

**U.S. Election Assistance Commission Public Meeting-Washington, DC
June 17, 2009**

**Testimony on the Election Data Collection Grant Program Evaluation Report
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Commissioners, Mr. Wilkey and Deputy General Counsel Gilmour, I come before the Commission today to provide you with some background and context to the presentation of a report completed by our independent evaluator, ICF, on the Election Data Collection Grant Program. Upon your review and consideration of this report I am recommending that the Commission submit to Congress, by June 30, an EAC report on the grant program.

In December 2007, the EAC was appropriated \$10 million to establish the Election Data Collection Grant program contained in the FY 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 110-161, Title V). Five grants, each totaling \$2 million were to be awarded to five states in order to improve their collection of precinct-level data during the 2008 Federal general election.

Pursuant to the appropriation, EAC instituted a competitive grants program and on May 28, 2008 the EAC awarded five grants of \$2 million each to Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The states were to use the funds to implement programs to improve the collection of 2008 Federal election precinct-level data related to some specific data elements contained in the EAC 2008 Election Administration and Voting Survey.

In addition, grantees were expected to:

- Develop and document a series of administrative and procedural best practices in election data collection that could be replicated by other States;
- Improve their data collection processes by enhancing their capacity to collect accurate and complete election data; and
- Document and describe particular administrative and management data collection practices, as well as particular data collection policies and procedures.

The grantee states were selected based on criteria such as overall program strategy and feasibility, readiness to proceed with the program, and proposed outcomes and measurement of goals. Additional selection criteria included factors such as state size, region of the country, whether the state was an Election Day Registration state, or had vendor contracting (i.e., whether the state contracts with one or more than one vote tabulation vendor).

Early feedback EAC staff has received on the program seems to indicate that the grant program was an overall success. In an effort to highlight the grantees' best practices, the EAC research staff have begun exploring various options and venues in which the grantees might share their experiences, their best practices, and their challenges with collecting these election data.

I conclude my overview by noting that as was required in the original appropriation EAC received from Congress, staff and the grant program evaluator ICF International, have shared drafts of the program evaluation report with the EAC Board of Advisors. The Boards of Advisors input has been important and critical as we work towards the successful completion of the final report due to Congress by June 30.

Thank you.