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Franklin County Board of Elections Recognized for Excellence in Election Administration with National Clearinghouse Award

(Columbus) Today, The Franklin County Board of Elections announced they were recognized for excellence in election administration with a national Clearinghouse Award for Improving Accessibility for Voters with Disabilities. Also known as the “Clearies,” the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) presents the awards program annually to celebrate the hard work of election offices across the country. Now in its seventh year, this year’s Clearie Awards honored programs that took place during the 2022 midterms.

The Franklin County Board of Elections was one of 24 programs nationally that were recognized with a Clearie Award. The *Franklin County Voting with Ease* program was designed by Absentee Department staff to improve accessibility for voters visiting the Franklin County Early Vote Center located at 1700 Morse Road. The Franklin County Early Vote Center (EVC) occupies three interconnected rooms with approximately 16,000 sq. ft. of space necessary to accommodate approximately 870,000 registered voters. Given the size and scale of the EVC, staff recognized the need to designate a space to better serve voters with mobility issues. Consequently, a voter ADA Station was created so that voters could bypass the substantially longer route through the EVC and to provide better accessibility. The ADA Station was located immediately inside of the main entrance and equipped with seating so that voters would not have to stand or walk far to use voting equipment. Trained EVC staff were placed in this area to provide additional assistance.

“Voter accessibility is one of our main priorities, and we are pleased to be recognized nationally for these efforts,” said Franklin County Board of Elections Director Antone White. **“Kudos to our Absentee Department staff for their work to ensure that every voter visiting the Franklin County Early Vote Center has the same opportunity for access and voter participation.”**

The board also received a 2022 Clearie Honorable Mention for Best Practices in Recruiting, Retaining, and Training Poll Workers. For each full countywide election, the Franklin County Board of Elections sets a goal to recruit 5,000 Poll Workers. Recognizing an untapped resource, board staff developed a recruitment program to engage Early Vote Center voters who had never considered working on Election Day to sign up. Early Voters submitted a total of 1,448 new applications throughout the three elections held in 2022 making this a wildly successful program for our office.

“Bi-partisan Poll Workers serve as the backbone of our Election Day operation, and we appreciate the many Democrats, Republicans, and Independent voters that sign up for each election,” said Franklin County Board of Elections Deputy Director David Payne. “To be recognized nationally for programs we have created makes us incredibly proud of the job we do, and we take great pride in administering fair, impartial, and accurate elections.”

The Clearies play an essential role in fulfilling the EAC’s mission to serve as a clearinghouse for election administration information under the Help America Vote Act. The EAC is an independent, bipartisan federal agency solely focused on election administration. Submissions were judged on innovation, sustainability, outreach, cost-effectiveness, replicability, and the generation of positive results. This year’s awards categories include:

- Outstanding Use of HAVA Grants in Elections Modernization
- Outstanding Election Official State Association Program or Local Office
- Outstanding Innovation in Election Cybersecurity and Technology
- Improving Accessibility for Voters with Disabilities
- Outstanding Innovations in Elections – Large Jurisdictions
- Outstanding Innovations in Elections – Small/Medium Jurisdictions
- Best Practices in Recruiting, Retaining, and Training Poll Workers
- Creative and Original “I Voted” Stickers

“The spotlight on U.S. elections has never been brighter, and the EAC is pleased to honor the work of these offices to make elections more secure, technologically advanced, and accessible to voters,” said EAC Chairwoman Christy McCormick, Vice Chair Ben Hovland, Commissioner Donald Palmer, and Commissioner Thomas Hicks in a joint statement. “Especially as election administrators prepare for the 2024 presidential election, we encourage them to review the great work of these Clearie Award-winning jurisdictions for ideas they may want to replicate in their communities.”

More information on the Clearies and each awardee is available on <http://eac.gov>.

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