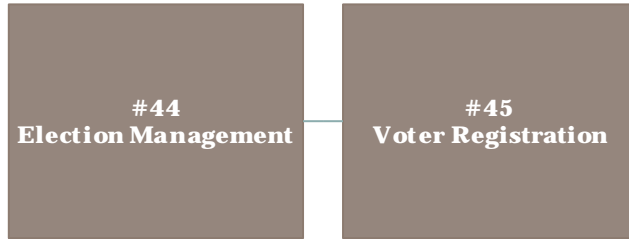


# Office of Elections

---



## Department Overview

Elections are mandated by the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia and are conducted as outlined in Virginia Code Title 24.2, the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, and the Help America Vote Act of 2003.

The Office of Elections has two divisions, both of which are mandated by the Virginia Code: Election Management and Voter Registration in order to provide the opportunity for all eligible citizens who desire to vote a mechanism to register to vote and to exercise their right to participate in the democratic process by voting.

## Department Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<b>Expenditures:</b>			
Compensation	\$2,729,992	\$2,900,454	\$3,141,722
Operating Expenses	800,114	593,510	890,637
Capital Equipment	7,670	0	0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$3,537,776</b>	<b>\$3,493,964</b>	<b>\$4,032,359</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$85,218	\$85,081	\$85,806
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$3,452,558	\$3,408,883	\$3,946,553
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<b>Positions:</b>			
Regular	20 / 20	21 / 21	23 / 23
Exempt	5 / 5	5 / 5	5 / 5
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>25 / 25</b>	<b>26 / 26</b>	<b>28 / 28</b>

# Office of Elections

---

## Lines of Business Summary

LOB #	LOB Title	FY 2016 Adopted	
		Disbursements	Positions
44	Election Management	\$2,036,309	7
45	Voter Registration	1,996,050	21
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$4,032,359</b>	<b>28</b>

## Lines of Business

LOB #44:

### **ELECTION MANAGEMENT**

#### **Purpose**

To provide each citizen 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.

#### **Description**

The Election Management Division of the Office of Elections is responsible for the logistics of conducting elections by providing the security, ballots, election supplies, polling places, officers of election and training to conduct all federal, state, town and local elections in Fairfax County.

Due to the cyclical nature of Election Management responsibilities, the department operates with a small year-round staff and relies on a large number of limited term employees to assist with election preparation including testing voting equipment and preparing supplies, and recruiting, and assigning and training officers of election. Limited term employees also staff the absentee voting satellites and assist with the processing, mailing and counting of absentee ballots. Additionally, approximately 2,500 citizen “volunteers” are recruited and trained to serve in polling places in an average year. This number increases to approximately 3,500 in a presidential election year.

The Election Management Division also works closely with the Voter Registration Division and Fairfax County Attorney’s Office to ensure compliance with all federal, state and local laws.

The Election Management Division also coordinates efforts with numerous other County agencies during the year to ensure the security and efficiency of each election. These agencies include, among others, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Sheriff, Police, Emergency Management, Information Technology, Human Resources, Public Affairs, County Attorney, Document Services, Cable, Facilities Management, Management and Budget, Park Authority and Libraries.

#### **Voting System**

In November 2014, the Office of Elections successfully implemented a new digital scan voting system to replace its aging optical scanners and touch screen voting machines. All voters now mark a paper ballot to cast their vote which creates and preserves a “paper trail” for any potential audits or recounts. The new voting equipment utilizes digital scanners which scan and capture an image of each paper ballot cast. The scanners are supplemented by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible ballot marking devices which employ audio and touch screen interfaces to print a barcoded ballot that can be read and counted by the digital scanners.

#### **Paper Ballots**

Paper ballots must be approved and printed in a manner prescribed by the Virginia Department of Elections. All ballots must be strictly secured and accounted for before, during and after each election. Each election requires different numbers and types of ballots depending upon the anticipated voter turnout and the offices for which candidates are being elected. For example, in November 2015, the department created 76 ballot styles to conduct elections for the multiple legislative and supervisor districts across the County. Additionally, based on the language accessibility requirements of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, the County is required to produce all ballots and election materials in both English and Spanish.

# Office of Elections

---

## **Absentee Voting**

The Office of Elections must have ballots available for mailing and in-person absentee voting a minimum of 45 days before each election. As a service to voters, the Office of Elections also maintains seven absentee voting satellites at various locations around the County. This is in addition to hours offered on Monday – Friday. It is important to note that an eighth site will be added in 2016. In addition to facilitating in-person absentee voting, these satellites also provide an opportunity for voters without identification to obtain a free photo ID.

## **Election Materials**

The Election Management Division designs, produces, and ensures the security of a multitude of forms, signs, instructions and supplies to conduct each election. This includes everything from legal documents (such as the Statement of Results and Election Abstracts) to such items as signs, pens and calculators. Although the Virginia Department of Elections prescribes the format for many of the legal forms, staff must still customize these items to merge with precinct and candidate databases for greater efficiency.

## **Precincts and Polling Places**

The Office of Elections makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for changes in precinct boundaries and polling places based on election districts, population growth, suitability of facilities and ADA compliance. In areas where school and County facilities are not available, the Office negotiates the use of private buildings such as churches and community centers to ensure voters have a polling place that is convenient and accessible in their communities. Since 1990, the number of precincts in Fairfax County has increased from 170 to 242 (as of December 2015.) Additional precincts may be added as the population increases.

## **Officers of Election:**

Typically approximately 2,500 election officers are needed to staff the County's polling places for a November general election. While this number suffices for a "typical" election, the Office of Elections projects November 2016 presidential election is projected to require approximately 3,500 election officers. This projection is supported by the County's Bi-Partisan Election Improvement Commission which recommended higher staffing levels to facilitate an increased number of electronic poll book check-in stations in the precincts. Additionally, the Office of Elections will manage a higher number of satellite voting locations prior to the election and the Central Absentee Precinct will require significantly more officers to ensure timely and accurate processing of the expected increase in requests for absentee ballots.

Election officer recruiting remains a challenge and an ongoing effort. While many election officers serve multiple years, there is natural attrition in this transient county. In order to communicate with existing election officers and potential election officers, the Office has streamlined communication methods with automated e-mail notifications and enhanced outreach efforts.

## **Election Officer Training**

All Chief, Assistant Chief and new Election Officers must take mandatory training before each election. In addition, Code of Virginia requires all Election Officers to be trained at least once every four years or whenever new equipment is implemented. Training large numbers of Officers in the short period of time before Election Day presents enormous challenges. The Office continues to explore innovative methods for delivering training including online interactive training and videos.

## **Benefits**

The success of the democratic process requires fair and open elections that accurately reflect the will of the electorate. The Election Management LOB provides eligible voters of Fairfax County with a voice in government by providing the opportunity to vote in a convenient and accessible location, voting capability for those voters who are unable to go to their polling place on Election Day, and the assurance that every vote will be counted.

# Office of Elections

---

## Mandates

Elections are mandated by the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia and are conducted as outlined in Virginia Code Title 24.2, the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986, and the Help America Vote Act of 2003.

## Trends and Challenges

Since the presidential election of 2000, the conduct of elections has received increased scrutiny from federal, state and local government agencies and officials, the news media and the general public. Each year, new legislation has been introduced to expand voting opportunities, regulate voting equipment and to change many of the traditional voting methods and procedures. Special interest groups, news outlets, academic researchers, and numerous other organizations have begun using the Internet and social media to express their opinions on the conduct of elections. It is one of the Office's most important objectives to overcome misconceptions and maintain voter confidence in the integrity of Fairfax County elections.

The events of September 11, 2001, followed by threats to the election process in Spain and elsewhere, have created a need for enhanced security measures to ensure the safety of Fairfax County polling places, personnel and equipment. A significant portion of election planning is now devoted to security and emergency contingency resources. Unlike elections conducted 20 years ago, police, emergency management personnel and technology experts have become an integral part of today's election planning.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #44: Election Management</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,312,834	\$1,391,658	\$1,567,844
Operating Expenses	411,656	315,920	468,465
Capital Equipment	7,670	0	0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,732,160</b>	<b>\$1,707,578</b>	<b>\$2,036,309</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$16,952	\$16,413	\$16,763
<b>Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund</b>	<b>\$1,715,208</b>	<b>\$1,691,165</b>	<b>\$2,019,546</b>
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	7/7	7/7	7/7
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>7/7</b>	<b>7/7</b>	<b>7/7</b>

## Office of Elections

---

### Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Machines/precinct	4.10	3.01	3.34	3.50	3.97
Election officers	2,984	2,320	2,593	2,400	3,500
Cost of officers/precinct	\$1,409	\$1,806	\$2,007	\$1,843	\$2,631
Cost per poll voter	\$1.42	\$2.54	\$2.76	\$3.20	\$2.33
Percent voter turnout	80.5%	46.8%	45.7%	37.7%	80.0%
Officers/precinct	12.59	9.75	10.89	9.96	14.46

The objective of the Elections Management Division is to improve the voting experience by providing a sufficient number of voting machines for each precinct (a minimum of 1 digital ballot scanning machine and 2 ADA accessible ballot marking devices) that provide a voter verifiable paper ballot and comply with legal mandates. Additional machines are required for presidential elections as reflected in the FY 2017 estimate. Election management is cyclical in nature in that election cycles and voter turnout vary significantly depending on a variety of factors. Presidential elections tend to see voter turnout in Fairfax County in the 80 percent range, while off-year elections usually experience turnout of approximately 40 percent. In addition, it is difficult to estimate how many elections will be held in a year, due to the unpredictable nature of party primaries, special elections, etc.

The cost of election officers per precinct rose in FY 2014 and FY 2015 as the Electoral Board voted to increase election officer compensation for the first time for chiefs/assistant chiefs since 2006 and for election officers since 1998. Efficiencies created by the recently purchased election equipment will result in fewer election officers being required than with the hybrid election system that was fully replaced in FY 2016. The efficiencies created by the new system will reduce the impact of the increased compensation and the increased number of officers required in anticipated high turnout elections, such as the presidential election in FY 2017.

# Office of Elections

---

LOB #45:

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

### **Purpose**

The goal of the Voter Registration Division of the Office of Elections is to provide registration opportunities for all eligible citizens who desire to vote, and to ensure the maintenance of complete and accurate voter registration records in accordance with Federal and state law. The Voter Registration Division's role has continued to grow in volume and complexity due to the population growth of the County, the increasing complexity and additional requirements imposed by new legislation and regulation, and the complexities of new hardware and software systems.

### **Description**

From 1990 to 2015 the number of registered voters has grown from 415,000 to 700,000. In order to fulfill its mission, the Voter Registration Division of the Office of Elections has established working relationships with numerous County agencies such as: County Attorney, Human Resources, Libraries, Print Shop, Facilities Management, Circuit Court, Department of Information Technology and the Department of Tax Administration. Additionally, Voter Registration has direct contact with elected public officials and candidates actively running for office.

Virginia, unlike many states, holds a November general election every year, while Fairfax County has at least two and often three elections every year and sometimes as many as five or six, there is no definitive method of projecting the exact number within the standard budget cycle.

Voter activity is dependent on many factors including the profile of the election (high-profile elections, such as a presidential election, increase voter activity), the competitiveness of the election races on the ballot, and the effectiveness of "get out the vote" efforts on that part of interested groups.

The implementation of the National Voter Registration Act has spread the work over the year, but has not completely eliminated the cyclical nature of the work. In calendar year 2016, the Office can expect a much greater level of activity affecting voter registration due to the upcoming presidential election.

Processing the voter registration applications is a multi-stepped operation which requires a voter information notice to be mailed to the voter at the home address. The processing of incomplete applications requires additional research and represents approximately 25 percent of all applications received. Incomplete applications require additional correspondence which increases the workload of this division.

In addition to processing applications, Voter Registration staff must process:

- voter inquiries made in-person, by telephone and e-mail. An extremely high volume occurs in the months prior to each November election;
- name and address change requests;
- applications which must be forwarded to other localities;
- cancellations;
- transfers;
- registration deletions and reinstatements;
- petition verification for candidates and other related candidate paperwork,
- street and map changes;
- re-precincting needs; and,
- filing.

# Office of Elections

---

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, the Division is required to “receive, catalog and review” campaign contribution and expenditure reports. The Division has the authority to impose and collect penalties for violations of campaign reporting requirements. Voter Registration staff is also tasked with supporting voting activities such as: in-person and satellite voting coverage, verification of precinct rosters, pre and post-election processing of voting records.

## Benefits

The benefit of the Voter Registration Division is to allow the eligible residents of Fairfax County to exercise their right to participate in the democratic process and to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

## Mandates

This LOB is mandated by the Constitutions of the United States and Virginia and various sections of US and Commonwealth of Virginia laws and regulations. The percentage of this LOB’s resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 100 percent.

## Trends and Challenges

The Office of Elections has expanded hours to offer more flexibility to the citizens of Fairfax County. The department is open weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except Thursdays where the office is open until 7:00 p.m.

The Code of Virginia requires that the office remain open the two Saturdays preceding a general election and the last Saturday before a primary or special election. With voters demanding expanded in-person absentee voting opportunities, the Office of Elections has not only added satellite in-person absentee sites, but has also expanded the hours beyond normal business hours during the weeks in advance of a general election, including Saturdays in an effort to supplement the minimum requirements of by the Code.

Additionally, Office of Elections staff is required to provide support when requested by either or both of the two major political parties, if they choose to nominate their candidates by “firehouse primary,” convention or canvass.

As personal electronic devices become more and more prevalent, the Office of Elections has adapted to provide improved access to the voter registration and voting process. The Office of Elections works diligently to maintain a balance between the expectations of the public and the limitations imposed by the need to safeguard voter and voting information.



# Office of Elections

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #45: Voter Registration</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,417,158	\$1,508,796	\$1,573,878
Operating Expenses	388,458	277,590	422,172
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,805,616</b>	<b>\$1,786,386</b>	<b>\$1,996,050</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$68,266	\$68,668	\$69,043
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,737,350	\$1,717,718	\$1,927,007
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	13 / 13	14 / 14	16 / 16
Exempt	5 / 5	5 / 5	5 / 5
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>18 / 18</b>	<b>19 / 19</b>	<b>21 / 21</b>

## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Registered voters	726,071	702,132	708,678	690,000	725,000
Registrations, transfers and address/name changes processed	112,700	120,000	86,000	100,000	175,000
Cost per registration, transfer or address/name change processed	\$5.40	\$5.40	\$5.65	\$5.40	\$5.65
Percent of registrations, transfers and address/name changes completed without error	98.0%	98.0%	98.1%	98.0%	98.2%

The level of activity in the Voter Registration division is dependent upon many factors. Some of these factors include the profile of the election (i.e. presidential year), the competitiveness of the election races on the ballot and the effectiveness of the “get out the vote” efforts on the part of interested groups. While the recent (July 2014) On-line voting application capability included on the Virginia Department of Elections website has the potential to slightly increase Fairfax County staff efficiency on voter registration processes, the Office predicts a significant increase in the number of registration transactions for FY2017 due to expected strong participation of the two major political parties, increased activity from third party organizations such as the League of Women Voters and the Office of Elections, all of which will be encouraging voters to register or update their registration records. The summer and early fall of 2016 will see many organizations conducting voter registration drives. These groups do not typically host large numbers of election focused activities during non-presidential years. The increase in third-party registration drive activity combined with a typically high turnout election fueled by constant media attention, on-line voter registration and a transient community make significantly increase registration transactions in FY2017 highly likely. Therefore the Office of Elections has incorporated this expected increased registration activity into its management plan.