



REPORT

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

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15. Election Commission, 2015

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15. Election Commission

\$1,393,678

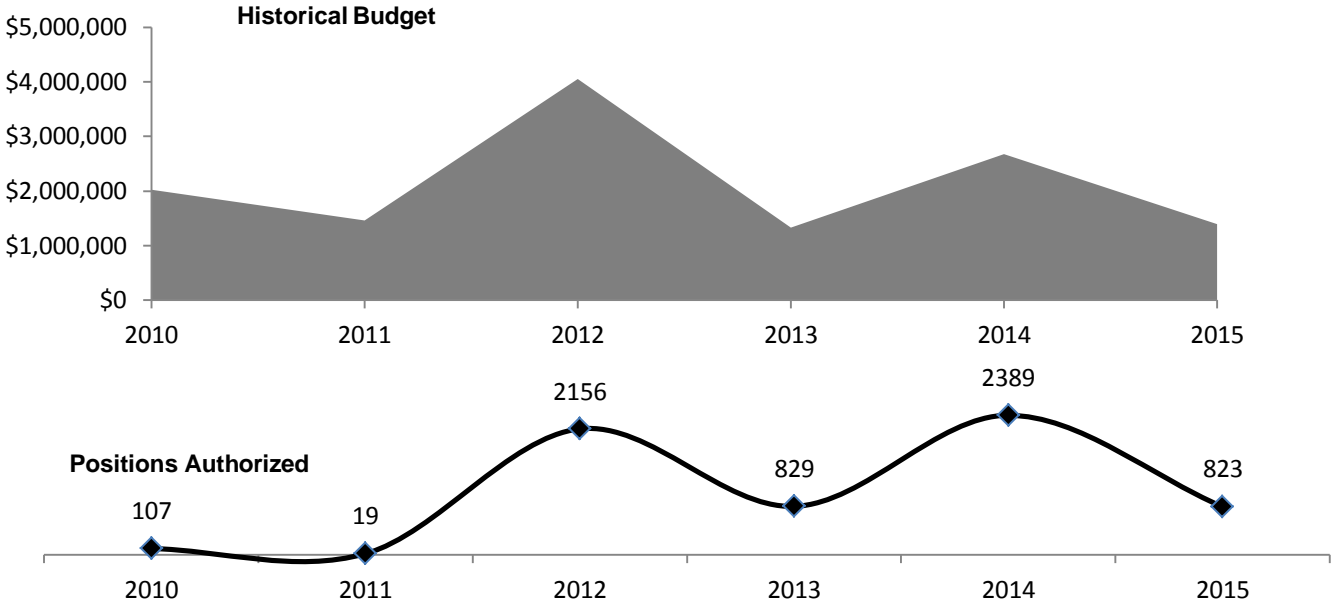
Proposed Department Budget

-\$1,282,517

Nominal Change in Proposed Department Budget

-47.92%

Percent Change in Proposed Department Budget



-65.6%

Percent Change in Positions 2014 to 2015 Proposed

-1566

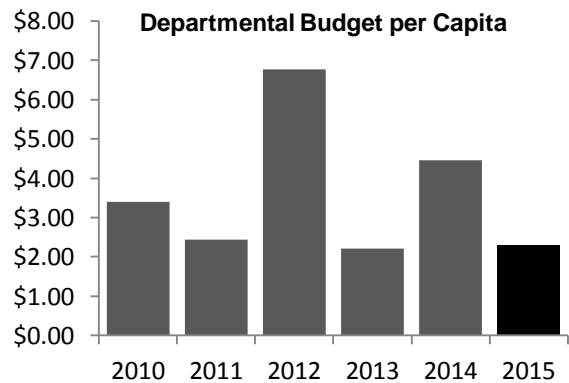
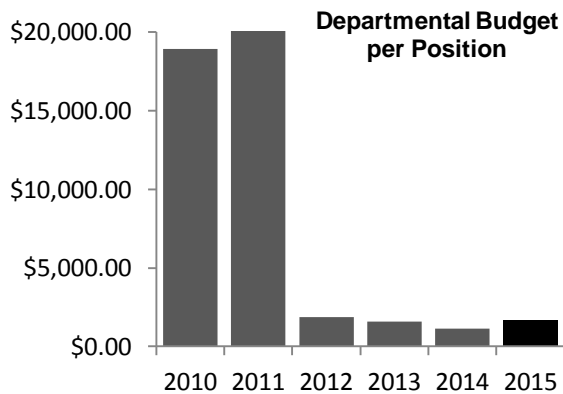
Nominal Change in Positions 2014 to 2015 Proposed

0

Vacant Positions

86%

% of Permanent Employees Eligible for Retirement within 10 years



2

The number of elections in 2015.
Decrease from 4 in 2014.

78

The number of Bilingual Poll Workers to provide voter service; 120 to 150 anticipated for Fall 2014 General Election.

7

The number of permanent Election Commission employees. Up to 2,400 Election Inspectors, Office Assistants and Laborers work for election days

327

The number of wards (precincts) in the City of Milwaukee.

20.66%

The percentage of turnout for the Fall 2014 Primary Election. The November 4th General Election may see a 70% to 80% turnout for the Governor's race.

4,986

The number of Election Day Registrations at the polls.

110

The number of hours for weekday In-Person Absentee Voting. The State Legislature eliminated 16 hours of convenient Saturday and Sunday voting.

317,781

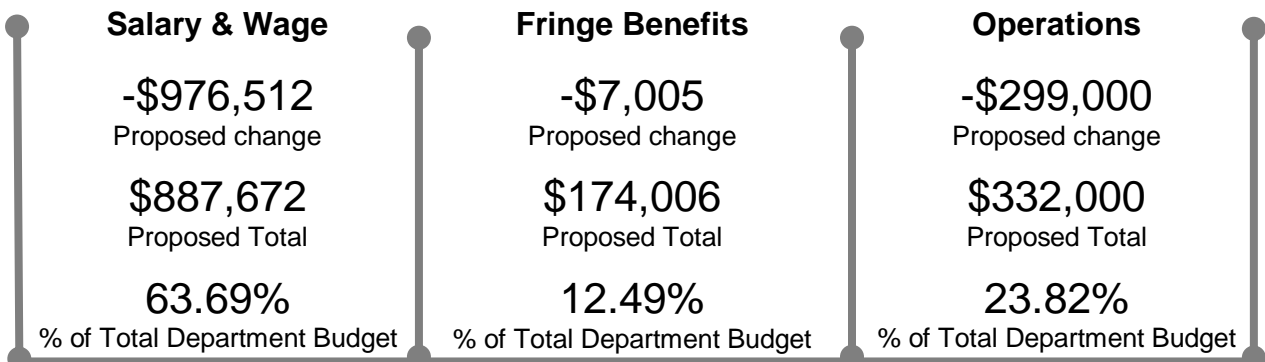
Number of registered voters in the City of Milwaukee for the August 12th Fall Primary Election.

193

The number of City of Milwaukee polling locations. Many are in schools, fire houses, park field houses and other public locations.

\$1.5 million

The amount needed to replace the 200 voting machines used on election day.



II. INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS.

1. 2014 Elections.

Three elections have occurred in 2014 - a Spring Primary Election, a Spring General Election and a Fall Primary Election. A Fall General Election is scheduled for Tuesday, November 4th. The Spring elections included circuit court judgeships and a special aldermanic election. The Fall elections include statewide offices, most notably the Governor's race. Turnout for the November 4th General Election is expected to be heavy, between 70% and 80%.

Table 15.1. City of Milwaukee Election Turnout, Spring 2014 and Fall 2014.

April 1, 2014	Spring Election	April 29, 2014	Spring General Election
Precincts Counted	327 (100%)	Precincts Counted	25 (100%)
Registered Voters	318,863	Registered Voters	20,256
Total Ballots Cast	28,818	Total Ballots Cast	1,906
Total Voter Turnout	9%	Total Voter Turnout	9.4%
August 27, 2014	Fall Primary Election		
Precincts Counted	327 (100%)		
Registered Voters	317,781		
Total Ballots Cast	65,640		
Total Voter Turnout	20.6%		

2. Planning for 2015 Elections.

Two elections – a Spring Primary and a Spring General election – are scheduled for 2015. Offices on the ballot will include judicial and school board seats. Turnout is expected to be around 5% for the primary and 10% for the general election. Planning and work ensure fair, accurate and transparent elections will commence shortly after the Fall 2014 General Election.

3. Poll worker recruitment and training.

The Election Commission maintains a core group of approximately 1,500 election workers to support elections with low to moderate turnout. For elections with higher projected turnouts, such as the November 2014 Fall General Election, the Commission engages in both general and targeted recruitment efforts. A large number of City employees volunteer to augment the Commission's regular election workers to ensure high-turnout elections run smoothly. The Commission runs several training sessions for election workers to prepare them for Election Day.

4. Voter registration, education and access.

Voter registration is a continuing priority for the commission. Education and outreach efforts include broadcast and print public service announcements, high school registration opportunities for 18 year olds, and community events to encourage registration. Polling place access is reviewed frequently to provide voters with mobility challenges equal opportunity to vote.

5. Bilingual Election Workers

The City of Milwaukee is one of more than 10,000 jurisdictions covered by s. 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 as amended in 1975. The section requires that:

"Whenever any State or political subdivision [covered by the section] provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language."

As a result, the Election Commission has developed a bilingual program to enable Spanish-speaking voters with limited English proficiency to participate effectively in the electoral process. The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (GAB) has also participated in identifying targeted polling sites for increased bilingual assistance. The Election Commission applies a bilingual staffing formula that is established by the U.S. Department of Justice.

To facilitate compliance with federal and state standards, the Election Commission has established an advisory task force composed of members of the Spanish-speaking community. The task force participates in evaluating services to the Spanish-speaking community and making recommendations for improvement.

A bilingual elections coordinator will continue to oversee all activities related to the bilingual elections program working with the deputy director of the Elections Commission and other staff members.

6. Voter Identification.

Recently, federal courts have restored the voter identification requirement for the November 4, 2014 General Election. Implementation of this law with 7 weeks' notice prior to the expected high-turnout election has presented the Commission with numerous unanticipated challenges, including the handling of ballots for absentee voters that had not previously submitted a copy of their photo identification with their applications. Implementation of this requirement for in-person voters will require training of election workers on acceptable forms of identification and provisional balloting for those voters who lack identification.

A broad publicity campaigns to inform the electorate of the required forms of identification to present to vote is underway. Efforts have included concise and accurate information in the media, on the City's website, and distribution of posters in public buildings such as libraries. Forms, instructions and training curriculum must be updated to comply with the voter ID requirement. Polling place signage is being devised to assist voters as well. All efforts will be made to assist voters in complying with this requirement.

III. EXPENDITURES.**Table 15.2. Changes in Expenditure Amounts by Account.**

Expenditure Account	2013 Actual Expenditures	2014 Adopted Budget	% Change	2015 Proposed Budget	% Change
Salaries and Wages	\$741,309	\$1,864,184	151.6%	\$887,672	-52.4%
Fringe Benefits	\$229,811	\$181,011	-21.2%	\$174,006	3.9%
Operating Expenditures	\$358,391	\$631,000	76.1%	\$332,000	-47.4%
Total Operating Budget	\$1,329,511	\$2,676,195	101.3%	\$1,393,678	-47.9%

1. Budget Summary.

The total 2015 Proposed Budget is \$1,393,678, a decrease of \$1,282,517 (-47.9%) from the 2014 Adopted Budget amount of \$2,676,195. There are only 2 elections during the 2015 Budget year.

2. Personnel Costs.

Personnel costs in the 2015 Proposed Budget are \$1,060,678, a decrease of \$984,517 (-48.1%) from the 2014 Adopted Budget amount of \$2,045,195. Salaries and wages decrease \$976,512 (%-52.4). Fringe benefits decrease, by \$7,005 (-3.9%). The decrease in fringe benefits is based on prior experience for general City employees.

3. Operating Expenditures.

Operating Expenditures in the 2015 Proposed Budget are \$332,000, a decrease of \$34,750, from the 2014 Adopted Budget amount of \$631,000. The changes can be attributed primarily to the lower cost of consumables and equipment moving expenses for the 2 elections in 2015.

4. Equipment Purchases.

Voting machine replacement is funded under Capital Projects.

5. Special Funds.

None.

IV. PERSONNEL.**Table 15.3. Changes in Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and Authorized Positions.**

Position Category	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted Budget	Change	2015 Proposed Budget	Change
O&M FTEs	8.81	38.64	29.83	17.86	(-20.78)
Non-O&M FTEs	0	0	0	0	0
Total Authorized Positions	829	2,389		823	(-1,560)

1. Personnel Changes.

The total number of authorized positions in the department under the 2015 Proposed Budget is decreased by 1,560 from the 2014 Adopted Budget. With only 2 elections in 2015, election workers, temporary election laborers, and temporary office assistants will only be used at one-half the 2014 level.

There are 7 full-time staff positions, which remain unchanged from 2014, and 3 Election Commissioners, who are paid nominally for meetings.

2. Vacancies.

None.

V. SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNTS (SPA).

None.

VI. CAPITAL PROJECTS.**New Voting Equipment, \$1,530,000.**

The 2015 Proposed Budget provides \$1,530,000 for the purchase of 200 voting machines. The Election Commission's goal is to have the machines in place for the February primary and spring elections. This will allow election workers to become familiar with the machines prior to the 2016 elections which are anticipated to have higher turnouts. The new machines will use proven technology and will not have touchscreens. The Election Commission is required to use vendors that are certified by the state and federal government.

The Commission will also purchase programming software for the machines (\$100,000). The Commission estimates that the City has saved \$1.7 million over the last 5 years by programming voting machines in-house. The request includes 2 years of machine maintenance. After 2 years, maintenance costs will be included in the operating budget. Maintenance is charged on a per machine basis.

The Commission is participating in a uniform voting equipment initiative being led by Milwaukee County and the Public Policy Forum. The County is trying to establish that all municipalities

within the county would use the same voting equipment. The County may provide a subsidy or incentive to municipalities which transition to new voting equipment in 2015. The machines the Commission intends to purchase will qualify for the subsidy or incentive should it become available.

VII. ISSUES TO CONSIDER.

1. Proposals in the State Legislature to further change election law. As evidenced by the Voter Identification Requirement, these changes have a substantial impact on the electorate and those planning and executing elections.
2. Possible future expansion of Section 203 bilingual election workers and election place materials to languages beyond Spanish. Those may include Hmong and Arabic, as populations of both are increasing in the city of Milwaukee.

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