

# 2014-16 Strategic Plan

## Department of Elections [132]

### Mission

The Department of Elections promotes and supports accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

### Vision

The Department of Elections envisions a highly modern, efficient and professional electoral process that is trustworthy and accountable at all levels and engages Virginia's diverse citizenry in the most fundamental right in a democratic society: the right to vote.

### Values

### Finance

#### Financial Overview

The Department of Elections is supported by two major funding sources: State general funds are used to support state mandated activities and services and a federal grant administered by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is used to implement the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requirements.

The agency's general fund budget provides financial assistance to local governments for general registrars' salaries and local electoral boards' compensation resulting in a utilization of 66% of these general funds. The remaining 34% supports a portion of the agency salaries and minimal agency operating expenses.

ELECT also utilizes HAVA funds that were appropriated by Congress in 2002 to assist the agency with the implementation of the Help America Vote Act. HAVA funds account for approximately 60% of ELECT's annual operating budget. After an initial appropriation of HAVA funding, in 2003, to purchase new voting equipment and other upgrades to the electoral system as required by federal legislation, Congress appropriated "requirement payments" to aid states in compliance with legislation. While requirements payments ended in FY2011, ELECT has worked to conserve these funds. ELECT has requested and received all available HAVA funds from the federal government and ELECT is not aware that Congress has any plans in the foreseeable future to appropriate additional funding for this purpose. While the HAVA funds are used to support absentee voting, compliance with voter registration list maintenance and voter education, the majority of the federally funded portion of the agency budget supported by the HAVA grant is associated with maintaining a computerized statewide voter registration system.

The HAVA funding has helped the agency meet significant shortfalls in funding needed to support mandated work due to unrestored funding reductions over the past decade and the lack of growth in state revenues to support growing office needs. With the limited resources available to the agency and the impending exhaustion of HAVA funds, it is an ever increasing challenge to meet existing workload to maintain client services.

With the continued reduction of the agency's annual general fund budget, it is important to note that the HAVA grant requires a minimum level of state spending ("maintenance of effort") towards implementing and maintaining HAVA requirements. It is essential to take into account this maintenance of effort requirement when considering any further budget reductions to the agency.

Another funding stream worth mentioning is the Election Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (EAID) grant. EAID is a federal grant originally tied to HAVA that relates to improving the accessibility of the elections process to citizens with disabilities. Virginia was originally appropriated slightly over \$2,000,000 and currently has slightly less than \$500,000 remaining from this funding source. EAID funds are spent to ensure polling places are accessible to individuals with disabilities, to train election officials on how best to promote access and participation of individuals with disabilities in elections, and provide information to individuals with disabilities about the accessibility of polling places.

ELECT was also aggressive in pursuing additional grant funding and has been successful in recently obtaining a grant from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) in the amount of \$1,818,000 to develop technologies to assist overseas and military voters. Currently there remains approximately \$400,000.

#### Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	8,636,870	4,357,399	8,518,924	4,402,809
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

*(Changes to Initial Appropriation will be 0 when the plan is created. They will change when the plan is updated mid-biennium.)*

### Customers

#### Anticipated Changes to Customer Base

## Current Customer List

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
Voter	Registered Voters	5,200,000	0	Stable
Candidates	Candidates Running for Office	2,500	0	Stable
Federal Agency	DOD, DOJ, EAC, FEC, SSA, USPS, HHS	0	0	Stable
State Agency(s),	VSP, DMV, VDH, VITA, DSS, DPB, DOA, DHRM, OAG, Supreme Court	0	0	Stable
Local or Regional Government Authorities	All 133 Local General Registrar Offices and Electoral Boards	133	0	Stable
Organization	Third-Party Voter Registration & Advocacy Groups	0	0	Stable
General Assembly	Members of the General Assembly and Staff	0	0	Stable
Governor	Governor's Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries	0	0	Stable

## Partners

Name	Description
Department of Social Services (DSS)	DSS assists with list maintenance by providing information on deaths and adjudicated mental incompetent citizens
Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)	Federal agency that is charged with assisting overseas and military voters with registration and casting ballots.
Office of Executive Secretary	Administrative office for courts.
Office of the Attorney General	Provides guidance and interpretation of state and federal laws and regulations.
Local county and city electoral boards	Local electoral boards are charged with implementing standards, policies and practices established by the State Board of Elections and ELECT in conducting elections at the local level.
Local county and city general registrars	Local general registrars are charged with implementing standards and policies established by the State Board of Elections and ELECT in their voter registration practices and processes.
Political Party	Political parties submit the names of candidates running for office for their particular party.
State Police	Provides lists of convicted felons to assist with maintenance of registration records
Board for People with Disabilities	Assists with communication to the disabled population and assists ELECT in ascertaining the needs of the disabled community.
Clerks of the House of Delegates and State Senate	Clerks provides ELECT with Statement of Economic interest forms filed by candidates for office.
Department of Health	The Bureau of Vital Statistics provides information to ELECT on deaths of citizens.
Department of Justice	Provides guidance and enforcement of state and federal laws and regulations.
Department of Motor Vehicles	Under the National Voter Registration Act, DMV offers its customers the opportunity to apply to register to vote at its customer service centers.
Department of Planning and Budget	Assists with assessing the fiscal impact of legislation.
U.S. Election Assistance Commission	Federal agency charged with administering the grant requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).
United States Postal Service	USPS provides address validation data and National Change of Address data to assist with list maintenance activities.
Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)	As mandated by the federal National Voter Registration Act, commonly called Motor Voter Act, DMV processes and submit voter registration applications to SBE that are received at DMV offices from its customers.
Virginia Electoral Board Association (VEBA)	Agency senior management works with leadership of VEBA to ensure cooperation between ELECT and electoral boards in all 133 localities.
Voter Registrars' Association of Virginia (VRAV)	Agency senior management works with leadership of VRAV to ensure cooperation between ELECT and general registrars in all 133 localities.

## Agency Goals

### • Achieve greater agency efficiency and effectiveness.

#### Summary and Alignment

The Department of Elections will align the agency's structure to provide enhanced services to customers and better utilize reduced financial resources.

#### Associated State Goal

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

#### Associated Societal Indicator

Government Operations

#### Objectives

##### » Align the agency structure, duties, workforce and internal controls to accomplish the Department's mission.

#### Description

The requirements for administering elections are an ever-changing target. As such, continual improvements in the structure, functions and processes must occur.

#### Objective Strategies

- Review of current structure, employee work profiles and roles.
- Review of the Department's use of contracting and vendors in core agency functions.
- Enhancement of staff knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the needs of Department customers.
- Establishment and documentation of proper internal controls and practices. Establishment and documentation of proper internal controls and practices.

#### Measures

- ♦ Compliance with Continuity of Operations (COOP) requirements

### • Secure permanent funding to accomplish our agency mission.

#### Summary and Alignment

Funding provided to the agency under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) will be exhausted by the end of FY2017. This funding source currently amounts for approximately 60% of the total operating budget for the agency. In order to maintain agency services, 100% of the total operating budget for the agency will have to be supported by General Funds. In addition, the agency is focused on making operations more efficient and reducing the long-term costs of providing services.

#### Associated State Goal

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

#### Associated Societal Indicator

Government Operations

#### Objectives

##### » Align the Department's budget with actual agency needs and obligations to include obtaining sufficient General Funds to support all agency operations.

#### Description

The current Department budget was established many years ago and has not been adjusted to meet current agency needs and reflect diminished General Funds.

#### Objective Strategies

- Establishment of a separate service area for the State Board of Elections.
- Improvement of the accuracy of agency decision briefs regarding future funding decisions.
- Education for stakeholders about impending funding shortfall.
- Transition of all agency operational funds from diminishing Federal Funds to General Funds.
- Reduction in ongoing operating costs for major systems.

#### Measures

- **Modernize electoral processes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.**

**Summary and Alignment**

Electoral processes in the Commonwealth use a combination of aging and up-to-date technologies and business practices. The Department of Elections plans to take steps to modernize the aging technologies and practices to effect efficiencies and cost savings. This will better position the agency and local election officials to support accurate, fair, open and secure elections. The Department of Elections will work to establish long-term relationships with key stakeholders to simplify and clarify electoral law, policy and regulations. This will provide citizens with assurance that elections will be accurate, fair and open.

**Associated State Goal**

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

**Associated Societal Indicator**

Government Operations

**Objectives**

- » **Educate stakeholders on potential changes in election law and policy and their impacts.**

*Description*

Election law and policy are complicated and minor changes can have significant consequences; therefore, it is imperative that the agency educate stakeholders on national trends, potential changes and current practices.

*Objective Strategies*

- Promotion of beneficial changes in election law and policy.
- Provision of accurate and timely data to key decision makers.

*Measures*

- » **Increase customer access to electoral processes.**

*Description*

Citizens and candidates can realize greater access to the electoral processes through the Department focusing on improving business processes and increasing the use of technology.

*Objective Strategies*

- Simplification of candidate interactions with the agency.
- Enhancement of opportunities for citizens to register and vote in the Commonwealth
- Improvement of access to election data for elected officials, candidates and citizens

*Measures*

- ◆ Agency Information Technology Security Cost per security data points rated as "Compliant" by Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)
- ◆ Average annual cost of maintaining the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS)
- ◆ Increase number of processes that can be completed online
- ◆ Number of automated data sets available to the public

- » **Promote increased information security policy, standards and practices in the election community..**

*Description*

Election data contains many data elements defined as sensitive by the Code of Virginia. The Department will take steps to increase information security and educate election officials on the importance of proper security protocols.

*Objective Strategies*

- Completion of the agency's information security program.
- Training for local election officials on the importance of information security in their role.
- Enactment of additional security protocols and procedures for access to Department systems.

*Measures*

- ◆ Compliance with Continuity of Operations (COOP) requirements

- **Enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of election officials.**

- **Summary and Alignment**

- The Department of Elections will establish standards and benchmarks to ensure that election officials are accountable at all levels, supporting accurate, fair, open and secure elections.

- **Associated State Goal**

- Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

- **Associated Societal Indicator**

- Voter Registration and Turnout

- **Objectives**

- **» Establish professional standards for election officials.**

- *Description*

- The Commonwealth currently does not have an established set of professional standards or development opportunities for election officials.

- *Objective Strategies*

- Assessment of current local election official duties and, responsibilities; and identification of key performance indicators.
      - Development and dissemination of key performance indicator report for use by the election community.
      - Collaboration with the election officials' associations in the development of a professional certification program.

- *Measures*

- **Position Virginia as a national leader in election administration.**

- **Summary and Alignment**

- The Department of Elections will leverage networking opportunities with other states to highlight Virginia's efforts to make the electoral process more modern and efficient. In addition, the Department will expand relationships with other state agencies to improve the voting process and engage more of Virginia's citizens. Through these efforts, the Commonwealth will illustrate how other states can improve their processes to support accurate, fair, open and secure elections nationwide.

- **Associated State Goal**

- Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

- **Associated Societal Indicator**

- Voter Registration and Turnout

- **Objectives**

- **» Increase the Department's visibility regarding modernization of electoral processes.**

- *Description*

- The Department is currently on the forefront of the national modernization movement in elections; however, lack of involvement on the national stage has resulted in minimal recognition of these efforts.

- *Objective Strategies*

- Increased coordination with other state election agencies.
      - Documentation of modernization efforts in conjunction with national interest groups.
      - Participation in national associations.

- *Measures*

## Major Products and Services

- Maintenance and improvements to the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS), Virginia's electronic statewide voter registration and election system used by SBE and all localities to administer the voter registration and election processes in Virginia
- Development and maintenance of Virginia's online voter registration system
- Assistance and policy guidance to county and city election officials
- Training to local election officials

- Assistance and information to federal, state and local candidates on ballot access, filing and campaign finance requirements
- Provide voter lists to candidates, courts, and nonprofit organizations
- Collection, aggregation and publication of election results
- Establishment and supervision of voting system technology and security standards
- Testing, certification, and approval of new voting equipment systems
- Candidate certification services
- Ballot proofing and certification services
- Certification of results of elections for federal and state offices
- Ballot referendum services
- Assistance to political action committees, referendum committees, political parties and contributors with campaign finance disclosure and compliance requirements
- Administration of campaign finance and disclaimer fine and penalty assessment, notification, collection and disbursement of fines to the Treasury of Virginia
- Campaign finance reporting software
- Proposal, assistance and drafting of legislation, including providing analysis of proposed bills and drafting fiscal impact statements for proposed bills
- Review all charter amendments and draft recommended amendments for uniformity and compliance with election laws
- Voter registration form development and distribution
- Voter registration procedure training services to other state agencies and to private citizens and groups involved in voter registration activities
- Electronic pollbook training and creation services
- Administration of grants to local election offices for hardware including new electronic pollbooks, new voting equipment, and other items
- Administration of salary reimbursements for salaries owed by the Commonwealth to general registrars and local electoral boards
- Administration of reimbursements for presidential primary expenses incurred by localities
- Administration of voter registration list maintenance programs, including multistate agreements to share voter registration data
- Voter education and outreach public relations programs

## Performance Highlights

In spite of annual budget cuts, including an additional 7% budget cut in FY2015, the Department of Elections (ELECT) continues to make substantial progress in modernizing and streamlining its services in administering elections and voter registration activities in Virginia. The most important recent advancement is the adoption of online voter registration program. Launched in 2013, not only does this program enhance the integrity of Virginia's voter registration rolls, this program also saves as much as 80 cents per registration.

The agency has been recognized several times recently for its progress in utilizing technology to improve the voter registration process, increase voter education and improve efficiencies in the elections process. Some of the honors, accolades, and distinctions over the past several few years include:

- Winner, Annual Governor's Technology Awards IT as Efficiency Driver—Government to Citizen, for Online Voter Registration (2013)
- Microsoft Dynamics 2013 Customer Excellence Award Winner in Government Administration: ELECT was part of the Commonwealth's team that was recognized by Microsoft for its implementation of the Microsoft Dynamics shared service platform in March of 2013. Specifically, ELECT had implemented the new campaign finance reporting solution and a locality contact management solution based on the Microsoft Dynamics platform.
- ELECT received an award from Google in July 2013 acknowledging our contribution to the Voting Information Project and for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of elections through open data.
- Virginia was one of seven pioneering states to launch groundbreaking multi-state voter registration data sharing initiative: Electronic Registration Information Center ("ERIC").

Another important item to note is Virginia's compliance with federal and state laws for mailing absentee ballots for overseas and military voters. Virginia had been under a consent decree with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to comply with the federal MOVE Act that mandates ballots be mailed to overseas and military voters 45 or more days before a federal election. Due to Virginia's compliance with the laws over the course of

several elections, Virginia is no longer under that consent decree.

ELECT's success in obtaining grant awards, including the \$1.8 million dollar FVAP grant and grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities are also notable achievements.

## Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	37
Salaried Employees	26
Wage Employees	2
Contracted Employees	11

## Key Risk Factors

The Department of Elections' (ELECT) main impediment to achieving its goals relates to the impact of continued budget cuts and the uncertainty surrounding the future funding of election administration from the federal, state, and local levels. ELECT's general fund budget has been slashed by more than 35% since Fiscal Year 2007, including a 7% budget cut in FY2015. Concurrently, the costs of complying with state and federal mandates for elections have risen, labor expenses for items including fringe benefits have increased, and fees from other state agencies for services such as VITA have been raised significantly. While spending has been cut, Virginia continues to rely on and spend its remaining federal HAVA grant funds which are scheduled to be extinguished within one to three years. These funds account for approximately 60% of the agency's operating budget. These long term cuts that happened at the federal, state, and local levels have resulted in certain stress fractures and cracks in the infrastructure of the electoral system, some of which were on display during the November 2012 General Election. The uncertainty and unpredictability regarding future funding levels at all levels of government make long-term strategic planning difficult and speculative.

In light of continued budget cuts, ELECT has been especially aggressive in pursuing additional funding streams. First, in August of 2011, ELECT drew down the last remaining HAVA dollars available from the federal government (\$6,970,000) which fully tapped that funding stream. Second, in late 2011, ELECT was awarded a \$1,800,000 dollar grant from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) to fund research and IT projects aimed at easing the voting process for overseas and military voters. ELECT also recently received a \$30,000 grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) for projects to increase knowledge of voting accessibility for people with disabilities and the aging community and to improve and expand the participation of individuals with disabilities in civic and community activities. ELECT also was awarded grant a second grant with FVAP that made available additional resources for military and overseas voting initiatives.

Additional funding is needed to ensure ELECT can perform its statutorily mandated objectives. While ELECT has been aggressive in pursuing additional funding through grant opportunities, these awards typically go to specialized areas and with strings attached. These special grants cannot replace a long-term general fund stream of revenue that can be relied on from one budget to the next. As the HAVA funds will be exhausted by the end of FY2018, ELECT will be in serious danger of not being able to comply with state and federal mandates to administer elections if additional state funding is not provided. It is also important that consideration be made to provide this funding prior to the next presidential election in 2016.

## Management Discussion

### General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

After finalizing the reorganization of the Department effective July 1, 2014, many challenges remain. The two main ongoing concerns for the Department are: 1) the use of aging and varying voting equipment across the Commonwealth, and 2) the impending exhaustion of the federal grant that funds approximately sixty percent (60%) of the Department's operating budget.

Considering these factors, the Department's two main areas of focus going forward are securing permanent funding and modernizing electoral processes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness which will result in cost-savings and increased customer service experiences.

Specifically, the Department's goals include the following:

- Improving access to election information by increasing the data available online
- Reducing ongoing operating costs for major systems, including VERIS
- Promoting increased uniformity of security policies, standards and practices in the election community
- Increasing the number of processes that citizens and registered voters can complete online to engage in the franchise

ELECT is also preparing the advise and assist localities regarding the potential voting equipment failures related to the use of aging and outdated equipment expected to arise in 2015. The concerns related to the use of this equipment, specifically Direct Record Electronic ("DRE") voting equipment, are well-documented and long-standing. Eight years ago in 2007, the legislature took steps to decrease the use of these machines by banning the purchase of additional DREs due to concerns regarding their security and auditability. However, many cash-strapped localities have opted to repair this equipment in lieu of purchasing new digital scan machines. As a result, over 100 localities currently use DRE equipment that is at or past its expected life span.

Not surprisingly, many voters experienced problems when attempting to cast a vote on these machines in 2014. These problems were documented by newspapers and tv stations across the Commonwealth. In addition, one DRE machine failure led to the loss of one vote which

was irretrievable, and a separate DRE was unable to render the results of votes cast by over 300 voters for more than four days - and only after assistance was provided by various technicians and Department staff was the DRE able to produce the voting results.

Due to Virginia's decentralized election administration system, the Department has limited oversight of localities' use and deployment of this equipment. In order to prevent the possible disenfranchisement of multiple voters, the Governor included in excess of \$28 million for the purchase of new modern voting equipment for the localities in the 2015-2016 budget amendments. If the final budget does not include these funds, Virginians casting votes on this equipment may be disenfranchised without any available remedy.

## **Information Technology**

Budget cuts, scarce resources and increasing public demand have required ELECT to produce new and more efficient service delivery mechanisms. Increasing security issues and the cost of technical services provided by VITA and other external technology resources have impacted the agency's Information Technology (IT) environment. The IT environment is further stressed by lack of sufficient number of IT staff that is required to support comprehensive statewide systems such as the statewide voter registration and election management system. As a result, ELECT has become reliant on many expensive external vendors and contractor to support its mission.

To address these factors, the agency has taken advantage of the opportunities that exist because of the popularity of Internet technologies to deliver high demand services to Virginia citizens, our clients, customers and constituents. These efforts are best demonstrated by the implementation of online voter registration, an initiative that moves Virginia towards paperless voter registration and a more efficient, secure, and voter-friendly registration system. Other examples include the 2012 launch of our new website which greatly improves citizen access to information and election related data and the 2012 launch of the new campaign finance management system, COMET, which has been a resounding success and has enabled the agency to reallocate resources to other divisions.

Continuous changes in federal and state laws relating to absentee voting, voter registration, election administration and campaign finance require the development of an agile IT environment that is poised to respond to the wide variety of business problems faced by the agency. A cornerstone of this effort has been the complete rearchitecture of the ELECT server infrastructure. The new infrastructure has reduced the risk through redundancy and the proper separation of development and production environments. In addition, the new infrastructure has increased the capacity and efficiency of the servers to handle the increased application processing that is currently needed.

## **Estimate of Technology Funding Needs**

### **Workforce Development**

ELECT promotes innovative thinking and the use of technology in bringing efficiency to the workplace. ELECT has used technology to automate certain functions, including the pollbook production process, voter credit importing, FOIA tracking, certain mail processing functions, and other areas are scheduled to be automated as a result of recent budget cuts.

In many cases, ELECT has had no choice but to increase efficiencies through technology. Continued budget cuts have resulted in multiple layoffs over the past several years and have required ELECT to do more with less. Accordingly, existing staff are asked to be more versatile and perform additional duties and functions. While ELECT has a dedicated and hardworking staff, to recruit and retain a highly competent workforce, ELECT needs the resources to eliminate salary suppression to have its best employees remain with the agency. Resources are needed to align current staff salaries to make them comparable with other state agencies' salary levels. In addition to the regular change of leadership at the top of the agency based on four year appointees by the sitting governor, ELECT sees a high turnover rate with staff. This can be largely attributed to the lower salaries. In spite of the difficult job market, ELECT still finds it difficult to retain its best staff.

As stated above, technology is taking an increasingly important role in administering elections. Investing resources to upgrade the "tech" skills of existing staff without this technological know-how is extremely important. The regular updating of the skills of staff members with the technological know-how is also important.

One of SBE's main goals is to provide high quality policy advice and guidance to the local election community. In addition, SBE's policy guidance is critical to the General Assembly during the legislative session and to the State Board in advising on the passage of Board policies and regulations. In order to provide high-quality guidance, SBE needs highly-educated and talented individuals who either possess a Juris Doctor degree or comparable skills and experience.

Recent changes to the rules capping the maximum number of work hours for wage employees have also impacted SBE. SBE has relied on wage staff to perform many important functions, particularly in a support role for policy analysts and election preparation. Changes brought on by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) have required state government to substantially limit the maximum number of work hours allowed for wage staff.

### **Physical Plant**

The Department of Elections office occupies the 1st floor of the Washington Building located in Capitol Square, Richmond, Virginia. Agency training space and the board room are located in the basement level of the Washington Building. All space is leased from the Department of General Services. The agency anticipates no change in the leased space requirements.



**Title**

**File Type**

## **Electoral Administration, Uniformity, Legality, and Quality Assurance Services [72302]**

### **Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides guidance and promotes uniformity in electoral proceedings by conducting research and providing procedural guidance to obtain uniformity in local election officials' practices and proceedings. The department is responsible for analyzing the legal requirements for elections in Virginia and developing strategies to monitor compliance with those requirements, providing training for election officials and agency staff, developing voter education programs and developing and executing communication strategies for the agency.

Activities include:

- Provide guidance, advice, and reference materials to SBE, general registrars, electoral boards, citizens, and voters to ensure uniformity and legality in the administration and implementation of federal and state election laws.
  - Develop and draft proposed legislation and regulations to accomplish agency objectives.
  - Identify and provide analysis of proposed federal and state legislation and regulations, ensuring the timely and proper implementation of enacted legislation and regulations.
  - Provides guidance, advice and support to SBE, general registrars, electoral boards, citizens and voters and ensures compliance with state and federal laws related to polling place accessibility.
  - Coordinate with Attorney General's office to assure compliance with federal and state laws.
  - Provide research support to Courts, Office of Attorney General, Division of Legislative Services and other agencies on federal election laws, Federal Election Assistance Commission guidance documents, historical State Board policies and practices, court cases surrounding elections, and Attorney General's opinions pertaining to the electoral practices.
  - Catalog, maintain and update at least annually all official guidance documents and publications, update records accessible through the Registrar of Regulations and the Library of Virginia.
  - Provide assistance in development of all forms and documents prescribed by State Board to ensure legality and compliance with federal and state election laws.
  - Coordinates and conducts training of local county and city electoral boards, general registrars, and their election staff
  - Develops and implements voter education programs to educate voters on voting procedures, voting rights and voting technology.
  - Establishes and implements standards for voting systems and voting systems technology and methods for casting and counting votes.
  - Establishes voting systems security standards and ensures local governments meet the prescribed standards.
  - Coordinates and conducts testing and certification of all voting systems used in Virginia.
  - Responds to inquiries from the media, strives to ensure the accuracy of information presented to citizens.
  - Prepares media releases to present relevant information to the general public and election officials.
- Improves the accessibility and quantity of polling places in Virginia.

### **Mission Alignment**

This service area assures the legality and purity of elections by issuing policy statements, developing Best Practices Guidelines and establishing statewide standards in election practices, voter registration, campaign finance and, voting systems technology and training for election officials. This service area also provides state mandated training of election officials.

### **Products and Services**

#### **Description of Major Products and Services**

Establish statewide standards for voting systems specifications, voting technology and, voting systems security

Perform statewide voting systems certification services for all voting systems used in Virginia elections

Establish statewide polling place accessibility standards

Educate voters on voting procedures, voting technology and voting rights

Coordinates and conduct training of local county/city electoral boards on the proper conduct of elections

Coordinate and conduct training of local general registrars on voter registration procedures and practices

Ensures individuals with disabilities has same access and opportunity for participation in the election process as does other voters

Provide research services on federal election laws, Federal Election Assistance Commission guidance documents, historical State Board policies and practices, court cases surrounding elections , and Attorney General's opinions pertaining to the electoral practices.

Propose and draft legislation and provide information and advise agency staff on matters concerning legislation

Ensure compliance with federal laws (e.g. preclearance) and court order requirements.

Ensure individuals with limited proficiency in English have the same access and opportunity for participation in the election process as other voters do.

Maintain statewide polling place accessibility standards.

### **Anticipated Changes**

Increased need for funding available to localities to ensure their compliance with federal and state laws. Increased need to train election officials.

### **Factors Impacting**

Our efforts to obtain and retain qualified staff with the level of knowledge and skill needed.

Reduction or elimination of grant funding programs that support human resources for this service area.

Reduction or elimination of grant funding programs available to assist localities in compliance with state and federal laws (e.g. ADA - access to polling places and VRA - multi-lingual election related forms and instructions).

### **Financial Overview**

Until fiscal 2003, Election Uniformity Services were totally funded from the state's general fund. In fiscal year 2004, ELECT received grants from the federal government to implement the standards and requirements prescribed in the HAVA. At some point in the future, the federal funds used to implement those requirements will be exhausted. ELECT will need additional funding from the state's general fund to maintain the improvements and the addition to services mandated by HAVA.

#### Biennial Budget

	<b>2015 General Fund</b>	<b>2015 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2016 General Fund</b>	<b>2016 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	528,106	1,198,840	528,106	1,198,840
Changes to Initial Appropriation	30,000	0	60,000	0

### **Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

## Statewide Voter Registration System and Associated Information Technology Services [72304]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area provides for the continuing operation and maintenance of the computerized statewide voter registration and election management system. The statewide system contains voter registration records for all five million plus voters registered in the Commonwealth and interacts with data for the purposes of maintaining an accurate voter registration list from the Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of State Police, Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Department of Health and the Social Security Administration. The system also manages the candidates, referendums and election results for all elections in the Commonwealth.

This statewide system is used by each of the 133 localities in the Commonwealth to add, update and remove voter registration and absentee voting records. In addition, voters can access the data from the system to review and update their own record through online tools provided by the Department of Elections.

As part of its responsibility to operate and maintain this service, the Department of Elections:

1. Requires the local counties and cities general registrars enter the names of all registered voters into the statewide voter registration system and, to change or correct registration records as necessary.
2. Requires county and city general registrars to perform regular maintenance of the voter registration records to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the voter records. Maintenance activities include cancelling of registered voters records of any voter who (i) is deceased, (ii) is no longer qualified to vote in the county or city where he is registered due to relocation of his/her residence, (iii) has been convicted of a felony, (iv) has been adjudicated incapacitated, or (v) is otherwise no longer qualified to vote as may be provided by law. ELECT works with external agencies and partners to identify voters who have records needing review relating to these maintenance activities.
3. Retains on the system for four years a separate record for registered voters whose names have been cancelled, with the reason for cancellation. A separate record for information received regarding deaths, felony convictions, and adjudications of incapacity pursuant to §§ 24.2-408 through 24.2-410 is retain on the system permanently.
4. Provides a means through the statewide voter registration and election management system for local general registrars to generate pollbooks, voter cards and other routine correspondence with voters to help ensure uniformity and integrity of elections.
5. Provides a means through the statewide voter registration and election management system for local general registrars to report election results and turnout information for dissemination to the general public.
6. Provides statistical reports each month of its website regarding voter registration activity.
7. Provides an online method for individuals to register to vote and view or update their voter record.
8. Provides an online system to report election results for all elections in the Commonwealth.

### Mission Alignment

Voter registration is the promenade to voting for all citizens. This service area is critical to the agency's mission to promote and support accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth. By having a centralized database of all voter registration records in the state, this service area assists in ensuring uniformity and integrity in the voter registration processes. During an election season, this activity provides the poll books and other precinct lists to ensure that all properly registered voters have the opportunity to vote in their respective precinct and district. This activity also provides for the timely and accurate reporting of election results for the general public.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

Registered voter lists and corresponding voter history data

Generation of uniform correspondence for voters when an action is taken on a voter's record (e.g. - voter information cards, cancellation notice, denial notice, etc.)

Identification of voter records with inaccurate or incomplete information for further review by local officials

Military and overseas citizens registration and absentee voting services

Lists of precincts and polling places

Reports of election results by precinct

Registration and voting statistics

Online voter registration services

Voter photo identification generation services

### **Anticipated Changes**

Improved list maintenance activities, including the sharing of data between Virginia and other states to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the voter registration list in Virginia.

Improved reporting tools for use by local and state election officials.

Improvements to the voter registration and election management system.

Improvement of the information security program and services.

### **Factors Impacting**

As in other service areas, the uncertainty of future funding is a serious concern. This service area largely exists because of a federal mandate (HAVA). This mandate will likely continue long after funding from the federal government has been exhausted. The Commonwealth has come to rely upon the statewide voter registration and election management system and other services provided by this area for election administration and without proper funding to improve and maintain these services provided by this area, serious problems will occur.

### **Financial Overview**

Prior to 2007, the cost to operate and maintain the centralized voter registration system was funded exclusively with state general funds. In 2007, to meet the mandates of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the State Board of Elections deployed a new statewide voter registration system to meet not only state requirements but, also the requirements of the federally mandated Help America Vote Act. In fiscal 2004, ELECT received grants from the federal government to implement the standards and requirements of a centralized voter registration system prescribed in HAVA. Therefore, ELECT used HAVA funds to design and develop the new statewide voter registration system that is fully HAVA compliant.

Due to the complexity of the new system, operation and maintenance cost have significantly increased over fiscal year 2007 costs. The increased operations and maintenance costs of the system have been funded exclusively with HAVA funds. This trend is expected to continue because the portion of state general funds used to cover operation and maintenance costs will be at the same level of funding as in fiscal year 2000. The funding received under HAVA for this activity is a one-time grant and is expected to be exhausted after fiscal year 2017. Therefore, State's general funds will be used to fund the on-going maintenance and support cost of the statewide voter registration system after 2017.

Biennial Budget

	<b>2015 General Fund</b>	<b>2015 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2016 General Fund</b>	<b>2016 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	761,532	1,660,154	761,532	1,703,165
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	1,162,000	-25,344	2,915,461

### **Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**

**Campaign Finance Disclosure Administration Services [72309]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area administers the campaign finance disclosure laws in Virginia. It provides information to the public of the source and use of money in political campaigns. Public disclosure activities are supported by the training of political campaign organizations in the proper application of Virginia campaign finance laws and, the proper reporting of campaign finance activities and transactions.

**Mission Alignment**

This service area directly aligns with ELECT's mission to promote and support accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth by keeping the public informed of the money in campaigns, the public can be reasonably confident in the purity of the process.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Filing requirements assistance services - provide support to filers in the accurate and timely filing of disclosure reports. Also assist filers in defining the requirements and content of the reports.

Filing software services - provide filing system (known as COMET) and approve standards for the preparation and transmittal by electronic means of the reports of contributions and expenditures from 3rd party software vendors software.

Public disclosure services – publish filed reports to web for public consumption

Public information services – provide general information to the public about disclosure activities

Disclosure Training Services - provide training to county and city election officials on how to administer the campaign finance laws for local county/city candidates

Compliance Training Services - provide training to candidates and political committee treasurers in disclosure and reporting requirements

**Anticipated Changes**

ELECT plans to move the COMET application to the agency's own servers to improve the architecture of the system for scalability and more flexibility in schema. The plan is to then reuse these components for all online applications as well as to move system administration responsibilities in-house and reduce maintenance costs. This project consists of adding digital signatures, automation of reporting and several other updates to reduce ongoing costs.

**Factors Impacting**

The current COMET solution was launched in early 2012. Since that time, the agency has not had funding to perform updates to the system. The underlying software is now two versions behind and the current hosting environment is not stable. The report mechanism is failing almost monthly with our large committees and is not resolvable until we resolve the hosting environment issues and have funding in place to pay for contract staff to make the necessary upgrades to the system.

**Financial Overview**

Campaign finance disclosure services are totally funded from the state's general fund. All financial disclosure reports filed with ELECT by General Assembly candidates, candidates for statewide offices (Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General), and political committees are timely published to the internet for public consumption. ELECT maintains a computer based campaign finance disclosure database to assist in this effort. The cost incurred in this service area supports campaign finance disclosure, compliance and enforcement activities.

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	253,600	0	253,600	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**



**Election Administration Services [72310]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area implements and administers procedures and practices that provide uniform and legal applications of election practices and candidate certification procedures and other activities related to elections.

**Mission Alignment**

This service area

- provides instructions and guidance to local county and city election officials in the certification of candidates and the conduct of all elections.
- certifies the results of elections
- develops and prescribes forms and documents to be used in all election practices and proceedings
- ensures that all ballots are printed and used in accordance with law
- administers ELECT’s electronic poll book efforts.

This service area directly aligns with ELECT’s mission to promote and support accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Election Procedure Guidance - Assistance and guidance to county and city election officials on electoral procedures and practices

Candidate Filing Services - Assistance and information to federal, state and local candidates on filing requirements

Provide election forms and other materials used by local Virginia counties and cities in the conduct of the election

Candidate Information Services - maintain and manage election calendars, candidate bulletins, candidate forms for qualifications and ballot access requirements

Candidate Certification Services - Ensure that only qualified candidates are on the ballot in the correct manner and correct order.

Ballot certification services - proof and ensure legality and purity of every ballot style use in state.

Election Results Certification Services - Certify results of elections for federal and state offices

Ballot referendum services

**Anticipated Changes**

ELECT will continue to reduce or discontinue services that are provided, but not required under the law such as ballot proofing. We are also seeking out how to make the processes required by law more efficient, reducing paper and cross-training of staff from across the agency to assist during peak periods.

**Factors Impacting**

A 27% cut in the agency’s budget in the past three years has had a great impact on this service area seeing the removal of an FTE position and two part-time positions to assist with ballot processing. The staff resources have been greatly strained and many services provided to the agency’s customers have been reduced or discontinued.

**Financial Overview**

Currently, the functions in this service area are funded through a mix of state and federal dollars. Until fiscal year 2003, Election Administration Services were totally funded from the state’s general fund. In fiscal year 2004, ELECT received a grant from the federal government to implement the standards and requirements prescribed in HAVA. The duties undertaken within this service area will need to be funded through the general fund when HAVA funds are exhausted.

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	169,452	1,200,408	169,452	1,200,862
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	-1,710

**Supporting Documents**

Title File Type





## Voter Services and Communications [72311]

### Description of this Program / Service Area

This service area provides voter registration, absentee voting and voter education services to Virginia citizens. It also provides guidance and support to local county and city election officials in delivering services to voters at the local level.

Activities Include:

- Monitor localities to assure readiness for absentee voting and election day response to emergencies and crises.
- Provides guidance, advice and support to SBE, general registrars, electoral boards, citizens and voters and ensures compliance with state and federal laws.

### Mission Alignment

This service area aligns with the agency mission by promoting and supporting accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth. Uniformity is ensured by fostering uniform procedures and practices employed in the voter registration and absentee voting processes throughout Virginia.

### Products and Services

#### Description of Major Products and Services

Voter registration services

Voter registration training services to various other state agencies designated under the National Voter Registration Act.

Voter registration forms

Absentee voting services for military and overseas citizens

Absentee voting services for in-state citizens

Absentee voting forms

Training of local election officials on absentee voting

Voter Registration Drive Services

Election Officials Voter registration training Services

Emergency absentee voting services for military and overseas citizens

Voter information and voter education services

Provide research services on federal election laws, regulations, U.S. Election Assistance Commission guidance documents, historical State Board policies and practices, court cases surrounding elections, and Attorney General's opinions pertaining to the absentee voting practices.

Propose and draft legislation and regulations, provide information and advise agency staff on matters concerning absentee voting legislation

Educate voters on absentee voting procedures, absentee voting technology and absentee voting rights

Coordinates and conduct training of local county/city electoral boards on the proper conduct of absentee voting

Coordinate and conduct training of local general registrars on absentee voting procedures and practices

Ensure that Virginia continues to meet Federal and State requirements related to absentee voting.

#### Anticipated Changes

- Increased need to train election officials
- Increased number of groups conducting voter registration drives
- Increased number of state agencies required to provide or make available voter registration opportunities
- Increased public expectation for voter services to be performed electronically.

#### Factors Impacting

Our efforts to obtain and retain qualified staff with the level of knowledge and skill needed.

- Reduction or elimination of grant funding programs available to assist localities in compliance with state and federal laws related to absentee voting
- Reduction or elimination of grant funding programs available to assist localities in compliance with state and federal laws related to provide multi-lingual election related forms and instructions.

### Financial Overview

This service area is partly funded by the state's general fund and partly funded by the federal mandate, Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grant. After the HAVA grant funds are exhausted, the standards and requirements imposed by HAVA and other federal law will need to be continued. The continuation of the services will not be possible without additional funding from the general fund.

#### Biennial Budget

	<b>2015 General Fund</b>	<b>2015 Nongeneral Fund</b>	<b>2016 General Fund</b>	<b>2016 Nongeneral Fund</b>
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	481,133	194,893	481,133	194,893
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	213,423	0

### Supporting Documents

**Title** **File Type**

**Administrative Services [72312]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area implements the agency's responsibility to provide support staff to the State Board of Elections, support through the timely distribution of salary reimbursements to the localities, as well as HR and payroll support to the Department of Elections agency staff. This service area establishes a budget for the Department of Elections, is responsible for fiscal operations, and maintaining standards established by state audit requirements.

**Mission Alignment**

This service area directly aligns with the agency mission to promote and support accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth by ensuring that all agency functional service areas that deliver direct services have the resources needed.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Provide reasonable assurance of the integrity of fiscal processes related to the submission of transactions to the Commonwealth General Ledger

Grants management

Identify and execute all payments required by the Acts of the General Assembly

Ensure timely submission of financial statement directive materials, compliance with fiscal regulations and stewardship over Commonwealth assets

Payroll Services

Assure sound fiscal management through budgeting and expense monitoring

Personnel resource and development

Agency administration services

Procurement services

**Anticipated Changes**

The agency will need to transition to general funds in the next biennium, reducing the need for grants management expertise.

**Factors Impacting**

This service area is responsible for managing ELECT's grant programs. The grant issues discussed throughout this plan, particularly the eventual exhaustion of HAVA funds without any additional Congressional appropriations in the near future, will require skilled handling of the agency's financial planning.

**Financial Overview**

Until 2004, this services area was 100% funded by the state's general fund. However, the 2002 Help America Vote Act placed additional demands on this service area to improve the overall administration of elections in Virginia. Ultimately, HAVA funds have been used in this area, particularly in the area of managing the HAVA grant.

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	768,078	103,104	650,132	105,049
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**



**Financial Assistance for General Registrar Compensation [78001]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides direct financial assistance to all Virginia counties and cities for local general registrars compensation

**Mission Alignment**

By providing financial assistance to local governments, this service area aligns with the agency mission to promote and support accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth by providing direct supervision of county and city election officials and helps to defray the costs of administering elections on the local level.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

- Direct Financial assistance to local governing bodies through reimbursement of General Registrar Salaries
- Compute and set authorized salaries of county and city General Registrar
- Communicate authorized salary information to local county and city government fiscal and payroll offices

**Anticipated Changes**

The Department of Elections has proposed increasing registrar salaries to coincide with the treasurer’s salary scale to account for the increase in registrar responsibilities over time. In addition, the Department recommends that the remaining part-time registrars (16 localities) be permanently moved to full-time status. Finally, the state should return to 100% reimbursement for registrar salaries to lessen the burden on localities and allow local dollars to stretch further in properly administering elections.

**Factors Impacting**

Over the past few years, the reimbursement rate has dropped from 100% reimbursement of salaries to approximately 70% reimbursement. In addition, general registrar salaries have not kept pace with the additional responsibilities placed on registrars by state and federal mandates. The role of general registrars has changed considerably over the past decade and the majority of responsibilities for administering the entire elections process have fallen to the registrars. This increase in responsibilities means that part-time registrars are greatly constrained in being able to meet their legal responsibilities. Part-time registrar offices also provide a lower level of service to voters in 16 localities because they are only open three days a week for a large part of the year.

**Financial Overview**

This service is funded by the state's general fund to reimburse localities for General Registrar salaries.

The Code of Virginia (§ 24.2-108 and § 24.2-111) mandates the governing body of each county or city to pay compensation to their general registrar and electoral board members in accordance with the compensation expense plan established in the Appropriations Act. Annually, the Department of Elections reimburses local governments for the authorized amounts paid for salary to the general registrar and compensation paid to the local electoral board members. The reimbursements do not include local supplements, mileage and expenses of the general registrar or local electoral board.

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	4,784,869	0	4,784,869	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

Title	File Type
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**Financial Assistance for Local Electoral Board Compensation and Expenses [78002]**

**Description of this Program / Service Area**

This service area provides direct financial assistance, in the form of reimbursements, to counties and cities for local electoral board compensation and mileage expenses

**Mission Alignment**

By providing direct financial assistance to local county and city governments to defray election administration costs, this service area aligns with the agency mission by promoting and supporting accurate, fair, open and secure elections for the citizens of the Commonwealth.

**Products and Services**

**Description of Major Products and Services**

Direct financial assistance to local county and city governments for cost of local electoral board compensation

Compute and set authorized salaries of county and city electoral board members

Communicate authorized salary information to local county and city government fiscal and payroll offices

**Anticipated Changes**

**Factors Impacting**

**Financial Overview**

Local electoral board compensation funded from the state's general fund.

The Code of Virginia (§ 24.2-108 and § 24.2-111) mandates the governing body of each county or city to pay compensation to their general registrar and electoral board members in accordance with the compensation expense plan established in the Appropriations Act. Annually, the Department of Elections reimburses local governments for the authorized amounts paid for salary to the general registrar and compensation paid to the local electoral board members. The reimbursements do not include local supplements, mileage and expenses of the general registrar or local electoral board.

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	890,100	0	890,100	0
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

**Supporting Documents**

**Title** **File Type**