MAEO MDVOTERS COMMITTEE
PROGRESS REPORT

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CRITICAL DATA OVERSIGHT - SMARTSHEET REPORTING PROCESS
OVERVIEW

When 2017 began, the Standards Committee and the Voter Registration Committee were meeting separately. We realized that both committees were moving in the same direction and tasked by the MAEO Board to work on similar projects with mutual goals, hence we combined our efforts and merged our committees to become the MAEO MDVOTERS Committee. This committee has made great progress on some key projects that will benefit all LBES across the State and we are proud of these early accomplishments.

Our first task was to devise a method to help each LBE pass their monthly Critical Data Audit. To accomplish this, we felt a key component was for the LBE to receive timely Audit Reports from SBE.

We looked at defining Critical Data and an Audit. We agreed that Critical Data in a voter record, if not input correctly, could do the following: 1) Disenfranchise a voter; 2) Allow an ineligible person to register and vote; 3) Compromise the identity of a confidential voter; or
4) Inflate or deflate our voter numbers.

We defined an audit as an inspection, examination, evaluation, review, appraisal, verification, that is performed to bring issues and/or problems to lite so that they can be addressed and corrected in the most expeditious manner. We agreed an audit should be helpful, positive and lead to learning and renewed understanding of the work being done. Conversely, an audit should never be punitive or dreaded, as this diminishes its integrity and purpose.

We then discussed developing an easy, efficient, and timely reporting process that would help both the LBES and SBE. We were hearing from staff across the State, that not receiving audit reports on a regular basis made it impossible to address data entry issues with their staff and correct frequent mistakes. 'You can't fix what you don't know is broken'. Consequently, we saw the same mistakes occurring month after month, and in some cases, year after year.

Our objectives became: 1) Review the Critical Data Audit process and make constructive recommendations to make it more relevant and beneficial to the LBES and SBE; 2) Develop ways to improve training to assure that all LBES can pass the monthly Critical Data Audit;
3) Develop a timely reporting method so that each LBE is aware of their findings as soon as possible; and 4) Create a "Findings Library" and other tools that the LBE can use as a learning and training resource.

The Smartsheet Reporting Process successfully produced an audit reporting tool that accomplishes these objectives. It is user friendly and could prove to be a valuable part of the Critical Data Audit process.

We have presented this Critical Data Smartsheet Reporting Process to Janet Smith and Mary Wagner, receiving a favorable response. As we are aware that there is a learning curve for any new process, we are presenting this today with the intention of sharing it with any LBE who wishes to use and learn from it.

Our hope is that as more and more LBES see how easy it is to use and experience the benefits it provides to their operations; this will become a Statewide process from which everyone will benefit.

Assumptions:

- The goal of Critical Data Oversight reporting is to assure that the LBES are entering voter data into MDVOTERS accurately, timely, and using the SBE prescribed and required processes and procedures.

- Voter record auditing is a requirement of the SBE by the State Auditors

- The Critical Data Audit Smartsheet Reporting process will be an essential tool to meet SBE requirements of the LBES.

BENEFITS to the SBE

- Can provide Control over who can view and who can edit the sheets

- An LBE email group to send audit instructions and to notify that AOC and DHMH are in the 'In Box'.

- An Audit Summary Report which provides:
    - All findings across the State, anonymously ("Findings Library")
    - Frequency of findings Statewide
    - A learning and training tool for both the LBEs and the SBE
    - Attainable common statewide goal - Complete and Accurate Voter Records

- Since the LBEs can view their findings right away they will be able to provide a timely "Audit Response" to the SBE.

- In the Audit Summary Report, all findings are viewed in one place instead of having to review 6 reports from 24 jurisdictions - equaling 144 reports. There are only 4 steps in the Smartsheet to accomplish what reviewing 144 reports would require.

- This Smartsheet reporting process is secure as the only voter registration information in the Smartsheet is a last name and voter ID number.

BENEFITS to the LBES

- Immediate Audit Reports are available every month. This would include a No Findings Report.

- A "Common Audit Occurrences" attachment to each LBES' Smartsheet as a reference for auditors while they are going through each section of the audit.

- An Audit Summary Report which provides:
    - All findings across the State, anonymously ("Findings Library")
    - Frequency of findings Statewide
    - A learning and training tool for both the LBEs and the SBE
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- Since the LBEs can view their findings right away they will be able to provide a timely "Audit Response" to the SBE.

- LBEs can see frequently occurring findings in their own reports, which will allow them to target training issues with their staff.

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MDVOTERS TRAINING MODULES

The MDVOTERS Committee's next project is to update existing training tools and create new ones where needed. There have been many changes in MDVOTERS since the conversion in 2005. Since then, MDVOTERS has gone through a lot of growing pains. Making sure there is up to date training for each module of MDVOTERS is critical for the success of data entry into our voting system.

Starting with the information we were getting from findings in the critical data audit, we began to make a list and assign committee members to specific MDVOTERS modules. In the short period of time we have been working on this, we have already made great progress. The following are some examples of what has been accomplished so far and a preview of what is to come.

We appreciate any feedback other MDVOTERS users can contribute to this immense undertaking.

In the Works:

1. Reference Library for Source of Change and Hierarchy of change

2. Cancelling Deceased Voters – The DHMH Interface – PowerPoint Presentation

3. Cancelling Criminals – The AOC Interface – PowerPoint Presentation

4. Candidacy – a more user friendly step by step

5. UOCAVA processes and procedures

6. Prioritization of list of items on the Online Library

While there are many other MDVOTERS modules that need attention, we believe we have a great start toward this task. Please contact any of the committee members with suggestions, questions, ideas, etc. We are all in this together and we want to make it right for SBE, for us and most importantly, for the voters of Maryland. One way to contact any of the committees to give feedback, suggestions, or questions is to access the MAEO Member Input Sheet via the MAEO Website. You will need a password to access the portal, which you can get from Stephanie or Amy in Harford or Hassan in AA County.