

Memo

To: Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
From: Wayne Barnett
Date: March 27, 2024
Re: Programmatic Impacts of Change Requests

This provides an overview of the programmatic impacts of changes requested by the Coalition.

Impact on staff to modification or elimination of Qualifying signature requirement.

- a. This change would have a positive impact on our ability to speed up the qualifying validation process by reducing the number of items to audit and documents to track.

Describe the steps staff has taken to speed up delivery of funds to candidates.

- a. Introduced the option for campaigns to receive funds using ACH rather than receiving a check in the mail. ACH allows the city to deposit funds directly into the campaign's bank account. We did not begin the ACH process until we knew a campaign was qualified. A campaign would receive a check in the mail until the ACH was finalized.
 - i. For 2024, we will begin the ACH process once an initial batch of qualifying contributions have been validated with the goal that ACH will be ready when the candidate qualifies.
- b. Invoice immediately after a campaign has qualified, rather than waiting until the next invoice session.
- c. In addition to releasing funds associated with all "accepted" vouchers, we began releasing an amount of funding equal to 85% of pending vouchers when voucher processing slowed down. With a system improvement for 2024, we can confidently continue to release pending funds when voucher processing slows.
- d. Allow campaigns to turn in qualifying materials in batches rather than all at once.

Explain how vouchers are currently processed and how information contained on vouchers is forwarded to candidates.

- a. Mail is opened and vouchers are sorted into groups, including (1) valid candidate assignment, (2) invalid candidate assignment, and (3) requires a letter to the resident. The voucher barcode is scanned to bring up the record in the database. The candidate assignment is selected, the voucher status is changed to received, and the date received is recorded. Vouchers are then batched for the next step. Batched vouchers are put through a desktop scanner, and the scanned batches are

sent to King County Elections (KCE) for signature check. KCE sends back a spreadsheet listing which vouchers have signature issues - those are flagged for follow up with the resident. We then query the database for all vouchers in a batch that can be moved to the next status—accepted—and make this change to all batched vouchers at once.

- b. Before we move to the final stage of processing, each voucher is reviewed to ensure the correct candidate assignment was selected in the database.
- c. At least twice monthly, we query the database for all accepted vouchers for each qualified campaign. We determine the total value of those vouchers, then query the database to change all valid vouchers assigned to a candidate to the status redeemed. These vouchers are now associated with an invoice name and date.
- d. We email an excel file to the treasurer that contains the names and addresses for each voucher user associated with each invoicing period. The treasurer uses this information to file a report to meet the campaign's filing obligations.
- e. At any time, a campaign may request information from our database such as a list of contact information for vouchers that have not yet been redeemed.

Anticipated cost of the proposed memo line modification.

The information provided here assumes DVP staff would hand key the data into the database and that all voucher types have a memo option.

Costs

- a. Temp staff – 6k per month for an additional temporary staff. Duration is eight months per election year. \$48k for 2025.
- b. Democracy Voucher Packet redesign, feedback, and translation - \$50k one-time charge. Assuming no significant change to the current physical layout.

System Modifications

- a. DVP database modifications are simple. Modifying portal to add a text field is simple for English, but how it could accommodate other languages is unknown.
- b. The SEEC system used to prepare contributor data for campaign reporting purposes must be modified to accommodate another field of information.

Unknowns that could have a significant impact on production:

- a. What, if any, editing for context would exist? What if we could not interpret, or misinterpreted, a comment?
- b. Would we only record content on vouchers assigned to program candidates?