

**TRIENNIAL ASSEMBLY 2021
ELIGIBLE VOTING MEMBERS
ELECTIONS POLICY DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Purpose

The purpose of this “Elections Policy Due to Covid-19 Pandemic” is to formalize procedures and best practices to ensure the greatest participation of voting members for the election of the Officers of the General Grand Chapter for the 2021-2024 Triennium.

Cancellation of the in-person 50th GGC Triennial Assembly

The in-person General Grand Chapter 50th Triennial Assembly "Circle of Friendship & Service Around the World" for October 29 to November 5, 2021, Salt Lake City, Utah, has been **CANCELED** due to health and safety restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are being made for a limited, two-day Virtual Assembly to be conducted November 3-4, 2021.

Constitutional Requirements

Due to Governmental health and safety restrictions for Covid, there are certain GGC Constitutional requirements that cannot be met. The General Grand Chapter will find the best possible measures to follow the Constitution as closely as possible. The Covid-19 pandemic situation is unique. The modifications to our normal procedures are for the specific situation that exists and are acceptable for the 50th Triennial Assembly only. The General Grand Chapter is fortunate to have a very capable Jurisprudence Committee to oversee these efforts and to advise on the best possible measures.

Registration

The NEW deadline for Registration is postmarked by September 1, 2021. Members who are eligible to vote must register in order to vote.

Voting members will be given a choice of electronic or mail-in ballot voting. These two choices are available on the updated Registration Form. Voters should note that the choice made cannot be changed at a later date.

Members Who Are Entitled to Vote

- All Officers of the General Grand Chapter.
- The Worthy Grand Matron, Worthy Grand Patron, Associate Grand Matron and Associate Grand Patron of Grand Chapters under General Grand Chapter.
- The three (3) Worthy Matrons elected and installed during the current Triennium of each Subordinate Chapter directly under the jurisdiction of the General Grand Chapter.
- All Past Grand Matrons and Past Grand Patrons of Grand Chapters under General Grand Chapter.
- The Deputies to the Most Worthy Grand Matron and Most Worthy Grand Patron appointed for the current Triennium, unless they are a Worthy Matron during the current Triennium. If so, they are a voting delegate as a Worthy Matron not a Deputy. They do not get two votes.

Proxy Voting

The Jurisprudence Committee are in agreement that there is no need for proxy voting in the election of the 2021-2024 General Grand Chapter Officers: *"Because the election of General Grand Chapter officers will not be conducted in person such that every voting member will be able to participate, the appointment of proxies under Article VI of the Constitution has been deemed unnecessary such that there will be no proxy voting in this election."*

Voting Procedures

The voting procedures for the elections of Officers for the 2021-2024 Triennium will be held by electronic ballot or mail-in ballot.

- Those Voting Members who have already registered and paid the \$25 fee will receive an updated Registration form via email to make their choice for either electronic or mail-in voting and return the form to the Registration Chairman.
- Those Voting Members who have not yet registered and who wish to vote, a link to the updated Registration Form is available on the GGC website www.easternstar.org under the Triennial Assembly tab. The Registration fee is \$25.00 US and the method of payment is specified on the form.

ELECTRONIC BALLOTING

The General Grand Chapter is committed to ensuring that all Voting Members are able to participate in a secret ballot election for the 2021-2024 General Grand Chapter officers. The GGC Elections Committee has chosen *Election Buddy* as a third-party provider for the electronic online voting technology. The Election Buddy platform provides confidential and secure elections, and has been successfully used by thousands of organizations. The Election Buddy electronic balloting system can be accessed from any Internet enabled device. This system is confidential, secure, and meets the conditions for balloting in compliance with GGC voting procedures to the fullest possible extent under the circumstances.

Unique Ballot Identifier

Each eligible Voting Member will be assigned a unique Ballot Identifier in order to vote and that Identifier will be specified in the email notice received by the Voting Member. It is essential Voting Members use this unique Ballot Identifier to cast their vote for their vote to count. If two or more voting members share an email address, they can both cast their votes using their unique Ballot ID. If two individuals try to use the same Ballot ID, they will be informed that they have already voted. It is important to be careful and only use the unique Ballot Identifier that has been assigned to you as a verified, eligible voter.

Electronic Voting Notifications

Pre-Notification: The General Grand Chapter Elections Administrator will send out an email notification of the upcoming election reminding voters of the upcoming election.

1. At the opening of elections, Election Buddy will send an email to all registered eligible Voting Members who have chosen to cast their ballots electronically. The email will contain a unique Ballot Identifier, instructions for voting and the link to use to vote.
2. If you do not receive this email on October 31st from Election Buddy, check your spam folder or Google Calendar.
3. If members are concerned about missing this important email, one option is to add invitations@mail.electionbuddy.com to your contact list. This can help the email link for your ballot to arrive in your inbox.
4. If members do not receive their ballot, contact the Administrator, Larry Holmes at elholmes971@gmail.com

Electronic Balloting OPEN

- .. **Electronic balloting will OPEN Sunday, October 31, 2021, at 12:01am, Eastern Daylight Time.**

Electronic Balloting CLOSED

- .. **Electronic balloting will CLOSE Tuesday, November 2, 2021, at 4:00pm, Eastern Daylight Time.**

ALL ELECTRONIC BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED DURING THIS SPECIFIED VOTING PERIOD TO BE COUNTED.

All electronic voting delegates are reminded that it is critical for General Grand Chapter to have your correct email address. If your email address changes prior to September 1, 2021, you must notify the Registration Chairman immediately to ensure email receipt of instructions to access your electronic ballot to be able to vote.

MAIL-IN BALLOTING

Mail-in balloting is being made available to increase participation of voting members who do not have access to a reliable Internet connection and/or those who do not have the option of accessing the electronic voting system.

Please note: Mail-in ballots will only be available to U.S or Canadian residents due to USPS mail issues.

All members who are eligible to vote must register in order to vote. There are two choices on the updated Registration Form: electronic or mail in. Voting Members requesting to vote by mail should indicate that choice on their registration form and return the completed form with the registration fee to the Registration Chairman shown on the form. **Voters should note that the choice made for either mail-in or electronic ballot cannot be changed at a later date.**

- Those Voting Members who have already registered and paid the \$25 fee will receive an updated Registration form via email to make their choice, electronic or mail-in voting, and return the form to the Registration Chairman.
- Those Voting Members who have not yet registered and who wish to vote, a link to the updated Registration Form is available on the GGC website www.easternstar.org under the Triennial Assembly tab. The Registration fee is \$25.00 US and the method of payment is specified on the form.

If at all possible, Voting members are encouraged to cast their ballots using the electronic voting system to avoid unforeseen delays in postal service.

Mail-in Balloting OPEN

- ❖ Mail-in ballots will be mailed as soon as possible following the close of Registration of September 1, 2021. Mail-in balloting opens when you receive your ballot in the mail.

Mail-in Balloting CLOSED

- ❖ **You must return your ballot by mail to be received before October 31st for your mail-in vote to be included in the final tabulations.** Mail your ballot to the GGC International Headquarters in the pre-addressed envelope which will be provided. Ballots received after October 31, 2021 will not be counted.

ALL MAIL-IN BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED AT HEADQUARTERS BY OCTOBER 31, 2021, TO BE COUNTED.

This schedule for mail-in balloting is necessary to allow time for counting the ballots received in the mail in order to announce the final election results on Wednesday, November 3, 2021.

All voting delegates are reminded that it is critical for General Grand Chapter to have your correct mailing address. If your mailing address changes prior to September 1, 2021, you must notify the Registration Chairman immediately to ensure receipt of your mail-in ballot for you to be able to vote.

Unfortunately, due to the uncertainty of the national and international postal services, there could be unforeseen and lengthy delays for mail-in ballots. Please take this possibility into consideration. Any and all ballots received after October 31st will not be counted.

Completed mail-in ballots are to be mailed to the GGC International Headquarters. A secure process has been put into place to ensure all mail-in ballots received by October 31st will be processed. The GGC Teller Committee will enter mail-in ballots into the electronic balloting system. The data entry will be supervised and verified for accuracy for an impartial, secure and valid election results. The privacy of the secret ballot process that takes place with in-person voting has been taken into consideration and members can be assured that all reasonable and possible secure measures have been taken to replicate this privacy.

Ballot Tabulation and Results

The GGC Red Book states a candidate who receives the majority of votes cast is elected. The following procedures will apply to the process of ballot tabulations:

- Offices with one candidate/nominee for the office. The candidate/nominee will be declared elected by acclamation.
- Offices with two candidates/nominees. For offices with two candidates/nominees, the candidate who receives the largest number of ballot votes will be declared elected.
- Offices with three or more candidates/nominees. For offices where there may be three or more candidates/nominees, the voting process used will be a preferential vote.
- Preferential vote. On a preferential vote ballot, each voter will be required to enter their vote in the order of preference for the office. For example, if there is one vacancy and three (3) candidates, each voter will vote their choice in order of preference: 1 – 2 – 3. Instructions will be given on the ballot.
- The first preference marked by the voter on each ballot counts as a vote for that particular candidate and the votes are tallied. If no candidate receives a majority (greater than 50% of the total valid ballots), the candidate with the fewest number of votes is eliminated. The ballots for the eliminated candidate are re-tabulated to the ballot's second preference. The process continues until a majority of votes is reached by one of the candidates and that candidate is declared elected. This process is in accordance with the requirements specified in the GGC Red Book.

Candidates

All candidates for an Elected Office in General Grand Chapter must be nominated in writing by the Worthy Grand Matron, Worthy Grand Patron and attested by the Grand Secretary. Also to be included is a letter from the candidate stating their agreement to be nominated and willingness to serve if elected. **The letters must be postmarked by the May 31, 2021 deadline.** No additional nominations will be accepted after June 1, 2021. Please contact the Right Worthy Grand Secretary at rwgsecretary@easternstar.org for complete instructions regarding the nomination process.

If desired, candidates may provide a photograph of themselves to be included with electronic voting online or with the mail-in voting by mail. The photograph cannot be larger than 5MB and must be in .jpg format in order to be included online. Candidates may also submit a short biography of information for the voters. The recommended limit is 150 words or less. Please contact the Right Worthy Grand Secretary at rwgsecretary@easternstar.org if there are any questions.

The names of the candidates for office and their information will be posted in a link on the General Grand Chapter website www.easternstar.org under the Triennial tab.

DEADLINES & VOTING SCHEDULE

May 31, 2021	Deadline for Nominees/Candidates to have the required information to the MWGM, MWGP & RWG Secretary.
September 1, 2021	Postmark deadline for Registration.
September 1, 2021.	Deadline email or mailing address changes to Registration Chairman for Registered Voting Delegates.
October 31, 2021	Deadline for Mail-in Ballots to be received at GGC Headquarters in D.C.
October 31, 2021, 12:01AM, EDT	Electronic balloting opens.
November 2, 2021, 4:00PM, EDT	Electronic balloting closes.
November 3 rd , 2021	Announcement of Election results.
November 4, 2021	Installation of 2021-2024 Officers

ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the elections will be announced by the MWGM Marianne R. Shenefelt and MWGP Henry S. Martin on Wednesday, November 3rd. The results will be posted on the General Grand Chapter website as soon as possible.

The Installation of the 2021-2024 GGC Officers will take place on November 4, 2021. Additional information regarding Installation may be available from RWAGM Glenda Winchester and RWAGP Lon Lowry.

General Grand Chapter Elections Committee
Richard Ashby, PGP, GGC Parliamentarian RPP, Chairman

Approved: Marianne R. Shenefelt, MWGM

Revised 6/2021