

ELECTION FUNDING: CONTACTING YOUR LOCAL OFFICIALS



The first half of the year is your chance to talk to your County Board of Elections Director and County Commissioners about where they are in the budgeting process and the local investment you'd like to see in your elections.

The County Commission plays a key role in making sure funding is available to meet the needs identified by the County Board of Elections and community advocates. During County Commission meetings, Commissioners can discuss, debate, and decide the budget – and the public is allowed to comment.

While County Boards of Elections members (composed of three members from the Governor's political party and two from the state's other leading party), are appointed by their county party leadership, the County Commissioners who ultimately decide your county's election budget are elected by YOU.

Find out if your Commissioners are on the ballot this election year at demnc.co/lookupmuni.

*PRO-TIP:

Contact the County Manager's office to find out information about the budget, upcoming County Commission meetings to discuss the budget, and opportunities for public comment on election funding at those upcoming Commission meetings.

DURING PUBLIC COMMENT MAKE SURE YOUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS KNOW:

- Election funding is key to providing voting access for all voters in our county.
- Based on the county's most recent budget, we found **the vast majority of NC counties surveyed provide less than the national average in funding**
- During past funding cycles, **poor investment created challenges for voters** (e.g., low voter turnout, few early voting options, and a reduction in poll workers).
- During past funding cycles, **more robust investment allowed the Board of Elections to provide better access for our community** (e.g., robust polling sites, including popular early voting options and hours; accessible curbside voting; voter education resources and proper polling place supplies; the recruiting, training, and retaining good poll workers).
- As our county prepares for upcoming elections, **more funding from the County Commissioners this fiscal year is critical to ensure: accessible, safe, and fair elections.**
- Election funding should be increased this year to: **expand early voting and ensure accessible polling sites, disseminate important information about election dates, rules, and districts changes, and provide the adequate equipment, materials, people power necessary to vote.**

TOP TEN TIPS: FOR LOCAL ELECTION FUNDING ORGANIZING & ADVOCACY



1. **Review** an Elections Funding Advocacy Training.
2. **Obtain** your County-specific resources.
3. **Contact** your County Board of Elections to determine what elections budget was proposed.
4. **Call on** your County Manager to determine when the county budget will be discussed.
5. **Compare** and evaluate this year's county election Budget.
6. **Promote** County Commission meetings and attendance in your community.
7. **Attend** County Commission meetings to discuss the budget and bring your neighbors.
8. **Provide** public comment on the budget at all county meetings where the budget is discussed, remembering this checklist of what every County Board of Elections (BOE) needs:
 - Adequate parking that's designated for BOE staff and visitors
 - A lobby where visitors can enter, and an enclosure where staff is secure
 - A large storage room to secure supplies and materials
 - A space for a board room and to host trainings
 - A One-Stop (Early Voting) Room
9. **Monitor** the County Commission meetings where Commissioners debate/decide the budget.
10. **Report** the County Commission's Election Budget to demnc.co/boereportform.

***PRO-TIP: Building a Relationship with Your County Board of Elections Director**

Election Funding Advocacy can be a **first chance to connect with county elections staff and let them know the community is there to help**, including advocating for investment in a budget that works for the voters they serve. Before planning your public comment on election funding or attending a county commission meeting, make sure to follow these steps to get as much information as possible:

- Look up your County BOE contact information at demnc.co/yourboe and contact your County's board of elections director.
- Ask the director or their staff if they've prepared a draft budget and ask for a copy.
- Ask questions about the budget and how it meets your community's priorities (e.g. number of early voting sites, number of weekend options, poll worker salaries, voter resources, etc.).
- Ask how you can help their work on the budget, including how the community can support more investment in this year's elections (e.g., types of testimony that would be most supportive, etc.)
- Ask how other ways the community can support elections (e.g. apply to be a poll worker, etc.)