

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



City of Los Angeles
Office of the City Clerk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Office of the City Clerk considers Angelenos partners in the effort to make Los Angeles a civically engaged, safe, high functioning city. As such, we strive to improve access to the information and the tools that help residents become active participants in shaping the policies and the direction in which our City is moving. Through our programs, this Office provides services to Neighborhood Councils (NCs), access to the legislative process, to voting, and to the tools that help local businesses collaborate to effect improvements. The Department also provides administrative, systems, and human resources support to over 900 City staff in various elected offices and departments.

Each year this office reevaluates its long-term priorities, taking into account what we have already accomplished and where technology is leaning, to ensure our services remain state-of-the-art. We align our goals to the Mayor's key objectives with a focus on fiscal stewardship and innovation to ensure we are a well-run city for all Angelenos. Last year the COVID-19 Pandemic required that we shift priorities and focus on the immediate need of addressing operational challenges. Our staff rose to the occasion and quickly set up and adapted to using remote access software, to supporting Council and Committee meetings in a virtual setting, and to providing online training and work group meetings for NCs. Clerk staff also showed up in large numbers to support DSW missions from taking calls for the Senior Meals Hotline to staffing testing sites and Project Room Key locations.

I am extremely proud of our staff who even when faced with uncertainty and challenges in their personal lives, stepped up to help Angelenos in need and kept their focus on continuing to provide quality services.

This year's Annual Report looks back at our 2020 Accomplishments and the goals we plan to achieve in Fiscal Year 2021. Our annual goals continue to focus on improving our service delivery so that public information is communicated with transparency and can be easily obtained by all Angelenos. This means we make records and archives available electronically, our public facing portals are intuitive, and our voter outreach efforts include communities throughout the City that are often overlooked. We also employ technology that serves to streamline processes for the public and our staff, and reduce, if not completely eliminate, the need for paper. We call our service delivery framework, TASC, which stands for Transparency, Accountability, Simplicity and Consistency. Every new project is developed with these tenets in mind.

I invite you to follow us on social media (Twitter, Facebook or YouTube @LACityClerk) as we do our part to help the City recover from this challenging year by building on the progress we have made in reconstitution efforts and in making services more accessible and equitable for all Angelenos.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly L. Wolcott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly L. Wolcott
City Clerk

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THE ORGANIZATION

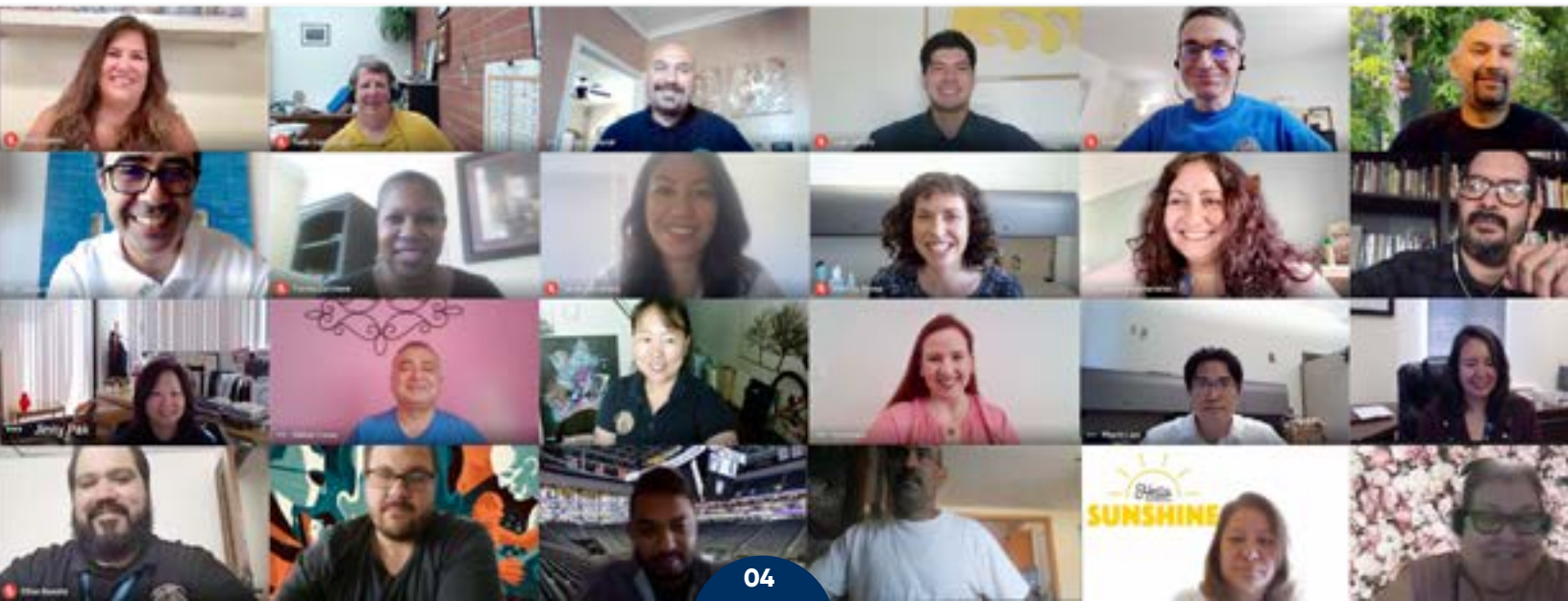
When the first government in Los Angeles was established under Spanish control in 1812, the only full time paid City officer was the forerunner to the present day City Clerk. The title of “City Clerk” was first used in the Charter of 1889. Today, The Office of the City Clerk serves as the Clerk of the City Council providing the critical role of maintaining a record of all City Council and Council Committee proceedings. It is the responsibility of the City Clerk to ensure compliance with the Public Records Act, the Political Reform Act and the Brown Act. The Office schedules and prepares Council and Council Committee agendas and processes all files for Council consideration. More than 3,000 Council files are created each year. The City Clerk is also responsible for preserving and protecting the City’s historical archives, attesting City contracts, and processing any claims filed against the City.

Elections is another key function of the City Clerk. It is currently responsible for the administration of up to 99 Neighborhood Council elections, as well as several department and governing board elections throughout the City, including the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). This Office also provides support to municipal elections by processing candidate filings, distributing Citywide voter information pamphlets and providing education, community outreach, and voter registration services.

In addition to its regulatory and legislative duties, the Office of the City Clerk oversees the Business Improvement District Program, the Neighborhood Council Funding Program (NC Funding), and their respective trust funds. The BID program allows businesses in a particular area of the City to pay an additional assessment to fund specific projects within its district’s boundaries. The NC Funding Program administers the Neighborhood Council system’s annual budget allocation.

As part of its Charter mandate, the Office of the City Clerk also provides administrative and human resources support to the almost 900 employees that comprise the Offices of the Mayor, the City Council, the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Clerk, the Office of Public Accountability, and the Civil and Human Rights Department. The Office also provides payroll support to the Departments of Cannabis Regulation and Neighborhood Empowerment.

The FY 2020/21 adopted operating budget for the Office of the City Clerk is \$10,847,864 with a position control comprised of 119 full-time management, legislative, and administrative employees.

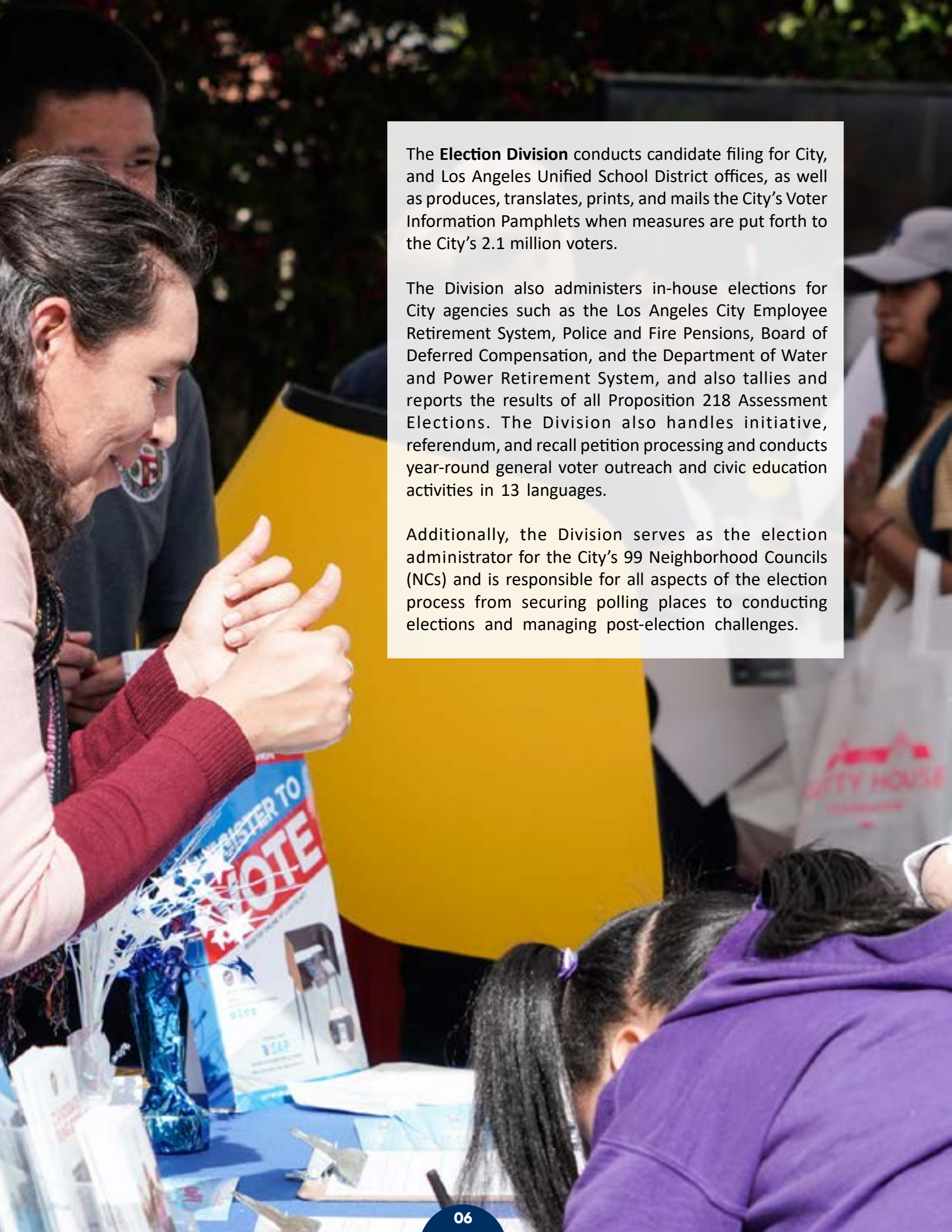




A Closer Look at the City Clerk's Six Divisions:

The **Council and Public Services Division (CPS)** serves as the official record keeper for all Council actions by providing Council Clerks, Voting Clerks, and Legislative Assistants to support and facilitate the meetings of the Council and its Committees. Each year, CPS posts and publishes more than 1,500 legally required notices and ordinances, and processes over 15,000 documents transmitted for Council consideration, creating in excess of 3,000 Council files.

CPS processes any claims filed against the City, and “attests” over 2,100 contracts annually. CPS also provides translation services for meetings, and responds to requests for records from the public on matters relating to City Council.



The **Election Division** conducts candidate filing for City, and Los Angeles Unified School District offices, as well as produces, translates, prints, and mails the City's Voter Information Pamphlets when measures are put forth to the City's 2.1 million voters.

The Division also administers in-house elections for City agencies such as the Los Angeles City Employee Retirement System, Police and Fire Pensions, Board of Deferred Compensation, and the Department of Water and Power Retirement System, and also tallies and reports the results of all Proposition 218 Assessment Elections. The Division also handles initiative, referendum, and recall petition processing and conducts year-round general voter outreach and civic education activities in 13 languages.

Additionally, the Division serves as the election administrator for the City's 99 Neighborhood Councils (NCs) and is responsible for all aspects of the election process from securing polling places to conducting elections and managing post-election challenges.



The **Business Improvement District (BIDs)** Division administers the BID program. A BID is a geographically defined area within which property and/or business owners agree by election to pay an assessment to fund designated programs and projects within the district's boundaries that provide a special benefit to the defined area. These districts typically fund services which are supplemental to those already provided by the City, including cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, marketing, and increasing economic development and livability.

The Division facilitates the establishment and renewal of BIDs in accordance with State and locally mandated policies and administers the BID Trust Fund which collects \$72 million annually in BID assessments. There are currently 38 property-based BIDs and five merchant-based BIDs established Citywide.



The **Records Management Division** administers the City Clerk’s Charter assigned duty as the custodian of City records. The City Archives and Records Center are the two key components of the City Clerk’s Records Management Division. The City Records Center, with a capacity of approximately 190,000 standard sized records storage boxes, is responsible for the retention and disposition of the inactive operating records of City Departments, Offices and Bureaus. The City Records Center tracks the location and status of all records and provides reference services to those records for City employees and officials, as well as to the public, within established security guidelines. The Division also manages the offsite storage of inactive departmental records.

The City Archives provides for the permanent retention of the City’s historically valuable records. The City Archives identifies, collects, preserves, arranges, and describes records of historical significance originated by City government from as early as 1827.

The **Systems Division** provides strategic and tactical planning, application development, systems integration, automation, and technical support for the Office of the City Clerk. The Division’s mission is to utilize technology to modernize systems, automate workflows, and improve efficiency in government services. The Division strives to continue to provide data transparency through mobile and web enabled applications with first-class service to all of the City Clerk’s customers.



And finally, the **Administrative Services Division (ASD)** provides fiscal, accounting and personnel support for almost 900 employees in the Offices of the City Clerk, the Mayor, the City Council, the Chief Legislative Analyst, the Office of Public Accountability, the Health Commission, and the Civil and Human Rights Department. The Division also provides payroll support to the Departments of Cannabis Regulation and Neighborhood Empowerment. ASD also administers AB1290¹ funds, General City Purposes (GCP)² funds, and Council Special Trust Funds. In addition, this Division houses the fiscal arm of the BID Trust Fund, and the NC Funding program, which administers the NC Trust Fund, a \$3.1M annual appropriation to support the operations of the 99 Citywide NCs.

¹ These funds were generated from community redevelopment projects and are under the control of each respective Council office.

² GCP funds cover the cost of special services or purposes not chargeable to a specific department. Administering departments and the City Clerk jointly prepare contracts while administering departments handle contract monitoring and approve payments. The City Clerk handles the payments and final close-out of contracts.

One bright spot in a year full of challenges has been the City Clerk staff's ability to persevere and overcome the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic and its collateral effects. This Department's collective efforts have resulted in a smooth transition to telecommuting and to the implementation of safety protocols for those working in the office. The Department's reconstitution plan has provided the framework for a safe continuity of services.

Operations have been modified to facilitate contactless services and goals have had to change as a result. In-person community outreach, for example, has been put on hold, however staff has partnered with community and education organizations to provide outreach via virtual meetings and online classes. While there is often the perception that remote services cannot compare to in-person experiences, there have been positive outcomes resulting from the shift in service delivery such as the broadening of access to services and information.

The highlights of any year are the culmination of a process that begins when Mayor Eric Garcetti and all City general managers meet early in the fiscal year to discuss his annual goals and long-term priorities. In turn, each Department establishes a goals and metrics plan for the following year that support his priority outcomes. Goal agreements between the Mayor and each general manager are memorialized in a "Status and Expectations" letter. This letter contains the specific goals established for the department by the general manager, and a timeline to attain them. The letters are reviewed with the Mayor in January, and again at the end of the fiscal year.

The following outlines the Mayor's expectations for the City Clerk in FY 2020-21 and the status of each goal at the end of the fiscal year:

Outreach/Civic Engagement

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Conduct 200 virtual outreach events
- Reach 15,000 Angelenos
- Register 500 to vote by June 30, 2021



The City Clerk is committed to widening the door to participatory democracy through consistent and reliable messaging regarding voter information and by providing targeted outreach to underrepresented communities, such as the unhoused, the formerly incarcerated, monolingual communities, and overall low-propensity voters. The City Clerk has a robust election outreach program that, during normal times, includes in-person outreach at homeless shelters, expungement clinics, community colleges, high school classrooms, and at community events.



Neighborhood Council (NC) Elections

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Develop NC Vote by Mail (VBM) registration portal and processes to conduct all-VBM NC elections
- Create a dashboard with NC election data and statistics
- Develop an MOU with the RR/CC to borrow approximately 90 Ballot Drop Boxes for use during the 2021 all VBM Neighborhood Council Elections
- Successfully administer VBM elections for all applicable NCs

Administering and improving elections for NCs is another of the City Clerk's goals to facilitate civic engagement. In an effort to keep everyone safe and socially distanced this year, the City Clerk is administering an all VBM Election for approximately up to 99 NCs. This effort has involved a significant amount of systems support to facilitate both an online candidate filing portal, as well as a VBM registration and tracking portal.

Continue to Partner, Collaborate, and Assist the County with Consolidated Elections

The City Clerk plans to continue its collaboration with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) for the 2022 Municipal Elections, as it did for the November 2020 General Election. City Clerk staff mobilized a Disaster Service Worker (DSW) Program that deployed over 280 City employees to staff and monitor City Vote Centers on Election Day, assisted LA County's Virtual Call Center to answer over 5,200 calls, and shared consistent election messaging through various media platforms.

Make Neighborhood Council (NC) Funding Policies and Operations More Accessible

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Translation of NC Vote By Mail (VBM) Funding guidelines and policies into Chinese, Korean and Spanish complete
- Increase the number of board members trained by 10% from prior fiscal year

The NC System was designed to foster civic engagement and facilitate access to City government. It is our operational and racial equity goal to help NCs maximize opportunities for community improvement and access to the legislative process through increased training, ongoing communication via roundtable discussions, newsletters, and through translated materials.



Enhancement of City Council Meeting Experience, Access to Council Files, Ordinances, and Contracts

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Complete System Integration
- Develop informational videos and resource materials for the public on the policies and procedures governing the City Council and the conduct of meetings
- Make the Legislative Management System more accessible through continued education

The CFMS – Multi-Software Integration Project is in the final phase of implementation. This will include the complete transition to the new System and its use to process documents submitted for City Council consideration, to prepare meeting agendas, provide Council voting capabilities, and facilitate live and on demand audio/video of meetings, resulting in improved transparency, and more efficient, streamlined processes. Council and Committee meeting agendas will be linked to the Public Comment Portal, providing a centralized, user-friendly platform for the public to submit written comments.



Improving Partnerships with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) through Enhanced Communication, Oversight, and Services

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Implement portal systems changes based on user recommendations

Since its implementation a year ago, the BID portal has functioned successfully, facilitating the submission of reports and requests for assessment funds from BID administrators, while providing access and transparency of information to all stakeholders.

Hiring, Onboarding, Staff Development and Knowledge Transfer

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Ensure transfer of knowledge for vacated positions
- Develop and retain staff through cross training on primary duties
- Hire interns through the College Promise Works Program



Due to the City’s economic shortfall, eligible employees have been encouraged to retire through the Separation Incentive Program (SIP). The City Clerk will lose 18 % of its workforce to SIP by the end of May 2021. As a result, managers are cross training staff on various duties, ensuring a transfer of knowledge and facilitating opportunities for professional development. The racial equity goal to hire and train interns is on track as the City Clerk was able to onboard two interns from the College Promise Works Program in March. Staff recently completed and implemented an online onboarding system that has allowed the Human Resources (HR) team to process new employees remotely. This has been an especially helpful tool for processing incoming Councilmembers and their staff during this election year.

Scan all City Council Files Back to 1980

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Scan the 1996 Council Files

The Records Management Unit is in the fourth year of scanning and uploading all Council Files back to 1980 to coincide with the inception of indexing to the Council records in the Legislative Management System (LMS). This Unit will lose two of its four full-time staff to the Separation Incentive Program (SIP), and losing the positions will make accomplishment of this long-term goal unsustainable. Any surplus funds that become available will be used to reinstate these positions.

Digitize Operations and Services, and Automate Manual Processes

Fiscal Year End Milestones

- Continue automating manual processes to reduce printing and paper expenses by 30%

The Systems team has been instrumental in facilitating remote work for City Clerk staff and in developing contactless services for customers. The Division continues to assist staff in fine tuning existing portals such as NC Funding and BIDs, and has recently completed a new system for tracking General City Purposes Contracts. Through in-house applications, such as the electronic signature program ClerkSign and the electronic contract attestation system, the team has helped the City Clerk continue to provide high quality services, while decreasing expenditures and reliance on inefficient manual paper-driven processes.

MORE GREAT WORK

DSW Missions

Approximately 70 City Clerk employees served as Disaster Service Workers (DSW), at the COVID-19 testing sites, at temporary shelters and as telephone intake staff for the Department of Aging's Senior Meal Hotline. Team members were also instrumental in assisting the Personnel Department identify, deploy, and track placement of citywide DSW staff.



Racial Equity Plan

This Office has been able to sharpen its focus on racial equity and develop a plan to guide us not only towards more equitable employment practices, but also towards facilitating more inclusive access to services.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Fiscal Operations

- Coordinated with the Systems team to develop and initiate a comprehensive database to manage and track General City Purposes (GCP) accounts, contract expenditures and provide transparency
- Processed 14,512 accounting documents in Fiscal Year 2019-20

Human Resources

- Coordinated 23 training sessions covering COVID-19 and related topics, grief and coping, deferred compensation, and leadership skills for City Clerk, Mayor and Council staff
- Processed 1,714 Form 41s, completed 148 new employee orientations, 105 fingerprint requests, administered payroll timekeeping for approximately 900 employees on a biweekly basis, conducted 89 Exit Interviews, completed 16 employee certifications, scheduled 23 interviews, conducted 34 background checks made 19 job offers, and processed 124 Family Medical Leave cases



BID Accounting

- Continued to reduce turn-around time for processing and approving payments to BIDS

NC Funding

- Staff reviewed 2,879 funding requests and 6,074 credit card transactions
- NCs collectively spent 69% of their annual funding allocation
- The team assisted 88 NCs in contributing \$547,177 to Covid-19 emergency response efforts

COUNCIL AND PUBLIC SERVICES DIVISION

- Worked closely with ITA, the City Attorney's Office and the Council President's team to successfully facilitate and support remote Council and Committee Meetings
- Developed and implemented new procedures to allow the public to comment telephonically
- Established a rotating staffing schedule and implemented safety protocols to keep the public counter open to continue providing services to City Departments and Offices
- Initiated protocols to witness and provide oath of office to Council confirmed Commissioners and General Managers via a video conferencing platform
- Established procedures and protocols for City departments to electronically submit City contracts and receive attestation

ELECTION DIVISION

- Processed Candidate Filings for 86 City and LAUSD Candidates for the March 3, 2020 Primary Nominating Election, assisted the County Registrar-Recorder with outreach, Vote Center selection, Vote Center set up and breakdown and Election Day monitoring
- Attended 579 events through February, reached 96,424 Angelenos, and assisted 8,200 individuals with Voter Registration
- Translated numerous documents related to the 2020 Census and COVID-19 Guidelines for the Mayor's Office and provided multilingual voiceovers for ITA's Ch. 35 COVID-19 PSA's
- Created videos highlighting the initiatives the City Clerk staff has participated in during the pandemic: Project Room Key - A DSW Opportunity, Earth Day, and LAProtects





Neighborhood Council Elections

- Created a working group of 25 NC stakeholders to discuss election process improvements ahead of the 2021 elections including the election timeline, bylaws, the challenge process, the vote by mail process, and Candidate Filing. The group's report was released in July.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS DIVISION (BIDs)

- The City's 42 BIDs provided 61 million dollars' worth of economic development to the City in the form of supplemental cleaning, safety, and destination marketing activity
- Launched the BID Portal in January 2020 allowing BIDs to submit invoices electronically and receive payment in a shorter time frame than in previous years
- Renewed 5 merchant-based BIDs (MBIDs) and coordinated the billing process for all into one cycle allowing for more uniformity and facilitating funding earlier in the year
- Updated the Division website to include clearer links to the BID Portal, training resources, and Bid-related policies

SYSTEMS DIVISION

- Facilitated Remote Access Software to all Clerk staff enabling everyone to access their files and operating software from home
- Launched the Clerk-Sign electronic signature application in June, allowing electronic signatures and seals to replace wet signatures and physical seal stamping on all documents and memos
- Shared the Clerk-Sign source code with the Department of Building and Safety's Information Technology team
- Implemented the electronic contract attestation system for Council and Public Services

OUTLINING OUR STRATEGY

In addition to the direction provided by the Mayor to meet his priority outcomes and expectations, the Office is also following the guiding principles and goals found in its 5-Year Strategic Plan (Plan). The Plan officially launched in 2012. The latest update covers Fiscal Years 21/22; the Office is now in its fourth year of its second 5-year plan.

The Plan outlines and further defines the Department's mission, vision, and operating framework. In addition to highlighting the services of each Division, the Plan highlights each of our strategic goals and corresponding metrics per fiscal year until completion. Each goal is designed to enhance service delivery, reduce manual processes, and reduce and/or eliminate paper whenever possible.

The Plan is a dynamic, living document that will be updated annually as technology advances and new ways are discovered to deliver public services that are more transparent, accountable, easy to use, and provide local government stakeholders maximum access to their City Hall. The Plan is available on our webpage at clerk.lacity.org.

While our long-term priorities will stay the same over time, the goals and metrics within them will change as we accomplish tasks and create new ways to work smarter and with new technology. The following briefly highlights our initiatives for the coming year, FY 21/22:



Election Outreach

The voting experience for Angelenos changed dramatically in the last two years with the implementation of vote centers and electronic voting equipment. Next year's Outreach goals include addressing information gaps to better prepare Angelenos for 2022, as well as continuing efforts to develop the next generation of civic-minded voters especially in low voting propensity communities. Once it's safe to conduct in-person outreach, the team will be back at community events, expungement clinics, citizenship ceremonies, and events for the unhoused to continue building on important initiatives launched in the last three years.

Continue to Automate and Streamline Council Public Services

The digital transformation of the Council File Management System Multi-Software integration project is in Phase II and implementation of proposed changes will conclude this fiscal year. The FY 21-22 Goals are to develop informational videos and materials to educate the public on Council meeting proceedings and to develop a centralized commission portal that allows the public to search for historic and current commission membership and composition information.

Automation of BID Processes

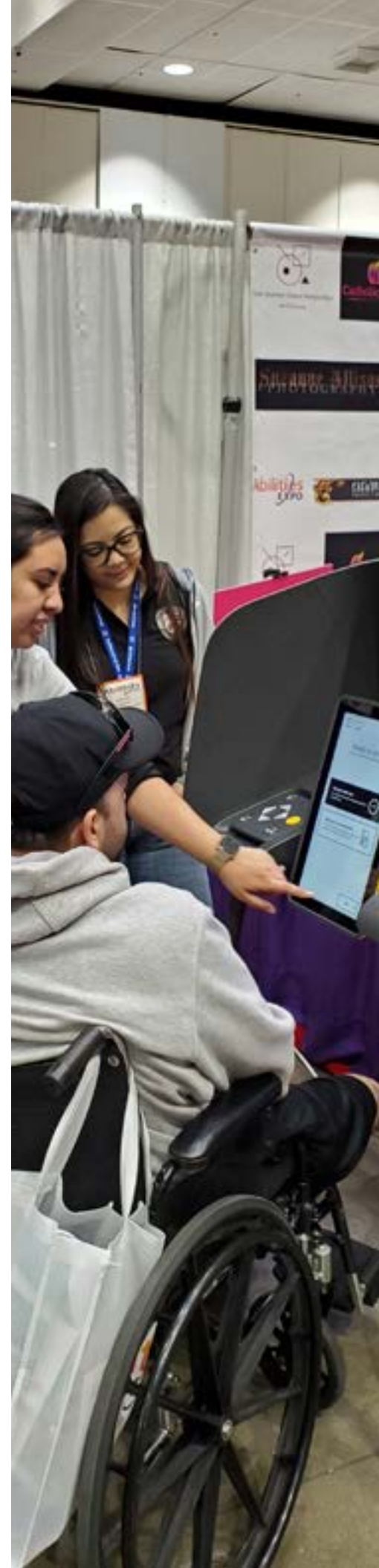
An entirely new application for the BID system, developed in house, now allows BID administrators to submit required compliance documents electronically. In FY 21-22 staff will modify the BID portal to include notice of compliance deadlines and fund availability information, and continue to work with the BIDs and the Systems team to build improvements based on the experience and feedback gained from ongoing operations. The team will also develop training and education materials for the BIDs on administration best practices.

NC Funding Program

The FY 21-22 Goals for NC Funding include increasing the number and types of training sessions offered online and if possible, in person. The live, online training course developed by the Funding team for financial officers has been well received. The team plans to continue offering those courses in addition to recorded instructional videos on different funding related topics such as Neighborhood Purpose Grants and Special Events. Enhancing the Section's training options will provide NCs with the tools they need to promote civic engagement in their neighborhoods.

Records Management

The Records Management Division has been working toward a goal to scan all Council files back to 1980 to coincide with the inception of the Council File Management System. This undertaking is being managed with only \$10K per year and we have currently scanned files all the way back to 1997 and will complete 1996 by June. This goal continues to be added to our long-term priorities to ensure at least one full year of Council files, or approximately 3,000 files, are scanned each fiscal year and made available to the public online. The goal for FY 21-22 is to scan the 1995 and a portion of the 1994 files, if funding continues.



IN CLOSING...

In March of 2020, when the Mayor issued the first COVID-19 Pandemic Safer at Home safety order, the Office of the City Clerk was fortunate to have a virtual infrastructure in place. Since one of our long-term goals has been to reduce reliance on manual processes and paper copies, we had several electronic systems in use or near completion. This has played an important role in our continuity of operations. Clerksign, and the electronic contract attestation system along with several public-facing portals have all been instrumental in our remote service capabilities.

Staff were able to quickly mobilize and set up systems and procedures for areas that were new terrain, as well. The Council Legislative and Systems teams, for example, worked closely with ITA and Council to launch virtual Council and Committee meetings. They established processes for new features such as telephonic public comment, and worked to resolve issues inherent in any new operation. Similarly, Elections Outreach and NC Funding staff pivoted to virtual platforms to continue conducting outreach and live online training sessions, respectively.

The concern for our City and its residents has been evident not only among City staff who are eager to continue providing services remotely, but among members of the community as well. Neighborhood Councils, moved by the effects of COVID-19 in their respective communities, collectively donated \$547,177 of their NC funds to relief efforts. Angelenos, with resources to share, called City Departments to offer free warehouse space, clothing, and food. City employees staffed the DSW programs, which included temporary shelters for the unhoused, testing sites, and senior meal hotlines and did so, even through the worst of the pandemic.


It is this spirit of collaboration that will help the City persevere and get through the difficulties that may lie ahead. This Office is committed to doing its part by continuing to help Angelenos directly, wherever possible, and by working with other Departments and Offices to leverage resources and maximize our efforts to make Los Angeles a well-run, inclusive and compassionate City.





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