

Election Commission 2026 Proposed Executive Budget

Mission: To ensure that elections are administered in a fair, secure, transparent, and accessible manner in order to instill voter confidence in the democratic process.



2026 Budget Summary

	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Amount Change	Percent Change
FTEs – O&M	29.18	32.56	3.38	11.6%
FTEs - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
FTEs - Total	29.18	32.56	3.38	11.6%
Total Positions Authorized	2,332	2,332	0	0.0%
Salaries & Wages				
Salaries & Wages	\$2,085,119	\$3,382,230	\$1,297,111	62%
Fringe Benefits	408,230	409,899	1,669	0.4%
Operating Expenditures	746,043	1,455,380	709,337	95.1%
Equipment	0	0	0	-
Special Funds	0	0	0	-
TOTAL	\$3,239,392	\$5,247,509	\$2,008,117	62.0%

Salaries and Positions

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FTEs - Total	29.18	32.56	3.38	11.6%
Total Positions Authorized	2,332	2,332	0	0.0%
Salaries & Wages	\$2,085,119	\$3,382,230	\$1,297,111	62%
TOTAL	\$2,085,119	\$3,382,230	\$1,297,111	62.2%

- Increase can be attributed to Temp Salaries increasing
 - \$1.2 Million in 2025 vs \$2.5 Million in 2026

Operating Expenses

	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget	Amount Change	Percent Change
Operating Expenditures	\$746,043	\$1,455,380	\$709,337	95.1%

- Operating nearly doubling as there are 4 elections in 2026

Capital

Project	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget
Voting Machine Replacements	\$80,000	\$0
Express Voting Machines	\$0	\$170,000
Election Commission-Upgrades	\$0	\$730,000
TOTAL	\$80,000	\$900,000

Election Administration Overview



ONGOING

- Chain of Custody
- Supply Chain Management
- Location Management
- Voter Outreach & Engagement
- Voter Registration
- Inventory Tracking
- Security
- Planning & Project Management
- Equipment Maintenance
- Voter Roll Maintenance
- WisVote System Management
- Reviewing, compiling and responding to open records requests
- Responding to litigation
- Handling media inquiries
- Reviewing and responding to proposed legislation



PRE-ELECTION

- Logic & Accuracy
- Public Testing
- Ballot Access
- Poll Worker Recruitment & Assignment
- Poll Worker Training
- Ballot Ordering & Management
- Polling Location Agreements
- Military & Overseas Voting
- Long-term Care Facility Voting
- Vote by Mail
- Dropbox Management
- In-Person Absentee Voting



ELECTION DAY

- ADA Accessibility
- Election Day Registrations
- Central Count
- Election Day Voting
- Triage Center Operations
- Crisis Management
- Observer Access



POST-ELECTION

- Auditing
- Reconciliation
- Canvassing & Certification
- Records Management
- Election Worker Payroll
- Inventory Auditing
- Election Day Registration Processing
- Canvassing & Certification
- Records Management
- Post-Election Evaluations

2026 Major Departmental Updates

- Rethinking our work as Cycles
 - 18-month Election Cycles; 6 elections
 - Intentional inventory management
- Election Day Communication Plans
 - Common Council, commissioners, executives, and critical partners
 - EOC at all elections
 - Election Planning Taskforce
- Seasonal Staff Revamp
 - Clear hiring & working timelines; Position realignment
- Ballot Ordering overhaul
- Language Access Review
- Investing in Project Management Tools
- Midtown Planning, Preparation
- Election Day Enhancements
 - Supply Depots
 - New communication tools
 - Additional staff for internal operations

Milwaukee's New Normal

HISTORICAL TRENDS no longer serve us

- Spring Elections and Partisan Primaries – 1:1 ballot order
- General Election – Plan resources like a Presidential
- IPAV bringing in new voters not taking election day voters

First-Class City in a ***BATTLEGROUND STATE***

- 1,850 jurisdictions; 1,900 election official leaders; one first class city
- 2024 Milwaukee had the highest turnout percentage of 50 largest cities in America

Nationally - ***MODERNIZATION*** to adjust to the new normal

SECURITY and ***TRANSPARENCY*** are top priorities

EARLY VOTING continues to grow in popularity

LITIGATION and ***LEGISLATION*** are a regular occurrence throughout the year

MIS/DIS/MAL INFORMATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Measures	2025	2026 Planned	2027 Projected
Maintain IPAV daily average wait time to less than 15 minutes		80%	85%
Election worker training completion rate		80%	85%
Pre-Election Day supply accuracy rate		80%	85%
Complete Central Count within 30 minutes of estimated time	1/2	4/4	2/2
Attend and lead voter engagement opportunities to instill trust in the democratic process	20	12	20

Election Comparisons

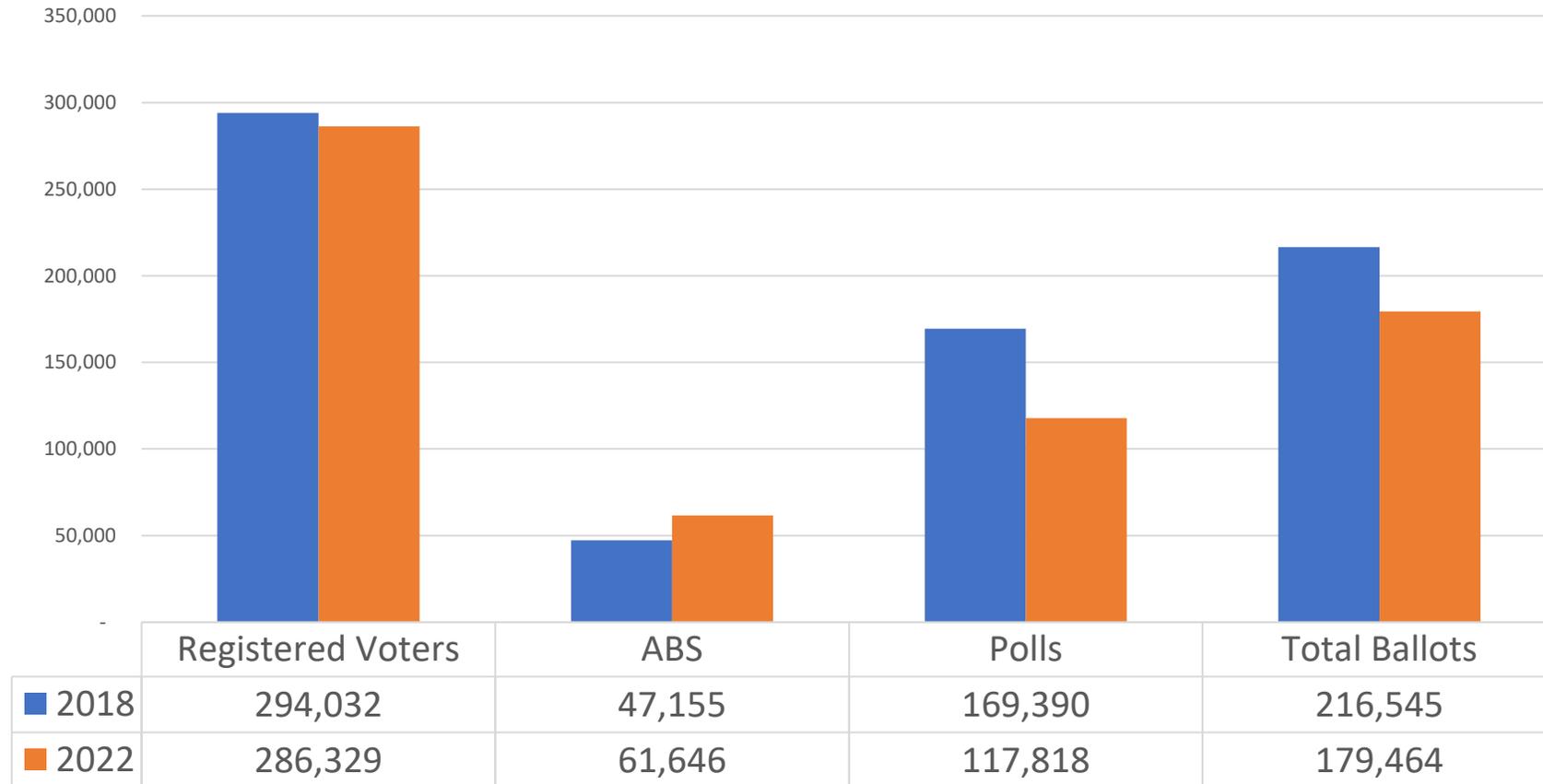
Spring Primary	2025	2024	2023
Election Day Voter Registrations	323	50	1,172
Registered voters	310,991	269,578	291,619
IPAV Locations	7	6	7
IPAV Totals	2,016	3,523	4,848

Partisan Primary	2022	2018
Election Day Voter Registrations	2,959	7,839
Registered voters	279,514	252,729
IPAV Locations	4	8
IPAV Totals	6,691	

Spring Election	2025	2024	2023
Election Day Voter Registrations	5,813	4,110	3,636
Registered voters	309,755	270,289	290,462
IPAV Locations	10	8	7
IPAV Totals	24,994	12,267	13,452

General Election	2022	2018
Election Day Voter Registrations	23,686	5,813
Registered voters	286,329	294,032
IPAV Locations	14	8
IPAV Totals	28,661	36,659

2018 & 2022 General Elections



YOUR *Vote*

YOUR VOICE

CITY OF MILWAUKEE ELECTION COMMISSION

- ADA Compliant Rebranding
- Chief and Community Listening Sessions
- “I Voted Early” sticker contest with MPS
- Departmentwide commitment to public engagement
- Mock elections
- Chief Advisory Committee
- Providing accurate materials and training to Community Groups

Key Dates

- October 31
 - Contest Closes
- November 17
 - Voting Begins (target)
- December 17
 - Voting Ends (target)



Milwaukee, Show Your Creativity!

City of Milwaukee ELECTION COMMISSION

I VOTED Early **Sticker Design Contest**

How to Participate

- Scan the QR Code to download the Entry Form
- Design or draw a fun, colorful, legible and non-partisan sticker using the template provided
- Sticker must include the words "I Voted Early"
- Follow the submission instructions on the Entry Form!
- One submission per qualified Milwaukee resident

Submit your artwork by October 31st!

Winning sticker designs will be announced January 2026 at a special event with city and school leaders.

Download the Entry Form



Participants must be City of Milwaukee Residents ages 5-99+ and must be affiliated with Milwaukee Public Schools.

For more information, contact the City of Milwaukee Election Commission

Email: stickercontest@milwaukee.gov : Mail: 200 E Wells St, Rm 501
Tel: 414-286-VOTE (8683) : Milwaukee, WI 53202

In partnership with:
MPS MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Categories

- Grades K-3
- Grades 4-8
- Grades 9-12
- Adult 18+

As of Wed 10/15:

147 submissions



ELECTION COMMISSION

Paulina Gutiérrez
Executive Director

Maricha Harris
Deputy Director



Board of Election Commissioners
Terrell Martin (D), Chair
Patricia Ruiz-Cantú (D)
Douglas Haag (R)

Carl Lewis
Operations

Phyllis Whitley
Field Coordinator

Tim Lundberg
Early Voting Coordinator

Stephanie Rushing
Absentee Coordinator

Emily Johnson
Voter Engagement Coordinator

Sonia Maldonado
Admin Services Coordinator

Erin Wruk
Election Services Coordinator

Caprice Brown
Election Services Coordinator

Sharon Beauregard
Training

Laborers & Ops
Center Staff

IPAV Chiefs
IPAV Staff
SVD Staff

Central Count &
Dropbox Staff

ABS Ballot Prep
& Tracking Staff

Engagement &
Registration
Processing Staff

Chief Inspectors
Election
Inspectors

Trainers and
Office Support
Staff

Department Demographics

FTE Staff Demographics	
	Total
Black	6
White	4
Latino	1
Asian	0
Total	11

	2024 EAC	Current MEC
Age Group	%	%
HS to 25	8%	4%
26 to 40	9%	15%
41 to 60	24%	30%
61 to 70	31%	25%
71 +	28%	24%

Seasonal Staff Demographics	
68%	Female
32%	Male
35%	Black
57%	White
6%	Latino
0.2%	Asian
3,760	

Service Uniformity

- **Nonpartisan office**
- We work with **all parties & communities** regardless of demographics, affiliation, or any other characteristic.
- **Our work is transparent**, and anyone can observe the voting process, as defined in state law.
 - We encourage and support observers, they play a critical role in democracy.
- The MEC prioritizes increasing voting in areas with historic low turnout to demystify the voting process. However, it will conduct these type of outreach events in all areas of the City.
- Per state law, 3-person bipartisan City of Milwaukee Board of Election Commissioners
 - The two major political parties submit a list of appointees to be selected by Mayor
 - Party with most votes from City in last governor's race defines the makeup.
 - Two Democrats and One Republican

Budget Amendment Updates

- Permanent Midtown Location
 - Discussions and planning underway
- Interns & Young People
 - Employing young people as poll workers and pre/post-election workers
 - Since 2024, nearly 10
 - Looking to expand and formalize
 - Working with UW Milwaukee
- MKE Mobile Action App
 - Critical partnership with UCC, exploring other methods of communication