U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

Voting Section – 4CON
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530

July 9, 2026

VIA FIRST-CLASS MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Manuel DeBrito
Election Commissioner
133 William Street, Room 114
New Bedford, MA 02740
Manuel.Debrito@newbedford-ma.gov;
Election@newbedford-ma.gov

RE: Election Information and Monitoring for 2026 Federal Primary Election

Dear Mr. DeBrito:

We write to request information regarding the City of New Bedford's administration of federal elections. We are requesting this information to evaluate your compliance with the voter assistance requirements of the Voting Rights Act ("VRA").

The public use file released with the Census Bureau's December 2021 determinations under Section 203 of the VRA identified a significant population of limited-English proficient ("LEP") United States citizens of voting-age in New Bedford. An estimated 4.5 percent of the city's voting-age Hispanic citizens are LEP. Nearly one-third of all voting-age citizens who speak Spanish are LEP. Although New Bedford is not yet covered by Section 203, it is required under Section 208 of the VRA to ensure that voters who request assistance, including LEP, elderly, illiterate, and physically disabled individuals, are allowed to receive assistance from the person of their choice.

Please provide us with the requested information by August 8, 2026:

1. Precinct Lists. In electronic format (.csv, .xls or .txt), a list of precincts and polling places scheduled for use in the September 1, 2026 primary election ("2026 primary election").

2. Maps. SHAPE or other digital files of City precinct boundaries for the 2026 primary election.

3. Voter Lists. In electronic format, a current list of registered voters (first and last names) to be used for the 2026 primary election. Please specify what delimiter was used for the lists, if any, or provide a file layout. The voter list will facilitate identification of voting precincts with LEP voters.

4. Voting Materials. Electronic copies of all voting materials made available to voters: (a) by mail; (b) through the voter registration system; (c) on the City's website; and (d) at polling places for the 2026 primary election.

5. Poll Official Training. Please provide the current poll official training manual.

As part of our assessment of your administration of the federal primary election, we plan to have election monitors at your 2026 primary election. We will contact you a week prior to the election monitoring to discuss the particulars of the monitoring effort.

If you have any questions or concerns about the election monitoring or the information request, please contact Timothy Mellett, Deputy Chief, Voting Section at (202) 598-0469 or timothy.f.mellett@usdoj.gov. We appreciate your cooperation in providing this information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Timothy Mellett

Timothy Mellett
Deputy Chief, Voting Section
U.S. Department of Justice
Timothy.f.mellett@usdoj.gov