



Election Systems & Software

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Roger A Piha-Paul Jr., Field Services Specialist
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Piha-Paul Jr.,

Election Systems & Software, LLC (ES&S) participated in the United States Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Field Services audit of Douglas County, Nebraska's (County) ES&S voting system. This audit was conducted July 15-17, 2024, and involved the review of the County's ES&S election management system (EMS), DS850 central count scanners and ExpressVote ballot marking devices. Overall, the audit was a success and was completed professionally and on time. ES&S' specific observations are set forth below.

Audit Process

Prior to the EAC conducting the on-site audit, ES&S worked with the County to train its personnel on the proper procedures to complete the hash validation process and to make sure ES&S was available to answer any questions the County had regarding the EAC audit. Douglas County has a top-notch election department with knowledgeable staff and a secure environment. The County employs its own IT personnel who were charged with assisting the EAC with its audit.

The audit was conducted by the EAC in a professional manner, with expectations of any EMS or equipment outlined prior to the audit. The EAC answered all questions from ES&S and the County prior to the start of the audit so that everyone was on the same page with how the audit was to proceed.

During the audit, the County hashed the EMS, all County DS850 central tabulators, and a sample of the County's ExpressVote ballot marking devices all in accordance with ES&S documentation and under the supervision of the EAC. The County successfully completed the hash validation process on the EMS, all DS850 central count units and all sample ExpressVote units. In addition, the EAC completed a facility review of the County's election office to note any recommendations for additional security that may be of value to the County. Based on conversations with the County, the EAC and the State of Nebraska, the audit was a success. All ES&S system verification procedures were followed as certified, and the system being used in Douglas County is in conformance with the EAC certified version.

ES&S' overall experience with the EAC Field Services program was positive. The EAC identified in detail the processes that were to be followed during the audit and did not veer from these processes. It should be noted that ES&S appreciates the EAC setting forth the audit plan upfront and following the plan as it was set forth. By providing the specific audit process to be followed, both the County and ES&S were able to ensure that both parties were fully prepared for the audit. The audit was conducted in a timely manner with attention to detail being followed by all parties involved. All of the foregoing made the success of the audit possible.

Lessons Learned

In working through the EAC Field Services audit, it became apparent that ES&S county customers who do not complete hash validation on its systems on a consistent basis will need to be trained on how to complete the procedure. The hash validation process is not difficult, but it does require attention to detail and an overall understanding of the process to ensure all proper steps are being followed. Counties with an IT department may find it easier to navigate the hash validation process than smaller counties who do not have a robust IT infrastructure.

Benefits of Audit

The benefit of having the EAC Field Services team audit a county's voting system is for a county to provide confidence to its voters that its systems are safe and secure. With a successful field services audit, a county can affirm for the public that its systems are the same systems as were certified by the EAC. This information provides public confidence that the voting system has been tested under the EAC Testing and Certification Program and that the version installed and used in the county is the same version that has been tested and approved by the EAC.

The EAC field services audits may be useful for counties that desire to add increased transparency to the EAC testing process. It may be best to complete these audits in non-election time frames as many election officials do not have the resources to participate in this process while preparing for and conducting elections.

Overall Experience

ES&S's experience with the EAC Field Services audit of the County was positive. All parties involved took the necessary time to plan, prepare and perform the audit. The EAC should be commended for putting together a professional, timely and collaborative audit process. By engaging the State, County and ES&S up front, the audit process went smoothly and within the timeline provided by the EAC.

Respectfully,



Timothy J. Hallett, JD
Vice President, Certification
Election Systems & Software, LLC