

# Redbook

## LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal

### Ohio Elections Commission

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# LBO Redbook

## Ohio Elections Commission

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### 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 executive budget recommends continuation funding of \$602,225 in each fiscal year of the FY 2022-FY 2023 biennium. Uses of recommended funding: \$549,936 (91.3%) each year for payroll and \$52,289 (8.7%) each fiscal year for supplies and maintenance and other expenses.

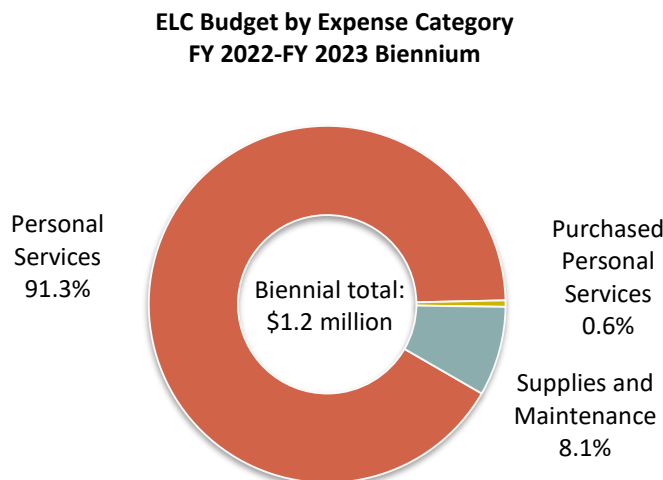
	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2022 Introduced	FY 2023 Introduced
<b>GRF ALI 051321, Operating Expenses</b>						
	\$418,774	\$427,496	\$436,420	\$404,765	\$394,765	\$394,765
% change		2.1%	2.1%	-7.3%	-2.5%	3.8%
<b>Fund 4P20 ALI 051601, Operating Support</b>						
	\$152,133	\$168,413	\$145,316	\$199,460	\$207,460	\$207,460
% change		10.7%	-13.7%	37.3%	4.0%	0.0%
<b>Total funding:</b>						
	\$570,907	\$595,909	\$581,736	\$604,225	\$602,225	\$602,225
% change		4.4%	-2.4%	3.9%	-0.3%	2.7%

### 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 proposal

The executive recommended budget for ELC is \$602,225 in each fiscal year of the FY 2022-FY 2023 biennium. As the chart below shows, the bulk of ELC's budget is devoted to personal services, covering the salaries of the Commission members and staff. This category accounts for approximately \$1.1 million (91.3%) of total spending over the FY 2022-FY 2023 biennium. Of the remainder, roughly \$97,600 (8.1%) goes to supplies and maintenance, and \$7,000 (0.6%) goes to purchased personal services.



### Operating Expenses (ALI 051321)

The money provided under GRF line item 051321, Operating Expenses, covers two-thirds (65.6%) of the Commission's overall costs. Given its function and as noted in the chart above, 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.) The executive recommended funding level for this appropriation item is \$394,765 in FY 2022 and the same amount in FY 2023.

### Operating Support (ALI 051601)

The second funding source for ELC's general operating costs is election filing fees deposited into Fund 4P20 and appropriated under Fund 4P20 line item 051601, Operating Support. The current cash balance in Fund 4P20 is \$131,360. The current FY 2021 balance in Fund 4P20 is \$73,780 as of February 2021.

### Election filing fees

As noted above, approximately 65.6% of ELC's funding comes from the GRF. The remainder comes from the Ohio Elections Commission Fund (Fund 4P20), 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. Table 1 below shows these fees and the portion deposited into Fund 4P20. The other portion goes to the GRF.

<b>Table 1. Statutory Fees for Election Filings</b>		
<b>Elective Office</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Portion to Fund 4P20</b>
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
<b>Questions and Issues</b>	<b>Fee</b>	<b>Portion to Fund 4P20</b>
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

In FY 2020, Fund 4P20 collected \$274,860 from these various filing fees. The amount collected so far in FY 2021 is \$73,780. Typically, receipts from these sources are higher in even-numbered calendar years when there are more elections on the ballot across the state. The FY 2020 revenues reflect filing fees collected from both the primary and general elections held during calendar year 2020.