



# Albany County Board of Elections

COMMISSIONERS OF ELECTION

RACHEL L. BLEDI  
REPUBLICAN

KATHLEEN A. DONOVAN  
DEMOCRATIC

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DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS

DAVID CADY (D)

MELISSA KERMANI (R)

TO: Hon. Wanda Willingham, Chair  
Audit & Finance Committee

FROM: Kathleen Donovan, Democratic Elections Commissioner  
Rachel Bledi, Republican Elections Commissioner

Date: October 15, 2024

RE: Proposed 2025 Budget

1. The department representatives appearing before the Audit & Finance Committee will be: Kathleen Donovan and Rachel Bledi.
2. There are no vacant positions.
3. There are no new positions.
4. There is a proposed salary increase for the Deputy Commissioner position in the amount of \$10,000: Attached is the justification.
  - 1) A1450 11115 001 29003 Deputy Commissioner Elections
  - 2) A1450 11115 002 29004 Deputy Commissioner Elections
5. There are no positions proposed to be eliminated or salary decreased.
6. There are no positions funded by grant money.
7. There are no proposed job title changes or movements to another line item.
8. Overall, there is a reduction in our contractual expenses from \$1,683,795 in 2024 to \$1,291,209 in 2025 and a reduction in our equipment costs from \$1,946,720 to \$427,223. Attached is the breakdown of contractual and budget expenses.
9. For the 2024-2025 budgets, the Board of Elections received three (3) new reimbursable grants: The *Ballot By Mail Grant*, The *Electronic Poll Book Grant* and *General Election Grant*. The *Ballot By Mail Grant* is 100% reimbursable in the amount of \$123,995 for costs related to providing pre-paid return postage and outgoing postage on absentee ballots and applications, and early voting by mail ballots and applications. The *General Elections Grant* is 100% reimbursable and provides \$80,522 in funds for eligible operating costs related to the General Election to be held in November 2024. Lastly, the *Electronic Poll Book Grant*, provides \$236,701 in reimbursable funds for expenses related to electronic poll books (E-Poll Books) and associated software, on-demand ballot printers and related cybersecurity.
10. The Board of Elections has two (2) county vehicles, a 2008 Ford box truck and a 2009 Chevy van, which are used to transport voting machines and election-related supplies to

polling sites and voter outreach presentations. There are no county vehicles assigned to any specific staff member of the Board of Elections. (See attached)

11. There is \$10,000 allocated to the Conferences Training Tuition line (#44039) which covers expenses for two major conferences held annually for Commissioners and staff. Both conferences are hosted by the NYS Elections Commissioners Association.
12. We have requested a \$20,000 increase in our overtime budget for 2025 (from previous years notwithstanding 2024) to \$100,000 due to the addition of evening training classes to accommodate inspectors who work full-time, to ensure the processing of an increased volume in absentee ballot requests and manual election recounts. In 2024, we had a significant increase in overtime in the amount of \$140,000 due to the increased workload associated with the Presidential Election and evening training classes. In 2023, Our overtime budget was \$70,000.
13. There were no positions established or changed in 2023.
14. Cyberattacks pose a serious threat to election security and is an ongoing concern and challenge. We have applied for a Cybersecurity Remediation Grant, in the amount of \$145,220 to address vulnerabilities identified in risk assessments. We have developed a remediation plan with a nonprofit technology consulting company, NYSTEC, to ensure that our systems are more secure and significantly increased the amount of training board staff receives. We also provided active shooter training to inspectors to assist them in responding to active threats at the polling place.
15. The Board of Elections sole performance metric is the successful conduct of elections with minimal disruption at poll sites, zero impediments to register to vote and all absentee ballots requests fulfilled timely.
16. The Board of Elections is presently unaware of any potential unfunded mandates or risks to funding at this time.

<b>Fees for Services</b>	<b>2024</b>		<b>2025</b>
Delivery of Machines	\$70,000.00	Delivery of Machines	\$70,000.00
Crystal rock (water)	\$3,000.00	Crystal rock (water)	\$1,200.00
Sheriffs Dept.	\$20,000.00	Sheriffs Dept.	\$18,000.00
Steno Services	\$1,000.00	Steno Services	\$1,000.00
Election Meals	\$3,000.00	Election Meals	\$3,000.00
Elections Systems & Services Maintenance agreement	\$130,000.00	Elections Systems & Services Maintenance agreement	\$130,000.00
Verizon for poll books	\$52,500.00	Verizon for Poll Books	\$50,000.00
Stanley Security	\$6,000.00	Stanley Security	\$6,000.00
CHA Integrated Solutions LLC	\$7,000.00	CHA Integrated Solutions LLC	\$7,000.00
Knowink	\$52,500.00	Knowink	\$60,000.00
Misc /machine supplies	\$15,000.00	Misc /machine supplies	\$15,000.00
Cleaning of polling sites for 3 elections	\$10,000.00	Cleaning of polling sites for 2 elections	\$5,000.00
Eclipse Network Solutions-doorbell intercom	\$2,000.00	Eclipse Network Solutions-doorbell intercom	\$2,000.00
Redistricting Services	\$25,000.00		\$0.00
Fence- Budget Resolution	\$12,640.00		\$0.00
Encumbered	\$50,347.00		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$459,987.00</b>		<b>\$368,200.00</b>
<b>MISC CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2024</b>		<b>2025</b>
Fort Orange Press- Absentee Ballot Mailing & Printing Service	\$ 101,000.00		\$ 101,000.00
Pheonix Graphics- Voter Information Mailer	\$ 31,846.00		\$ 50,000.00
Vincy's Printing- Ballot Paper	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 50,000.00
NTS	\$ 97,965.00		\$ 107,762.00
Ballot By Mail Grant	\$ -		\$ 123,995.00
Poll Book Grant	\$ -		\$ 236,701.00
Election Day Grant	\$ -		\$ 80,522.00
Cybersecurity Grant	\$ 52,810.00		\$ 38,000.00
<b>BUDGETED EXPENSES</b>	<b>2024</b>		<b>2025</b>
Office Equipment	\$ 25,000.00		\$ 25,000.00
Computer Equipment	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
Election Equipment	\$ 1,891,720.00		\$ 367,223.00
Warehouse Equipment	\$ 25,000.00		\$ 25,000.00
Office supplies	\$ 12,000.00		\$ 12,000.00
Computer Supplies	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
Other Supplies	\$ 42,000.00		\$ 45,000.00
Postage	\$ 265,299.00		\$ 175,000.00
Travel, Mileage, Freight	\$ 50,000.00		\$ 25,500.00
Conferences, Tuition, Training	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00
Printing and Advertising	\$ 300,000.00		\$ 217,000.00
Election Day Staffing	\$ 1,624,400.00		\$ 841,450.00



**ALBANY COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
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*Commissioners*  
RACHEL L. BLEDI  
KATHLEEN A. DONOVAN

*Deputy Commissioners*  
MELISSA KERMANI  
DAVID CADY

## **MEMO**

**TO:** M. David Reilly, Commissioner, Management and Budget  
Zachary Smetana, Senior Budget Analyst, Management and Budget

**FROM:** Rachel Bledi, Board of Elections Commissioner  
Kathleen A. Donovan, Board of Elections Commissioner

**RE:** Salary Increase Request for Deputy Commissioners

**DATE:** 07/11/2024

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We are proposing salary increases for the job titles of Deputy Commissioner as explained below.

Salary Increase Request:

A1450 11115 001 29003 Deputy Commissioner Elections

A1450 11115 002 29004 Deputy Commissioner Elections

Current Salary: \$83,775

Increase Request: \$10,000

The work to ensure fair and accessible elections has increased significantly in recent years, with several new federal and state laws changing the process of elections, broadening the time period for elections and even adding the number of electoral contests, creating new avenues for voters to participate in elections and the democratic process.

The Deputy Commissioner's position at the Board of Elections has taken on a multitude of new responsibilities with additional State requirements and mandates that have been increasing our daily workload. This now includes the addition of early canvassing of absentee ballots, 9 days of early voting, inspector training and managing 24 employees. They have worked many overtime hours with no compensation and are paid less than their colleagues in similarly sized counties. In Dutchess County, for example, the current salary of the Deputy Commissioner is \$114,602 - considerably higher despite having a smaller operation.

Both the Democratic Deputy Commissioner, David Cady and the Republican Deputy Commissioner, Melissa Kermani, have been long-term employees at the Board of Elections who are dedicated to their duties and possess the skillset and experience to do their jobs effectively. They have served an instrumental role in the modernization of the workforce, the office and upgrading our election equipment. Moreover, they assist in managing employees, often dealing with complicated and confidential personnel matters.

The Deputy Elections Commissioners have proven their ability to perform beyond the scope of their duties and solidly represent their respective political party interests in safeguarding the integrity of elections. Therefore, we are requesting a \$10,000 increase in salary and look forward to discussing this important request.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>JOB TITLE</b>	
DEBORA BANKS-TURNER	ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR	PICK-UP DRIVELY OF FILES THUR OUT OFCOUNTY
FREDRICK THUMHART	EDUCATION SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
NANA CLARK	ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF ADA EQUIPMENT TO POLLING SITES
KEVIN BRUNICK	ELECTION SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
MARCY GRAZIANO	IT TRAINING SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
RICHARD HOGAN JR	LABORER	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
JOEL COYE	COMPUTER INFORMANTION SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
EDWARD KINLEY	IT TRAINING SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTINGMACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
DAVID CADY	DEPUTY COMMISSIONER	PICK-UP AND DELIVER OF VOTING MACHINES AND SUPPLIES TO POLLING SITES
JENESSA RIVERA	EDUCATION SPECIALIST	PICK-UP AND DELVERLY OF ADA EQUIPMENT TO POLLING SITES