



HAVA Grant Funds Updated Program Narrative

As a part of its Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, Congress appropriated additional funds to states to be used to improve the administration of elections for federal office, including enhancing technology and making election security improvements. Ohio's share of the appropriated funds is \$13,657,222. As a part of the federal statutory requirement, the state must provide a \$2,731,444 match by December 21, 2021.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose submits the following plan for how Ohio intends to expend the appropriated resources to improve the administration of federal elections in the state. This plan builds upon the work currently underway in response to Secretary LaRose's Security Directive 2019-08¹, which required county boards of elections to make high security upgrades a priority. The Directive sets forth a comprehensive, multi-faceted security strategy with Ohio's local boards of elections to provide the redundancy required of a strong election system infrastructure.

Security Block Grants

All 88 county boards of elections will be awarded a block grant of \$25,000 to assist with continued compliance with Security Directive 2019-08 and compliance with future Security Directives. This includes continued compliance with the Elections Infrastructure Security Assessment high priority requirements and mitigation of physical security vulnerabilities identified by Department of Homeland Security (DHS) physical security assessment. Additionally, each county board of elections is required to continue membership with the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC), engage DHS for free resources including a phishing campaign assessment, vulnerability scanning, risk and vulnerability assessment, remote penetration testing, validated architectural design review, cyber threat hunt, and a physical security assessment. The Secretary of State's Office will provide support to the county boards of elections throughout continued compliance with the EISA high priority items and will

¹ <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/globalassets/elections/directives/2019/dir2019-08.pdf>

monitor compliance. This initiative is estimated to cost up to \$2,200,000 and is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Grants for Increased Voter Accessibility

This initiative includes \$15,000 in grant funding to every county board of elections to provide individuals with disabilities the same opportunity for access and inclusion in the electoral process, including privacy and independence, as which exists for all other Ohio voters. Increasing access to information, supporting training for election officials, and ensuring physical access to polling locations and board of elections offices will be essential parts of the initiative to provide integrated access to voting for individuals with a full range of disabilities. This initiative is estimated to cost up to \$1,320,000 and is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Albert Intrusion Detection Monitoring Services

The Secretary of State's Office will provide Albert intrusion detection monitoring services to all county boards of elections through December 31, 2022. Additionally, the Secretary of State's Office will provide Albert intrusion detection devices and monitoring services to the voting system, e-pollbook, voter registration system, and remote marking ballot device vendors that serve critical Ohio systems through December 31, 2022. This initiative is estimated to cost up to \$737,294. Since Albert monitoring for the 2020 election cycle is funded by the 2018 HAVA grant, this extension of services will apply after the 2020 elections.

Security Information and Event Management (SIEM)

The Secretary of State's Office will provide Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and security monitoring support services to all 88 county boards of elections through December 31, 2022. This initiative is estimated to cost up to \$3,590,928. Since SIEM monitoring for the 2020 election cycle is funded by the 2018 HAVA grant, this extension of services will apply after the 2020 elections.

Cybersecurity Training

Each board of elections is required to train its staff annually on tactics to proactively defend against cyber-attacks. Each board is required to use a program covering topics including, but not limited to, how to detect a phishing email, the importance of using strong passwords, and general cybersecurity awareness. The Secretary of State's Office will procure a training program for county board of elections that do not currently offer training through December 31, 2022. This training is estimated to cost up to \$100,000 and is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Secure USB Drives

For election night reporting, all boards of elections must use Secretary of State provided and approved USB Devices when transferring results data to secure tabulation machines. When these devices are plugged into the Secretary of State provided workstation, the USB write blocker device provided by the Secretary of State must also be utilized. A write-blocker must also be used to ensure that no malicious transfer occurs when copying data from the USB device. Upon successful transmission, a tamper evident seal must be placed over the USB port of the USB device, and stored in a secure location.

For general office use at the board of election, all USB storage devices must be FIPS 140-2 compliant with authentication and encryption. This initiative is estimated to cost up to \$290,200 and is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Cybersecurity Support to Local Partners

This program will equip the Secretary of State's office with cybersecurity experts who will assist the county board of elections with their IT support needs. These experts will be responsible for a broad range of county support activities. These activities will promote best practices that further enhance and improve the cybersecurity baseline of the election security ecosystem. Examples of assistance activities provided to local partners include, but will not be limited to the following: assistance with tool, software or hardware integration; software and patch management support; network analysis review; incident response planning and exercising; tier one incident management forensic collection support; and general engineering technical assistance. This initiative is estimated to cost

up to \$3,168,000 and is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Risk Limiting Audits

All county boards of elections are required to conduct a post-election audit following each general election in odd and even years and every primary election held in an even-numbered year. This plan sets aside up to \$250,000 to support implementation of risk-limiting audits through 2022, beginning with the November 2020 General Election.

Secretary of State Cybersecurity Program

This initiative allocates up to \$2,000,800 for the Secretary of State's Cybersecurity Program. Funding for this initiative will implement the Ohio SOS vulnerability management program, mature the security awareness program, improve incident management response activities and IT security upgrades for critical systems. This initiative also includes pertinent cybersecurity upgrades that will optimize current technology and infrastructure, which will enhance the State of Ohio's election security posture and further enable greater operational resiliency leading up to and beyond the general election. This program is anticipated to begin in advance of the November 2020 General Election.

Contingencies

In the event that the funding allocation for the priorities listed above is greater than the actual costs associated with achieving the intended outcome, that other funding sources are identified for a priority, or that the priority falls in relative importance, the Secretary of State's office has identified the following contingent priorities:

1. *Continued Implementation of Elections Infrastructure Security High and Medium Priority Items:* This contingent initiative would continue the work at the Secretary of State's office and the county boards of elections on continued compliance with the high and medium election infrastructure security items as well as continued compliance with other requirements in Security Directive 2019-08 and future

directives to improve the administration of federal elections for federal office, including enhancing election technology and making election security improvements. Additionally, this initiative would support implementation of future Security Directive requirements.

2. *Content Management Systems & Cloud Hosting Support*: This contingent initiative would provide funding to assist counties or their managed service providers in replacing open source website content management systems (e.g., WordPress) with systems that are secured more robustly against common defacing attacks and other cyberattacks. Funding would also be available to assist counties with moving their online functions (e.g., dynamic election night reporting) to secure government clouds during high traffic time periods to mitigate risks of distributed denial of service (DDoS) and other cybersecurity threats.
3. *Voter Registration Security Enhancements*: This contingent initiative would provide funding to assist counties or their service providers with security upgrades with their voter registration systems.
4. *Board of Voting Machine Examiners Support*: This contingent initiative would provide funding and support to update the matrices of the Board of Voting Machine Examiners. This will allow for additional cybersecurity controls for systems approved by the Board of Voting Machine Examiners.
5. *Implementation of H.B. 197 – 2020 Primary Election Provisions*: This contingent initiative would provide funding to support the extension of absentee voting by mail in the March 17, 2020 Primary Election until 7:30 p.m. on April 28, 2020 as passed by the Ohio legislature.