

FUNDING FAIR ELECTIONS IN COLUMBUS COUNTY



Annual election funding is the key to voting access in Columbus County.

The Columbus County Board of Commissioners, assisted by the Columbus County Manager who is appointed by the Commissioners, ensures funding is available to meet the budgetary needs identified by the Columbus County Board of Elections.

County budgets run on fiscal years, from July 1 to June 30, and are therefore debated and decided by your County Commissioners in the first half of the year. **For example, in June 2019, ahead of the 2019-20 fiscal year, the Columbus County Commissioners provided \$610,882, spending 1.03% of its total county budget on allocations that would ultimately be used to protect voters during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.** This budget included funding for the 2020 primary election and allowed the Board of Elections to provide things like:

- **Polling places**, including popular early voting options and hours.
- **Voter education** resources and proper polling place supplies.
- Recruitment, training, and retention of **poll workers**.
- **Voting equipment** and technology, like machines, printers, and IT staff.

For more information about how your county compares with others near you, visit demnc.co/electionsadvocacy

As Columbus County prepares for elections in 2023-2024, sufficient investment from the County Commissioners for the upcoming fiscal year will be critical to ensure accessible, safe, and fair elections.

Advocating for better elections is easier when you understand the costs. Election funding can be increased to:

- **Expand early voting options** and ensure safer and more accessible polling sites. For precincts that have fewer than 25,000 voters, estimated rental costs were \$5,000 per month. For larger jurisdictions, the estimate was \$10,000 per month.
- **Hire more poll workers.** The recommended standard is one poll worker for every 200 voters and a daily pay rate of \$200.
- **Share voting information widely** about election dates, rules, and any new districts. It's estimated to cost approximately \$1 to educate each voter in the county.
- **Provide functioning equipment** and resources necessary to vote. Voting machines cost around \$3,000 each. Experts recommend one machine per every 250 voters.

Analysis provided by NC Budget & Tax Center, NC Black Alliance, Common Cause NC, Democracy NC, and Southern Coalition for Social Justice. Not affiliated with any candidate or political party.

FUNDING PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES IN COLUMBUS COUNTY



Presidential primaries decide the candidate from each party who will run in the presidential general election in November of that same year. Typically held in the first half of a presidential election year, these elections can also decide everything from who controls a U.S. Congressional seat to local soil and water supervision.

\$610,882

**COUNTY COMMISSION
PROVIDED TO FUND THE
COLUMBUS COUNTY
PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**

1.03%

of Columbus County's total budget that went toward these elections.



early voting sites available in the last presidential primary.

1 SATURDAY, 0 SUNDAYS

weekend option available during early voting during the last presidential primary.

As Columbus County prepares its budget now for the 2024 presidential primary, more funding from the County Commissioners will be critical to ensure accessible, safe, and fair elections.

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