

# Greenbook

## LBO Analysis of Enacted Budget

### Ohio Elections Commission

Terry Steele, Senior Budget Analyst  
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# LBO Greenbook

## 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 appointed for five-year terms: three democrats, three republicans, and one unaffiliated with any political party. It is staffed by a full-time executive director and one commission assistant.
- The budget provides funding of \$625,000 in FY 2024 and \$642,000 in FY 2025.

FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Appropriations	FY 2025 Appropriations
<b>GRF ALI 051321, Operating Expenses</b>					
\$436,420	\$404,282	\$398,454	\$404,044	\$415,000	\$432,000
% change	-7.4%	-1.4%	1.4%	2.7%	4.1%
<b>Fund 4P20 ALI 051601, Operating Support</b>					
\$145,316	\$184,388	\$233,135	\$204,077	\$210,000	\$210,000
% change	26.9%	26.4%	-12.5%	2.9%	0.0%
<b>Total funding:</b>					
\$581,736	\$588,670	\$631,589	\$608,121	\$625,000	\$642,000
% change	1.2%	7.3%	-3.7%	2.8%	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. ELC adjudicates approximately 500 cases annually. The Commission consists of seven appointed members including three republicans, three democrats, and one independent serving five-year terms. The Commission employs a staff of two people, including an executive director and a commission assistant.

### Analysis of FY 2024-FY 2025 budget

The budget for ELC is \$625,000 in FY 2024 and \$642,000 in FY 2025. Following is a description of how the two appropriation line items (ALIs) under ELC’s budget are used to fund the Commission’s operations.

## Operating Expenses (ALI 051321)

The appropriation for GRF ALI 051321, Operating Expenses, is \$415,000 in FY 2024 and \$432,000 in FY 2025, providing about two-thirds (66.9%) of funding for the FY 2024-FY 2025 biennium. Payroll costs constitute the bulk of the Commission's expenses. The payroll covers seven Commission members and the two full-time staff members. The annual salaries for Commission members are set by statute at \$25,000, plus expenses. The staff consists of two full-time employees: an executive director, who also serves as the staff attorney, and an administrative professional.

## Operating Support (ALI 051601)

The appropriation under the Ohio Elections Commission Fund (Fund 4P20) ALI 051601, Operating Support, is \$210,000 in each fiscal year and provides about one-third (33.1%) of funding for ELC operations during the FY 2024-FY 2025 biennium. The ALI provides supplementary funding for ELC's operations derived principally through election filing fees and fines. The cash balance of Fund 4P20 as of August 2023 was just under \$130,000.

### Election filing fees

The table below shows the fees charged for various elections-related filings with the Secretary of State. Also shown are the portions distributed to the GRF and Fund 4P20 and used by ELC.

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
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

The amount collected in FY 2023 was \$168,422. The typical pattern is for more to be collected in an even-numbered fiscal year, and coincides with the schedule of local and statewide elections under Ohio law. Because filing fees have remained unchanged, the amounts collected from this source remains fairly consistent from one biennium to the next, around \$400,000 for every two-year period. The amount collected from fines can be more variable, and depends on what types of cases come before the Commission.