



## **The Importance of Compensating Election Officials Appropriately**

As our municipalities begin preparations for the 2024 election cycle, the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks urges municipalities to acknowledge the critical importance of ensuring fair compensation for our dedicated appointed and elected Clerks and election officials.

In a functioning democracy, the role of election officials cannot be understated. We are the unsung heroes who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the integrity of the electoral process. Paying election officials appropriately is not just a matter of financial compensation; it's about upholding the very foundations of our democratic society.

Proposal 22-2 created a pivotal shift in making our local democratic processes more accessible, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse needs of our communities. The extension of the election period to include an additional nine-days of in-person early voting will enhance voter participation, safeguard the integrity of our elections, and ensure that every voice is heard.

In light of this transition, we recognize that the increased duration of elections will place additional responsibilities on our appointed and elected Clerks, as well as our election staff, who are at the forefront of managing and overseeing this crucial process. Therefore, it is imperative all election officials are fairly compensated for the dedication, hard work, and the added workload brought about by the extended election periods and added responsibilities required by law. The success of Proposal 22-2 hinges on our ability to maintain an engaged and motivated workforce to oversee our election process.

Here's why it matters:

1. **Incentive for Dedication:** Adequate compensation is a powerful motivator. Fair pay acknowledges the dedication of election officials and compensates them for carrying out their duties with the utmost integrity and commitment.
2. **Attracting Qualified Professionals:** Competitive compensation attracts the best and brightest to serve as election officials. Election administration requires precision, a high level of responsibility, and a deep understanding of election processes, Appropriate compensation will attract and retain qualified professionals.
3. **Professionalism and Accountability:** Appropriate compensation reinforces the professionalism and accountability of election officials. It communicates that their work is valued and that they



are held to the highest standards, which is essential for a transparent and trustworthy electoral system.

4. **Reducing Turnover:** Inadequate compensation leads to high turnover rates among election officials. Retaining experienced election officials is essential to maintaining the continuity and reliability of the electoral process. Well-compensated staff are more likely to stay in their roles.
5. **Upholding Trust:** Trust in the democratic process is paramount. Paying election officials appropriately is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to a free and fair electoral system, which is essential for maintaining public trust.
6. **Effective Management:** Election officials deal with complex logistics, legal requirements, and public relations during elections. Appropriate compensation and benefits enable municipalities to attract and retain experienced management and ensures the smooth running of elections.
7. **Public Confidence:** When election officials are compensated appropriately, it reflects positively on the entire electoral system. It reassures the public that the election officials who are administering their elections are invested in handling their votes with professionalism, contributing to overall confidence in the democratic process.

To address this issue, we call upon municipalities to consider the following measures:

1. **Make a Plan:** Implement a compensation adjustment plan that provides additional financial support to appointed and elected Clerks, and election staff, for their additional duties and responsibilities. This plan may include additional staffing and/or compensation.
2. **Wage Assessment:** Conduct a thorough wage assessment to ensure that Clerks and election staff are compensated in-line with the other department directors or counterparts in other departments, taking into account the additional extended responsibilities associated with Proposition 2022-2 and 2018-3.
3. **Employee Support:** Provide additional support, resources, and benefits to assist Clerks and election staff in effectively managing the challenges and complexities of the extended election period.



All municipalities benefit from the tireless efforts of Clerks and Clerk's Office employees who play an indispensable role in the democratic process. It is essential for municipalities to value and appreciate the dedication of these public servants.

In summary, the pay and benefits for election officials are not expenditures but investments in the health of our democracy. It safeguards the integrity of elections, encourages dedicated professionals to serve, and upholds public trust. It is imperative that election officials are compensated appropriately and equitably, given the demands and responsibilities they shoulder.

The MAMC supports our member Clerks in their efforts to work collaboratively with their municipalities to ensure that the implementation of new election duties is smooth, fair, and successful in all respects.