



New Mexico
2020 HAVA Election Security Grant
Program Narrative

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Version: 1.0

Revision History

Revision Number	Date	Updates
1.0	April 27, 2020	Original Submission

Introduction

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 was passed by Congress in December 2019. The Act included \$425 million Help America Vote Act (HAVA) dollars to be allocated to states to improve the administration of elections for Federal office. The improvements could include enhancements to election technology as well as election security improvements, as authorized under sections 101, 103, and 104 of [HAVA]. New Mexico received its authorized share of the funds in the amount of \$4,142,484 and, like other states, is required to make a 20% match within two years of receiving the funds. The Office of the Secretary of State will request a special appropriation in the state's fiscal year 2022 to meet the match obligation total of \$828,497 which brings the total award amount to \$4,970,981.

The federal funds are required to be spent within five years, with a deadline for expenditure of December 20, 2024. New Mexico intends to expend a portion of the funding for immediate improvements prior to the 2020 General Election, while the remainder will be used on activities extending to the five year expiration deadline. A majority of the funds will be used on initiatives that will directly benefit New Mexico's counties with a focus on ensuring security measure equipment needs and other election modernization initiatives.

Voting Equipment Replacement & Upgrades

New Mexico is statutorily required to utilize paper ballots for all elections. These ballots are counted by precinct-based optical scan tabulation systems. Utilizing the 2018 HAVA grant funding, New Mexico upgraded the majority of counties to a more robust system due to the recent adoption of voting convenience centers. Additionally, where these tabulation systems were already in use, additional optical scan tabulation systems were purchased. The upgraded systems are certified for use within the state and include security features such as ballot image capture and auditing capabilities.

New Mexico is preparing for a substantial increase in absentee voting in the 2020 cycle and will be increasing high speed central count tabulation systems in order to accommodate the increase. The estimated costs of the remaining systems need to enhance New Mexico's central count capacity is as well as complete additional optical scan tabulation system upgrades is \$440,250. New Mexico will deploy the systems to county election officials during the 2020 election cycle.

Finally, New Mexico will be implementing secure ballot drop boxes for use in the 2020 General Election. Costs associated with contractual services to implement and manage the installation are estimated at \$301,900.

Election Auditing

New Mexico was the first state to adopt risk limiting audits and they were used for the first time in the 2010 General Election. The audit technique outlined in New Mexico's election code is well suited to the state's paper ballot voting method and the audit is overseen by an independent audit firm which ensures a high level of confidence in the accuracy of the final vote tally. Since New Mexico has already implemented sufficient election auditing no grant funds are expected to be utilized in this category.

Voting Registration Systems and Management

New Mexico implemented a new voter registration system in December 2017 which includes multi-factor authentication and access audit capabilities. The state plans to continue work on this system including improvements that will provide more robust voter list maintenance functionality. The estimated enhancement costs are \$80,000 and are planned to be implemented post the 2020 General Election.

Cyber Vulnerabilities

Election Security Program

New Mexico has established an Election Security Program within the Elections Division of the New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State. Based on the success and growth of the program and also to accommodate the increased demands in election security across the state, New Mexico intends to maintain the existing position as well as create additional positions. Currently, the program is comprised of one Election Security Officer. New Mexico plans to fund two additional positions.

The program will be responsible for the development and implementation of effective policies and procedures and security best practices to safeguard sensitive data and election systems and protect against cyber vulnerabilities. Additionally the program will continue to establish and oversee a security training program for state and local election officials, as well as their staff, that will support short and long range security strategies for election systems. The program will continue to develop risk assessment and monitoring strategies to aid county offices in securing their systems and networks.

Costs associated with the Election Security Program fall into program operational expenses and professional services associated with cyber improvement efforts overseen by this office. We anticipate spending approximately \$1,205,700 on these efforts throughout the grant period.

System Monitoring

Through the Election Security Program, New Mexico will increase system monitoring efforts to ensure the ability to effectively protect the sensitive data maintained through the statewide voter registration database. System monitoring will be implemented at both the state and county level. Increased monitoring costs to include equipment and maintenance are estimated at \$576,300. New Mexico intends to implement during the 2020 election cycle.

Election Infrastructure

Under the oversight of the Election Security Program within the Office of the Secretary of State, the state proposes to implement additional election infrastructure as well security risk assessments of the election infrastructure. The assessments will be intended to determine the security and vulnerability posture of the statewide election infrastructure. The gathered information will aid the Election Security Program Manager in developing effective short and long range goals and strategies to address cyber vulnerabilities. The estimated cost of the security assessments is estimated at \$228,100 in equipment and contractual services. The assessment is planned to be completed prior to the 2020 General Election, while long term election specific infrastructure will be added throughout the life of the grant.

Additionally, support will be provided to local election officials to conduct election security self-assessments prior to the 2020 General Election at an estimated cost of \$100,000. Upon completion of the assessments, New Mexico will provide necessary resources to enhance the security of county level election infrastructure and systems. The estimated costs of post assessment remediation to be utilized throughout the life of the grant are \$150,031.

Incident Response Systems

The threat of cybersecurity attacks continues to be a focus of bad actors nationwide. In an effort to mitigate the impacts to New Mexico's election systems, the Election Security Program has determined the need to provide support at the county level. To ensure continuity of the election operations, incident response kits will be purchased and deployed to counties on a need basis while assessing any impact of a potential cybersecurity attack. The response systems are intended to be available during the 2020 election cycle and are estimated at \$30,000 in equipment costs.

County System Upgrades

The State intends to utilize federal funds to aid counties in mitigating cyber vulnerabilities. Specific upgrades due to current findings include upgrading from unsupported operating systems, replacing aging workstations, and assisting with patch mitigation. The estimated cost of county level system upgrades ahead of the 2020 General Election are \$204,000. As county level assessments continue, additional needs and costs will be dependent on findings. Additional costs will be funded utilizing remaining grant funds throughout the grant period.

In order to mitigate cybersecurity risks related to the transmission of election results from counties to the statewide system, counties will be provided new and uniform equipment. The estimated costs to implement for the 2020 General Election are \$64,850.

Training

Ensuring state and county election officials and staff are properly trained on cybersecurity is a priority for New Mexico. An election security training program is successfully being implemented utilizing 2018 HAVA grant funds. Additional costs associated with equipment to continue these efforts for the 2020 election cycle are estimated at \$4,000.

Communication

As part of the efforts ensure the integrity of the election New Mexico will launch a statewide voter education and outreach campaign. The communication campaign will ensure voters are provided accurate information by trusted sources. This campaign will mitigate expected misinformation and disinformation campaigns that may have an impact on voter participation and the security of the election process. New Mexico intends to use an estimated \$200,000 of the HAVA federal funding to focus on these efforts during the 2020 election cycle as well as future elections throughout the life of the grant.

Other – COVID -19 Supplies

Like many states New Mexico is faced with many challenges to ensure continuity of the election process in light of the ongoing global pandemic as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on the fact that New Mexico will need to accommodate extensive safety measures for local election officials, election board workers and voters, New Mexico will need to utilize a portion of the 2020 HAVA funding to meet a projected budget shortfall. The funding will be utilized to purchase personal protective equipment for use in the upcoming Primary Election. The estimated shortfall to secure this equipment is \$950,000.