



U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Fiscal Year 2026

Congressional Budget Justification

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Mission Statement

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

As the only federal agency solely mandated to support election administration, the EAC will continue to protect and improve the nation’s election technology, assist election officials, serve voters, and ultimately help make elections safe, secure, accurate, and accessible by fulfilling this mission.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Highlights and Priorities

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 President’s Budget requests \$17,000,000 for the EAC. This request includes resources for improving election technology, increasing voter awareness and confidence, enhancing data collection and accuracy, and investing in the professionalism of the election workforce. The request does not provide additional funding for grant programs. At this funding level, the EAC is committed to utilizing methods to improve automation of functions and to reduce full-time equivalent (FTE) employment while minimizing service disruptions to states, localities, and the American voter.

In March 2025, the EAC was cited in the *Executive Order on Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections* and will coordinate with federal partners, mandated EAC Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Boards, and election officials to support election integrity.

Salaries and Expenses

FY 2024 Actual		FY 2025 Enacted		FY 2026 President’s Budget	
FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars
83	\$27,720,000	83	\$27,720,000	60	\$17,000,000

Of the \$17 million budget, \$2.5 million will be available for two-year funding; this will be for website efforts, artificial intelligence (AI) opportunities, and modernizing data collection, as described below. The EAC will focus on the following priority areas:

Improving Election Technology

- Sustain the Testing and Certification Program and the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VMSG). This includes the Field Services division, which helps maintain the integrity of the election process by providing training and support to state and local jurisdictions. This ensures the chain of custody remains intact from EAC-certified systems to field deployment, preventing tampering and unauthorized access, thereby upholding public trust in the electoral process. It also includes ongoing work to support and increase the use of paper ballots in voting systems for Federal elections to maintain election integrity through the existence of a paper trail, which enhances election verifiability, audit functions, and voter confidence.

- Maintain the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) as research occurs for electronic ballot delivery systems, election night reporting systems, and voter registration portals and databases. Election supporting technology has been targeted by malicious actors in previous election cycles. These unregulated technologies consequently have a high security risk for targeting in the future.
- The EAC will continue working with federal partners to review and report on the security of all systems used in the voter registration and voting process. This includes assessing the risk of systems being compromised through malicious software and unauthorized intrusions.

Increasing Voter Awareness and Confidence

- In FYs 2024 and 2025, the EAC signed a memorandum of understanding with General Services Administration (GSA) to transfer Vote.gov to the EAC. The agency currently has a GSA project team member detailed to assist with the transition of the website. In FY 2026, the EAC will fully maintain Vote.gov.¹ Ultimately, combining Vote.gov and EAC resources in one agency will help voters access accurate information about election administration and voting procedures while reducing cost and administrative overhead. Consolidating essential information into a single centralized resource will reduce redundancy and improve the accuracy of election information.
- The two-year funding will also allow the EAC to look for opportunities to utilize AI to help election officials and gain efficiencies internally. This effort also supports the work of ESTEP to authenticate information provided through Election Night Reporting systems and other critical public-facing data, including data interoperability efforts to increase voter confidence.

Enhancing Election Data Collection and Accuracy

- The EAC intends to implement working group recommendations and develop a prototype to modernize the collection of Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) data and make the research more usable for election officials, the public, Congress, media, state and local governing bodies, and academic institutions. Providing more user-friendly collection and analysis tools will increase transparency into election administration practices. It will also significantly reduce the burden on election officials who are tasked with collecting the data.
- The EAC will use existing staff to target innovative areas of research to better understand election trends. For example, the EAC plans to establish an off-year EAVS survey to collect data in a more targeted manner on narrowly scoped areas of stakeholder interest.

Investing in the Professionalism of the Election Workforce

- Maintain the learning management portal, develop new training content in-house, and facilitate hands-on in-person training. Investing in the professional development of election officials helps ensure that elections are conducted accurately, securely, and in a manner that increases public confidence. In response to unprecedented turnover in the election workforce in recent years, the EAC launched the much-requested online Learning Lab to help train local election officials on federal legal requirements such as

¹ Based on historical costs, GSA budgeted \$8,000,000 over three years for the Vote.gov launch.

accessibility and election law. In addition, the EAC now provides in-person training for states on a variety of additional topics, including election audits and tabletop exercises to prepare, respond, and recover from unexpected circumstances, with a focus on continuity of operations.

- Establish voluntary audit standards, centered on a transparent, evidence-based framework to support election officials in conducting high-quality audits. Election audits perform critical functions in election administration. These voluntary federal audit standards aim to help jurisdictions at all levels by offering guidance that promotes competence, integrity, and transparency. Federal audit standards would also increase public trust by providing a benchmark to assess the quality of election audits. Voluntary audit standards build on the library of election audit resources already published by the EAC, providing additional guidance toward continuous improvement in election audits.

The EAC's current Human Resource Service Provider cannot meet agency needs, leading to audit findings in the Annual Financial Statement audit, among other ongoing challenges. The EAC is in the final stages of migration to another service provider for improved customer service. This provider is almost double the cost of the current provider at approximately \$400,000, but the EAC expects dramatically improved service and compliance. Personnel vetting reforms are implemented through the service provider and will continue to be provided through this agreement.

Election Security Grants

FY 2024 Actual		FY 2025 Enacted		FY 2026 President's Budget	
FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars
-	\$55,000,000	-	\$15,000,000	-	\$0

The FY 2026 President's Budget does not request funding for grant programs.

Agency Background and Structure

What is the EAC?

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is an independent, bipartisan agency established by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. Following the 2000 election, Congress created the EAC to support the modernization and improvement of election administration across the nation. As the only federal agency solely dedicated to election administration, the EAC serves as a critical resource for local, state, and federal partners ensuring elections are safe, secure, accurate and accessible for all Americans.

THE EAC'S MANDATE

Election Technology

A core responsibility of the EAC is to protect the nation's voting equipment in federal elections. The EAC's testing and certification of voting systems is rigorous and comprehensive. This program supports state and local officials in their mission of safe and secure elections. The EAC is responsible for developing voluntary security and accuracy standards and providing a certified stamp of approval for voting systems used by American voters.

This process ensures voting systems are held to stringent standards for security, reliability, accessibility, and accuracy. Building upon the success of its voting system testing and certification program, the EAC has developed:

Election Supporting
Technology Evaluation
Program (ESTEP)

Programs to test and
enhance the security of
voting systems

Field Services to verify
certification and assist at
the state and local level

Support for Election Officials and Voters

The EAC supports election officials and voters through education and training programs. Congress established the EAC as the national clearinghouse on best practices for election administration. The EAC also provides guidance, best practices, and resources for:

Accessibility for all
voters, including those
with disabilities

Polling place management,
contingency planning, and
emergency preparedness

Voter education on
election processes
and safeguards

Distributing Grants

The EAC efficiently manages and distributes federal grants under HAVA to states. These grants are used to improve election infrastructure, update voting equipment, enhance cybersecurity, ensure accessibility, and support voter education initiatives. The EAC thoroughly audits HAVA grants to ensure they are used appropriately and effectively to strengthen the election system.

Election Research and Data

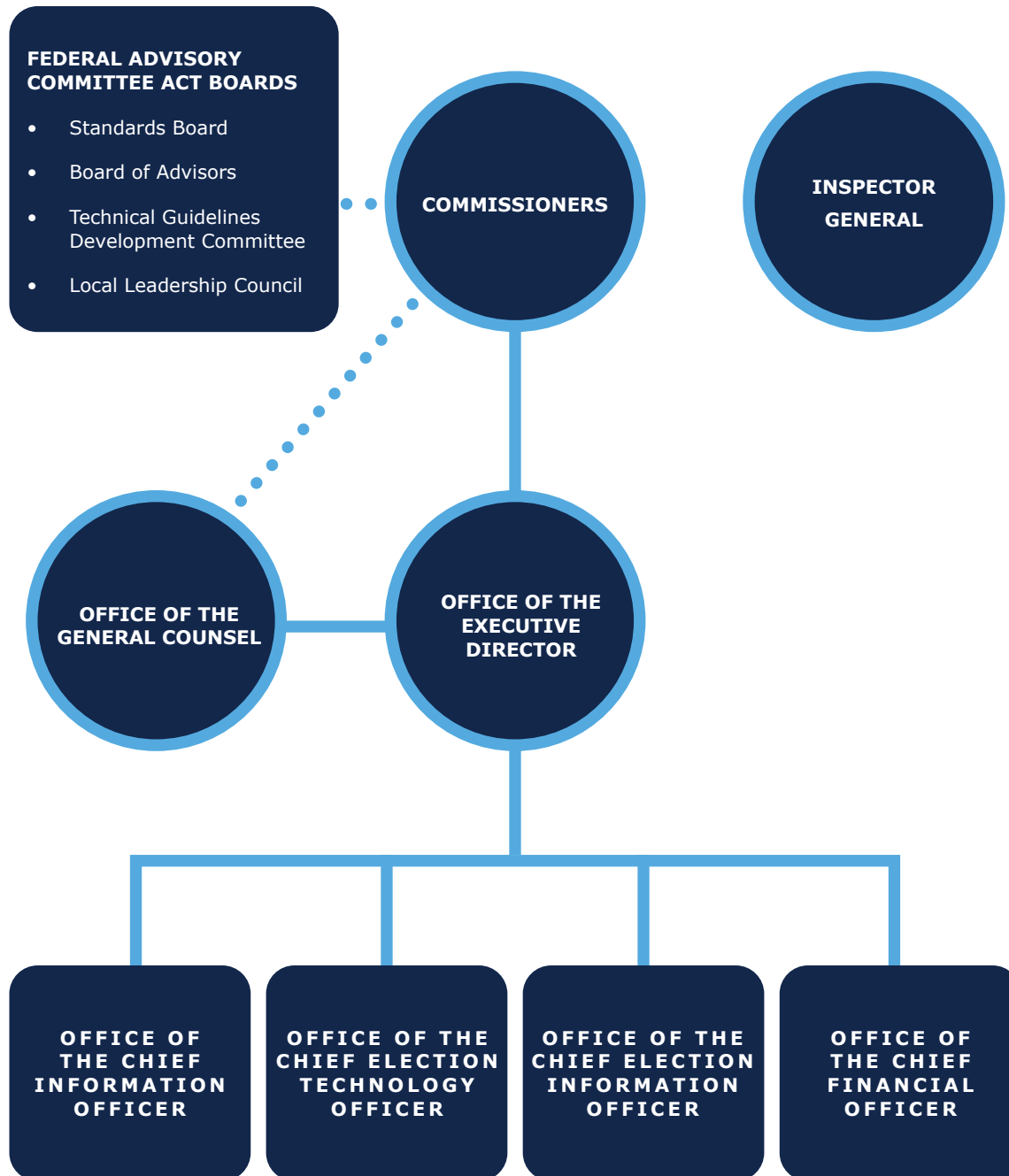
The EAC conducts in-depth research and collects comprehensive data on election administration, including voter accessibility, voter registration, voting for overseas citizens and members of the armed forces, and absentee voting. This information informs decisions that impact the voting process and is vital for policymakers, election officials, and the public.

Operating under Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) standards and regulations to ensure objectivity and accessibility to the public the EAC has four boards:



By establishing national standards and offering essential resources, the EAC plays a vital role in ensuring that U.S. elections remain safe, secure, accurate, and accessible. The agency's work in certifying voting systems, distributing HAVA grants, and promoting accessibility directly impacts the effectiveness of the electoral process, ensuring that every eligible voter can participate and have their vote accurately counted. The EAC's efforts contribute to maintaining public trust and confidence in the election system, which is fundamental to American democracy.

U.S. Election Assistance Commission Organization Chart



Budget Request

Operating Plan Summary

(DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS)

Salaries and Expenses	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 President's Budget	Change from FY 2025 Enacted to FY 2026 President's Budget	% Change from FY 2025 Enacted to FY 2026 President's Budget
Full-Time Equivalent	83	83	60	-	-
11 Payroll Personnel Compensation	9,719	10,776	6,751	-4,025	-37%
12.1 Personnel Benefits	3,533	3,935	3,635	-300	-8%
Subtotal PC&B	13,252	14,711	10,386	-4,325	-29%
21 Travel and Transportation	888	1,605	660	-945	-59%
23 Rent, Communications, Utilities	1,052	1,167	909	-258	-22%
24 Printing and Reproduction	66	43	37	-6	-14%
25 Other Contractual Services	10,051	8,427	3,684	-4,743	-56%
25.3 NIST Allocation	1,250	1,250	1,250	0	0%
26 Supplies and Subscriptions	131	64	16	-48	-75%
31 Equipment	677	257	53	-204	-79%
94 Financial Transfers (OIG)	9	9	5	-4	-44%
Subtotal, Non-Personnel	14,181	13,009	6,614	-6,395	-49%
TOTAL	27,720	27,720	17,000	10,720	-38.67%

Election Security Grants	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 President's Budget	Change from FY 2025 Enacted to FY 2026 President's Budget	% Change from FY 2025 Enacted to FY 2026 President's Budget
Full-Time Equivalent	-	-	-	-	-
11 & 12 Payroll and Benefits	-	-	-	-	-
25 Other Contractual Services	-	-	-	-	-
41 Grants	55,000	15,000	-	-15,000	-100%
TOTAL	55,000	15,000	0	-15,000	-100%

Budgetary Changes: FY 2025 Full-Year Enacted to FY 2026 President's Request

(ROUNDED)

PERSONNEL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: - \$4,325,000

TRAVEL: - \$945,000

Includes regional planned and requested travel to support state and local jurisdictions.

OTHER SERVICES: - \$4,743,000

All programs but minimal essential federal agreements and other contractual services are included in this figure, as well as efforts to scale the FedRAMP Marketplace and GRC tools.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Rent, Communications, Utilities: - \$258,000

Equipment: - \$204,000

Supplies & Subscriptions: - \$48,000

Printing & Reproduction: - \$6,000

Financial Transfers: - \$6,395

GRANTS:

Election Security Grants: - \$15,000,000

Includes grants to states under the Election Security Grants program and improving accessibility in federal elections.

Appropriations Language

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses to carry out the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252), \$17,000,000; of which \$1,250,000 shall be made available to the National Institute of Standards and Technology for election reform activities authorized under the Help America Vote Act of 2002; of which not less than \$1,351,169 shall be for necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General; and of which not to exceed \$2,500,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2028.

ELECTION INNOVATION GRANTS

For the establishment of a competitive grant program to foster innovation, enhance processes and procedures, and improve the administration of Federal elections, \$96,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2026; of which not to exceed 2 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2028, for the administration and oversight of grants awarded under this heading: Provided, That the Election Assistance Commission shall, consistent with the purposes of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252), award grants to States and eligible units of local government on a competitive basis for projects that will have significant national, regional, or local impact in the improvement of the administration of Federal elections through innovation, including, but not limited to, election administration; cybersecurity and audits; security of election officials and locations; accessibility for voters, including those with disabilities and other specific access needs, and including vote-by-mail, voter education, language proficiency, usability, and voter technology; or other programs to enhance or reliably secure processes and procedures in administering Federal elections without meaningfully impairing access: Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, the term "State" has the meaning given such term in section 901 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21141): Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be deemed to be a State: Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, an eligible unit of local government is defined as a unit of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections: Provided further, That a grant awarded under this heading shall be for an amount not greater than \$10,000,000, and shall be available for obligation by the State or eligible unit of local government through September 30, 2028: Provided further, That not more than 10 percent of the total amount of funds made available under this heading may be awarded to projects in a single State.

FY 2026 Annual Performance Plan and Indicators

As a customer service agency, the EAC aims to fulfill its mandate and be the nexus for all things election administration— including serving as the primary liaison between the federal government and state and local election officials.

The EAC's FY 2026 Annual Performance Plan and indicators align with the President's Management Agenda (PMA), focusing on:

- Mission: Deliver results for the American people through effective programs and services.
- Service: Improve the experience of federal service delivery for stakeholders.
- Stewardship: Strengthen the agency's internal capacity to be efficient and transparent.

Agency Priority Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Decrease the Burden on States and Support the Professional Development of Election Administrators

The decentralized nature of U.S. elections results in varied sets of practices and laws. HAVA mandates the EAC to serve as a national clearinghouse for election best practices and conduct research to improve the administration of federal elections. By investing in professional development, the EAC assists election officials in understanding the legal and procedural requirements of federal elections. Additionally, HAVA requires the EAC to maintain testing, certification, and oversight of the nation's voting systems, sparing states the burden of creating their own testing and certification standards. HAVA also directs the EAC to study and recommend best practices for facilitating voting by the military and overseas citizens, aiming to streamline processes and reduce administrative burdens. These efforts provide election administrators with the best practices and tools needed to serve voters efficiently, securely, and accessibly.

Strategic Objective	Strategies	Indicators	Target
1.1 Help election officials discover best practices and explain election processes to Americans.	<p>Increase awareness of EAC Resources.</p> <p>Increase the number of election officials receiving standardized high-quality training.</p>	<p>Increase the Clearinghouse Award (Clearies) program participation by 50% from 112 in 2023 to 168.</p> <p>Increase the number of users in the Learning Lab by 500% from 50 to 300 and Clearinghouse Network by 30% from 863 to 1,125.</p> <p>Increase in-person training by 30% from 1,100 to 1,430.</p>	Achieve
1.2 Assist states in understanding the efficiency/utility of the EAC testing and certification program.	<p>Increase awareness of the Testing and Certification, ESTEP, and Field Services programs.</p> <p>Conduct a gap analysis of each state's requirements and certification process against the EAC's programs.</p>	<p>Increase annual presentations, training, engagements, and explanatory resources by 10%, tailored for state awareness of the EAC's certification programs.</p>	Achieve
1.3 Study ways to improve voter list maintenance, HAVA verification processes, and the technological security and accuracy of voter registration systems.	<p>Commission a study on how to improve voter list maintenance.</p> <p>Gather feedback at annual FACA board meetings on how the EAC can be more helpful.</p> <p>Reach out to other federal partners to gather information on existing data sets and any data interoperability challenges or opportunities.</p>	<p>Issue a Statement of Work and solicit bids for a study on how to improve voter list maintenance by September 30, 2025.</p> <p>An inventory of federal data sets.</p>	Achieve
1.4 Identify best practices for serving military voters.	<p>Identify best practices for serving military voters.</p>	<p>Add a category to the 2025 Clearies for outstanding programs serving Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act voters. Develop a list of at least five best practices based on research. Hold at least one military-focused event. Meet with the Federal Voting Assistance Program.</p>	Achieve
1.5 Streamline grant-use definitions to ensure proper use of all federal funds appropriated to the states and territories.	<p>Define terms: voter education, voter registration, and get out the vote.</p>	<p>Adoption of policy defining terms by the commission.</p>	Achieve

Strategic Goal 2: Reduce the Cost and Complexity of Running Elections

Acknowledging the fundamental role of states in managing elections, the EAC is committed to supporting election officials and assisting states and localities in conducting elections. By implementing initiatives such as optimizing the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), developing evidence-based chain of custody and audit practices, and simplifying the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), the EAC aims to enhance efficiencies and reduce costs for states. The EAC's work to improve ballot chain-of-custody and set audit standards reinforces election security and is aimed at simplifying procedural complexity for election offices. Together, these efforts are designed to ensure the effective use of taxpayer funds while bolstering public confidence in elections.

Strategic Objective	Strategies	Indicators	Target
2.1 Revamp EAVS survey to make it easier for election officials to fill out and more useful for users of the data.	Reduce survey completion time.	Reduce survey completion time from 5,000 hours total or an average of 81 hours per state by 10% to 4,500 hours total or 63 hours per state.	Achieve
2.2 Promote robust best practices for election audits as a tool to increase trust and understanding of the election process.	Gather feedback on the challenges and limitations of current audit practices, including feedback on federally established voluntary principles. Development and dissemination of existing audit materials.	Gather feedback from a majority of FACA board participants; at least 300 election officials to attend an EAC training or take a Learning Lab module on audits.	Achieve
2.3 Promote increased use of chain of custody best practices to increase confidence in the election process.	Development and dissemination of existing chain of custody materials.	At least 500 election officials attend EAC training or take the Learning Lab module on chain of custody best practices.	Achieve
2.4 Make recommendations to improve federal elections.	Make recommendations to Congress in the Annual Report. Transfer Vote.gov to the EAC.	Include at least one recommendation to improve federal elections in the 2025 Annual Report and the 2024 EAVS Report. Vote.gov is hosted on EAC-controlled infrastructure.	Achieve
2.5 Simplify testing and certification by aligning the VVSG with modern technology standards and streamlining Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL) project management.	Simplify lab accreditation process, reduce duplication between EAC and NIST. Evolve the VVSG.	Draft VVSG 2.1. Initiate request to NIST to consolidate and simplify EAC and NIST lab accreditation outside of the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP).	Achieve

Strategic Goal 3: Leverage Technology for Transparent, Data Driven Agency Decision Making

The EAC is undertaking modernization initiatives for its internal systems, enhancing data analytics capabilities, and leveraging artificial intelligence to optimize efficiencies. These measures enable the agency to function more effectively and make well-informed decisions. By refining data collection processes, consolidating program functions, and expanding public-facing tools along with feedback mechanisms, the EAC aims to bolster transparency and accountability. Such efforts reinforce the agency's mission to ensure that its actions are responsive to stakeholder needs and foster confidence in elections.

Strategic Objective	Strategies	Indicators	Target
3.1 Define and develop quantitative data sources for evaluating hiring, performance management, and determining program effectiveness.	Integrate hiring and performance management systems. At least one data driven measure per program/division. Dashboard for senior management to monitor performance.	Initiate Interior Business Center integration. Set up at least one key performance indicator (KPI) per office/division with metrics combined into a central dashboard.	Achieve
3.2 Consolidate functional responsibilities to reduce silos.	Ensure program office personnel are coordinated on operations and cross-trained on other office competencies.	Documented cross-training of personnel (establish training records). Monthly coordination meetings. Details across divisions.	Achieve
3.3 Utilize AI to analyze grants data and produce frequent data on how the money is being spent.	Connect grants data to large language model (LLM) engine to summarize disparate grant reports into a single narrative that helps the team analyze where money is being spent.	LLM operational by September 30, 2025.	Achieve
3.4 Develop a plan to expand survey collection tools to gather open-source information to benefit the public and Congress.	Develop a plan to collect additional election data that does not require reporting by jurisdictions.	Survey publicly available data on staffing to determine if quality data is available.	Achieve
3.5 Expand feedback mechanisms to enhance public trust and ensure balanced perspective.	Maintain balance in the points of view represented. Collect website user feedback.	Ensure public sentiment as expressed in social media, news articles, public events, and FACA boards reflects a balanced perspective.	Achieve

FY 2022 – FY 2027 Strategic Plan Goals

The EAC is in the process of establishing a new strategic plan. The EAC's current strategic plan² sets forth three strategic goals and ten objectives. The three strategic goals are as follows:

1. **Enhancing Technology:** Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials;
2. **Supporting Election Officials and Voters:** Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections; and
3. **Operational Excellence:** Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

The new strategic plan will be uploaded to the EAC's website once it is final. Past strategic plans can be found on the EAC's website (<https://www.eac.gov/about-eac/operations>).

Fiscal Year 2024 Accomplishment Highlights

Strategic Goal 1

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

Field Services Program – As a part of the Quality Monitoring Program, the EAC's Field Services team worked directly with state and local officials on post-certification quality monitoring tasks of voting equipment. In 2024, the team received 54 hash validation requests from various localities including Texas, Hawaii, and Nebraska, and provided training to local election officials on hash validation best practices. Field Services also completed and documented two pilot projects and provided briefings on the program to officials from 43 states and territories.

² Current Strategic Plan covers the period of Fiscal Years 2022–2026. EAC will establish a new plan for FY 2026–2030 in accordance with OMB Circular A-11.

Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program – Responsive to the growing need for election technology, the EAC formally approved ESTEP as a permanent program in 2024 and launched a certification program to test and certify electronic poll books. Progress was also achieved toward developing pilot evaluation programs for other election supporting technologies, like election night reporting platforms, electronic ballot delivery systems, and voter registration systems. ESTEP registered both commercial and public-sector system developers and accepted its first electronic poll book system for testing in June 2024 — the KNOWINK Poll Pad v.3.6.

Strategic Goal 2

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

Clearinghouse Resources for Election Officials – The EAC developed more than 20 new resources in 2024. These products and guides cover topics ranging from election security to state-by-state profiles to practical guidance for the general election. The agency also collected data for the 2024 EAVS, with new questions and a policy-related focus; it is expected to be the most comprehensive report to date. To meet the evolving needs of election officials and voters, the EAC expanded its training resources in 2024 with over 1,900 election officials from 45 states and territories participating online or in-person. Topics included accessibility for voters with disabilities, communications, poll worker training, federal election laws, standard operating procedures, managing stress in the workplace, and more.

National Poll Worker Recruitment Day and Help America Vote Day – The EAC’s fourth annual National Poll Worker Recruitment Day was celebrated on August 1, 2024 and Help America Vote Day on January 30, 2024, to encourage Americans to sign up to become poll workers in their communities. Leading up to the general election, offices and entities from 45 states and DC used EAC toolkits and joined the call to action. The EAC operates helpamericavote.gov, which serves as a year-round resource to help Americans sign up to serve at the polls. The dedicated webpage offers a custom lookup toolkit with jurisdiction-specific information sourced directly from election officials.

Improving Voting Accessibility for People with Disabilities – In 2024, the agency in compliance with HAVA, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), and the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, expanded on previous research about the accessibility of elections by reexamining voting experiences for individuals with disabilities. The findings, available in a comprehensive report written in collaboration with Rutgers University, showed that due to the substantial efforts election officials have made to serve all voters, the gap for participation between voters with and without disabilities is narrowing. The EAC is working with election officials to develop resources and training to help close the remaining gaps identified for improvement. Part of those resources in FY 2024 was the creation of a first-of-its-kind video training series that incorporates not only physical accessibility, such as creating accessible polling places, but also promotes ways election administrators can create accessible websites, social media content, electronic communications, and forums.

Facilitating Communication Among Election Officials – In 2024, the EAC established a collaborative peer-to-peer platform where election officials can find resources, connect with experts and colleagues in other jurisdictions, and discuss emerging issues. This platform offers a secure way for that important collaboration. Over 1,200 election officials and staff from all 50 states have joined the Clearinghouse Network.

Administering Election Security Grants – In 2024, the EAC distributed \$55 million in HAVA Election Security Grants and continued oversight of existing grant funds. These funds supported election administration improvements, voter education programs, cybersecurity services, and technology upgrades. To assist jurisdictions with utilizing these much-needed funds, the EAC regularly publishes guidance on its website in the form of frequently asked questions. Since 2018, the EAC has disbursed over \$1 billion in Election Security Grants, and because the grants are no-year funds, the EAC continues to review progress reports and manage the grants. The EAC also provided in-person assistance, more than a dozen training sessions, virtual technical support, conference calls, and subject-specific webinars. At the request of Congress, the EAC reintroduced the Help America Vote College Program (HAVCP) for the first time since 2010, awarding \$1 million in total to 21 grantees from across the country. These grants support the recruitment, training, and support of college students as nonpartisan poll workers.

Strategic Goal 3

Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Elections – In February 2024, EAC Commissioners voted to affirm that states may use HAVA Election Security Grant funds to counter AI-generated content, including manipulation or fabrication of images, audio, and video. Additionally, the EAC has provided election officials with a well-received AI Toolkit and other resources to further understanding of the challenges and opportunities of this emerging technology. Internally, the EAC appointed a Chief AI Officer and has implemented AI options to gain efficiencies.

Stakeholder Feedback and Coordination – In April, the EAC's Standards Board and Board of Advisors held annual meetings in Kansas City, Missouri. The EAC heard directly from election officials and key stakeholders on the challenges and needs ahead of the 2024 elections. In addition, in December and January, election officials and technical experts from across the country met for the EAC's Local Leadership Council (LLC) and Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC), respectively, for 2024 Annual Meetings. The EAC is also working diligently to collaborate with federal partners by attending and participating in meetings, contributing to publications, and offering election expertise to colleagues.

Organizational Improvement – The EAC has concentrated on improving operations, policies, and procedures in 2024. In FY 2024, the EAC reorganized its divisions into five central offices to be more functionally aligned, efficient, responsive, scalable, and capable of accomplishing the agency's mandate. In addition to the reorganization, key positions were filled, including a new Executive Director, General Counsel, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Election Information Officer, Chief Election Technology Officer, and others. In addition to updating policies and procedures, the agency launched a new performance management form and achieved 100% compliance from supervisors and staff. All EAC supervisors completed mandatory supervisory training by the end of December 2024.



ATTACHMENT A:

Office of Inspector General Budget Request

BACKGROUND

The EAC Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by Section 812 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (IG Act), to provide independent and objective reporting to the EAC and Congress through its oversight activities.

OIG's mission is to safeguard the federal investment in our electoral system by conducting objective and meaningful oversight. It accomplishes this mission by conducting audits, investigations, and evaluations of the EAC, its programs, its contractors, and its grantees.

In addition to the oversight functions required of OIG by HAVA and the IG Act, other requirements include:

Statute/Public Law	Requirement	Frequency
31 U.S.C. § 3521	Where an agency has an Inspector General, the Inspector General or an independent external auditor, as determined by the Inspector General, shall audit the financial statement.	Annual
Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014 (FISMA), 44 U.S.C. § 3555	FISMA directs Federal agencies to conduct annual IT security reviews, and Inspectors General to perform annual independent evaluations of agency programs and systems and report their results to OMB and Congress.	Annual
Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019, Pub. L. No. 116-117; Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, Pub. L. No. 112-248; Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-204	The Inspector General must review agency compliance with improper payment requirements. The Inspector General is required to make a compliance determination after each fiscal year.	Annual
Reports Consolidation Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-531	The Inspector General shall provide, for agency annual reports, a statement that summarizes what the Inspector General considers to be the most serious management and performance challenges facing the agency and briefly assesses the agency's progress in addressing those challenges.	Annual
42 U.S.C. § 2000ee-2	The Inspector General of each agency shall periodically conduct a review of the agency's implementation of its privacy and data protection policies.	Periodic

In FYs 2024 and 2025, OIG's total funding supported six full-time employees, though the office has not had its full complement of staff since the Inspector General departed in March 2024 and two senior staff members were lost to attrition between September 2024 and March 2025. OIG relies on contracts with independent public accounting firms to augment its audit capabilities and an interagency agreement with another OIG for investigative services.

FY 2026 BUDGET REQUEST OVERVIEW

OIG's total FY 2026 budget request is \$1,351,169—a \$852,032 decrease from the prior year's enacted budget.

This request provides OIG the resources necessary to support four full-time employees: an Inspector General, a Deputy Inspector General, a Senior Counsel that also serves as the Director of Operations and Investigations, and a Program Analyst. In addition to salary and benefits, the request includes \$7,500 for oversight-related travel, \$8,000 for mandatory training, \$91,717 for supporting software and services, and \$274,860 for contracts with independent public accounting firms that will conduct oversight work on OIG's behalf. OIG will also dedicate \$100,000 for investigative services provided under an interagency agreement. At this level, OIG anticipates that it can complete its mandatory oversight work and a limited number of discretionary projects.

Modest amounts are budgeted for supplies and materials (\$1,000), equipment (\$1,000), and a transfer to the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) in keeping with the provisions of the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (\$5,405).

OIG BUDGET REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS (Dollars in Thousands)				
		FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Enacted	FY 2026 President's Request
	Full-Time Equivalent	5	6	4
11	Personnel Compensation	611	722	634
12	Personnel Benefits	193	309	228
	Subtotal, Personnel	804	1,031	862
21	Travel	16	21	7
25	Other Goods and Services from Non-Federal Sources	350	1,055	311
25.3	Other Goods and Services from Federal Sources	66	84	164
26	Supplies and Materials	2	3	1
31	Equipment	-	2	1
94	Financial Transfers	9	7	5
	Subtotal, Non-Personnel	443	1,172	489
	Total Salaries and Expenses	1,247	2,203	1,351

FY 2026 BUDGET NARRATIVES

OIG will leverage the funding requested in FY 2026 to continue its oversight of EAC program and operations, provide oversight of EAC grant recipients, and combat fraud and other misconduct through investigations. These activities are discussed below.

Oversight of EAC Programs and Operations

FY 2026 Priority: *OIG will meet its statutory requirements.*

OIG contracts with independent public accounting firms to perform statutorily mandated work conducting the annual audit of the EAC's financial statements and ensuring the EAC's compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA). In FY 2026, \$117,396 is budgeted for these mandatory audits.

OIG staff complete other mandated work, such as the required improper payments review and publishing a report on the most serious management and performance challenges facing the agency. Above personnel and other HR-related costs, \$8,000 is budgeted for writing and editing services in FY 2026.

Beyond the mandatory work, OIG can conduct and oversee discretionary projects that focus on high-risk programs and operations. This work is dependent on the resources available. Areas that OIG has recently completed discretionary oversight work on include:

Program / Operational Area	Results
Travel Administration	In February 2025, OIG issued a report on an audit of the EAC's travel administration process. The audit found that the EAC had addressed recommendations made by OIG in 2007 through the development of a travel handbook. However, the audit found that travel administration transactions were not always processed in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation. OIG made two recommendations for improvement.
Internal Procurements	In January 2024, OIG issued a report on an audit of procurements that the EAC executed with internal resources. OIG found that the EAC's internal procurements did not comply with selected Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requirements. Moreover, the EAC did not post procurement information to USASpending.gov as required by the DATA Act. OIG made 13 recommendations to address the issues identified.
Personnel Practices	In January 2024, OIG issued a memorandum to alert EAC leadership to personnel practices that may not have been in accordance with EAC policies and OPM guidance.
FACA Board Spending	In July 2023, OIG issued a management advisory to advise the EAC Executive Director on recent Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) board costs, which were incurred without appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that federal regulations were followed and costs were minimized.
Testing and Certification	In March 2023, OIG issued a report on an audit of the EAC's Testing and Certification Program, which found that the EAC had a robust lab accreditation program and voting system certification process. However, the audit identified opportunities to improve (1) stakeholder coordination; (2) program implementation related to policies, procedures, communication, and staffing; and (3) the assessment of program risks. OIG made seven recommendations.

The oversight activities described are tracked and documented in an audit management system. In FY 2026, \$13,147 is budgeted for this software.

Oversight of EAC Grant Recipients

FY 2026 Priority: *OIG will conduct grant audits using contracted audit services.*

FY 2026 Priority: *OIG will offer educational assistance to grantees to improve stewardship of federal election funds.*

The EAC has distributed over \$4 billion in grants to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. These grants are given as advances, and OIG estimates that approximately half a billion dollars in federal funds, state matching funds, and interest earned is currently held by the grantees. To help assess the risk profile of a given grantee, OIG performs quarterly reviews of information in the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. In FY 2026, \$15,775 is budgeted for access to this database.

OIG primarily conducts audits of these grants using contracted audit services. In FY 2026, \$157,464 is budgeted for the completion of grant audits by independent public accounting firms. This funding will permit OIG to initiate 3-4 grant audits.

When there are indications of recipient noncompliance, or matters impacting more than one grantee, OIG may choose to conduct audits using its own staff. Doing grant audits with internal staff for high-risk recipients and high-value subject areas allows OIG to forgo the contracting process, complete the work faster, and find fraud, waste, and abuse earlier. However, this work is dependent on the resources available.

The oversight activities described are tracked and documented in an audit management system. In FY 2026, \$13,147 is budgeted for this software.

OIG also runs a fraud awareness program. As part of this program, OIG educates grant recipients at the state and local level on how to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse; how to recognize when it does happen; and how to submit a complaint to OIG. In FY 2026, \$7,500 is budgeted for travel related to these activities.

Combat Fraud and Other Misconduct

FY 2026 Priority: *OIG will operate its hotline program and use interagency agreements for investigative services.*

When allegations are made concerning waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in EAC programs or involving a recipient of EAC funds, OIG is responsible for investigating those allegations.

During the first half of FY 2025, OIG processed 67 unique complaints. Complaints are received via an online portal, in email, over the phone, or in person, and are logged in investigations management software. OIG's Senior Counsel oversees these functions and ensures that complaints are appropriately addressed. In FY 2026, \$6,525 is budgeted for the software that supports the online portal and OIG's tracking of complaints.

Complaints related to election crimes such as voter fraud are referred to the Department of Justice Public Integrity Section. OIG refers complainants to the appropriate state election officials when the issue relates to registering to vote or state election administration.

When an allegation requires further investigation, OIG has an interagency agreement for investigative services. OIG also uses the agreement to consult with investigators on potential suspension and debarment, subpoenas, and other related actions. This work is funded on an as-needed basis, which is difficult to predict. In FY 2024, one investigation was conducted on OIG's behalf and there were several consultations on other matters. In FY 2026, \$100,000 is set aside for OIG's potential investigative needs.

