

STATE OF LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

Department of Elections and Registration:
Analysis of Program Authority
and Performance Data

October 1997



Performance Audit Division

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Legislative Auditor*

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**Department of Elections and Registration:
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**Performance Audit
Office of Legislative Auditor
State of Louisiana**

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October 22, 1997

The Honorable Randy L. Ewing,
President of the Senate
The Honorable H. B. "Hunt" Downer, Jr.,
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Ewing and Representative Downer:

This report gives the results of our performance audit of the Program Authority and Performance Data of the Louisiana Department of Elections and Registration. The audit was conducted under provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. In addition, this audit is one step toward meeting requirements of the Louisiana Performance Audit Program (Louisiana Revised Statute 24:522).

The report represents our findings, conclusions, and recommendations. We have also identified one matter for legislative consideration. Appendix C contains the Department of Elections and Registration's response. Appendix D contains the Division of Administration, Office of Planning and Budget's response. I trust that this report will be of use to you in your legislative decision-making process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel G. Kyle".

Daniel G. Kyle, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor

DGK/dl

[ELECTION]



Office of Legislative Auditor

Executive Summary

Department of Elections and Registration: Analysis of Program Authority and Performance Data

For fiscal year 1996-97, the legislature appropriated almost \$35.5 million to the Department of Elections and Registration. Our performance audit of the department's program authority and performance data in the 1996-97 executive budget found that:

- ♦ The Voting Machines program conducts special elections that possibly violate the state constitution. No law specifically authorizes these elections. During fiscal year 1995-96, the department spent state funds for 161 special elections. Every year the department conducts approximately 150 of these elections for schools, colleges, trade unions, and civic associations.
- ♦ The Department of Elections does not engage in formal strategic planning. The lack of formal strategic planning may explain some of the deficiencies found in the department's performance data. A major deficiency is the lack of missions for any program in the 1996-97 executive budget. Without missions, the executive budget does not provide its users with the overall purpose of each program and identify clients served. Also, only one of the four programs in the executive budget has a goal. As a result, program managers and legislators may not be able to determine in what direction program activity is headed.
- ♦ The performance data in the 1996-97 executive budget could be made more useful to legislators and others for decision-making purposes. The goal meets the established criteria. However, only one of the six objectives has a time frame for achievement, and only one contains a measurable target to be achieved. Although all six objectives specify end results, many of these end results are broadly stated. The 24 performance indicators do not provide sufficiently useful information about the programs' performance because most indicators do not measure progress toward achieving objectives.

Overall Mission Statement Parallels the Constitution

The department's overall mission statement parallels and is in accordance with Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974. Thus, this mission reflects the intent of the drafters of Louisiana's constitution.

(See pages 20-21 of the report.)

Executive Budget Contains No Missions and Only One Goal

In the 1996-97 executive budget, the department is divided into four programs to carry out its functions. The executive budget has no missions for any of the department's four programs and a goal for only one program. The single goal, for the Voting Machines program, is consistent with responsibilities given the commissioner by state law. That is, the goal reflects the intent of the legislature as portrayed in underlying law.

The department developed mission statements and goals in its operational plan for fiscal year 1997-98. The Office of Planning and Budget addressed this issue in the 1997-98 executive budget by adding missions and goals for all four programs.

(See page 21 of the report.)

Expenditures for Some Special Elections May Violate the Constitution

The Voting Machines program conducts special elections that possibly violate the state constitution. No law specifically authorizes these elections. During fiscal year 1995-96, the department spent state funds for 161 special elections. Every year the department conducts approximately 150 special elections for schools, colleges, trade unions, and civic associations. State law does provide that the commissioner can employ voting machine mechanics, experts, and other assistants when necessary to demonstrate to the public the proper method of operating voting machines. We estimate that the department incurred approximately \$24,600 in voting machine personnel salary expense to conduct special elections in fiscal year 1995-96. When there is no specific legal authorization, providing special elections appears to be an unauthorized expenditure of state funds.

(See pages 22-23 of the report.)

No Apparent Duplication or Overlap

We reviewed the programs, functions, and activities of the department to identify any that appeared to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. As a result of the reviews we conducted, we found no instances of duplicative, overlapping, or outmoded activities. However, the department pays a contractor to maintain and program voting machines. This contractor is paid through the Elections program. State employees in the Voting Machines program also perform this function. There are no performance indicators that measure the contractor's performance.

(See page 25 of the report.)

Matter for Legislative Consideration

- 2.1** The legislature may wish to consider amending R.S. 18:1353(D), or enact other provisions, to clarify to what extent the department can conduct special elections. If special elections are specifically authorized, the legislature may wish to consider having the department charge a fee to cover the costs of providing this service.

Recommendations

With the assistance of the Division of Administration, Office of Planning and Budget, the Department of Elections and Registration should:

- 2.2** Develop performance indicators for voting machine services provided by the independent contractor. These indicators should be included in future contracts executed by the department and also in the department's performance data.
- 2.3** Ensure that all programs include clearly identified missions and goals in future editions of the executive budget.

Analysis of Performance Data

The Department of Elections developed performance data for the 1996-97 executive budget without using formal strategic planning. The lack of formal strategic planning may explain some of the deficiencies found in the department's performance data. A major deficiency is the lack of missions in the 1996-97 executive budget. Without missions, the executive budget does not provide its users with the overall purpose of each program and identify clients served.

(See page 28 of the report.)

There is a goal for only one of the four programs in the executive budget. As a result, program managers and legislators may not be able to determine in what direction program activity is headed. For the single goal, we found that the goal statement meets the established criteria.

(See pages 30-31 of the report.)

The Administrative program includes administrative and support functions. The objective relates to the administrative function. However, there are no goals or performance indicators for the entire program. According to a GASB official, support and administrative functions should be separated for the purpose of developing performance data. Administration deals with the general management and oversight of a program or department. Support services provide purchasing, payroll, legal, and other services to the rest of the department. If the department developed performance data for these two areas, legislators would be able to see the performance of each function.

(See pages 31-33 of the report.)

Overall, the department's objectives and performance indicators do not meet established criteria. All six objectives specify an end result that a program is striving to achieve. However, only one objective is timebound, and only one has a measurable target. Of 24 performance indicators, 14 (58 percent) are output indicators, and 5 are input indicators. *Manageware* and GASB stress the need for a balanced mix of indicators. One

program has no performance indicators. Although they are clear and easy to understand, most performance indicators do not measure progress toward achieving the objectives. For these reasons, the objectives and performance indicators do not provide enough information to allow an external user to make informed decisions about the programs.

(See pages 31-42 of the report.)

Recommendations

With the assistance of the Division of Administration, Office of Planning and Budget, the Department of Elections and Registration should:

- 3.1** Begin developing a formal strategic plan for the department
- 3.2** Develop separate sets of performance data for the administrative and support functions of the Administration program
- 3.3** Improve the existing objectives by making them specific, measurable, and timebound
- 3.4** Develop a mixture of performance indicator types for each objective
- 3.5** Ensure that performance data contain the elements presented in Exhibit 3-1

Chapter 1: Introduction

Audit Initiation and Objectives

The Office of the Legislative Auditor conducted this performance audit of the executive budget program information for the Department of Elections and Registration in response to certain requirements of Louisiana Revised Statute (R.S.) 24:522. Act 1100 of the 1995 Regular Legislative Session amended the state audit law, R.S. 24:511 *et seq.*, and created the Louisiana *Performance Audit Program*. Although the legislative auditor has been conducting performance audits since 1986, R.S. 24:522 formalizes an overall performance audit program for the state. In addition to finding solutions to present fiscal problems, the legislature created the Performance Audit Program to identify and plan for the state's long-term needs.

This report is one of a series of reports on all major executive branch departments addressing the following objectives:

- Determine if the department's missions and goals as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget are consistent with legislative intent and legal authority
- Determine if the department's missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget are consistent with established criteria
- Determine if the department's objectives and performance indicators as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget collectively provide useful information for decision-making purposes
- Identify any programs, functions, and activities within the department that appear to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded

Report Conclusions

Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 creates the Department of Elections and Registration and designates the Commissioner of Elections to head it. The commissioner administers the laws relating to custody of voting machines and voter registration. Also, the commissioner must pay certain expenses of conducting elections, according to state law.

Total expenditures of the department for fiscal year 1995-96 were almost \$32.7 million. The legislature authorized the department to spend nearly \$35.5 million in fiscal year 1996-97.

In the 1996-97 executive budget, the department is divided into four programs. The executive budget also contains no missions and only one goal for the Department of Elections. The goal for the Voting Machines program is consistent with certain responsibilities assigned the Commissioner of Elections by state law.

The Department of Elections developed performance data for the 1996-97 executive budget without using formal strategic planning. The lack of strategic planning may explain some of the deficiencies found in the department's performance data. Major deficiencies are lack of program missions and only one goal in the 1996-97 executive budget. As a result, legislators and other users of the executive budget may not know a program's overall purpose and the clients it is supposed to serve. In addition, without goals, users of the executive budget and program managers may not know in what direction programs are headed.

Overall, the department's objectives and performance indicators do not meet established criteria. All six objectives specify an end result that a program is striving to achieve. However, only one objective provides a time frame in which to achieve the end result, and only one objective is measurable.

Of the 24 performance indicators, most (14, or 58 percent) are output type. In addition, most of the indicators do not measure progress toward achieving the objectives. Only 11 of the performance indicators are consistent with the objectives. However, most indicators are clear and easy to understand. For these reasons, the objectives and performance indicators for the programs collectively do not provide useful

information to allow an external user to make informed decisions about the programs.

We reviewed the programs, functions, and activities of the department to identify any that appeared to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. We found no instances of overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded functions.

Accountability Initiatives

Article XIV, Section 6 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 reorganized the executive branch into 20 departments. State law says that the structure of the executive branch of state government is to promote, in part, economy and efficiency in the operation and management of state government. Since the reorganization, additional efforts have been undertaken to eliminate duplicative, overlapping, and outmoded programs and activities. Some of these efforts require internal reviews of programs, policies, and services of state agencies, and others provide for external reviews.

R.S. 24:522 requires the legislative auditor to annually make recommendations to the legislature relative, in part, to the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services that the various state agencies provide. In particular, it directs the auditor to evaluate the basic assumptions underlying all state agencies, programs, and services to assist the legislature in identifying those that are vital to the best interests of the people of Louisiana and those that no longer meet that goal. The act also requires state agencies to produce certain information during the budgetary process.

In July 1996, the Office of Legislative Auditor issued a report that examined the performance and progress of Louisiana state government. That report followed up on all recommendations made in performance audits and staff studies issued by the legislative auditor during the previous three years. In that report, we tracked the progress of agencies in implementing recommendations contained in the performance studies and identified related legislation. We also identified a number of problem areas in state government including inadequate oversight and inadequate planning.

As part of our continuing efforts to meet the requirements of R.S. 24:522, we have issued this report that examines the legal authority for the department's programs and services. This report also examines the program information contained in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget and builds on the need for better planning. As previously mentioned, similar performance audit reports are to be issued on all other executive branch departments.

State law (R.S. 49:190, *et seq.*) also requires agencies to provide the legislature with certain internal information to justify their existence in order to continue. This is referred to as the sunset review process. This process allows the legislature an opportunity and mechanism to evaluate the operations of state statutory entities.

State law also requires an annual report by department undersecretaries on their department management and program analysis. These reports, required by the provisions of R.S. 36:8, are referred to as Act 160 reports, since Act 160 of 1982 originally enacted this law. This law requires agencies to conduct evaluations and analyses of programs, operations, and policies to improve the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of the departments.

Other performance legislation includes an accountability act for colleges and universities. Also, various agency performance related reports are required to be submitted with the agency budget request. One of these reports is referred to as the "Sunset Review Budget Request Supplement."

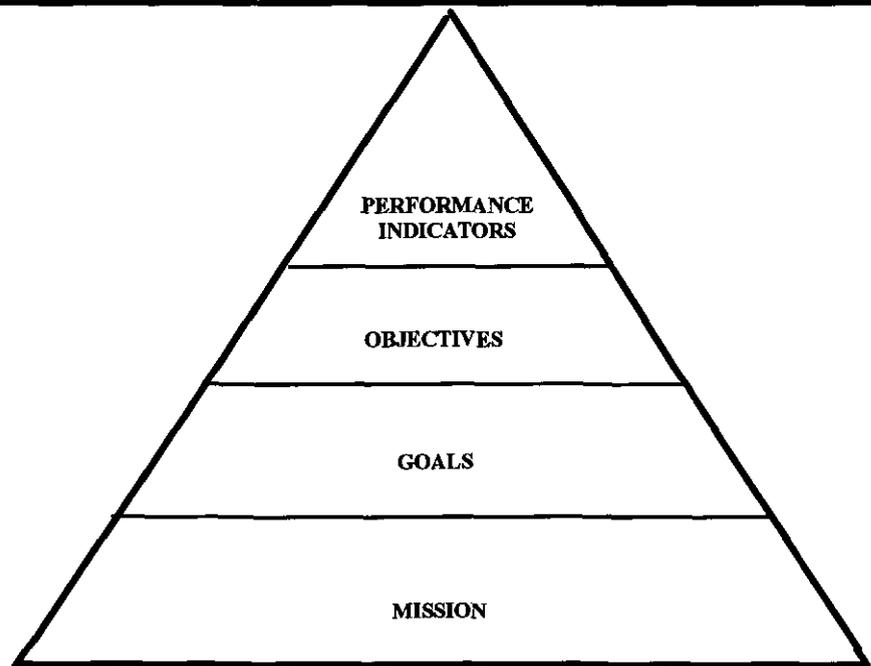
**Program
Budgeting and
Strategic
Planning
Focus on
Outcomes**

Act 814 of the 1987 Regular Legislative Session required the state to adopt a program budgeting system beginning in fiscal year 1988-89. R.S. 39:36 requires the executive budget to be in a format that clearly presents and highlights the programs operated by state government. According to *Manageware*, a publication of the Division of Administration's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), program budgeting is a budget system that focuses on program objectives, achievements, and cost-effectiveness. *Manageware* also states that program budgeting is concerned with outcomes or results rather than with individual items of expenditure.

Strategic planning is a process that sets goals and objectives for the future and strategies for achieving those goals and objectives, with an emphasis on how best to use resources. Program budgeting involves the development of missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators. These factors are components of the strategic planning process.

Exhibit 1-1 below shows how missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators relate to each other. As can be seen in this exhibit, the mission is the base from which goals are derived. Objectives flow from the goals and performance indicators flow from the objectives.

Exhibit 1-1**Major Components of the Strategic Planning Process**



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using a similar diagram in *Manageware*.

Manageware defines these terms as follows:

- **Mission:** a broad, comprehensive statement of the organization's purpose. The mission identifies what the organization does and for whom it does it.
- **Goals:** the general end purposes toward which effort is directed. Goals show where the organization is going.
- **Objectives:** specific and measurable targets for accomplishment. Objectives include a degree or type of change and a timetable for accomplishment.
- **Performance Indicators:** the tools used to measure the performance of policies, programs, and plans.

Furthermore, *Manageware* categorizes performance indicators into five types:

1. **Input indicators** measure resource allocation and demand for services. Examples of input indicators are budget allocations and number of full-time equivalent employees.
2. **Output indicators** measure the amount of products or services provided or the number of customers served. Examples of output indicators include the number of students enrolled in an adult education course, the number of vaccinations given to children, and the number of miles of roads resurfaced.
3. **Outcome indicators** measure results and assess program impact and effectiveness. Examples of outcome indicators are the number of persons able to read and write after completing an adult education course and the change in the highway death rate. Outcome indicators are the most important performance measures because they show whether or not expected results are being achieved.
4. **Efficiency indicators** measure productivity and cost-effectiveness. They reflect the cost of providing services or achieving results. Examples of efficiency indicators include the cost per student

enrolled in an adult education course, the bed occupancy rate at a hospital, and the average processing time for environmental permit applications.

5. **Quality indicators** measure effectiveness in meeting the expectations of customers, stakeholders, and other groups. Examples of quality indicators include the number of defect-free reports compared to the number of reports produced, the accreditation of institutions or programs, and the number of customer complaints filed.

Manageware also points out the benefits of program budgeting. According to *Manageware*, program budgeting streamlines the budget process. *Manageware* also says that program budgeting supports quality management by allowing managers more budgetary flexibility while maintaining accountability for the outcomes of programs. Since appropriations are made at the program level, program managers can more easily shift funds from one expenditure category to another to cover unanticipated needs, according to *Manageware*.

The need for accountability in government operations is gaining recognition both domestically and internationally. According to a recent report issued by the United States General Accounting Office, the federal government is currently implementing the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. This act requires agencies to set goals, measure performance, and report on their accomplishments. The report also cites several states including Florida, Oregon, Minnesota, Texas, and Virginia and foreign governments such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom that are also pursuing management reform initiatives and becoming more results-oriented.

In Louisiana, the 1996-97 general appropriation bill and resulting act included program descriptions for the first time. The fiscal year 1997-98 general appropriation bill will also include performance indicators. For fiscal year 1997-98, this information is presented for informational purposes only. However, in the future, it will serve as a starting point for the full implementation of performance based budgeting.

Beginning in fiscal year 1998-99 and all subsequent fiscal years, key objectives and key performance indicators contained in the General Appropriation Act will be included in the agency's

appropriation. Each agency will be required to provide quarterly performance progress reports. The agency's appropriation will be issued conditioned upon the agency preparing and submitting these reports.

**Executive Budget
Is Basis for
General
Appropriation
Act**

Article VII, Section 11(A) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 requires the governor to submit a budget estimate to the legislature that sets forth the state expenditures for the next fiscal year. This budget estimate, the executive budget¹, must include recommendations for appropriations from the state general fund, dedicated funds, and self-generated funds.

R.S. 39:36 requires the executive budget to be configured in a format that clearly presents and highlights the programs operated by state government. This statute also requires the executive budget to include:

- (1) an outline of the agency's programmatic structure, which should include an itemization of all programs with a clear description of the objectives of each program;
- (2) a description of the activities that are intended to accomplish each objective; and
- (3) clearly defined indicators of the quantity and quality of performance of these activities.

OPB develops the executive budget based on voluminous material contained in various documents prepared by the departments as part of their budget requests. The budget request packages are made up of six separate components, which are listed on the following page. These packages contain both financial and program information.

¹ The governor also submits a capital outlay budget. However, the scope of this audit includes only the executive budget.

1. **Operational plans** describe the various programs within state agencies. They also give program missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators. Operational plans are derived from long-range strategic plans. Operational plans tell what *portions of strategic plans will be addressed during a given operational period.*
2. **Existing operating budgets** describe the initial operating budgets as adjusted for actions taken by the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the Interim Emergency Board, the legislature, and/or the governor.
3. **Continuation budgets** describe the level of funding for each budget unit that reflects the resources necessary to carry on all existing programs and functions at the current level of service in the ensuing fiscal year. These budget components include any adjustments necessary due to the increased cost of services or materials as a result of inflation and increased workload requirements resulting from demographic or other changes. Continuation budgets contain program information.
4. **Technical/other adjustment packages** allow for the transfer of programs or functions from certain agencies or departments to other agencies or departments. However, total overall revenues and expenditures cannot be increased. The technical/other adjustment packages also contain program information.
5. **New or expanded service requests** are designed to provide information about the cost of new and/or expanded services that departments will provide. These service changes can come about as a result of regulation or procedural changes that are/were controlled by the agency or by the addition of services that were not previously provided. The new or expanded service requests also contain program information.
6. **Total request summaries** provide a cross-check of the total budget request document. These forms are designed to provide summaries of all the requested adjustments made to arrive at the total budget requests.

According to *Manageware*, the total budget request must be accompanied by the Sunset Review Budget Request Supplement (i.e., BRS forms). The BRS forms list all activities that a budget unit has been directed to administer (through legislatively authorized programs and acts of the legislature) for which no funds were appropriated in the existing operating budget. The BRS forms must be submitted to OPB, the Legislative Fiscal Office, and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget.

For the 1996-97 fiscal year, OPB prepared and published several volumes of a two-part executive budget using the departments' budget request packages. One part of the executive budget contains financial information, and the other part contains program information. The program information includes program descriptions, missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators related to the services and products of each department resulting from spending state revenues.

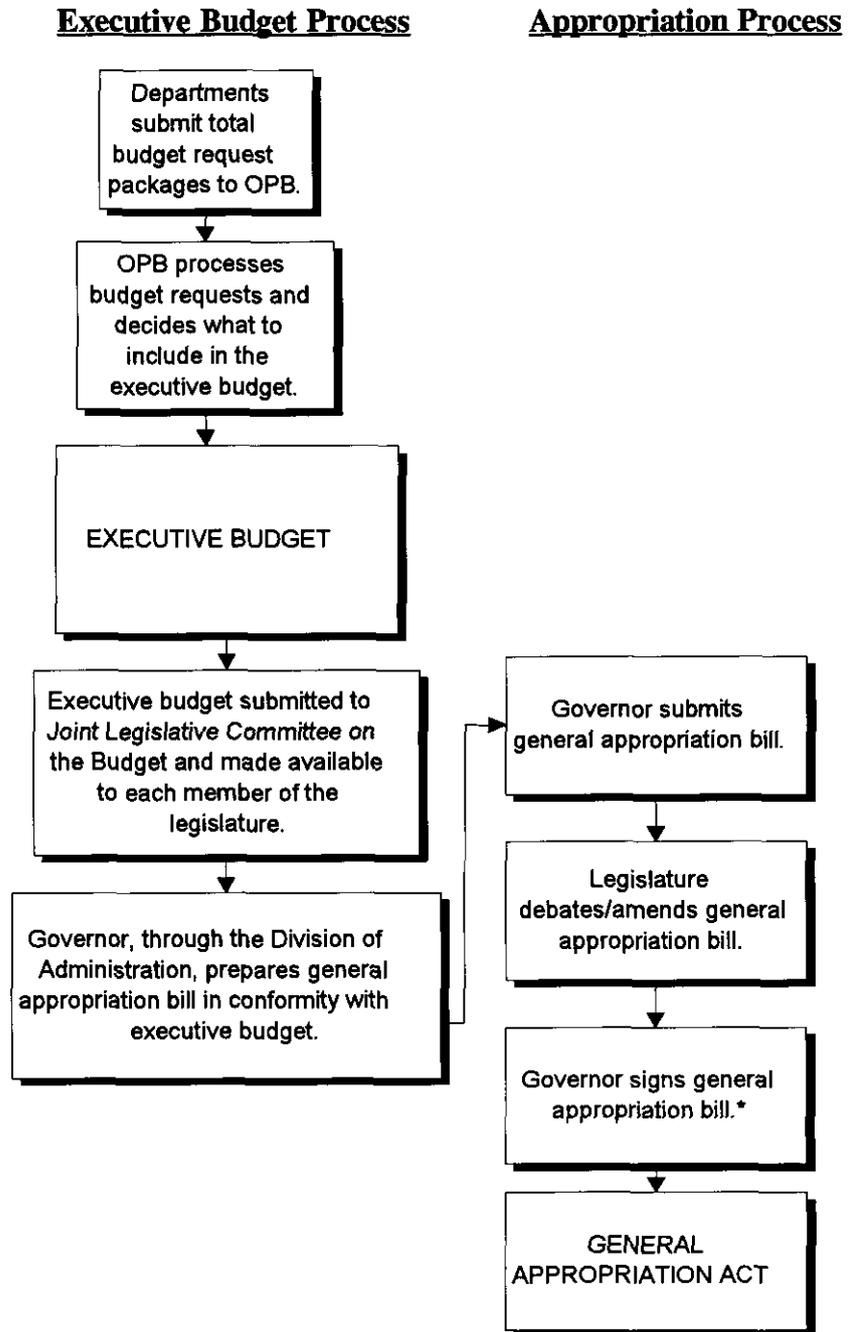
According to R.S. 39:37, the governor must submit the executive budget to the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget. The governor must make a copy of the executive budget available to each member of the legislature. The constitution requires that the governor submit a general appropriation bill for proposed ordinary operating expenditures in conformity with the executive budget document that was submitted to the legislature.

The general appropriation bill moves through the legislature similar to any other bill. The Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives initially hears the bill. It then moves to the full House, then to the Senate Finance Committee, and then to the full Senate. Both the House and Senate may amend the bill. The bill is voted upon in its final form by the full membership of both chambers. OPB monitors any amendments the legislature makes to the bill.

After the general appropriation bill passes the legislature, it is forwarded to the governor. Once the governor signs the bill, it becomes law in the form of the General Appropriation Act. After the governor signs the bill, OPB reports to the state departments any amendments made by the legislature. The state constitution allows the governor to veto any line item in the appropriation bill. A veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the legislature. Exhibit 1-2 on page 11 illustrates the executive budget and appropriation processes.

Exhibit 1-2

Executive Budget and Appropriation Processes



* The governor has line-item veto power.

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using state law, *Manageware*, and *House Legislative Services - State and Local Government in Louisiana: An Overview* (December 1995).

Scope and Methodology

Overview. This performance audit of the Department of Elections and Registration's program information was conducted under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. All performance audits are conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards as promulgated by the Comptroller General of the United States. Work on this audit began in October 1996.

This section provides a summary of the methodology used in this audit. Based on planning meetings held by legislative audit staff, we formulated audit objectives that would address issues specific to the program information contained in the executive budget. The audit focused on the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget program information.

References Used. To familiarize ourselves with performance measurement, program budgeting, and accountability concepts, we reviewed various publications including the following:

- *Manageware* published by the Office of Planning and Budget (1991 and 1996 editions)
- *Research Report - Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting: Its Time Has Come, An Overview* published by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) (1990)
- *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act* published by the U.S. General Accounting Office (June 1996)
- Various reports by the Canadian Comprehensive Auditing Foundation
- Reports from various states related to program budgeting and strategic planning

These publications are listed in detail in Appendix A. We also conducted interviews with personnel of the Urban Institute, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and GASB. These individuals represent both the theoretical and practical sides of current performance measurement and accountability efforts.

To gain an understanding of the state's budget process, we reviewed state laws regarding program budgeting. In addition, we interviewed staff of OPB and the Department of Elections and Registration regarding their budget processes.

Legal Basis for Missions and Goals. We searched state and federal laws to determine whether there was legal authority for missions and goals of the department and its programs. We also reviewed applicable laws to determine legislative intent related to the creation of the department and the functions that the department and its programs are intended to perform. In addition, we reviewed and organized data obtained from the department on its structure, functions, and programs. We also interviewed key department personnel about these issues. We included within the scope of our detailed audit work all related boards, commissions, and like entities that requested funding through a specific line item in the executive budget. We also prepared a listing, which is contained in Appendix B, of all related boards, commissions, and like entities we identified, regardless of whether they requested funding.

Comparison of Performance Data to Criteria. We developed criteria against which to compare the department's missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget. To help develop these criteria, we gathered information from GASB, OMB, the Urban Institute, and *Manageware*. During our criteria development process, we obtained ongoing input from GASB. We also obtained concurrence from GASB on our final established criteria. We then compared the missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators to the established criteria.

In addition, we evaluated the objectives and performance indicators to determine if they collectively provide useful information to decision makers. When deficiencies or other problems were identified, we discussed them with appropriate personnel of the department and OPB. We did not assess the validity or reliability of the performance indicators.

Although other documents contain program information on the department, we only compared the missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators contained in the executive budget to the criteria. This decision was made because the executive budget is the culmination of OPB's review and refinement of the budget request components. It also represents the governor's official

recommendation to the legislature for appropriations for the next fiscal year.

Potential Overlapping, Duplicative, or Outmoded Areas. Finally, we reviewed the program descriptions and legal authority for the department's programs and related boards, commissions, and like entities to identify areas that appeared to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. We defined these terms as follows:

- **Overlapping:** instances where two or more programs appear to perform different activities or functions for the same or similar purposes
- **Duplicative:** instances where two or more programs appear to conduct identical activities or functions for the same or similar purposes
- **Outmoded:** those programs, activities, or functions that appear to be outdated or are no longer needed

We did not conduct detailed audit work on the areas we identified as potentially overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. We only identified them for further review at another time.

Areas for Further Study

During this audit, we identified the following areas that require further study:

- As previously mentioned, assessing the validity and reliability of performance indicators was not within the scope of this audit. However, if the legislature intends to include performance indicators in future appropriation bills and acts, validity and reliability become increasingly important. Consequently, in the future, the legislature may wish to direct a study of the validity and reliability of performance indicators included in appropriation bills.
- The availability of management information systems that can readily integrate data from a variety of sources is essential to a successful program budgeting system. Capturing accurate and meaningful performance data is important, in part,

because of the increased emphasis the legislature is placing on program information. Therefore, the capabilities of the department's management information system as related to program data should be addressed in the near future.

Report Organization

The remainder of this report is divided into the following chapters and appendixes:

- **Chapter 2** describes the Department of Elections and Registration. This chapter gives the legal authority for the department and its programs as well as other information that describes the department and related boards. This chapter also compares the missions and goals of the department as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget to their legal authority. In addition, this chapter discusses programs, functions, and activities within the department that appear to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded, if any came to our attention.
- **Chapter 3** gives the results of our comparison of the department's missions, goals, objectives, and performance indicators as reported in the fiscal year 1996-97 executive budget to established criteria. In addition, this chapter discusses whether the objectives and performance indicators collectively provide useful information for decision-making purposes.
- **Appendix A** is a list of references used for this audit.
- **Appendix B** is a listing of related boards, commissions, and like entities that we identified.
- **Appendix C** is the Department of Elections and Registration's response to this report.

- **Appendix D** is the Division of Administration, Office of Planning and Budget's response to this report.

Chapter 2: Department Overview

Chapter Conclusions

Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 creates the Department of Elections and Registration and designates the Commissioner of Elections as its head. State law directs the department to administer laws relating to custody of voting machines and voter registration and to pay certain expenses of conducting elections.

In the 1996-97 executive budget, the department is divided into four programs to carry out its functions. Total expenditures of the department for fiscal year 1995-96 were \$32,695,000. The legislature authorized the department to spend \$35,462,648 in fiscal year 1996-97.

The 1996-97 executive budget contains no missions and only one goal for the Department of Elections and Registration. As a result, the executive budget does not provide its users with the purpose for each program. Furthermore, for three of the department's four programs, the executive budget does not show its users in what direction program activity is headed.

The Voting Machines program conducts special elections that may violate the state constitution. During fiscal year 1995-96, the department spent state funds for 161 of these elections. Every year, the department conducts approximately 150 special elections for schools, colleges, trade unions, and civic associations. No law specifically authorizes these special elections. Without specific legal authorization, providing these elections may be an unauthorized expenditure of state funds.

We reviewed the programs, functions, and activities of the department to identify any that appeared to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. As a result of the reviews we conducted, we found no instances of duplicative, overlapping, or outmoded activities. However, the department pays a contractor to maintain and program voting machines. State employees also perform this function. There are no performance indicators that measure the contractor's performance.

**Commissioner of
Elections
Administers Part
of State Elections
Process**

Before 1956, the Secretary of State, Louisiana's chief elections officer, carried out all election functions. Currently, the Secretary administers all laws relating to elections, except for voter registration and custody of voting machines. Those responsibilities rest with the Commissioner of Elections.

Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 creates the Department of Elections and Registration. The constitution designates the Commissioner of Elections as head of the department. R.S. 36:661(C) makes the commissioner responsible for the policies, administration, functions, programs, and affairs of the department.

In the executive budget, the Department of Elections and Registration is divided into four programs. Exhibit 2-1 below shows the program's actual expenditures for fiscal year 1995-96, and the requested amounts, appropriated amounts, and authorized positions for fiscal year 1996-97.

Exhibit 2-1

**Department of Elections and Registration
Expenditure, Budget, Appropriation and Staffing Data
Fiscal Years 1995-96 and 1996-97**

Program	Fiscal Year 1995-96	Fiscal Year 1996-97		
	Actual	Requested	Appropriated	Authorized Positions
Administration	\$1,229,000	\$1,449,948	\$1,255,279	16
Voting Machines	3,633,000	3,818,513	3,818,513	63
Voter Registration	6,117,000	7,722,379	7,722,379	13
Elections	21,716,000	22,666,477	22,666,477	0
Total	\$32,695,000	\$35,657,317	\$35,462,648	92

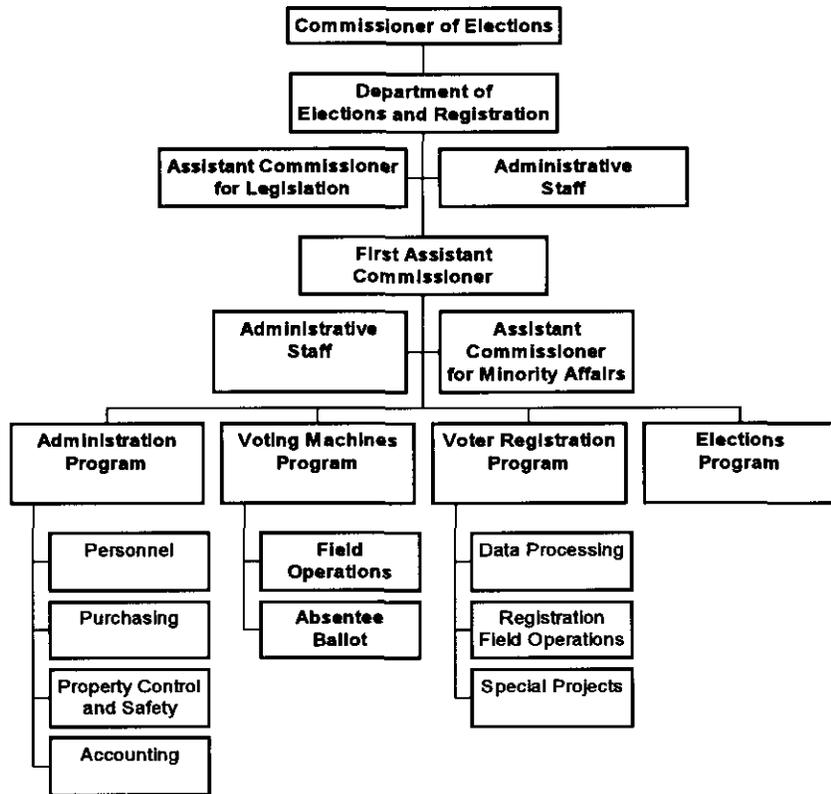
Note: Besides the authorized positions, the department employs as many as 255 part-time staff. Most of the part-time personnel are paid through the Elections program.

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for fiscal year 1995-96, the fiscal year 1996-97 Executive Budget, and the General Fund Appropriations - Executive Summary for fiscal year 1996-97.

As shown in Exhibit 2-1, in terms of expenditures, the Elections program is the largest. However, this program has no full-time authorized employees.

Exhibit 2-2 below shows the organization of the Department of Elections and Registration. As illustrated in this exhibit, the department's four programs are Administration, Voting Machines, Voter Registration, and Elections.

Exhibit 2-2
Department of Elections and Registration
Organization Chart



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff from information provided by the Department of Elections and Registration.

Boards and Commissions. The Commissioner of Elections is a member of the State Board of Election Supervisors, which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of State. This board reviews election laws and procedures, and issues reports to the legislature. Also, there is a board of election supervisors in each parish. These boards supervise the preparation for and the conduct of all elections held in the parish. Appendix B provides more information concerning these boards.

Clients Served. Exhibit 2-3 below portrays the number and types of clients served by the department.

Exhibit 2-3	
Department of Elections and Registration	
Number of Clients Served	
Fiscal Year 1995-96	
Types of Clients	Number Served
Registered Voters - Statewide	2,455,783
Commissioners/Deputy Custodians/Janitors	28,000
Special Educational Elections for schools, colleges, civic associations, unions, etc.	161
Clerks of Court	64
Parish Boards of Election Supervisors	64
Parish Councils/Police Juries	64

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using unaudited information obtained from the Department of Elections and Registration.

Overall Mission Statement Parallels the Constitution

The department's overall mission statement parallels and is in accordance with Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974. Thus, the overall mission reflects the intent of the drafters of Louisiana's constitution. The overall mission is not specifically labeled as a mission in the 1996-97 executive budget. However, the department and its OPB planning analyst concurred that the following statement would suffice as the overall mission.

Mission of the Department of Elections and Registration

The Department of Elections and Registration is under the direction of the Commissioner of Elections, who is authorized under Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 to exercise all functions of the state relating to the custody of voting machines and voter registration.

Executive Budget Contains No Missions and Only One Goal

The 1996-97 executive budget does not provide mission statements for any of the department's programs and has a goal for only one of the four programs. According to *Manageware*, a mission statement provides a broad, comprehensive statement of the purpose of a program, and goals show the general end purpose toward which program effort is directed. Without missions and goals, the executive budget does not provide its users with the overall purpose of each program or identify the program's beneficiaries. Also, for three programs, the executive budget does not show in what direction program activity is headed. As a result, we could not determine whether program missions and goals are consistent with responsibilities assigned the commissioner and department by state law.

According to its Assistant Commissioner of Management and Finance, the Department of Elections developed mission statements and goals for fiscal year 1997-98. OPB has addressed this issue in the 1997-98 executive budget by adding missions and goals for all four programs. The remainder of this chapter discusses and compares the legal authorization and activities of each program.

Administration Program Directs Other Department Programs

State law authorizes the activities of the commissioner that are conducted in the Administration program. According to the 1996-97 executive budget, the Administration program directs and supports all other programs in the department. The executive budget also states that this program performs the functions of elections research, purchasing, personnel, accounting, payroll and property control.

R.S. 36:661(C) gives the commissioner responsibility for the administration, control, and operation of the functions, programs and affairs of the department. In addition, R.S. 36:662(7) makes the commissioner responsible for other duties, such as accounting and budget control, procurement and contract management, management and program analysis, data processing, personnel management, and grants management.

Voting Machines Program Goal Is Consistent With State Law

The Voting Machines program's goal is consistent with the responsibilities given to the commissioner by state law. However, some special elections that the department conducts may violate state law because the department is not legally obligated to conduct these types of special elections.

According to the 1996-97 executive budget, the goal of the Voting Machines program is to provide the equipment to hold efficient and honest elections. The executive budget states that this program encompasses maintaining, storing, repairing, replacing, programming, and delivering all absentee equipment and voting machines in the state. Article IV, Section 12 of the Constitution provides that the commissioner shall administer the laws relating to custody of voting machines. In addition, R.S. 18:1353(C) allows the commissioner to purchase, sell, transfer, maintain, repair and store voting machines. This law also says the commissioner must prepare and deliver the machines to the custody of the parish custodian in complete readiness for use at the polls.

Expenditures for Some Special Elections May Violate State Constitution

The Voting Machines program conducts special elections that possibly violate the state constitution. According to the 1996-97 executive budget, the Voting Machines program "serves high schools, colleges, unions, etc., in an effort to educate students and provide a service to the people of Louisiana." In fiscal year 1995-96, the department provided equipment and staff to conduct 161 special elections for these types of organizations. Department staff informed us that the legal authority for this activity is R.S. 18:1353(D), which allows the commissioner of elections to employ voting machine mechanics, experts, and other assistants when

necessary in order to explain and demonstrate to the public the proper method of operation of the machines. However, no law specifically authorizes these elections.

The department's expenditures for these special elections during fiscal year 1995-96 appear to have violated Article VII, Section 14(A) of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974. This provision states that except as otherwise provided by the constitution, the funds of the state shall not be donated to or for any person, association or corporation, public or private. The Louisiana Supreme Court interpreted this provision by stating:

. . . the section is violated whenever the state . . . seeks to give up something of value when it is under no legal obligation to do so. City of Port Allen v. Louisiana Municipal Risk Management Agency, Inc., et al., 439 So. 2d 399, 401 (La. 1983).

We estimate that the department incurred approximately \$24,640 in salary expenses to conduct the special elections in fiscal year 1995-96. This estimate is based on the average salary, as of June 30, 1996, of staff employed in the Field Operations Division of the Voting Machines program. Also, some of these elections continued for longer than one day. Department staff informed us that the entity requesting a special election pays the cost of moving the voting machine(s) from storage to the election site. Finally, moving the machines from storage to voting sites probably increases the department's maintenance expense because of the increased wear and tear on the machines.

**Voter
Registration
Program
Maintains Voter
Information**

There is legal authority for the commissioner's activities that are conducted in the Voter Registration program. This program assists parish registrars of voters, and maintains information on all registered voters in the state, according to the executive budget. The program is comprised of the Voter Registration System, the Field Section and the parish registrars of voters.

According to the executive budget, the Voter Registration System has centralized all voter information and statistics to ensure the integrity of the state's voter rolls, protect against dual registration, and cancel the registration of individuals who die or

are interdicted. The Data Processing Section in this program compiles and stores statistical information that is available for use by departments of government and the general public. Article IV, Section 12 of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 provides that the commissioner shall administer the laws relating to voter registration. Also, R.S. 18:31(A) directs the commissioner to establish a state voter registration computer system to register voters throughout the state.

The Voter Registration program also has a Field Section, which assists, directs and prescribes uniform rules and forms for all parish registrars of voters in the state. Each parish has a registrar of voters. R.S. 18:18(2) states the commissioner shall direct and assist the registrars of voters of the state. Furthermore, the commissioner is to prescribe uniform rules, regulations, forms and instructions to be used by each registrar of voters, according to R.S. 18:18(3).

As a result of federal legislation and Louisiana's Act 10 of 1994, the department implemented alternative methods of registration in January 1995. These methods, known as "motor voter," allow voter registration at places such as motor vehicle registration offices and social service agencies. Individuals can also register to vote with mail-in cards. According to the executive budget, the state added almost 209,000 voters to its rolls in 1995 as a result of the motor voter laws.

Elections Program Funds Election Expenses

State law authorizes the commissioner's responsibilities that are conducted in the Elections program. According to the executive budget, this program provides funding for the payment of expenses associated with holding elections in the state. The program also assesses and collects certain election-related expenses due the state from local and municipal governments. Interviews with department staff revealed that this program acts like a revolving fund. It receives and expends funds, but has no full-time staff.

R.S. 18:1400.2 through R.S. 18:1400.5 provide that the commissioner shall pay for certain specified expenses of holding elections. If a local or municipal candidate or issue also appears on the state ballot, the state pays one-half of these election expenses. Based on the number of items appearing on the ballot, the

remaining one-half is prorated between the state and the local or municipal entity having one or more candidates or issues on the ballot. However, some exceptions to these rules may apply for presidential preference primary elections. The types of election expenses paid by this program include salaries for commissioners, deputy custodians, and janitors. Expenses also include drayage of voting machines, precinct rentals, and registrars of voters' expenses.

No Apparent Duplication or Overlap

We reviewed the programs, functions, and activities of the department to identify any that appeared to be overlapping, duplicative, or outmoded. We reviewed the department's 1996-97 operational plan and organization chart. We also reviewed our June 1996 report on the department, issued for the purpose of sunset review. In these reviews, we compared the program descriptions and activities for similarity.

As a result of our reviews, we found two similar functions being performed. However, we found no instances of duplicative or overlapping activities. The department contracts with Independent Voting Machine Service Company, Inc., to maintain and program voting machines. This is paid through the Elections program. The department also employs staff to maintain and program voting machines in the Voting Machines program.

The contractor provides voting machine technicians to provide assistance with programming of machines before elections and assistance with service and repair calls during elections. The department paid this contractor almost \$1.8 million in fiscal year 1995-96, and budgeted \$1,865,000 for fiscal year 1996-97. According to the Commissioner of Elections, this amount varies depending on the number and types of elections. However there are no performance indicators that measure the contractor's performance.

Matter for Legislative Consideration

- 2.1 The legislature may wish to consider amending R.S. 18:1353(D), or enact other provisions, to clarify to what extent the department can conduct special elections. If special elections are specifically authorized, the legislature may wish to consider having the department charge a fee to cover the costs of providing this service.

Recommendations

With the assistance of the Division of Administration, Office of Planning and Budget, the Department of Elections and Registration should:

- 2.1 Develop performance indicators for voting machine services provided by the independent contractor. These indicators should be included in future contracts executed by the department and also in the department's performance data.
- 2.2 Ensure that all programs include clearly identified missions and goals in future editions of the executive budget.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Performance Data

Chapter Conclusions

The Department of Elections and Registration developed performance data for the 1996-97 executive budget *without using formal strategic planning*. The lack of strategic planning may explain some of the deficiencies found in the department's performance data. One major deficiency is lack of program missions. Also, only one of the four programs in the executive budget has a goal.

The overall mission statement conveys the department's purpose and is organizationally acceptable. The one goal in the executive budget (for the Voting Machines program) is consistent with the overall mission statement. It also reflects the destination toward which the program is striving.

Overall, the department's objectives and performance indicators do not meet the established criteria. All six objectives specify an end result that a program is striving to achieve. However, only one objective provides a time frame by which to achieve the end result, and only one objective provides a measurable target.

Of the 24 performance indicators, most (14, or 58 percent) are output type. In addition, most of the indicators do not measure progress toward achieving the objectives. Only 11 of the performance indicators are consistent with the objectives. However, all indicators are clear and easy to understand. For these reasons, the objectives and performance indicators for the programs collectively do not provide useful information to allow an external user to make informed decisions about the programs.

Analysis Conducted

We compared the department's performance data that appear in the 1996-97 executive budget to a set of established criteria. These criteria are shown in Exhibit 3-1 on page 29.

We also compared the overall departmental mission statement to the criteria. We also assessed one goal, 6 objectives, and 24 performance indicators to determine if they provide useful information for decision making.

Strategic Planning Could Help Improve Performance Data

The department developed performance data for the 1996-97 executive budget without using formal strategic planning. The lack of formal strategic planning may explain some of the deficiencies we found in the department's performance data. A major deficiency is lack of program missions. Without a mission for each program, the executive budget does not provide legislators with the overall purpose of each program or identify the program's customers. To make informed decisions about the department's programs, legislators and other users of the executive budget need to know the purpose of the program, how the program relates to the overall departmental mission, and who are the customers of the program.

According to *Manageware*, strategic planning helps an organization manage its future by establishing missions, goals, and objectives. The organization then develops strategies and action plans to provide direction for achieving its goals and objectives. According to the Assistant Commissioner of Management and Finance, the Department of Elections will implement strategic planning as soon as possible.

Exhibit 3-1**Criteria Used to Evaluate the
Fiscal Year 1996-97 Executive Budget
Performance Data**

MISSION: A broad, comprehensive statement of purpose

- √ Identifies overall purpose for the existence of the organization, department, office, institution, or program as established by constitution, statute, or executive order
 - √ Identifies clients/customers of the organization or external and internal users of the organization's products or services
 - √ Organizationally acceptable
-
-

GOAL: The general end purpose toward which effort is directed

- √ Consistent with department, program, and office missions
 - √ Provides a sense of direction on how to address the mission; reflects the destination toward which the entity is striving
-
-

OBJECTIVE: A specific and measurable target for accomplishment

- √ Consistent with goals
 - √ Measurable
 - √ Timebound
 - √ Specifies desired end result
-
-

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR: Tool used to measure performance of policies, plans, and programs

- √ Measures progress toward objective or contributes toward the overall measurement of progress toward objective
 - √ Consistent with objective
 - √ Clear, easily understood, and non-technical
-

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff based on input from *Manageware*, GASB, the federal Office of Management and Budget, and the Urban Institute to show criteria used to evaluate the department's performance data.

Overall Mission Statement Meets the Established Criteria

The overall mission statement in the 1996-97 executive budget meets all established criteria in Exhibit 3-1. This statement was not labeled as a mission in the executive budget. However, department staff and the OPB planning analyst concurred that it would suffice as the department's overall mission.

Department of Elections and Registration's Mission

The department is under the direction of the Commissioner of Elections, who is authorized under Article IV, Section 12 of the *Louisiana Constitution of 1974 to exercise all functions of the state relating to the custody of voting machines and voter registration.*

This mission statement states the overall purpose of the department, and identifies the state as the department's customer. Also, the department's operational plan includes language similar to the mission statement; therefore, we concluded the overall mission is organizationally acceptable.

Executive Budget Contains No Program Missions and Only One Goal

The 1996-97 executive budget contains no mission statements for the Department of Elections and Registration's programs. In addition, only one of the department's four programs has a goal.

According to *Manageware*, a mission statement provides a broad, comprehensive statement of the purpose of a program, and goals show the general end purpose toward which program effort is directed. Without missions, the executive budget does not provide its users with the overall purpose of each program and does not allow users to determine whether the program mission is consistent with the department's overall mission. Also, without missions, the executive budget does not identify users of each program's services. To make informed decisions about the department's programs, an external user needs to know the purpose of the program, how the program relates to the overall departmental mission, and who are the customers of the program.

Only the Voting Machines program has a goal statement. The lack of goals may mean that legislators and program managers cannot determine in what direction programs are heading. Because of the lack of goals in three of the four programs, we could not assess whether objectives of these three programs are consistent with goals. The discussions of each program's performance data that follow do not include missions or goals, except for the goal of the Voting Machines program.

The department has since developed mission and goal statements. The 1997-98 executive budget contains a mission and goal for each program.

Administration Program Performance Data Meet Few Criteria

The performance data reported in the 1996-97 executive budget for the Administration program are not useful for budgetary decision making. First, this program's performance data are missing a mission and goal. Second, the objective and performance indicators for the Administration program meet few of the established criteria.

The Administration program's performance data are presented in Exhibit 3-2 on the following page. Specific problems identified with this program's objective and performance indicators are described in the paragraphs following this exhibit.

The Administration program's functions are diverse. This program contains administrative and support functions. The objective in the executive budget relates to the administrative function. According to a GASB official, support and administrative functions should be separated for the purpose of developing performance data. Administration deals with the general management and oversight of a program or department. Support services provide purchasing, payroll, legal and other services to the rest of the department. If the department developed performance data for these two areas, legislators would be able to see the performance of each function.

Exhibit 3-2
**Administration Program's Performance Data Reported
in 1996-97 Executive Budget**

Mission: None identified.

Goals: None identified.

Objective: Continue to ensure the efficient functioning of the Department of Elections and Registration and subsequently the election process in the State of Louisiana.

Performance Indicators:
Number of Elections Held:

- Statewide
 - Spring Municipal (Primary and General, if Necessary)
 - Special Elections/ Local Propositions
 - Total Number of Elections Held
-

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the 1996-97 executive budget.

Objective. The Administration program's objective provides a desired end result that is stated in general terms. However, it could be formulated as a more specific target for accomplishment. The objective is also not measurable and does not provide a time frame in which the end result will be achieved. As a result, program managers and legislators do not know how much the program will achieve or when the objective will be achieved.

Performance Indicators. The performance indicators for the Administration program do not provide useful information for decision making. None of the four indicators measure the performance of the Administration program. The indicators simply count the number of different types of elections. Furthermore, they do not measure progress toward the objective of ensuring the efficient functioning of the department and the state's election process. We classified the indicators as output indicators because they provide an idea of the amount of work the program (and department) performs. None of the indicators measure outcome, efficiency, or input.

The department should develop other types of indicators for this program. *Manageware* and GASB stress the need for a balanced mix of indicators. If a mix of indicators is not presented in

the executive budget, users of the budget will not have complete information on the program's performance.

Exhibit 3-3 below is a summary of the results of our analysis of the Administration program's performance data.

Exhibit 3-3	
Results of Comparing Administration Program's Performance Data to Established Criteria	
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 1 is consistent with goals • 0 of 1 is measurable • 0 of 1 is timebound • 1 of 1 specifies an end result
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 4 measures progress toward objective • 0 of 4 is consistent with objectives • 4 of 4 are clear and easily understood

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff from results of comparison of 1996-97 executive budget performance data to criteria in Exhibit 3-1.

**Voting Machines
Program
Performance
Data Do Not
Measure
Accomplishments**

The Voting Machines program's goal meets the established criteria, but the remainder of the performance data need improvement. Specifically, the two objectives and the performance indicators do not meet most of the established criteria. For these reasons, the objectives and performance indicators do not collectively provide useful information to allow legislators to make informed decisions about the program. The performance data for the Voting Machines program are presented in Exhibit 3-4 on the following page.

Exhibit 3-4
**Voting Machines Program's Performance Data Reported
in 1996-97 Executive Budget**

Mission: None identified.

Goal: Provide the equipment to hold efficient and honest elections.

Objective #1:

Continue to hold, in a state of readiness, voting machines and computerized absentee voting equipment and provide necessary technical assistance and support to hold public elections in Louisiana.

Performance Indicators:

- Equipment Available for All Elections
- Number of Elections:
- Statewide
 - Spring Municipal (Primary & General, if Necessary)
 - Special Elections/ Local Propositions
 - Total Number of Elections Held

Objective #2:

Move from mechanical to computerized voting equipment in large metropolitan areas of the state by FY 1997-98; other jurisdictions will have updated mechanical machines that are capable of printing results on election night.

Performance Indicators:

- Counting of Absentee Votes Computerized
- Computerized Voting Equipment in Metropolitan Areas

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the 1996-97 executive budget.

Goal. The goal meets the two established criteria. It reflects the destination of the Voting Machines program. Since the program lacks a mission, the goal cannot be consistent with it. The goal is, however, consistent with the part of the overall mission that relates to the custody of voting machines.

Objectives. The first objective specifies end results. Since the goal of the program is to provide the equipment to hold efficient elections, we found that the objective is consistent with the goal. However, the objective is not measurable and does not specify a time frame for accomplishment. To improve this objective, the department could include the number of voting machines and the cost to keep all voting machines ready.

The second objective relates to two different results and could be separated into two objectives. There are end results for both components; however, the end results should be more specific. For example, the objective could give the number of large metropolitan areas that will receive computerized equipment. The first half of the objective is timebound, but the second half is not. Neither half is measurable. Since the goal of the program is to provide the equipment to hold efficient elections, both halves of the objective are consistent with the program goal.

One of the typical procedures in strategic planning involves reviewing the organization's missions and goals and setting objectives. Objectives should be specific and measurable milestones that must be achieved to realize a program's goals. Objectives should also set time frames for achieving results. The lack of strategic planning by the department may have contributed to the lack of specific, timebound, and measurable objectives for this and other programs.

Performance Indicators. The performance indicators for the Voting Machines program generally do not provide useful information for legislators. None of the seven performance indicators measure progress toward achieving an objective.

The first objective has five performance indicators. One of these indicators tells whether or not voting equipment was available for all elections. We classified this as an outcome indicator. The other four performance indicators count the number of four types of elections held in Louisiana and thus do not measure progress toward the objective. We classified these four indicators as output type indicators. These indicators are also used in the Administration program. All of the indicators relate to the objective and are clear and easy to understand.

One performance indicator, computerized voting equipment in metropolitan areas, measures the first half of the second objective. This indicator meets two of the established criteria. The other indicator, counting of absentee votes computerized, meets

only one of the criteria. The counting of absentee votes is computerized; however, according to department officials, absentee voting is still done with punch cards. Therefore, the counting of absentee votes does not specifically relate to the objective since the objective concerns improved voting machines. Furthermore, the indicator does not measure progress toward the objective. However, the indicator is clear and easy to understand. To have a mix of indicators, the department should develop outcome indicators as well as indicators that measure how efficiently the Voting Machines program is functioning. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the department needs to develop and include objectives and performance indicators for its contractor.

Exhibit 3-5 below is a summary of the results of our analysis of the Voting Machines program's performance data.

Exhibit 3-5

Results of Comparing Voting Machines Program's Performance Data to Established Criteria

Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 of 1 is consistent with department mission • 1 of 1 provides a sense of direction
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of 2 are consistent with goals • 0 of 2 is measurable • 1 of 2 is timebound • 2 of 2 specify an end result
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 7 measure progress toward objective • 6 of 7 are consistent with the objective • 7 of 7 are clear and easily understood

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff from results of comparison of 1996-97 executive budget performance data to criteria in Exhibit 3-1.

**Voter
Registration
Program
Performance
Data Need
Improvement**

The performance data of the Voter Registration program do not provide useful information to enable legislators to make *informed decisions about the program*. In addition to having no mission or goals, the program's two objectives do not meet most of the established criteria. Furthermore, most of the performance indicators do not meet the established criteria.

The performance data for the Voter Registration program are shown in Exhibit 3-6 on the following page. Specific problems that we identified with this program's performance data are discussed below.

Objectives. Both objectives have an end result, but the end results could be more specific. However, neither objective is timebound or measurable. Since no goal is provided in the executive budget, the objectives cannot be consistent with the goal.

Performance Indicators. The 12 performance indicators for the Voter Registration program generally do not provide useful information for external users. Most indicators are not consistent with established criteria. Also, most indicators are one type, namely, output indicators.

The 11 performance indicators for the first objective are generally not consistent with established criteria. They do not measure progress toward achieving the program's objectives. If the objective contained a measurable target, then some of the indicators would probably measure progress toward the objective. Also, only four indicators relate to and are consistent with the objective. All indicators are clear and easy to understand.

The second objective has only one performance indicator. This indicator does not measure progress toward the objective; however, it is clear and easy to understand. The objective relates to improving computer programs, but the indicator measures sales of the data produced. If the objective is to evaluate, update, and modify programs, then the department should be measuring the results of these efforts. The department should develop additional indicators for this objective.

Exhibit 3-6
**Voter Registration Program's Performance Data Reported
in 1996-97 Executive Budget**

Mission: None identified.

Goals: None identified.

Objective #1:

Continue to centralize voter information and statistics and ensure the integrity of the state's voter rolls.

Performance Indicators:

- Number of Registered Voters (Using Highest During FY)
- Parishes on Statewide System
- Number of Requests for Voter Registration Lists
- Louisiana was the first state in the nation to have a statewide voter registration system
- Total Number of Voters Added to Statewide Rolls
- Percentage of New Voters Registered in Person
- Percentage of New Voters Registered Through "Motor Voter" Methods
 - Percentage Registered by Mail-in Cards
 - Percentage Registered by Motor Vehicle Office
 - Percentage Registered by Social Service Offices and Education Drives
- Percentage of All Registered Voters Registered by Motor Voter

Objective #2:

Continue to evaluate, update, and modify programs to produce cleaner information and reports.

Performance Indicator:

- Sales from Voter Registration Information on System

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the 1996-97 executive budget.

Ten of the twelve indicators for this program are output indicators. Many measure the percentage of how many voters are registered by which method of registration. The department should develop other types of indicators for this program, as *Manageware* stresses.

Exhibit 3-7 below summarizes the results of our analysis of the Voter Registration program's performance data.

Exhibit 3-7

**Results of Comparing Voter Registration Program's
Performance Data to Established Criteria**

Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 2 is consistent with goals • 0 of 2 is measurable • 0 of 2 is timebound • 2 of 2 specify an end result
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 12 measures progress toward objective • 4 of 12 are consistent with the objective • 12 of 12 are clear and easily understood

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff from results of comparison of 1996-97 executive budget performance data to criteria in Exhibit 3-1.

**Elections
Program
Performance
Data Are
Limited**

An external user of the executive budget cannot make informed decisions about the Elections program using its objective and performance indicator. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this program receives and spends funds for activities that are related to elections. The objective and performance indicator for the Elections program each meet two of the established criteria. The performance data for the Elections program are shown in Exhibit 3-8 on the following page.

Exhibit 3-8
**Elections Program's Performance Data Reported
in 1996-97 Executive Budget**

Mission: None identified.

Goals: None identified.

Objective:

Continue to make timely payment of all election expenses and to accurately assess and collect all expenses due the state.

Performance Indicator:

Turnaround Time for Reimbursement for Statewide Election

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the 1996-97 executive budget.

Objective. The objective relates to two department functions and could be split into two objectives. Both parts of the objective specify a desired end result but neither provides a time frame by which the end result will be achieved. Since this program pays all expenses and collects all amounts owed, we found that the two parts could be considered measurable.

Performance Indicator. The one performance indicator for this program meets two of the established criteria. However, it is not clear to which part of the objective this indicator relates. Thus, we found that the indicator is not clear and easy to understand. The indicator can relate to either part of the objective. Specifically, this indicator can be used to measure the time it takes to pay expenses, or to measure the time it takes to collect amounts owed.

As discussed above, the indicator can be associated with either part of the objective. Therefore, the objective and performance indicator do not provide useful information for decision-making purposes.

Exhibit 3-9 on the following page is a summary of the results of our analysis of the performance data of the Elections program.

Exhibit 3-9
**Results of Comparing Elections Program's
Performance Data to Established Criteria**

Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 of 1 is consistent with goals • 1 of 1 is measurable • 0 of 1 is timebound • 1 of 1 specifies an end result
Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 of 1 measures progress toward objective • 1 of 1 is consistent with the objective • 0 of 1 is clear and easily understood

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff from results of comparison of 1996-97 executive budget performance data to criteria in Exhibit 3-1.

Recommendations

With the assistance of the Office of Planning and Budget, the Department of Elections and Registration should:

- 3.1** Begin developing a formal strategic plan for the department
- 3.2** Develop separate sets of performance data for the administrative and support functions of the Administration program
- 3.3** Improve the existing objectives by making them specific, measurable, and timebound

- 3.4** Develop a mixture of performance indicator types for each objective
- 3.5** Ensure that performance data contain the elements presented in Exhibit 3-1

Appendix A

List of References

Appendix A: List of References

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- Portland-Multnomah County Progress Board. *Portland-Multnomah County Benchmarks - Standards for Measuring Community Progress and Government Performance*. January 1994.
- Texas, State of--Governor's Office of Budget and Planning. *Instructions for Preparing and Submitting Agency Strategic Plans for the 1992-1998 Period*. January 1992.
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Appendix B

Boards, Commissions, and Like Entities
Related to the
Department of Elections and Registration

Appendix B: Boards, Commissions, and Like Entities

Board, Commission or Like Entity	Legal Authority	Purpose/Function
State Board of Election Supervisors (Within the Department of State)	R.S. 18:23-18:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews election laws and procedures used in conducting elections in the state • Reports its findings, observations, and recommendations annually to the legislature
Parish Boards of Election Supervisors	R.S. 18:423	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises the preparation for and the conduct of all elections held in the parish

Note: Each parish has a board of election supervisors.

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using the September 1996 *Boards, Commissions, and Like Entities Report to the Legislature* and research of state laws.

Appendix C

Department of Elections and Registration's Response



State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION

JERRY M. FOWLER
Commissioner of Elections

October 20, 1997

Dr. Daniel G. Kyle, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor
Post Office Box 94397
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9397

ATTENTION: Robert Bruce

RE: Act 1100 of the 1995 Regular Session

Dear Dr. Kyle:

Enclosed herewith is the Department's Response to the Analysis of Program Authority and Performance Data for the Department of Elections and Registration for the year ended June 30, 1997.

Please contact Carol Guidry if you should require additional documentation or information. With kind regards, I remain

Yours truly,



Jerry M. Fowler
Commissioner

JMF:chg

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS AND REGISTRATION
ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM AUTHORITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA
FISCAL YEAR 1996-1997

The Department would like to respond to two issues noted in said report. The first issue is a question concerning the possible violation of the state constitution by the Voting Machine Program conducting special elections for schools, colleges, trade unions, and civic associations. The second issue is concerned with the lack of adequate performance indicators in the Department's operational plan for Fiscal Year 1996-1997.

With regard to the first issue, the Department of Elections and Registration has allowed the use of Department voting machines and personnel to conduct special elections since the 1950's. On October 9, 1997, the Department requested an attorney general's opinion regarding this issue. Upon receipt of an opinion by the Attorney General's office, a copy will be forwarded to the Office of Legislative Auditor. If it is determined that the Department is in violation of the state constitution, the Department will cease conducting special elections pending the adoption of legislation authorizing said special elections.

With regard to the second issue, representatives for the Department of Elections and Registration met with representatives from the Office of Planning and Budget, House and Governmental Affairs Committee, and the House Appropriations Committee to determine adequate performance indicators for the Department for Fiscal Year 1997-1998. All representatives concurred that the new performance indicators will meet the needs of everyone concerned; therefore, we feel that we have already taken the necessary corrective action to resolve this issue.

Appendix D

Division of Administration,
Office of Planning and Budget's
Response



State of Louisiana
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUDGET RECEIVED
LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR

97 OCT 20 AM 9:53

M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

MARK C. DRENNEN
COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATION

October 15, 1997

Daniel G. Kyle, Ph.D., CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor
Post Office Box 94397
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397

Re: Analysis of Program Authority and Performance Data for Department of Elections and Registration

Dear Dr. Kyle:

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the audit report, Department of Elections and Registration: Analysis of Program Authority and Performance Data.

Our office generally agrees with audit recommendations regarding ways to improve the department's planning and performance accountability. To the department's credit, it should be noted that, working with staff from the Office of Planning and Budget, the House Appropriations Committee, and the Joint Legislative Committee on Senate and House Governmental Affairs, the department has already initiated improvements to its operational plan and performance indicators. These improvements were included in the department's total budget request package for FY 1997-98.

As you are aware, the Office of Planning and Budget maintains a standing offer to all state agencies of training and technical assistance in planning, budgeting, and performance accountability. A Department of Elections and Registration executive has participated in recent Office of Planning and Budget training on the strategic planning, operational planning, and performance accountability requirements and guidelines of Act 1465 of 1997. In addition, we anticipate working with department executives and staff over the course of this fiscal year as they undertake departmentwide strategic planning and continue improvements to their operational plan and performance indicators.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Winham
State Director of Planning and Budget

SRW/CSL

c: Honorable Jerry Fowler
Commissioner of Elections and Registration