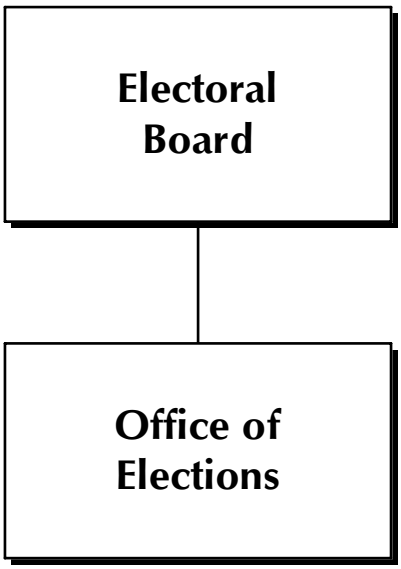
Office of Elections



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.

Focus

The success of the democratic process requires fair and open elections, which accurately reflect the will of the electorate. It is the responsibility of this agency to provide all Fairfax County residents with the means to have a voice in their government by offering:

- The opportunity to register to vote;
- The opportunity to vote in a convenient, accessible location;
- The opportunity to vote by using secure, accurate and user-friendly equipment that is equally accessible to all voters, including those with disabilities;
- A means for absentee voting for those voters unable to go to the polls on Election Day;
- Knowledgeable and helpful staff and poll workers;
- Accurate and timely reporting of election results; and
- A responsible use of available funding and resources.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Strategic issues for the agency include:

- Providing a comprehensive program of voter registration, outreach, and education;
- Maintaining secure and accurate records to ensure a resident's legal right to vote;
- Intensifying recruiting efforts focusing on volunteers fluent in multiple languages to assist staff and to serve as election officers and assistant registrars;
- Utilizing a variety of electronic media for contacting and training election officers;
- Providing secure, accurate, and user-friendly equipment accessible to all voters;
- Maintaining convenient and accessible polling places and absentee voting sites; and
- Replacing outdated paper-based records with electronic technology, where permitted by law.

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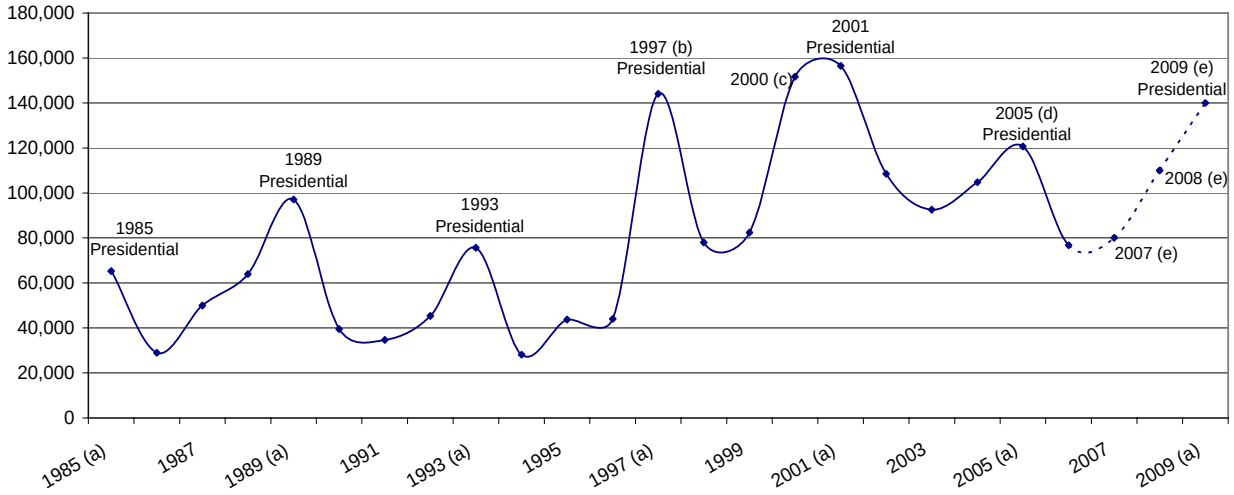
The election administration function of the Office of Elections manages the logistics for conducting and certifying elections by preparing election equipment, overseeing polling places, recruiting and training election officers, preparing ballots, providing information to the public, and posting unofficial election results on the agency's Web site on election night. It also receives, audits, and provides public access to the candidates' campaign contribution and expenditure reports.

The voter registration function of the Office of Elections determines eligibility of voters, develops policies and procedures in accordance with federal and state laws, maintains the voter registration records and the street file database, offers a comprehensive program of year-round voter registration, processes absentee ballot applications, certifies candidates' nominating petitions and processes local candidate qualification forms, maintains the Web site for public information, and provides public information and access to electronic lists of registered voters.

In FY 2008, the agency will conduct: (1) a November general election to elect nine members of the Virginia Senate, 17 members of the House of Delegates, 10 members of the Board of Supervisors, 12 members of the School Board, the Commonwealth's Attorney, the Sheriff, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, and three directors of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District; (2) a February primary election for the nomination of candidates for office of President of the United States; (3) three town elections in May to elect mayors and town council members in the Towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna; (4) a June primary election, if called by one or more political parties, to select nominees for Congressional offices; and (5) any special election(s) which may be required. The number of voter registration applications and absentee ballot requests is a direct function of population growth and voter interest in these elections, which in turn causes cyclical fluctuations in agency workload.

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS PROCESSED BY FISCAL YEAR IN FAIRFAX COUNTY



(a) Presidential Election occurred in this fiscal year.

(b) National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) adopted.

(c) Application totals increased due to four month study when all DMV forms came directly to the agency.

(d) Application totals decreased due to DMV's new "Print On Demand" (POD) applications.

(e) Projected numbers are shown with a dotted line.

FY 2008 presents three issues that could significantly increase the agency's workload:

(1) **Implementation and functionality of the new Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS):** The Federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) mandated a new electronic voter registration system by January 1, 2006. VERIS replaces the Virginia Voter Registration System (VVRS), which maintained the official voter registration records for all jurisdictions in Virginia, but did not meet some HAVA requirements, requiring development of a new system. Initial user acceptance testing of VERIS identified numerous deficiencies and implementation was delayed. Functionality issues with the system remain, however, requiring further modification in order to limit the increase to transaction processing time. Even if these issues are addressed, additional staff time will be required for system training and integration and to accommodate inherent process extensions required to comply with federal legislation.

(2) **Legal Requirements Related to Voting Equipment:** Potential state and/or federal legislation regarding voting equipment is a major factor that could have significant financial ramifications for Fairfax County. Legislation from the Virginia General Assembly requiring voting machines certified for use in Virginia to produce a contemporaneous voter verifiable paper receipt continues to be a possibility. Passage would require a large capital outlay for equipment to retrofit or replace the existing voting machines, as well as additional warehouse space and storage/transportation containers. Personnel requirements would increase for the handling, maintenance, pre-election testing, and set-up of the additional equipment. Ongoing operating expenses would include paper roll supplies and printer maintenance. Legislation may also be introduced that would decertify certain types of voting equipment or declare them to be obsolete. At this time, a host of legislative mandates are possible, all of which could create significant financial obligations that the agency would not be able to accommodate within existing resources. The agency continues to closely monitor pending legislation to assess any local impact.

(3) **Presidential Primaries:** In February 2008, both major political parties will likely hold primary elections to select candidates for the office of President of the United States. Great public interest will bring a high level of activity before the election as well as a large turnout at the polls, creating additional staff requirements in both the office and at the polls.

Utilizing new, fully-tested technology is a key factor in providing superior service to County voters. In FY 2005 and FY 2006, the agency leased an electronic look-up device for each precinct, which enabled election officers to quickly assist voters in determining their assigned precinct without monopolizing County phone lines. The look-up device was the first step toward implementation of an electronic pollbook. The e-pollbook has a tremendous potential to increase accuracy, accelerate the check-in process at polling places, and assist voters who are at the wrong location. With the implementation of VERIS, the agency expects to introduce barcode technology into a number of processes, including the tracking of absentee ballots and returned voter confirmation cards. Bar-coding should greatly reduce processing time associated with these functions. The agency will be assessing other operational areas to determine where additional efficiencies may be identified.

Security, equity, identity, and privacy issues continue to be a priority with the implementation of new registration and voting technology. The agency is working closely with the State Board of Elections, the Virginia Information Technologies Agency, the County's Department of Information Technology, and vendors to ensure that these issues are being properly addressed. The growing County population and its diversity also present new challenges and concerns. The biggest challenge, however, will be to implement new mandates and manage change, while keeping costs down.

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New Initiatives and Recent Accomplishments in Support of the Fairfax County Vision

Connecting People and Places	Recent Success	FY 2008 Initiative
Continue to identify and develop new communication partnerships to provide innovative and cost-effective avenues for the ongoing dissemination of voter educational programs and materials.	☑	☑
Enhance public contact by continuing to expand interactive applications on the department's Web site and improving Web-based accessibility to comprehensive information regarding all departmental functions.	☑	☑
Creating a Culture of Engagement	**Recent Success**	**FY 2008 Initiative**
Introduced a comprehensive multi-media campaign to inform voters about absentee voting options in the County. Continue to encourage eligible voters to take advantage of absentee voting opportunities offered at multiple satellite voting locations throughout the County.	☑	☑
Provide staffing at local Department of Motor Vehicles Customer Service Centers and County governmental centers to decentralize services to the County's geographically dispersed customer base.		☑
Conduct a countywide mailing to all registered voters in order to: provide accurate, up-to-date polling location information; replace voter information cards produced prior to July 2004, which display social security numbers as the voter registration number; educate voters on the available methods for voter registration and absentee voting; and encourage voters to consider volunteering as an election officer.		☑
Exercising Corporate Stewardship	**Recent Success**	**FY 2008 Initiative**
Continue to review and revise emergency procedures and contingency plans for continuity of operations and responsiveness to pandemic or localized emergency events.	☑	☑
Implement barcode technology to track and process returned absentee ballots and voter confirmations, as well as manage voting equipment inventory and election night materials.		☑
Continue development, acquisition, and implementation planning for an electronic pollbook in order to ensure high quality customer service through prompt and accurate information availability.	☑	☑
Performed a comprehensive security analysis relative to all agency functions. Begin modifications to agency procedures.	☑	☑
Redirect operating funds to provide additional training and certification of staff to increase the number of cross-trained employees with technical and legal expertise.		☑

Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary				
Category	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	20/ 20	21/ 21	21/ 21	21/ 21
Exempt	4/ 4	3/ 3	3/ 3	3/ 3
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	$1,711,454	$1,910,655	$1,910,655	$2,277,191
Operating Expenses	420,255	540,606	621,728	886,837
Capital Equipment	704,905	704,906	704,906	0
Total Expenditures	**$2,836,614**	**$3,156,167**	**$3,237,289**	**$3,164,028**
Income:				
Publication Sales	$272	$4,610	$1,000	$1,000
State Shared General Registrar Expenses	71,775	105,612	105,612	107,724
Total Income	**$72,047**	**$110,222**	**$106,612**	**$108,724**
Net Cost to the County	**$2,764,567**	**$3,045,945**	**$3,130,677**	**$3,055,304**

Position Summary					
1	General Registrar E	1	Management Analyst II	1	Administrative Assistant V
2	Chiefs of Administrative Services E	1	IT Technician II	3	Administrative Assistants IV
		1	Administrative Associate	2	Administrative Assistants III
				7	Administrative Assistants II
				5	Election Specialists

TOTAL POSITIONS
24 Positions / 24.0 Staff Years **E Denotes Exempt Positions**

FY 2008 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2008 program:

- **Employee Compensation** **$74,538**
  An increase of $74,538 in Personnel Services is associated with salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program.

- **Personnel Services Reduction** **($19,852)**
  A decrease of $19,852 in Personnel Services as part of an across-the-board reduction to meet budget limitations based on available revenues as a result of a flattening residential real estate market.

- **Presidential Primary Election** **$350,000**
  An increase of $350,000 to conduct presidential primary elections in February 2008 is comprised of an increase of $311,850 in Personnel Services for election officers, staff overtime, and limited-term personnel to assist with election preparation and the processing of additional voter registrations, and an increase of $38,150 in Operating Expenses for additional postage, ballots, and other supplies required for an election.

- **Voter Mailing** **$275,000**
  An increase of $275,000 in Operating Expenses is for printing and postage costs associated with conducting a countywide mailing of new voter information cards, absentee voting educational materials, and election officer recruitment forms to all registered voters.

- **Voting Machines** **$30,000**
  An increase of $30,000 in Operating Expenses is for the purchase of 10 voting machines for two new precincts in the County.

- **PC Replacement Program** **$3,500**
  A net increase of $3,500 in Operating Expenses is for the PC Replacement Program, based on the number of PCs scheduled to be replaced in FY 2008, according to the four-year replacement cycle.

- **Intergovernmental Charges** **($419)**
  A decrease of $419 in Operating Expenses is based on lower than anticipated charges for motor pool costs from Department of Vehicle Services.

- **Carryover Adjustments** **($81,122)**
  A decrease of $81,122 in Operating Expenses is due to the carryover of one-time expenses as part of the *FY 2006 Carryover Review*.

Changes to FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2006 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2006:

- **Carryover Adjustments** **$81,122**
  As part of the FY 2006 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of $81,122 in Operating Expenses.

Key Performance Measures

Objectives

- To provide the legally mandated one voting machine for each 750 registered voters in each precinct with a minimum of three voting machines per precinct and a countywide average of 5.24 voting machines per precinct.

- To provide, at a minimum, three election officers at each polling place, with a countywide average of 8.81 election officers at each polling place based on the number of registered voters in the precinct and anticipated voter turnout.

- To maintain no less than 98.3 percent, the number of error-free data entry transactions initially completed for all voter registration documents processed, including all registrations, transfers, and address/name changes.

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Estimate/Actual	Current Estimate FY 2007	Future Estimate FY 2008
Output:					
Registered voters	591,964	633,034	620,000 / 611,183	630,000	645,700
Poll voters	186,874	413,606	293,000 / 258,165	331,500	258,280
Absentee voters	7,417	53,488	13,000 / 19,306	15,000	18,000
Precincts	223	224	224 / 224	225	227
Voting machines	953	1,180	1,180 / 1,168	1,180	1,190
Absentee satellites	6	7	7 / 7	7	7
Election officers	1,656	2,606	2,100 / 1,783	2,100	2,000
Registrations, transfers, and address/name changes processed	121,878	140,661	111,900 / 100,881	99,600	105,000
Efficiency:					
Cost of machines/precinct	$1,158	$1,428	$1,428 / $1,413	$1,415	$1,311
Cost of officers/precinct	$818	$1,238	$1,013 / $871	$1,004	$1,031
Cost per poll voter	$2.36	$1.44	$1.87 / $1.98	$1.65	$2.24
Cost per registration, transfer or address/name change processed (1)	$4.62	$4.75	$6.65 / $4.58	$6.41	$6.73
Service Quality:					
Percent of polling places that are handicapped accessible	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% / 99.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Percent of polling places that are in compliance (machines)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% / 100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Percent of polling places that are in compliance (size)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% / 100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Percent voter turnout	32.8%	73.8%	50.0% / 45.4%	55.0%	42.8%
Error rate	1.8%	1.7%	1.4% / 1.7%	1.4%	1.7%
Outcome:					
Registered voters/precinct	2,655	2,826	2,768 / 2,728	2,800	2,844
Machines/precinct	4.27	5.27	5.27 / 5.21	5.24	5.24
Officers/precinct	7.43	11.63	9.38 / 7.96	9.33	8.81
Percent of registrations, transfers, and address/name changes completed without error	98.2%	98.3%	98.6% / 98.3%	98.6%	98.3%

Note: Calculations are based on statistics for the November general elections, which occur every year.

(1) These FY 2007 and FY 2008 estimated costs per transaction (registration, transfer or address/name change processed) are projected to be at these higher rates if the proposed new state information system is implemented without significant modifications. Average time per transaction is uncertain at this time. The FY 2006 estimated cost per transaction was much lower since the new state information system was not implemented.

Performance Measurement Results

For the November 2005 general election: 1) 98.7 percent of all polling places were open on time and 100 percent of the precincts were open within 10 minutes of 6:00 a.m.; 2) 100 percent of precincts were staffed well above the legal mandate of three election officers per precinct, with the average precinct staffed with nearly eight officers; 3) all 224 precincts were equipped with an average of five voting machines per precinct or about one machine per 524 registered voters, which is approximately 30 percent above the statutory requirement of one machine for every 750 voters; and 4) of the 1,168 voting machines used in the election, less than 2 percent were out of service at any given time during the day.

A state funded accessibility survey conducted in early 2006 noted some minor accessibility barriers in several precincts. All of the identified barriers were removed early in FY 2007 so that 100 percent of the precincts complied with federal accessibility standards for the November 2006 general election.

In FY 2006, the actual number of applications received from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices was less than anticipated. The reduction in volume appears to stem from a combination of factors: 1) peak activity in the previous fiscal year, which included a presidential election; 2) implementation of a "Print on Demand" (POD) voter registration application form at DMV; and 3) the general slowing of housing activity in the County.

The State Board of Elections planned to implement the new Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS) by January 1, 2006. Cost per transaction estimates were based on this target date. Since VERIS was not implemented in FY 2006, the cost per computer transaction was well below the projected level. However, the future cost per transaction may increase significantly once VERIS is in place. VERIS includes mandated interfaces that may measurably increase processing times. As with the implementation of any new system, additional staff time must be factored in as personnel becomes familiar with the new processing requirements.

Statistical measures indicate a first-time data entry error free rate of 98.3 percent in FY 2006, slightly down from the target of 98.6 percent. This slight difference in the error rate can be attributed to the higher number of relatively inexperienced staff.

The number of computer transactions that were completed in FY 2006 was reduced from the FY 2005 (presidential election) level by 28 percent. For benchmark purposes, Arlington and Prince William Counties experienced less of a drop; however, the other four jurisdictions in the comparison sample had reductions ranging from 36 percent to 52 percent. Fairfax County completed over twice as many voter registration computer transactions than the nearest benchmarked jurisdiction.