

STRATEGIC PLAN



FY 2022-FY 2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
INTRODUCTION	6
AGENCY STRUCTURE	7
ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT	8
AGENCY ORGANIZATION CHART	9
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK	10
IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THIS PLAN	11
STRATEGIC GOAL 1	16
STRATEGIC GOAL 2	20
STRATEGIC GOAL 3	27
CONTRIBUTING DIVISIONS	36



Mona Harrington
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is entering a new phase in meeting and exceeding our mission to help election officials improve the administration of elections and help Americans participate in the voting process. Through a nimble and proactive management approach, the agency has established itself as a critical support of election administration. Recent advances have positioned the EAC to fully meet and surpass our mission in the next five years.

Strengthen American Elections Through the Development and Implementation of Responsive and Dynamic Voting System Guidelines and Cyber Resources for Election Officials

The EAC is charged with developing and implementing the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), a set of specifications and requirements that voting systems including voting devices and software, must meet in order to receive a certification from the EAC. The VVSG include guidance on design, quality, cybersecurity, transparency, interoperability, accessibility, privacy, usability, secrecy, access control, physical security, data protection, system integration, detection, and monitoring of voting systems. The security of our voting systems has never been under more public scrutiny, with citizens relying upon election officials to protect their vote from interference. These developments have made the VVSG a cornerstone of American elections as state and local officials rely upon the EAC to develop a dynamic and responsive system to protect elections.

Over the next five years, the EAC will evolve the existing guidelines to ensure the VVSG remains an agile and dynamic document, ensuring voting systems meet the modern-day security standards of the next decade. The EAC will also create guidelines for other election technologies to fortify all steps of the election process beginning with electronic poll books, or e-poll books. The program will develop requirements and responsibilities for participants in the program, a way for manufacturers to register to formally participate, testing requirements and procedures, reporting and certification artifacts, and include a quality monitoring program. By developing these guidelines, while establishing a system for continual updates to the VVSG, the EAC can ensure election officials have modern and responsive guidelines by which to certify their equipment.



Encourage Improvements to Election Administration Through the Development and Distribution of Resources that Assist Election Officials in Modernizing American Elections

The EAC was established to serve as a clearinghouse on election administration information and best practices. To best serve election officials in this endeavor, the EAC has brought in experts in areas of election administration including accessibility, language access, election law, and election operations to research, collect, and establish best practices.

Over the next five years, the EAC will build upon existing expertise to provide innovative research and best practices to enable election officials to run safe, secure, accurate, and accessible elections. By providing research and resources on emerging and difficult issues in election administration, the EAC can maximize efficiencies and the agency's position as a national clearinghouse to best serve election officials.

Create Operational Excellence Throughout Agency Management and Programming

In addition to the two program specific goals, the EAC will focus for the next five years on the continued development of the agency. The EAC takes seriously the responsibility to effectively and responsibly maximize the funding it receives from the American taxpayer. The agency's 2018 strategic plan created a stronger, adaptable, and more efficient EAC. Through reorganization and strategic hiring, the EAC has become an agency that excels in meeting its statutorily mandated mission.

Over the next five years, the EAC will evolve from a young agency establishing programs and rebuilding from a period of uncertainty into a thriving federal workforce serving election officials, the American

public, and agency employees. Through establishing internal structures and tools, the EAC will improve its ability to serve its stakeholders through good federal partnerships, strategic planning, and efficient structures and processes.

The EAC expects the period of FY 2022 - FY 2027 to be a pivotal time in the history of the EAC. Just as election administration and technology evolve and improve, so must the EAC in order to best serve election officials and voters. This exciting period promises growth and evolution in service of our mission. We look forward to serving our stakeholders and helping to improve the administration of elections during this period.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission helps election officials improve the administration of elections and helps Americans participate in the voting process.

VISION STATEMENT

A trusted, proactive, and responsive federal agency that helps election officials administer and voters participate in elections.

FY 2022-FY 2023 Agency Priority Goals

- 1 Contribute to the cyber-resilience of the American election administration system.
- 2 Actively engage stakeholders and assist election officials to conduct safe, secure, accurate, and accessible elections in 2022 and beyond.
- 3 Implement the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines lifecycle policy to establish a regular update process and deprecation of older versions.
- 4 Optimize performance throughout agency operations.

The above Agency Priority Goals were designed to focus the agency's work on certain priorities while working toward the Strategic Goals listed on the following pages. These Priority Goals are subject to change on an annual basis, per the priority and objectives of each EAC chairperson.

INTRODUCTION



Twenty years ago, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) created the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Despite being one of the newest and smallest federal agencies, the EAC was tasked with a critical mission to help strengthen American elections through a focus on election administration and assisting election officials to meet the challenges of the time. The original expectations of the agency - serving as a clearinghouse of information and best practices, transitioning from outdated voting systems, and managing grants to the states - have since expanded in both size and importance as elections and technology have rapidly evolved. Since its inception, the EAC has created robust guidelines for the next generation of voting technology, produced research and best practices on election administration and emerging topics, provided training for over a thousand election officials on cybersecurity, and assisted election officials as they conducted elections during a pandemic.

Despite historic funding shortages, the EAC has remained agile in its methods to meet its mission including adding expertise to the federal workforce and reorganizing as appropriate. The next phase of EAC work will allow the agency to build upon the victories of the first 20 years of HAVA, utilizing new expertise and close collaboration with federal partners to address the increasing threats to American elections and those who run them.

As a small and rapidly evolving agency, the ability of the EAC to meet the goals in this strategic plan is highly dependent upon funding levels. Through continued investment in the agency, the EAC believes the agency can become a model federal agency effectively using funding, engaging meaningfully with the public, and directly serving our stakeholders to address high priority concerns and an evolving elections landscape. Cuts or lulls in funding could directly impact the ability of the EAC to achieve each of the strategic goals in this plan.

The mission outlined in HAVA has never been more critical to elections, the cornerstone of American democracy. The EAC has never been better positioned to excel in its mission and serve the election officials on the front lines of the electoral process.

AGENCY STRUCTURE

The EAC is a legislatively created independent federal Commission. It consists of four Commissioners, EAC professional staff, and the EAC's Inspector General. The agency also has four federal advisory committees: the EAC Board of Advisors, the EAC Standards Board, the EAC Technical Guidelines Development Committee, and the Local Leadership Council. The EAC has two Congressional Oversight Committees, the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration and the U.S. Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

The EAC's four Commissioners are presidential appointees selected upon recommendation of Congressional leadership and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The agency's chartering legislation, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), provides for the appointment of two Commissioners by the majority party and two Commissioners by the minority party. This helps to ensure the agency works to achieve its mission in a bipartisan manner.

The EAC's professional staff members possess expertise in election administration, election technology, accessibility, administration, communications, federal compliance, federal grant management, finance, law, and management. The size of the EAC's professional staff has varied since the agency's inception but has recently grown due to budgetary investment in the agency. At the time of this plan's drafting, the EAC's professional staff consisted of 43 full-time staff members.

The EAC's three statutorily mandated advisory boards represent a broad set of EAC stakeholders, and each board makes distinct contributions to the EAC's work. The EAC Standards Board consists of 110 members, 55 state elections officials selected by their respective chief state election official and 55 local election officials selected through a process supervised by the chief state election official. The EAC Board of Advisors consists of 35 members who represent specific interests in the field of elections. The EAC Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) assists the EAC in developing its Voluntary Voting System Guidelines. It is composed of 15 members, selected for their technical and subject matter expertise. The EAC formed a new Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) board in 2021, the Local Leadership Council (LLC), to provide direct feedback from local election officials on emerging and pressing issues in election administration. Consisting of 100 local election officials and leaders of local election official organizations, the LLC conducted its first meeting in December 2021 and will meet regularly to advise the EAC on topics of critical importance to local election officials as they administer elections.

4

COMMISSIONERS

4

FEDERAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEES

43

FULL-TIME STAFF
MEMBERS

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

STANDARDS
BOARD

BOARD OF
ADVISORS

TECHNICAL
GUIDELINES
DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

LOCAL
LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL

As a result of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the EAC is limited in options for obtaining timely and formal quantitative and qualitative feedback from stakeholders on agency resources and programming. Despite that limitation, the EAC works to utilize the four advisory boards with members representing various stakeholder groups to continually assess the work and impact of the agency.

The EAC will continue to utilize the expertise of the boards to garner feedback on EAC products, goals, and plans. The agency will also continue to seek an exemption from the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) to allow it to regularly obtain timely information directly from stakeholders. In the absence of an exemption, the EAC will also utilize new tools and processes to evaluate the agency and its performance as outlined in this plan.

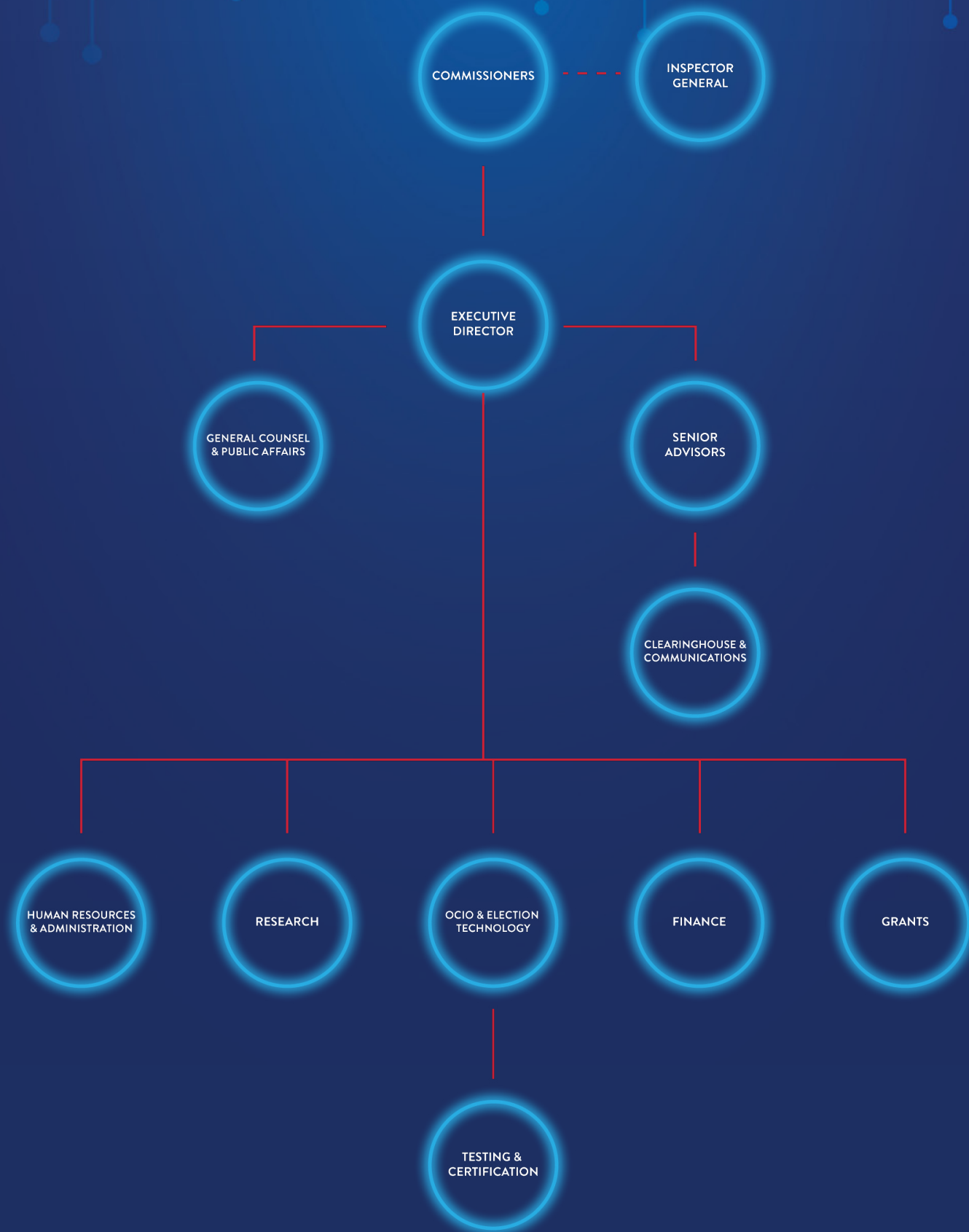
The EAC serves in a customer service role for both election officials and the public. The EAC receives thousands of calls and emails from the public each year. Staff work to assist members of the public and direct them to the best information possible.

The EAC analyzes the types of inquiries received and uses that data to help shape its goals and objectives. By understanding the needs of election officials and the public, the EAC is best able to serve these important constituencies through its goals and programming.

Additionally, members of Congress, both on the EAC's oversight committees and beyond, play a critical role in helping to shape the goals of the agency. Through regular correspondence, invitations to testify, and inquiries, Congress has interacted directly with EAC leadership on emerging areas of concern and areas for further research and programming. The EAC is grateful for the continued interest in its work and continually monitors Congressional concerns for incorporation within agency goals and programming.

These various methods help the agency evaluate goals on an annual basis as we strive to meet our mission and serve election officials and voters. The EAC is grateful for the feedback and engagement it receives and will continue to utilize it as appropriate.

EAC'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



This organizational chart is currently operational but is pending a final vote by Commissioners.



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This strategic plan includes three goals designed to drive the agency toward achieving its mission. Within each strategic goal are agency strategies to guide decision making in furtherance of achieving goals and specific performance measures to evaluate success of EAC programs.

EAC leadership is fully committed to the success of the agency including the execution of the EAC's strategic plan. Leadership will ensure achievement of the strategic objectives by empowering EAC staff to utilize expertise within a culture of innovation to maximize impact of EAC programs. The Executive Director's role is to make sure appropriate progress is made and the necessary resources are provided to ensure success throughout the agency. As necessary, the Executive Director will work with division directors to modify components of this plan to ensure the agency is consistently achieving its mission.

IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF THIS PLAN

The EAC will implement this plan through four stages: Planning, Executing, Reporting, and Evolving. First, the agency has taken a collaborative agency-wide approach to the drafting of this plan. Through integrating division directors in the drafting of goals and objectives, the EAC has worked to ensure maximum agency-wide engagement with the strategic plan. As leaders within the agency, division directors will play an integral role in launching, tracking, and evolving these goals throughout the strategic plan period.

Second, the EAC will utilize the goals and objectives to drive EAC programs during the strategic plan period. If necessary, the EAC will build new programs, processes, procedures, and plans in order to achieve goals and objectives set forth in this document. Division directors will be expected to cite to EAC leadership specific elements of the strategic plan when developing new programming or operations during the strategic plan period.

Third, the agency provides an annual report to Congress each January detailing the agency's work toward meeting its mission. These annual reports will provide an opportunity for the EAC to reflect upon progress to completion of strategic plan goals and objectives. The EAC will develop a procedure to evaluate all programs throughout their existence for adherence to strategic plan goals. Additionally, the management of work toward accomplishing the strategic goals will be a key factor in the annual evaluation of EAC senior staff including the Executive Director, General Counsel, and division directors.

Finally, the agency will utilize the annual report and critical election concerns to evolve the goals of this plan when necessary to meet the moment. Due to the critical nature of the work of the EAC in the evolving landscape of American elections, the agency must remain agile in addressing the needs of stakeholders and the agency staff. Through a spirit of constant review and reflection, the EAC will ensure this strategic plan is a guiding document that evolves with the agency.

PLANNING

EXECUTING

REPORTING

EVOLVING

CROSS AGENCY PRIORITY GOALS



Per the GPRA Modernization Act, the EAC must address cross agency priority goals in the agency strategic plan. The current Presidential Management Agenda lays out three strategic goals:

- 1 Strengthening and empowering the Federal workforce
- 2 Delivering excellent, equitable, and secure Federal services and customer experience
- 3 Managing the business of Government to Build Back Better

Strengthening and Empowering the Federal Workforce

The EAC strategic plan directly furthers cross agency priority goals regarding strengthening and empowering the Federal workforce. Through the addition of staff during the previous strategic plan period, the EAC has reached a point of capacity that will allow the agency to evolve operations to best serve the workforce. As outlined in Strategic Goal 3, the EAC will work during the plan period to continue to build a skilled and diverse workforce. Through building internal tools and structures, EAC leadership will empower agency employees to understand and have a voice in agency operations. The EAC will strive to evolve its internal operations and processes to produce a model work environment, meeting the needs of our workforce both currently and in the future.

Delivering Excellent, Equitable, and Secure Federal Services and Customer Experience

The EAC has numerous stakeholders including the American public. As the only federal agency focused solely on election administration, the EAC plays an integral role in providing critical information for Americans regarding the voting process both as a provider of direct election support and as a clearinghouse of election administration informational products for election officials as reflected in Strategic Goal 2. The EAC will also continue to partner with other agencies, including the General Services Administration (GSA) on public-facing products and services including Vote.gov to ensure the American public is provided with accurate, timely, and easy-to-access elections information. The EAC will endeavor in the next five years to continue to evolve the design and functionality of the EAC's website, eac.gov, to deliver excellent and secure customer service.

The EAC has recently expanded the resources offered to serve Americans in the election process. The agency has expanded the translation of materials available on the EAC website into 21 languages. These resources include the National Mail Voter Registration Form, the Glossary of Election Terminology, and the Executive Summary of the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) report. These documents allow language minority voters to access voter registration, understand common terminology used in elections or on their ballots, and learn about election administration across the country. The EAC will continue to consider additional translations of these materials or additional materials as appropriate to serve America's diverse population.

Managing the business of Government to Build Back Better

In furtherance of the goal to "Build Back Better," the EAC will focus on agency growth to build additional capacity, sustainable solutions for grants management, and expanded cybersecurity programs to secure the EAC's systems. Through a focus on building capacity within the agency, the EAC will foster lasting improvements to the American electoral system through providing additional support to election officials and creating additional guidance on elections technologies to further secure our elections. Strategic Goals 1, 2, and 3 speak specifically to building a strong electoral system and a strengthened EAC with Strategic Goal 1 speaking to cybersecurity improvements.

At the time of this writing, the EAC was in the process of implementing new grants management software. This software will enhance how the agency manages grants, streamlining the reporting process across grant categories directly addressing the Administration's desired goal during the strategic goal period. The agency is also adequately prepared for the G-Invoice transition mandate in FY 2023, streamlining the EAC's official coordination with other federal agencies.

THE U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION HELPS ELECTION OFFICIALS IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS AND HELPS AMERICANS PARTICIPATE IN THE VOTING PROCESS

GOAL 1

Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Continue to evolve the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and related policies to provide responsive guidelines and requirements for voting systems.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Develop programs under the Help America Vote Act to bolster the security and accessibility standards of other election technology.

OBJECTIVE 1.3

Leverage and expand upon the EAC's existing technical expertise to provide timely resources to increase the security posture of critical infrastructure (voting systems, e-poll books, and other areas of election administration, etc.).

GOAL 2

Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Serve as a clearinghouse of election best practices by continually creating resources that help election officials improve the administration of elections and help voters participate in elections.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

Increase confidence in America's elections and transform the common understanding of election administration through commissioning innovative research.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Effectively and efficiently distribute federal resources to EAC stakeholders.

GOAL 3

Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Increase customer service to key stakeholders and partners.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Update internal structures and policies to optimize performance.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Develop and continue to manage internal structures and tools that produce a culture of innovation and a driven workforce.

OBJECTIVE 3.4

Continue to build a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

For the years 2022 to 2026, the EAC has three strategic goals and 10 strategic objectives.

Strategic Goal 1: Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials.

- OBJECTIVE 1.1** Continue to evolve the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and related policies to provide responsive guidelines and requirements for voting systems.
 - OBJECTIVE 1.2** Develop programs under the Help America Vote Act to bolster the security and accessibility standards of other election technology.
 - OBJECTIVE 1.3** Leverage and expand upon the EAC's existing technical expertise to provide timely resources to increase the security posture of critical infrastructure (voting systems, e-poll books, and other areas of election administration, etc.).
-

Strategic Goal 2: Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.

- OBJECTIVE 2.1** Serve as a clearinghouse of election best practices by continually creating resources that help election officials improve the administration of elections and help voters participate in elections.
 - OBJECTIVE 2.2** Increase confidence in America's elections and transform the common understanding of election administration through commissioning innovative research.
 - OBJECTIVE 2.3** Effectively and efficiently distribute federal resources to EAC stakeholders.
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Strategic Goal 3: Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

- OBJECTIVE 3.1** Increase customer service to key stakeholders and partners.
- OBJECTIVE 3.2** Update internal structures and policies to optimize performance.
- OBJECTIVE 3.3** Develop and continue to manage internal structures and tools that produce a culture of innovation and a driven workforce.
- OBJECTIVE 3.4** Continue to build a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

GOAL 1

Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines, security, and cyber resources for election officials.

1.1

1.2

1.3

GOAL OVERVIEW

A key component of American elections is the decentralized nature of election administration throughout the country. While this decentralization is an important factor in ensuring the security of elections, it can also lead to confusion about the security of America's voting systems and other election technology. The EAC plays a key role in bringing technological gains in security and other factors to voters through the oversight of voting system guidelines and providing cybersecurity resources to election officials.

As the only agency focused solely on election administration, the EAC is uniquely qualified to lead on providing resources to election officials while educating the American public about the resilience of our systems. The EAC helps to safeguard the integrity of our voting systems through the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and cybersecurity resources developed to serve election officials. This work will expand and the EAC will utilize agency expertise to develop additional guidance to bolster the security of other election technologies in the coming years.

1.1

Continue to evolve the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and related policies to provide responsive guidelines and requirements for voting systems.

OVERVIEW

The EAC works to ensure responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines through the development, passage, and implementation of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines, known as the VVSG. The VVSG are the only national set of uniform specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if the voting system meets required standards. Some factors under these tests include basic functionality, accessibility, accuracy, reliability, and security capabilities.

In February 2021, the EAC's Commissioners unanimously passed the VVSG 2.0. These standards represent the first major revision of the standards in over 15 years. The VVSG 2.0 standards significantly improve voting system standards in comparison to the VVSG 1.0 version that manufacturers are currently using to test and certify voting machines. In the next five years, the EAC will adopt a more frequent update cycle for the VVSG and will implement the VVSG Lifecycle Policy detailing this process.

STRATEGIES

- Finalize the VVSG Lifecycle Policy to ensure a clearly defined path for regular updates is communicated to all stakeholders.
- Provide yearly VVSG update recommendations to the Executive Director after review by the EAC's advisory boards and other stakeholders.
- Make regular updates to the Testing and Certification Program manuals to reflect a rapidly evolving environment.
- Accredite voting system testing laboratories (VSTLS) for future VVSG 2.0 voting systems.
- Encourage participation by manufacturers in pilot programs such as the component testing pilot program.
- Encourage anomaly reporting to the testing and certification division to resolve potential issues in a timely manner.
- Encourage manufacturers to certify their equipment to the updated standards.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- VVSG is reviewed yearly for potential updates.
- Certification of a VVSG 2.0 compliant system.

1.2

Develop programs under the Help America Vote Act to bolster the security and accessibility standards of other election technology.

OVERVIEW

The EAC recognizes that technologies outside of the scope of voting systems are being rapidly adopted by jurisdictions across the nation to modernize their elections, provide for improved auditability, and help better control costs. The EAC refers to this class of systems as election supporting technology and is working to develop programs to test and certify this equipment. Examples of election supporting technologies include e-poll books, as well as election night reporting, in-precinct ballot printing, and remote ballot delivery and marking devices. The EAC will develop guidelines supporting testing and certification, which will help standardize the level of security and accessibility provided by these devices and help relieve some of the burden states currently shoulder when creating their own guidelines.

STRATEGIES

- Develop pilot programs with security and accessibility requirements specific to each election supporting technology.
- Encourage Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL) and manufacturer participation in each pilot.
- Utilize pilot findings to develop permanent testing and certification programs that can remain agile in a technological environment that is continually evolving.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Successfully conduct a pilot program for e-poll book testing and certification and use findings to create a permanent program.
- Conduct a pilot program for another election supporting technology and publish findings.

1.3

Leverage and expand upon the EAC’s existing technical expertise to provide timely resources to increase the security posture of critical infrastructure (voting systems, e-poll books, and other areas of election administration, etc.).

OVERVIEW

The EAC’s Cyber Access and Security (CAS) program was created in 2020 to provide cybersecurity training, best practices, and other resources to election administrators. In concert with the EAC’s Clearinghouse department, the CAS program continues to create, collect, and disseminate this critical security information and update existing materials to reflect current and emerging threats to our critical election infrastructure. The EAC plans to bolster its capabilities through the addition of personnel, technical resources, and outreach efforts.

STRATEGIES

- Create computer-based training resources for election administrators to learn fundamental cybersecurity skills critical to protecting their election infrastructure.
- Produce and update written guidance and checklists for election administrators to reference when securing their systems or creating their own custom training.
- Coordinate with stakeholders on the best use of EAC resources for delivery of materials created by other organizations.
- Coordinate with stakeholders on messaging and priorities around various election events.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Creation of an online training delivery system with courses focused on election cybersecurity fundamentals.
- Successful cybersecurity defense of 2022 midterm and 2024 presidential elections.

GOAL 2

Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.

2.1

2.2

2.3

GOAL OVERVIEW

Elections are run by thousands of election officials across the country. This decentralized system allows election officials to serve as experts within their jurisdiction and state but has traditionally created a lack of uniform, nationwide election administration practices. To address this challenge, the EAC was tasked by the Help America Vote Act to serve as a clearinghouse of information on election administration. Through the collection and development of best practices, conducting innovative research into emerging topics in elections, and distributing resources and funding to the states, the EAC serves a critical role in helping to advance election administration.

The rapidly changing landscape of elections has only served to increase the importance of a coordinated effort to collect, develop, and distribute resources to allow election officials to effectively and efficiently respond. During the next five years, the EAC will build upon successful historic programming initiatives in the clearinghouse, research, and grants divisions to provide election officials the information and grant funding (if appropriated) that is required to strengthen elections conducted between 2022 and 2026 and beyond.

2.1

Serve as a clearinghouse of election best practices by continually creating resources that help election officials improve the administration of elections and help voters participate in elections.

OVERVIEW

The EAC is charged by HAVA to be a clearinghouse of information on election administration. To align with this charge, the EAC established a Clearinghouse department consisting of Subject Matter Experts including former election officials and experts on election law, accessibility, language access, design, and more. The Clearinghouse team works with EAC staff to create new, timely, and in-depth resources for election officials on various pressing issues ranging from audits to redistricting. The expertise of the Clearinghouse staff will be used to supplement expertise from other departments such as research, communications, and grants, as the EAC develops materials, FAQs, trainings, and other resources to raise awareness of best practices and share ideas to improve election administration.

As a trusted source of election information, the EAC's website is a critical resource for voters as they look for information on voter registration, casting a ballot, and other parts of the electoral process. Since elections are managed at the state and local level, the EAC includes and updates links to information from these offices on voter registration, options to cast a ballot, local election directories, contact information and more. In the next five years, the EAC will redesign and further develop the EAC's website to best serve election officials and the public.

The EAC has traditionally relied upon public meetings and the EAC's website to gather and distribute best practices. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EAC adjusted programming and created new avenues for collaboration and discussion with key stakeholders. By utilizing existing and emerging technology, in the next five years, the EAC will work to expand and innovate not only the guidance and materials provided to election officials but the ways in which these resources are provided.

STRATEGIES

- Release an updated version of the Election Management Guidelines and Quick Start Guides to assist state and local election officials in effectively managing and administering elections.
- Assist in the training of new election officials by producing an Overview and Orientation for New Election Officials document that provides new election officials with comparative data and an overview of best practices for the administration of successful elections. Beyond EAVS data, this guide will include key definitions, best practices, and federal resources for election officials.
- Create a portal for election administrators that would allow collaboration, sharing of knowledge, materials and best practices. This portal will inform election administrators of training events, important election dates, and notify them of critical election security information. As election administrators join this portal, a directory of election officials will organically form.

2.1

Serve as a clearinghouse of election best practices by continually creating resources that help election officials improve the administration of elections and help voters participate in elections.

- Develop feedback mechanisms through the EAC advisory boards to expand and improve resources and programming.
- Expand and improve the EAC newsletter to communicate directly with election officials and other subscribers including establishing rapid response communications as appropriate.
- Use analytics for social media platforms to gauge reach of posts and growth of followers.
- Improve the organization and design of the EAC website to make it easier for the public to find information on the voting process and other information concerning elections.
- Improve the organization and design of the website to make it easier for election officials to find updated information, training, and reports so they can apply that to the management of elections in their community.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Election administrators from every state are using the portal, accessing the reporting options, connecting with other election administrators, and are more informed about training, events, and important election dates.
- EAC produces resources addressing the top three concerns of members of the advisory boards each year as identified at their annual meetings.
- Steady quarterly growth on engagement metrics for newsletters including open rates and clickthrough rates.
- Add more election officials and election office staff to the newsletter distribution list.
- Increase the reach and use of pages that are targeted to voters and election officials as measured by website analytics.

2.2

Increase confidence in America's elections and transform the common understanding of election administration through commissioning innovative research.

OVERVIEW

When the EAC was created, it inherited the long-standing duty of analyzing American election administration in order to facilitate the federal government's efforts to both help election officials better administer elections and help voters participate in elections. This is no small task. America does not have one singular election administration system. Instead, it has thousands of semi-autonomous, independently acting election jurisdictions, each with its own processes and procedures. To understand American election administration, one must understand the thousands of moving components, including the many items measured and tracked by the EAC.

Today, the EAC's analysis produces a number of different research products. Most notable is the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS). The EAC's EAVS is the most comprehensive survey of American election administration information, data, and practices in the country. The EAC publishes a new survey every two years following federal general elections. It contains more than one million data points, and it provides a national insight into how American elections are administered. In the next five years, the EAC will continue to increase the value the agency and its stakeholders receive from the EAVS by making the data more accessible and easier to use while evaluating the methods of collection and analysis of the data to ensure the survey is most effectively managed.

In addition to EAVS, the EAC regularly commissions timely research into critical election administration questions concerning voters with disabilities. Through regular surveys regarding the hurdles voters with disabilities face nationally, the EAC is able to provide valuable insight and recommendations to state and local election officials as they work to serve voters with disabilities. The EAC plans to continue this research and utilize innovative study techniques, as outlined below, to further the understanding of the experiences of voters with disabilities in order to ensure their right to an independent and private ballot.

The EAC also recognizes the need to engage others in studying election administration. The EAC will work with outside researchers to ensure their work contributes to and expands both the federal government's and the election administration community's understanding of how elections are administered. In the past, the EAC has worked alongside public and private researchers to produce research and tools for election officials. In today's time of expanded access to data and data processing power, the EAC will engage and partner with others to help the nation better understand its own elections. The EAC is committed to utilizing the best research tools available and will partner with outside entities that allow the EAC to utilize cutting edge research instruments including simulated learning to learn about elections and train election officials.

The agency will also use the EAC's research to inform its strategic planning and to produce innovative products for election officials and voters. The EAVS was first administered in 2004 and has been conducted every two years since. Each time the EAVS is completed, the agency gains more complete and accurate data, which allows it to track trends over a growing period of time and provide more insights into election administration.

2.2

Increase confidence in America's elections and transform the common understanding of election administration through commissioning innovative research.

STRATEGIES

- Continually evaluate the EAVS survey instrument for potential improvements so states and localities have an easier time submitting accurate and reliable data.
- Strengthen relationships with external users (scholars, other federal agencies, etc.) of EAVS, solicit their feedback on how to make the survey better.
- Prioritize creating products tracking trends over time.
- Produce simulated learning exercises to create and utilize data to train election officials on best practices.
- Continue to produce survey research into difficulties faced by voters with disabilities and the release of targeted recommendations and best practices based on findings.
- Reorganize and reimagine the presentation of research results on the EAC's website to ensure the data are easy to understand and utilize for further research projects.
- Establish an internal system for collaboration between divisions utilizing EAC research findings on EAC intranet.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Create working groups for Sections B-F that will help modernize the questions in those sections, similar to the Section A working group.
- Measured decrease in difficulties for voters with disabilities in surveys following federal elections.
- Utilization of simulated learning exercises by election officials in a majority of states.

2.3

Effectively and efficiently distribute federal resources to EAC stakeholders.

OVERVIEW

A key function of the EAC's mission is the administration and management of grants federal funds that help election officials procure modern election systems and improve the administration of federal elections. The agency issues grant awards, provides guidance on the appropriate use of funds, oversees, and tracks grant activities, provides technical assistance, monitors expenses, prepares financial reports for Congress, resolves audits conducted by the OIG (Office of the Inspector General), and closes out grants when all revenue is expended. The EAC Office of Grants Management (Grants Office) supports the agency's mission by overseeing this critical work.

The EAC seeks to provide excellence in service for all stakeholders, internal and external in its administration of financial assistance programs under HAVA and other discretionary funding if provided. The past few years have proven that the agency can meet objectives in a resource limited environment. The agency strives to improve its processes while considering the impact on EAC stakeholders, with an eye to facilitating smoother delivery of content, reduction in burden, and increasing efficiencies wherever possible.

One of the primary steps to achieving the vision of the agency is core federal staff recruitment, development, and retention. In 2020, the EAC began this process and will continue to build on this in the next stage of growth. What was for many years a program only, the Grants Office is now a standalone department with three federal positions and one full-time contractor. This commitment by the agency in a mission-critical area has resulted in significant gains in the past two years – namely successfully awarding and administering \$825 million in new funding, developing standardized reporting, report reviews, training, responsive communication with stakeholders including Congress, and improved capacity in the grant recipient community through sustained technical assistance provided via webinars, written guidance, frequently asked questions, and more.

The next phase of development for the agency will incorporate the grant recipient community around performance measurement of HAVA funding. The EAC must measure grantee performance to show achievement of program goals and objectives, share lessons learned, improve program outcomes, and foster adoption of promising practices per CFR200.301.

In addition, engaging stakeholders in a dialogue to establish performance measures for HAVA funds, the EAC will also develop a risk assessment to strengthen our position as good stewards of federal funds and evaluate the HAVA grants on an annual basis to identify those recipients who are deemed high risk for additional oversight and monitoring, as well as technical assistance.

One of the crucial modernization efforts the EAC kicked off in September 2021, is the partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to assess and fit the EAC grants process to their GrantSolutions end-to-end grant administration services. This process will move forward for onboarding in FY 2022 and fully function in FY 2023 and beyond.

STRATEGIES

- Award and administer grants.
- Maintain current and relevant grant and reporting information on the EAC website.
- Provide technical assistance and guidance on the management of federal financial assistance administered by EAC to reduce the risk of inappropriate use of funds and accounting errors.
- Onboard GrantSolutions end-to-end services for grants administration of the EAC's current and future grants.
- Initiate national stakeholder engagement to develop performance measures for HAVA grants.
- Implement performance measure reporting and tracking for impact assessment of HAVA grants.
- Strengthen data collection efforts and utilize such data to analyze the efficacy and impact of grant programs.
- Develop risk assessment for grant oversight and monitoring priorities.
- Conduct site visits of recipients for whom the EAC assesses to be high risk or has found significant problems in grant reports and/or in audit reports.
- Utilize regular performance and program reviews to create and maintain a culture of continuous improvement.
- Provide support and oversight during audit resolution for any findings identified by the OIG.
- Improve communication and sustain outreach with grant recipients, Congress, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Government Accountability Office (GAO), and other stakeholders to be responsive to valid inquiries about its programs and operations.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- All federal financial assistance administered by the EAC is accurately and timely disbursed.
- All audit findings are resolved within established timeframes.
- All expired grants are closed in a timely manner, with no grants expired for more than two years.
- Report annually to Congress on the expenditure of HAVA funds each year.
- Technical assistance and training to recipients to increase grant compliance is provided at least twice a year.
- Report complete, accurate, and timely financial assistance data as required by the DATA Act.
- Progress and financial reporting by grant recipients is reviewed with initial review provided within 45 days of submission.
- Grant staff attend professional development and education to obtain their certification and/or keep up with changing federal guidance.

GOAL 3

Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

3.1

3.2

3.3

3.4

GOAL OVERVIEW

Through Strategic Goal 3, the agency reaffirms its dedication to being good stewards of public funds, contributing positively to the federal government, and continuing to build and operate an agency that is diverse and impactful. The agency has been historically underfunded. In recent years the agency has received incremental funding allowing for the improvement of its operational structure. During the next five years, the EAC aims to build upon the success of previous strategic plans and create operational excellence by increasing customer service to key stakeholders, updating internal structures and policies to optimize performance, maximizing minimal resources, and building a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

3.1

Increase customer service to key stakeholders and partners.

OVERVIEW

A key component of the success of the EAC is meeting the needs of stakeholders including election officials at the state and local level and the American public.

In the next five years, the EAC will build necessary feedback and tracking mechanisms to allow the agency to increase customer service to election officials and the American public. Through utilizing social media tools, discussions with EAC FACA boards, website metrics, and real-time tracking of trends in public requests and inquiries to the agency, the EAC's customer service to stakeholders will reach new levels of success.

The nature of the EAC's work and its congressional mandates often require the agency to work with other federal agencies. The EAC regularly works in collaboration with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to achieve the Agency's mission. As elections and the threats that they face have evolved, the agency has deepened its collaboration with partners including the Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to protect critical infrastructure and serve stakeholders facing increasing and escalating threats to safety. The EAC previously helped DHS establish a core component of its critical infrastructure operations, the Elections Subsector Government Coordinating Council (GCC) and co-chairs the GCC. As the EAC looks to the next five years, it will work to deepen these partnerships to best serve the agency's stakeholders and achieve its mission.

In 2019, the EAC established a working relationship with GSA to increase information, improve functionality, and ensure the accuracy of voter registration information on the website [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov). The EAC has formally extended this partnership agreement with GSA through 2024 and EAC staff will continue to serve as subject matter experts and assist as GSA continues the development of [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) including translations of materials on the site. [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) is a simple URL that is easy to remember and use to direct the public to the site. Continually improving [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) will assist election officials as they work to serve voters and provide accurate information for Americans looking for voter registration information for their state.

3.1

Increase customer service to key stakeholders and partners.

STRATEGIES

- Obtain feedback from FACA boards on existing resources and desired work products for election officials at each board meeting.
- Build a real-time tracking system to record and evaluate requests from the public to the EAC through phone calls, emails, or web inquiries.
- Conduct regular meetings with key stakeholders including election officials and their membership organizations, and federal partners including NIST, GSA, and CISA.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the EAC website and social media accounts to ensure that statistics are utilized, and that metrics are established to inform decisions that are required to enhance the usability, functionality, and accessibility of the platforms.
- Develop rating system on EAC website for all resources to measure usability and usefulness.
- Collaborate across the federal government (GSA, BFS, OPM, NARA, OMB, GPO, GAO) by building frequent, targeted, and transparent communication for seamless services and improved customer satisfaction.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Increase of web traffic to EAC website as measured by unique visitors in each quarter of federal election years.
- Increase engagement with EAC social media profiles each year by election officials as measured by follower or subscriber counts and reach of posts, including retweets and shares.
- Increase downloading of election resources from EAC website.
- Generation of new opportunities for inter-agency programs that add value or create efficiencies.
- Connect EAC information technology system threat detection capabilities to the CISA Federal Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM) Dashboard.
- Additional Inter-Agency Agreement requests for joint work by federal partners including a requested extension of existing IAA with GSA for Vote.gov.

3.2

Update internal structures and policies to optimize performance.

OVERVIEW

The EAC spent the first years of its existence establishing itself as a critical agency for the service of American elections and those that run them. The next period of EAC operations will allow the agency to develop a stronger position as a growing and dynamic federal agency. In the next five years, the EAC will update internal structures and policies to optimize agency performance.

A key component of agency performance is compliance with all federal regulations. As a boutique federal agency, the EAC lacks dedicated divisions present at larger agencies to focus on various compliance requirements. The EAC has utilized existing staff to maintain a steady level of compliance and will focus in the next five years on agency growth and the development of procedures to streamline the compliance process, thereby allowing limited agency resources to be used to maximum capacity.

Additionally, the EAC has several stakeholders it works closely with in the areas of financial, facility, and human resource administration. They include the Department of Treasury's Bureau of Fiscal Service (BFS), the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the GSA. The EAC works closely with OMB on all matters of budget formulation and congressional reports mandated through appropriations, while also working with BFS to ensure accurate financial reporting and compliance with such reporting requirements. Human Resource coordination and compliance with OMB and OPM focus not only on recruitment and hiring, but also compliance with executive orders in areas such as equity and staff development. The EAC continues to pride itself on its strong communication with federal stakeholders and its high level of involvement and contribution to a range of programmatic and administrative issues in the federal government. In the next five years, the EAC will build or strengthen internal structures to ensure active collaboration and compliance with federal partners in these critical operational areas.

The EAC submits reports for federal compliance and transparency throughout the year. Even though these reports are required, they offer data and metrics for HR, IT security, ethics, and responsible budget management that help the EAC assess the effectiveness of internal policies and procedures. This reporting will continue over the next five years and the EAC will use them to gauge and improve agency operations.

3.2

Update internal structures and policies to optimize performance.

STRATEGIES

- Update all EAC policies to serve employees while ensuring compliance with federal laws.
- Establish internal process to review policies annually for required updates.
- Develop a tool to provide updated policies and procedures to employees as they are reviewed or updated.
- Lead change by initiating and maintaining ongoing partnerships with EAC divisions and federal agencies to share technical expertise, data, and other resources for problem-solving and strategic planning.
- Provide regular training to ensure all administrative staff are in compliance with federal regulations and procedures governing contracting, travel, human resources, records management, and facilities management.
- Modernize information technology systems to meet new Zero Trust Architecture and other cybersecurity guidance as specified by the President and OMB.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- All EAC policies and procedures are updated and reviewed on a yearly basis.
- Membership is obtained in the Small Agency Council for Administration, Human Resources (Training, EEO Diversity & Inclusion), Procurement, Finance, and CIO managers.
- All Congressional reporting deadlines are met.
- Standard operating procedures for all administrative functions are complete and aligned with the newly revised Administrative Manual.
- New records management processes are implemented, and staff is trained.
- Submit all required federal reporting by deadlines.

3.3

Develop and continue to manage internal structures and tools that produce a culture of innovation and a driven workforce.

OVERVIEW

As a young agency, the EAC has remained nimble in both structure and processes to best serve stakeholders during periods of limited funding or lack of leadership. While this agility has allowed the agency to be built, the next phase of the EAC includes the development and installation of internal tools and structures that allow EAC staff to maximize performance. In the next five years, the EAC will maximize the use of its budget by developing tools for collaboration within the agency that allow for innovation and dynamic partnerships.

As elections evolve, the EAC's support and resources must rapidly change. In order to produce a culture of innovation, the EAC must provide the tools, training, support, and mechanisms for collaboration and innovation in programming. Through the development of an EAC intranet, the agency will build the necessary systems to allow constant collaboration, training, and development of resources throughout the agency. This system will allow the agency to maximize employee performance and skills, allowing the agency to maximize the impact of all available resources.

The EAC is entrusted to manage its resources ethically, strategically, and sustainably by obtaining maximum value to the benefit of the agency. The Administration Division will improve and reengineer its processes to ensure it fully delivers results as the EAC continues to build a culture that uses enterprise risk management and successfully plans for future events. The EAC will contribute to effective federal-wide resource management by optimizing its real estate, improving space utilization, and ensuring physical security. Significant progress has been made during the build-out of the EAC's new office space in Washington, DC.

Through core administrative functions, contract management and oversight, purchasing, records management, event support and travel, special projects, and customer service, the agency will improve service delivery to its internal customers to ensure a high-performing organization

3.3

Develop and continue to manage internal structures and tools that produce a culture of innovation and a driven workforce.

STRATEGIES

- Capitalize on technology to improve services, streamline processes, and promote efficiency.
- Build and deploy an EAC intranet site that allows for collaboration, communication, and training among EAC staff.
- Gather regular employee feedback and suggestions through the employee engagement committee.
- Utilize the election official portal to provide rapid updates to stakeholders.
- Review and re-envision the Administration Division and services to assure they meet customer needs.
- Increase footprint of new office space.
- Create a customer service survey to capture customer satisfaction after service delivery.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Ticketing System in place to track requests for each administrative function (contract management, human resources, records management, travel management, and space & facilities management).
- EAC intranet site utilized by all agency employees to access key resources.
- Increased use of intranet for collaboration with each division reporting at least one collaborative effort resulting from intranet use.
- Establishment of administrative succession plan with cross-training of staff on administration support functions to ensure continuity.
- Following the return to in-person operations, the EAC saves resources by utilizing larger office space for in-house meetings and summit events for at least two events per year that would otherwise require external venue costs.

3.4

Continue to build a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

OVERVIEW

The EAC recognizes employees are critical to achieving its mission and for that reason, the agency strives to attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled, diverse, and results-oriented workforce. Investment in its workforce is a top priority for EAC. An engaged, high-performing workforce is vital to meet organizational goals and prepare for the future.

As the agency has grown, the EAC has added employees with diverse knowledge and skillsets to best fulfill the agency's mission. Building upon the 2018 strategic plan, Goal 3.4 seeks to optimize the EAC's human capital resources to advance the agency's mission and help drive the activities needed to ensure that the EAC addresses existing and future challenges with the right people and the right skills. Proper use of employee skills will best serve the EAC and its stakeholders and that is why continual improvement to promote organization efficiency throughout the agency is a top priority. The EAC will recruit, reward, and develop the most talented individuals with the skills and passion to fulfill its mission. At the same time, the agency will challenge and support its employees, ensuring they are fully prepared for the demanding work of supporting election officials at a boutique federal agency. The EAC will seek out and develop strong leaders who, in addition to being experts in their field, bring out the best in others and model integrity, respect, accountability, and trust.

STRATEGIES

- Continually review and reevaluate human capital strategy.
- Hire human resources specialists to serve and support EAC staff.
- Align human capital management policies, programs, processes, and systems to support accomplishment of EAC mission, vision, goals, and priorities.
- Ensure the EAC leadership has technical and managerial skills necessary to lead a diverse workforce, accomplish the EAC's strategic goals and priorities, and to promote knowledge-sharing, continuous learning and improvement, and a climate of open communications.
- Recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse workforce with the competencies necessary to accomplish the agency mission.
- Create a responsive, high-performance culture through rewarding and promoting high-performing employees and promptly addressing poor performance.

- Ensure compliance with Merit System Principles and other human capital related regulatory and legal requirements.
- Improve workforce planning by integrating succession management activities into efforts to retain employees and manage knowledge transfer within specific mission-critical positions.
- Provide professional development and credentialing to mission-critical positions.
- Actively engage in cross-office training to ensure all EAC staff, regardless of division, have a basic understanding of finance, internal controls, and ethics.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Recurring human capital planning is aligned with the agency's strategic and operational plans.
- Quarterly reviews find HR policies and practices are followed throughout the EAC to minimize financial and reputational risk.
- EAC competency models, developed by engaging key stakeholders across the agency to identify mission-critical requirements and gaps, are created and published on the intranet.
- Competencies are incorporated into vacancy announcements, assessments, IDPs, and structured interviews.
- A hiring and selection toolkit for hiring managers is developed and implemented.
- Applicant flow data validates targeted recruitment efforts.
- Employee orientation video is updated to help new employees understand how to be successful in their day-to-day job and how their work contributes to the agency's mission.
- A learning and development framework is created in support of continuous learning, job-related development, and career growth through succession efforts, including the reinstatement of EAC's Staff Associate Program to reinforce the strategy of "growing our own."
- Training program is planned, budgeted, and implemented to address competency gaps.
- Performance appraisal system is reviewed annually to ensure all appraisals are linked to strategic objectives and annual performance goals.
- The EAC's culture promotes a fair and unbiased environment, and values opportunity, inclusiveness, and accomplishments so employees are better able to understand the mission and determine where they fit.
- Annual Employee Survey (AES) results improve each year.

CONTRIBUTING DIVISIONS

As a boutique federal agency, the EAC works within the agency budget to maximize efficiency and fully express the agency’s mission. As a result, EAC divisions are highly collaborative with each other, contributing to EAC strategic objectives. The following charts EAC’s divisions and their contributions to the strategic goals and objectives:

EAC CONTRIBUTING DIVISIONS

Goal 1: Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines, security, and cyber resources for election officials.

	Objective 1.1	Objective 1.2	Objective 1.3
Clearinghouse	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communications	No	No	Yes
Finance	No	No	No
General Counsel	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grants	No	No	No
Human Resources/ Administration	No	No	No
OCIO	Yes	Yes	Yes
Research	No	No	Yes
Testing and Certification	Yes	Yes	Yes



EAC CONTRIBUTING DIVISIONS

Goal 2: Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.

	Objective 2.1	Objective 2.2	Objective 2.3
Clearinghouse	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communications	Yes	Yes	Yes
Finance	No	No	Yes
General Counsel	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grants	Yes	No	Yes
Human Resources/ Administration	No	No	No
OCIO	Yes	Yes	No
Research	Yes	Yes	No
Testing and Certification	Yes	Yes	No

Goal 3: Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

	Objective 3.1	Objective 3.2	Objective 3.3	Objective 3.4
Clearinghouse	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Communications	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Finance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
General Counsel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grants	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Human Resources/ Administration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OCIO	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Research	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Testing and Certification	Yes	Yes	Yes	No



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