



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: January 28, 2026
RE: Department of Elections' Budget Proposals: Fiscal Years 2026–27 and 2027–28

This memorandum provides an overview of the Department of Elections' (Department) budget proposals for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2026–27 and 2027–28. The memorandum is intended to accompany the enclosed budget forms required by the Mayor's Office of Public Policy and Finance and the Controller's Office. The memorandum is organized to align with the order of those forms, providing explanations of the Department's funding requests and priorities.

- A. Budget Submission Process
- B. Citywide Priorities and Fiscal Outlook
- C. Department's Budget Overview
 - 1. Legally Mandated Programs and Processes
 - 2. New Regulatory and Legislative Changes
 - 3. Fixed and Fluctuating Costs
 - 4. Cost-Savings Opportunities
- D. Elections Commission's Request for Information
- E. Budget Forms
- F. Elections Commission's Budget
- G. Conclusion

A. Budget Submission Process

Each year, all City departments prepare budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal years as part of the City's annual budget development process, which determines how City services and programs are funded. Like many other City departments, the Department operates on a rolling two-year budget cycle. Accordingly, this year's budget submission includes proposed amendments to the FY 2026–27 budget, which was approved last year, as well as a new budget proposal for FY 2027–28.

In accordance with San Francisco Administrative Code § 3.3, the Department's budget proposals must undergo public review at a minimum of two public meetings prior to submission. The first public meeting must take place at least 15 days before the meeting at which the Elections Commission may approve the proposals.

The Department will submit final versions of both budget proposals to the Mayor's Office and the Controller's Office by the Charter-mandated deadline of February 23, 2026. Following submission, the Mayor's Office will incorporate the Department's proposals into the City's consolidated budget, which must be submitted to the Board of Supervisors (Board) by June 1, 2026. The Board will then review the proposed budget, consider any recommendations or amendments, and return a final budget to the Mayor for signature by August 1, 2026.

B. Citywide Priorities and Fiscal Outlook

In December 2025, the Mayor's Office and the Controller's Office issued joint policy and technical instructions, along with budget forms, to guide departments in preparing budget proposals for the next two fiscal years. These instructions reflect the City's fiscal outlook and establish expectations for budget development in the current financial environment.

According to the Mayor's Office, San Francisco's Five-Year Financial Plan projects a two-year General Fund deficit of \$936 million, increasing to \$1.2 billion by FY 2029–30. In response, the Mayor has directed departments to take a strategic, outcomes-driven approach to budgeting, including eliminating discretionary programs, operating within current staffing levels while reducing vacancies and streamlining reporting structures, and reviewing contracted services and non-personnel expenditures to identify efficiencies and savings.

C. Department's Budget Overview

In developing its FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28 budget proposals, the Department has balanced the Mayor's fiscal directives with the need to preserve core election programs and maintain accessible and inclusive voter services. The proposed budgets are designed to maintain service levels consistent with prior years for the two elections scheduled during the budget period—the November 3, 2026, General Election and March 7, 2028, Presidential Primary Election, both of which are expected to be complex and to generate high voter turnout.

The General Election includes numerous federal, state, and local contests and measures, resulting in longer and more complex ballots, while the Presidential Primary Election requires additional voter education regarding political party preference and how it determines a voter's ballot eligibility and historically draws elevated voter participation, which in turn increases ballot processing volumes. To support the successful administration of these elections, the Department's proposals continue to fully fund election operations and legally mandated services, including election material production, language access services, public outreach, accessibility programs, and a full range of voting options.

The following outlines the guiding principles and key considerations that informed the Department's budget proposals, as well as the strategies the Department plans to implement to achieve ongoing spending reductions while maintaining compliance with election law and ensuring convenient, reliable voter access.

1. Legally Mandated Programs and Processes

The Department remains committed to fulfilling its mission by maintaining voter programs and services—many of which are required by federal, state, and local law—throughout the year and during the two elections scheduled over the next two fiscal years.

For each election, the Department must plan, coordinate, and execute a wide range of programs within legal timelines and statutory requirements. These programs include, but are not limited to, the following functions:

Production of Official Ballots, Voter Information Pamphlets, and Other Election Materials: The Department prepares and distributes official ballots, Voter Information Pamphlets, and other election materials in multiple languages and formats. This ensures that all voters, including individuals with limited English proficiency and voters with disabilities, have the information needed to fully participate in the election process.

Facilitation of Voter Notification and Engagement Program: The Department administers a multilingual voter notification program using both postal and digital communications to maintain accurate voter registration records, provide legally required notices, and deliver targeted information to specific populations. These efforts support compliance with voter notification requirements while advancing the Department's commitment to barrier-free registration and informed voter participation.

Provision of Year-Round and Election-Specific Accessible and Equitable Outreach and Voter Education: The Department conducts year-round outreach and voter education to promote voter registration, increase awareness of translated materials and accessible services, and educate residents about their voting rights and voting process. In advance of each election, the Department develops and implements a targeted outreach and communications campaign to inform voters about key dates, voting options, and how to vote by mail or in person.

Election-specific outreach campaigns also address topics unique to each election. For example, outreach efforts over the next two years will include education on how a voter's registered political party preference affects participation in presidential primary contests, continued public education on ranked-choice voting used for local offices, and information on non-citizen registration and voting eligibility in local Board of Education elections.

Administration of Vote-by-Mail and Accessible Vote-by-Mail Programs: The Department administers the vote-by-mail program for approximately 500,000 local voters, ensuring the timely delivery of ballots to eligible voters and providing accessible vote-by-mail options for individuals with special needs. The Department also facilitates timely and convenient ballot return through its 37 official ballot drop-off boxes located throughout the City.

Provision of In-Person Early Voting and Election Day Services: The Department operates in-person early voting and Election Day voting services, ensuring that voting locations are accessible, adequately staffed with poll workers, and equipped with the necessary supplies and multilingual and accessibility resources to serve all voters effectively.

Collection, Processing, and Counting of Voted Ballots: The Department securely collects, processes, and counts voted ballots in accordance with statutory requirements, maintaining the integrity, security, and confidentiality of the voting process throughout each stage of ballot handling.

Completion of the Canvass and Release of Final Election Results: Following each election, the Department conducts the official canvass, which includes reviewing and verifying election materials, reconciling ballots, and certifying final election results within legally mandated deadlines.

Given the scope, complexity, and legal requirements associated with these responsibilities, adequate budgetary support is essential to the Department's mission of ensuring equitable access to voting and administering free, fair, and functional elections. The proposed budget submissions reflect the level of funding necessary to meet these obligations, maintain compliance with election laws, and support the reliable delivery of accessible, multilingual, and inclusive voter services.

2. New Regulatory and Legislative Changes

In addition to maintaining established programs and core election operations, the Department must adapt to newly enacted regulatory and legislative requirements that affect both service delivery and costs. The most significant regulatory change with fiscal impacts is the issuance of new state language minority determinations, which expand the Department's language access obligations and require additional resources to implement.

Pursuant to California Elections Code § 14201(f), the Secretary of State issued updated language minority determinations on December 24, 2025. These determinations identify precincts in which at least 3 percent of voting-age residents belong to a single language minority and lack sufficient English proficiency to vote without assistance. The determinations were based on data provided by the California Statewide Database at UC Berkeley, which relied on a special tabulation prepared by the Census Data Review Board to identify precincts meeting the statutory threshold.

As a result, San Francisco is now required to provide translated facsimile (reference) ballots in five additional languages at polling places and by mail or email; make a good-faith effort to recruit bilingual poll workers fluent in these languages for assignment to identified sites; and notify voters of the availability of facsimile ballots in these languages. The newly required languages—Bengali, Hindi, Hmong, Mongolian, and Urdu—are in addition to the existing state-required languages of Burmese, Japanese, Korean, and Thai.

Separately, the Department is required to provide translated ballots and materials in Chinese and Spanish under the federal Voting Rights Act, in Filipino under the City's Language Access Ordinance, and anticipates providing materials in Vietnamese beginning in 2026, following the anticipated adoption of Vietnamese as a required language.

To implement these expanded state and local language requirements, the Department will undertake several initiatives. These include translating and providing all official election materials and ballots currently available in Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino into Vietnamese, as well as translating and making facsimile ballots available in the newly state-required languages.

The Department will also develop and implement targeted outreach campaigns to increase public awareness of the availability of election materials in multiple languages. These efforts will focus on communicating how voters can access materials in their preferred language and will utilize a combination of traditional media, such as radio and print, and digital channels, including social media, websites, and direct email communications, to maximize reach and engagement.

In addition, the Department will collaborate with community-based organizations to amplify messaging and reach targeted communities. Outreach activities will include in-person voter education workshops and participation in community events to directly engage residents and respond to questions about language assistance options.

To further increase awareness of translated election materials and to provide voters with an additional opportunity to indicate their preferred language for receiving ballots, facsimile ballots, and other election materials, the Department will mail multilingual notices in advance of the June 2 election. These notices will be sent to voters whose registration records indicate birth in a country associated with Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, Burmese, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Thai, Bengali, Hindi, Hmong, Mongolian, Urdu, or Vietnamese language communities and who do not currently have a language preference on file. As a result of this mailing, the Department expects to increase the number of voters receiving election materials in languages other than English and to expand the pool of bilingual poll workers available for upcoming elections.

Collectively, these expanded requirements and implementation efforts will result in additional ongoing costs for the Department beginning in FY 2026–27, including increased expenditures related to translation, production, outreach, and staffing.

3. Fixed and Fluctuating Costs

To effectively plan and conduct elections, the Department must maintain reliable office space, equipment, supplies, vehicles, and software. Accordingly, the Department's budget proposals account for fixed operating costs, including warehouse leases for the storage of election equipment and supplies, vehicle rentals, and licensing and maintenance contracts for election systems such as the Election Information Management System, the Accessible Vote-by-Mail System, and the City's Voting System. These fixed costs also include the ongoing use of equipment to process returned vote-by-mail envelopes, as well as general office equipment necessary to support daily operations.

While fixed operating costs typically experience only modest changes from one fiscal year to the next, expenses associated with legally mandated election programs and seasonal staffing fluctuate more significantly. This variability is driven by several factors, including the type of election scheduled in a given fiscal year (such as a statewide general election or primary), changes in election law, growth in the number of registered voters, and variations in voter turnout. In addition, the overall cost of conducting elections continues to increase due to inflation and the increasing complexity of election administration.

During election periods, which are characterized by substantially increased workloads, the Department relies on seasonal employees to supplement its full-time workforce. These temporary staff support a wide range of election activities, including candidate filings, voter record maintenance, vote-by-mail ballot signature verification, poll worker training, polling place supply preparation, ballot processing, and the post-election canvass. To estimate staffing needs and related costs reflected in the budget proposals, the Department analyzed anticipated workloads and historical data from comparable past elections.

In addition to seasonal staffing costs, the budget proposals include human resources expenditures for the Department's full-time staff. These employees provide continuity across election cycles and ensure the consistent delivery of high-quality voter services. Full-time staff also perform election-specific functions and contribute specialized expertise in areas such as election law and compliance, project management, public communications, technical systems and security, and City labor and administrative practices. Outside of active election periods, full-time staff continue to carry out essential departmental functions typical of any City agency. These responsibilities include managing facilities and equipment, processing voter inquiries and correspondence, maintaining data systems, and overseeing accounting, payroll, and personnel operations.

One of the most significant factors driving fluctuations in the Department's budget proposals is the number of candidates and measures appearing on official ballots and in the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) for each election. These variables directly affect the number of ballot cards required and the length of the VIP, which in turn influence major cost drivers in the Department's budget such as printing, postage, translation services, and staffing.

In FY 2026–27, the Department will conduct the Consolidated General Election on November 3, 2026. Based on historical comparisons and anticipated ballot content, the Department estimates that the November 2026 ballot will likely consist of four to five ballot cards, reflecting the large number of federal, state, and local contests and measures typically associated with general elections. The Department projects that the VIP for this election will be approximately 250 pages.

In FY 2027–28, the Department will conduct the March 7, 2028, Presidential Primary Election. Due to the unique and more complex rules governing presidential primaries, the Department anticipates the need for a robust voter education program and slightly higher-than-usual outreach and voter support costs. Voter education efforts will begin earlier than for most elections and will focus on explaining how a voter's registered political party preference determines the presidential contest on their ballot, as well as how voters registered with No Party Preference (approximately 26 percent of the local electorate) may request a ballot containing presidential candidates. The Department also expects an increased volume of voter inquiries by phone and email and therefore plans to open its expanded phone bank earlier than in most election cycles. For FY 2027–28, the Department estimates that the ballot will likely consist of two to three ballot cards and that the VIP will be approximately 200 pages.

4. Cost-Savings Opportunities

In response to the Mayor's directive to reduce spending, the Department conducted a thorough review of its operations to identify efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities where feasible, while continuing to meet all legal requirements and maintain expected service levels. This review focused on contracted services and non-personnel expenditures as well as staffing structures and the effective use of existing City resources.

As part of this effort, the Department evaluated opportunities to leverage technology where appropriate, reviewed vendor services to identify potential cost efficiencies, and assessed whether certain functions or processes could be supported through alternative or more consolidated approaches. The Department also examined facility, equipment, and other operational expenses to ensure resources are used efficiently and aligned with operational needs.

Based on this review, the Department identified reductions across several expenditure categories, including professional services, facilities and equipment, software and operational costs, as well as certain personnel-related expenses, such as deletion of a vacant position. These reductions represent ongoing savings that align with the Mayor's fiscal directives and support long-term fiscal sustainability, while allowing the Department to continue delivering secure, accessible, and reliable election services.

These reductions, along with other budgetary changes that reflect increased costs, are further detailed in Form 1A of the budget packet.

D. Elections Commission's Request for Information

This section contains information requested by the Elections Commission in its *List of Regularly Requested Information*.

1. *For each contract the Department has (e.g., sole-source or resulting from an RFP), show which budget line items the contract contributes to, as well as name of the entity the contract is with, the contract's start and end date, the dollar amount for each year, what the contract is about, and whether the contract was sole-source or from competitive bidding.*

The Department's budget proposals for FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28 include contracts with six vendors. Table 1 provides the information requested above, followed by a brief description of the purpose of each of these contracts.

Table 1: Department Contracts

Account	Account Description	Vendor	Start Date	End Date	Annual Dollar Amount	Procurement Authority
527610	Systems Consulting Services	Democracy Live	7/1/2025	6/30/2027	\$49,000	Sole Source
527610	Systems Consulting Services	DFM Associates	10/1/2021	9/30/2031	\$191,100	Sole Source
527610	Systems Consulting Services	Runbeck Election Services	2/1/2024	1/31/2028	\$94,544 (varies)	Sole Source
549510	Other Office Supplies					
527990	Other Professional Services	LibertyVote Systems	7/21/2025	6/30/2029	\$1,679,406	Sole Source
529990	Other Equipment Maintenance	OPEX Corporation	7/1/2022	6/30/2027	\$35,723	Sole Source
535810	Advertising	Most Likely To	7/1/2024	3/1/2028	Approx. \$200,000 to \$300,000	Bidding

Accessible Vote-by-Mail System Contract. State law requires all county election officials to maintain an Accessible Vote-by-Mail (AVBM) System that enables voters, including those with disabilities, to access, navigate, mark, and print their ballots online using assistive technology. The Department's contract with Democracy Live ensures compliance with these legal requirements while supporting the delivery of accessible, secure, and inclusive voting services to all eligible voters.

Election Information Management System (EIMS) Contract. The Department relies on the Election Information Management System (EIMS) to manage a broad range of critical election administration functions. Through its contract with DFM Associates, EIMS supports voter record maintenance; the processing of new voter registrations; the recording of voter history; the administration of local petitions and candidate filings; the tracking of vote-by-mail ballots from issuance through return and processing; the management of poll worker recruitment, assignments, and polling place data; and the maintenance of street index, voting district maps, and precinct information.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Sorting Equipment Maintenance Contract. The Department uses two Agilis Ballot Sorting System units to process returned vote-by-mail ballot envelopes. These capture a digital image of each envelope, including the voter's signature, scan the envelope's barcode, and link the ballot envelope image to the recipient file in the Election Information Management System (EIMS). This contract ensures that the Department receives ongoing maintenance services for its Agilis Ballot Sorting System units, supporting efficient vote-by-mail ballot processing.

Voting System Contract. The Department maintains a contract with LibertyVote (formerly Dominion Voting Systems) to provide and support the voting system used to conduct elections in San Francisco. This contract covers the licensing, maintenance, and support of the City's certified voting system, including ballot tabulation equipment, accessible voting devices, and associated software. The contract also includes system testing and certification support, technical assistance during election preparation and Election Day operations, and ongoing updates necessary to ensure compliance with state and federal election requirements and security standards.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Extraction Equipment Maintenance Contract. The Department uses nine OPEX Model 72 envelope openers and content extractors. These machines slice open envelopes and create space for Department personnel to extract ballot cards from accepted vote-by-mail ballot envelopes while preserving the secrecy of each ballot. This process is the most labor-intensive part of vote-by-mail ballot processing. This contract ensures the Department receives ongoing maintenance services for its ballot extractors, enhancing processing speed and efficiency.

Advertising Contract. Year-round and for each election, the Department conducts multilingual and multiformat voter education and outreach on a variety of election topics. Through the contract with Most Likely To, the Department seeks full-service marketing and advertising support on an as-needed basis. These services may include developing messaging and creative materials, planning and executing traditional, non-traditional, and online media campaigns, purchasing media placements, tracking the progress of strategies, providing recommendations, and evaluating impacts with detailed reporting of findings.

2. *Include a breakdown of the "Non-Personnel Services" line item.*

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of expenses budgeted in this account, with amounts over \$1M itemized separately.

Table 2: Breakdown of the "Non-Personnel Services" Line Item

Account	Account Description	Dollar Amount FY 2026-27	Dollar Amount FY 2027-28
522020	Professional Staff Development	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
526610	Interpretation Services for ASL & Other Languages	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
526990	Fees for Outreach Event Attendance and Workshops	\$ 7,050	\$ 7,050
527100	Payments to Poll Workers	\$ 573,280	\$ 573,280
527610	Systems Consulting Services (EIMS, AVBM, & Agilis Ballot Processing System)	\$ 289,111	\$ 289,111
527990	Other Professional Services (Voting System Contract, VIP Translation & Typesetting, & Election Night Staffing)	\$ 2,750,000	\$ 2,750,000
	· Voting System	\$ 1,679,406	\$ 1,679,406
	· Translation & Typesetting of the Voter Information Pamphlet	\$ 858,000	\$ 858,000
	· Polling Place Supply Delivery and Retrieval Services	\$ 170,000	\$ 170,000
	· Election Night Staffing for Processing Center	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
	· Other	\$ 27,594	\$ 27,594
528010	Scavenger Services	\$ 13,080	\$ 13,080
528030	Pest Control	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
528110	Security for School Sites & Ballot Staging Area	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
529310	Office Equip Maintenance	\$ 6,360	\$ 6,360
529990	Other Equip Maintenance (Opex Envelope Extractor, Fire Extinguisher)	\$ 32,510	\$ 32,510
530110	Property Rent (Ballot Loading Area at Cow Palace)	\$ 39,160	\$ 39,160
530210	Garage Rent	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,000
530310	Warehouse Lease and Payments for SFUSD Poll Sites	\$ 1,708,222	\$ 1,708,222

Account (Cont.)	Account Description (Cont.)	Dollar Amount FY 2026-27 (Cont.)	Dollar Amount FY 2027-28 (Cont.)
530510	Payments for Private Poll Sites	\$ 91,000	\$ 91,000
531210	Vehicle Rental (for use by Deputy Sheriffs, Field Support, & Transport of Materials & Staff)	\$ 220,000	\$ 220,000
531990	Other Equipment Rentals (Forklift, Dollies, Tents, etc.)	\$ 49,000	\$ 49,000
535210	Freight-Delivery	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
535510	Copy Machine	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
535520	Printing	\$ 5,331,341	\$ 4,941,708
	· Ballots, Vote-By-Envelopes, Inserts, & Mailers	\$ 3,262,000	\$ 2,955,638
	· Voter Information Pamphlets, Sample Ballots, and Facsimiles	\$ 1,999,341	\$ 1,916,070
	· Poll Worker Manuals	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000
	· Other	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
535610	Postage (Mailing of Election Materials & Ballot Return Postage)	\$ 606,188	\$ 606,188
535810	Outreach Advertising	\$ 198,243	\$ 300,000
535960	Software Licensing Fees for Various Web Applications and Hosting the Online VIP	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000
552210	Fees Licenses Permits (Permits for Porta-Potty Placement and Licenses to Mass Email Communication)	\$ 17,128	\$ 17,128

E. Budget Forms

The Mayor and Controller require all City departments to submit their budget proposals using the Budget Formulation and Management System (BFMS) and the standardized forms they jointly issue. These forms are enclosed with this memorandum, with a brief description of each form provided in this section to assist with their review and understanding.

It is important to note the naming conventions for the forms and the fiscal years they reference. The forms labeled “Budget Year” (BY) and “Budget Year Plus 1” (BY+1) correspond to the upcoming fiscal years, FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28, respectively. The forms labeled “Prior Year” (PY) and “Current Year” (CY) refer to the already completed fiscal year, FY 2024–25, and the ongoing fiscal year, FY 2025–26.

1. Form 1A and 1B: High Level Summary

Form 1A: Summary of Major Changes in the Proposed Budget. This form requires the Department to respond to 18 questions designed to provide an overview of significant changes in the proposed budget. The questions focus on fiscal impacts, spending reductions, position adjustments, and measures to ensure operational efficiency while maintaining equitable and accessible services.

Form 1B: Department Budget Summary. This form provides a summary of the Department's proposed budget for FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28, with a focus on expenditures, revenues, and General Fund Support (GFS). It compares the Department's base budget to proposed changes for each fiscal year and highlights the resulting fiscal impacts.

Table 3, offers a concise snapshot of the Department's budget proposals for quick reference.

As detailed in Table 3, the Department's proposed expenditures are projected to decrease by \$52,817 in FY 2026–27 and by \$701,065 in FY 2027–28. These reductions are primarily attributable to targeted cost savings across several categories, including professional services, facilities and equipment fees, and software and other operational expenses. In addition, the proposed deletion of a vacant position contributes to the overall expenditure reduction.

Table 3: Snapshot of the Department's Budget Proposals

	FY 2026-27			FY 2027-28		
	Base Amount	Final Amount	Changes	Base Amount	Final Amount	Changes
Total Expenditures	\$ 24,103,908	\$ 24,051,091	(\$ 52,817)	\$ 25,013,503	\$ 24,312,438	(\$ 701,065)
Total Revenue & Recovery	\$ 923,191	\$ 923,191	\$ 0	\$ 157,248	\$ 299,148	\$ 141,900
General Fund Support	\$ 23,180,717	\$ 23,127,900	(\$ 52,817)	\$ 24,856,255	\$ 24,013,290	(\$ 842,965)

2. Form 2A, 2B, and 2C: Sources

The Department's projected revenues are estimated at \$923,191 for FY 2026-27 and \$299,148 for FY 2027-28. These projections include revenues the Department anticipates receiving from the following sources:

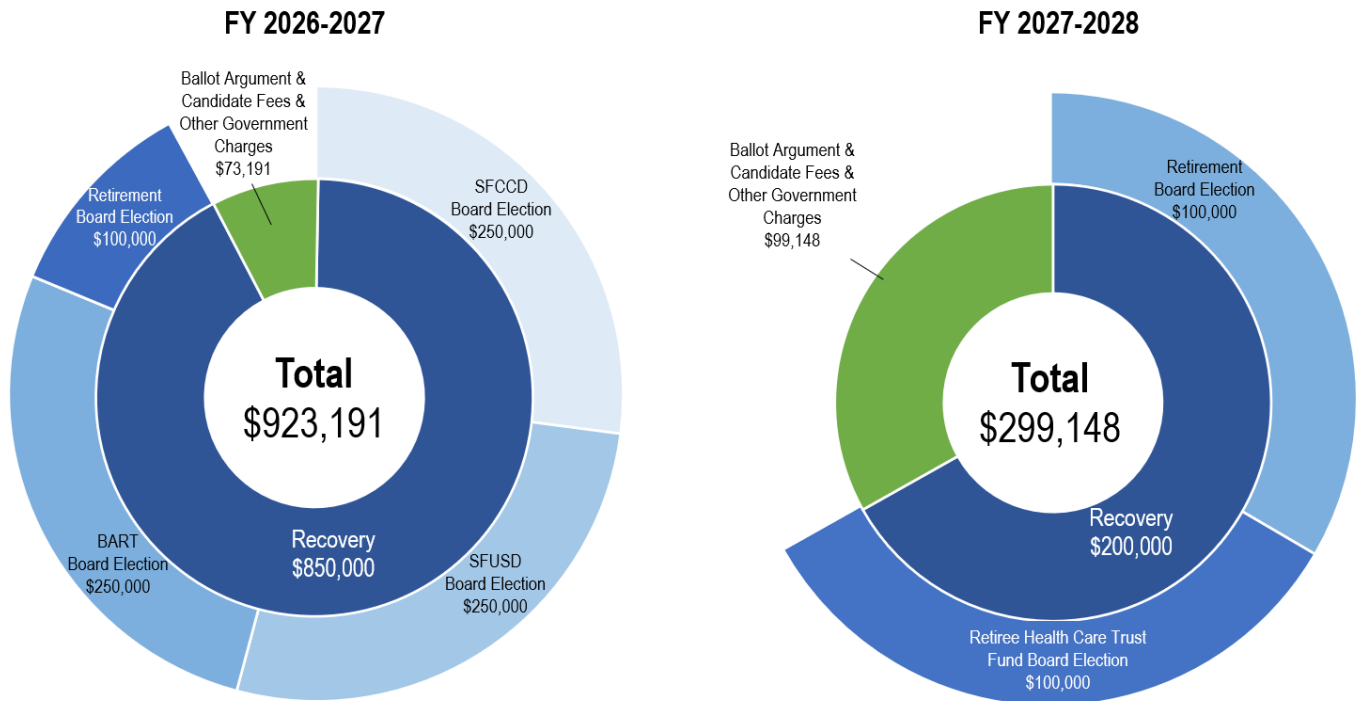
Candidate Filing and Paid Ballot Argument Fee Collections: State and local laws establish the procedures and fee amounts for candidate filings and the submission of paid ballot arguments. To estimate revenues for elections in FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28, the Department analyzed historical filing data from similar past elections.

District and Agency Elections Revenue Recoveries: In accordance with state law, the Department is authorized to conduct district and agency elections and recover the associated administrative costs. In FY 2026-27, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), Community College District (CCD), and Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) will consolidate their elections with the November 2026 Election.

Additionally, the Department anticipates revenue recoveries from conducting one agency election in FY 2026-27, San Francisco Retirement Board Election, and two agency elections in FY 2027-28, the San Francisco Retirement Board Election and the Retiree Health Care Trust Fund Board Election.

Graph 1 illustrates these projected revenue and recoveries for FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28.

Graph 1: Revenue and Recoveries



Form 2A: Revenue Report. This form outlines the changes in projected revenues and revenue recoveries, along with their associated sources, as reflected in the FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28 budget proposals compared to the base budget approved last year. The form highlights a projected increase in revenue in both FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28.

In FY 2026–27, revenue projections remain unchanged from those submitted last year, totaling \$923,191.

In FY 2027–28, revenue projections are expected to decrease by \$ 624,043 because no district elections, such as the Community College District or Bay Area Rapid Transit District elections, are scheduled during that fiscal year, and the Department will not be required to administer those elections.

Form 2B: Fees and Fines. This form details various projected fees, including a breakdown of fee descriptions, amounts, and the applicable code sections authorizing their collection as reflected in the FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28 budget proposals.

In FY 2027–28, County candidate filing fee revenue is projected to increase by \$41,900, based on historical trends and expected candidate filings during that fiscal year.

Form 2C: Fee Cost Recovery. This form identifies new and modified fees, fines, or service charges. However, this form is not applicable, as the Department is not proposing any changes to existing fees.

3. Form 3A and 3B: Uses

Overview of Major Budget Accounts and Projected Expenditures: The following provides a concise overview of the Department's projected expenditures for the upcoming two fiscal years. Although this information is not required as part of the official budget form packet, it is included to enhance transparency, provide clarity, and facilitate a review of the Department's proposed budgets.

The Department's total projected expenditures are \$24,051,091 for FY 2026-27 and \$24,312,438 for FY 2027-28. These expenditures are organized into six major categories that include:

Salaries: This category covers expenses for both year-round and seasonal employees of the Department, as well as overtime costs incurred during election cycles.

Mandatory Fringe Benefits: These consist primarily of health and retirement benefits provided by the City to its employees.

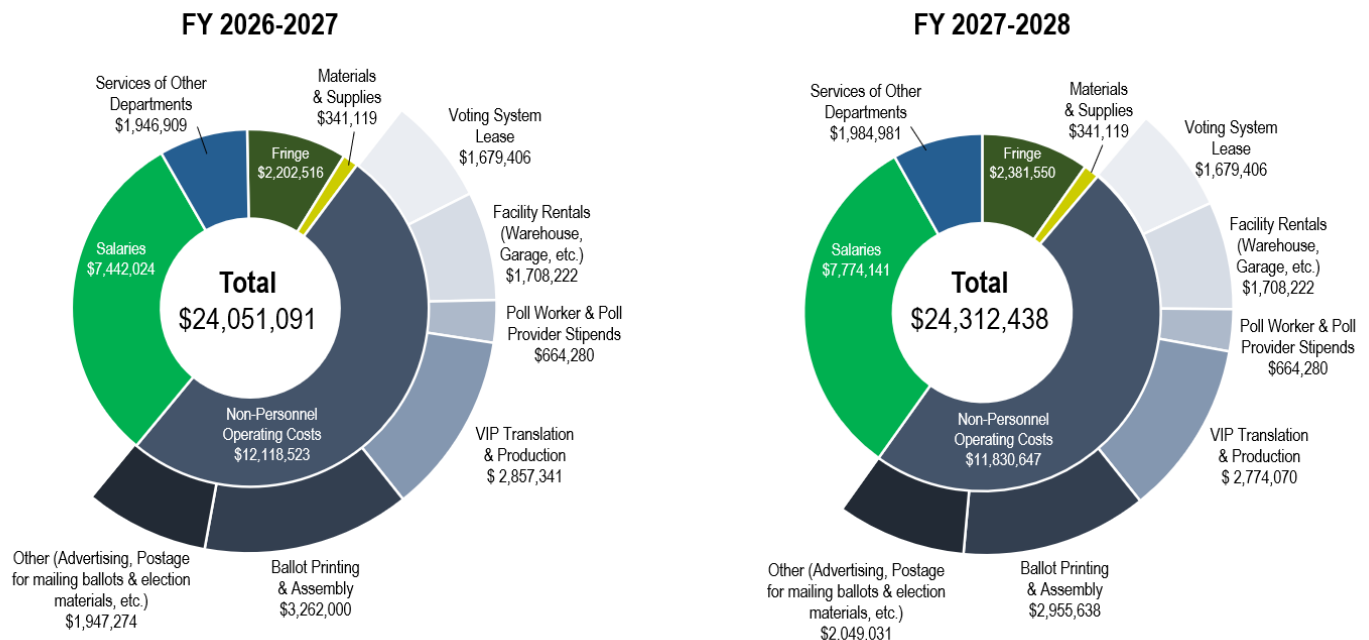
Non-Personnel Services: This category includes operational expenses, including contractual obligations; maintenance of the vehicle fleet and ballot processing equipment; and costs associated with ballot production, printing, assembly, and mailing. Additionally, this category encompasses the production, translation, and mailing of the Voter Information Pamphlet; poll worker and polling place provider stipends; polling place facility rental fees; vehicle and garage rental fees; warehouse lease; voter outreach advertising; and various logistical expenses required for the conduct of elections.

Materials and Supplies: This category includes the cost of supplies and materials, such as polling place signage, office paper, and other essential items that support daily functions and election-related activities.

Services of Other Departments: This item accounts for costs associated with intra-departmental services specific to the Department, such as ballot security provided by the Sheriff's Office, as well as citywide shared costs, such as charges from the Public Utilities Commission for light, heat, and power.

Graph 2 provides a visual representation of projected expenditures across these six categories.

Graph 2: Expenditures



Form 3A. Expenditure Changes. This form provides an itemized breakdown of the Department's proposed expenditure changes for FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28, compared to the base budget, along with detailed explanations for any increases or decreases in spending.

As shown in this form, overall expenditure reductions are driven by targeted savings across several categories that include personnel-related savings resulting from the deletion of a vacant position, which reduces both salaries and associated fringe benefits; operational efficiencies achieved through increased use of technology and alternative vendors for professional services, including audio production, translation, and typesetting; and election-related workload reductions in BY+1 due to fewer ballot contests requiring translation and production services. Additional ongoing savings are realized through facilities and equipment cost reductions, including lower garage rent and copy machine expenses, as well as technology and telecommunications efficiencies achieved through software consolidation, vendor changes, and modernization of phone and cellular services.

Decrease in Permanent Salaries – Miscellaneous Regular of \$129,442 in the Base Year (BY) and \$138,626 in BY+1.

a. This reduction reflects the proposed deletion of position 1410.

Decrease in Fringe Benefits totaling \$52,632 in BY and \$57,906 in BY+1.

a. This reduction is directly associated with the proposed deletion of position 1410 and the corresponding decrease in salary-related benefit costs.

Decrease in Programmatic Projects-Budget of \$1,275,030 in BY+1

a. This allocation was provided by the Mayor's Office to account for increased costs associated with a fiscal year that includes a Presidential Primary Election. This line item reflects a decrease of \$1,275,030, as the Department reallocated a portion of this funding to other budget categories where increased expenditures are expected, consistent with the Mayor's Office budget directives.

Decrease in Other Professional Services of \$105,000 on an ongoing basis.

a. The Department will leverage technology to produce the audio version of the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP), reducing reliance on human voice recordings. In addition, the Department will utilize a City-contracted vendor to obtain more competitive pricing for certain language services and will expand the use of software-generated facsimiles in place of manual typesetting, resulting in further cost efficiencies.

Decrease in Garage Rent of \$15,200 on an ongoing basis.

a. The Department will shift vehicle parking to a lower-cost City garage location and will utilize its warehouse for off-election parking of certain vehicles to further reduce costs.

Decrease in Copy Machine Costs of \$10,000 on an ongoing basis.

a. Savings result from a new vendor contract that reduces service levels while maintaining operational needs.

Decrease in Software Licensing Permits of \$6,041 on an ongoing basis.

a. The Department will utilize alternative software products to deliver required services, such as hosting the VIP with a different vendor.

The Department also proposes several expenditure increases. Overall, these increases are driven by a combination of election-related workload, personnel costs, and technology and facilities needs. Personnel-related increases include higher fringe benefit costs resulting from temporary staff becoming benefit-eligible when multiple elections occur within the same calendar year, as well as wage and benefit adjustments for services provided by personnel of other City departments in accordance with applicable MOUs.

Election-specific increases in BY+1 reflect the added complexity of administering a party-specific Presidential Primary Election, including higher printing and advertising costs associated with producing multiple ballot variants and expanded voter education efforts. Additional increases are attributable to facilities maintenance needs, such as repairs to ballot drop boxes and warehouse infrastructure, as well as technology investments, including the transition of website and application hosting to the Department of Technology's Citywide Public Cloud environment.

Increase in Other Fringe Benefits of \$200,000 on an ongoing basis.

a. When two elections occur within the same calendar year, some temporary employees may work more than six months and begin accruing benefit costs, resulting in higher overall fringe benefit expenditures.

Increase in Printing Costs of \$500,000 in BY+1.

a. This increase reflects the need to print additional party-specific ballots for the Presidential Primary Election. The Department must produce approximately 40 ballot variants for each ballot type to accommodate political party and language preferences.

Increase in Advertising Costs of \$101,757 in BY+1.

a. Additional advertising is required to support expanded voter education efforts related to the party-specific Presidential Primary Election, including messaging on party preference, ballot eligibility, and voting options.

Increase in Senior DPW – Building Repair of \$10,000 in BY+1.

a. This increase reflects additional repair and maintenance services needed for ballot drop boxes and the Department's warehouse facilities.

Increase in Department of Technology (DT) Citywide Public Cloud of \$20,900 on an ongoing basis.

a. This increase reflects the transfer of hosting for the Department's website, voter portals, tools, and applications from an external vendor to the Department of Technology's Citywide Public Cloud environment.

Increase in General Fund – Parking and Traffic of \$3,767 in BY and \$3,956 in BY+1 (total increase of \$7,723 across both years).

a. This increase accounts for a 5 percent adjustment in wages and benefits, per the applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), associated with Parking Control Officer (PCO) assistance.

Increase in General Fund – Sheriff Services of \$22,968 in BY and \$24,116 in BY+1 (total increase of \$47,084 across both years).

a. This increase reflects a 5 percent adjustment in wages and benefits, per the applicable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), associated with Sheriff staffing support.

Form 3B. Position Changes. This form is used to show any proposed changes to approved positions.

The Department is seeking to substitute its 0952 Deputy Director II position with a 0932 Manager IV position.

Reclassifying this leadership position to Manager IV allows for a permanent civil service appointment, supporting continuity and the retention of institutional knowledge across election cycles. Given the Department's responsibility for administering complex, legally mandated election processes, long-term leadership stability is critical to maintaining operational efficiency, legal compliance, and high-quality service delivery.

While the maximum salary for the 0932 Manager IV classification (\$216,710) is approximately 7% higher than that of the 0952 Deputy Director II classification (\$201,942), both positions fall within comparable executive-level salary ranges. The proposed substitution is expected to have a minimal fiscal impact, as compensation for the 0932 Manager IV position will be set within the salary range previously established for the 0952 Deputy Director II position and aligned with available funding.

Overall, the proposed substitution preserves necessary executive flexibility while strengthening leadership stability and continuity, without increasing costs or altering the scope of work.

The Department proposes to delete its vacant 1410 position as part of its efforts to align staffing levels with operational needs and fiscal constraints. This position has remained unfilled, and its elimination allows the Department to achieve cost savings while continuing to meet service requirements through existing staffing resources and operational adjustments.

4. Form 4A and 4B: Equipment and Fleet Requests

Form 4A: New Equipment Requests. This form is used to provide details on proposed equipment expenses. However, it is not applicable, as the Department is not requesting any new equipment in these budget proposals.

Form 4B: Fleet Requests. This form is used to outline requests for new or replacement vehicles. However, it is not applicable, as the Department is not proposing any additions to its fleet in these budget proposals.

5. Organizational Chart

This form provides a visualization of the Department's organizational structure, highlighting both filled and vacant positions. The chart reflects the positions approved in the previous year's Annual Salary Ordinance, including those designated for attrition savings.

6. Proposition J Contracting: Reporting Requirements

Proposition J permits the use of an outside service provider only when it can deliver the service at a lower cost than it would require for City employees to perform the same task. This form includes a detailed cost analysis to justify any such service being proposed.

Since FY 2007-08, the Department has consistently received approval to outsource the assembly and mailing of vote-by-mail ballot packets, as this approach has proven to be more cost-effective. For the FY 2026–27 budget proposal, the Department once again seeks approval to obtain these services for the November 2026 election. Outsourcing this function not only reduces costs but also ensures the timely and efficient delivery of approximately 560, 000 vote-by-mail ballot packets.

7. Interdepartmental Services Balancing

The Interdepartmental Services (IDS) Balancing form provides a detailed account of costs associated with services supplied to the Department by other City departments and agencies. The Department maintains IDS accounts with 10 City departments and agencies, covering both general services and election-specific services.

General Services Internal Department Services (IDS) accounts fund services that are shared across all City departments. These accounts are centrally loaded into the Department's budget and represent fixed operating costs that support day-to-day operations. For example, the Department of Technology provides general information technology support and telecommunications services; the Public Utilities Commission supplies light, heat, and power to Department facilities; and the General Services Agency provides general accounting and administrative support. Collectively, these services enable the Department to operate effectively year-round, regardless of the election schedule.

Beginning in FY 2026–27, all City departments will also have an IDS account with Digital Services, which will provide centralized digital support services, including website governance, accessibility compliance assistance, and other shared digital infrastructure and support functions.

Election-related IDS accounts, by contrast, are directly tied to services required for administering elections. The costs associated with these accounts fluctuate based on the type of elections scheduled in a given fiscal year. For instance, the Reproduction and Mail Services Division handles the printing and reproduction of mailers and other official election materials; the Sheriff's Department provides ballot security and collection services, safeguarding election materials throughout the process; and the Municipal Transportation Agency facilitates the Election Night collection and transportation of election results data.

F. Elections Commission's Budget

The Elections Commission's budget is included within the Department of Elections' overall budget but is contained under separate accounts, as detailed in Table 6. To date, the Elections Commission has not submitted any funding requests. Should the Commission choose to propose changes, it must provide justification for each change to the Director by Thursday, February 12, 2026. This timeline allows the Department to input any proposed changes into the budget system and finalize the required forms by the Charter-mandated budget submission deadline of February 23, 2026.

Table 6: Elections Commission's Budget

Account	Account Item	Charts Title	Dollar Amount FY 2026-27	Dollar Amount FY 2027-28
501010	Perm Salaries-Misc-Regular	Personnel - Salaries & Wages	\$56,609	\$60,616
513010	Retire City Misc	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$8,510	\$9,634
514010	Social Security (OASDI & HI)	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$3,510	\$3,758
514020	Social Sec-Medicare(HI Only)	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$821	\$879
515010	Health Service-City Match	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$3,665	\$3,995
515020	Retiree Health-Match-Prop B	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$436	\$467
515030	RetireeHlthCare-CityMatchPropC	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$130	\$139
515710	Dependent Coverage	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$6,453	\$7,034
516010	Dental Coverage	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$606	\$630

Account (Cont.)	Account Item (Cont.)	Charts Title (Cont.)	Dollar Amount FY 2026-27 (Cont.)	Dollar Amount FY 2027-28 (Cont.)
519120	Long Term Disability Insurance	Personnel - Fringe Benefits	\$233	\$249
530310	Misc Facilities Rental	Non-Personnel Operating Costs	\$267	\$267
535610	Postage	Non-Personnel Operating Costs	\$583	\$583
549990	Other Materials & Supplies	Materials and Supplies	\$438	\$438

G. Conclusion

In preparing its budget proposals for FY 2026–27 and FY 2027–28, the Department has balanced two critical priorities: responding to the directive to achieve permanent savings to the General Fund and continuing to advance its mission to ensure equitable, accessible, and inclusive voting and election services for all San Franciscans. These priorities reflect the Department's commitment to fiscal responsibility while recognizing the complexity and legal mandates inherent in administering elections.

Through targeted efficiencies, strategic use of technology, and careful review of staffing and operational costs, the Department has identified sustainable savings while preserving the capacity to meet expanding regulatory requirements and increasing operational demands. These decisions were guided by the principle that cost reductions must not compromise election integrity, accessibility, security, or public confidence.

At the same time, the Department remains firmly committed to its core responsibilities: delivering essential election services required by law, conducting robust voter outreach and education efforts, supporting language access and accessibility initiatives, and ensuring elections are administered fairly, securely, and transparently.

Overall, these budget proposals demonstrate the Department's ability to responsibly manage public resources, adapt to evolving fiscal and regulatory challenges, and uphold the integrity of San Francisco's elections. By balancing fiscal discipline with operational readiness, the Department is prepared to continue serving voters effectively while maintaining public trust in local elections.