

Department of Elections
Proposed Budget
FY 2021 – 2022 and FY 2022 – 2023

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Budget and Appropriations Committee Hearing
June 14, 2021

Introduction

This presentation contains an overview of the Department of Elections' budget proposals for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, and responses to Chair Haney's questions directed to all departments:

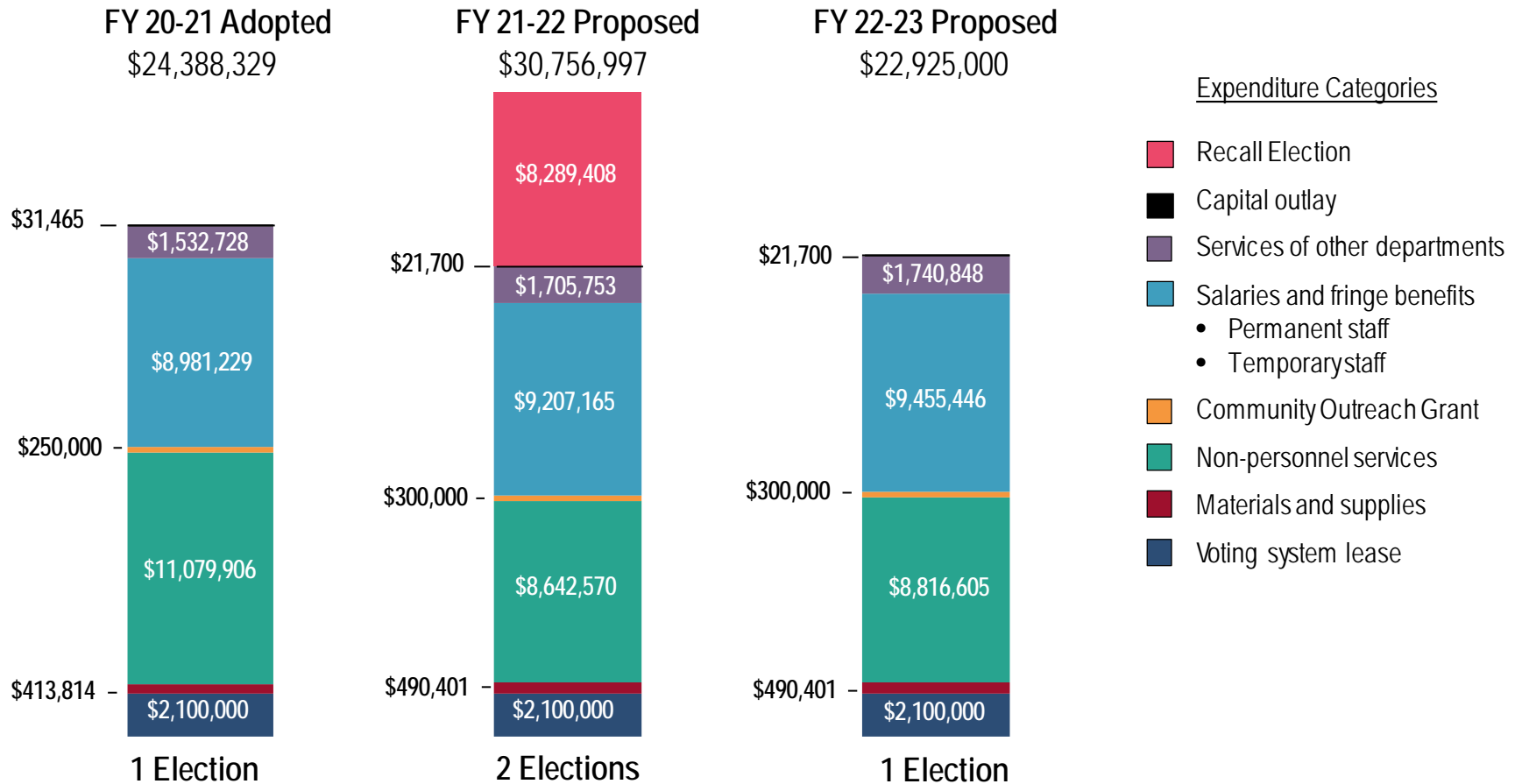
1. How are you eliminating corruption and waste?

2. How are you working urgently to rebuild a better city post-COVID?

3. How are you innovating away from failed policies by focusing on impact?

Proposed Budget

The Department's budget proposals for FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 were developed to support the City's efforts to close a projected budget shortfall while continuing to deliver equitable and accessible elections services to City residents.



Eliminate Corruption and Waste



Transparency, Internal Controls, and Audits

The Department is committed to maintaining full transparency and internal controls for all budgetary activities including those related to grants, contracts, and procurement.

1. Procurement practices are all based on the City's policies.
2. Regular monitoring of expenditures against approved budget and expected revenues.
3. Accounting support from the General Services Agency through an interdepartmental service agreement.
4. Yearly participation in the Controller's Post Audit and Continuous Monitoring Program as well as various reporting and audits administered by the Controller and other agencies.
5. The Department supports transparency by providing members of the public with both in-person and website streaming opportunities to observe the manner by which the Department utilizes City funds when conducting elections.

Rebuild a Better City



Expanded Voter Outreach

The Department will continue transitioning to more focused methods to reach the City's most vulnerable populations. These include voters and potential registrants living in neighborhoods with turnout below the City average, voters who are limited- or non-English speakers, voters with disabilities, voters who are housing insecure, and voters of color.

Our planned outreach strategies include:

- Increasing direct and indirect distribution of outreach materials.
- Continuing to apply simplified language and more images in materials such as the Voter Information Pamphlet.
- Increasing the number of official email and postal mail election notifications.
- Expanding the targeted use of radio and television public service announcements.
- Growing outreach partnerships and grants to community-based organizations.

Rebuild a Better City



Convenient Voting

The Department will help “build back better” by providing voting options that are convenient and accessible.

For the City’s upcoming elections, the Department will maintain core voting services:

- Vote-by-mail program used by City voters who prefer to vote by mail.
In accordance with current election law, all voters will be sent VBM ballots in elections conducted in 2021.
- Early, in-person voting provided at the City Hall Voting Center starting 29 days before Election Day.
- Providing 588 in-person voting locations on Election Day.
- Increasing ballot delivery and pickup services for voters who are in care facilities, housebound, or experiencing incarceration during the election cycle.
- Providing ballot drop-off and pickup services to voters especially during the weekend before Election Day.

Rebuild a Better City



Enhanced Election Tools

Recognizing that many voters now prefer to obtain information online, the Department will continue improving its digital election tools and resources.

The Department's website features information on registration, voting options and elections results -- all available in multiple languages with accessible features, including screen-reader compatibility, high contrast text, and Alt text for images.

The Department's website also offers several self-help online tools that allow voters to access individualized registration and election information. Before each election cycle, the Department will continue to develop upgrades to its website that will make it easier for voters and potential registrants find the information they seek.

Innovate by Focusing on Impact



Public Feedback

The Department plans to continue using several strategies to maximize receiving public feedback regarding the effectiveness, convenience, and accessibility of election programs and services.

The Department will continue collaborating with members of its Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, Language Accessibility Advisory Committee, and Poll Worker Advisory Network.

Feedback gathered at advisory meetings combined with feedback gathered from voters through surveys and inquiries made via telephone, email, and in-person visits, allows the Department to identify service areas that require additional focus. In the next two fiscal years, the Department will maintain its direct feedback methods, with a focus on data regarding the City's most vulnerable voters.

Innovate by Focusing on Impact



Election Data

The Department will continue to review election-related information to improve services.

During each election cycle the Department collects information such as the types and times of turnout, operational volumes through the cycle, and the nature of public inquiry from emails, phone calls, and personal interactions.

By analyzing this data, the Department can prepare for peaks of activity, and adjust staffing and resource levels within a cycle, and utilize the data to better plan for the next cycle.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, over the course of the next two years, the Department will:



Eliminate corruption and waste by maintaining full transparency in all internal and external operations and by continuing to comply with all applicable local, state, and federal election law and city policies.



Help rebuild a better City post-COVID by providing high-quality election services to the entire local electorate, while focusing on voters and potential registrants living in neighborhoods with turnout below the City average, voters who are limited- or non-English speaking, voters with disabilities, voters who are unhoused or housing insecure, and voters of color, and by working to develop new election tools and convenient voting options.



Continue to improve existing processes and focus on impact by gathering and incorporating direct feedback from voters, advisory committee members, and community partners, and indirect feedback, as manifest in actual voting behavior, such as early voter turnout, vote-by-mail turnout, polling place usage, and public inquiry call topics.