

Greenbook

LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget

Ohio Secretary of State

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August 2025

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Attachment:

Appropriation Spreadsheet

LBO Greenbook

Ohio Secretary of State

Quick look...

- The Secretary of State (SOS) oversees elections and business licensing in Ohio, among other responsibilities.
- The budget totals about \$103.8 million for the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium. Approximately \$71.3 million (68.8%) of this biennial funding comes from business and notary filing fees.
- GRF funding is approximately \$31.9 million (30.7%) of biennial funding. Of this, \$24.4 million (76.5%) is for debt service payments on obligations issued to buy county voting systems, and \$7.5 million (23.5%) is for cybersecurity personnel and poll worker training.
- H.B. 96 establishes the Ohio Election Integrity Commission (OEIC) under the SOS to replace the Ohio Elections Commission. OEIC hears complaints if there is an objection to a determination by the SOS. The budget appropriates \$250,000 in FY 2026 to support OEIC.

Fund Group	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
General Revenue (GRF)	\$12,934,331	\$14,786,340	\$15,705,147	\$16,210,274
Dedicated Purpose (DPF)	\$49,401,785	\$56,617,415	\$35,271,210	\$36,266,197
Federal (FED)	\$5,273,288	\$2,737,860	\$100,000	\$100,000
Holding Account (HLD)	\$69,060	\$30,501	\$85,000	\$85,000
Total	\$67,678,466	\$74,172,116	\$51,161,357	\$52,661,471
% change	--	9.6%	-31.0%	2.9%
GRF % change	--	14.3%	6.2%	3.2%

Overview

The Secretary of State (SOS) supervises the administration of election laws and the 88 county boards of elections. The SOS also chairs the five-member Ohio Ballot Board, which approves statewide ballot language, reviews statewide initiative and referendum petitions, and informs voters about proposed ballot issues. In overseeing elections, the SOS compiles and maintains election statistics, political party records, and other related records, including campaign finance reports filed by candidates running for statewide office, the General Assembly, and political action committees. These responsibilities are handled by the Elections Division. The SOS also oversees business licensing in the state. This function is handled by the Business Services Division. In addition, the Division handles a variety of Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) filings. The Business Services Division also houses the Notary Commission.

Appropriation summary

Of the funding provided under H.B. 96, a total of \$31.9 million (30.87%) is from the GRF, over three-quarters of which is for debt service on purchases of new voting machines for counties. The remaining portion of the GRF funding is for cybersecurity staffing and poll worker training. The largest share of funding for the SOS comes from filing fees on businesses and notaries in various funds within the Dedicated Purpose Fund (DPF) Group. Together, these fees plus a small amount in the form of business filing refunds support approximately \$71.5 million (68.9%) of funding for the biennium. These amounts mostly go toward operations of the Business Services Division and also supplement funding for the Elections Division. Finally, \$200,000 comes from the remaining portion of grant funding received through the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Key budget provisions

Ohio Election Integrity Commission

H.B. 96 abolishes the Ohio Elections Commission (ELC) on January 1, 2026, and replaces it with the Ohio Election Integrity Commission (OEIC) within the SOS. Under the act, the OEIC serves generally as an appellate body. All elections-related complaints must be filed with the SOS, and the SOS is responsible for disposing of the complaint. The OEIC hears a matter only if the person who is the subject of the complaint objects to the SOS's decision. The OEIC consists of five members, with one member appointed by each of the following: the SOS, the House Speaker, the House Minority Leader, the Senate President, and the Senate Minority Leader. Each member will receive a salary of \$25,000 per year, plus reimbursement for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing their official duties. The budget appropriates \$250,000 in FY 2026 under Fund 5CS1 ALI 050604, Ohio Election Integrity Commission.

Between September 30, 2025, and January 1, 2026, the ELC must continue to operate under the prior law. Any complaint that is still pending before the ELC on January 1, 2026, along with all records regarding the complaint, is transferred to the OEIC for hearing and disposition.

Elections statistics

The budget eliminates a requirement that the SOS compile and publish the Ohio election statistics and the official roster of federal, state, county, township, and municipal officers biennially. While the SOS will maintain election results and statistics in the same manner as the office currently does, there is no centralized system for political subdivisions to provide updates to their roster of officials. The SOS estimates removing this requirement will reduce costs by \$200,000 each biennium, which are currently paid from Fund 5990 ALI 050603, Business Services Operating Expenses.

Campaign spending by foreign nationals

The budget bill contains a provision that allows a person who is not a U.S. citizen or national but is a lawful permanent U.S. resident (green card holder), to make campaign contributions, expenditures, and independent expenditures for state and local candidates, but not for ballot issues. It is unclear as to how many such individuals would be impacted by the restriction on campaign spending for ballot issues.

Help America Vote Act grants

Federal grants that Ohio received through the EAC and appropriated under Fund 3ASO ALI 050616, Help America Vote Act (HAVA) will likely be almost entirely expended by the end of FY 2025. This funding has been used to oversee cybersecurity programs, including grants to county boards of elections (BOEs) for technology and IT support and upgrades associated with SOS cybersecurity directives. To continue these activities, H.B. 96 includes \$100,000 in residual HAVA funding each fiscal year. For the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium, the budget includes \$2.1 million in GRF each fiscal year under ALI 050321, Operating Expenses, to make up the difference. Remaining costs will be covered using Business Services Fund (Fund 5990) ALIs 050603, Business Services Operating Expenses, and 050630, Elections Support Supplement.

Electronic pollbook funding

H.B. 45 of the 134th General Assembly provided \$7.5 million to the Electronic Pollbook Fund (Fund 5ZE0) through a cash transfer from the GRF. This money is used by the SOS to cover the costs that counties incur for buying electronic pollbooks and other ancillary equipment. Under the program, the SOS calculates each county's share of this funding, based upon the number of registered voters in each county. The payment to counties must be the lesser of 85% of the actual acquisition costs, or the allocation to that county, as calculated by the SOS. As of the beginning of FY 2026, the SOS has provided over \$6.1 million in payments to 71 counties for pollbook acquisition. The budget reappropriates the unspent, unencumbered money from FY 2025 to be carried forward for use in FY 2026, allowing the residual counties that have yet to participate in the program to acquire pollbooks, as well as enable counties that have yet to spend their full allocation to acquire additional equipment. As of July 1, 2025, \$1.3 million in funding remains available to counties.

Analysis of FY 2026-FY 2027 budget

Elections Services

This category of appropriations funds the Secretary of State's (SOS) Elections Division, which is responsible for the administration and oversight of all elections in the state, as well as poll worker training.

Operating Expenses (ALI 050321)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
GRF ALI 050321, Operating Expenses					
\$622,985	\$1,438,238	\$784,254	\$2,135,968	\$3,505,147	\$3,510,274
% change	130.9%	-45.5%	172.4%	64.1%	0.1%

This ALI is used to support cybersecurity measures throughout the SOS's Office. This includes the salaries of the Chief Information Officer and Chief Information Security Officer. Reimbursements to county boards of elections for any required post-election audits are also made

from this ALI. Increases in appropriations over the upcoming biennium will be used to partially offset costs previously paid from federal funds received under HAVA.

Poll Workers Training (ALI 050407)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
GRF ALI 050407, Poll Workers Training					
\$0	\$468,392	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000
% change	--	-100.0%	--	-100.0%	--

This ALI provides grants to local boards of elections (BOEs) to help cover the cost associated with the initial and ongoing training of poll workers and presiding judges. Training occurs twice per year. The SOS is required to provide grants to county BOEs up front to pay these costs based upon previous training costs. Online training sessions and training materials for poll workers are also available on the SOS's website. These costs, however, are budgeted under Fund 5950 ALI 050631, Precinct Election Officials Training.

County Voting Systems Lease Rental Payments (ALI 050509)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
GRF ALI 050509, County Voting Systems Lease Rental Payments					
\$9,675,838	\$12,117,249	\$12,150,078	\$12,150,372	\$12,200,000	\$12,200,000
% change	25.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%

This GRF ALI is used to pay the debt service on obligations issued for county voting machine acquisitions under S.B. 135 of the 132nd General Assembly. That act required debt issuance of up to \$104.5 million to ensure the payment for these machine acquisitions. As of the beginning of FY 2026, all 88 counties have participated in this program and \$100.9 million in obligations have been disbursed to acquire new voting machines.

Board of Voting Machine Examiners (ALI 050610)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 4S80 ALI 050610, Board of Voting Machine Examiners					
\$18,700	\$24,000	\$16,727	\$14,042	\$14,400	\$14,400
% change	28.3%	-30.3%	-16.1%	2.6%	0.0%

This ALI provides funding to cover the expenses of members of the Board of Voting Machine Examiners, now named the Board of Voting Systems Examiners. It also pays for the costs associated with examining, testing, and certifying voting machine devices. The funding for these purposes is derived from fees charged to voting machine vendors for machine certification. Given

the \$2,400 vendor certification fee, this level of funding assumes six items of voting equipment will be brought before the Board for certification in each year.

Statewide Voter Registration Database (ALI 050629)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 5990 ALI 050629, Statewide Voter Registration Database					
\$733,775	\$607,340	\$452,805	\$996,657	\$705,000	\$730,000
% change	-17.2%	-25.4%	120.1%	-27.1%	3.6%

This ALI is used to support the numerous functions related to the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD), such as maintaining the communication lines between SWVRD and 88 county boards of elections as well as IT hardware and software maintenance support for the system.

Election Support Supplement (ALI 050630)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 5990 ALI 050630, Election Support Supplement					
\$2,465,911	\$2,674,906	\$3,225,000	\$4,115,526	\$4,458,687	\$4,545,000
% change	8.5%	20.6%	27.6%	8.3%	1.9%

This ALI pays for the expenses that the SOS incurs for administering elections, including the salaries of the Elections Division. The increase in spending from this line item in FY 2025, along with the appropriations for the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium, is because the ALI will be used to absorb the costs that were previously paid through federal HAVA funds.

Ohio Election Integrity Commission (ALI 050604)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 5CS1 ALI 050604, Ohio Election Integrity Commission					
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$0
% change	--	--	--	--	-100.0%

This ALI is used to support the new Ohio Election Integrity Commission (OEIC). Under the SOS, the OEIC generally serves as an appellate body if the SOS's decision on an elections-related matter is objected to by the subject of the complaint. This ALI will be used alongside Fund 5990 ALI 050630, Election Support Supplement, to ensure compliance with the Ohio Elections Law. The Ohio Election Integrity Commission Fund (Fund 5CS1) will be primarily supported by a portion of candidate and petition filing fees as well as administrative fines imposed by the SOS or the OEIC.

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) (ALI 050616)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 3AS0 ALI 050616, Help America Vote Act (HAVA)					
\$3,910,020	\$5,096,238	\$5,273,289	\$2,737,860	\$100,000	\$100,000
% change	30.3%	3.5%	-48.1%	-96.4%	0.0%

This ALI is used to carry out federal requirements and paid for by federal grants deposited into the Help America Vote Act Fund (Fund 3AS0). For the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium, H.B. 96 appropriates \$100,000 in each fiscal year for these purposes. This substantial reduction comes about because of a lack of additional funding received from the federal Election Assistance Commission. This has caused a drawdown of cash in Fund 3AS0, which as of the beginning of FY 2026 has a cash balance of \$678,000. The types of things that this federal funding has supported include: (1) improving the statewide voter registration database, (2) acquiring, modifying, or replacing voting systems and technology, and (3) implementing the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act.

Business Services

The ALIs in this category are used to pay for functions carried out by the Business Services Division. The Division is responsible for handling articles of incorporation for Ohio corporations and granting licenses to out-of-state corporations seeking to do business in Ohio. The Division is also responsible for processing numerous types of filings under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC).

Business Services Operating Expenses (ALI 050603)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 5990 ALI 050603, Business Services Operating Expenses					
\$17,369,792	\$17,648,025	\$22,896,271	\$27,225,522	\$28,686,668	\$29,281,310
% change	1.6%	29.7%	18.9%	5.4%	2.1%

This ALI is used to pay the expenses associated with collecting and processing UCC filings as well as filings associated with corporations or partnerships, including the personnel costs for the Business Services Division. The additional funding for the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium is attributable to a shift of operating costs of the Public Integrity Division to the Business Services Division. This shift accounts for approximately \$1.5 million of the additional appropriations each fiscal year under H.B. 96.

Notary Commission (ALI 050609)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 4120 ALI 050609, Notary Commission					
\$422,607	\$513,172	\$442,165	\$481,259	\$541,455	\$555,487
% change	21.4%	-13.8%	8.8%	12.5%	2.6%

This ALI is used to pay the expenses of the Notary Public Office, including the cost of issuing licenses. The ALI is funded through a \$15 fee paid by individuals for notary public licenses valid for five years, except notary commissions held by practicing attorneys, which are valid as long as the attorney lives in Ohio. The Notary Commission also oversees minister licenses (\$10) and special police officer commissions (\$15).

Address Confidentiality (ALI 050626)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund 5SN0 ALI 050626, Address Confidentiality					
\$175,003	\$214,190	\$20,238	\$183,437	\$375,000	\$400,000
% change	22.4%	-90.6%	806.4%	104.4%	6.7%

This ALI is used to fund the Safe at Home address confidentiality program for survivors of domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, rape, or sexual battery and certain other crimes. The program was created by H.B. 359 of the 131st General Assembly. Under the program, the SOS arranges to receive mail on the participant's behalf, shielding the information from public records. The mail is subsequently forwarded to a confidential mailing address. Eligible voters who are participating in the Safe at Home Program may also register to vote or vote by absentee ballot without address information appearing in public voter registration files.

The Safe at Home Program is funded through fines that courts impose when sentencing certain offenders for various offenses. Fines deposited into the Address Confidentiality Fund (Fund 5SN0) in FY 2024 amounted to approximately \$5,200. The amount collected in FY 2025 was just over \$5,100. Because these sums are insufficient to run the program, H.B. 96 allows for cash transfers of up to \$400,000 from the Business Services Fund (Fund 5990) to cover the funding needs of the program.

Corporate/Business Filing Refunds (ALI 050606)

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Appropriation	FY 2027 Appropriation
Fund R002 ALI 050606, Corporate/Business Filing Refunds					
\$32,044	\$27,840	\$69,060	\$30,501	\$85,000	\$85,000
% change	-13.1%	148.1%	23.1%	178.7%	0.0%

This ALI is used to pay out UCC and corporate filing fees that may be subject to refund. These refunds occur when, for example, filings are rejected or otherwise not recorded, or when the applicant has made an overpayment.

**FY 2026 - FY 2027 Final Appropriations
All Fund Groups - Detail**

H.B. 96 - Main Operating Appropriations Bill

Detail by Agency			FY 2024	FY 2025	Appropriation FY 2026	Appropriation FY 2027	FY 2025 to FY 2026 % Change	FY 2026 to FY 2027 % Change
SOS Secretary of State								
GRF	050321	Operating Expenses	\$784,254	\$2,135,968	\$3,505,147	\$3,510,274	64.10%	0.15%
GRF	050407	Poll Workers Training	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000	-100.00%	N/A
GRF	050509	County Voting Systems Lease Rental Payments	\$12,150,078	\$12,150,372	\$12,200,000	\$12,200,000	0.41%	0.00%
General Revenue Fund Subtotal			\$12,934,332	\$14,786,340	\$15,705,147	\$16,210,274	6.21%	3.22%
4120	050609	Notary Commission	\$442,165	\$481,259	\$541,455	\$555,487	12.51%	2.59%
4S80	050610	Board of Voting Machine Examiners	\$16,727	\$14,042	\$14,400	\$14,400	2.55%	0.00%
5990	050603	Business Services Operating Expenses	\$22,896,271	\$27,225,522	\$28,686,668	\$29,281,310	5.37%	2.07%
5990	050629	Statewide Voter Registration Database	\$452,805	\$966,657	\$705,000	\$730,000	-27.07%	3.55%
5990	050630	Elections Support Supplement	\$3,225,000	\$4,115,526	\$4,458,687	\$4,545,000	8.34%	1.94%
5990	050631	Precinct Election Officials Training	\$0	\$488,046	\$0	\$500,000	-100.00%	N/A
5990	050636	County Election Officials Training	\$163,357	\$146,832	\$240,000	\$240,000	63.45%	0.00%
5AS1	050639	Data Analysis Transparency	\$0	\$3,202,774	\$0	\$0	-100.00%	N/A
5CS1	050604	Ohio Election Integrity Commission	\$0	\$0	\$250,000	\$0	N/A	-100.00%
5FG0	050620	BOE Reimbursement and Education	\$17,597,866	\$15,832,492	\$0	\$0	-100.00%	N/A
5FH0	050621	Statewide Ballot Advertising	\$700,043	\$762,587	\$0	\$0	-100.00%	N/A
5RG0	050627	Absentee Voter Ballot Application Mailing	\$0	\$2,298,595	\$0	\$0	-100.00%	N/A
5SN0	050626	Address Confidentiality	\$20,238	\$183,437	\$375,000	\$400,000	104.43%	6.67%
5ZE0	050638	Electronic Pollbooks	\$3,887,312	\$899,644	\$0	\$0	-100.00%	N/A
Dedicated Purpose Fund Group Subtotal			\$49,401,786	\$56,617,415	\$35,271,210	\$36,266,197	-37.70%	2.82%
R002	050606	Corporate/Business Filing Refunds	\$69,060	\$30,501	\$85,000	\$85,000	178.68%	0.00%
Holding Account Fund Group Subtotal			\$69,060	\$30,501	\$85,000	\$85,000	178.68%	0.00%
3AS0	050616	Help America Vote Act (HAVA)	\$5,273,289	\$2,737,860	\$100,000	\$100,000	-96.35%	0.00%
Federal Fund Group Subtotal			\$5,273,289	\$2,737,860	\$100,000	\$100,000	-96.35%	0.00%
Secretary of State Total			\$67,678,466	\$74,172,116	\$51,161,357	\$52,661,471	-31.02%	2.93%