



# OFA ◇ OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## **PRINTING AND RECYCLING BALLOTS**

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You asked several questions concerning ballots, which we answer separately below.

### ***1. What companies print ballots for federal, state, and local elections in Connecticut?***

According to the Office of the Secretary of the State, two companies are approved to print ballots for use in Connecticut's federal, state, and local elections: (1) Adkins, which is located in New Britain, Connecticut and (2) LHS Associates, which is located in Methuen, Massachusetts. About 140 municipalities use Adkins and the remaining use LHS. (LHS supplied the state with its optical scan voting machines and programs the machines' memory cards for each election.)

A municipality may opt to use another printer, but must first have the ballot approved by ES&S, the manufacturer of the state's optical scan machines. In this case, the municipality must send sample ballots to ES&S for testing. ES&S ensures that the ballots are printed with an "exacting nature" so that the machines can accurately count them and thus, comply with the error rate standards in the federal voting system standards in effect on October 29, 2002, which the federal Help America Vote Act (P. L. 107-252) requires.

## **2. What is the average cost of printing a ballot?**

There are a number of factors that determine the cost of a ballot, including:

1. stock color,
2. the simplicity or complexity of the ballot (i.e., the number of candidates necessitating X/Y coordinates),
3. whether the ballot is single or double sided,
4. whether the ballot is single or multiple pages, and
5. quantity printed or ordered.

Depending on these variables, the average cost of a ballot in Connecticut generally ranges from \$0.25 to \$0.45.

## **3. How does the ballot recycling process work?**

Unused or unvoted ballots cannot be reused. The law requires that they be destroyed within 10 days after an election ([CGS § 9-303](#)). The Secretary of the State's Office indicated that unused ballots may be recycled after destruction and according to Judy Beaudreau, Vernon registrar of voters and previous head of the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut, some registrars do recycle unused ballots.

Department of Environmental Protection regulations (Conn. Agency Regs. § 22a-241b-1) define "recycle" as separating or diverting items from the solid waste stream for the purposes of processing or causing them to be processed into a material product. If recycled, unused ballots would generally be transferred to a recycling facility, mixed and bailed with other recycled paper, and processed into new paper and paper products.

## **4. What is the fiscal impact of recycling ballots?**

There is no fiscal impact associated with recycling paper ballots. The weight of unused ballots as a percentage of a municipality's total municipal solid waste is anticipated to be insignificant, causing no measurable difference in a municipality's tipping fee. (A tipping fee is a charge, usually in dollars per ton, for the unloading or dumping of waste at a landfill, transfer station, recycling center, or waste-to-energy facility, also called a disposal or service fee. Average tipping fees in Connecticut range from about \$57 to \$70 per ton.)

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