



NORTH CAROLINA

VOTE

State Board of Elections

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC 27611-7255

Phone: (919) 733-7173
Fax: (919) 715-0135

KIM WESTBROOK STRACH
Executive Director

NUMBERED MEMO 2016-06

TO: County Boards of Elections
FROM: Kim Strach, Executive Director
RE: **URGENT:** Budget Requests
DATE: March 30, 2016

Dear County Board Members and Directors:

In January 2015, my office issued Numbered Memo 2015-01 to provide an overview of requirements that may affect your county budgets and scheduling. We are currently in the process of certifying the March 15 primary election, planning for the June primary, and looking forward to what will likely be a high-turnout general election. Ensuring that county boards of elections are appropriately funded is of critical importance.

I realize you are already involved in the budget process, but want to make sure your county commissioners and managers know that the State Board of Elections supports your efforts to secure funding necessary to provide fair, efficient, and secure elections. The filing period for the June 7th primaries closed on Friday, March 25. There were four candidates who filed for Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Therefore, we will have a statewide primary that will require all precincts in North Carolina to be open.

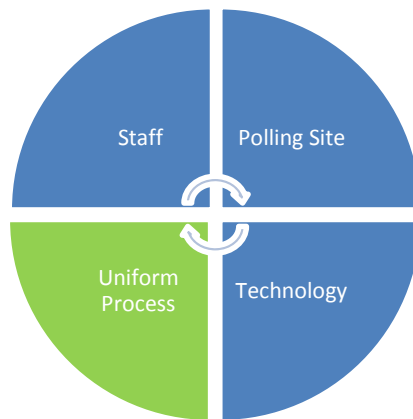
Polling Site Resources

We had record-breaking turnout for the March 15 primary election. As a result, some counties experienced long lines on Election Day and the latter days of one-stop early voting. It is almost a certainty that turnout will be substantially higher for the general election, perhaps double the turnout of the March primary. Participation in the 2008 general election increased 104% over the 2008 primary; in 2012, the increase was 108%. If the trend holds, more than 4.6 million voters will turn out in November – a record for the state.

One of the most effective ways to address long lines is to ensure your polling sites are equipped for anticipated traffic. Many county boards have indicated that they lack the ability to allocate additional resources to polling sites, such as additional staff, laptops, and printers for use at the

required stations. It may be impossible to eliminate lines completely, especially if a large number of voters arrive at the same time so that staffing that is usually sufficient for that period is unable to process all voters without a queue. However, you should make every effort to pinpoint those times of heavy activity so that you can direct available resources to accommodate voters as efficiently as possible. We are evaluating data from the recent primary in an effort to assist you with predicting traffic for the general election.

Despite the size or resources of a county, the **formula for ensuring optimal preparation is the same**. We will continue to apply the **uniform administrative process detailed in the station guides** at every polling site statewide. You must ensure that: 1) **each of your polling sites** is able to accommodate the highest number of voters anticipated; 2) you have sufficient **staff** to serve the maximum number of voters possible and 3) the appropriate **technology** (and amount of that technology) is implemented.



Given the fact that counties are already making budgetary decisions, we ask that you let your governing bodies know that we are ready to provide justifications that they may need from you to ensure your county's voting sites are equipped and ready for November.

One-Stop Early Voting Hours Matching

The 2016 election year will require counties to offer the same number of cumulative hours that were offered in the 2012 General Election.

Any election that requires minimum matching hours provides the opportunity for a unanimous county board of elections to request a reduction in the number of cumulative one-stop hours. State Board of Elections members must also **unanimously agree** to approve such county board reduction requests. However, at least one State Board member wishes to convey that the member **will not support any reductions to the hours requirement for the general election** unless the request is justified by exigent circumstances. The member has also stated that budgetary

constraints will not be accepted as an exigent circumstance. Unless all five members of the State Board agree, no reduction will be granted. This means all 100 county boards of election are expected to meet or exceed the number of hours that they were open for one-stop early voting for the 2012 general election. Each county’s required hours are contained in **Attachment One** of this Numbered Memo.

Remember, each one-stop early voting site must have two election judges who are not affiliated with the same political party. Additionally, these election judges may **not** work the check-in station and make the initial determination of reasonable resemblance. This requirement is set by statute and applies to all one-stop early voting sites across North Carolina.

One-Stop Early Voting and Election Day personnel

Adequate funding for staff is essential to ensure that you are able to effectively and efficiently manage the voters presenting to one-stop and Election Day sites. As discussed earlier, increased wait times can result if you do not have enough staff in the voting site to serve the number of voters that are likely to appear. All required stations must be fully operational and functional. The following chart provides the bare minimum of required staffing for one-stop early voting sites and Election Day polling places. Most voting sites will have and should have additional staff at each station.

Bare Minimum Number of Election Officials

Check-In Station	One-Stop Early Voting Sites	Election Day Precincts
Check-In Station	1	1
Help Station	1	1
Ballot Station	1	1
Judges for Reasonable Resemblance	2	3
Greeter	optional but recommended	optional but recommended
TOTAL	5	6

Please make sure that your county government officials understand that these are **the minimum** requirements and recognize that the staffing needs in many voting sites will far exceed these numbers.

Preliminary analysis indicates that additional election officials at Check-In and Help stations within voting sites can alleviate lengthy wait times. We are, however, working to provide more specific information from analysis of historical data as well as data from the March 15 primary.

Meanwhile, it is crucial that county government officials understand the need to allocate funding for additional staff for the general election this November.

Additionally, as discussed in the next section, technological needs are an essential budgetary focus for the promotion of greater efficiency at voting sites.

Electronic Poll Books

More than half of counties use electronic poll books on Election Day. One of our goals is to have electronic poll books in every polling place in North Carolina in the near future. Statewide use of this technology would streamline the voting process and greatly increase the efficiency of functions required of county staff in the administration of elections.

However, as you know, implementation of the uniform use of electronic poll books requires more than the purchase of laptops and printers (the expense for which can seem prohibitive for counties with a high number of precincts or limited resources). North Carolina's 100 counties vary greatly in population and resources; different challenges and needs must be addressed before all counties are in the position to employ this technology during both one-stop early voting and on Election Day. Costs will include not just equipment, but hiring of staff and the appointment of precinct officials with expertise in its use. If a county funds additional laptops but not the additional staff (or vice versa), this need has not been met.

Your ability to fully articulate the need for both staff and technology when requesting funding is key.

Precinct Official Recruitment and Training

Beyond budget constraints, one of the greatest challenges many counties face is the recruitment of election officials to work during the election period. I have spoken with many county directors and board members who have had difficulties getting precinct official nominations from the political parties and who have encountered additional challenges in the effort to find qualified individuals to work during one-stop early voting and on Election Day. We appreciate the burden and will continue to assist as best as we are able, but you are strongly encouraged to begin these efforts early by working with local community groups, universities and community colleges, all of which can prove excellent sources of motivated poll workers.

Finally, you face the challenge of ensuring that every election official is properly and adequately trained. County government officials should understand that compensating election officials for extra time commitments will assist with both recruitment and retention.

Since every precinct will be open for the June 7th primary, all precinct officials must receive training in advance. We are working on additional opportunities to provide training for county board staff and all election officials in preparation for the November general election.

Litigation

A number of ongoing cases in state and federal court could affect upcoming elections, just as they have in the past. As always, we encourage county boards of elections to request contingency funds for unforeseen changes to the election process.

Commissioner's Duty to Fund the Elections

Fortunately, many county boards of elections enjoy a cooperative and constructive relationship with their county commissioners. At times, however, it is necessary that elections officials remind commissioners that statute requires that they “appropriate reasonable and adequate funds necessary for the legal functions of the county board,” (G.S. § 163-37), and that staffing decisions are appropriately left to the county board of elections. *See Graham County Board of Elections v. Graham County Board of Commissioners*, 212 N.C. App. 313 (2011). With so many legal requirements affecting the logistics of elections in this state, we encourage you to make every attempt to develop open lines of communication with your county government officials.

2012 GENERAL ELECTION ONE-STOP HOURS BY COUNTY

ALAMANCE	330	IREDELL	302	WILKES	193
ALEXANDER	123	JACKSON	464	WILSON	213
ALLEGHANY	123	JOHNSTON	444	YADKIN	113
ANSON	134.75	JONES	108	YANCEY	110
ASHE	129	LEE	236		
AVERY	108	LENOIR	443.5		
BEAUFORT	195	LINCOLN	320		
BERTIE	218.5	MACON	132		
BLADEN	298.5	MADISON	360		
BRUNSWICK	883.5	MARTIN	113		
BUNCOMBE	2146	MCDOWELL	342		
BURKE	336	MECKLENBURG	2742		
CABARRUS	240	MITCHELL	221		
CALDWELL	270	MONTGOMERY	107		
CAMDEN	115	MOORE	260		
CARTERET	380	NASH	277		
CASWELL	113	NEW HANOVER	580		
CATAWBA	273	NORTHAMPTON	318		
CHATHAM	387	ONslow	296		
CHEROKEE	136	ORANGE	528		
CHOWAN	113	PAMLICO	149		
CLAY	124.5	PASQUOTANK	113		
CLEVELAND	221	PENDER	577		
COLUMBUS	322.5	PERQUIMANS	113		
CRAVEN	548	PERSON	279.5		
CUMBERLAND	924	PITT	545		
CURRITUCK	113	POLK	282		
DARE	202.5	RANDOLPH	318		
DAVIDSON	405	RICHMOND	222		
DAVIE	254	ROBESON	348		
DUPLIN	100	ROCKINGHAM	258		
DURHAM	997.5	ROWAN	443		
EDGECOMBE	480	RUTHERFORD	287.5		
FORSYTH	1034	SAMPSON	311		
FRANKLIN	283	SCOTLAND	113		
GASTON	448	STANLY	252		
GATES	119	STOKES	239.5		
GRAHAM	111	SURRY	225.75		
GRANVILLE	240	SWAIN	200		
GREENE	122	TRANSYLVANIA	120		
GUILFORD	2364	TYRRELL	100		
HALIFAX	333	UNION	598		
HARNETT	189	VANCE	246		
HAYWOOD	213	WAKE	1658		
HENDERSON	372	WARREN	115.5		
HERTFORD	243.5	WASHINGTON	107		
HOKE	212	WATAUGA	216		
HYDE	107	WAYNE	474		