



**PUERTO RICO
STATE ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

PUERTO RICO STATE ELECTIONS COMMISSION
HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT (HAVA)
2020 HAVA Election Security Award

Date: JULY 22, 2020

Signed by

Juan E. Dávila Rivera, Esq.
Chairman

State Election Commission of Puerto Rico

Narrative 2020 HAVA Election Security Award

The Puerto Rico State Elections Commission is the authority entitled by law for the administration of the electoral processes in Puerto Rico. This governing body is integrated by the representation of political parties Commissioners and its President. CEE is responsible for the programmed, structure, lead, and supervising the election process in Puerto Rico. This faculty is awarded by the 78-2011 act, as amended, better known as the Puerto Rico Electoral Code for the twentieth century.

CEE has been awarded \$3,676,962 under the 2018 HAVA Election Security Funds. As per the program and budget narrative submitted before, these funds were distributed to accomplish the following activities: (1) enhancing the election cybersecurity infrastructure and network infrastructure and (2) upgrading the election day voter registry.

At present, CEE has been awarded \$4,141,883 more under the 2020 HAVA Election Security Grant Fund. Puerto Rico is responsible for providing 20% of state matching funds, totaling \$828,377. The total amount, including the state match, is \$4,970,260. States and territories may use these funds to improve the administration of elections for Federal Office, including to enhancing election technology and making election security improvements.

CEE will request and use the awarded funds for the purposes of the grant. To meet the aim of the grant, our agency will allocate funds as follows:

Upgrade and Voting equipment replacement

The CEE has several teams working on the electronic counting system. For better performance in internal controls, we divided the equipment into hardware and software categories. On hardware, the groups are servers, electronic scrutiny machines, laptops for the alternative result output transmission system, memory cards, personal computers (desktop), label printers for memory cards, compact flash readers batteries and parts. For the software category, we contemplate licenses for Microsoft operating systems, Linux, databases in MS-SQL, Sharepoint, Fortinet licenses, and service subscriptions in the Cloud.

This equipment requires upgrades, maintenance, repair, and in some cases, replacement. Professional technical support will also be contemplated for the activities related to supporting the equipment upgrades and maintenance. The CEE will acquire hosting subscription services, including information storage, which includes the services that protect against risks at more point, more completely and efficiently, enabling confidence wherever information is used or stored. Also, we intend to acquire a more efficient cellphone internet connection used as a local connection provider for the scrutiny machines, eased the result transition from the polling stations.

All the below-mentioned equipment is essential to carry out the electoral events. For this reason, we are allocating \$1,656,753.20 of the grant budget to this category.

Election Auditing

We will implement a procedure to audit the counting logic of the electronic counting system. Such validation would post *facto* during the general counting of each event. The audit shall consist of providing a parallel mechanism where ballots are counted against the general count. Random sampling shall be the mechanism used for such auditing. Any additional requests for auditing required by the Commission to provide a transparent report on electronic scrutiny, transmission, and disclosure of results shall be considered under this category. As an essential element in achieving confidence in computer systems, the CEE budgeted \$207,094.15 for this heading.

Voting Registration System and Management

Currently, the system that our agency uses to manage the General Voter Registration is called Advanced Civil Id. This system provides various components that allow the administrative and electoral divisions to be able to intervene and complete the electoral functions corresponding to each area. However, procedures such as quality control, certification of transactions carried out by local commissions, debugging of voter registration, the system of exclusions, and electoral recusals, are not yet integrated into this platform. To establish better controls that promote better management and administration of the General Voter Register, CEE will integrate these functions into one platform. The integration of these functions will facilitate greater visibility of ordinary activity in voter registrations and higher monitoring capacity.

At present, CEE has a communications infrastructure in a closed environment with various local offices called Permanent Registration Boards (JIP). All JIPs are connected to the CEE Administrative Building through a Virtual Private Network (VPN). These offices provide direct service to voters who come to JIPs to conduct electoral transactions. Improving the network is imperative to maintain high service availability. To meet this goal, a redundant and secure line must be installed for each JIP with uninterrupted online service.

To add fields to the existing database, we consider including additional tools that allow us to include voter data, including postal address, email address, and telephone numbers. It is necessary to include recurring updates to the database, operating system, and hosting to ensure optimal performance of these improvements and minimize vulnerabilities. To make these improvements, we budgeted \$828,376.60 in this category.

Cybersecurity vulnerabilities

Under the activities established for 2018 HAVA Security Grant are:

1. Cybersecurity dashboard,
2. Tools for correlating threats and validate threat intelligence feeds,
3. Endpoint protection capabilities,
4. Behavioral and heuristic analytics to prevent malicious activities for evolving,
5. Attract visualization tools for rapid identification and triage response,

6. Integrate CEE newest Fortinet component, and
7. Incorporate a robust training for curriculum our network administration.

These additional funds will allow us to optimize our hardware and software infrastructure resources by acquiring new tools, solutions, and high-availability mechanisms for cybersecurity. They will help us maximize resources for protection and visibility against any intruder attempting to penetrate our systems. Besides, they will allow us to permanently acquire components that complement the monitoring equipment that our IT staff has installed. This monitoring team helps establish functionalities that monitor and alert any action that compromises the security of voting systems and communications networks. With the allocation of additional funds, we will be able to include hosting platforms for web applications that offer data security, specifically in the public segment where election data will be published and where the user/voter interacts entered their data. For the described activities, we are allocating \$414,188.30 of the new grant to cover the above requirements.

Training

The CEE requires specialized training for network and server administrators in the areas of administration and security. Also, to the technical computer and telecommunications personnel to solve cyber-attacks, penetration of intruders, viruses, malware, ransomware, among others.

Also, each acquisition of equipment and tools will require training of the personnel who will take care of the management and administration of these. The CEE allocates the use of the amount of \$207,094.15 to meet the needs described above.

Communication

The Agency has an internet site that provides educational information, statistics, election data, and other tools. With this service, we serve all types of users/voters, including the population with disabilities. We provide the necessary access and information for active military, students, and others outside of Puerto Rico for the election day through the Absentee Voting Administrative Board. Now, our platform hosted on a long-running farm, which limits information growth and security. Developed in the SharePoint 2010 release, a platform that has the extended support of Microsoft until October 2020; therefore, we need an update of this software.

For better performance of the actual service, it is necessary to make a substantial improvement to the online platform. By making this improvement, CEE will be able to enhance the software and hardware results in a new user interface design that is more accessible and adaptable to all devices. To ensure that this service is highly available to the user, we need hosting that is flexible in its capacity and cloud services. Updated versions of licenses are required for operating systems, databases, and content manager.

As a result of the global pandemic, today, more than ever, it is necessary to change the way the message is conveyed to voters and officials. We need to acquire hardware and software to create a virtual room that allows remote information and education. It is necessary to develop educational audiovisual material to comply with users with disabilities and the general

population. With these funds, we can acquire specialized professional resources and services to design educational materials disclosed through the Virtual Platforms of the Agency. In addition to the acquisition of other tools to serve the population with disabilities as established by the HAVA Act. For the activities contemplated we are allocating \$828,376.60 for this category.

State Match Funds

For the activities of the 2018 grant, our agency has already deposited \$183,848 in compliance with the state matching funds requirement. For the actual fiscal year, HAVA requires a 20% state match, corresponding \$828,377 of state expenditures in support of the activities of this grant. CEE has already requested the funds to the Fiscal Control Board through the Puerto Rico Office of Management and Budget. CEE will identify state expenditures to meet by making in-kind matches for the support activities of the grant to ensure our compliance.