Public information requires considerable expertise. Many jurisdictions have staff experts for this task. Others rely on volunteers, college students, or on their own skills. Whatever your resources, a good media campaign is an invaluable service to voters and a boost to voter turnout.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions
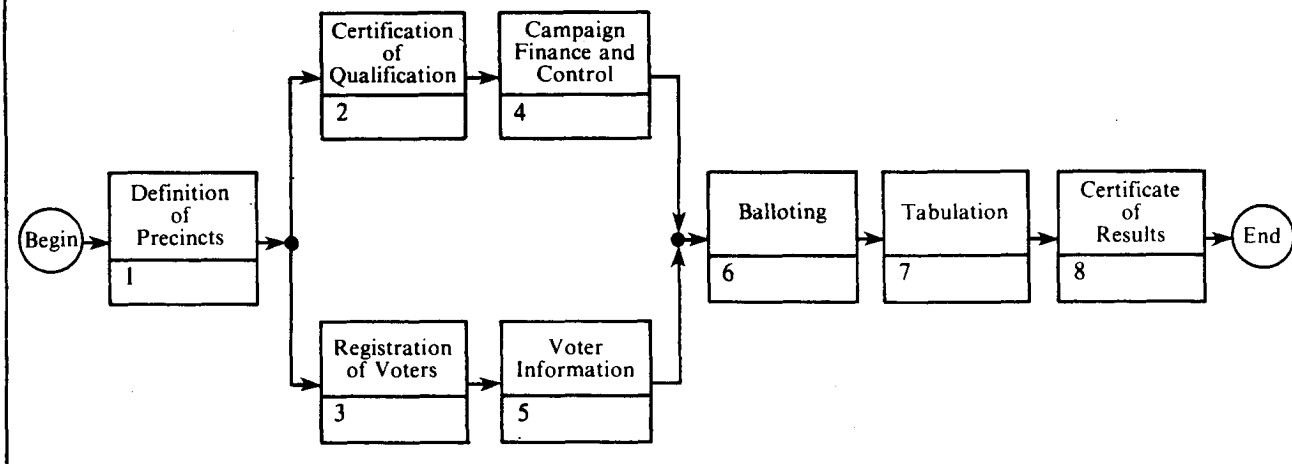
6. Balloting

To the general public, an election is simply a matter of lining up to vote at the local polling place. How quickly and conveniently they get to vote is their prime measure of your success. Passing that test is no easy job.

The selection and preparation of polling places is critical. Polling places should be easily accessible to the public and so distributed as to minimize the number of individuals who have to cross man-made or natural barriers to cast their votes. At the same time, officials should provide an adequate number of voting stations to prevent long lines from developing.

Most of the effort devoted to preparing for election day is spent to protect the integrity of election results. You can drastically reduce the chances of major problems (and of contested results) by ensuring that:

- Precincts receive appropriate ballot varieties
- All ballots, including blanks, are accounted for
- Voting machines are tested and in working order
- All persons casting ballots are registered in the precinct where they voted
- Polls open and close at prescribed times.

Balloting involves a series of distinct tasks ranging from preparing the ballot and polling places through closing the polls. Each task is discussed in logical order below.

Task A. Define Statutory Requirements for Ballot Faces. State election codes require ballots to conform to specified formats. State statutes also normally address the order in which contests are placed on the ballot, the position of

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candidates' names for each contest, and what additional information is permissible for each candidate (party, occupation, etc.).

Task B. Determine Ballot Styles.
The term "ballot styles" refers to the specific set of contests, propositions, and candidates that are to be presented to the electorate of each precinct. Overlapping election districts or political subdivisions very often result in different ballot styles from precinct to precinct and, in rare cases, may even result in multiple ballot styles within a precinct.

Task C. Determine Ballot Varieties.
Ballot varieties within a ballot style usually result from rotating the order in which candidates are presented for each race. Candidates' names are normally rotated by precinct in States that have rotation requirements.

Task D. Speciy Ballot Method.
There are three standard methods of casting ballots:
- Paper ballot
- Voting machine
- Computer punch card.

In selecting any single method or combination of methods, you should first consult your State election code (which may narrow your options). You may then want to read through *Voting Systems—Volume I, A Review of Current Equipment and Recommended Procurement Procedures* published by the FEC National Clearinghouse.

Task E. Design Materials Presented to the Voter at the Polling Place.
Regardless of the method used to conduct balloting, you must present the alternatives for each contest to the voter. Three basic vehicles are used to convey alternatives to the voter:
- Paper ballot
- Punch card ballot with or without page
- Voting machine strips.

If your State does not already require it, it is a good idea to prepare and distribute sample ballots (or ballot faces) and to set up demonstration machines, should they be appropriate, in order to familiarize voters with both the ballot and the procedure. This will reduce errors and increase polling speed.

All States require election officials to make absentee ballots and instructions available to registered voters upon request.

Task F. Select Polling Places.
To select an appropriate polling place, you should consider the following:
- The number and geographic distribution of registered electors within each precinct
- The accessibility of a proposed site from all points in the precinct
- The capability of the site to safely accommodate peak-hour voting crowds, parking, and traffic
- The ability of sites to accommodate deliveries
- Ability of sites to accommodate the infirm and handicapped.

Once sites have been chosen, you should arrange for utilities, insurance coverage, and security. You may want to install special locks to ensure that nobody tampers with equipment and materials. It is especially important to install a telephone for trouble calls to the central county office.

Task G. Calculate Voting Station Requirements.
The number of voting stations or machines required at each precinct depends on the following variables:
- The number of registered voters
- The distribution of voter turnout over the election day
- The average amount of time it takes to vote
- Maximum acceptable waiting time.

The Federal Election Commission publication, *Reducing Voter Waiting Time*, will assist you in determining the appropriate number of voting stations or machines.

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Task H. Print Voting Materials.

Many States require by law that enough ballots be printed for a specific percentage of the registered voters in each precinct regardless of the projected voter turnout. If you have the option, however, you should print only enough ballots to provide for the expected turnout plus a reasonable reserve in the event turnout is unexpectedly high. Experience will have to be your guide in deciding expected and possible turnout.

Task H1. Prepare Voting Machines.

Voting machines must be programmed to record votes for candidates and propositions being presented. Each voting machine must be fully tested to ensure that:

- The ballot face is correct
- No programming errors were made (i.e., certain races and choices lock out correctly)
- All mechanical counters rotate correctly from 9, 99, and 999.

Task H2. Prepare Punch Card Ballot Systems.

Punch card systems should be checked for four possible errors:

- Improper assembly of pages
- Masks guide punches to the wrong column
- Incorrect pre-punch in cards
- Tabulation programs miscount votes.

Punch card systems must be tested by preparing ballot cards and actually running tabulation programs. This pretesting should be done far enough in advance of the election to allow time for correcting any errors. Two paper ballot systems exist that have electronic vote tabulation requiring preparation similar to punch card systems.

Task I. Package Voting Materials.

Printed materials should be boxed or packaged to make the process of transfer, storage, and delivery to the polling places easier. You should label each package with the following information:

- Quantity of each item contained in the package
- Contests for which the items will be used
- Precincts to which the package will be delivered
- Special instructions.

Task J. Deliver Materials and Equipment to Precincts.

When ballots, voting machines, other printed materials, and voting apparatuses are delivered to the precincts, election officials are responsible for ensuring that seals are intact. Furthermore, it is critical to make certain that each polling place has received materials and equipment intended for it. In most jurisdictions, written verifications are prepared and retained on file until after election results have been certified. Efficiency can be achieved by coordinating crews to assemble voting apparatus with delivery crews.

Task K. Initiate Absentee Voting.

Absentee ballots are distributed in most States upon written request. It is important to record the names of absentee voters on precinct lists of registered voters in order to eliminate the possibility of individuals voting more than once.

Task L. Conduct Balloting.

State statutes specify the time polling places open and close. They also normally specify the number and type of poll workers and outline voting procedures. If the election code is not easily understood, a summary check-off sheet and instruction booklet should be provided to each polling place in order to help with the problems that inevitably arise. A special telephone line to the local clerk and registrar is an important adjunct to any poll worker assistance scheme.

Task M. Prepare for Tabulation.

When the polls close, election officials seal ballots and punch cards in packages and lock voting machines. Precinct listings of voters and signature cards are also packaged. The State election codes usually dictate closing procedures. Again, an instruction booklet and check-off sheet are invaluable aids to weary poll workers.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions

```
                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Certification│   │  Campaign    │
                    │     of       │──▶│ Finance and  │
                    │Qualification │   │   Control    │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │  2           │   │  4           │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘

  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐                          ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌─────┐
  │          │  │Definition│                          │          │  │          │  │Certificate│ │     │
 (Begin)────▶│    of    │──●                         │ Balloting│──│Tabulation│──│    of    │─▶(End)
  │          │  │Precincts │                          │          │  │          │  │  Results │  │     │
  └──────────┘  ├──────────┤                          ├──────────┤  ├──────────┤  ├──────────┤  └─────┘
                │  1       │                          │  6       │  │  7       │  │  8       │
                └──────────┘                          └──────────┘  └──────────┘  └──────────┘

                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Registration │   │    Voter     │
                    │  of Voters   │──▶│ Information   │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │  3           │   │  5           │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
```
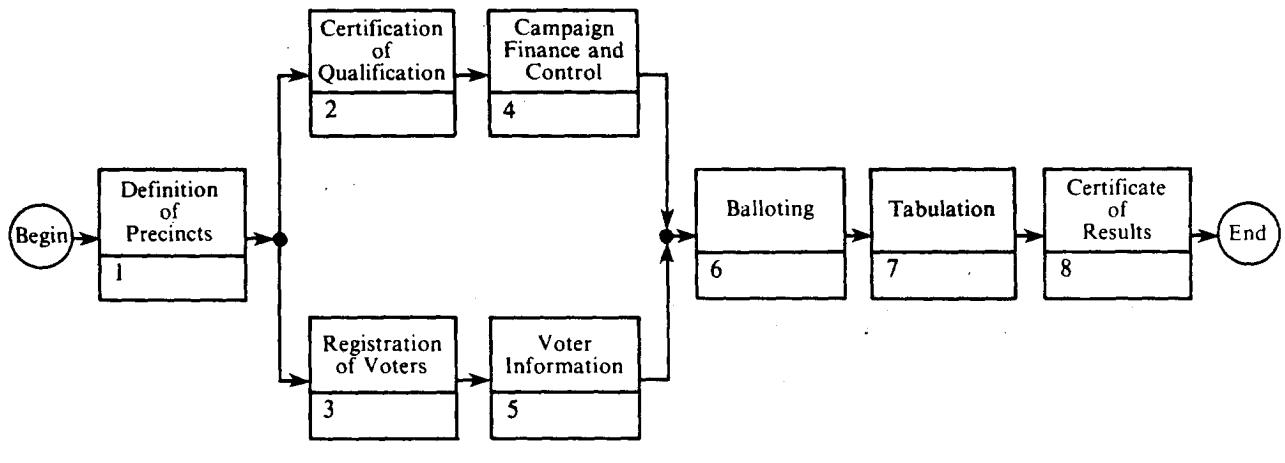
7. Tabulation

No election is over until all the votes are counted. In most jurisdictions, tally forms and procedures are specified in the .State codes. In many States, observers as well as election officials participate in the tabulation of election results.

The tabulation of election results is a highly technical process. Underlying the tabulation process is the verification of results by numerous independent counts. To ascertain if the number of votes tabulated is accurate, precinct tally totals can be compared to precinct registration lists. Tabulation is performed in two distinct tasks. Each task is discussed below.

Task A. Prepare Tally Sheets for Each Precinct.
As votes are counted, they are recorded on precinct tally sheets. Election officials certify the accuracy of each tally. During the precinct tally, officials must account for voided ballots or punch cards and erroneous votes recorded by voting machines.

Task B. Secure Ballots, Punch Cards, and Machines to Allow for Recount.
Candidates and supporters or opponents of propositions may request a recount. This normally occurs in close elections. Consequently, ballots, punch cards, and voting machines must be protected until election results are certified. The manner and means of this are again specified in the State election code.

Exhibit III-1

Flow Diagram of Election Office Functions

```
                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Certification│   │   Campaign   │
                    │      of      │──▶│ Finance and  │
                    │ Qualification│   │   Control    │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │ 2            │   │ 4            │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘

  ┌───────┐  ┌──────────┐                    ┌─────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────┐  ┌─────┐
  │ Begin │─▶│Definition│                 ●─▶│Balloting│─▶│Tabulation│─▶│Certificate│─▶│ End │
  └───────┘  │    of    │                    │         │  │          │  │    of     │  └─────┘
             │ Precincts│                    ├─────────┤  ├──────────┤  │  Results  │
             ├──────────┤                    │ 6       │  │ 7        │  ├──────────┤
             │ 1        │                    └─────────┘  └──────────┘  │ 8        │
             └──────────┘                                               └──────────┘

                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Registration │   │    Voter     │
                    │  of Voters   │──▶│ Information   │
                    ├──────────────┤   ├──────────────┤
                    │ 3            │   │ 5            │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
```
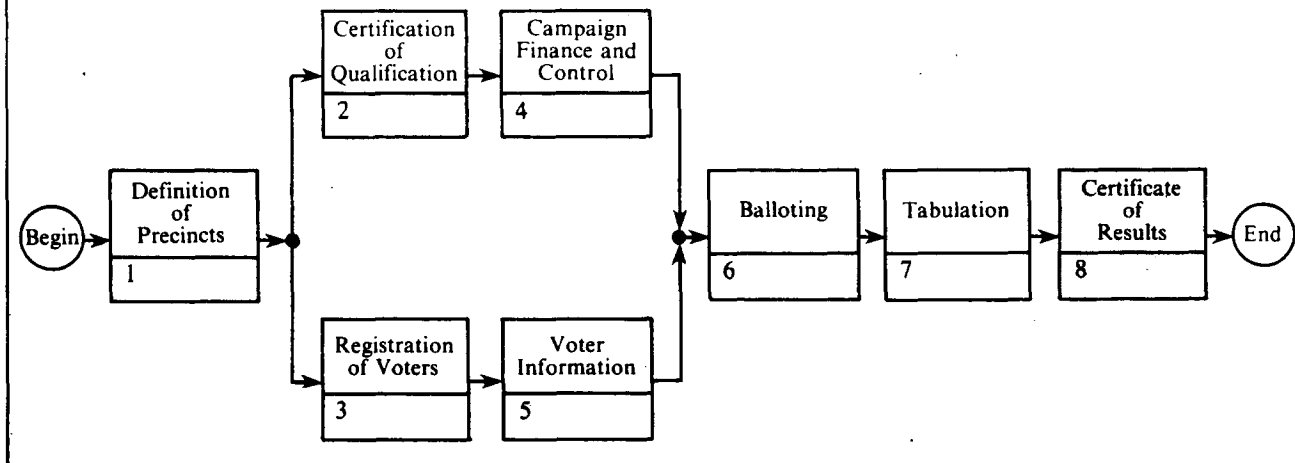
8. Certification of Results

Election officials canvass the precincts in their jurisdiction and compile the election results. Usually these are submitted to a state certification board (often called the Board of State Canvassers) along with the personal disclosure and the campaign finance information submitted by winning candidates. The certification board normally makes recommendations to the secretary of state. Pending a review and possibly an audit of candidate submissions, the secretary of state (sometimes in connection with other state officials) certifies the election results. Certification involves five distinct tasks, which are discussed below.

Task A. Assemble Certification (or Canvassing) Boards.
Certification boards or canvassing boards are normally formed at both local and state levels. Local boards are typically composed of the local clerk plus two or three other local government officials while the state board is usually composed of two or three prominent members of the State government. The purpose of each level of canvassing board is to review results reported from the next lowest level, to ensure that each jurisdiction has certified tallies properly, and to ensure that valid documentation accompanies election results. In some States and races the boards certify election results, while in other States they make recommendations to the secretary of state.

Task B. Canvass All Precincts.
The certification board may perform a canvass of all precincts to obtain election results and procedural documentation. Procedural documentation usually consists of certified tally sheets.

Task C. Resolve Challenges.
The judiciary or the board of State Canvassers may be called upon to resolve challenges. Election officials should be prepared to provide valid documentation that election procedures were followed.

Task D. Prepare Certification of Results.
Certification represents legal evidence of the election results. Consequently, not only the total vote count is certified, but the procedures by which the election was conducted are also certified to be in accordance with the law. In some States, the Board of State Canvassers certifies election results, and in others the board makes recommendations to the secretary of state.

Task E. Make Election Results Official.
Often unofficial election results are made public as soon as the tallies have been performed, but only after the results have been certified can they be filed officially with the legislative body of each jurisdiction.

IV. MONITORING THE ELECTION PROCESS

IV. Monitoring the Election Process

The eight functions listed in the previous chapter (along with the tasks and activities necessary to perform them) describe most of the election system. We need only two other functions to complete the picture: *legislation* and *planning, management, and control.*

While it is an essential function, legislation is not a principal duty of local election officials. They may, of course, suggest and influence changes in State and Federal laws. But since theirs is not the final responsibility, we will pass over a discussion of legislating for elections.

It *is* the responsibility of local election officials to plan, manage, and control the entire election system in all its parts. Planning, management, and control include much more than just doing all the tasks and activities. They require:

■ Scheduling out events
■ Estimating service volumes
■ Allocating staff and resources to the system over the fiscal year
■ Accounting for the resources allocated
■ Achieving and verifying levels of performance
■ Evaluating the schedule, the service volumes, the resource allocation, and the levels of performance.

In other words, they require the management cycle described at the outset of this volume.

It is impossible, of course, to do any of these things without collecting and analyzing some important numbers. In your first year of implementing this management approach, you may have to estimate several things. But your first year should also include a rigorous data collection effort so that future plans can be drawn more accurately. Collecting data entails a bit of work and

continued encouragement to a staff that does not always see the point of it all. Yet managing a system without good data on what is happening is a lot like driving a car without a speedometer, or a gas, oil, or temperature gauge. It can be done, but never really well in the long run.

This volume, along with its companions *Planning Elections* and *Costing Elections* identifies a number of data items useful to you in carrying out your duties. We recommend, however, that you consult the Federal Election Commission's *Election System Statistics* series for a full and detailed explanation of what data to collect, how, and what to do with it.

In this volume we have focused on the role of the election director. We recommend that election officials implement a routine cycle of administrative decision making. To assist election officials in viewing the election process as a whole, we have presented an overview of the eight election functions.

The next volume, *Planning Elections*, presents a checklist of tasks and activities performed during each function. In that volume we discuss specific planning techniques that can be used in conjunction with the checklist, and we present sample worksheets to assist in the planning process.
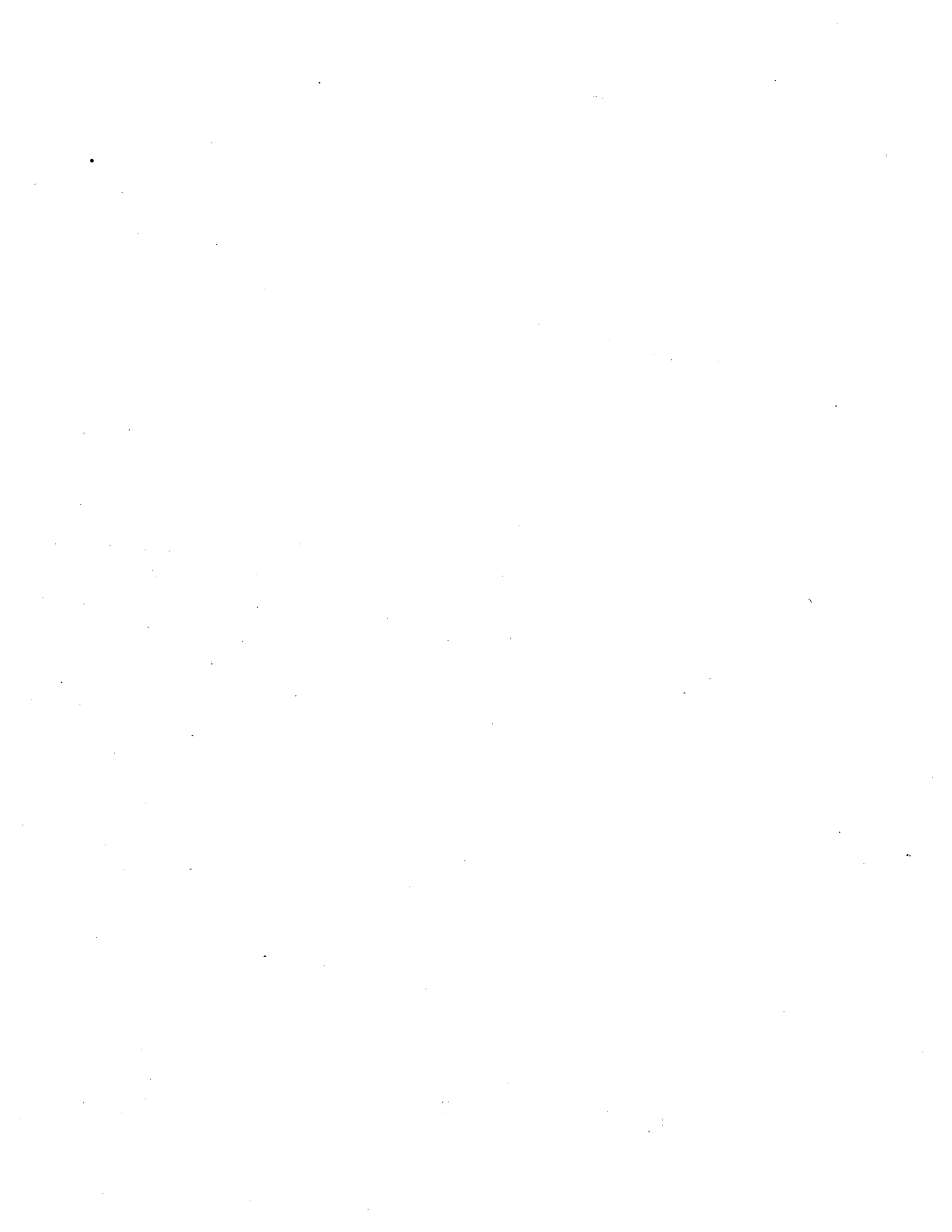
Worksheet

Line Item Actual vs. Budgeted Report
(East Columbia Elections Office, Period: March 1 to March 31)

Object of Expense	Year-to-Date Budget	Year-to-Date Expenditures	Encum-brances	Total Expenditures And Encumbrances	Balance Available	Percent Available
Personnel: Professional						
Support						
Fringe Benefits						
Total ·						
Supplies and Materials						
Printing						
Postage						
Graphic Arts						
Advertising						
Rental Space						
Office Machine Rental						
Total Non-Personnel						
Total						