

FY 2025 Department Funding Request

Department/Program #	Department Name / Program	Priority #	Department Improvement Title
05001-0001	05001 - ELECTIONS/0001 - ADMIN	2	Pre-printing Sequence Numbers on Ballots

Budget Category, Preliminary Recommendation and Comments

PRELIMINARY Budget Department Category	PRELIMINARY Recommendation for Funding	Comments (if any)
B-Statute/Compliance/Obligated	Recommended	Per Election Advisory 2024-21

Budget Category, FINAL Recommendation and Comments

FINAL Budget Department Category	FINAL RECOMMENDATION for Funding	Comments (if any)
B-Statute/Compliance/Obligated	Recommended	Per Election Advisory 2024-21

Details of Current Situation:

Collin County does not pre-print sequence numbers on the ExpressVote blank ballot stock used at polling places. Instead, a randomized sequence number is assigned to each ballot card issued to voters using a two digit alpha code representing the voting location and a randomly generated serial number between 1 to 99,999. The randomized sequence number is generated using an ExpressLink printer connected to the e-Pollbook. The database does not connect the voter information to the sequence number. Subsequent to the election, a report is generated for each voting location showing which randomized sequence numbers were used at that location. Voted ballots can be matched against the report. The randomized sequence number method used by Collin County is authorized by Texas Secretary of State Election Advisory No. 2019-23 and confirmed by Attorney General Opinion KP-0422. Section 122.001c of the Texas Election Code authorizes the Secretary of State to prescribe this type of alternative method for random sequence numbering ballots. The elections department believes the current method of issuing a randomized sequence number to blank ballot stock using ExpressLink printers is more secure and auditable than the pre-printed sequence number method.

Detailed Description of Request (exactly what are the funds to be used for):

Some members of the public have requested that all ballot stock used in our elections are pre-printed prior to the election with sequence numbers versus our current method of printing a randomized sequence number on a blank ballot as the voter is being processed at the polling place. The Elections Department has agreed to place this item on our FY25 budget submission so that Commissioners Court members can make the final decision. Following is background information regarding our current method of issuing randomized sequence numbers at the polling place versus pre-printing sequence numbers prior to the election: Providing ballot stock with pre-printed sequence numbers more easily exposes the sequence number of the ballot selected by the voter. The reason it is easier to expose the sequence number of the voters selected ballot is because the voter selects a ballot from several ballots that are shuffled on the table. The pre-printed sequence number on the ballot could potentially be exposed because the voter is required to hand the ballot back to the clerk so the ballot can be inserted in the ExpressLink printer that prints the precinct/ballot style coding on it. The ballot is handled a second time by the clerk by handing the coded ballot back to the voter. The randomized sequence number method currently used by Collin County better protects the sequence numbers because a blank ballot is inserted in the ExpressLink printer and the printed randomized sequence number is not exposed to the clerks or other persons in the polling place. It is important to keep a voter's sequence number protected because persons (bad-actors) having access to another voter's sequence number can use the publicly available voted ballot images from the election to identify that person's voted ballot.

- The randomized assignment of the sequence number on ballots only occurs when a voter is being checked in. The remaining blank ballot stock can be reused in subsequent elections.

- Following are the costs that would be incurred if changing from the current method of applying random sequence numbers on ballots issued to voters versus pre-printing sequence numbers on all blank ballot stock:

Ballot Cost
 Blank ballot stock (no sequence numbers) = 0.115 each 17" ballot
 Ballot stock with pre-printed sequence numbers = 0.15 each 17" ballot

Estimated ballot stock needed for conducting a general election 1,200,000 ballots
 Blank ballot stock (no sequence numbers) - (1,200,000 x 0.115= \$138,000)
 Ballot stock (with pre-printed sequence numbers) - (1,200,000 x 0.15 = \$180,000)

If using pre-printed sequence numbered ballot stock, the unused ballots in the election cannot be reused in subsequent elections. In this example, it is estimated there will be 600,000 unused ballots remaining after the general election. This means the costs incurred by not being able to reuse blank ballot stock would be \$90,000 (600,000 x 0.15).
 Overall, the additional cost for using the pre-printed sequence number method in the general election is \$132,000 (\$90,000 + \$42,000).

Statutory authority for this request (if applicable):	Will this generate revenue?	No	If Yes, potential amount?

Return on Investment - Efficiencies Gained - Benefit to County and Citizens

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS EXPENSES (SUPPLIES, DUES, MAINTENANCE, ETC):

Account Description	Details	Amount Requested	Budget Dept. Comments	Recommended Amount	Recommendation
626562 - OPER-PRINTED MATERIALS	Ballot Stock with pre-printed Sequence numbers	\$10,000.00		\$10,000.00	Recommended
M&O Requested Subtotal:		\$10,000.00		Recommended M&O Subtotal:	\$10,000.00

FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, ONE-TIME PURCHASES (ITEMS THAT NEED TO BE PRICED)

Item Detailed Description	New / Replace	Quantity Requested	User Name and/or Job Title	Estimated Unit Cost	Estimated Total Requested	Unit Cost Provided by Purchasing	Updated Item Description (if applicable)	Updated Quantity	Updated Total Request	Recommendation	
Ballot stock with pre-printed sequence numbers		1,200,000		\$0.15	\$180,000.00	\$0.21	17" ballots		\$246,000.00	Recommended	
					\$0.00	\$6,474.00	Freight		\$6,474.00	Recommended	
Estimated Requested Equipment Subtotal:					\$180,000.00		Recommended Equipment Subtotal:		\$252,474.00		
Total Estimated Department Request:						\$190,000.00	Updated Total Department Request:				\$262,474.00
RECOMMENDED Total Department Request Utilizing FY 2025 Funds:										\$262,474.00	