



## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

**RON DESANTIS**  
Governor

**LAUREL M. LEE**  
Secretary of State

June 17, 2020  
(VIA EMAIL)

Dear Supervisors of Elections,

I'm writing to share some updates in response to your letters of April 7, 2020, and May 13, 2020, to address potential challenges with elections related to COVID-19. The letters noted some critical issues for many counties, including a shortage of Election Day polling locations and poll workers, a need to begin canvassing vote-by-mail ballots earlier than usual, and a need for assistance in obtaining protective equipment and cleaning products. The Department of State is confident the solutions set forth in the Executive Order will ease burdens on elections officials and staff, allowing you and your staff to continue providing safe and efficient voting environments and options for voters in all counties.

First, in anticipation of greater vote-by-mail participation, the Governor is suspending the provision in section 101.68(2)(a), Florida Statutes, to the extent it prohibits County Canvassing Boards from beginning canvassing of vote-by-mail ballots on the 22nd day before the election. Instead, County Canvassing Boards may begin canvassing vote-by-mail ballots upon completion of the public Logic & Accuracy Testing of tabulation machines and equipment, pursuant to section 101.5612(2), Florida Statutes. In order to maximize the expanded opportunities for early voting locations and additional time for canvassing, I encourage you to maximize (as I'm sure most of you already are planning to do) the optional early voting days, to which the timing of the Logic & Accuracy Testing is tied.

Second, to address the concern expressed by you as to poll worker attrition, Governor DeSantis is encouraging state workers to serve as poll workers and is providing such workers who wish to do so administrative leave to attend training and serve as poll workers. Governor DeSantis has also encouraged counties and municipalities to offer similar incentives to supplement poll workers. In addition to providing an additional pool of individuals for you to pull from to supplement your poll worker ranks, this solution will allow the State of Florida to provide an in-kind contribution for each county that can go towards meeting the 20% match requirement for receiving CARES Act funding.

Third, to address the need for additional polling places, Governor DeSantis is directing the Commissioner of Education and each Superintendent of Schools to work with you in your respective counties for the purpose of closing K-12 schools for use on the Primary and General Election Days. This cooperation should go far in supplementing gaps created by the exit of prior or existing polling locations.

Lastly, you expressed concerns about the availability of supplies necessary to ensure a safe environment for staff, poll workers, and voters. To assist in this area, Governor DeSantis is directing the Director of the Division of Emergency Management to coordinate with each County Emergency Management Director to facilitate providing any personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, and cleaning products requested by you for this purpose. Additionally, as noted in the emails to you, please continue to track all election related COVID-19 expenditures and identify those that may be counted to offset the match. In addition, the Department of State will track election related COVID-19 expenditures to assist counties in meeting the match requirement.

I am thankful to you for your work in collaboratively identifying and synthesizing your most pressing needs during these unique circumstances. I am additionally thankful to Governor DeSantis and his team for working with us to generate innovative and practical solutions to assist in meeting those needs so as to ensure safe and efficient Primary and General Elections. I am confident that the solutions will both ease administrative burdens on your offices and provide voters with expanded opportunities for safe and efficient voting. We look forward to working with you to maximize the opportunities for your counties made possible by the Governor's actions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurel M. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurel M. Lee  
Secretary of State