

Office of Elections

Mission

To provide each resident of Fairfax County with the opportunity to exercise his or her right to vote in an efficient and equitable manner in accordance with the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Code of Virginia.

Connection to the Countywide Strategic Plan

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The Countywide Strategic Plan serves as a road map to help guide future work, focusing on the 10 Community Outcome Areas that represent the issues of greatest importance to the community. In February of 2023, the first Annual Report on the work of the strategic plan was released to the public. The report contains point-in-time progress highlights for each of the proposed plan strategies, plus a sample data dashboard and data story that is being replicated across all of the outcome areas, and a number of additional initiatives to embed the elements of the plan within department-level work. The report also includes a Year Two Implementation Model, which focuses on identifying the specific strategies that will move forward to implementation under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan. The Office of Elections primarily supports the following Community Outcome Area:



Community Outcome Area	Vision Statement
Effective and Efficient Government	<i>All people trust that their government responsibly manages resources, is responsible to their needs, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them.</i>

Focus

The Office of Elections is guided by policy set by the State Board of Elections, the State Department of Elections, and the Fairfax County Electoral Board, and is administered by the General Registrar. The Office supports the electoral process which provides Fairfax County citizens with a critical channel to have a voice in their government. The Office is required to conduct fair and transparent elections that accurately reflect the intent of the electorate to ensure continued confidence in the integrity of the electoral process. The Office has two primary statutory functions: voter registration and conducting elections. Additionally, the Office coordinates ballot access for local candidates and ensures that voters and citizens are appropriately informed of upcoming elections and changes in electoral procedures and laws.

The Office provides year-round voter registration and community engagement activities. Using a State maintained statewide database, the Virginia Elections and Registration Information System (VERIS), the Office determines the eligibility of voters, maintains the voter registration records database, certifies candidate nominating petitions, processes absentee ballot applications, and provides public information and access to electronic lists of registered voters and absentee applicants. In addition to the main location at the Government Center, the Office also manages 16 absentee voting locations each fall to ensure that residents throughout the County have access to in-person registration and absentee voting services.



The Office manages the logistics of conducting and certifying elections by recruiting and training election officers, preparing voting equipment, overseeing polling places, preparing ballots, compiling election returns, and posting unofficial election results on the agency's website on election night. The Office develops voter information and procedures, in four languages, to comply with federal and state laws, responds to Freedom of Information Act requests, suggestions and complaints from voters, campaigns, candidates, elected officials, and the press.

The workload and related expenses in the Office of Elections correspond to the offices up for election in a given year, the number of voter registrations, as well as the election turnout and the number of absentee ballots received. The Office is responsible for analyzing these variables and for developing plans and programs to facilitate successful elections.

During the past three years, the Office adapted quickly and effectively to accommodate significant changes in voting patterns that resulted from the no-excuse absentee voting legislation that took effect on July 1, 2020. This new legislation permits all registered voters to vote absentee early in person or by mail without a reason or excuse, which resulted in a significant increase in absentee voting compared with previous elections. The Office also responded effectively to legislation that took effect on July 1, 2021, that enabled voters to receive absentee ballots by mail on an ongoing basis without submitting an application for each election. Changes in absentee voting laws will be a major budget driver going forward.

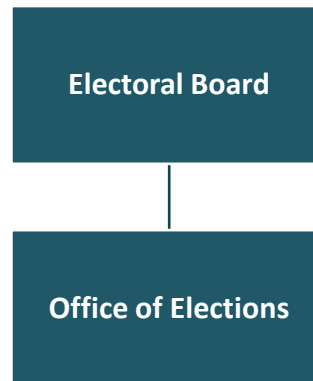
During FY 2023, the Office implemented improvements to its voter registration list management processes. As part of this effort, an address update request letter was mailed to approximately 69,000 voters whose redistricting mailing notices were returned as undeliverable by the U.S. Post Office. The purpose was to give voters the opportunity to update their address within Fairfax County and request to be removed from the voter list if they had moved out of Virginia, or to another jurisdiction in Virginia. This was a very successful initiative with over 17,000 responses including more than 10,000 individuals who asked to be removed from the voter list because they had moved to another state.

The Office also implemented several successful initiatives in FY 2023, including expanded communication efforts, technology efficiencies for reporting election information, the addition of extensive FAQs on its website, and restructuring and reallocating of some key positions. The Office also purchased and implemented a new ballot-on-demand system for in-person early voting locations that improved the check-in process for the large increase in early voters, and efficiently and accurately issued 264 different ballot styles to voters at a cost significantly lower than ordering pre-printed ballots.

Same Day Registration (SDR) legislation took effect October 18, 2022, which enables voters to register to vote and immediately cast provisional ballots at in-person early voting locations after the voter registration books closed on October 17, and at their polling place on Election Day. This new program resulted in more than 3,900 SDRs and more than double the number of provisional ballots compared with the previous year.

In future years, the Office anticipates changes in legislation will continue to place an increasing financial burden on the agency highlighting the impact of unbudgeted programs.

Organizational Chart



Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted	FY 2023 Revised	FY 2024 Advertised	FY 2024 Adopted
FUNDING					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$3,682,129	\$4,333,724	\$5,666,297	\$5,989,499	\$6,119,511
Operating Expenses	2,681,340	2,754,137	4,695,559	2,758,137	2,758,137
Capital Equipment	13,193	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$6,376,662	\$7,087,861	\$10,361,856	\$8,747,636	\$8,877,648
Income:					
State Shared General Registrar Expenses	\$192,649	\$85,806	\$140,861	\$153,421	\$153,421
Election Filing Fees	0	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
Total Income	\$192,649	\$87,406	\$142,461	\$155,021	\$155,021
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$6,184,013	\$7,000,455	\$10,219,395	\$8,592,615	\$8,722,627
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	32 / 32	32 / 32	32 / 32	34 / 34	34 / 34
Exempt	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6

FY 2024 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2024 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the Budget on May 9, 2023.

Employee Compensation \$307,310

An increase of \$307,310 in Personnel Services includes \$254,016 for a 5.44 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$25,309 for performance-based and longevity increases, and the remaining \$27,985 to support employee retention and recruitment efforts that will reduce pay compression and align the County's pay structures with the market based on benchmark data.

Essential Positions \$153,699

An increase of \$153,699 and 2/2.0 FTE new positions, including \$149,699 in Personnel Services and \$4,000 in Operating Expenses, is included for an Assistant Absentee Manager to support additional needs in absentee voting and an Information Technology Analyst position to support

increasing information technology needs. It should be noted that an increase of \$78,833 in Fringe Benefits is included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. For more information on Fringe Benefits, refer to the Agency 89, Employee Benefits, narrative in the Nondepartmental program area section of Volume 1.

Staffing for Satellite Locations, Absentee Ballot Processing and Voting Equipment \$637,273

An increase of \$637,273 in Personnel Services to support non-merit staffing for satellite locations, to process absentee ballots and to support voting equipment. It should be noted that an increase of \$38,019 in Fringe Benefits is included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. For more information on Fringe Benefits, refer to the Agency 89, Employee Benefits, narrative in the Nondepartmental program area section of Volume 1.

Stipends for Satellite Election Officers and Non-Merit Pay Increases \$323,097

An increase of \$323,097 in Personnel Services includes \$123,000 for stipends for Satellite Election Officers for primary and special elections and \$200,097 to support pay increases for non-merit staff. The Office has been notified by the state that satellite staff must be compensated via stipends instead of as hourly workers to maintain compliance with state requirements.

Election Officer Stipends \$335,700

Consistent with actions approved by the Board of Supervisors as part of the *FY 2022 Carryover Review*, an increase of \$335,700 in Personnel Services is included to support Election Officer stipend increases for General Elections.

General Registrar Salary \$63,325

An increase of \$63,325 in Personnel Services is included to increase the salary of the General Registrar as approved by the state. The state mandated salary for the General Registrar increased to \$173,676 in FY 2024. It should be noted that this increase is offset by revenue.

Targeted Vacancy Savings (\$30,617)

A decrease of \$30,617 is included to recognize targeted vacancy savings. Although the County has taken actions to reduce the vacancy rate, it is anticipated that vacancies will remain high for the foreseeable future, generating flexibility in agency budgets.

**Changes to
FY 2023**

Adopted

Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2022 Carryover Review, FY 2023 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2023.

Carryover Adjustments \$2,084,480

As part of the *FY 2022 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$2,084,480 including \$335,700 in Personnel Services to address Election Officer Stipends, \$300,000 in Operating Expenses to support the Office's section of Morrisette Warehouse, and the remaining \$1,448,780 was included as encumbered carryover mainly associated with mailing services, election software, voting equipment carts, and voting machine batteries.

Third Quarter Adjustments \$1,189,515

As part of the *FY 2023 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$1,189,515, including \$581,318 to support non-merit staffing increases, \$474,392 to support the costs of the Special Election and June Primaries, \$78,750 to support mailers for polling place and name changes, and \$55,055 to support the state-mandated salary increase for the General

