

2021



Legislative Reference Bureau

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ELECTION COMMISSION

2021 Proposed Plan and Executive Budget Review

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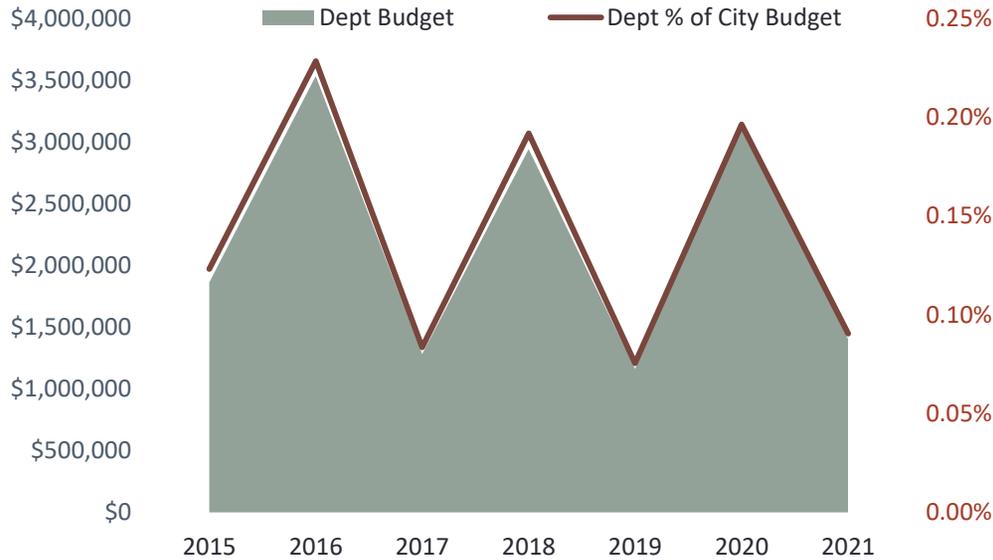
Budget Hearing: 9:00 am on Monday, October 5, 2020



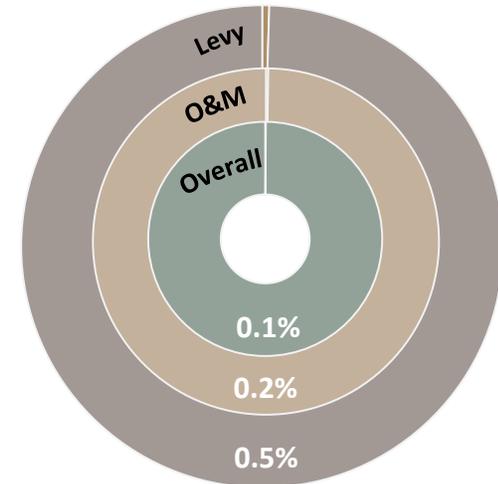
\$1,403,418
Proposed 2020 Budget

-\$1,758,619
Change in Proposed Budget

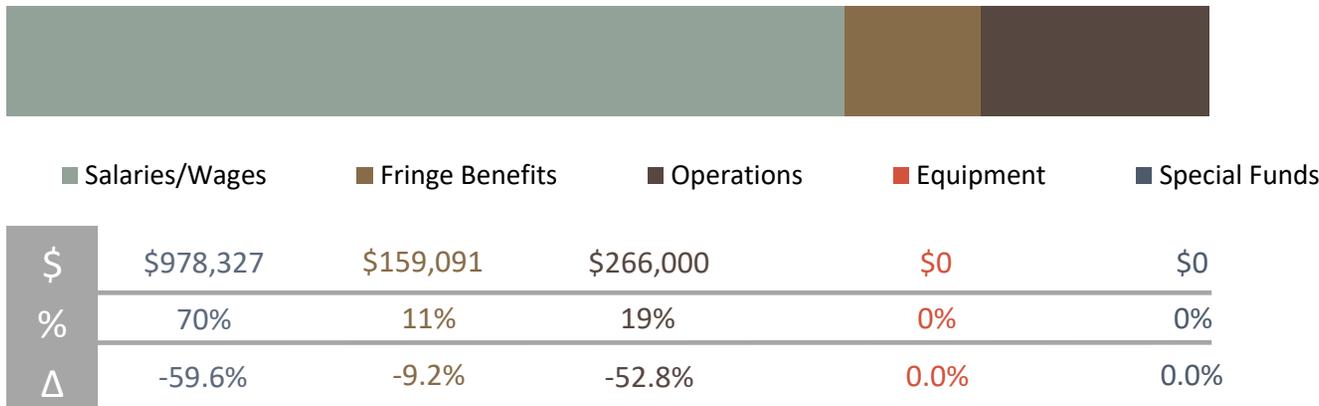
-55.6%
% Change in Proposed Budget



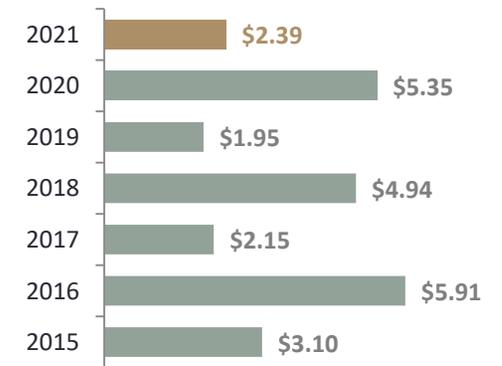
Departmental Budget Impact



Departmental Budget Appropriation Category



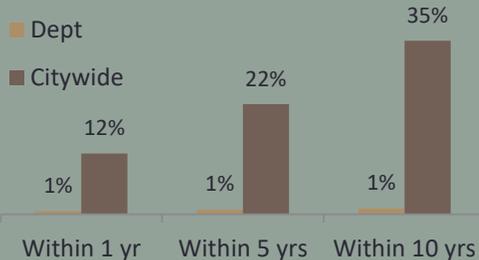
Budget per Capita



-55.6%
Decrease in department's budget.

310,000
Number of voters in the registration database.

Retirement Eligible



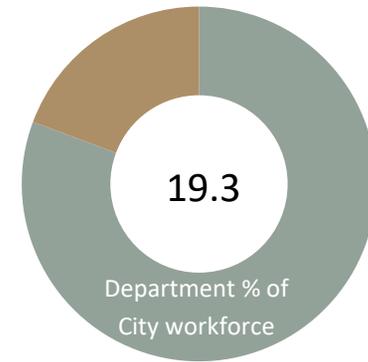
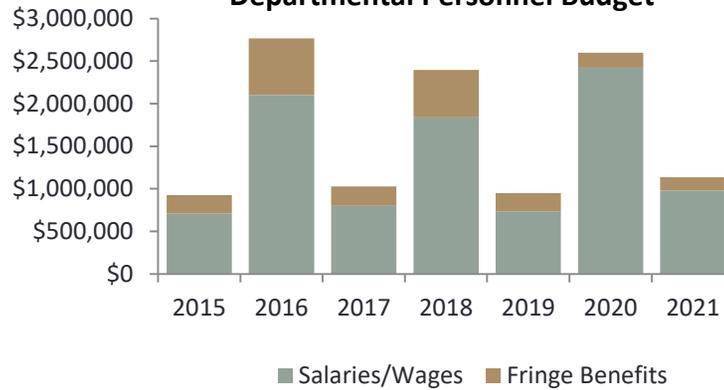
-999
Change in Positions

-39.5%
% Change in Positions

0
Current Vacancies

2
Voluntary Separations

Departmental Personnel Budget

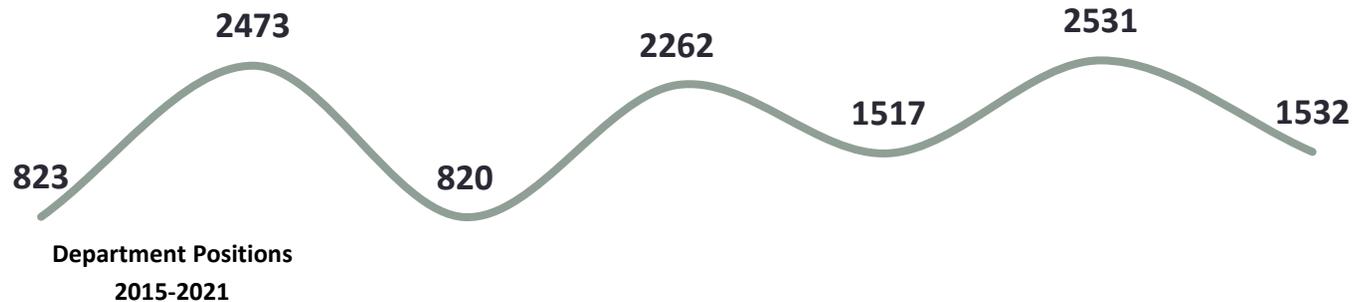


Staffing - Vacancies

There are no vacant positions in the department at this time.

Staffing - Authorized Positions

The number of authorized positions decreases from 2,531 to 1,532 due to the decreased number of scheduled elections in odd-numbered years.



-\$1,444,428

Decrease in salaries and wages for the department, down 59.6%.

-\$298,055

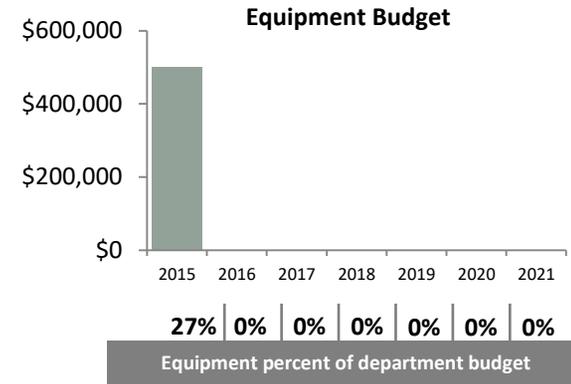
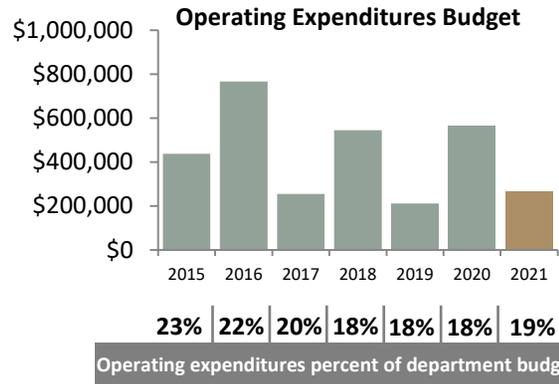
Decrease in Operating Expenditures, down 51.1%.

-\$16,136

Decrease in employee fringe benefits.

180

Current number of polling locations.



2021 ELECTION DATES AND PROJECTED TURNOUTS

- February 18 Spring Primary 25,000
- April 6 Spring Election 60,000

Special Purpose Accounts

The department has no special purpose accounts.

Grants

The department has no grant funding.

Capital Requests

There are no proposed capital programs or projects.

-\$1,758,619

Decrease in department's budget.

1,532

Number of positions authorized for 2021.

2

Number of elections scheduled for 2021.

800%

Increase in absentee voting-by-mail since onset COVID-19 pandemic.

I. Voter Registration Efforts

The Election Commission's recent and ongoing voter registration efforts include the following:

- The development and citywide distribution of a *Registering & Voting in Milwaukee* tri-fold brochure.
- *MyVote (online registration) buckslips* that were mailed with water bills.
- *MyVote door hangers*, distributed by HACM, Safe & Sound and other community organizations.
- Voter Registration Kiosks at every Milwaukee Public Library (13), in the rotunda of City Hall, at MHD Keenan Health Center, the YWCA, SDC, the 16th Street Community Health Clinics, the Milwaukee Public Market and other locations.
- Email registration status and address on MyVote.
- Social media videos .
- MyVote email signature.
- Working with other City departments which serve as voter registration centers.
- Social media videos.
- Email blasts sent by exporting the emails of registered voters from WisVote voter registration database to encourage recipients to confirm their voter registration information.
- Engaging nonprofit organizations.
- Media, social media and press events to promote MyVote.
- Data management and quality control by analyzing the impact of the state's data maintenance and purge processes to ensure accuracy and challenge irregularities.

II. Impact of Voter ID Law

The effects of Wisconsin's photo ID law on Milwaukee residents remain significant. The State's investment in a photo ID education campaign was negligible. While the City, along with numerous community partners, have made a substantial investment in photo ID education, the communities that are the most-impacted by this law (people in poverty, students and seniors) can also be the most difficult to reach via messaging.

In addition to a lack of messaging, erroneous messages, passed from person to person, can also impact or discourage access to voting. Misinformation includes references to an ID specific to voting ("voter ID"), that the address on the ID must match the registration ID, or that only "REAL IDs" can be used to meet the photo ID requirement.

The Election Commission believes that the impact of the photo ID requirement is still significant, particularly among students and the poor, but less so than in the 2016 Presidential Election. This is mainly due the outreach and education efforts of the Commission as well as numerous voting rights groups, such as the League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County, All Voting is local, VoteRiders, ACLU and others. By sharing accurate information and assisting individuals with securing photo IDs.

III. Voting by Mail

The Election Commission has taken steps to encourage members of the public to vote safely and consider voting by mail, especially in the current COVID-19 environment. These steps include:

- Raising awareness and accessibility of the by-mail absentee voting option. The department's public education campaign has included two "Safe Vote" mailings (pre-August Primary and pre-November Election) sent to all households, information distributed through the media and community partners. The Commission has also expanded a longstanding collaboration with Milwaukee Public Libraries so that branches can provide resources and assistance to any person wanting to request an absentee ballot.
- Establishing systems to rebuild public trust in voting by-mail absentee. Specifically, the establishment of an expanded and unprecedented 15 absentee ballot drop box locations that are available 24 hours a day to alleviate public concern about mail delivery times.
- Reviewing and retooling the department's absentee ballot voting systems, including streamlining the absentee ballot application process, as well as automating the assembling and mailing of absentee ballots.
- Maintaining on-going and effective communication with the department's absentee voting partners, specifically the Wisconsin Election Commission and the US Postal Service.

The Commission believes that consistent check-ins and problem-solving opportunities may prevent recurrence of problems experienced in previous elections.