

# **JOINT ELECTION AGREEMENT FOR November 7, 2023 ELECTIONS**

## **Recitals**

1. Travis County (the “County”) will be conducting general and special elections for the participating entities (each, a “Participating Entity,” and together, the “Participating Entities”) listed in Exhibit A, which is attached to and incorporated into this agreement, on November 7, 2023. The Participating Entities require elections to be held on November 7, 2023, in those portions of Travis County as shown on the maps and metes and bounds descriptions in Exhibit B, also attached to and incorporated into this agreement.
2. Under Texas Election Code Section 271.002, political subdivisions of the State of Texas are authorized to hold elections jointly in voting precincts that can be served by common polling places if elections are ordered by the authorities of two or more political subdivisions to be held on the same day in all or part of the same territory.
3. Texas Government Code Chapter 791 authorizes local governments to contract with one another and with state agencies for various governmental functions, including those in which the contracting parties are mutually interested.
4. It would benefit the County, the Participating Entities, and their respective citizens and voters to hold the elections jointly in the election precincts that common polling places can serve.

Pursuant to Texas Election Code Sections 271.002 and 271.003 and Texas Government Code Chapter 791, this Joint Election Agreement is entered into by and between Travis County, a political subdivision of the State of Texas acting by and through the Travis County Commissioners Court, and the Participating Entities, each acting by and through their respective governing bodies.

## **I. Scope of Joint Election Agreement**

This agreement covers the November 7, 2023 Joint General and Special Elections for the parties to this agreement to be held on November 7, 2023. The County and the Participating Entities will hold these elections on November 7, 2023 (“Election Day”) jointly for the voters in those portions of Travis County identified on the maps and descriptions in Exhibit B.

## **II. Election Officer**

The Participating Entities hereby appoint the Travis County Clerk, the election officer for Travis County, as the election officer to perform or supervise the County’s duties and responsibilities involved in conducting the joint election covered by this agreement.

## **III. Early Voting**

Each of the Participating Entities agrees to conduct its early voting jointly. Each of the Participating Entities appoints the Travis County Clerk, the early voting clerk for Travis County,

as the early voting clerk for the joint election. Early voting for the Participating Entities will be conducted at the dates, times, and locations to be mutually agreed upon by the election officer and authorized and ordered by the governing body of each Participating Entity.

A. County Responsibilities [continue]

1. The County will provide to the governing body of each Participating Entity a list of places, times, and dates of early voting suitable for consideration and adoption by the governing body, under Texas Election Code chapter 85.

2. The Travis County Clerk, as the early voting clerk, will be responsible for conducting early voting by mail and by personal appearance for all Travis County voters voting in the joint election. The Travis County Clerk will receive from each Participating Entity's regular early voting clerk applications for early voting ballots to be voted by mail, under Texas Election Code Title 7. The Travis County Clerk will send early voting ballots by mail and receive early voting ballots for early voting by mail. And the Travis County Clerk may appoint such deputy early voting clerks as necessary to assist the Travis County Clerk with voting to take place at the early voting locations.

3. The County will determine the number of election workers to hire to conduct early voting in the joint election. The Travis County Clerk will arrange or contract for training for all election workers and will assign all election workers employed for early voting in the joint election. The training of these election workers is mandatory; these individuals will be compensated for their time in training. The County will provide a training facility for election schools to train election workers employed in conducting early voting, including early voting by personal appearance at main and temporary branch early voting polling places, early voting by mail, and other aspects of the early voting program for the joint election. The County will name early voting deputies and clerks employed to conduct early voting.

4. The County will provide and deliver all supplies and equipment necessary to conduct early voting for the joint election, including ballots, election forms, any necessary ramps, utility hook-ups, signs, registration lists and ballot boxes, to early voting polling places. The County will designate and confirm all early voting polling place locations.

5. The County will be responsible for preparing and transporting the electronic voting equipment necessary to conduct early voting. The County will perform all tests of voting equipment as required, including posting notice of equipment testing.

6. Under Election Code sections 66.058 and 271.010, the Participating Entities appoint the Travis County Clerk as the joint custodian of records for the sole purpose of preserving all voted ballots securely in a locked room in the locked ballot boxes for the preservation period that the Election Code requires.

7. The County will receive ballot language in both English and Spanish from each Participating Entity and format the ballots as needed to include these languages. The County will provide each Participating Entity with a final proof of ballot language for approval before printing the ballots. Upon final proof approval, ballots will be printed in an expedited timeframe so as to

allow ballot allocations for the Early Voting by Personal Appearance Program, and the ballot mail outs for the Early Voting by Mail Program.

8. A single joint voter sign-in process consisting of a common list of registered voters, and common signature rosters will be used for early voting. A single, combined ballot and single ballot box will be used. The County will use an electronic voting system, as defined and described in Texas Election Code Title 8, and agrees to use ballots that are compatible with such equipment.

9. The County will be responsible for conducting the Early Voting Ballot Board. The County will designate a person to serve as the presiding judge for the Early Voting Ballot Board and will provide that information to the governing body of each Participating Entity for entry of an order by that authority appointing this official. The presiding judge for the Early Voting Ballot Board is eligible to serve in this capacity. The presiding judge for the Early Voting Ballot Board will appoint two or more election clerks, and the judge and clerks will compose the Early Voting Ballot Board and will count and return early voting ballots, and perform other duties the Election Code requires of it.

#### **B. Participating Entities' Responsibilities**

1. Each Participating Entity will appoint a qualified person to serve as the regular early voting clerk for the Participating Entity. The regular early voting clerk for each respective Participating Entity will receive requests for applications for early voting ballots to be voted by mail and will forward in a timely manner, as prescribed by law, any and all applications for early voting ballots to be voted by mail, received in the Entity's office, to the Travis County Clerk.

2. Each Participating Entity will appoint a qualified person to act as custodian of records for the Participating Entity to perform the duties imposed by the Election Code on the custodian of records for its respective entity.

3. Each Participating Entity will provide ballot language for the respective portion of the official ballot to the County in both English and Spanish. The Participating Entity must make any additions, modifications, deletions, or other changes to such ballot contents or language before the Participating Entity's final proof approval. The County will provide the Participating Entity with a final proof of ballot language, as it is to appear on the ballot, for final proof approval. Upon final proof approval, the ballot will be programmed for the voting equipment in an expedited timeframe so as to allow ballot allocations for the Early Voting by Personal Appearance Program, and the printed ballot mail outs for the Early Voting by Mail Program.

### **IV. Election Day**

#### **A. County Responsibilities**

1. The County will designate and confirm all Election Day polling place locations for the joint election and will forward such information to the Participating Entities in a timely fashion to allow the governing body of the respective Participating Entities to enter orders designating such polling places.

2. The County will designate the presiding election judge and the alternate presiding election judge to administer the election in the precinct in which a common polling place is to be used and will forward such information to the Participating Entities to allow the governing bodies of the respective Participating Entities to enter appropriate orders designating such officials before the election. The presiding election judge and alternate presiding election judge must be qualified voters of the Travis County. The presiding election judge for the location in which a common polling place is used may appoint election clerks as necessary to assist the judge in conducting the election at the precinct polling place. The alternate presiding election judge may be appointed as a clerk. The alternate presiding election judge may serve as the presiding election judge for the precinct in the presiding election judge's absence. Election judges and clerks will be compensated at the rate established by the County. The Texas Election Code and other applicable laws will determine compensable hours.
3. One set of election officials will preside over the election in the precinct using a common polling place. There will be a single joint voter sign-in process consisting of a common list of registered voters and common signature rosters in the precinct using a common polling place. A single, combined ballot and single ballot box will be used. The officer designated by law to be the custodian of the voted ballots for the County will be custodian of all materials used in common in the precinct using a common polling place. The County will use an electronic voting system, as defined and described by Texas Election Code Title 8, and agrees to use ballots that are compatible with such equipment.
4. The County will arrange for training and will provide the instructors, manuals and other training materials deemed necessary for training all judges and clerks. Training for election judges and alternate judges is mandatory, and these individuals will be compensated for their time in training.
5. The County will arrange for Election Day voter registration precinct lists for the joint election. The County will determine the amount of election supplies needed for Election Day voting.
6. The County, by and through the County Clerk's Elections Division, and Administrative Operations, will be responsible for preparing and transporting voting equipment and election-day supplies for use on Election Day.
7. The County, by and through the County Voter Registrar, will provide the list of registered voters as needed in the overlapping jurisdictions identified in the attached exhibits, with designation of registered voters in each Participating Entity, for use at the joint election day polling place on Election Day.
8. The common polling place is designated as the polling place that the County uses. At the common polling place, a single ballot box will be used for depositing all ballots cast in the joint election. At this polling place, one voter registration list and one combination poll list and signature roster form will be kept for the joint election. The final returns for each Participating Entity and the County will be canvassed separately by each respective Participating Entity. The Travis County Clerk will maintain a return center on Election Day for the purpose of receiving

returns from the County. The Travis County Clerk will provide unofficial election results to the qualified individual appointed by each Participating Entity.

9. On Election Day, the Travis County Clerk or the clerk's Elections Division will field all questions from election judges.

10. The County will make available translators capable of speaking English and Spanish to assist Spanish-speaking voters in understanding and participating in the election process in the territory covered by this agreement.

**B. Participating Entities' Responsibilities**

1. Before Election Day, each Participating Entity will answer questions from the public with respect to the Participating Entity's election during regular office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

2. The custodian of records for each Participating Entity will receive returns from the Travis County Clerk on Election Day.

**V. Election Night**

**A. County Responsibilities**

1. The County will be responsible for all activities on election night, including setting up a central counting station, coordinating and supervising the results tabulation, coordinating and supervising the physical layout of the support stations that are the joint election's receiving substations, and coordinating and managing election media coverage.

2. The County is responsible for transporting voted ballot boxes to the central counting station.

3. The County will appoint the presiding judge and alternate presiding judge of the central counting station to maintain order at the central counting station, to administer oaths as necessary, to receive sealed ballot boxes, and to perform such other duties that the Texas Election Code requires, and will forward such information to each Participating Entity in a timely fashion to allow the governing body of each Participating Entity to enter appropriate orders designating such election officials before the election. The presiding judge of the central counting station may appoint clerks to serve at the central counting station. In addition, the County will appoint a tabulation supervisor to be in charge of operating the automatic tabulating equipment at the central counting station; an individual to serve as central counting station manager; and an assistant counting station manager to be in charge of administering the central counting station and generally supervising the personnel working at the central counting station. The County will forward such information to each Participating Entity in a timely fashion to allow the governing body of each Participating Entity to enter appropriate orders designating such election officials before the election.

4. The County will provide the Participating Entities with reasonable space in a public area adjacent to the central counting station at which each Participating Entity may have representatives or other interested persons present during the counting process.

## B. Participating Entities' Responsibilities

1. Other than receiving returns from the Travis County Clerk, the Participating Entities have no role or responsibility on the night of the election.

## VI. County Resources

A. The County will provide the Elections Division permanent staff and offices to administer the joint election, under the Travis County Clerk's direction.

B. For early voting, the County will provide a locked and secure area in which voted ballot boxes will be stored until the Early Voting Ballot Board convenes. The County, by and through Administrative Operations, will be responsible for transporting the ballot boxes to the central counting station for the Early Voting Ballot Board.

C. The County will be responsible for providing and maintaining voting equipment and testing any voting equipment as required by the Texas Election Code.

D. The County will process the payroll for all temporary staff hired to conduct the joint election. The payroll processing includes statutory reporting and providing W-2 forms where applicable.

E. The County will conduct early voting as indicated in this agreement.

## VII. Joint Election Costs; Payment

A. Concurrently with its submittal of an executed copy of this agreement, each Participating Entity must also submit payment via check or ACH, in the amount equal to the deposit identified for that Participating Entity in the Cost Estimate attached as Exhibit C, which is also incorporated into this agreement. **The County is under no obligation to conduct a Participating Entity's elections until the County receives that Participating Entity's payment of Cost Estimate.** All checks must be made payable to Travis County. This deposit represents approximately 75% of the costs of the Participating Entity's share of the estimated election costs. The County will submit an invoice to each Participating Entity for the balance of the Participating Entity's actual joint election expenses upon the election's completion. Joint-election expenses include expenses for facilities, personnel, supplies, and training that the County actually incurs for establishing and operating all early voting and election-day activities at the polling place in the joint election territory as well as activities related to tabulating votes, all as reflected on the Cost Estimate. Each Participating Entity will pay the total amount of its invoice within thirty (30) days of receiving it.

B. In the event of a recount, the expense of the recount will be borne by the Participating Entity involved in the recount on a pro-rata basis.

C. In the event a Participating Entity cancels its respective election because of unopposed candidates under Texas Election Code Title 1, the Participating Entity will be responsible for its

respective share of election expenses incurred through the date that the election is canceled as allocated to the cancelling entity based on the formula in the Cost Estimate, adjusted for the actual expenses incurred by the County through the date of the cancellation. When the Participating Entity cancels its election, the County will recalculate the allocation percentages among the remaining Participating Entities according to the formula used in the Cost Estimate.

D. In the event there are any expenses associated with processing a ballot arising from a write-in candidate, the Participating Entity that received the declaration will bear the expenses.

E. A Participating Entity that establishes an early voting polling place, other than one that was mutually agreed upon by all Participating Entities, will bear the expense of doing so. The Cost Estimate for each individual Participating Entity will include additional polling locations for each Participating Entity, as set forth in Exhibit C.

## **VIII. General Provisions**

### **A. Legal Notices**

Each of the Participating Entities will be individually responsible for preparing the election orders, resolutions, notices, and other pertinent documents for adoption or execution by its own respective governing board and for all related expenses. The Travis County Clerk will provide each Participating Entity information on changes affecting the Participating Entity's election, such as polling place changes and changes in voting equipment, when such changes are confirmed, verified, or otherwise become known to the clerk's office. Each of the Participating Entities will be individually responsible for posting or publishing election notices and for all related expenses. Each of the Participating Entities further will be individually responsible for election expenses incurred in relation to any polling place that is not a common polling place as designated in this agreement.

### **B. Communication**

Throughout this agreement's term, the Travis County Clerk or the clerk's employee will meet as necessary with the designated representative of each Participating Entity to discuss and resolve any problems that might arise regarding the joint election.

### **C. Custodian**

The Travis County Clerk will serve as the custodian of the keys to the ballot boxes for voted ballots in the joint election.

### **D. Effective Date**

This agreement takes effect upon its complete execution by all Participating Entities and the County. The obligation of each Participating Entity to the County under this agreement will not end until that Participating Entity pays the County its share of the joint election costs.

## **IX. Miscellaneous Provisions**

A. Amendment/Modification of Exhibits A, B, and C

1. The Participating Entities acknowledge and agree that Exhibits A, B, and C may be amended to add or remove entities wishing to participate or cease participating in the agreement. The Participating Entities agree to future amendments of Exhibits A, B, and C and authorize the County to enter into such amendments without the Participating Entities' having to sign the future amendments. The County agrees to notify all Participating Entities of any amendments to Exhibits A, B, and C.

2. Except as otherwise provided, this Agreement may not be amended in any respect whatsoever except by a further agreement in writing, duly executed by the parties to this agreement. No official, representative, agent, or employee of the County has any authority to modify this Agreement except by express authorization from the Travis County Commissioners Court. No official, representative, agent, or employee of any Participating Entity has any authority to modify this agreement except by express authorization from the governing body of the respective Participating Entity. The Travis County Clerk may propose necessary amendments to this agreement in writing in order to conduct the joint election smoothly and efficiently, except that any such proposed amendment must be approved by the Travis County Commissioners Court and the governing body of each respective Participating Entity before the amendment will be effective.

B. Notice

Any notice to be given in this agreement, by any party to the other, must be in writing and delivered personally or by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the proper party at the addresses listed in Exhibit A.

Each party may change the address for notice to it by giving notice of the change under this section's terms.

C. Force Majeure

In the event that the County cannot perform any of its obligations in this agreement or is interrupted or delayed by any occurrence not occasioned by its own conduct, whether it be an act of God, the result of war, riot, civil commotion, sovereign conduct, or like reason, then the County will be excused from performing for such period of time as is reasonably necessary after such occurrence to remedy its effects.

D. Venue and Choice of Law

The Participating Entities agree that venue for any dispute arising under this agreement will lie in the appropriate courts of Austin, Travis County, Texas. This agreement is governed by and is to be construed under the laws of Texas and the United States of America.

E. Entire Agreement



This agreement contains the parties' entire agreement relating to the rights granted and the obligations assumed in it, and it supersedes all prior agreements, including prior election services contracts relating to each Participating Entity's November 7, 2023 election. Any prior agreements, promises, negotiations, or representations not expressly contained in this agreement are of no force or effect. Any oral representations or modifications concerning this agreement have no force or effect, except a subsequent amendment in writing as this agreement provides.

F. Severability

If any provision of this agreement is found to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability will not affect the agreement's remaining provisions; and its parties will perform their obligations under the agreement's surviving terms and provisions.

G. Breach

In the event that any Participating Entity or the County breaches any of its obligations under this agreement, the non-breaching party will be entitled to pursue any and all rights and remedies allowed by law.

H. Payments from Current Revenues

Payments made by the Participating Entities in meeting their obligations under this agreement will be made from current revenue funds available to the governing body of the respective Participating Entity. Payments made by the County in meeting its obligations under this agreement will be made from current revenue funds available to the County.

I. Other Instruments

The Participating Entities agree that they will execute other and further instruments or any documents as may become necessary or convenient to effectuate and carry out this agreement's purposes.

J. Third-Party Beneficiaries

Except as otherwise provided in this agreement, nothing in this agreement, expressed or implied, is intended to confer upon any person, other than the parties to it, any of its benefits, rights or remedies.

K. Other Joint Election Agreements

The County and the Participating Entities expressly understand and acknowledge that each may enter into other joint election agreements with other political subdivisions, to be held on Election Day and at common polling places covered by this agreement, and that the addition of other political subdivisions as parties to this agreement will require amending Exhibits A, B, and C.

L. Mediation

When mediation is acceptable to both parties in resolving a dispute arising under this agreement, the parties agree to use a mutually agreed upon mediator, or a person appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction, for mediation as described in Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code section 154.023. Unless both parties are satisfied with the mediation’s result, the mediation will not constitute a final and binding resolution to the dispute. All communications within the scope of the mediation will remain confidential as described in section 154.073, unless both parties agree, in writing, to waive the confidentiality. Despite this, the parties intend to fully comply with the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Public Information Act whenever applicable. The term “confidential” as used in this agreement has the same meanings as defined and construed under the Texas Public Information Act and the Texas Open Meetings Act. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, nothing in this Agreement requires the County or a Participating Entity to waive any applicable exceptions to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act.

M. Counterparts

This Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts, all of which will be deemed originals and with the same effect as if all parties to it had signed the same document. Signatures transmitted electronically by e-mail in a “PDF” format or by DocuSign or similar e-signature service shall have the same force and effect as original signatures All of such counterparts will be construed together and will constitute one and the same agreement.

**TRAVIS COUNTY**

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Andy Brown  
County Judge

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dyana Limon Mercado  
County Clerk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_