

San Francisco Department of Elections

Proposed Budget

FY 2023 – 2024 and FY 2024 – 2025

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Budget & Appropriations Committee Hearing

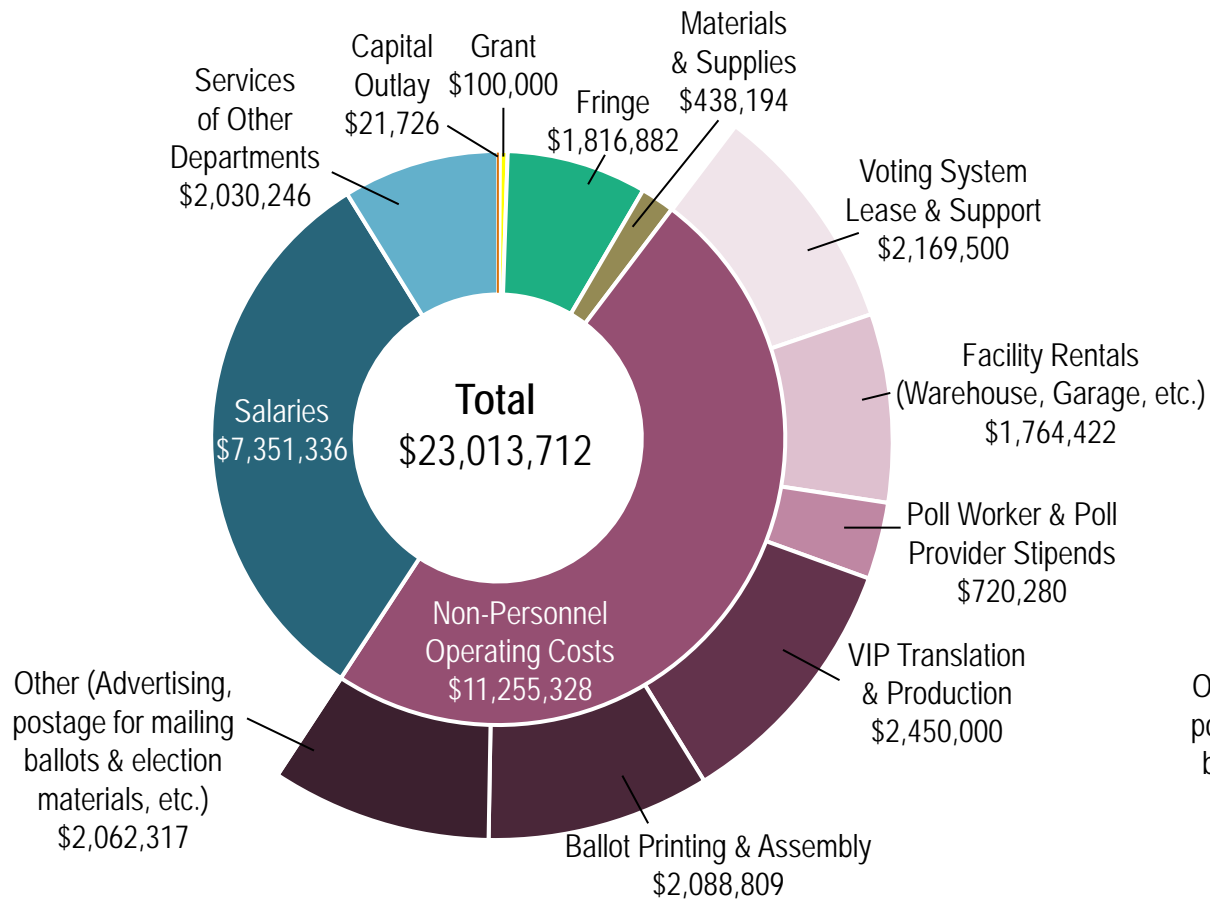
June 14, 2023



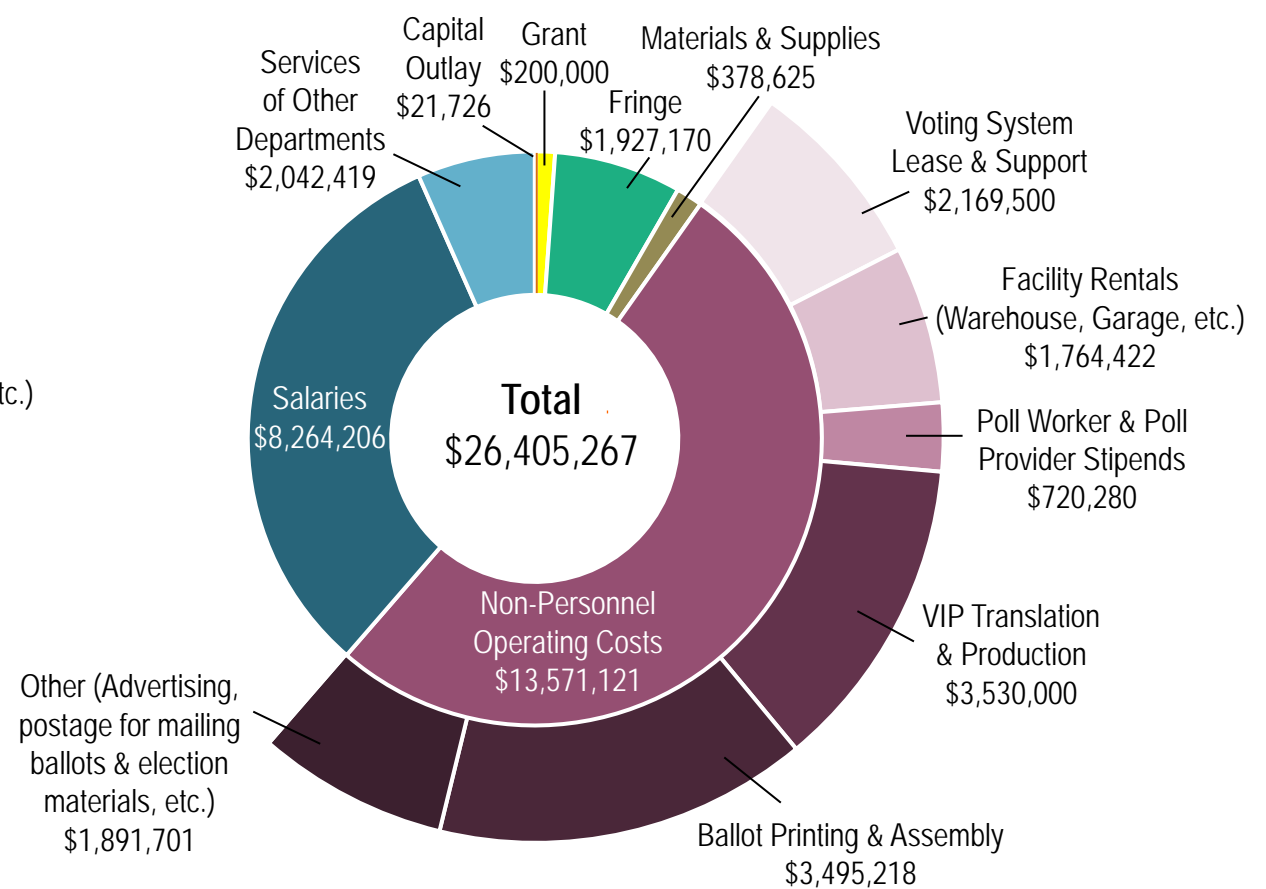
Total Budget

The Department's proposed expenditures is \$23M for 2023-24 and \$26M for 2024-25.

FY 2023-24



FY 2024-25



Objectives

In the next two fiscal years, the Department will conduct the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election and the November 5, 2024 Consolidated General Election.

As part of the Department’s mission to conduct free, fair, and functional elections in San Francisco, budget proposals for the next two fiscal years include funding necessary to maintain convenient, accessible, and equitable election services for all potential and existing registrants.

Many such services are associated with

- a) the universal vote-by-mail program,
- b) in-person voting programs, and
- c) the multilingual voter outreach education program.

Assessment

The Department uses both internal and citywide methods to track its performance.

Internal methods of assessment include the regular use of public feedback and various surveys.

For the Annual Performance Report issued by the Controller's office, we also gather about two dozen data points on specific elections services and programs, including

- the number of outreach events,
- the number of bilingual poll workers,
- the number of polling places with accessible entryways and voting areas, and
- our average customer service rating

We frequently review both internal and external assessments with the goal of providing optimal elections programs going forward.



Challenges

We expect both the primary and the general elections in 2024 to be very large and complex.

The 2024 elections will require the production of two longer than usual Voter Information Pamphlets in multiple languages and formats as well as the production of multi-card ballots in approximately 30 ballot types.

In both elections, high turnout and ballot complexity factors will create significant workloads, increasing all voter registration, voter outreach, in-person voting, vote-by-mail, and ballot processing tasks.



Reductions

The Department's FY 2023-24 budget was reduced by \$7.8M and its FY 2024-25 budget by \$849K. The decrease in the FY 2023-24 budget results mainly from last November's Proposition H, via which voters moved local elections to even-numbered years. Each FY budget reflects costs for one election, the March primary and the November general.

We have also proactively implemented a number of cost-savings strategies. These include

- 1) optimizing hiring practices to reduce election-specific human resources costs,
- 2) developing plans and schedules to allow for ballot processing without having to lease additional space, and
- 3) submitting an ordinance to opt out of printing the names of supporters and opponents of local measures on the ballot



Ordinance

A new state law requires printing of the names of supporters and opponents for all statewide measures on the ballot. The law permits a county Board of Supervisors to opt out of this requirement for all local ballot measures. Voters receive this information in local Voter Information Pamphlet provided to every voter for each election.

Including a list of supporters and opponents for local ballot measures could increase the number of ballot cards required for each already multi-card San Francisco ballot.

Increasing the number of cards will cause the Department to incur additional expenses for each election due to the production costs of the ballot cards, postage for mailing heavier ballot packets, as well as staff time required to process additional cards.

We estimate that opting out of printing the names of supporters and opponents for local ballot measures could save the City approximately \$1M in 2024 elections.

Language Access

The Department maintains a comprehensive language access program in all legally-mandated languages.

This program includes provision of translated materials such as ballots, voter guides, polling place materials, and online voter tools, as well as year-round multilingual assistance in-person and by telephone and email.

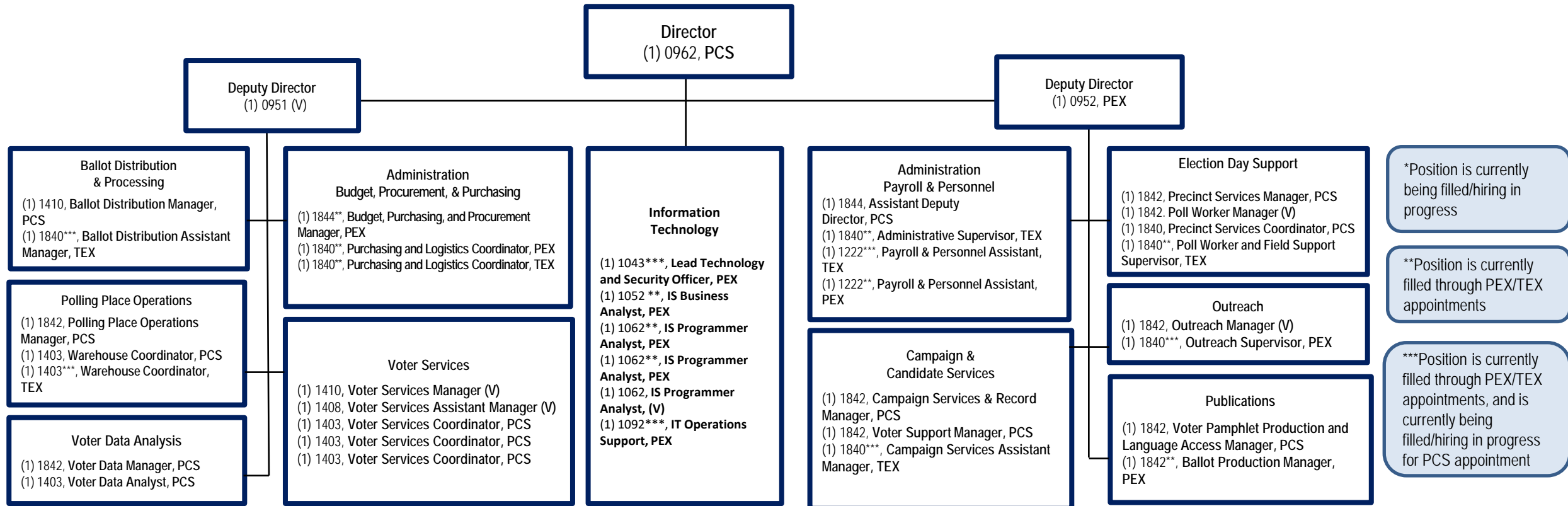
This program also includes multilingual outreach and education, bilingual assistance at the polls, and partnership with local community organizations to help us evaluate language access and to ensure effective election access for all San Francisco residents

We project the cost of proving all these services will be \$3.5M and \$5.9M in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25, respectively.

English
Chinese
Spanish
Filipino
Vietnamese
Korean
Japanese
Thai
Burmese

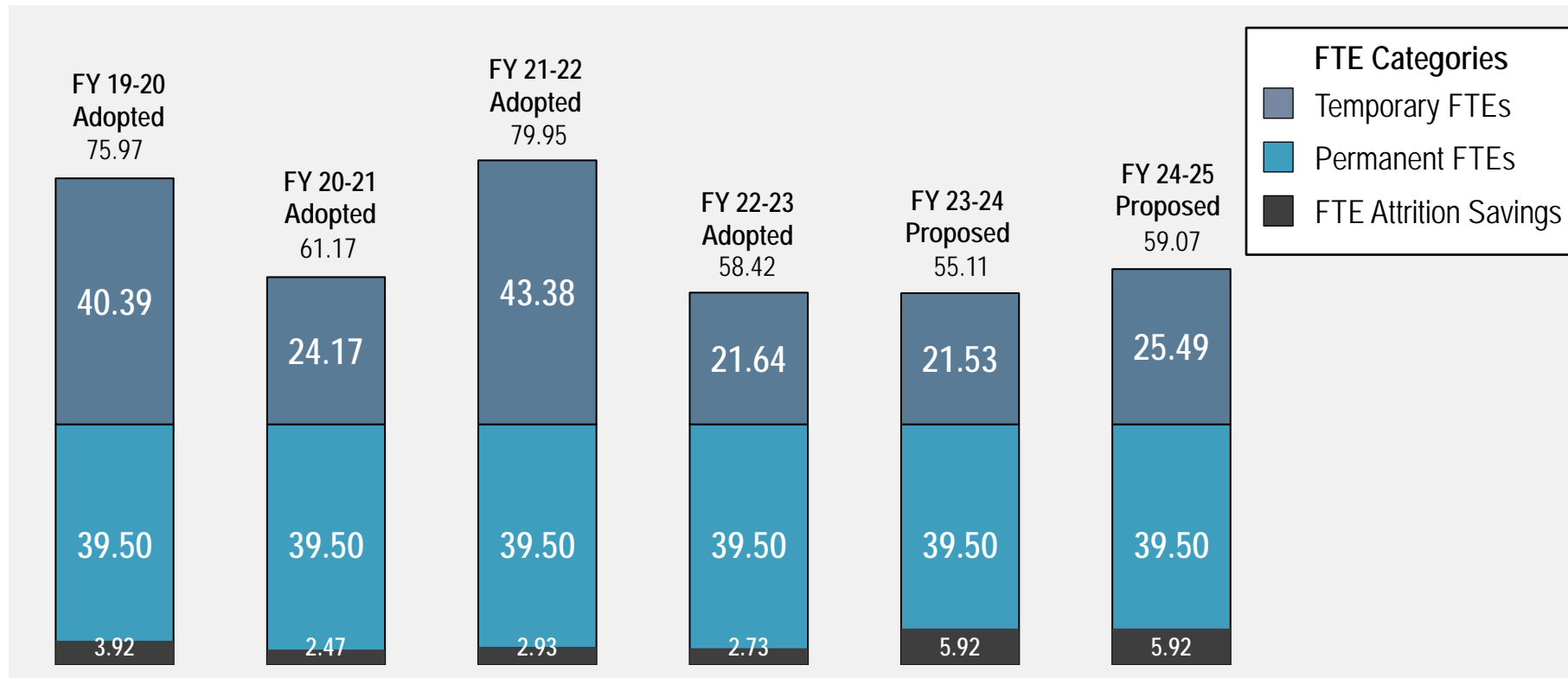
Staffing

We have maintained 39.5 full-time equivalent positions since 2014, the majority of which are filled by permanent appointments. We will continue to work with DHR to move our current full-time but exempt appointments to permanent appointments.



Staffing

In every election cycle, we hire temporary personnel for approximately three months and release them after the election is certified.



Although there is a variation of FTE positions over the past four years, these changes result from hiring of seasonal employees to assist full-time personnel with election tasks.

As shown in the graph, total FTE varies by FY due to variation in temporary staffing levels.