## STAFF REPORT

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| **Agenda Item:** | 5 | **Name:** | Hiedi Popochock |
| **Proposed No**.: | 2016-0512 | **Date:** | January 24, 2017 |

**SUBJECT**

A Motion to approve the Department of Elections’ fourth Limited English Proficiency Outreach Report of the four semiannual reports as required by a 2015/2016 budget proviso.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed Motion 2016-0512 would approve the Department of Elections’ fourth Limited English Proficiency Outreach Report (Attachment A).

In the 2015/2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance (Ordinance 17941), Council approved a budget proviso that required the Director of Elections to provide four semiannual reports on the progress of the department’s limited English proficiency outreach efforts. The reports are to include elements of Section IV (Alternative translation materials and services) of 2014-RPT0080, to which the 2015/2016 budget proviso refers, which includes information on Elections’ instructional brochure, online toolkit, Ambassador Program and civics engagement in schools.

The fourth and final Limited English Proficiency Outreach Report was transmitted on October 1, 2016, one day later than the budget proviso deadline of September 30. The Report includes the five reporting requirements of the budget proviso.

**BACKGROUND**

In order to identify ways to increase access to King County government services and operations for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, Council adopted proviso language as part of the 2014 Budget Ordinance (Ordinance 17695), requesting a report from the Department of Elections (“Elections”) on current programs and future plans for LEP engagement strategies and resources, including an analysis of alternatives for expanding minority language voting materials.

The 2014 proviso required the following information related to elections-related services:

*“B. For election-related services, an analysis of options or factors that could provide minority language voting materials for LEP populations in Tiers 1 and 2 that have not yet reached the thresholds required by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, at a cost lower than the current costs for such materials for minority languages required by the act. The analysis shall, at minimum, include the following:*

* 1. *A description of the alternative translation materials and services that could be provided to these LEP populations;*
	2. *Cost estimates related to each of the alternative options; and*
	3. *The feasibility of implementing these alternative options.”*

The Director of Elections filed 2014-RPT0080 in June 2014 in response to this section of the 2014 budget proviso only, but the transmittal did not include a motion to accept the proviso. During 2015/2016 budget deliberations, Councilmembers agreed to revise Ordinance 17695 to remove the proviso language, and the Council included in the 2015/2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance (Ordinance 17941) a proviso on the Elections budget (Section 34) requiring additional reporting on activities reported in 2014-RPT0080.

The 2015/2016 Biennial Budget Ordinance 17941, Section 34, Proviso P2, reads as follows:

*“Of this appropriation, $250,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the director of elections transmits four semiannual reports on the department's limited English proficiency outreach efforts and motions that approve each report and the motions are passed by the council. The motions shall reference the subject matter, the proviso's ordinance, ordinance section and proviso number in both the title and body of the motion. Upon transmittal of each report, $62,500 shall be released for expenditure.*

*Each report shall include, but not be limited to, a description of the department's limited English proficiency outreach efforts detailed in section IV of the report transmitted to the council by the department in June 2014 (2014-RPT0080) in response to Ordinance 17695, Section 33, Proviso P1, as well as goals and outcomes for each of those outreach efforts. The description shall include, but not be limited to, information on the department's progress relating to the implementation of the elections ambassador program, the development of an instruction brochure about voting and elections that has been translated into Tier 1 and 2 languages, the development of an online toolkit and the creation of a mock election program in primary and secondary schools.*

*The director of elections must file the four semiannual reports by June 30, 2015, December 31, 2015, June 30, 2016, and September 30, 2016, respectively, and the motions required by this proviso by those same dates, in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, the policy staff director and the lead staff for the committee of the whole or its successor and the citizens' elections oversight committee.”*

**ANALYSIS**

Elections transmitted the fourth semiannual LEP Report (“the fourth Report”) on October 1, 2016, one day after the proviso deadline of September 30, 2016, according to the King County Council Clerk’s Office. According to the proviso, funds would be released upon transmittal of the report. Proposed Motion 2016-0512 would approve the Department of Elections’ fourth and final Limited English Proficiency Outreach Report as prescribed by the 2015/2016 budget proviso.

The fourth Report (Attachment A) includes elements of Section IV (Alternative translation materials and services) of 2014-RPT0080, to which the 2015/2016 budget proviso refers, includes information on the following LEP outreach efforts:

1. **Instructional brochure** to be translated into Tier 1 and Tier 2 languages

1. **Online tool kit** – online voter education and outreach materials in simplified language
2. **Elections Ambassador Program** – recruitment and training of experienced civic activists from identified language communities "to assist Elections with interpretation and facilitation services"

4. **Civics engagement in schools** – support of mock election in Seattle School District "to improve and empower all communities through an enhanced awareness of voting and participating in government"

Elections’ most recent activities in the four categories listed above are described below.

**Instructional Brochure.** The second semiannual LEP Outreach Report, approved by Motion 14579, reported that Elections completed the development and translation of an instructional brochure and created a web page for voter education and outreach. For this reason, the fourth Report does not include an update on this item.

**Online Toolkit.** The third semiannual LEP Outreach Report, approved by Motion 14704, highlighted Elections’ expanded online translation materials. For example, voters will have the opportunity to complete a language preference form online to receive their ballot materials in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Spanish. According to Elections’ fourth Report, there are no new developments since the last report.

**Elections Ambassador Program.** The fourth Report notes that Elections has hired four community ambassadors to serve as liaisons and technical resources to Ethiopian, Filipino, Russian and Ukranian, and Samoan communities.

**Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations.** In addition to the required reporting categories, the fourth Report describes Elections’ new activities in partnering with community-based organizations. The fourth Report states that, with funding approved by the Council in 2016 (Ordinance 18239), Elections has launched its community partnership pilot program that awarded funding to 22 community-based organizations through a competitive process, in order to provide voter outreach in various languages.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The fourth Report indicates that the community-based organizations held over 75 events in the targeted communities. Table 1 below illustrates the data by language (other than English) reported collectively, by the organizations. The data in the table provides the number of new voter registrations based on the preferred language requested to receive voting materials. It also shows the number of language preference cards that were completed by existing registered voters. The language preference cards allows registered voters to request voting materials in their preferred language, if available.

**Table 1. Voter Outreach Data by Language**

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| **Language** | **Number of New Voter Registrations** | **Number of Language Preference Cards** |
| Chinese | 283 | 99 |
| Korean | 39 | 208 |
| Spanish | 140 | 50 |
| Vietnamese | 229 | 153 |
| **Total** | **691** | **510** |

**Civic engagement in schools.** The fourth Report highlights that Elections continues to work with Seattle Public Schools to support school and classroom participation in mock elections.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Motion 2016-0512 and Attachment A
2. Transmittal letter

**INVITED**

1. Julie Wise, Director, King County Department of Elections
1. The first phase of the grants includes Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Korean-speaking communities. The second phase of grants includes East African, Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and European communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)