

LSC Redbook

Analysis of the Executive Budget Proposal

Ohio Elections Commission

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ATTACHMENTS:

- Catalog of Budget Line Items
- Budget Spreadsheet By Line Item

Ohio Elections Commission

- Total recommended budget of nearly \$1.1 million over the FY 2016-FY 2017 biennium
- Approximately 63.0% of funding from the GRF

OVERVIEW

Agency Overview

The Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) oversees political party spending, campaign finance, and corporate political contributions to ensure compliance with the Ohio Elections Law set forth in Chapter 3517. of the Revised Code. The Commission issues advisory opinions on campaign finance questions, responds to questions about campaign activities, and acts as an enforcement body and customer service center for the policing of campaign activities. Hearings before the Commission typically entail complaints brought against individual candidates, campaign committees, political action committees, or corporations that are required to file financial reports. The Commission also handles a number of cases dealing with false campaign statements and various nondisclosure issues. Generally, ELC handles between 800 and 1,000 cases annually. The Commission consists of seven appointed members including three Republicans, three Democrats, and one Independent. The Commission employs a staff of three people, including an executive director, an executive assistant, and an administrative assistant who works on a part-time basis.

Appropriation Overview

As Table 1 below shows, the executive recommends \$527,617 in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, a 1.8% increase over estimated FY 2015 spending of \$518,117. Under the executive budget, 63.1% of ELC's funding comes from the GRF. Almost all of the total proposed funding – about 91.9% – is for personnel costs.

Fund Group	FY 2015*	FY 2016	% change, FY 2015-FY 2016	FY 2017	% change, FY 2016-FY 2017
General Revenue	\$333,117	\$333,117	0.0%	\$333,117	0.0%
General Services	\$185,000	\$194,000	5.1%	\$194,000	0.0%
TOTAL	\$518,117	\$527,617	1.8%	\$527,617	0.0%

*FY 2015 figures represent estimated expenditures.

The remainder of ELC's funding comes from the Ohio Elections Commission Fund, which receives a portion of filing fees for petitions of candidacy collected by the Secretary of State, including races for statewide offices and ballot issues, races for Ohio House and Senate seats, and penalties imposed by the Commission. The rest of the fees are deposited into the GRF. Generally, Fund 4P20 receives approximately \$300,000 in even-numbered fiscal years and \$100,000 in odd-numbered fiscal years from these filing fees and fines, primarily because most candidate election cycles occur in even-numbered years. However, it should be noted that some even-numbered years generate greater revenue than others, depending on the timing of particular four-year election cycles. Table 2 below shows these fees and the portion deposited into Fund 4P20.

Table 2. Statutory Fees for Elections Filings		
Elective Office	Amount	Portion to Fund 4P20
Statewide Elective Offices, including Supreme Court	\$150	\$50
State Board of Education	\$55	\$35
Judge	\$80	\$30
District – State Legislators, U.S. Representatives	\$85	\$35
City	\$45	\$25
County	\$80	\$30
Township and Village	\$30	\$20
School Board and Educational Service Center	\$30	\$20
Questions and Issues		
Statewide	\$25	\$25
City	\$12.50	\$12.50
County or Multi-County District	\$15	\$15
Precinct or Sub-County District	\$10	\$10
School Board/Educational Service Center	\$10	\$10

ANALYSIS OF EXECUTIVE PROPOSAL

Governor's Recommended Funding for the Ohio Elections Commission				
Fund	ALI and Name		FY 2016	FY 2017
General Revenue Fund				
GRF	051321	Operating Expenses	\$333,117	\$333,117
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$333,117	\$333,117
Dedicated Purposes Fund Group				
4P20	051601	Operating Support	\$194,500	\$194,500
General Services Fund Group Subtotal			\$194,500	\$194,500
Total Funding: Ohio Elections Commission			\$527,617	\$527,617

Operating Expenses (051321)

This GRF line item is used to pay the personnel, maintenance, and equipment costs of the Commission. The executive funds this line item at \$333,117 in both FY 2016 and FY 2017, matching estimated FY 2015 spending. ELC is governed by a seven-member board whose salaries are set in accordance with section 3517.152 of the Revised Code. That section fixes the salary for appointed Commission members at \$25,000 and provides for members to be reimbursed for expenses. ELC employs three administrative staff: (1) an executive director who also serves as the staff attorney, (2) an executive assistant, and (3) an administrative assistant. The administrative assistant works on a part-time basis.

Operating Support (051601)

This line item is used to supplement funding for the Commission's operating expenses. The revenue supporting this appropriation is derived from (1) a portion of the fees collected for petitions of candidacy for various political offices, (2) fees collected for filing petitions for ballot questions and issues, and (3) fines for various campaign violations that are deposited into the Elections Commission Fund (Fund 4P20). The executive funds this line item at \$194,500 for FY 2016 and FY 2017, a 5.1% increase over the FY spending estimate of \$185,000. The January 2015 cash balance of Fund 4P20 was approximately \$84,000, but is expected to be drawn down at the end of FY 2015.

Fund 4P20 historically collects approximately \$400,000 per biennium, the majority of that amount received during election cycles in the even-numbered calendar years. In FY 2014, filing fees generated just under \$197,000 in revenue, while fines and penalties generated just over \$52,000. Thus far in FY 2015, filing fees generated nearly \$89,900 and penalties generated just over \$29,400.

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Ohio Elections Commission

General Revenue Fund

GRF 051321 Operating Expenses

FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Estimate	FY 2016 Introduced	FY 2017 Introduced
\$335,461	\$333,270	\$331,769	\$333,117	\$333,117	\$333,117
	-0.7%	-0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: General Revenue Fund

Legal Basis: ORC 3517.152; Section 265.10 of Am. Sub. H.B. 59 of the 130th G.A.

Purpose: This line item is used to pay for a portion of the Ohio Election Commission's personnel, maintenance, and equipment costs. The Commission consists of seven appointed members including three Republicans, three Democrats, and one Independent. The Commission employs a staff of three: an executive director, an executive assistant, and an administrative assistant. The Commission hears approximately 800 to 1,000 cases annually. The cases typically involve complaints brought against individual candidates, campaign committees, political action committees, or corporations that are required to file financial reports.

Dedicated Purpose Fund Group

4P20 051601 Operating Support

FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Estimate	FY 2016 Introduced	FY 2017 Introduced
\$218,620	\$214,400	\$245,590	\$185,000	\$194,500	\$194,500
	-1.9%	14.5%	-24.7%	5.1%	0.0%

Source: Dedicated Purpose Fund Group: Filing fee revenue from declarations of candidacy, as well as ballot questions and issues; fine revenue derived from violations of Ohio's election laws

Legal Basis: ORC 3517.152; Section 265.10 of Am. Sub. H.B. 59 of the 130th G.A.

Purpose: This line item is used to supplement GRF funding for the operating expenses of the Ohio Elections Commission.

Appropriation Amounts as Recommended by the Governor

All Fund Groups

Line Item Detail by Agency	FY 2014	Estimate FY 2015	Introduced FY 2016	FY 2015 to FY 2016		Introduced FY 2017	FY 2016 to FY 2017	
				\$ Change	% Change		\$ Change	% Change
Report For Main Operating Appropriations Bill			Version: As Introduced					
ELC Ohio Elections Commission								
GRF 051321 Operating Expenses	\$ 331,769	\$ 333,117	\$ 333,117	\$ 0	0.00%	\$ 333,117	\$ 0	0.00%
Sub-Total General Revenue Fund	\$ 331,769	\$ 333,117	\$ 333,117	\$ 0	0.00%	\$ 333,117	\$ 0	0.00%
4P20 051601 Operating Support	\$ 245,590	\$ 185,000	\$ 194,500	\$ 9,500	5.14%	\$ 194,500	\$ 0	0.00%
Sub-Total Dedicated Purpose Fund Group	\$ 245,590	\$ 185,000	\$ 194,500	\$ 9,500	5.14%	\$ 194,500	\$ 0	0.00%
Ohio Elections Commission Total	\$ 577,358	\$ 518,117	\$ 527,617	\$ 9,500	1.83%	\$ 527,617	\$ 0	0.00%
Grand Total	\$ 577,358	\$ 518,117	\$ 527,617	\$ 9,500	1.83%	\$ 527,617	\$ 0	0.00%