


**City of Detroit**  
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

**Gina Avery-Walker**  
*Director*

**JANICE M. WINFREY**, *City Clerk*  
*Chairperson, Election Commission*

**Melissa King**  
*Deputy Director*

TO: Mary Waters, Councilmember At-Large  
Detroit City Council

FROM: Gina Avery-Walker, Director  
Department of Elections 

DATE: March 17, 2023

RE: Questions on Department of Elections' FY 2024 Budget

1. What is driving the approximately 30% YoY reduction in Operating Services spending? What are some examples of Operating Services costs that are projected to decrease YoY, and what is the cause of the decrease?

**Response:** Operating expenses decreased in various cost centers due to utility and parking outlays being entirely transferred from our cost centers and appropriation. OFCO has opted to streamline the process and have every department's utilities and parking paid from one central account string placed outside their respective budgets.

Secondly, Proposal 2, which was passed in the November 2022 Election, allows for postage for returning absentee ballots to be funded by the State of Michigan. The funding required to mail the ballots and other election related mail will still be funded from our budget. Nevertheless, given that the postage costs for absentee ballots being returned is being subsidized, we don't anticipate needing as much funding for postage year-over-year.

Finally, there have been other reductions largely because there's only one scheduled election in FY 24. There are typically two scheduled elections in a fiscal year. Substantial portions of the charges related to postage will be expensed in July of 2024, which falls under FY 25. Given these charges will fall under FY 25, it was appropriate to reduce the budget in FY 24.

2. What are some examples of operating supplies will not be purchased/not purchased in the same quantities as for the 2022 general election that will drive the approximately \$15,000 YoY decrease?

**Response:** The removal of funding for BallotTrax, which is a software the voters could sign up for to receive updates regarding the status of their absentee ballot, is the primary expense driving this reduction. We previously paid for this software but no longer need to because of the adoption of Proposal 2 in November 2022, which allows for us to utilize a state funded ballot tracking system.

3. Why are election costs being weighted approximately 80% towards the Primary with only approximately 20% allocated to the General?

**Response:** There is currently only one scheduled Election in FY 24, which is the Presidential Primary Election in February 2024. There are typically two scheduled in a fiscal year. The full brunt of the expenses for the Presidential Primary will occur in FY 24. Conversely, substantial portions of the outlays for the FY 24 General Election related to postage, operational cost, advertising, and poll worker pay will pay will be expensed after June of 2024, which falls under FY 25. Given these charges will fall under FY 25, it was appropriate to substantially reduce the General Election budget in FY 24.

4. How many contract election workers are estimated to be needed for 2024? Does this number vary between Presidential Primary, General Primary (FY24 and FY25 budget), and General Election (FY25 budget)?

**Response:** The number of poll workers needed does vary based on expected voter turnout for the election cycle. The Presidential Primary and Municipal Elections tend to need less staff compared to the Gubernatorial and Presidential Elections. The range of workers required for all elections is generally between 4,800-7,500. We expect to hire approximately 4,800-5,000 in FY 24 for the Presidential Primary Election and 7,300-7,500 for the Presidential Election.

5. Is the signature verification software a one-time purchase or is it an ongoing subscription? If it's a subscription, why are the costs increasing each year and not contractually locked-in?

**Response:** The signature verification software was a one-time purchase. Additionally, there is a yearly license and service agreement fee that is contractually locked in for two years at \$41,325 per year.