

ELECTION EXPENSE COST ALLOCATION PROCEDURES

May, 2002

INTRODUCTION

The Secretary of State has developed the following procedures for allocating election costs among local governmental units as required in (*Minnesota Statutes Section 204B.32, Subd. 2*). The procedures must be followed in determining the election costs to be paid by counties, municipalities, school districts and hospital districts *unless* they have voluntarily entered into an agreement to assume or share election expenses in another manner.

GENERAL FORMULA

When a single election process is shared among multiple governments (e.g., county, municipal, school district, or hospital district), total election costs are allocated according to each jurisdiction's share of eligible voters and its share of the total ballot (measured as a percent of the total "column inches" of ballot). Therefore, the general cost allocation formula is:

Your share = (total election costs) x (% voters in your jurisdiction) x (your % of ballot).

Where precincts are split by one or more school district boundaries, the allocation of the school district share of costs must be distributed among the affected school districts in proportion to the percentage of the total number of registered voters in the precinct who reside in each school district.

An exception to this general rule is the cost of paper ballots, which are usually paid for directly by the municipality or school district. With this exception, percentage allocations of total ballot inches can be used as the basis for allocating all election expenses covered by this procedure.

Here are two examples of how this formula works. Example one is a school district election conducted in conjunction with a municipal election on an optical scan ballot. All residents of the municipality live in the school district. The front of the ballot contains three columns, each 15

inches long. For this example the back of the ballot was not used. The total ballot has 45 inches of offices and questions, (3 X 15). The school district offices and questions are 10 inches long. So in this example, the school district pays 22% (10/45) of the cost of the election.

In the second example the school district is conducting its election in conjunction with a municipal election on paper ballots, and only a third of the municipality's registered voters live in the school district. All of the paper ballots (blue, green, buff, goldenrod, etc.) are pasted together as a single ballot. The total combined length is 30 inches long. Of that 30 inches, the school district offices and questions take up 5 inches. The percentage of ballot length used by the school district is 16.5% (5/30). But because the municipality contains more than one school district, the percentage of ballot length is divided by the percentage of registered voters who reside in the school district. So in this example the school district is responsible for 5.5% of the total election cost, (16.5% x 33%).

There are, of course, more complicated situations than presented in these two examples. Still by keeping the basic formula in mind, **Your share = (total election costs) x (% voters in your jurisdiction) x (your % of ballot)**, you should be able to fairly allocate the election expenses.

APPLICABILITY

These procedures are applicable for any election in which offices or questions for more than one of the following categories is voted on.

Category A:

Federal offices
state legislative offices & ballot questions
state constitutional offices
state constitutional amendments
judicial offices
county offices & ballot questions
soil and water district offices & questions

Category B:

municipal offices

Category C:

school district offices
& ballot questions

Category D:

hospital district offices
& ballot questions

The terms “county offices” and “county ballot questions” in Category A include county park district offices and ballot questions. The terms “municipal offices” and “municipal ballot questions” in Category C include municipal park board, library board and other municipal-level elected offices and related ballot questions.

BALLOT PREPARATION

Where electronic voting systems are used, the county auditor shall determine the number of column inches devoted to offices and questions in each applicable category. If no offices or questions from Category A are on the ballot, the county auditor may delegate these duties to the municipal clerk. The county auditor shall determine the proportion of the ballot covered by each of these categories as a percentage of the total number of column inches devoted to offices and questions on the ballot.

The county auditor shall pay the cost of the portion of the ballot used for Category A. The municipal clerk shall pay the cost of the portion of the ballot used for Category B. The school district clerk shall pay the cost of the portion of the ballot used for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the cost of the portion of the ballot used for Category D.

The cost of the ballot includes the programming, layout, proofing and printing required to produce the ballot in the manner required by the Minnesota election law.

The cost of paper ballots are to be paid by the election jurisdiction preparing the ballots.

PREPARATION AND TESTING OF ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS

The county auditor shall determine the total cost required to prepare the program, conduct the preliminary test and perform the public accuracy test for each ballot counter to be used in an election. When federal, state, or county offices or questions are not on the ballot, the county auditor may delegate this responsibility to the appropriate municipal, school district or hospital district clerk.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of the costs of programming and testing determined for Category A. The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of programming and testing determined for Category B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of programming and testing determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of programming and testing determined for Category D. By mutual agreement, the county auditor and the municipal, school district and hospital district clerks may adopt an alternate method of paying the costs of programming and testing of electronic voting systems.

PREPARATION OF POLLING PLACES

The municipal clerk shall determine the total cost required to set up and equip each polling place in the manner required by the Minnesota election law.

The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of preparation of the polling places determined for Categories A and B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of

preparation of the polling places determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of preparation of the polling places determined for Category D.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of costs of preparation of the polling places determined for Categories A and B for precincts in unorganized territories.

POSTAGE FOR ABSENTEE BALLOTS AND APPLICATIONS

When federal, state, or county offices or questions are on the ballot, the county auditor shall determine the total cost of postage required to mail absentee ballots and absentee ballot applications. For other elections, the county auditor may delegate this responsibility to the municipal clerk.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of the costs of postage determined for Category A. The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of postage determined for Category B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of postage determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of postage determined for Category D. The county auditor may choose to assume all the postage costs for absentee ballot requests for which applications were submitted to the county auditor.

When the responsibility to administer absentee voting in state and county elections has been delegated to a municipality, the municipal clerk shall also pay the percentage of costs determined for Category A.

ELECTION NOTICE PUBLICATION COSTS

The following two sections apply only to those election jurisdictions that have entered into an agreement to prepare and publish election notices jointly.

State and County Elections

The county auditor shall determine the total cost of preparing and publishing the notice of election for all state and county elections.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of the costs of the election notices determined for Category A. The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of the election notices determined for Category B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of the election notices determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of the election notices determined for Category D.

Municipal Elections not Held with State and County Elections

The municipal clerk shall determine the total cost of preparing and publishing the notice of election for all municipal elections held on a day other than the day when a state or county election is held.

The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of the election notices determined for Category B. the school district clerk shall pay the percentage of the costs of the election notices determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of the election notices determined for Category D.

**TRANSPORTATION OF BALLOTS
AND ELECTION SUPPLIES**

The county auditor shall determine the total cost to transport ballots and election supplies from the auditor to the municipal clerk. The municipal clerk shall determine the total cost required to transport ballots and election supplies to the polling places prior to and after the election in the manner required by the Minnesota election law.

The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of transportation costs determined for Categories A and B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of transportation costs determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of transportation costs determined for Category D.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of transportation costs determined for Categories A and B for precincts in unorganized territories.

SALARIES OF ELECTION JUDGES

The municipal clerk shall determine the total cost required to pay the salaries of the election judges needed for each election.

The municipal clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of the election judges' salaries determined for Categories A and B. The school district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of the election judges' salaries determined for Category C. The hospital district clerk shall pay the percentage of costs of the election judges' salaries determined for Category D.

The county auditor shall pay the percentage of costs of the election judges' salaries determined for Categories A and B for precincts in unorganized territories.

**COMPENSATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE
EXPENSES**

When the administrative duties of an election official are carried out, by mutual written agreement, by another election official, the actual costs of administering these duties may be billed to the jurisdiction whose duties have been assumed. The agreement between jurisdictions must include an itemized list of duties to be performed and the rate at which billing for the duties will be made. No billing may be made for any expense which does not appear on the itemized list of duties to be performed.

**DOCUMENTATION OF
ELECTION EXPENSES**

Documentation of actual expenditures is required for the allocation of election expenses required in Minnesota Statutes, Section 204B.32, as described in these procedures. The determination of the total cost of election judges salaries and administrative expenses must be made from an itemized list including the names of persons serving, the number of hours served and the rate of payment per hour. Invoices or billing statements are acceptable documentation for goods or services purchased from vendors.

EFFECTIVE DATE

These procedures are effective for all elections occurring after August 1, 1995 and remain in force until amended, superseded or revoked by subsequent action of the Secretary of State.

S:\ELECT\ELECT\FORMS 2002\cost allocation procedures.doc