

**2018 HAVA Election Security Grant Amended Program Narrative**  
**State of Nebraska**  
**April 30, 2020**

In our original program narrative of July 2018, the Secretary of State's office noted that it intended to amend the narrative once the legislature had appropriated state matching funds and if priorities for the funding changed. Both of these things have occurred.

The Nebraska Legislature appropriated state matching funds in the budget effective July 1, 2019. The Secretary of State's office is currently using these funds for upgrades to the statewide voter registration system. In addition, projects have changed in regards to the use of HAVA funds. Most notably is the use of funds to pay for the statewide election equipment replacement project instead of having funds to pay for emergency replacement of older equipment.

The federal funds are held in an interest bearing account. All interest on these balances will be reported as program income on the Federal Financial Reports. In addition, these funds will be held in the state's Election Administration Fund and subsequently spent on allowable activities described in section 101 of HAVA. The grant funds will be used to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements in the following areas:

**1. Voting Equipment Replacement and Upgrades**

Nebraskans take pride in their paper-based election system. Paper ballots significantly reduce the possibility of election tampering and are the failsafe against malicious actors seeking to change the results of an election. The state's current ballot counting equipment and ADA ballot marking devices were purchased in 2006 with initial HAVA funds and are at the end of their life cycle. The amount of funds Nebraska received was not sufficient for replacement of our entire election tabulation system. However, the Secretary of State's Office requested and received state funding for the majority of the cost of the replacement of ballot counting and ADA compliant ballot marking devices statewide. The replacement project will require spending approximately one million dollars in HAVA funds.

This equipment replacement project also included the use of HAVA funds for the purchase of air-gapped computers and printers for each of our counties that use reporting software to tabulate election results. These computers will allow counties to construct the tabulation reports and results on a computer that is not connected to the internet. The new process will allow for a comparison between the report and the results that are ultimately uploaded to the Secretary of State's Election Night Reporting Website. This additional security step will allow for an election results file that cannot be tampered with prior to upload and provides a secure file for reference in case issues arise.

**2. Voting Registration Systems and Management**

The Election Security Funds will be used for the Statewide Voter Registration System in the following areas:

**A. Two-Party Authentication**

Prior to the 2018 General Election, the Secretary of State implemented a two-party authentication process for the Statewide Voter Registration System. The Secretary of State collaborates with our 93 county election offices on voter registration. This effort ensures that in the event that any individual user's credentials are compromised, the system will remain secure because the tokens institute and require a newly generated code in order to access the system. This has enhanced security of the voter registration system. Funds will be continually used to purchase addition tokens and for the ongoing license fees.

B. Voter List Maintenance Efforts

One of the more important ways that Nebraska can strengthen its security is improving the accuracy of the voter rolls. Nebraska already matches its list to the National Change of Address list from the U.S. Post Office and routinely checks the list against death and felon records. To further improve these efforts, Nebraska intends to join a collaborative list maintenance service. Funds will be used to pay membership fees and mailing costs associated with a list maintenance service.

C. Voter Registration System Enhancements

The Secretary of State, as well as our local election officials, have requested enhancements to the Statewide Voter Registration System to provide efficiencies and enhance reporting. Funds will be used to pay for change orders to our vendor for enhancements to the Statewide Voter Registration System. State matching funds have been used for this project so far, and federal HAVA funds will be used after the state match has been met.

**3. Cyber Vulnerabilities**

The Election Security Grant Funds will be used for Cyber Vulnerabilities in the following ways:

A. Albert Monitors

Funds will be used to install and maintain four (4) Albert Monitors in critical areas in Nebraska to monitor suspicious activity in real time with the assistance of the Elections Infrastructure – Information Sharing Analysis Center (EI-ISAC). Funds will continue to be used for the monitoring service costs.

B. Cybersecurity Consulting Services

Third party vendors will be hired to consult, provide analysis and prepare documentation relating to strengthening our internal security and operational policies and procedures. Such policies could be used at both the state and county levels to ensure safe and secure Federal elections. Cybersecurity consultants may also be hired to conduct scanning and penetration testing of our election vendors and to provide guidance and direction to existing IT staff to implement additional security measures.

**4. Communications & Training**

The Election Security Grant Funds will be used for training in three different areas:

A. Training for Election Division Staff

Employees will be sent to various conferences and trainings sessions to expand election administration knowledge and stay current on election security issues.

B. Training for County Election Officials

Members of the Elections Division will travel the state to provide training at county and regional meetings of county election officials. Additionally, statewide and regional training conferences will be hosted to ensure that our county election officials are staying up to date on election security. Elections Division staff will also provide one-on-one training with individual counties as necessary. These training sessions will allow new county employees to get proper training of the election systems as well as provide our seasoned officials with refresher training.

C. Hiring of a Training and Implementation Coordinator

A position was created to provide dedicated training during the Implementation of the new voting equipment statewide. After the implementation phase, this position will help to provide training manuals and best practices on Election Administration and provide continual training for current Election Officials as well as training for new election officials.

**5. Resources for Voters with Disabilities**

The Secretary of State will directly purchase supplies for our local election officials to accommodate voters with disabilities and offer modifications to polling sites to maintain ADA compliance.

In addition, the Secretary of State will investigate the cost, viability, and proven success in other states for online programs offered by known and established vendors that provide secure early voting ballot delivery systems that enable voters with disabilities the ability to mark a ballot and return the ballot to their local election office. The office will also investigate each system for compatibility for use with the early ballots of overseas citizens and military personnel.

**6. Administration**

A new accounting/compliance position will be created, with a portion of the employee's time to be spent on properly monitoring and administering the 2018 Election Security Funds. The employee is also expected to spend time on other HAVA grants and will record time on each grant in accordance with federal regulations, with only actual time spent on the grant being paid from the 2018 HAVA funds. Additionally, some administration funds may be used to pay for the costs of Federal HAVA Single Audits.