

2023 Budget Supplemental Questions

Please answer the following questions in a word document and return to Council. The answers to these questions will be provided to council as supplemental information. While not part of the physical budget presentation to Council, departments should be prepared to answer questions Council may have on these supplemental questions. If you feel that you have provided an answer in a previous question, please don't repeat your answer, simply refer to the earlier question/answer.

Strategic Goals

1. Provide your 2023 strategic goals; how are they different from 2022? In what way, if at all, are your strategic changes demonstrated in your budget request?

The Auditor's Office strategic goals for 2023 include:

- a. Leveraging communication channels such as social media, website, outreach to build a network of community partners to educate and connect residents to Auditor's Office services
- b. Address space and facility security issues related to elections in order to be well prepared to support fair, accountable, accurate and secure 2024 presidential elections.

These strategic goals continue those identified for 2022 and recognize the challenges on the horizon with the 2024 Presidential Election, proactively seeking to prepare for these challenges.

The Auditor's Office 2023 budget reflects these priorities with continued funding of office staff and the inclusion of a priority package for elections space remodel.

National, state and local landscape:

1. What are the federal, state and local issues facing your work? What risks or opportunities does that create for you in 2023 and beyond? What is your plan to leverage the opportunity or mitigate the risk? What support do you need?

At the federal, state and local level there continues to be focus on the integrity of the elections process and the spread of mis/dis/mal information about elections, all which raise safety concerns for voters and staff during critical election times.

We have the unique opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to fair, accountable, accurate, and safe elections by recognizing and planning for our 2024 Presidential election year needs. This includes the funding and support of an election space remodel to ensure we have secure, safe facilities for voters to receive and cast ballots and for election workers to process and count votes.

While the elections space remodel is our most important need for which we need support, we will also need to ensure we are supporting and funding communication and outreach efforts in our budget. We have a modest ask to support this work.

2. What, if any, new mandates do you have impacting your work? Are they funded or unfunded? What is the plan for accomplishing the work?

There are currently no significant, new mandates.

Programs

1. List programs, projects and services within your department funded through federal COVID/ARPA funds. What, if any, of those programs are you recommending ongoing funding for and what is the source of ongoing funding?

We have no programs funded by ARPA funds.

2. What new programs are you launching for 2023? What need or efficiency is that new program addressing? How is that program funded for sustainability? What metrics are in place to determine effectiveness?

We will be launching a project to import and index into our recording system recorded documents from 1976 and earlier. Recorded documents are important in documenting a person's ownership or interest in a property. Recorded documents also preserve our community history.

This project will be a multi-year project and will be fully funded by our Recording O&M fund, with no general fund expenditures. The Recording O&M fund is supported by a portion of the fee charged when a document is recorded and is earmarked in state law for specific document preservation activities.

3. If different than #2, what are your areas of significant investment? What are you not doing because of that investment?

As mentioned above, our major investment area is our election space remodel. The funding for this project comes from a variety of non-general fund sources, including roughly \$500,000 from a HAVA grant secured by the Auditor's Office that will pay for election security-related items and the \$1.5 million from our election equipment reserve fund.

Internal Operations

1. What is your department doing to streamline processes or deliver services in a new way? How do your budget allocation requests play into these innovations? Are there ways which a different budget approach, e.g. several departments sharing a resource, could achieve the same or better results in a more cost-effective way?

For 2023, our major request is to support the elections space remodel. This is critical to improving operational efficiencies and enhancing security of operations. Once completed, we will be able to consolidate our election operations to one location, eliminating excessive movement of ballots and materials between buildings, floors and workspaces and providing a consistent location for the voting public to access our services. This consolidation of elections spaces will eliminate the need to build-out a Presidential Election Processing Center every four years.

2. What, if any, hiring challenges are you experiencing? How is that affecting your level of service or internal operations? How are you mitigating those operational challenges and/or what is your plan for recruitment?

We have found great candidates recently and feel lucky that we have not been negatively impacted by the tight market so far. We have experienced more vacancies than usual, but these have mostly been due to retirements and internal promotional opportunities. While these vacancies have impacted our operations, we have been able to prioritize essential services and minimize the impact to our customers and the community.

For the first time we will be participating in the job fair on October 26 for government agencies, recruiting for Animal Control Officer candidates. We have also launched a LinkedIn account to be able to promote our vacancies.

3. Please provide a list of all vacant position titles, position codes, date vacated, and date first posted. This should be a separate page or spreadsheet attachment.

See attached spreadsheet.

4. What effect has the increase of inflation and/or supply chain issues had on your department? What, if any, services, or projects have you had to adjust to accommodate for this? (i.e. moving to outside contracted services, delaying of project starts and/or purchasing, redistribution of workload, etc.)

The elections space remodel project may be impacted by inflation and supply chain issues once the project gets started.

We have also experienced supply chain concerns associated with the printing of the local voters' pamphlet, envelope and ballot printing. Paper stock necessary for these supplies are at historically low levels based on shifts to other paper products to meet consumer demand. This is a nationwide situation and we are working closely with our vendors to mitigate the impacts by ordering far earlier than we have in the past.

Successes

1. Take this opportunity to share one significant success in your department over this past year. What made it a success?

We are pleased to have hired the Communications and Public Engagement Officer this year and appreciate the Executive and Council's support of this position in the 2022 budget.

We regularly communicate with more county residents than any other county department or office (elections, vehicle/vessel and business licensing, recording, marriage licenses, pet licenses and animal complaints). In addition, the current mal/dis/mis information campaigns occurring throughout the country relating to elections requires our office to respond appropriately and ensure that we are publishing correct, professional information.

We have already improved our outreach by establishing our own Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts. We will be improving our website and focusing on all outwardly facing communications in the coming year.

The recruitment process was successful due to the support and assistance from the current county communications professionals in the Executive's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Airport, and Public Works as well as communications professionals from other counties.