

# **LSC Greenbook**

**Analysis of the Enacted Budget**

**Ohio Elections Commission**

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**ATTACHMENT:**

Budget Spreadsheet By Line Item

# Ohio Elections Commission

- Total recommended budget of nearly \$1.1 million over the FY 2016-FY 2017 biennium
- Approximately 63.1% 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 budget appropriates \$527,617 in both FY 2016 and FY 2017. Under the budget, 63.1% of ELC's funding comes from the GRF.

<b>Fund Group</b>	<b>FY 2015*</b>	<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>% change, FY 2015-FY 2016</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>% change, FY 2016-FY 2017</b>
General Revenue	\$331,553	\$333,117	0.5%	\$333,117	0.0%
General Services	\$272,158	\$194,000	(28.5%)	\$194,000	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$603,710</b>	<b>\$527,617</b>	<b>(12.6%)</b>	<b>\$527,617</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

\*FY 2015 figures represent actual 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.

<b>Table 2. Statutory Fees for Elections Filings</b>		
<b>Elective Office</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Portion to Fund 4P20</b>
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
<b>Questions and Issues</b>		
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

### **Erroneous Fee Deposits**

H.B. 64 contains a provision that requires the Secretary of State and Director of the Elections Commission to certify the amount of filing fee income that had been erroneously deposited into the GRF instead of Fund 4P20 between 2007 and 2015. The Director of Budget and Management must transfer this amount after the certification is made. The amount involved is estimated to be under \$10,000.

## ANALYSIS OF ENACTED BUDGET

Appropriations for the Ohio Elections Commission				
Fund	ALI and Name		FY 2016	FY 2017
<b>General Revenue Fund</b>				
GRF	051321	Operating Expenses	\$333,117	\$333,117
<b>General Revenue Fund Subtotal</b>			<b>\$333,117</b>	<b>\$333,117</b>
<b>Dedicated Purpose Fund Group</b>				
4P20	051601	Operating Support	\$194,500	\$194,500
<b>Dedicated Purpose Fund Group Subtotal</b>			<b>\$194,500</b>	<b>\$194,500</b>
<b>Total Funding: Ohio Elections Commission</b>			<b>\$527,617</b>	<b>\$527,617</b>

### Operating Expenses (051321)

This GRF line item is used to pay the personnel, maintenance, and equipment costs of the Commission. The budget funds this line item at \$333,117 in both FY 2016 and FY 2017. 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 budget funds this line item at \$194,500 for FY 2016 and FY 2017. Actual FY 2015 spending was \$272,158. A large portion of the increased FY 2015 spending was due to a \$50,000 increase in appropriation authorized by the Controlling Board. ELC requested this increase because unlike past years, there were fewer vacancies in board membership throughout the biennium, resulting in an increase in payroll and operating costs.

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 and penalties generated just under \$250,000 in revenue. In FY 2015, ELC collected just over \$297,000 in filing and fine revenue.

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# FY 2016 - FY 2017 Final Appropriation Amounts

# All Fund Groups

## Line Item Detail by Agency

			FY 2014	FY 2015	Appropriation FY 2016	FY 2015 to FY 2016 % Change	Appropriation FY 2017	FY 2016 to FY 2017 % Change
<b>Report For Main Operating Appropriations Bill</b>			<b>Version: As Enacted</b>					
<b>ELC Ohio Elections Commission</b>								
GRF	051321	Operating Expenses	\$ 331,769	\$ 331,553	\$ 333,117	0.47%	\$ 333,117	0.00%
<b>General Revenue Fund Total</b>			<b>\$ 331,769</b>	<b>\$ 331,553</b>	<b>\$ 333,117</b>	<b>0.47%</b>	<b>\$ 333,117</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
4P20	051601	Operating Support	\$ 245,590	\$ 272,158	\$ 194,500	-28.53%	\$ 194,500	0.00%
<b>Dedicated Purpose Fund Group Total</b>			<b>\$ 245,590</b>	<b>\$ 272,158</b>	<b>\$ 194,500</b>	<b>-28.53%</b>	<b>\$ 194,500</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Ohio Elections Commission Total</b>			<b>\$ 577,358</b>	<b>\$ 603,710</b>	<b>\$ 527,617</b>	<b>-12.60%</b>	<b>\$ 527,617</b>	<b>0.00%</b>