

ELECTIONS COMMISSION

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Source of Funds	FY25 Adjusted Base	FY26 Recommended	% Change Over FY25	FY27 Recommended	% Change Over FY26
GPR	5,213,100	7,678,300	47.3	7,384,400	-3.8
PR-O	473,100	433,600	-8.3	433,600	0.0
SEG-F	1,200,500	1,274,500	6.2	1,222,100	-4.1
SEG-O	100	100	0.0	100	0.0
TOTAL	6,886,800	9,386,500	36.3	9,040,200	-3.7

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITION SUMMARY

Source of Funds	FY25 Adjusted Base	FY26 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY25	FY27 Recommended	FTE Change Over FY26
GPR	25.75	35.75	10.00	35.75	0.00
PR-O	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00
SEG-F	7.25	7.25	0.00	7.25	0.00
TOTAL	36.00	46.00	10.00	46.00	0.00

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The commission administers and enforces Wisconsin law pertaining to elections (Chapters 5 to 10 and 12 of Wisconsin Statutes). The commission is comprised of six members, who serve for five-year terms. One member is appointed by the Senate majority leader; one is appointed by the Senate minority leader; one is appointed by the speaker of the Assembly; one is appointed by the Assembly minority leader; and two are members who formerly served as county or municipal clerks and who are nominated by the Governor with the advice and consent of a majority of the members of the Senate. The transition plan from the Government Accountability Board to the commission put forth by the Department of Administration established a rotational term schedule of the commissioners. The commission elects a chair and vice-chair from its members by a majority vote.

The administrator serves as the agency head and the chief election officer of the state. The commission staff is required to be nonpartisan.

Commission activities fit into four general functions: general administration; education, training and assistance to local election officials, candidates and officeholders; voter education and outreach; and complaint resolution. Within these functional areas, the commission implements legislative changes and initiatives; develops policy; issues formal opinions and guidance; promulgates administrative rules; prescribes procedures and forms; carries out investigations; responds to inquiries from local election officials, candidates and the public; and completes other related activities.

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MISSION

The mission of the commission is to enhance representative democracy by ensuring the integrity of Wisconsin's electoral process through the administration of Wisconsin's elections laws and the dissemination of information, guidance and services to local election officials, candidates, policymakers, voters and the public, utilizing both staff expertise and technology solutions.

PROGRAMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Program 1: Administration of Elections

Goal: Ensure open, fair and transparent elections, by cultivating public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.

Objective/Activity: Administer state-level election responsibilities and provide educational, training and customer service resources to local elections officials, candidates, voters and the general public.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
1.	Monitor the number of contacts the public makes to the commission.	4,000,000	885,711	1,500,000	17,670,586
1.	Percentage of sworn complaints resolved within 90 days of submission.	70%	60%	70%	73%
1.	Conduct training events and maintain training resources for local elections partners and the general public.	150	170	150	195
1.	Percentage of candidates receiving nomination paper review results within two business days of filing.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Based on fiscal year.

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2025, 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2025¹	Goal 2026	Goal 2027
1.	Monitor the number of contacts the public makes to the commission.	10,000,000	1,500,000	3,000,000
1.	Percentage of sworn complaints resolved within 90 days of submission.	70%	70%	70%
1.	Conduct training events and maintain training resources for local elections partners and the general public.	170	170	170
1.	Percentage of candidates receiving nomination paper review results within two business days of filing.	100%	100%	100%

Note: Based on fiscal year.

¹Goals have been revised for 2025.

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GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Citizen-Initiated Referendum
2. Office of Election Transparency and Compliance
3. Grant Programs for Local Election Offices
4. Funding for Special Elections
5. Funding for Information Technology
6. Support for Ongoing Programs and Other Commission Costs
7. Automatic Voter Registration
8. Early Canvassing of Absentee Ballots
9. Voter Identification Modifications
10. Voter Residency Duration
11. In-Person Absentee Voting Period Extension
12. Posting a Voter Bill of Rights
13. Voter Registration in High Schools
14. Modify Special Election Dates
15. Aggrieved Candidate Recount Technical Fix
16. Appropriation Language Changes
17. Convert Expiring Project Positions to Permanent Positions
18. Standard Budget Adjustments

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**Table 1
Department Budget Summary by Funding Source (in thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL FY24	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST FY26	AGENCY REQUEST FY27	GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION FY26	GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION FY27
GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE	\$4,440.4	\$5,213.1	\$6,567.5	\$6,879.2	\$7,678.3	\$7,384.4
State Operations	4,440.4	5,213.1	6,567.5	6,879.2	6,778.3	6,884.4
Local Assistance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	900.0	500.0
FEDERAL REVENUE (1)	\$2,145.0	\$1,200.5	\$1,274.5	\$1,222.1	\$1,274.5	\$1,222.1
State Operations	2,145.0	1,200.5	1,274.5	1,222.1	1,274.5	1,222.1
PROGRAM REVENUE (2)	\$440.0	\$473.1	\$433.6	\$433.6	\$433.6	\$433.6
State Operations	440.0	473.1	433.6	433.6	433.6	433.6
SEGREGATED REVENUE (3)	\$0.0	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1
State Operations	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
TOTALS - ANNUAL	\$7,025.3	\$6,886.8	\$8,275.7	\$8,535.0	\$9,386.5	\$9,040.2
State Operations	7,025.3	6,886.8	8,275.7	8,535.0	8,486.5	8,540.2
Local Assistance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	900.0	500.0

(1) Includes Program Revenue-Federal and Segregated Revenue-Federal

(2) Includes Program Revenue-Service and Program Revenue-Other

(3) Includes Segregated Revenue-Service, Segregated Revenue-Other and Segregated Revenue-Local

**Table 2
Department Position Summary by Funding Source (in FTE positions)**

	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST FY26	AGENCY REQUEST FY27	GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION FY26	GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION FY27
GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE	25.75	35.75	35.75	35.75	35.75
State Operations	25.75	35.75	35.75	35.75	35.75
FEDERAL REVENUE (1)	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25
State Operations	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25
PROGRAM REVENUE (2)	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
State Operations	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
TOTALS - ANNUAL	36.00	46.00	46.00	46.00	46.00
State Operations	36.00	46.00	46.00	46.00	46.00

(1) Includes Program Revenue-Federal and Segregated Revenue-Federal

(2) Includes Program Revenue-Service and Program Revenue-Other

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**Table 3
Department Budget Summary by Program (in thousands of dollars)**

	ACTUAL FY24	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
			FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
1. Administration of elections	\$7,025.3	\$6,886.8	\$8,275.7	\$8,535.0	\$9,386.5	\$9,040.2
TOTALS	\$7,025.3	\$6,886.8	\$8,275.7	\$8,535.0	\$9,386.5	\$9,040.2

**Table 4
Department Position Summary by Program (in FTE positions)**

	ADJUSTED BASE FY25	AGENCY REQUEST		GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATION	
		FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
1. Administration of elections	36.00	46.00	46.00	46.00	46.00
TOTALS	36.00	46.00	46.00	46.00	46.00

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1. Citizen-Initiated Referendum

The Governor recommends requiring the Legislature to introduce and vote on a joint resolution for a constitutional amendment that would give Wisconsin citizens the right to use a referendum process to propose and approve or reject laws and constitutional amendments.

2. Office of Election Transparency and Compliance

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	925,600	10.00	1,067,400	10.00	925,600	10.00	1,067,400	10.00
TOTAL	925,600	10.00	1,067,400	10.00	925,600	10.00	1,067,400	10.00

The Governor recommends creating an Office of Election Transparency and Compliance to provide research and assistance to the commission, including responding to inquiries from the public and legislators regarding alleged unlawful or noncompliant behavior with the goal of increasing confidence in election operations.

3. Grant Programs for Local Election Offices

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	0	0.00	0	0.00	900,000	0.00	500,000	0.00
TOTAL	0	0.00	0	0.00	900,000	0.00	500,000	0.00

The Governor recommends providing ongoing funding to support local governments in funding elections and providing one-time funding to provide grants to local governments for the purchase of "Badger Book" electronic poll books.

4. Funding for Special Elections

The Governor recommends creating a sum sufficient GPR appropriation to allow the commission to reimburse counties and municipalities for certain costs incurred in the administration of special primaries and special elections.

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5. Funding for Information Technology

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	263,500	0.00	213,500	0.00	238,500	0.00	238,500	0.00
SEG-F	50,000	0.00	0	0.00	50,000	0.00	0	0.00
TOTAL	313,500	0.00	213,500	0.00	288,500	0.00	238,500	0.00

The Governor recommends providing funding for the costs of ongoing multifactor authentication protections of the voter registration system, hosting and maintaining the clerk training management system (ElectEd) and the commission's website, continuing to provide address validation software (Smarty Streets), and Zendesk customer support software to track elections questions more accurately in light of the 2021 Legislative Audit Bureau report on election administration. The Governor also recommends requiring the commission to post non-English sample ballots online for jurisdictions that create them.

6. Support for Ongoing Programs and Other Commission Costs

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	199,000	0.00	418,900	0.00	239,700	0.00	378,300	0.00
PR-O	8,000	0.00	8,000	0.00	8,000	0.00	8,000	0.00
TOTAL	207,000	0.00	426,900	0.00	247,700	0.00	386,300	0.00

The Governor recommends continuing to support quality services by increasing funding for the accessibility review and supply program, providing funding for limited term employees, fully funding commissioner per diems, fully funding the costs of membership in the Electronic Registration Information Center, and providing expenditure authority for the materials and services appropriation to align with existing revenues and usage.

7. Automatic Voter Registration

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	0	0.00	0	0.00	195,100	0.00	20,800	0.00
TOTAL	0	0.00	0	0.00	195,100	0.00	20,800	0.00

The Governor recommends that the commission work with the Department of Transportation to begin automatic voter registration and that the commission facilitate the initial registration of all eligible electors as soon as practicable. See Department of Transportation, Item #40.

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8. Early Canvassing of Absentee Ballots

The Governor recommends authorizing a county or municipal clerk to canvass absentee ballots on the day before an election.

9. Voter Identification Modifications

The Governor recommends modifying certain voter identification requirements in light of case law. The Governor also recommends requiring the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Technical College System to issue identification cards that meet the revised requirements.

10. Voter Residency Duration

The Governor recommends restoring previous residency requirements such that a resident of Wisconsin is eligible to vote in an election in a municipality or ward if the voter has been a resident of that location for at least ten days before an election.

11. In-Person Absentee Voting Period Extension

The Governor recommends eliminating the restriction on how soon a person may complete an absentee ballot in person.

12. Posting a Voter Bill of Rights

The Governor recommends requiring polling places to post a voter bill of rights which informs voters of voting rights guaranteed under current law.

13. Voter Registration in High Schools

The Governor recommends restoring prior law which required public high schools to offer voter registration for interested and eligible students and staff, while retaining the current law requirement that the municipal clerk review the registrations for accuracy. The Governor also recommends that registration be allowed at private and tribal high schools, in the same manner, if desired by those schools.

14. Modify Special Election Dates

The Governor recommends modifying the scheduling of special elections to ensure they are scheduled with sufficient time to comply with federal requirements for sending ballots to military and overseas voters.

15. Aggrieved Candidate Recount Technical Fix

The Governor recommends modifying statutes to only allow an aggrieved candidate, other than the candidate who requested the initial partial recount, to request a recount of additional jurisdictions or the full state.

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16. Appropriation Language Changes

The Governor recommends amending the statutory language of the clerk training appropriation to allow it to fund training of municipal and county clerks on all election administration procedures and topics, including voter identification. The Governor also recommends modifying the current appropriation used for reimbursing the costs of election recounts to be a continuing appropriation.

17. Convert Expiring Project Positions to Permanent Positions

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
SEG-F	176,800	4.00	303,000	4.00	176,800	4.00	303,000	4.00
TOTAL	176,800	4.00	303,000	4.00	176,800	4.00	303,000	4.00

The Governor recommends converting 4.0 FTE SEG-F project positions that are expiring to 4.0 FTE SEG-F permanent positions.

18. Standard Budget Adjustments

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY26		FY27		FY26		FY27	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	-33,700	0.00	-33,700	0.00	-33,700	0.00	-33,700	0.00
PR-O	-47,500	0.00	-47,500	0.00	-47,500	0.00	-47,500	0.00
SEG-F	-152,800	-4.00	-281,400	-4.00	-152,800	-4.00	-281,400	-4.00
TOTAL	-234,000	-4.00	-362,600	-4.00	-234,000	-4.00	-362,600	-4.00

The Governor recommends adjusting the commission's base budget for: (a) removal of noncontinuing elements from the base (-\$176,800 and -4.0 FTE positions in FY26 and -\$303,000 and -4.0 FTE positions in FY27); (b) full funding of continuing position salaries and fringe benefits (-\$108,800 in each year); (c) reclassifications and semiautomatic pay progressions (\$52,800 in FY26 and \$50,400 in FY27); (d) full funding of lease and directed moves costs (-\$1,200 in each year); and (e) minor transfers within the same alpha appropriation.