

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Hon. Corey Johnson
Speaker of the Council

Hon. Fernando Cabrera
Chair, Committee on Governmental Operations



Report of the Finance Division on the
Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Plan and the
Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Mayor's Management Report for the
Board of Elections

March 20, 2020

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The Board of Elections Overview

The Board of Elections (BOE) conducts, as specified by State law, all elections within the City of New York. The BOE is an administrative body of ten Commissioners, two from each borough upon recommendation by both political parties and then appointed by the City Council for a term of four years. The Board has a central office and five borough offices.

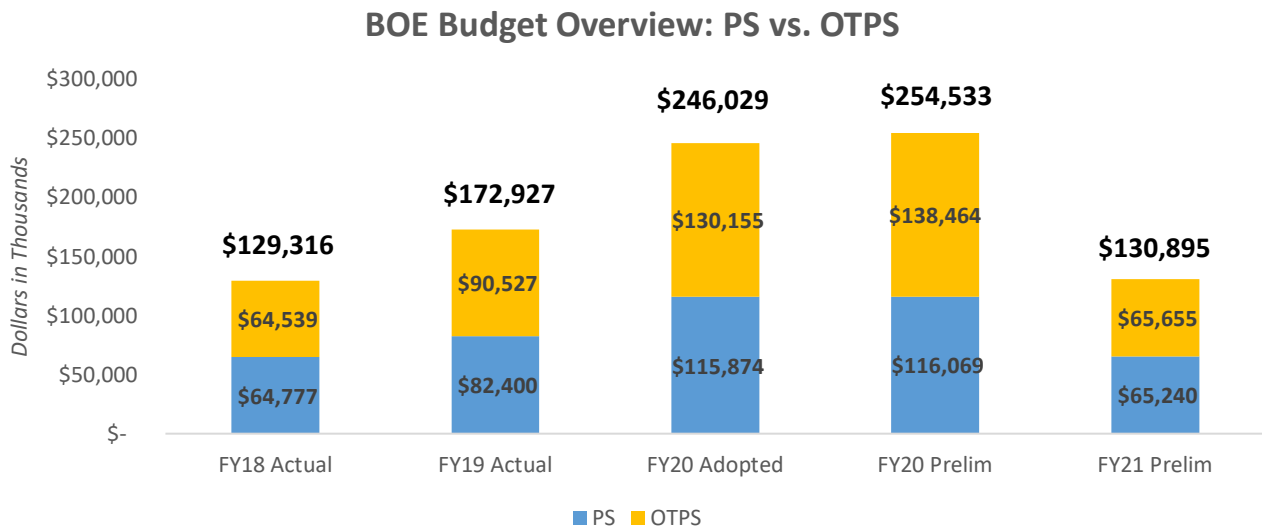
BOE’s activities include:

- Administering all elections within the City of New York;
- Receiving and examining candidates’ petitions;
- Registering voters either by mail or on specified registration days;
- Keeping current the City’s voter registration lists; and
- Holding and keeping minutes of all of the Commissioners’ meetings.

Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget Highlights

The Board of Election’s Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget totals \$130.9 million, including \$65.2 million in Personal Services (PS) funding to support 517 full-time positions. The entirety of BOE’s budget is financed by City tax-levy funding. The Board’s budget is subdivided into two Units of Appropriation (U/As), which include Personal Services and Other than Personal Services (OTPS).¹

Figure 1



In the Preliminary Plan, funding for Fiscal 2021 is substantially lower than its Fiscal 2020 budget, as significant additional funding is expected to be added to the Board’s budget in the Fiscal 2021 Executive and Adopted Plans, primarily pertaining to funds dedicated to Early Voting, after the Board further identifies its budgetary needs.

¹ Units of Appropriation are the subdivisions of the City Expense Budget that the City Council votes upon.

Highlights of BOE's Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget

- **No New Needs.** Since Adoption of the Fiscal 2020 Budget, no new needs have been added to the Board's budget.
- **Other Adjustments.** Since Adoption of the Fiscal 2020 Budget, the Board has realized an increase of \$8.5 million in State funding to its Fiscal 2020 Budget as grants/reimbursements for costs related to the implementation of Early Voting.
- **Miscellaneous Revenue.** The Financial Plan projects that the Board of Elections will generate miscellaneous revenue totaling \$116,000 in Fiscal 2021, including \$60,000 from the sales of maps and voter lists.
- **Contract Budget.** The Board of Election's Fiscal 2021 Contract Budget totals \$29.4 million for 37 contracts, which accounts for 44.7 percent of the Board's OTPS Budget.
- **Preliminary Mayor's Management Report (PMMR) Highlights.** Notable performance metrics reported by the Board of Elections in the Fiscal 2020 PMMR are outlined below
 - ✓ Poll worker attendance on Election Day totaled 91.8 percent in Fiscal 2019, an increase of four percent since Fiscal 2018, which falls within this indicator's historic range.
 - ✓ Voter complaints regarding poll workers totaled 708 in Fiscal 2019, an increase of 248 complaints since Fiscal 2018.
 - ✓ The number of BOE interpreters deployed on Election Day for Fiscal 2019 totaled 2,128, an increase of 76 interpreters deployed since Fiscal 2018, with the majority being allocated in Brooklyn.

Financial Plan Summary

Table 1

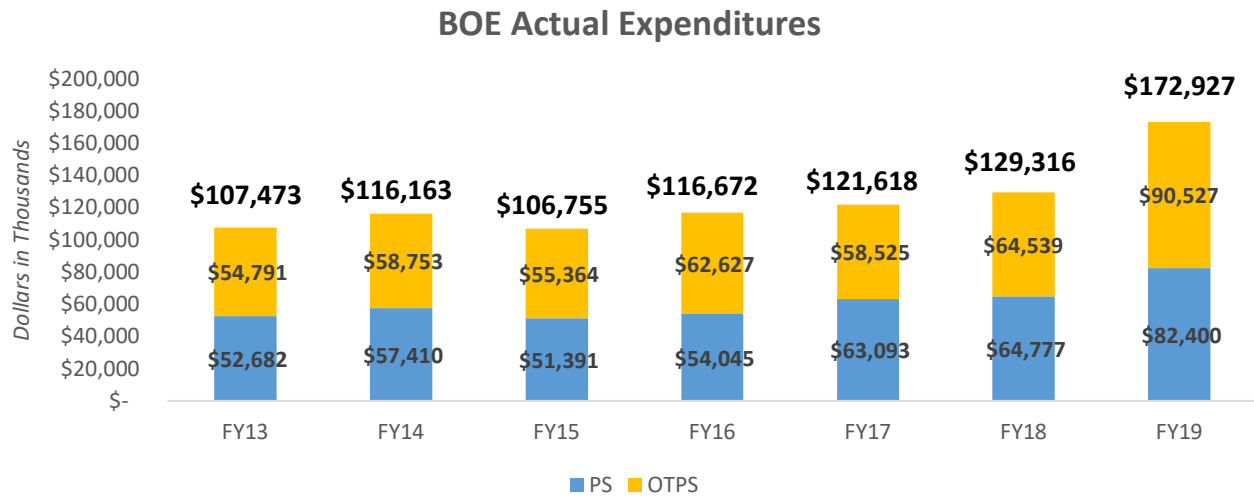
BOE Financial Summary						
	FY18	FY19	FY20	Preliminary Plan		*Difference
<i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Actual	Actual	Adopted	FY20	FY21	2020-2021
Personal Services						
Additional Gross Pay	\$470	\$564	\$89	\$89	\$89	\$0
Full-Time Salaried	28,020	29,999	32,331	32,326	30,155	(2,176)
Unsalariated & Other Salaried	28,844	40,059	70,193	70,193	25,498	(44,695)
Overtime - Civilian	7,229	11,540	12,091	12,091	8,328	3,763)
P.S. Other	214	238	1,170	1,370	1,170	0
SUBTOTAL	\$64,777	\$82,400	\$115,874	\$116,069	\$65,240	(\$50,634)
Other Than Personal Services						
Contractual Services	\$30,372	\$50,278	\$80,540	\$53,819	\$29,357	(51,183)
Fixed & Misc. Charges	55	33	0	3	0	0
Other Services & Charges	29,089	31,613	33,839	38,863	28,289	(5,550)
Property & Equipment	2,123	3,787	7,576	37,369	4,009	(3,567)
Supplies & Materials	2,900	4,816	8,200	8,410	4,000	(4,200)
SUBTOTAL	\$64,539	\$90,527	\$130,155	\$138,464	\$65,655	(\$64,500)
TOTAL	\$129,316	\$172,927	\$246,029	\$254,533	\$130,895	(\$115,134)
Funding						
City Funds			\$246,029	\$246,029	\$130,895	(115,134)
State Funds			\$0	\$8,504	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$129,316	\$172,927	\$246,029	\$254,533	\$130,895	(\$115,134)
Budgeted Headcount						
Full-Time Positions - Civilian	537	544	517	517	517	0

*The difference of Fiscal 2020 Adopted Budget compared to Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget

The Board of Election's Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget totals \$130.9 million, including \$65.2 million in PS funding to support 517 full-time positions. The Board's Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget is \$115.1 million less than its Fiscal 2020 Adopted Budget of \$246 million. This decrease is primarily attributed to the fact that \$75 million for Early Voting, included in the Fiscal 2020 Budget, has yet to be included in the Board's Fiscal 2021 Budget. It is expected that funding associated with Early Voting would be included in the Fiscal 2021 Executive Plan. The Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget does not include funding for financial actions that were included in the Fiscal 2020 Executive Budget, such as \$21 million for the purchase of electronic poll books. It is unlikely that this funding will be added to the Board's Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget, since electronic poll books have a ten-year lifespan and will not need to be replaced in the near future. Lastly, the Board's Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Plan includes an increase in State funding, totaling \$8.5 million. This funding is State reimbursements for costs incurred by the City Board of Elections during Early Voting, including a \$5 million reimbursement for equipment purchased (e.g. electronic poll books) and the remaining amount to cover for additional technological enhancements the City Board of Elections had to undertake in preparation for the implementation of Early Voting. These enhancements include additional Wi-Fi hotspots and electrical upgrades, among other enhancements. For additional information regarding budgetary actions that have occurred since the Fiscal 2020 Adopted Budget, please refer to Appendix A.

Actual Expenditures

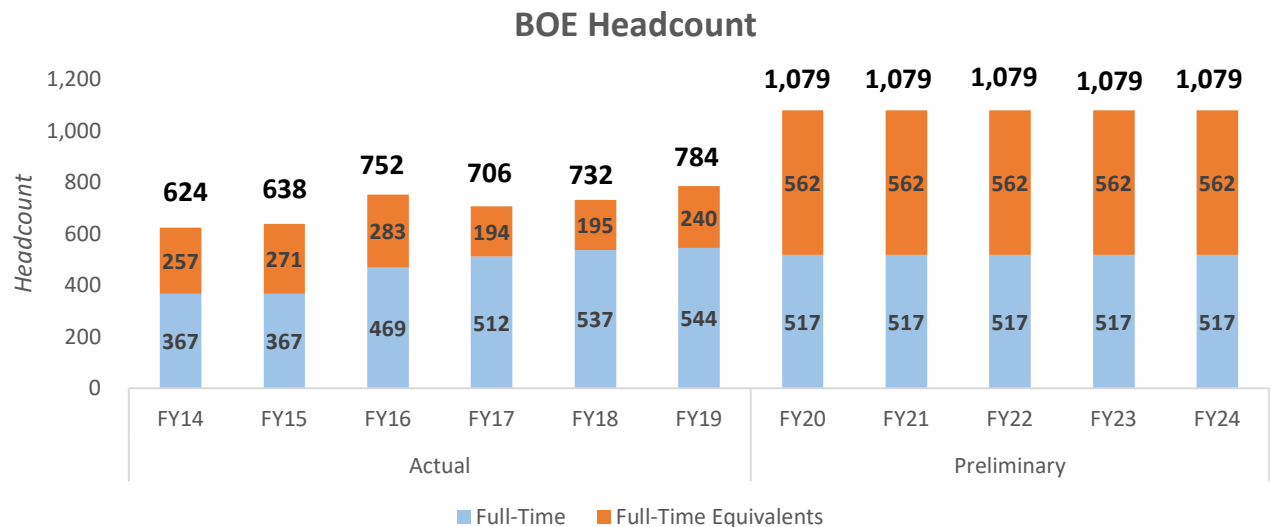
Figure 2



Since Fiscal 2013, the Board of Election’s annual actual expenditures have averaged \$124.4 million, peaking at \$172.9 million in Fiscal 2019. The Board’s expenditures are expected to increase significantly in the coming fiscal years, primarily due to the implementation of Early Voting. BOE’s Fiscal 2021 Budget is expected to increase in the Executive and Adopted Plans as additional BOE needs are identified and included in the budget.

Headcount

Figure 3



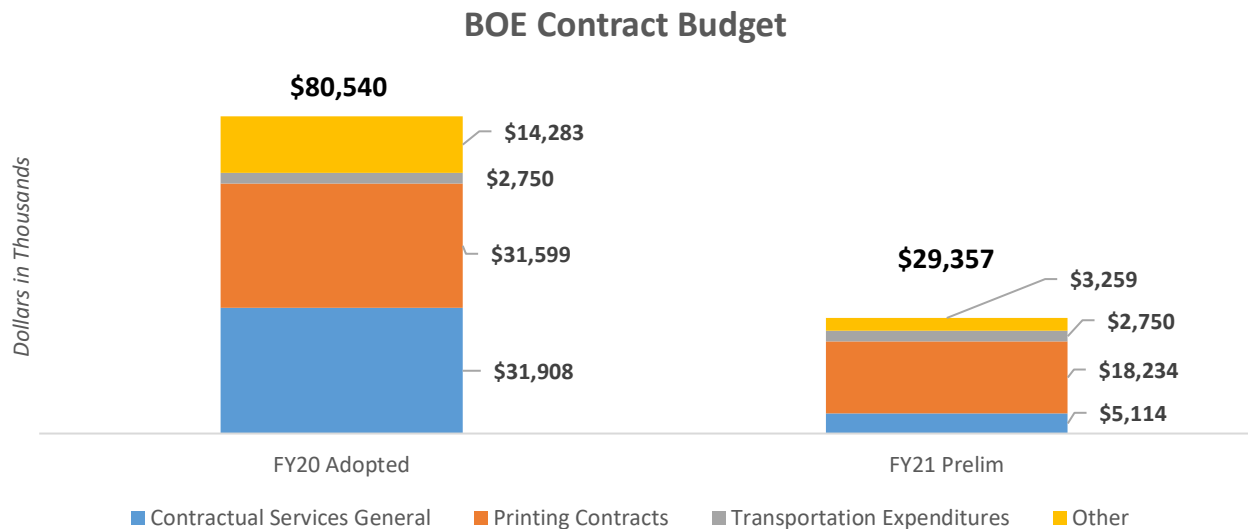
In the Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Plan, the Board of Election’s Fiscal 2021 PS Budget includes \$65.2 million to support 517 full-time positions and 562 full-time equivalent positions. As of December 2019, the Board actually employs 665 full-time positions and 172 full-time equivalent positions. While the Board has a full-time equivalent vacancy rate of approximately 69 percent, its full-time headcount is 148 positions over budgeted headcount. The number of actual full-time positions at BOE has risen over the past fiscal years, while actual full-time equivalent positions have fallen. This represents a

conversion of part-time positions to full-time positions. Out of the total 1,079 budgeted positions for Fiscal 2020, the Board still has a net vacancy rate of 22.4 percent. It should be noted that these headcount figures do not include the poll workers that work poll sites on election days, which total over 30,000. For additional information regarding the Board of Election’s headcount, please refer to Appendix B.

Contract Budget

The New York City Charter mandates the preparation of a Contract Budget to identify expenditures for contractual services, which are defined as any technical, consultant or personnel services provided to the City by means of a contract. The Contract Budget is a subset of the OTPS portion of the City’s Expense Budget. The Administration prepares a Contract Budget twice each fiscal year. The Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Contract Budget totals \$16.9 billion for procurement expenditures across all agencies.

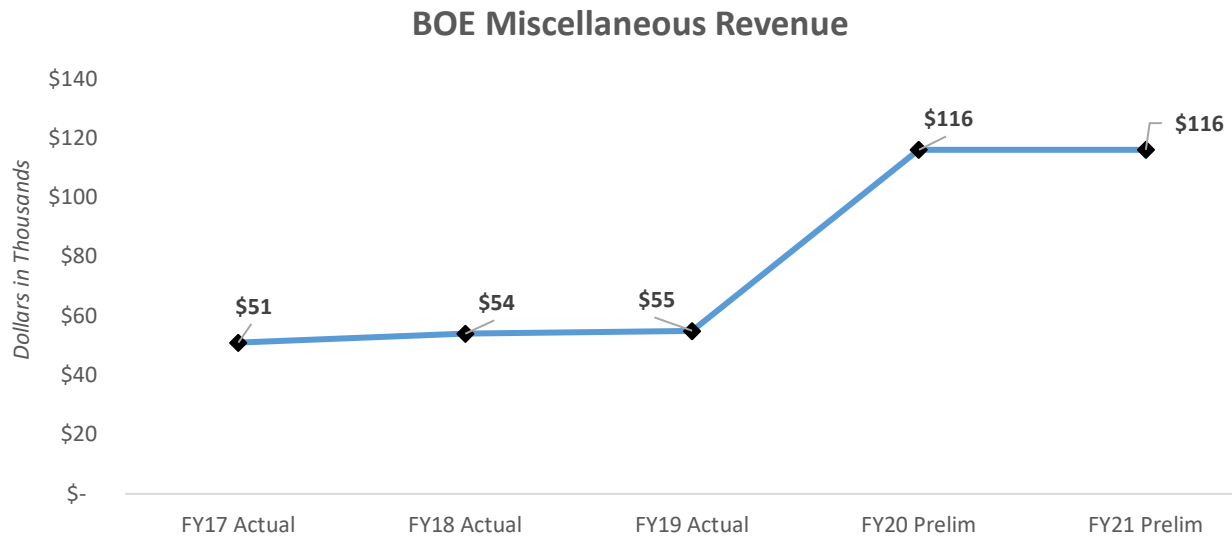
Figure 4



The Board of Election’s Fiscal 2021 Contract Budget totals \$29.4 million for 37 contracts, accounting for 44.7 percent of the Department’s OTPS budget. Printing Contracts comprise 62.1 percent of the Board’s total Contract Budget for Fiscal 2021, representing the substantial outlays the Board spends on printing voter ballots, voter registration forms, and other documents essential to the voting process. The Board’s Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Contract Budget is \$51.2 million less than its Fiscal 2020 Adopted Budget, primarily due to \$21 million that was included in the Department’s Fiscal 2020 budget during the Fiscal 2020 Executive Budget that has not been included in the Board’s Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Budget for the purchase of electronic poll books to be used for Early Voting. According to the BOE, given that the electronic poll books have a live span of approximately 10 years, it is unlikely to be included in the Board’s Fiscal 2021 budget. However, it is likely that the Board’s Fiscal 2021 Contract Budget will increase over the course of the fiscal year as new needs are identified and as it pays software contracts for the use of its electronic poll books. For additional information regarding the Board of Election’s Contract Budget, please refer to Appendix C.

Miscellaneous Revenue

Figure 5



The Board of Elections generates a small amount of miscellaneous revenue from the sale of maps and voter lists, performing voter contribution and expenditure searches, and printing photocopies of documents. In Fiscal 2019, \$55,000 was generated from the provision of these services. These services are expected to generate \$116,000 in both Fiscal 2020 and Fiscal 2021. For additional information regarding the Board of Election’s miscellaneous revenue streams, please refer to Appendix D.

Capital Program

The Board of Election’s Modernization Project is included in the Fiscal 2020 – 2024 Capital Commitment Plan, and is located in the Public Buildings Program Area, which is managed by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). The BOE Modernization Project includes \$9.8 million in unallocated capital appropriations between Fiscal 2021 – 2024 for unspecified BOE projects. In Fiscal 2020, \$898,000 is allocated for numerous modernization projects at BOE, including \$260,000 for the renovations of bathrooms at its main office at 345 Adams Street, and \$311,000 for the synchronization with the City’s Financial Management System (FMS), phone bank upgrades, and funding for a generator connection.

Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report (PMMR)

As an independent agency, the Board is not required to provide performance measurements for the PMMR. The data in the Fiscal 2020 PMMR is collected from the Board’s annual report. Neither four-month actual data nor Fiscal 2020 and Fiscal 2021 targets are provided.

Figure 6

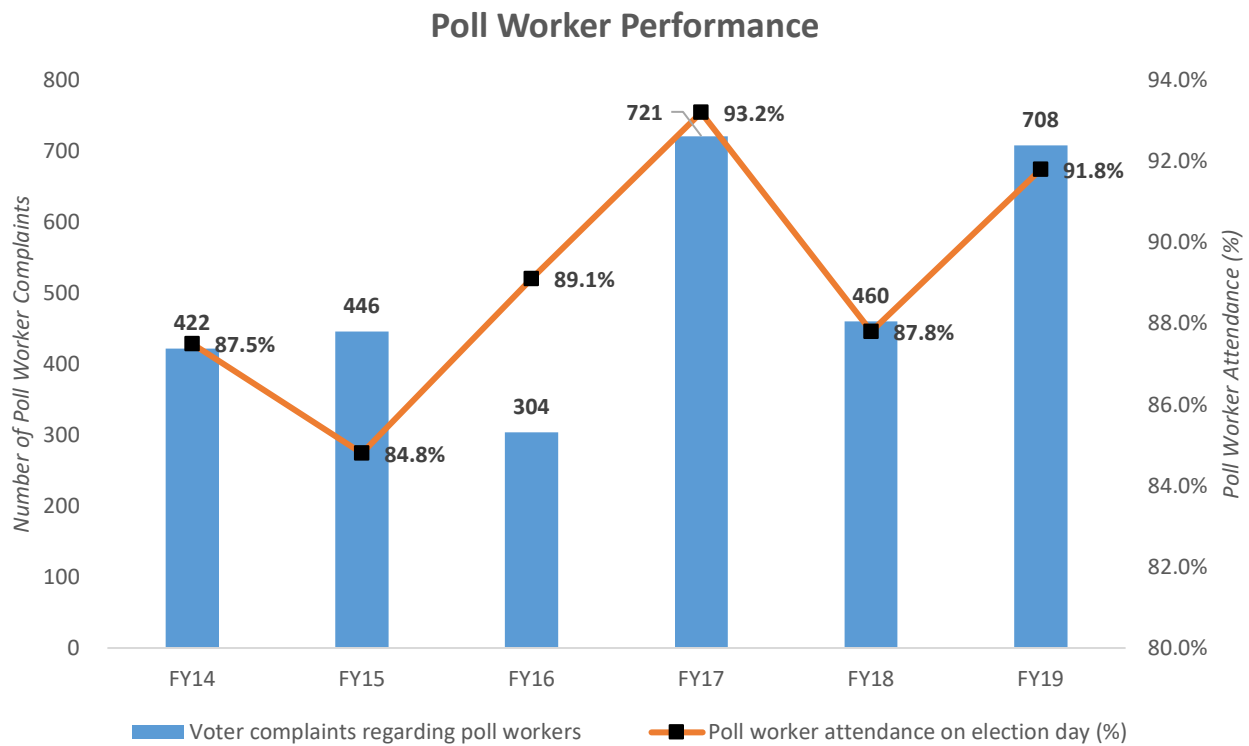


Figure 6 above highlights BOE poll worker performance data from the Fiscal 2020 PMMR. In recent years, the BOE has made it a priority to increase poll worker participation in NYC elections, as well as improve their performance. The BOE has long argued that doing so has been difficult due to low poll worker salaries.² However, this issue has been at least partially addressed, with Mayor de Blasio signing an Executive Order to increase poll workers’ and poll worker coordinators’ salaries by \$50, from \$200 to \$250 for poll workers and from \$300 to \$350 for poll worker coordinators that began in the 2018 November General Election. For additional information regarding the Board of Election’s Fiscal 2020 PMMR indicators, please refer to Appendix E.

New York State and Local Actions

New York State Election Proposals and Reforms

In the New York State Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo announced his intention to implement a number of election proposals and reforms that may have an impact on the electoral process in New York City.

1. **Automatic Manual Recounts.** The Governor will introduce legislation establishing statewide standards for when automatic ballot recounts are triggered and the process for how recounts are handled. Automatic manual recounts for statewide elections will be held if the margin of victory is 0.2 percent of all votes cast, while automatic recounts for all other elections will be held when the margin of victory is 0.5 percent of all votes cast. Although the NYC Board of

² Since 2001, poll workers have been paid \$200 per day, while poll worker coordinators have been paid \$300 per day. Raising poll worker salaries can only be done through a Mayoral Executive Order or through the NY State Legislature.

Elections has its own framework for determining close elections and triggering manual recounts, the NYC BOE would abide by the new requirements in the Governors legislation.

2. **Implementing a System of Automatic Voter Registration.** The NY State Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget includes \$16 million in Fiscal 2021 and \$7.7 million in Fiscal 2022 in capital funds to establish an online voter registration system, which would be made available online on the State Board of Elections website.
3. **Election Security Rapid Response Team.** The Governor will direct the creation of a cyber-security task force, consisting of staff from multiple state agencies to support cyber security work ahead of the 2020 elections. The Governor will direct relevant state agencies to work with the State Board of Elections to establish in advance of the 2020 elections a comprehensive plan that is ready to be executed immediately if a cyber-attack should jeopardize the timely and accurate counting and reporting of all eligible ballots.
4. **Ranked Choice Voting.** Although not included in the State's Fiscal 2021 Executive Budget, NYC voters voted in favor of the introduction of ranked choice voting, as per the ballot's approval in the 2019 General Election. Ranked choice voting will give voters the choice of ranking up to five candidates in primary and special elections for Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President and City Council beginning in January 2021. In this scenario, a candidate who receives a majority of first-choice votes would win, and if there is no majority winner, the last place candidate would be eliminated and any voter who had that candidate as their top choice would have their vote transferred to their next choice. This process would repeat until only two candidates remain, and the candidate with the most votes would be the winner. This proposal would eliminate the separate run-off primary elections for Mayor, Public Advocate, and Comptroller.

Language Assistance Program

The BOE currently offers interpretation services in Spanish, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Korean, Bengali, Punjabi, and Hindi in neighborhoods with large numbers of speakers in those languages. However, interpretation services in some of the City's most commonly spoken languages, including Russian, Haitian-Creole, Yiddish, Polish, and Italian are not offered.

Due to the Mayor's Charter Commission Ballot Proposal 2 having been passed in the 2018 November General Election, the City created the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) to provide poll site interpretation services for elections in the City. Per the City's Charter, the CEC would develop a language access program at poll sites in consultation with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and the Department of City Planning (DCP). To the extent applicable, the Commission would consult and coordinate with the Board of Elections in the development and implementation of the program established.

In Fiscal 2019, pursuant to an agreement with the City Council, MOIA launched a supplementary program to provide poll-site interpretation services in languages not covered by the BOE. According to the Fiscal 2020 Adopted Budget, \$640,000 was allocated for the CEC to provide funding for interpretation services for all elections held in Fiscal 2020, which includes the November 2019 General Election and the April 2020 Presidential Primaries.

During the November 2019 General Election, MOIA utilized a translation and interpreter services company, named "Thebigword", which screened and hired interpreters that were used during the General Election. According to MOIA, over 200 interpreters were used at over 100 sites, offering

translation services at 85 poll sites in Brooklyn, 14 in Queens, and one in Staten Island. Furthermore, MOIA stated that it spent approximately \$585,200 to provide interpretation services at these poll sites during the November 2019 General Election. Additionally, MOIA stated that it did not use interpretation services during the Early Voting period, as it was analyzing information during the early voting period to determine the best days to provide these services at poll sites for future elections.

Appendices

A: Budget Actions in the November and the Preliminary Plans

<i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	FY20			FY21		
	City	Non-City	Total	City	Non-City	Total
BOE Budget as of the Adopted FY20 Budget	\$246,029	\$0	\$246,029	\$130,895	\$0	\$130,895
New Needs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Adjustments						
State Voting Equipment Grant	0	5,068	5,068	0	0	0
FY20 Early Vote	0	3,436	\$3,436	0	0	0
Subtotal, Other Adjustments	\$0	\$8,504	\$8,504	\$0	\$0	0
TOTAL, All Changes	\$0	\$8,504	\$8,504	\$0	\$0	\$0
BOE Budget as of the Preliminary FY21 Budget	\$246,029	\$8,504	\$254,533	\$130,895	\$0	\$130,895

B: BOE Headcount

	Actual - Year End						Budgeted - FY21 Prelim				
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Full-Time	367	367	469	512	537	544	517	517	517	517	517
Full-Time Equivalent	257	271	283	194	195	240	562	562	562	562	562
Total	624	638	752	706	732	784	1,079	1,079	1,079	1,079	1,079

D: BOE Miscellaneous Revenue

Board of Elections Miscellaneous Revenue - Fiscal 2021 Preliminary Plan					
BOE Miscellaneous Revenue Sources (\$ in Thousands)	Actuals			Planned	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Photocopies & Searches	\$27	\$32	\$35	\$55	\$55
Sales of Maps & Voter Lists	24	22	20	60	60
Minor Sales	-	-	-	1	1
Total	\$51	\$54	\$55	\$116	\$116

E: BOE Fiscal 2020 PMMR Indicators

Board of Elections Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY19	FY20
Voter turnout - general election (000)	2,760	1,166	2,138	*	*	NA	NA
Voter Registration forms processed	503,609	110,510	247,879	*	*	NA	NA
Total registered voters (000)	4,927	5,054	5,138	*	*	NA	NA
Total active voters (000)	4,447	4,596	4,613	*	*	NA	NA
Poll worker attendance on Election Day (%)	93.2%	87.8%	91.8%	*	*	NA	NA
Voter complaints regarding poll workers	721	460	708	*	*	NA	NA
Voter complaints regarding poll workers - service	394	363	477	*	*	NA	NA
Voter complaints regarding poll workers - procedure	327	97	231	*	*	NA	NA
Voter equipment replacement rate - ballot scanners (%)	0.9%	0.0%	1.4%	*	*	NA	NA
Voter equipment replacement rate - ballot marking devices (%)	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%	*	*	NA	NA
Precision of unofficial election results (%)	1.1%	0.5%	2.7%	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day	2,329	2,052	2,128	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day - Bronx	176	158	158	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day - Brooklyn	670	588	546	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day - Queens	910	862	968	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day - Manhattan	529	404	411	*	*	NA	NA
Interpreters deployed on Election Day - Staten Island	44	40	45	*	*	NA	NA