

# Texas: 2020 HAVA Election Security Grant Funding Narrative

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## I. Overview of State Election Structure

The Secretary of State (“SOS”) is the chief election officer of Texas. In that role, SOS obtains and maintains uniformity in Texas elections and advises and assists local officials conducting those elections.

The conduct of elections in Texas is decentralized. County clerks or, in those counties that have created the office, county elections administrators, conduct county elections (the “County Election Officer”). In addition, the voter registrars (generally either the county tax assessor-collector or the county elections administrator) maintain the official list of registered voters in their respective counties. The county political parties conduct primary elections in Texas, with the county chair as the chief election officer. Early voting in primary elections, including voting by mail, is conducted by the County Election Officer.

Local political subdivisions conduct their own elections. For example, city elections are held by the city, and school district elections are held by the school. These political subdivisions often contract with the county to conduct their election or hold joint elections with one another, but they are not required to do so. They utilize the county list of registered voters appropriate for their locality.

## II. Planned Expenditures of 2020 HAVA Election Security Grant Funds

Texas anticipates expanding upon the activities outlined in the [2018 HAVA Election Security Grant Funds narrative](#) (“2018 HAVA Narrative”). It should be noted that Texas has hired two Election Security Trainers utilizing HAVA funds. The duties of those trainers include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assisting in training county election officials on security best practices;
- Assisting counties with election security remediation efforts; and,
- Developing a pilot program on Risk-Limiting Audits, a new form of post-election audits.

The 2018 Budget Worksheet has been revised to reflect updated expenditures, including the addition of the Election Security Trainers.

Below is a description of Texas’ anticipated use of the 2020 HAVA Election Security Funds, including a reference to the applicable Budget Worksheet Program Categories, as well as how Texas anticipates meeting the state match requirement. A description of how those activities will augment or

differentiate from the 2018 HAVA grant activities is included where applicable. In addition, activities that will take place prior to the 2020 November General Election are identified.

A. [Election Auditing and Cyber Vulnerabilities: Security Services for Counties](#)

*Budget Worksheet Program Categories: (d) Cyber Security*

As described in the 2018 HAVA Narrative, SOS partnered with the Texas Department of Information Resources (“DIR”) to offer election security assessments through DIR’s Managed Security Services (“MSS”) program, free of charge, to all 254 Texas counties. Those assessments will continue to utilize the 2018 HAVA Election Security grant. The findings of the assessments will result in recommended remediation. Accordingly, SOS is working with DIR and its partners to develop remediation packages.

Because of the additional funding provided through the 2020 HAVA grant funds, SOS will be able to sub-grant money to the counties. SOS has budgeted funds for remediation from both the 2018 and 2020 HAVA grants, which is noted on the attached budget worksheets. Counties will have the option to utilize commodities offered through DIR, such as the MSS program, or procure goods and services through their own procurement channels. In addition to remediation, counties will have the option to acquire paper-based voting equipment, which is described in Section C of this narrative.

Texas anticipates completing the election security assessments prior to the 2020 November General Election with remediation efforts well underway prior to the election.

B. [Voter Registration Systems and Management and Election Management: Security Enhancements and Integration](#)

*Budget Worksheet Program Categories: (c) Voter Registration Systems, (d) Cyber Security, and (f) Other Election Applications*

Consistent with the 2018 HAVA Narrative, Texas devoted 2018 HAVA grant funds to making security enhancements to the Texas Election Administration Management (“TEAM”) system, which hosts the state’s HAVA-compliant voter registration system. The security enhancements included integration of various election management applications maintained by the SOS, including, but not limited to, applications relating to candidate filing, ballot certification, election night reporting, and canvassing of elections. The 2020 HAVA grant funds will allow for additional security enhancements as well as hosting and maintenance of the system through the duration of the grant period.

Planned modifications will be completed prior to the 2020 November General Election. Additional improvements will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

C. [Voting Equipment Replacement and Upgrades: Contract Solutions](#)

*Budget Worksheet Program Categories: (a) Voting Equipment*

With the 2020 HAVA grant funds, SOS will allow counties to acquire HAVA-compliant, paper-based voting equipment using sub-grants awarded to the counties. As required by state law, counties must select from a list of voting system components certified by the state. Also consistent with state law, counties must obtain SOS approval prior to executing a contract to acquire a voting system.

Funds budgeted from both the 2018 and 2020 HAVA grants under the “SUBGRANTS” budget category

in the 2018 and 2020 budget worksheets may be used, at the discretion of the county, to acquire paper-based voting equipment and election security remediation as described in Section A of this narrative.

Although voting system acquisition will be dependent on a variety of variables, such as obtaining county match, vendor availability, and commissioners court approval, SOS anticipates a number of counties will acquire paper-based, HAVA-compliant voting equipment prior to the 2020 November General Election.

#### D. [State Match](#)

2020 HAVA grant funds sub-awarded to the counties will require 20% county matching funds. Funds expended at the state-level will be matched through existing appropriations, if possible; otherwise, SOS will seek the necessary match from the 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, which convenes in January 2021. As stated in the 2018 HAVA Narrative, SOS obtained the match for the 2018 HAVA grant through the 86<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. Accordingly, counties do not need to match 2018 funds sub-granted to the county.

### III. [Conclusion](#)

With the addition of the 2020 HAVA grant funds, Texas will continue its efforts to synergize each of the aforementioned planned activities to ensure that the election infrastructure in Texas is well organized, efficient, transparent, and, most of all, secure.