



**38<sup>th</sup> Annual  
National Conference  
Orlando, FL**

## **2023 Professional Practices**

### **Zelle Yeah! Electronic Pay for Election Workers**

### **Broward County, FL**

**Submitted by:**

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### **Summary**

The Broward County Supervisor of Elections Office has implemented a new approach to poll worker pay. The disbursement of funds has been a significant topic of discussion for quite some time, with poll workers seeking more expedited payment methods. As a result, Broward County recently transitioned from issuing manual checks, to issuing electronic payments via Zelle. The objective for adopting and implementing Zelle was based on achieving time and cost savings. Broward County SOE has made exemplary use of this contemporary disbursement method, all the while exploring new and improved strategies for the betterment of its workforce and processes.

### **Why We Needed a Change**

Commencing in 2019, Broward County SOE implemented same day pay for poll workers, distributing paper checks on Election Night. This replaced our former method of disbursement, sending payments via mail approximately three weeks post-Election Day. Same day pay was deemed an enormous success and received outstanding reviews. Poll workers embraced this new approach; there was no better feeling than going home on Election Night with a paycheck in their hand. Broward County SOE was pleased to have provided such an opportunity, following such diligent work on a long, hard day.

The improvements resulting from same day pay were also accompanied by new challenges. For instance, payroll data had to be submitted to the Finance Department for processing two weeks prior to Election Day. This allowed ample time to conduct quality control on the data and processing with the payroll company, for checks to be available for the Election Day Operations Department a week prior to Election Day. During that last week, the Election Day Operations Department typically made significant changes to the organization of the checks due to various factors, such as (but not limited to): last minute changes in locations, positions, and/or personnel. All these factors necessitated the printing, sorting, daily re-organization, and storage of approximately 5,000 manual paper checks. The aftermath of Election Day then produced checks to be voided due to no-shows or additional position changes (position change implies the initial check generated was not aligned with position worked). Between commencing in 2019, through the November 2022 General Election, Broward County voided approximately 4,800 checks which cost approximately \$65,000 in fees. Furthermore, it caused significant staff time to reconcile the payroll data and undertake the void process.

Beyond the overall satisfaction derived from same day pay, Broward County SOE was determined to overcome the trials brought forth by the newly adopted method.

### **Zelle Implementation**

For the March 2023 Municipal Election, Broward County deployed the pilot program of issuing election worker pay electronically via Zelle. This new approach was designed to maintain timely pay for poll workers, while promoting efficiency and cost savings for the organization.

Zelle is a payment application that allows users to send and receive money instantly and for free. No additional fees are included; it is typically integrated into the online banking system. It is currently incorporated into approximately 1,700 online banking applications. If a recipient does not bank with a Zelle partner, they can use the stand-alone application. Zelle allows for instant access to funds, whereas no recipient banking information needs to be collected. It is a secure method of funds transfer, as the application utilizes authentication and monitoring features. Zelle does not convey its transactions to the Internal Revenue Service; the laws requiring such reporting do not apply to Zelle. There are no taxes imposed on these transactions by Zelle. Any applicable taxes are calculated by Broward County SOE and withheld prior to the transfer of funds.

<https://www.zellepay.com/>

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Broward County initiated the Zelle implementation process by working closely with our banking institution. This started approximately nine months prior to the March Municipal Election, as it was imperative to fully understand and grasp the concepts of what the process entails. Internal departments also worked closely with each other to determine the feasibility and practicality of implementing this new strategy. Refer to [Attachment A](#) for details on the Implementation, Testing, and Payroll phases.

### **Poll Worker Experience**

Change is usually met with some growing pains, and the implementation of our new pay procedure was no different. We found that the initial responses from our poll workers varied. We hire approximately 4,000 workers to staff a county-wide election, and they represent a myriad of ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some were completely amenable to the idea, while others balked at the switch.

Our full-time staff quickly realized that one of the hurdles to overcome was poll workers' lack of understanding of what Zelle is and how it works, and the most effective way to communicate this was through time spent talking to workers. We tried to convey the message through our website, through emails, and we recognized that sometimes there is just no substitute for a good one-on-one conversation. These talks encouraged some poll workers to set up bank accounts solely for the purpose of receiving their Election Day payments. Our staff worked diligently to alleviate any concerns and provided supporting information as needed to make the transition as seamless as possible for the poll workers. Admittedly, even with coaching, some of the more-seasoned workers were not willing or able to adapt to the new procedure, and this fostered an opportunity to bring in new poll workers who were ready and excited to embrace technological advances.

Most of our Election Day workforce was elated with the idea. They appreciated the concept of having funds deposited directly into their accounts shortly after Election Day, without any additional effort. They valued the elimination of bank visits and the reduction in time to receive funds (funds may not be fully available upon manual check deposit).

Within ten minutes of initiating the funds transfer, poll workers were reporting receipt of funds. No significant issues were reported. The Zelle process was deemed a rousing success!

### **Conclusion**

The decision to implement Zelle for poll worker pay was made after substantial planning and due diligence. The efficiency, time and cost savings achieved with the conversion proved significant and valuable. Staff now can spend their time prior to Election Day more constructively, preparing for a seamless election. The payments disbursed to poll workers are based on actual real-time data: who showed up to work, for a full or partial day, and for the correct positions. Voiding of checks will no longer occupy excess time or incur additional (and possibly unbudgeted) expenses. Overall, Broward County achieved our objective with this new strategy, while we continue in our pursuit of accuracy, excellence, and providing the best possible service to our voters and to our Election Day workers.

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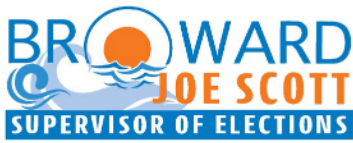
### Attachment A

#### *Implementation and Testing:*

- With the assistance of our Information Technology Department, the necessary program was installed on the Finance Department's computers by the banking institution. This program allowed for the conversion of the payroll data to the specific format required for uploading to the banking institution's system (funds transfer .txt file).
- A series of testing was conducted to verify the program was functioning appropriately. Testing also included understanding of the naming convention, formatting requirements, and establishing the timeframe for recipient receipt of funds.
- A few weeks prior to Election Day, the Election Day Operations Department provided data to the Finance Department to perform a penny test. Data required for funds transfer includes the name of each recipient, the amount, and the respective Zelle information (cell phone or email address).
- Data received was entered into the banking institution's program, a specifically formatted report was generated and uploaded to the banking institution's system to initiate funds transfer. A penny was sent to each recipient via Zelle, to determine the validity of each account. Recipients reported whether the penny was received.
- Twenty-four hours following the funds transfer, a report was downloaded from the banking institution detailing the status of each transaction. Any discrepancies noted were resolved immediately.

#### *Payroll Processing:*

- By noon following Election Day, the Election Day Operations Department provided completed templates to the Finance Department with all the required Zelle information. At this point, reconciliations were conducted to determine who should be paid, for which positions, and for what amounts. [See Attachment B](#)
- The Finance Department immediately performed quality control procedures on the data received. These procedures check the validity of the data provided and ensure it is formatted appropriately for processing via our payroll company. The payroll company's system has specific data and formatting requirements.
- The Finance Department processed the payroll via the payroll company, at which time applicable taxes were calculated. This process reported the transactions to the necessary reporting entities (i.e., Internal Revenue Service), as well as maintained and documented them for W-2 purposes. Note: no disbursements were performed. Payroll registers/reports were generated.
- Data from the payroll company's registers/reports was sent to the banking institution's program, and the funds transfer file was created. This file consisted of all the required data needed to process the funds transfer. The file also included an assigned number for each transaction, generated by the program.
- The funds transfer file was uploaded to the banking institution's system, which initiated the request for funds transfer. Within ten minutes, poll workers were reporting receipt of their pay in their bank accounts.
- Within one week of funds transfer, pay stubs generated by the payroll company's system were mailed to each recipient.



**Attachment B**

Completed template received from Election Day Operations Department for processing payroll. Zelle requires name, amount, and cell phone or email address. Other data is required for processing payroll via the payroll company.

Pw_Soc_Sec_num	Last_Name	First_Name	Address	City	State	Zip_Code	Gender	Birth_Day	Precinct	Total_Wages	PW	Email	Cell Phone.
XXX-XX-XXXX	Strange	Steven	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00A012	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Richards	Reed	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00F008	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Storm	Johny	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00A001	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Banner	Bruce	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	M	5/24/1991	00W015	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Roger	Steve	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	M	5/24/1991	00A007	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Starke	Tony	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00A004	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Bobby	Ricky	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	M	5/24/1991	00F005	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Summers	Scott	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00F002	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Wayne	Bruce	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00W003	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Romo	Natasha	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00W018	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Pim	Henry	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00F001	230.00	A	<a href="mailto:rjuman@browardvotes.gov">rjuman@browardvotes.gov</a>	
XXX-XX-XXXX	Ordanson	Thor	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00A008	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Gray	Gene	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00W002	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Xavier	Charles	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00W007	230.00	A		9543578683
XXX-XX-XXXX	Maximoff	Wanda	115 S Andrew Ave	Fort Lauderdale	FL	33301	F	5/24/1991	00W005	230.00	A		9543578683

**From:** [Auto-Receipt](#)  
**To:** [Patricia Santiago](#)  
**Subject:** Transaction Receipt from Election Center for \$75.00 (USD)  
**Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2023 4:19:41 PM

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#### Order Information

Description: Election Center Payment  
Invoice Number 20230608151353179

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#### Billing Information

Broward County Supvrs of Elections  
Broward County Supervisor of Elections  
115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 102  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
United States  
psantiago@browardvotes.gov  
954-712-1950  
Fax: 954-357-7070

#### Shipping Information

Joe Scott  
Broward County Supervisor of Elections  
1501 N.W. 40th Avenue  
Lauderhill, FL 33313  
United States

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**Total: \$75.00 (USD)**

#### Payment Information

Date/Time: 8-Jun-2023 13:18:33 PDT  
Transaction ID: 64416187966  
Payment Method: Visa xxxx3943  
Transaction Type: Purchase  
Auth Code: 010039

#### Merchant Contact Information

Election Center  
Katy, TX 77450  
US  
services@electioncenter.org