

Greenbook

LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget

Ohio Elections Commission

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LBO Greenbook

Ohio Elections Commission

Quick look...

- The Ohio Elections Commission oversees political party spending, campaign finance, and corporate political contributions to ensure compliance with the Ohio Elections Law.
- The Commission consists of seven members, three of which are Democrats, three of which are Republicans, and one Independent. It is staffed by a full-time executive director and one administrative professional.
- The budget appropriates continuation funding of \$602,225 in each fiscal year of the FY 2022-FY 2023 biennium, a slight increase from FY 2021 spending of \$588,670.

FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Appropriation	FY 2023 Appropriation
GRF ALI 051321, Operating Expenses					
\$418,774	\$427,496	\$436,420	\$404,282	\$394,765	\$394,765
% change	2.1%	2.1%	-7.4%	-2.4%	0.0%
Fund 4P20 ALI 051601, Operating Support					
\$152,133	\$168,413	\$145,316	\$184,388	\$207,460	\$207,460
% change	10.7%	-13.7%	26.9%	12.5%	0.0%
Total funding:					
\$570,907	\$595,909	\$581,736	\$588,670	\$602,225	\$602,225
% change	4.4%	-2.4%	1.2%	2.3%	0.0%

Agency overview

The Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) issues advisory opinions on campaign finance questions, responds to questions about campaign activities, and enforces the elections laws relating to campaign activity. 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 cases dealing with various nondisclosure issues. Generally, ELC handles approximately 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 two people, including an executive director and an administrative professional.

Analysis of FY 2022-FY 2023 budget

Operating Expenses (ALI 051321)

GRF line item 051321, Operating Expenses, accounts for two-thirds (65.6%) of the Commission's overall appropriations under H.B. 110, or \$394,765 in each fiscal year. Given its function, payroll costs constitute the bulk of the Commission's expenses. The payroll covers seven Commission members and staff. The annual salaries for Commission members are set by statute at \$25,000. The staff consists of two full-time employees: an executive director, who also serves as the staff attorney, and an administrative professional. The staff was reduced in FY 2021 with the departure of a part-time administrative assistant whose position was not filled.

Operating Support (ALI 051601)

The remaining one-third of ELC's appropriations, or \$207,460 in each fiscal year, comes from filing fees deposited into Fund 4P20 and appropriated under line item 051601, Operating Support. This augments the GRF funding to cover ELC's operating expenses. The current cash balance in Fund 4P20 is \$138,792.

Election filing fees

Fund 4P20 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. Note that receipts from these sources are typically higher in even-numbered calendar years when there are more elections on the ballot across the state. For example, receipts in FY 2020 totaled \$274,860 and reflect amounts collected from both the primary and general elections held during calendar year 2020. The amount collected in FY 2021 was \$134,107, just under half the FY 2020 amount. The table below shows these fees and the portion deposited into Fund 4P20. The other portion goes to the GRF.

Statutory Fees for Election Filings		
Elective Office	Fee	Portion to Fund 4P20
Statewide Elective Offices	\$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

Statutory Fees for Election Filings		
Questions and Issues	Fee	Portion to Fund 4P20
Statewide	\$25	\$25
City	\$12.50	\$12.50
County or Multi-District	\$15	\$15
Precinct or Sub-County District	\$10	\$10
School Board/Educational Service Center	\$10	\$10