



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

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CONNOR B. McCORMACK
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

May 23, 2002

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**PRIORITY UNMET NEEDS FOR FY 2002-03:
DEPARTMENT OF REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK**

The Department of Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) is submitting this request for critical unmet needs for election operations totaling \$8.6 million of which \$3.9 million is needed for on-going election net County cost (NCC) funding and \$4.7 million has been identified for a necessary one-time funding augmentation as detailed below. For FY 2002-03 the CAO has proposed a \$2.2 million reduction in our budget from last year's appropriation at a time when election costs are escalating exponentially (the prime example is the soaring cost of sample ballot printing which for the March 2002 election was \$4.1 million, which is \$2.3 million more than was budgeted and \$3 million more than the comparable cost for the March 2000 Primary Election due to the combined effects of redistricting and the change from an Open to a Modified Closed Primary format, as described more fully below). The unmet priority needs delineated below affect all five supervisorial districts.

NCC Request: \$3.9 Million to Fund Escalating Election Costs

We are requesting \$3.9 million in permanent election funding in support of the escalating costs of conducting elections in a technologically challenging and changing environment. Recent state legislative changes include 1) truncating the voter registration deadline by two weeks from 29 days to 15 days prior to each election. Precinct voter lists must be printed 19 days prior to the election to complete distribution of election supplies for the County's 5,000 voting precincts, thereby necessitating preparation and mailing of thousands of supplemental voters' lists and additional contact with precinct workers; 2) the first-ever Modified Closed Primary format, which replaced the popular Open Primary rules, negatively impacting poll worker recruitment and retention and confusing poll workers and voters alike; and 3) the decennial redistricting of all legislative districts without coordination of various boundary lines which tripled the number of unique ballot combinations that need to be printed for sample ballot booklets. This resulted in soaring printing costs that will continue for the next 10 years. The following funds are needed to address these structural changes:

- \$982,000 for programs and staff to improve the conduct of elections and avoid recurrence of problems experienced in the March 5, 2002 Primary Election that were identified in the RR/CC's April 9th report entitled *Primary Elections: Problems, Solutions and Resources Needed for Improvement*. This report was prepared in response to your Board's motion of March 12th that specifically requested identification of additional financial resources needed to prevent a repeat of the problems experienced with the March 5th election. The \$982,000 consists of \$225,000 to institute a Poll Inspector Recruiting Bonus Program to combat severe pollworker recruitment and retention problems; \$125,000 to increase the Polling Place Rental Stipend from \$25 to \$50 per election to match the amount paid by the 88 cities when conducting their elections; and \$632,000 for 18 positions to hire full-time staff to institutionalize the pilot pollworker recruiting programs needed to address the loss of many traditional pollworkers due to aging/retiring/dying. These pollworker program needs are fully described on pages 15-22 of the report. (Note: the report identified the amount of additional resources needed as \$1,812,000 [typographical error in report had figure at \$1,712,000]. However, we have amended that amount as follows: 1) a reduction of \$230,000 in recognition of the four (4) pollworker program positions your Board approved on the May 14, 2002 agenda as part of a completely Department-funded position exchange that resulted in no NCC increase. This was due to the permanent deletion of 64 vacant Departmental positions in exchange for 30 positions in response to needs identified in the management audit of the department released in November 2000, and 2) a shift in the request for \$600,000 to replace precinct election supply boxes to the category of one-time funding as listed below.
- \$2.2 million to restore the proposed CAO Departmental funding reduction. Without continuation of this funding, the \$2.3 million shortfall in the budgeted amount for sample ballot printing for the March 2002 Primary Election (described earlier in this letter), will continue for the November 2002 General Election **and** for all future elections during the next 10 years that the redistricted legislative boundary lines remain in effect.
- \$475,000 to fund 13 temporary Election Assistant items to accommodate the increased volumes in a variety of election operations such as the processing of an exploding number of State and County initiative petitions and the anticipated increase in candidate filings and related election operations if secession measures are placed on the November 2002 ballot as expected. The Department currently has 87 Election Assistant positions costing \$3.3 million. These funded items provide the ability to hire hundreds of temporary staff for varying amounts of time. For example, we may require one hundred temporary staff to work for two months conducting absent voting processing or hire one hundred staff for one-two months to perform petition signature verification. Funding for these 13 additional temporary positions (which does not increase the Department's 836 budgeted positions) was requested in our FY 2002-03 budget submission but was not included in the CAO recommendation.

- \$222,000 to pay for increased election postal costs for the November 2002 General Election due to the upcoming postal rate increase effective June 30, 2002 (this postal increase was announced after our departmental budget request was submitted).

One-Time Costs: \$4.7 Million for Election Projects

The Department has identified a need for a one-time \$4.7 million funding augmentation in support of the following:

- \$4.0 million to purchase equipment needed for a transitional paper-based (optical scan) replacement voting system. Last month's final order by Federal Judge Stephen Wilson accelerated the de-certification of the County's Votomatic punch card voting system making it illegal to use punch card voting beginning with the March 2004 Primary Election. As that election is less than 22 months away and the estimated cost of \$100 million is not currently available at the federal, state or local level to purchase/install Countywide a touch screen voting system, the County will require a transitional voting system. Converting to an interim optical scan single card system will require retooling of 30,000 existing Votomatic punch card devices and reconfiguration of punch card tally readers. Our intention is to have this interim system implemented by the off-year November 2003 election as it would be unwise to inaugurate any new voting system for the first time in a high-profile Countywide election such as the March 2004 Presidential Primary election. Therefore, the estimated \$4 million replacement cost must be incurred in the upcoming fiscal year to be ready for conduct of the November 2003 election. A portion of the estimated \$4 million cost could possibly be reimbursable through Proposition 41 bond funds if it is determined that an interim replacement system is eligible for partial funding through bonds that will be issued in the future. As yet, the five commissioners who will make decisions regarding Proposition 41 funding dispersal have not been appointed to set criteria for application of funds.
- \$600,000 to replace 5,000 precinct election supply boxes that are 30 years old and are now required to hold 54 pounds of election supplies. As demonstrated at the March 12, 2002 Board meeting, there is a critical need to replace these supply boxes with a new design on wheels to allow pollworkers to get the supplies from their vehicles into the polling places election morning (many veteran pollworkers told us they quit because they can no longer lift the heavy supply box). New mobile supply boxes must be procured at the onset of FY 2002-03 in order to be produced and delivered in time for use in the November 2002 General Election and all future elections.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
May 23, 2002
Page 4

- \$100,000 to hire specialty short-term consultants to manage priority election assignments for the November 2002 General Election to avoid recurrence of problems experienced during the March 2002 Primary Election. The need for short-term consultants is especially critical due to this month's unexpected resignation of the Division Manager responsible for pollworker recruitment and election equipment assembly and delivery as well as the 18-month on-going medical absence of another Division Manager responsible for candidate filing, campaign disclosure and election information services to the public. There is insufficient time to recruit, advertise, interview, hire and train a replacement Polls Division Manager when the November election is now less than six months away and the long-term absence of the other Division Manager is greatly impeding operations and preparation for the November election. This funding will allow us to obtain consulting assistance beginning July 1 to coordinate and manage these critical election operational areas.

We recognize the extremely difficult, competing funding needs your Board is faced with as you finalize decisions regarding the County's 2002-03 budget. We would not be requesting priority consideration if these RR/CC programs and positions were not critically needed to properly conduct upcoming elections.

Respectfully submitted,

CONNOR B. McCORMACK
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Fs:kc

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
2002-03 Priority Unmet Needs

	Gross Appropriation		Revenue/IFT		Net County Cost	Budgeted Positions
<u>On-going Funding:</u>						
1.	\$ 982,000		\$ --		\$ 982,000	18
	<u>Pollworker/Polling Location Programs:</u> Reflects on-going funding to improve the conduct of elections and avoid recurrence of problems experienced in the March 5, 2002 Primary Election. Includes funding for pollworker staffing, polling inspector incentives, and polling location rent increases.					
2.	\$ 2,200,000		\$ --		\$ 2,200,000	--
	<u>Restore Election Services Funding:</u> Reflects permanent funding to restore a proposed CAO funding reduction.					
3.	\$ 475,000		\$ --		\$ 475,000	--
	<u>Temporary Election Positions:</u> Reflects an increase to fund 13 previously ordinance "No Count" temporary Election Assistant positions necessary to conduct various election operations.					
4.	\$ 222,000		\$ --		\$ 222,000	--
	<u>Postal Rate Increases:</u> Reflects an increase in permanent funding to supplement postal costs attributable to revised rates that will be effective June 30, 2002.					
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	Total On-going Funding:					
	\$ 3,879,000		\$ --		\$ 3,879,000	18
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<u>Priority One-Time Election Funding</u>						
5.	\$ 4,000,000		\$ --		\$ 4,000,000	--
	<u>Transitional Replacement Voting System:</u> Reflects a one-time increase in funding to purchase an optical scanning transitional replacement voting system to be in place for the March 2004 Presidential primary election deadline as required by the de-certification of the existing 35 year-old punch card voting system.					
6.	\$ 600,000		\$ --		\$ 600,000	--
	<u>Replacement of Election Supply Boxes:</u> Reflects a one-time increase in funding to replace our current inventory of inefficient, out-dated election supply boxes to be purchased in time for the November 2002 Gubernatorial General Election.					
7.	\$ 100,000		\$ --		\$ 100,000	--
	<u>Election Consultant Funding:</u> Reflects an increase in one-time funding to hire specialty short-term consultants to manage priority election assignments.					
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	Total One-Time Funding:					
	\$ 4,700,000		\$ --		\$ 4,700,000	--

Grand Total Funding:

\$ 8,579,000 \$ -- \$ 8,579,000 18