



Part 4 — Costs & Economic Realities

Posted on August 17, 2025 by Carey Fauscett-Anderson

TRENTON, Ga. — The Dade County Board of Commissioners recently received six qualified proposals for the construction of a new elections building. All six proposals fell within a narrow range—between \$2.9 million and \$3.2 million.

The consistency in these numbers reflects the current construction market and underscores that these prices are not the result of overestimation by one or two vendors, but the reality of today's economy.

Why the Costs Are Higher Than Past Estimates

Some citizens have compared these proposals to figures discussed years ago under a prior administration. At that time, no formal design or bid process had taken place, and the figures were based on rough discussion rather than vendor proposals. Those earlier numbers also reflected outdated market conditions, different design considerations, and pre-inflation construction costs.

Since then, the cost of building materials, skilled labor, and compliance-related infrastructure has risen significantly. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, construction material costs have increased sharply in recent years, particularly for concrete, steel, and electrical components—all of which are essential for an election's facility.

In addition, Georgia's voting equipment requirements, security standards, and accessibility mandates have continued to evolve. Since 2023, the state has implemented enhanced security checks and approved software upgrades for Dominion voting systems to safeguard equipment from potential threats ([GovTech, 2023](#)). The Secretary of State's office also expanded routine security health checks ahead of the 2024 elections ([Georgia Secretary of State, 2024](#)). In 2025, bills were introduced that would have required hand-marked paper ballots and new optical scanning systems, although those proposals did not pass into law ([CitizenPortal, 2025](#); [TrackBill, 2025](#)). These ongoing updates—both in enacted safeguards and proposed changes—reflect the broader environment in which local governments must plan, adding layers of infrastructure and compliance compared to earlier projections.



What the Price Includes

The \$2.9M–\$3.2M proposals are not just for a simple structure. They include:

- Secure, climate-controlled storage for all voting equipment.
- Adequate space for Logic & Accuracy testing before each election.
- A dedicated poll worker training area that meets state guidelines.
- Sufficient electrical capacity and networking infrastructure to support simultaneous testing and operations.
- ADA-compliant public access and workspaces.
- Fire safety and security systems to meet Georgia's election facility standards.



These features are not optional—they are necessary to remain in compliance with state law and to ensure the security and efficiency of elections operations.



Why a Narrow Price Range Matters

When multiple vendors—each independently estimating materials, labor, and time—return similar bids, it signals that the market has established a realistic baseline for the project. This means that even if the county were to start the bidding process over, the resulting proposals would likely fall within the same range.

Elections Staffing Realities

Elections in Dade County are managed by a very small team, with only one full-time elections position supported by a network of part-time poll workers during election cycles. This lean staffing means that the same people responsible for voter registration, early voting, absentee ballot processing, Logic & Accuracy testing, and poll worker training are also handling equipment transport, setup, and secure storage.



Without a dedicated elections facility, these tasks require extra steps, more time, and more physical labor—often stretching workdays into evenings and weekends during busy election periods. The limited number of people involved in these operations means there is no room for inefficiency, and the lack of centralized space compounds the challenge.

While the proposed cost may be higher than figures discussed years ago, it reflects the real price of building a facility that meets Georgia's current legal and operational standards. All six proposals are in line with one another, confirming that this is the true cost of building the secure, functional elections facility Dade County needs.

