

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Linda H. Lamone
Administrator

Nikki Charlson
Deputy Administrator

July 21, 2020

Via Electronic Mail Only

The Honorable David Brinkley
Secretary, Department of Budget and Management
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Annapolis MD 21041

Dear Secretary Brinkley, Senator Guzzone, and Delegate McIntosh:

As we prepare for the November 3 election, I would like to share with you important information about the State Board of Elections' FY21 budget. First, we plan to submit an FY21 budget amendment of about \$20 million to conduct the upcoming election. Second, using the federal Help America Vote Act funds to support the upcoming election will require an increase in general fund appropriations in FY21 and future fiscal years.

State and local election officials are planning to provide in-person voting during early voting and on election day. Early voting will be conducted from October 22 through October 29 at 78 locations, and voting at about 1,600 neighborhood polling places is being planned for November 3¹. Due to the public health pandemic, however, election officials expect the number of voters requested and receiving a ballot by mail will significantly increase from prior elections. The fiscal impact of the primary election was reduced due to the federal CARES Act funding and election officials' ability to transfer funds needed for a primarily in-person election to a primarily vote-by-mail election². There are no federal CARES Act funding left, and there will not be sufficient savings to apply to the expected increase in mail-in ballots.

Expected FY21 Budget Amendment

Because our FY21 budget is not sufficient to conduct the November 3 election, we will submit a request for a FY21 budget amendment. The table below itemizes the estimated expenses that will be included in the request.

¹ This assumes that facilities are willing to be used as voting locations and election judges are willing to serve.

² For example, the local boards of elections were able to perform themselves (i.e., not rely on temporary staffing) pre-election testing on election equipment because the amount of equipment needed for the June 2 election was significantly less than a traditional election. Similarly, less funds were needed to transport the equipment since there were 44 voting locations, not the 1,700 voting locations for a traditional election.

Description	Est. Amount
Cost to print and mail form to request a mail-in ballot	\$5,600,000
Cost to print and mail vote-by-mail packets to requesting voters ³	\$5,500,000
Pre-paid postage for voters to return mail-in ballot requests and voted ballots	\$1,800,000 ⁴
Cost to expand the call center & support remote viewing of canvasses	\$802,500
Additional ballot drop off boxes	\$40,500
Additional SBE resources to support mailings and related contracts	\$58,552
Additional SBE resources to assist local boards with recruiting election judges	\$58,552
Hire additional election judges to supplement local election official efforts ⁵	\$201,875
Statewide voter education campaign	\$4,000,000
Additional voting equipment carts, precinct booths & privacy sleeves	\$736,521
Mailings to inactive voters and eligible but not registered voters	\$300,000
Buy cleaning, PPE supplies, stanchions, and social distancing decals	\$1,505,760
Approximate FY21 Budget Amendment	\$20,604,260

We expect that there may be additional costs associated with processing the expected large volume of forms requesting a mail-in ballot. To address that concern, we are exploring whether there are data entry centers available to perform this work. We are in the early stages of exploring this option and do not have any cost estimates to provide.

We also understand that federal funds authorized and appropriated under the Help America Vote Act may be used to supplement our FY21 budget. These federal funds were awarded to states for election security improvements. To date, we have used these funds for SQL licenses, two-factor authentication, network routers for same date registration, network & cyber security consultants, pollbook servers, statewide tabletop exercises, and other related information technology security upgrades and training and we have several contracts using these funds. They include:

- Annual data services for the routers for same day registration – \$530,000
- Information security expertise through December 2024 – \$4,100,000
- Annual software licenses – \$95,000
- Annual software subscription – \$245,000

Using these funds for non-election security items means that State funds will be needed to replace the federal funds or our efforts to enhance how we protect our election systems and data will be impacted.

³ This assumes that 50% of eligible voters will request and vote by mail.

⁴ This represents one-half of the estimated costs of the return mail for the two mailings. The local boards of elections pay the full cost of the postage, and we reimburse the local boards for one-half of the postage costs.

⁵ Under a current staffing contract, individuals could be recruited to serve as election judges. The lowest hourly rate under this contract is \$23.75. The estimate cost assumes that 500 election judges are recruited from current staffing contract and work 17 hours a day.

Letter to Secretary Brinkley, Senator Guzzone, and Delegate McIntosh

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If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda H. Lamone". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Linda H. Lamone
State Administrator