

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION – LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

Executive Summary: 2010 Proposed Budget – Election Commission

1. The Election Commission’s Budget increases by 57.6% from 2009 to 2010. This is primarily attributable to the fact that there will be 4 elections in 2010 compared to 2 in 2009. The elections in 2010 will also be higher turnout elections. The Proposed Budget also eliminates one Elections Recruiter/Trainer position (\$50,334). Funding for the Management Services Specialist position is eliminated for 2010 though the position’s authority is maintained in case the position is needed to support additional needs resulting from the 2010 elections. (Page 3)
2. The Election Commission’s Operating Budget increases from \$1,315,764 to \$2,073,779, or by 57.6% between the 2009 Budget and 2010 Proposed Budget. (Page 3)
3. In the 2010 Proposed Budget, there are 107 authorized positions, 87 more than those authorized for 2009. (Page 3)
4. There are 2 vacant positions in the Election Commission -- *Elections Recruiter/Trainer and Management Services Specialist*. (Pages 3 and 4)
5. The Proposed Budget includes \$105,000 for *Professional Services*. This funding will be used to handle the data entry of voter registration applications commencing July 1, 2010 and continuing through December 15. (Page 4)
6. *Facility Rental* increases from \$57,000 in the 2009 Budget to \$69,000 in the 2010 Proposed Budget. This account includes \$45,000 for lease of a privately-owned warehouse. The rest (\$24,000) will be for payment of rental fees for voting sites. (Page 4)
7. The allocation for *Other Operating Services* increases by 73.3% between the 2009 Budget and the 2010 Proposed Budget, from \$445,141 to \$771,365. Included in this item is payments to election workers for 4 elections (versus 2 in 2009), including compensation for training, absentee ballot processing, poll worker and voter registration activities, printing and postage expenses, and all Election Day polling place and field supplies. (Page 4)
8. No equipment purchases are anticipated by the department in 2010. (Page 4)
9. There are no capital improvements projects scheduled for 2010. (Page 4)
10. Four elections are scheduled in 2010. The estimated voter turnout for each is as follows:

Spring Primary, Feb. 16:	15,000
Spring General, April 6:	20,000
Fall Primary, Sept. 14:	100,000
Fall General, Nov. 2:	190,000

(Page 5)

11. The 2010 Proposed Budget estimates that the Election Commission will generate \$800, an increase of \$300 over the 2009 amount. (Page 4)
12. The Election Commission has employed various strategies to reduce costs and improve efficiencies. These strategies will be continued in 2010. These include the selection of a vendor for data entry, the Adopt-a-Voting-Site program, and Central Count for the processing of absentee ballots, etc. (Page 5)

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Research & Analysis Section - Legislative Reference Bureau

2010 Proposed Budget Summary: Election Commission

Expense Category	2008 Actual	2009 Budget	2008-2009 Change	2010 Proposed	2009-2010 Change
Total Operating Expenditures	\$2,710,209	\$1,315,764	-51.5%	\$2,073,779	57.6%
O&M FTE Positions	23.11	11.80	-11.31	21.56	+9.76
Authorized Positions	113	20	-93	107	+87

The Election Commission staff registers City of Milwaukee voters and conducts all elections in the City of Milwaukee. The Board of Election Commissioners is composed of 3 citizen members representing the 2 political parties receiving the most votes for Governor in the City in the last gubernatorial election. Staff assistance is provided by an Executive Director, 6 other full-time employees (current staffing level) and temporary employees utilized at election time. Two elections are usually held during odd-numbered years and 4 generally in even-numbered years.

PERSONNEL

Number of Authorized and Funded Positions

Changes in number of positions, 2009 Budget and 2010 Proposed Budget:

	2009 Budget	2010 Proposed	Change
O&M Funded FTE Positions	11.8	21.56	+9.76
Authorized Positions	20	107	+87

Vacancies

There are currently 2 vacant positions in the Election Commission.

- *Elections Recruiter/Trainer.* This position became vacant in December 2008. The position was held vacant throughout 2009 as the functions of the position were not essential to the 2009 elections. The duties of this position will be reassigned to the Poll Worker Coordinator, Deputy Director and Executive Director throughout 2010. The position has been eliminated in the 2010 Proposed Budget.

- *Management Services Specialist*. This position was approved in the 2008 Budget, but was not filled due to the establishment of more efficient procedures and a redistribution of workload. The duties of this position will remain with the Deputy Director and Executive Director. Thus, funding for this position is eliminated for 2010. The Election Commission can manage in 2010 without this position. The position authority is maintained in case the position is needed to support additional needs resulting from the 2010 elections.

LINE ITEMS

- The 2010 Proposed Budget contains \$105,000 for *Professional Services*. This funding will be used for retaining a professional data-entry firm to assist with entering voter registration and absentee ballot applications with data entry services commencing July 1, 2010 and continuing through December 15. To date, this has proven beneficial to the department's goal of increasing database accuracy, overall efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The amount budgeted is for data entry services primarily around the time of the November 2010 Governor's race.
- *Facility Rental* increases from \$57,000 in the 2009 Budget to \$69,000 in the 2010 Proposed Budget. This account will be used to lease a new privately-owned warehouse on Holton Street. In April of this year, the Election Commission was required to vacate the former City of Milwaukee Municipal Warehouse located on Hawley Road, as the land was sold to MMSD for use as part of a flood plain. Subsequently, the Election Commission moved to the Holton Street facility. The rent for this facility is \$45,000. In addition, the Commission pays \$24,000 (\$6,000 for each election in 2010) in polling place rental fees for voting sites for the 4 elections.
- The allocation for *Other Operating Services* increases by 73.3% between the 2009 Budget and the 2010 Proposed Budget, from \$445,141 to \$771,365. Included in this item are payments to election workers, including compensation for training, absentee ballot processing, poll worker and voter registration activities, printing and postage expenses, and all Election Day polling place and field supplies. The most significant expense in this account is poll worker pay for workers who are paid as independent contractors. There were 2 elections in 2009 versus 4 in 2010. The change in the number of elections affects this and other budgeted lines.
- No equipment purchases are anticipated by the Election Commission in 2010. The 2009 Budget also provided no funding for equipment purchases.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

There are no capital improvements projects scheduled for 2010.

REVENUE

The projected revenue for 2010 is \$800, which is derived from the sale of poll lists. This amount is \$300 more than the amount budgeted in 2009.

2010 ELECTIONS

2010 EXPECTED TURNOUT

Four elections are scheduled in 2010: Spring Primary and Spring General Elections for Municipal Judges and School Board races. Voter turnout is expected as follows:

Election Date	February 16, 2010	April 6, 2010	September 14, 2010	November 2, 2010
Election	Spring Primary	Spring General	Fall Primary	Fall General
Expected Turnout	15,000	20,000	100,000	190,000

MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN 2010

The major anticipated challenges the Election Commission may face in 2010 are as follows:

The most significant challenge for the Election Commission in 2010 will be the administration of the Fall General Election/Governor's race. This election may be contentious and highly scrutinized. In addition, the major challenges that the Election Commission may face in 2010 are as follows:

- Significant increase in workload, accountability, and public scrutiny with no additional staff positions since 2003.
- Recruiting a sufficient number of poll workers with the skill set necessary for accomplishing increasingly complex Election Day assignments.
- Training 2,000 election workers / Chief Inspectors prior to the Fall elections.
- Managing the Special Registration Deputies associated with various voter registration activities in order to ensure quality and accurate registration data.
- Managing the complexity of the city's data on the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). This challenge is particularly significant given the recent elimination of the Government Accountability Board staff position previously assigned to work on-site with the City of Milwaukee Election Commission.
- A volume of voter registrations, absentee ballot requests and Election Day registration somewhat comparable to the 2008 Presidential Election.

ONGOING STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING COSTS AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES

Following are some of the strategies that have been employed by the Election Commission to reduce costs and improve efficiencies:

- Selecting a vendor to conduct data entry.
- Combining single-ward neighborhood voting sites in order to reduce the number of sites and required poll worker staffing.
- The Adopt-a-Voting-Site program, with 15 sites currently sponsored by community-based organizations.
- Working with the Milwaukee County Election Commission to consolidate election notice requirements to one publication and reduce advertising costs.
- Conducting all programming in-house versus paying an outside vendor.

- Using technician staff within the department to maintain voting and ballot marking equipment versus costly vendor maintenance contracts.
- Central Count for the processing of absentee ballots.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Redistricting action taken by the Common Council in 2001 resulted in a reduction in the number of election wards, from 335 to 314, and the number of polling locations to 202. In the 2004 Budget, the citywide reduction of aldermanic districts from 17 to 15 required a change in aldermanic district boundaries. As a result, the Election Commission revised the number and locations of polling locations according to the new boundaries.
2. Beginning with the 2002 Budget, poll workers are paid as vendors from the Other Operating Services account and not from the staff salary account.
3. In 2002, the federal government enacted the **Help America Vote Act (HAVA)** to make reforms and improvements to voting systems and voter access in all states. HAVA mandates include ensuring that all voter registration records are maintained within a single, statewide voter registration system, that all polling sites meet ADA accessibility requirements, and that voting equipment be made available to assist people with disabilities to mark their ballots privately and independently. The City of Milwaukee has been compliant with these 3 HAVA mandates since August, 2006.
4. In response to HAVA, and in order to receive federal funding, the Commission has converted the City's voter registration database to the Wisconsin State Elections Board's **Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS)** - a computerized statewide voter registration system that is a single database for all registered voters.
5. In order to address the issues stemming during the 2004 elections, the Mayor formed the Election Task Force in 2005. In June, 2005, the Election Task Force issued recommendations related to voter registration, absentee ballots, polling locations and poll workers. The Commission states all Task Force goals have been fully implemented, including centralized processing of absentee ballots.

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