

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, 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. In addition, the Office receives, audits, and provides public access to candidates' campaign contribution and expenditure reports. The Office develops voter information and procedures, in four languages, to comply with federal and state laws, and responds to Freedom of Information Act requests, suggestions and complaints from voters, campaigns, candidates, elected officials, and the press.

The workload and related expenses of the Office 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.

In FY 2022, the Office of Elections successfully administered the Gubernatorial Election with 441,973 votes cast, including absentee voting. The Office adapted quickly and effectively to accommodate significant changes in voting patterns that resulted from no-excuse absentee voting legislation that took effect on July 1, 2020. This new legislation permits all registered voters to vote absentee in person or by mail without a reason or excuse, and it resulted in a significant increase in absentee voting compared with previous elections. The number of absentee voters requesting a ballot through the mail rose more than 428 percent from the last similar election, increasing from 15,565 voters in 2017 to 82,239 voters in 2021. The number of in-person absentee voters grew more than 268

percent, increasing from 29,866 voters in 2017 to 109,764 voters in 2021. Changes in absentee voting laws will be a major budget driver going forward.

The Office successfully implemented new initiatives during FY 2022 to respond effectively to new and pending legislation, keep up with the changes in voting patterns, and maintain the security, accuracy, transparency, and integrity of all election activities and functions, while continuing to protect staff and voters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the most significant new initiatives that the Office implemented during the November 2021 Election was a complete transformation of the ballot mailing program with the use of a third-party ballot printer and mailer. While all absentee ballot requests and mailings were still closely overseen by staff in the Office of Elections, the use of a third-party ballot printer and mailer enabled the Office to keep up with the significant increase in requests for absentee ballots through the mail, while also sending those ballots in an efficient and timely manner. This new initiative was essential to meet the increased demand particularly due to staffing and space limitations.

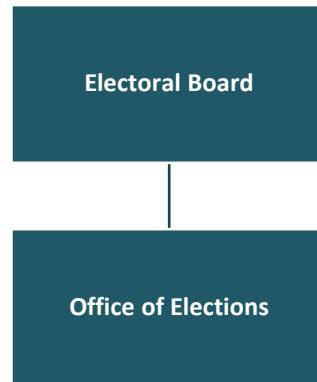
The Office implemented many other successful initiatives in FY 2022 including an improved and more efficient check-in process at in-person absentee voting locations to accommodate the large increase in absentee in-person voters. The Office also began issuing 249 different ballot styles to voters at in-person absentee voting locations to better capture voting information and get ahead of the curve on pending legislation that will require localities to issue absentee ballots to voters based on the precinct where they live. While logistically challenging, this method of providing 249 different precinct ballot styles provided improved and more useful voting information. In addition, the Office greatly expanded the use of touchscreen ballot marking devices that produced paper ballots at the in-person absentee voting locations to enable the Office to issue 249 different ballot styles to voters at each location in an efficient and effective manner. As a result of this initiative, Fairfax County was one of only five jurisdictions in the state that reported all results, including all absentee votes, by precinct for the November 2021 Election.

For the first time, jurisdictions in the Commonwealth of Virginia were encouraged to provide early voting on a Sunday for the November 2021 Election. The Office implemented Sunday voting at 16 in-person absentee locations on Sunday, October 24 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. As a result of this initiative, the Office processed 4,656 voters on Sunday, October 24.

The Office also provided a sample ballot mailer in four languages to every registered voter in Fairfax County ahead of the 2021 November Gubernatorial Election. The sample ballots contained critical information including the location of each voters' polling place, in-person absentee voting locations, Voter ID requirements, and sample ballots that reflected the actual contests that appeared on the ballot that each ballot received for this election. 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 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 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised
FUNDING				
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$5,218,539	\$3,665,458	\$3,861,458	\$4,333,724
Operating Expenses	1,941,232	1,509,137	2,164,370	2,754,137
Total Expenditures	\$7,159,771	\$5,174,595	\$6,039,328	\$7,087,861
Income:				
State Shared General Registrar Expenses	\$183,658	\$85,806	\$85,806	\$85,806
Election Filing Fees	3,274	1,600	1,600	1,600
Total Income	\$186,932	\$87,406	\$87,406	\$87,406
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$6,972,839	\$5,087,189	\$5,951,922	\$7,000,455
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	30 / 30	32 / 32	32 / 32	32 / 32
Exempt	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6	6 / 6

FY 2023 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2023 program:

Employee Compensation

\$171,285

An increase of \$171,285 in Personnel Services includes \$146,984 for a 4.01 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$24,301 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2022.

Ballot Printing and Expanded Early Voting

\$1,081,981

An increase of \$1,081,981 includes \$496,981 in Personnel Services associated with limited-term staffing for expanded early voting at 16 satellite locations, and \$585,000 in Operating Expenses associated with third party ballot printing and mailing, that is required due to state legislation for no-excuse absentee voting that took effect on July 1, 2020. 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.

Elections Software and Equipment \$660,000

An increase of \$660,000 in Operating Expenses is associated with Elections Software and Equipment. Software license and Electronic Poll Pads are used to check-in voters more securely, accurately, and efficiently than paper pollbooks.

Changes to FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2022 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2021 Carryover Review, FY 2022 Mid-Year Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2021:

Carryover Adjustments**\$864,733**

As part of the *FY 2021 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$864,733, including \$196,000 in Personnel Services for a one-time compensation adjustment of \$1,000 for merit employees and \$500 for non-merit employees paid in November 2021. The remaining amount includes \$168,733 associated with encumbered funding primarily associated with office supplies and equipment, and \$500,000 in unencumbered funding associated with licensing and updates to the current voting system and software updates to electronic pollbooks.

Position Detail

The FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan includes the following positions:

OFFICE OF ELECTIONS – 38 Positions			
1	General Registrar, E	1	Business Analyst III
2	Management Analysts III, 1E	1	Business Analyst I
3	Management Analysts II, 1E	4	Administrative Assistants V, 2E
4	Management Analysts I, 1E	10	Administrative Assistants IV
1	Financial Specialist III	5	Administrative Assistants III
1	IT Technician II	4	Administrative Assistants II
1	IT Technician I		
E Denotes Exempt Position(s)			

Performance Measurement Results

During the 2021 Gubernatorial Election, the voter turnout was 60 percent of the active registered voters in Fairfax County. A total of 441,973 voters cast ballots in the Gubernatorial Election, including absentee voting. Fairfax County has 243 precincts. Sixteen absentee satellites were used during the Gubernatorial Election.

The Office continues to monitor voter registration activity and its operational impact. Virginia law requires that submitted voter registration applications be processed within 30 days of receipt of the application. Additionally, absentee applications are required to be processed in less than three days. The Virginia Department of Elections monitored this data through calendar year 2015, however, they no longer provide this analysis. Office leadership remains cognizant of these requirements and continuously monitors incoming traffic to ensure compliance with statutes and provide rapid service to voters.

Indicator	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Machines/precinct	3.00	3.00	4.20	3.00	3.00	4.00
Officers/precinct	10.20	15.64	14.82	15.64	15.27	8.60
Percent of registrations, transfers and address/name changes completed without error	98.2%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2023-advertised-performance-measures-pm>