

# 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 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, 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 called 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 14 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. In addition, the Office receives, audits, and provides public access to candidates' campaign contribution and expenditure reports. The Office also develops voter information and procedures to comply with federal and state laws, and responds to inquiries, suggestions and complaints from voters, campaigns, candidates, elected officials, and the press.

The workload and related expenses of the Office are related to 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.

In FY 2021, the Office of Elections successfully administered the 2020 Presidential Election with approximately 605,023 votes cast, including absentee voting. This year was impacted by significant changes in procedures due to the changes in election laws as well as the tremendous impact of implementing safeguards to protect staff and voters from COVID-19.

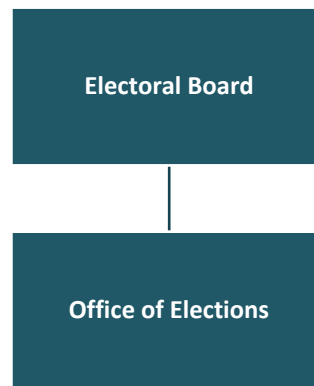
The Office also provided a sample ballot mailer to every registered voter in Fairfax County ahead of the 2020 November Presidential Election. The sample ballots contained critical information about each voters' selections, Voter ID requirements, and absentee locations and their polling places with the sample ballots. The Office will continue this practice for all elections.

In future years, the Office anticipates that the State Department of Elections (ELECT) will continue to reduce the amount of support provided. Additionally, changes in legislation are placing an increasing financial burden on the agency. These include the requirement to provide return postage for absentee ballots, changes in handling of materials requiring staffing and the need to implement security upgrades to the voting equipment.

**Pandemic Response and Impact**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Elections made significant adjustments, especially as it relates to staffing. The Office extended the time staff worked to prepare equipment (i.e., starting ten weeks out instead of six) due to limitations on access to the Logistics Center. Staff working hours were adjusted to account for the reduction of available part-time employees. Due to the increased demand for ballots by mail during the FY 2020 Presidential Election, postage and printing costs increased significantly. Citing concerns over exposure to COVID-19, several polling places became unavailable. This required staff to send notices to 15,000 voters identifying their new polling places.

**Organizational Chart**



**Budget and Staff Resources**

Category	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Adopted	FY 2021 Revised	FY 2022 Advertised	FY 2022 Adopted
<b>FUNDING</b>					
<b>Expenditures:</b>					
Personnel Services	\$3,844,436	\$3,488,888	\$4,512,138	\$3,630,571	\$3,665,458
Operating Expenses	1,370,487	1,504,637	3,321,651	1,509,137	1,509,137
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$5,214,923</b>	<b>\$4,993,525</b>	<b>\$7,833,789</b>	<b>\$5,139,708</b>	<b>\$5,174,595</b>
<b>Income:</b>					
State Shared General Registrar Expenses	\$781,909	\$85,806	\$85,806	\$85,806	\$85,806
Election Filing Fees	2,300	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$784,209</b>	<b>\$87,406</b>	<b>\$87,406</b>	<b>\$87,406</b>	<b>\$87,406</b>
<b>NET COST TO THE COUNTY</b>	<b>\$4,430,714</b>	<b>\$4,906,119</b>	<b>\$7,746,383</b>	<b>\$5,052,302</b>	<b>\$5,087,189</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	29 / 29	30 / 30	30 / 30	32 / 32	32 / 32
Exempt	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6

## FY 2022 Funding Adjustments

*The following funding adjustments from the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2022 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 4, 2021.*

**Employee Compensation** **\$34,887**  
An increase of \$34,887 in Personnel Services is included for a 1.00 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees effective July 2021.

**Financial Support Position** **\$91,627**  
An increase of 1/1.0 FTE new position and \$91,627 is associated with the addition of a Financial Specialist III position to address the increase in complexity of financial activity in the department. It should be noted that an increase of \$45,328 in Fringe Benefits funding is included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. For further information on Fringe Benefits, refer to the Agency 89, Employee Benefits, narrative in the Nondepartmental program area section of Volume 1.

**Machine Custodian Position** **\$54,556**  
An increase of 1/1.0 FTE new position and \$54,556 is associated with the addition of an Assistant Machine Custodian position to address the increased workload associated with managing the County's voting equipment system. This includes an increase of \$50,056 in Personnel Services and \$4,500 in Operating Expenses. It should be noted that an increase of \$28,384 in Fringe Benefits funding is included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits. For further information on Fringe Benefits, refer to the Agency 89, Employee Benefits, narrative in the Nondepartmental program area section of Volume 1.

## Changes to FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2021 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2021 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2020 Carryover Review, FY 2021 Mid-Year Review, FY 2021 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2021.*

**Carryover Adjustments** **\$900,264**  
As part of the *FY 2020 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of \$900,264 in Operating Expenses associated with office equipment and furniture, communications and media services, telecommunications, miscellaneous services, management professional training, translation services, office supplies and other operating expenses.

**November 2020 Presidential Election** **\$1,140,000**  
As part of the *FY 2020 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$1,140,000 for costs associated with the November 2020 Presidential Election in FY 2021 including ballots, postage, voter notices, printing, additional staffing costs, and other operating expenses.

**Third Quarter Adjustments** **\$800,000**  
As part of the *FY 2021 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$800,000, including \$300,000 in Personnel Services for a one-time compensation adjustment of \$1,000 for merit employees and \$500 for non-merit employees paid in May 2021. The remaining amount of \$500,000 is due to expenses associated with the June 2021 Primary Election, including increased staffing necessary to process absentee ballots and staff voting locations, the purchase of ballots, supplies for polling and satellite locations, as well as increased printing and postage expenses associated with projected increases in mail-in voting.

