

ALVIN A. JAEGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

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PHONE (701) 328-2900  
FAX (701) 328-2992

E-MAIL [sos@nd.gov](mailto:sos@nd.gov)

**SECRETARY OF STATE**  
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

April 29, 2020

Mona Harrington  
Acting Executive Director  
US Election Assistance Commission  
1335 East-West Highway Suite 4300  
Silver Spring MD 20910-3225

Dear Ms. Harrington:

Attached is the narrative for the State of North Dakota and how it intends to use the Election Security Funds associated with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019.

If you have any questions about these initiatives, contact Deputy Secretary of State, Jim Silrum at (701) 328-3660 or via email at [jsilrum@nd.gov](mailto:jsilrum@nd.gov), or State Election Director, Brian Newby, (701) 328-3721, or [bnewby@nd.gov](mailto:bnewby@nd.gov).

In the meantime, thank you for the support you provide to North Dakota voters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alvin A. Jaeger".

Alvin A. Jaeger  
North Dakota Secretary of State

cc: Kinza Ghaznavi, Grants Manager

**State of North Dakota**  
**2020 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Election Security Grant**  
**Budget Narrative**

In December 2019, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 was signed into law by President Trump. Pursuant to this legislation, the Secretary of State of North Dakota has received \$3 million dollars in grant funding from the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) for the purpose of improving the administration of elections for Federal office, including enhancing technology and making certain election security improvements. The funds, authorized under Title I Section 101 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002, will provide North Dakota with additional resources to secure and improve its election system. The state's required match in relation to the \$3 million is \$600,000.

On March 2, 2020, North Dakota Secretary of State Al Jaeger requested the \$3 million from the EAC, explaining that funds will be used to develop the state's election program over a five-year period as follows:

- Implement a new statewide digital scan voting system and provide electronic pollbooks for use in every polling location in the state.
- Harden the security related to election activities, including the implementation of multifactor authentication in the voting systems.
- Migrate servers to a zero-trust environment.
- Provide dedicated hardened computers to each county.
- Create and conduct tabletop exercises for county election auditors.
- Add additional equipment to support the 2020 election equipment conversion.
- Yet to be determined additional election related activities consistent with HAVA.

**Implement a new statewide digital scan voting system and provide electronic pollbooks for use in every polling location in the state.**

North Dakota has replaced voting equipment and is introducing electronic pollbooks. This new equipment will be used in polling locations for the first time in 2020. Additional dollars are included for ancillary equipment upgrades.

**Harden the security related to election activities, including the implementation of multifactor authentication in the voting systems.**

In support of North Dakota's 53 auditors, the Secretary of State, in conjunction with North Dakota's state Information Technology (NDIT) department will provide a suite of security features to the counties, including the use of a sophisticated multifactor authentication process for access to sensitive information. These costs are included in the line item of cybersecurity in the budget spreadsheet.

**Migrate servers to a zero-trust environment.**

In addition to the security suite, NDIT is moving the systems supported on the state network to a zero-trust environment, requiring FEDRAMP-comparable security access for all system users. The cost for this transition is included in the line item of cybersecurity in the budget spreadsheet.

**Provide dedicated hardened computers to each county.**

To ensure complete airgap compliance with systems at the county level, the Secretary of State's office will provide a dedicated, hardened computer for direct access to state election systems. These computers are in the process of being deployed in conjunction with the 2020 election cycle.

**Create and conduct tabletop exercises for county election auditors.**

The State plans to conduct annual training with the auditors that combines the CISA Tabletop in a Box with state-provided threat injections. The first training was targeted for the summer of 2020, but COVID-19 complications may delay this training or require the training to be virtual.

**Add additional equipment to support the 2020 election equipment conversion.**

Costs to expand or replace new equipment, as needed, after the 2020 implementation are included in the equipment line item of the budget.

**Yet to be determined additional election related activities consistent with HAVA.**

Just as COVID-19 was not a specifically foreseen implementation issue for the 2020 election cycle, there surely will be unexpected adversaries to the election process in the months and years ahead. North Dakota's county auditors have demonstrated resilience in fighting threats to the election process, and the Secretary of State's office anticipates supporting the counties in any way possible as new issues emerge. Thus, the State's plans may change as circumstances require.