



U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Fiscal Year 2025

Congressional Budget Justification

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Mission and Vision

Mission

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission helps election officials improve the administration of elections and helps Americans participate in the voting process.

Vision

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission is a trusted, proactive, and responsive federal agency that helps election officials administer and voters participate in elections.

Salaries and Expenses

FY 2023 Enacted		FY 2024 Estimate		FY 2024 President's Budget		FY 2025 Request	
FTE*	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars
66	\$28,000,000	87	\$28,000,000	87	\$33,800,000	91	\$38,000,000

Note: FY 2024 Estimate levels reflect the annualized CR levels for 2024

Election Security Grants (FY 2023-2024) / Election Innovation Grants (FY 2025)

FY 2023 Enacted		FY 2024 Estimate		FY 2024 President's Budget		FY 2025 Request	
FTE*	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars	FTE	Dollars
-	\$75,000,000	-	\$75,000,000	-	\$300,000,000	5	\$96,000,000

FY 2025 Priorities



Improve the national security posture of elections with secure and accessible voting systems through the utilization of the newly implemented Voluntary Voting System Guidelines 2.0 (VVSG); expanding quality monitoring efforts for certified voting systems already in the field; expanding the testing, evaluation, and protection of election supporting technology, such as electronic poll books (EPB), ballot delivery systems, and election results reporting systems.



Develop a Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure (CVD) program, an independent security research program for election technology, and conduct testing campaigns of submitted VVSG 2.0 voting systems to maintain the agency's focus on national security implications as it relates to election administration.



Continued development of voluntary penetration testing for election technologies, including voting systems, to ensure our nation's critical elections infrastructure is secured against ongoing cybersecurity threats.



Expand the agency's current Field Services Program (FSP) to assist state and local jurisdictions with quality monitoring of EAC certified systems.



Continue critical research by the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) to successfully pilot future election technologies focused on security, accessibility, and usability, as well as seek the assistance of outside consultants for building requirements and developing best practices.



Continue to serve as a clearinghouse of voting information by providing election officials and voters with necessary timely information and materials as they prepare to administer and participate in the 2024 presidential election, as well as future elections. This includes providing training and developing best practices to strengthen the integrity of elections, securing voting technology, and added guidance on preparing for Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled threats to election administration.



Collect and analyze the data from the 2024 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), the agency's instrument used to collect state-by-state data on the administration of federal elections. Release the 2024 EAVS report in June 2025.



Administer grant funding to help transition the states to VVSG 2.0. the newest standards in voting system technology and administer competitive Election Innovation Grant funding to states with qualified projects, ensuring funding is utilized efficiently and that states in need of such funding have an opportunity to request it.

Appropriations Language

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses to carry out the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252), \$38,000,000; of which \$1,500,000 shall be made available to the National Institute of Standards and Technology for election reform activities authorized under the Help America Vote Act of 2002; of which not less than \$2,324,429 shall be for necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General; and of which not to exceed \$10,000 shall be for official reception and representation expenses: Provided, that of the amounts appropriated under this heading, up to \$4,000,000 shall remain available until September 30, 2026.

ELECTION INNOVATION GRANTS

For the establishment of a competitive grant program to foster innovation, enhance processes and procedures, and improve the administration of Federal elections, \$96,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2026; of which not to exceed 2 percent shall remain available until September 30, 2028, for the administration and oversight of grants awarded under this heading: Provided, That the Election Assistance Commission shall, consistent with the purposes of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252), award grants to states and eligible units of local government on a competitive basis for projects that will have significant national, regional, or local impact in the improvement of the administration of Federal elections through innovation, including, but not limited to, election administration; cybersecurity and audits; security of election officials and locations; accessibility for voters, including those with disabilities and other specific access needs, and including vote-by-mail, voter education, language proficiency, usability, and voter technology; or other programs to enhance or reliably secure processes and procedures in administering Federal elections without meaningfully impairing access: Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, the term “State” has the meaning given such term in section 901 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21141): Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be deemed to be a State: Provided further, That for purposes of this appropriation, an eligible unit of local government is defined as a unit of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections: Provided further, That a grant awarded under this heading shall be for an amount not greater than \$10,000,000, and shall be available for obligation by the State or eligible unit of local government through September 30, 2028: Provided further, That not more than ten percent of the total amount of funds made available under this heading may be awarded to projects in a single State.

Agency Background and Structure

Congress established the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to help election officials improve the administration of elections and help eligible Americans participate in the voting process. Congress charged the EAC with fulfilling its mission by managing federal standards for voting systems, testing and certifying voting systems to the voluntary national standard, distributing congressionally appropriated funds to states for the improvement of election administration, administering a national election administration clearinghouse that studies election administration practices, providing best practices to the nation, helping voters register to vote and participate in federal elections, and other purposes pursuant to HAVA.

The EAC consists of four presidentially appointed Commissioners, professional staff, and four Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committees. Congressional leaders of the majority and minority party each have the authority to recommend two of the four Commissioners who lead the agency, making the EAC a bipartisan commission by statutory mandate.

The EAC's three statutorily mandated FACA committees are the Standards Board, the Board of Advisors, and the Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC). The three groups advise the agency and help develop the EAC's national voting system testing and certification standard, the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG).

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) dictates the membership of the three committees. The Standards Board is a 110-member board consisting of 55 state election officials (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) selected by their respective chief state election official, and 55 local election officials selected through a process supervised by the chief state election officials. The Board of Advisors consists of groups representing governors; mayors; state legislatures; secretaries of state; state election directors; county recorders, election officials and clerks; voter advocacy groups; federal agencies; and professionals in the fields of science and technology.

The TGDC helps the EAC develop its Voluntary Voting System Guidelines. It is composed of 14 members appointed jointly by EAC and the Director of the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), who is the chairperson of TGDC.

In 2021, the EAC established a fourth FACA Committee, the Local Leadership Council (LLC), to provide recommendations and direct feedback to the EAC on a range of election administration topics. Membership in the LLC consists of 100 members with two members from each state who are currently serving or recently served as officers of each state's local election official association. The first in-person meeting of the LLC took place on July 20-21, 2023. During this meeting, the LLC elected its first executive committee and is now a fully functioning FACA board.

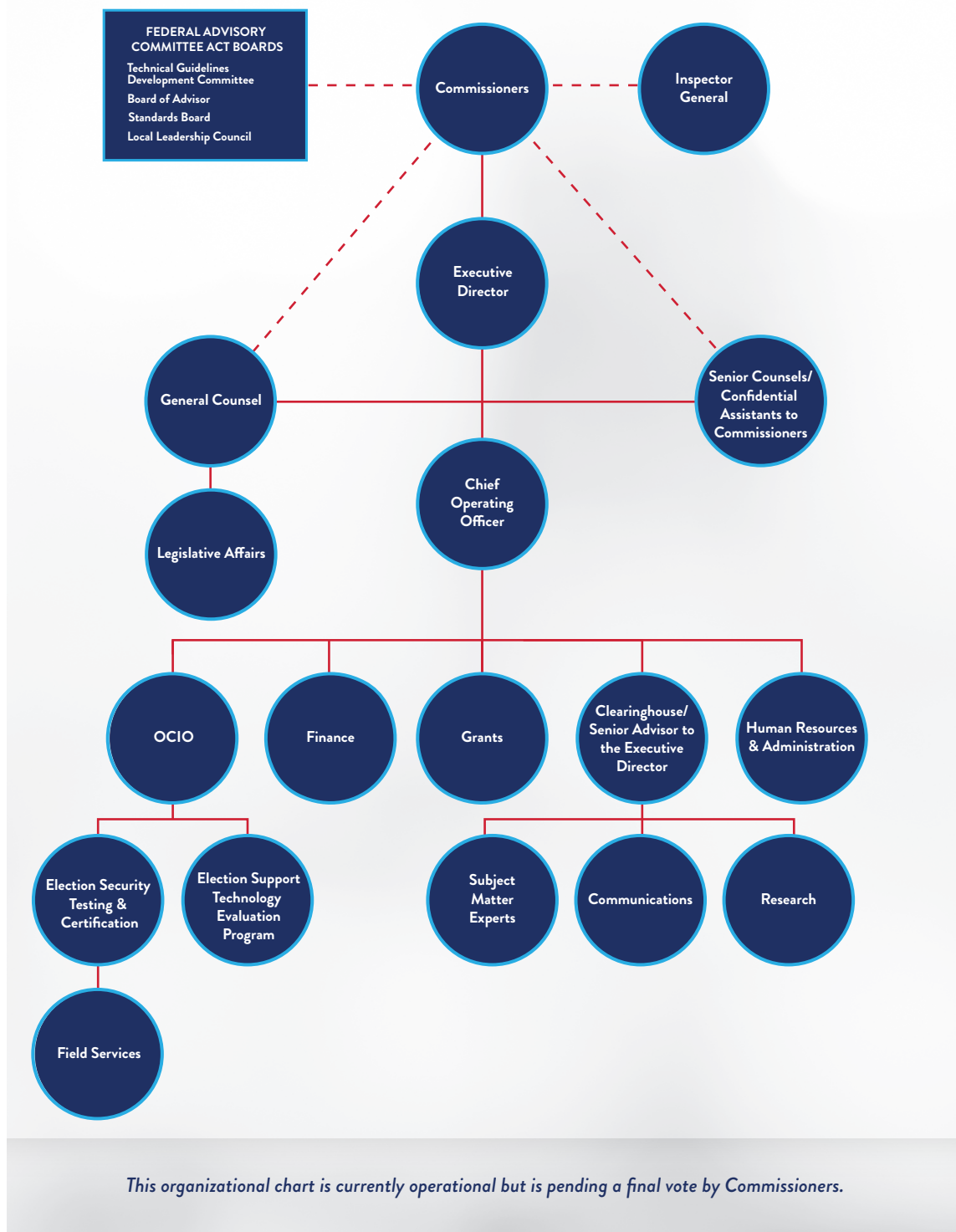
Goals and Structure of Budget Justification

As established and detailed in the EAC's strategic plan, the EAC's operations and offices are aligned to address the Commission's congressional mandates to protect the nation's voting systems; test and certify voting equipment; assist states with the administration of HAVA grant funds to improve federal elections; serve as a clearinghouse of information on voting; administer and maintain the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) voter registration form; and report to Congress on NVRA and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voting activity.

The EAC's current strategic plan sets forth three strategic goals and ten strategic objectives. The three strategic goals are as follows:

1. Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials;
2. Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections; and
3. Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

U.S. Election Assistance Commission Organization Chart



Fiscal Year 2023

Accomplishment Highlights

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is a trusted, proactive, and responsive bipartisan federal commission established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). The EAC provides funds to state election offices to improve and strengthen security around federal elections, develops the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), accredits testing laboratories and certifies voting systems, serves as the nation's clearinghouse for information on election administration, conducts the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) and other studies, and administers the National Mail Voter Registration Form in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. Across the United States and its territories, the EAC is providing services for state and local election officials and the voters they serve.

The EAC has also continued to maintain a focus on the national security implications of election administration through its programs and initiatives. These areas include Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure (CVD) work, as well as the agency's Field Services and Testing and Certification programs. Among the EAC's other most notable accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2023 are the following:

Strengthening Election Security and Voter Confidence

The testing of the security and accuracy of voting machines is a national security imperative. The EAC understands that voter confidence can be enhanced when election officials and their federal partners adequately prepare for and respond to election security challenges. Some of the challenges include foreign malign influence and disinformation, malicious attempts to breach voter registration databases and other election systems, the use of ransomware, and other emerging and evolving threats to election infrastructure, periodic threats to election officials, and a large turnover of experienced election officials.

The Cyber Access and Security Program (CAS) is an integral part of the EAC's mission. CAS maintains an Election Security Preparedness page on the EAC website with cybersecurity, risk management, training, best practices, and other resources to support this key mission. CAS coordinates closely with other agencies such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to produce relevant and timely products that complement other agency offerings. Examples of this include the publishing of guidance on hash validation, contributions to the EAC's chain of custody best practices guidance, and the continued hosting of CISA's Election Risk Management online tool. The EAC's CAS program will continue to seek new and innovative ways to deliver high-quality information and training to election officials. As the federal agency tasked with distributing election administration best practices, the EAC is well positioned to expand its leadership in this area in coordination with our partners and stakeholders.

In 2023, the EAC was invited to participate in the Federal Senior Leadership Council's Sector Risk Management Agency working group. This builds on well-established collaboration with other federal government entities that work on election security, including the development of the election security working group that eventually became the election infrastructure subsector's Government Coordinating Council (GCC). Co-led by the EAC Chair on the GCC executive committee, GCC members include the EAC Chairperson and Vice Chair, as well as three state election officials and three local election officials drawn from the EAC's federal advisory committees. In addition to the EAC's work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish the GCC, the Commission supported establishing the Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) comprised of private election equipment manufacturers and vendors.

Threats to election workers remain a great concern to election officials and the EAC. In an effort to provide additional resources on this critical issue, the EAC launched a dedicated webpage for security-related concerns. The webpage serves as a reference for election workers who may be facing personal threats or harassment in the workplace, and includes resources to identify, mitigate and respond to threats and guidance for removing PII (Personally Identifiable Information) from internet searches. The EAC regularly updates this comprehensive resource to include information and best practices specific to the physical security of election and poll workers, information on submitting reports to law enforcement, helpful toolkits, and the most recent updates and resources from our federal partners. Additionally, the EAC is providing a regular cyber threat intelligence report for distribution to state and local election officials. This reporting helps election officials maintain situational awareness of the cyber threat landscape and better prepare to defend their critical elections infrastructure.

The Commission continues to take a multifaceted approach to helping state and local election officials strengthen election security. This work includes testing and federally certifying voting systems, producing security-focused resources, and disseminating security best practice information and checklists to state and local election officials.

Meeting the Challenges of AI-Enabled Threats to Election Administration

The EAC provided state and local election officials with quality guidance and communications tools to curb the damaging effects of AI-generated materials during FY 2023. The ever-evolving election landscape continues to be the target of new threats. Social media evolved rapidly, with new platforms, new forms of disinformation, foreign influence, and AI-generative tools that may accelerate false information, making voter education and communication more challenging. To keep ahead of these challenges, the EAC developed and distributed a comprehensive AI toolkit to election officials to help combat this emerging threat. Additionally, the agency conducted research aimed at enhancing voter education initiatives and promoting best practices and has solicited input from election officials for information related to firsthand experiences with harmful AI-generated disinformation.

Confidence in U.S. elections is strengthened when state and local officials can access the much-needed programs and resources the EAC provides, whether these are modern standards for election technology, or sharing EAC guidance across jurisdictions related to AI-generated content. The EAC is committed to meeting the ever-growing needs of state and local election officials and meeting the challenges of AI-enabled threats head on.

Advancing VVSG 2.0, Election Technology, Field Services

As states seek to invest in the purchase of new voting equipment, election leaders are continuing to turn to the EAC's Testing and Certification Program as a key resource in ensuring the nation's voting systems are tested to confirm the secure and accurate tabulation of ballots. This includes seeking information on the systems currently certified, Engineering Change Orders (ECOs) to certified system configurations, and implementation of the current iteration of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines, which is known as VVSG 2.0.

In FY 2022, the EAC successfully operationalized VVSG 2.0. The first step was a unanimous vote of the Commissioners to adopt a VVSG Lifecycle Policy. This new policy facilitates migration to new standards by defining the types of VVSG version changes, both major and minor, providing guidance on Voting System Test Lab (VSTL) accreditation, migration to new standards, and defining limited maintenance modifications that may be made to systems certified to deprecated standards which allows jurisdictions to fully realize the expected lifespan of their voting systems. The policy also established an annual review cadence of the VVSG for potential changes to be included in future iterations of the standard.

The second and final step to operationalize VVSG 2.0 was accreditation of both VSTLs to test systems to the new standard. Accreditation of the labs involves assessments performed by both the NIST National Voluntary Lab Accreditation Program (NVLAP) as well as the EAC's Testing and Certification Program staff. These assessments were successfully completed by the labs and the Commissioners voted to accredit the labs in November and December 2022. With VVSG 2.0 ready to be used for testing voting systems, the new Testing and Certification Program Manuals version 3.0, which includes requirements for penetration testing of all systems submitted to the program going forward, is effective. The EAC is now accepting applications to test voting systems to the new standard. Currently, one system is in test for VVSG 2.0 certification and several manufactures have communicated that they intend to submit systems soon.

The EAC continued to work with NIST to develop an evaluation process for End-to End Verifiable (E2E-V) protocols in voting systems, as required by VVSG 2.0. Both agencies collaborated on a two-day webinar held in October to gather feedback on a range of topics regarding E2E-V technology. The webinar included four panels with stakeholders on several topics: integrity and voter confidence, security, accessibility and human factors, and implementation and testing of E2E-V in voting systems. Based on the feedback from the webinar, NIST is planning to conduct research to explore technology solutions for voting systems like E2E-V that increase voter confidence in election outcomes. Additionally, effective since late 2022, the EAC's new Testing and Certification Program Manuals includes requirements for the test labs to conduct penetration testing on all voting systems submitted to the program.

In addition to the launch of VVSG 2.0, the EAC hired the first Director of the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) in FY 2022 and appointed an additional four employees in FY 2023 to the new program. ESTEP was created to evaluate the security and accessibility of election-supporting technologies such as electronic poll books, electronic ballot delivery systems, voter registration portals, and election night reporting databases. ESTEP will lead to the creation of draft standards that can be used by Voting System Test Laboratories (VSTLs), the creation of program manuals, the administration of pilot programs, and reporting on the results of these pilot programs. The objective of the EAC is to establish standards for these critical election-supporting technologies similar to VVSG, with the goal to enhance the security and accessibility of these systems for all users.

In FY 2023, the EAC moved forward with a voluntary Electronic Poll Book (EPB) Pilot Program. As of the general midterm election in November 2022, 2,270 local jurisdictions in 40 states utilize EPBs. This program's goal is to help alleviate some of the burdens currently shouldered by states in developing and maintaining EPB standards and conducting testing of broadly applicable functionality, such as security, accessibility, and usability. A draft set of requirements was developed by the EAC, NIST, and Mandiant. The requirements have been circulated to EAC stakeholders for feedback. The EAC also distributed the requirements to both federally accredited Voting System Technical Laboratories (VSTL) and all electronic poll book manufacturers across the country, for a final review before the pilot testing commenced.

Once the requirements were reviewed, the EAC opened a call to all electronic poll book manufacturers to participate in the EPB pilot. Manufacturers were selected on a first-come, first-serve basis, through their submission of the EPB Pilot Agreement, which indicated an acceptance of pilot terms. In total, five electronic poll book manufacturers, one state, and one local jurisdiction agreed to participate in the EPB pilot. To ensure balanced representation, each VSTL received the same number of pilot participants for testing. The cost of the testing was covered by the EAC, as Congress has made EPBs and similar election technologies a priority due to security concerns because they are connected systems. VSTL testing concluded in Q4 of 2023.

As a result of funding from FY 2023, the EAC released its findings from the Voluntary Electronic Poll Book Pilot Program in Q1 of FY 2024, marking the culmination of a two-year-long program, in which ESTEP worked alongside accredited test laboratories and other stakeholders, to evaluate EPBs against the Voluntary Electronic Poll Book Requirements Version 0.9 (VEPBR v0.9). Additionally, the EAC hosted an event where panelists discussed the findings and impact of the Voluntary E-Poll Book Pilot Program from various perspectives, including EPB manufacturers, voting system test laboratories, and state and local jurisdictions. These panelists commented on the advantages of testing and certifying e-poll books on the federal level. Lastly, the EAC Commissioners voted unanimously to formally adopt ESTEP as a permanent agency program.

ESTEP has already initiated the next steps for testing and certifying e-poll books on the federal level, which involves revising the Voluntary Electronic Poll Book Requirements to incorporate baseline functional requirements based on state and local standards. In addition, ESTEP has developed supporting administrative guidelines in the Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program Manual, to assist manufacturers and voting system test laboratories with adherence to program expectations. In Q2 of 2024, EAC Commissioners will formally vote on these two documents once all feedback has been implemented from public comments. ESTEP continues to work closely with the EAC's research specialists to enhance data collection methods during the 2024 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) reporting for e-poll books to further improve the nation's understanding of the use of these critical systems.

In FY 2023, the EAC launched a Field Services Program (FSP) to assist state and local jurisdictions with quality monitoring of EAC certified systems. This program will accomplish verification of certified system configurations, collection, and investigation of voting system anomaly reports, provide training and best practices with primary emphasis on industry standard verification and security tools, perform state and local site reviews, and manufacturer review. Staff necessary to get the program up and running have been onboarded including a program manager and five full-time Field Services Specialists dedicated to different regions across the country. The launch of the EAC's Field Services Program is currently underway in its pilot phase. Scope of services has been defined and is being socialized to stakeholders at all levels through the EAC's series of conferences and boards, federal partner agencies, state and local organizations, vendors and manufacturers, directly to potential participants via our Commissioners, and through direct engagement by Field Service Specialist outreach.

Initial solicitation for participation has produced significant demand, with five states formally requesting assistance and two more state-requested county pilots at this time. Stakeholders have conveyed positive feedback on the value of services the FSP initiative is charged with providing as a critical component of successful national election security. The level of engagement and scope of projects currently being developed will maximize the dedicated time of all FSP personnel onward into FY 2024 and will require a degree of scalability in the near future to meet the needs of delivery to potentially include: contract employees, elections consulting services, agency cross-divisional cooperation, and hiring additional Field Services Specialists.

Information Technology Improvements

Throughout 2023, the EAC continued to implement improvements to its information technology (IT) infrastructure. These include abilities to gain greater visibility into the health of all EAC endpoints, whether operating in a remote environment or utilizing our on-premises network. In May of 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order 14028 mandating all Federal Civilian Executive Branch agencies take measures to improve the cybersecurity posture of their organizations. One of the principal requirements of the Executive Order is to transition our infrastructure to a Zero Trust Architecture. The EAC has developed a plan to implement a Zero Trust Architecture and will likely need additional funding and expertise to fully realize the transition. Throughout 2023, the EAC made progress toward this goal by implementing a single sign-on (SSO) capability, phishing resistant multi-factor authentication, and decommissioning of legacy VPN (Virtual Private Network) infrastructure.

In addition to Executive Order 14028, a number of binding operational directives (BODs) and OMB memoranda have been issued related to improving cybersecurity. In particular, BOD 22-01 requires the EAC to remediate vulnerabilities with known exploitations within 14 days of publishing on a CISA maintained list. This requirement has caused the EAC to accelerate existing plans for automated vulnerability detection and remediation and we are currently able to meet the timelines set out by CISA. In 2023, the EAC increased its integration with the CISA continuous diagnostics and mitigations (CDM) program by implementing improved endpoint detection and response and mobile device monitoring tools.

Conducting Essential Research on Election Administration and Infrastructure

In June 2023, the EAC released the 2022 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Comprehensive Report and dataset. The biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) is the agency's flagship research initiative, collecting nationwide data on election administration from nearly 6,500 local election jurisdictions across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. The EAVS collects state-by-state, jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction data on a wide variety of election administration topics, including voter registration, military and overseas voting, domestic civilian by-mail voting, polling operations, provisional ballots, voter participation, and election technology. EAVS data is utilized by countless stakeholders in the election community, including members of Congress, legislative staff, federal officials, journalists, academics, advocates, and election officials themselves. In today's environment of heightened concerns regarding cybersecurity in elections, EAVS data is increasingly being used by intelligence analysts, members of the national security community, and other stakeholders who are working to secure U.S. election infrastructure.

The EAC hosted a Data Summit in July 2023 after the release of the 2022 EAVS report and its submission to Congress. The event convened state and local election officials, their federal partners, and other key election stakeholders to discuss EAVS findings and leveraging data-driven practices to improve election administration.

EAC initiatives to improve the EAVS have focused on three interrelated goals: to reduce response burden; to strengthen data quality and completeness; and to make the data more accessible and useful, particularly for election officials. Respondents to the 2022 EAVS continue to have the option of completing the EAVS online, along with the option of using the traditional EAVS data collection template. The EAC plans to transition to a fully online survey experience in the coming years.

In early FY 2023, the EAC published its first EAVS Glossary which contains EAVS terms to assist POCs in providing correct and accurate data. The EAC posted six Closer Look Videos to its YouTube channel, to provide EAVS POCs an overview of the 2022 EAVS Survey Instruments. The agency conducted eight state-requested webinars for states who used the online template to complete the EAVS, which provided states with a customized walkthrough of how to complete the 2022 EAVS using the online template.

The EAC is currently preparing to administer the 2024 EAVS. The EAC has conducted needs assessments with states on how the 2022 EAVS went and on how the 2024 EAVS can be improved.

As of this writing, the EAC has made progress in the development of three HAVA Studies: 1. Methods of Recruiting, Training, and Improving the Performance of Poll Workers; 2. Federal and State Laws Governing the Eligibility of Persons to Vote; and 3. Laws and Procedures used by Each State Concerning Recounts, What Constitutes a Vote, and Contesting Ballots. The three reports are scheduled to be published in 2024.

Election Accessibility

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) contained landmark provisions creating the right for voters with disabilities to mark cast and verify their ballots privately and independently. Since then, states have made significant efforts to eliminate barriers and close the voter registration and voter participation gaps that exist between voters with disabilities and voters without disabilities. However, obstacles still exist for voters with disabilities and additional progress is needed to realize the true promise of HAVA.

While no one solution can be applied across the thousands of jurisdictions that comprise America's decentralized election system, there are common threads in how best to serve voters with disabilities. Under the leadership of the EAC Senior Accessibility Subject Matter Expert, the EAC elevates best practices that can serve as exemplary models to election officials, ensuring there are multiple options that accommodate the diversity of disabilities. In October 2023, the EAC worked with the National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM) to develop targeted training materials on accessibility and disability awareness. This series of brief training videos provides tools to remedy accessibility barriers identified in previous EAC work and serve as a valuable resource for election officials, poll workers, and other stakeholders.

The EAC also ensures voters are educated about their rights by actively engaging voters with disabilities and advocacy groups. The EAC also distributes copies of the EAC's disability voting rights pamphlet, which uses plain language to spell out federal voting rights for persons with disabilities in large print and Braille. In 2023, EAC Commissioners and staff participated in key stakeholder events focused on voting for persons with disabilities, including the National Disability Rights Network, African American Conference on Disabilities, and the Digital Accessibility Legal Summit.

Following up on the well-received 2020 national survey, the EAC commissioned Rutgers University to conduct a comprehensive analysis of accessibility in the 2022 general election. The full report, titled "Disability and Voting Accessibility in the 2022 Elections" was released on July 12, 2023. The researchers focused on voter accessibility in the 2022 election, comparing the results to the same post-election surveys that were conducted in 2020 and 2012. The survey covered topics such as voter turnout, difficulties voting, assistance voting, voting methods, and treatment by election officials. The findings are critical for election officials who continuously work to meet the needs of their jurisdictions and make voting accessible to all eligible voters.

For election officials, the agency is developing an Accessible Equipment Calculator that helps election officials to estimate the number of accessible devices at a polling place, based on the specific demographics of the jurisdiction. HAVA mandates a minimum of one accessible voting device per polling place in federal elections. However, jurisdictions have different needs and disability rates vary across the country. This calculator will help election officials estimate if additional voting devices are needed based on the proportion of voters with disabilities, to achieve a voter wait time of less than 30 minutes.

Clearinghouse

Established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), the EAC is charged with serving as a clearinghouse for election administration information. In FY 2023, the EAC expanded the Clearinghouse Division, made up of former election officials, experts in election administration, election law, and accessibility. The Clearinghouse team produced numerous resources to help election officials implement best practices on communication, election official security, voter list maintenance, developing continuity of operations plans (COOP), serving uniformed and overseas voters, accessibility practices to serve voters with disabilities and, and numerous other subjects. The agency also utilized FY 2023 funding to expand into innovative research and training including a partnership with the University of Rhode Island to simulate thousands of polling place scenarios to identify best practices.

In 2023, under its clearinghouse function, the EAC began the process of identifying and developing topic areas and best practices to build and host a free training program for election officials nationwide. The EAC Learning Lab will host training content and allow officials from all jurisdictions to participate regardless of their local budget. This program is especially needed given the turnover of election officials in the past year. Additionally, it aims to raise the professionalism of election administrators in general. The EAC Learning Lab will also facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices that is core to the EAC's mission.

The Clearinghouse Division also revised and published the Election Management Guidelines (EMG) to assist state and local election officials in effectively managing and administering elections in the United States. This comprehensive resource assists election officials with getting quickly up to speed regarding all aspects of election administration. The updated version covers 19 chapters on topics such as voting system certification, system security, accessibility, ballot building, absentee voting, and recounts, with increased focus on relevant election technologies that have changed since the last EMG from 15 years ago. As mentioned above, the field of election administration continues to see high levels of turnover, the EMG represents an important addition to EAC's growing library of resources for election officials.

The EAC is also continuing work on the EAC Clearinghouse Network – a collaborative peer-to-peer platform where election officials can find resources, connect with experts and colleagues in other jurisdictions, and discuss emerging issues. To fulfill the mission of the EAC's clearinghouse function, the agency recognizes that election officials must be able to easily communicate with each other on common issues and solutions. This resource offers a secure platform for that important collaboration.

The network is organized by community topics, and individual posts and resources can be tagged. Users can also list their skills and interests on their profiles, making it easy for community members to connect with experts on specific subjects. Election officials themselves are often an excellent the best source of hands-on experience and direct primary information, and the EAC applies their hands-on experience to facilitate discussions between states and localities on many election administration topics. In May 2023, the Clearinghouse Network launched in its pilot phase with EAC FACA Board members. This initial stage of this project will commence over the next few weeks, with an expanded controlled launch of this system occurring throughout the summer.

The project is currently expanding access to users across the nation in the 2024 election cycle.

In 2023, the EAC held the Seventh Annual Clearinghouse Awards, also known as the “Clearie” Awards, for best practices in election administration. The EAC launched the Clearies to further the clearinghouse mandate to promote best practices in elections, and to highlight the successful use of Congressionally appropriated HAVA funds, while celebrating the accomplishments of election officials.

The award categories include innovation in election administration; improving accessibility for voters with disabilities; best practices in recruiting, training, and retaining poll workers; creative and original “I Voted” sticker design; innovation in election cybersecurity and technology, outstanding use of HAVA grants in election modernization, and outstanding election official association program or local office. Winners were selected by four independent panels of election officials from the EAC’s advisory boards with the EAC Commissioners serving as judges for the sticker category.

In 2023, the EAC issued Clearie awards to 24 programs with honorees ranging from large states with more than 6.5 million voters to townships of less than 80,000 registered voters. To provide even more best practices to election administrators, the EAC also recognized 16 offices and their efforts for Clearie Honorable Mention awards.

The EAC continued to add more state-specific resources to its website, directing voters to trusted sources for voter registration, options to cast a ballot, and contact information for where they are registered.

HAVA Security Grants

The EAC awarded \$75 million in Election Security Grant funds in FY 2023. The funding included a requirement that grantees report financial data on a quarterly basis. These federal funds supplement local and state expenditures and allow the states to purchase more secure voting systems, maintain cybersecurity programs, and improve election infrastructure. Beginning January 2023, the agency implemented the new quarterly financial reporting requirement from the FY 2022 funding. The EAC pursued Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) approval to ensure that the required reporting was standardized to reduce the reporting burden across grant recipients.

Multiple training events were held to support the Federal Financial and Progress reporting requirements for all HAVA grants. The emphasis on training at critical compliance points led to improved and increased reporting compliance. Grants staff reviewed over 300 financial and progress reports in FY 2023. The EAC Grants office responded to a high volume of inquiries regarding allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary expenditures and funding activities.

The College Poll Worker Program was relaunched after a 13-year hiatus with FY 2023 funding of \$1 million in no-year funds. The College Program grants are authorized under Title V of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to encourage student participation as poll workers or assistants, to foster student interest in the elections process, and to encourage state and local governments to use students as poll workers. The grants also aim to relieve poll worker shortages. The EAC developed two options for the funding opportunity to achieve its objective – a Service Day model around the EAC Help America Vote Day and EAC Poll Worker Recruitment Day and a traditional two-year Poll Worker grant. The first round of awards were made in Q2 of FY 2024.

Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding was available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic for the 2020 federal election cycle. Under HAVA, states had until March 2022 to meet the matching requirements, at which point the CARES grants expired and automatically entered the closeout process. Training was provided to grantees on closing out the grant and guidance was published on the EAC website. In FY 2023, the EAC continued the closeout process with individual grants for which activities had concluded and financials were reconciled, closing ten CARES grants in FY 2023 for a total of 55 of 56 grants closed. The EAC closed the remaining grant in December of FY 2024. Many states spent all their funding, while some states have returned federal funds including interest earned on those funds. The federal funds returned in FY 2023 totaled \$9,092,813.

Additional grants developments included hiring two additional full-time Grants Management Specialists to oversee and support the increased grants administration responsibilities for the agency and the development of the new College Program and its administration. The responsibilities have increased in report reviews, audit resolution and adding a new competitive grants program.

At the close of FY 2023, the EAC offboarded from HHS' GrantSolutions grants administration software as a service to a custom-built grants management system built on the Appian platform. The upgrade and modernization of the grant system will allow staff to dedicate more time to strategic activities and providing technical support to grantees. The new system will automate critical grant processes to improve the execution of grant activities and reduce the administrative burden for both grantees and EAC staff. Staff can focus on developing enhanced technical assistance training for award management, best practices, audit readiness, and education on federal grants administration. The full grant system will be deployed in FY 2024.

Operating Plan Summary

(DOLLARS IN THOUSANDS)

Salaries and Expenses	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2024 President's Budget	FY 2025 Request
Full-Time Equivalent	66	87	87	91
11 Payroll Personnel Compensation	7,403	10,162	9,254	11,847
12.1 Personnel Benefits	3,172	4,354	4,006	5,077
Subtotal PC&B	10,575	14,516	13,260	16,924
21 Travel	1,087	953	428	1,037
23 Rent, Communications, Utilities	1,129	1,191	797	1,046
24 Printing and reproduction	54	98	20	71
25 Other Contractual Services	11,198	8,422	15,334	16,667
25.3 NIST Allocation	1,500	1,500	2,500	1,500
26 Supplies and Subscriptions	196	195	174	306
31 Equipment	1,254	118	1,288	440
41 Grants ¹	1,000	1,000	-	-
94 Financial Transfers (OIG)	7	7	7	9
Subtotal, Non-Personnel	17,425	13,484	20,548	21,076
Total Salaries and Expenses	28,000	28,000	33,808	38,000

¹College Poll Worker Grant

Election Innovation Grants	FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2024 President's Budget	FY 2025 Request
Full-Time Equivalent	-	-	-	5
11&12 Payroll and Benefits	-	-	-	1,000
25 Other Contractual Services	-	-	-	1,000
41 Grants	75,000	75,000	300,000	94,000
Total Grants	75,000	75,000	300,000	96,000

FY 2025 Budget Request Highlights

In November 2024, the nation will administer and participate in the 2024 presidential election. The mission of the EAC is to help election officials protect the nation's voting systems, improve the administration of elections, and help Americans participate in the voting process. The agency's mission is also vital to national security and the protection of critical election infrastructure. Continuing the commitment to the EAC's penetration testing, Field Services, and vulnerability disclosure programs is critical to ensuring a secure democratic voting process throughout the country.

The EAC's FY 2025 budget justification highlights the agency's plans to continue to help election officials efficiently and effectively administer secure and accessible elections by developing and sharing best practices, as well as research and report election administration data. The agency's budget submission also looks to build on its recent growth and make continued key investments in areas of emerging importance including expanding a much-needed audit program for voting systems. Additionally, the EAC looks to strategically apply critical administrative funding internally to enhance agency management and performance, make substantial improvements in the areas of communications and web development, and advance agency equity and diversity.

Cyber Access and Security Program / Vulnerability Disclosure & Independent Security Research

In FY 2025, the EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security (CAS) Program, providing cybersecurity support both to internal EAC operations and external customers. Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) documentation and compliance functions and technical cybersecurity expertise are provided by the program to support the EAC's IT operations. Externally, the program provides training, best practices, and other materials to assist election officials, voters, and others to improve the cybersecurity posture of their systems, practices, and procedures in the face of growing cyberthreats to national security. The program works with other federal partners through the Government Coordinating Council to ensure its products are focused and relevant while not duplicating the efforts of other agencies.

The EAC has an urgent need to support election technology vulnerability tracking, mitigation, and public disclosure in the support of national security and will develop a program for these activities under the CAS Program. Additionally, the EAC plans to launch a voluntary program for independent security research on voting systems and election supporting technology. To execute this essential effort, the EAC seeks to hire additional full-time cybersecurity specialists. These specialists will set up and streamline voting system vulnerability disclosure processes. They will also work with trusted researchers and election technology manufacturers to manage vulnerability findings and mitigations.

Field Services Program / Election Technology Requirements

As a part of its FY 2025 budget request, the EAC requests funding for two additional staff to execute its Field Services Program. This program will allow the EAC to ensure configurations of fielded EAC certified systems are consistent with their scope of certification, gather anomaly reports from election officials, provide election best-practice trainings, provide audit training and support, and perform site reviews. These requests are in direct support of HAVA and the Administration's cybersecurity priorities. It is critical that the EAC have adequate funding to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of certified voting systems that are in the field. The current EAC program has six dedicated personnel to perform these tasks on behalf of election officials, however, the success of the program relies on adding more staff to meet the needs of the large number of jurisdictions we expect to assist. To perform the quality monitoring the EAC requires in its current program manual, adequate staff must be placed regionally to provide support to election offices throughout the nation.

Additionally, the EAC Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) aims to establish specialty requirements and guidelines specific to technology used for election support that are not covered under VVSG, such as electronic poll books, voter registration systems, election night reporting systems, and ballot delivery systems. Each evaluation of election technology will be initially executed as a pilot program to assess adequacy of requirements and the parameters that would make the most effective and agile evaluation program. In addition, the EAC will find and fund experts to assist with the development of these new programs.

The EAC utilized FY 2023 funds to launch and finalize a pilot testing and certification program for electronic pollbooks that closely contours the existing voting system testing and certification program and requests FY 2025 funds to establish a permanent program. The agency's pilot leverages well-understood processes and allows the utilization of existing testing and certification expertise in addition to the hiring of experts to determine the effectiveness of this type of program. The program developed security and accessibility requirements for these critical pieces of election infrastructure that, due to their online nature, are inherently more vulnerable to exploitation than voting systems.

The agency requests FY 2025 funds to take findings from the Electronic Poll Book Pilot Program and expand testing to protect the nation's other election supporting technologies, including accessible and secure ballot delivery for voters with disabilities and Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters. Strengthening the security of these systems is a national security imperative but must be undertaken with a strong focus on accessibility testing to ensure voters with disabilities have access to a private and independent vote. The EAC will utilize the experience of the agency's voting system testing and certification program to strike this balance within the pilot program to ensure ballot delivery systems are both accessible and secure.

Election Official Training Program

Since 2020, election officials, interested stakeholders, and the public have engaged in a national conversation on how to restore trust in the elections process. While the public generally trusts their local elections office, this does not translate to trust in election officials in other localities or states. One way to address this problem is the creation of a national-level election official training program to increase the professionalization of election administration and to generate trust in election officials. It is widely accepted within the field that professionalization is needed to help assure voters that elections are run accurately, with integrity, and in accordance with the law. The cost of private education and training can be exorbitant and not open to all election officials or key personnel within an office. A federally funded and no cost training program can address concerns about increased turnover in elections offices or eschewing necessary training due to a lack of funding. New election officials are entering the field at a challenging time and must quickly learn election laws and processes that are increasingly complicated. In recent surveys, a significant portion of election officials surveyed plan to leave the field before 2024 and recruiting and retaining staff remains a challenge.

Election administration has become increasingly complex, particularly since elections were designated as critical infrastructure in 2017. Small oversights in routine election processes can lead to further erosion of trust in our election system. The EAC will utilize best practices developed and collected under the clearinghouse function to build and host a free training program for election officials nationwide. As the only federal agency solely focused on improving election administration, the EAC is uniquely positioned to provide professional development training at little or no cost to participants. This program will allow officials from all jurisdictions to participate regardless of their local budget. It will facilitate the exchange of ideas, including implementing new voting systems, ensuring the security of elections, and promoting best practices that are core to the EAC's mission.

Training programs help to build the foundation of necessary skills to understand election laws, regulations, and procedures, minimizing the likelihood of errors. Well-trained election officials are also better equipped to identify and address potential issues, such as managing large turnouts, addressing technical glitches, or responding to emergencies. The training program is currently under development, in consultation with numerous stakeholders.

Advancing Agency Management and Performance

While the EAC's mission remains unchanged, the current election environment is dynamic and the agency must grow and maintain a workforce not only with the required technical and management skills for program and project delivery meeting stakeholder needs, but also one that is viable, committed, talented, and diverse. Plans are to increase the current agency workforce by 25 FTEs in FY 2025. This will require the Human Resources (HR) function to become forward-thinking to provide guidance on strategic and operational human capital management issues and less focused on traditional administrative and compliance activities. HR transactional responsibilities will never be eliminated, however, separating transactional work from strategic work will be an essential step in transforming EAC's HR function.

Maintaining a quality management and performance curriculum continues to be critical for EAC. The newly revised performance management system, administered by NeoGov, was implemented in FY 2022 and continued evaluation of the program will be necessary to improve the process. Leadership training continues to be critical and the EAC has included in its FY 2025 budget request funding for continued supervisor training.

EAC Commissioners approved OPM studies to be performed on the agency's structure and performance on a regular basis. Again, monies for such a study are requested to analyze and plan the number and skills of employees needed to achieve EAC's mission. Workforce planning is a key HR function and must be addressed as staffing needs increase.

As the EAC gradually brings more HR services in-house to increase the quality and effectiveness of human resource actions and activities related to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, this will require more HR staff with a higher degree of specialization in order to be effective. Such role specificity will allow HR the flexibility to offset peak work demands in one HR area with staff from another and promote greater efficiency in performance management, employee development, diversity initiatives, and other HR functions.

To achieve some of the agency's diversity and inclusion initiatives requires collaboration between the Equity Office and the Office of Human Resources. Working together, the two offices will provide a strategy to ensure that recruitment, hires, and promotions are conducted with EEO, equity and merit system principles in mind. They will also be held accountable for the practices designed to widen and diversify groups of qualified candidates considered for employment openings at all levels of EAC.

Advancing Equity

Unlike larger agencies, the EAC historically did not have an Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The agency filled this void in FY 2023 by hiring a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA) & Equal Employment Officer (EEO) Officer to advise, represent, and assist the EAC's Executive Director, Human Resources, and the Office of General Counsel on civil rights and equal opportunity matters. These matters relate both internally to the EAC and externally to states and other stakeholders. For example, the team will ensure:

- The continued promotion of equal employment opportunities in the recruitment, hiring, development, and retention of a highly skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.
- Equal access and compliance with internal civil rights programs and services affecting EAC employees and applicants for employment.
- Equal access and compliance with external civil rights programs and services relating to the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of Help America Vote Act (HAVA) programs receiving federal financial assistance through EAC, including assisting states in complying with voting laws and civil rights voting laws.

It is important that the work of EAC's newly established OCR is in alignment with the goals of EAC, which are as follows:

- Expand the nation's comprehensive understanding of American election administration.
- Proactively and responsively create products that help election officials improve the administration of elections and help voters more easily participate in elections.
- Help election officials improve the administration of American elections through the distribution of EAC assistance and products.

Reaffirm dedication to being good stewards of public funds, contributing positively to the federal government, and continuing to build and operate an agency that is diverse and impactful.

Competitive Election Innovation Grants

The EAC requests \$96,000,000 to administer grants under the Election Innovation Grants program. The EAC aims to foster research and innovation in the areas of voting technology and election infrastructure, cybersecurity and other security safeguards, comprehensive election and voting accessibility, usability, language translation services, voter education and election civics communication, and other areas such as emergency COOP response. This approach will further improve and enhance processes and procedures in the administration of federal elections.

The 2020 federal election cycle saw unprecedented challenges, including a worldwide pandemic, but also an adverse shift in voter confidence. The Election Innovation Grants program will allow the EAC to distribute funds on a competitive basis to those state and local entities that can provide innovative solutions to issues surrounding the administration of federal elections, including pilot initiatives. The program will advance election administration through novel approaches to voting processes and the implementation of the latest technology with the goal of creating replicable trends and models that will improve the field overall.

By establishing a competitive grants initiative, the EAC can help election officials safeguard the voting experience for all voters, including those with disabilities or other access needs, veterans, individuals needing translation services, and remote overseas voters. Given the focus on increased election security, it is crucial that cybersecurity concerns are balanced with accessibility to foster free and fair elections.

Under this program, the EAC will solicit, review, award, and oversee funds available to grantees while adhering to strict evaluation criteria weighted on the quality of the proposal, project design, demonstrated capacity of the applicant to deliver, potential scalability and replicability, the long-term impact of the project, as well as the cost-effectiveness of proposed activities. The Election Innovation Grants program would simultaneously bolster election security and innovation through the EAC grants process as well as the EAC clearinghouse function through mandated reporting.

Mandatory Formula Grants

In addition, the President's Budget proposes legislation to support critical state and local election infrastructure, through a significant and sustained federal investment to improve equitable access and ensure our elections are secure. The legislation would provide \$5 billion in 2025, to be expended over ten years through formula grants administered by the Election Assistance Commission, to allow for states to upgrade their equipment in accordance with VVSG 2.0 standards.

Budgetary Changes: FY 2024 Full-Year Estimate to FY 2025 Request

(ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST THOUSAND DOLLARS)

PERSONNEL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: + \$2,408,000

Assumes full annualized rate for existing personnel, those assumed under an annualized CR level for FY 2024, and a FY 2025 increase of 4 FTE with associated cost of living adjustment.

TRAVEL: + \$84,000

OTHER SERVICES: + \$8,245,000

Includes federal contracts and other contractual services reflected in the FY 2025 Budget request as compared to annualized CR level for FY 2024.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Equipment: - \$322,000

Supplies & Subscriptions: + \$111,000

Printing & Reproduction: - \$27,000

Rent, Utilities: - \$145,000

Financial Transfers: + \$2,000

GRANTS:

HAVA College Poll Worker Grant: -\$1,000,000

Election Security/Election Innovation Grants: + \$21,000,000

Budget Requests and Performance Measures by Strategic Goal

The EAC's request is presented in terms of its three strategic goals. The full strategic plan can be found on the EAC's website (<https://www.eac.gov/about-eac/operations>):

1. Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials;
2. Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections; and
3. Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

Strategic Goal 1

Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials.

Staff from the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of the General Counsel, Testing and Certification, Clearinghouse, Communications, and Research Divisions collaborate toward the success of goal one.

Objectives and success indicators for the goal are as follows:

OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the goal include continuing to evolve the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and related policies, developing programs under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to bolster security and accessibility standards of election technology, and leveraging and expanding the EAC's existing technical expertise to provide timely resources to increase the security posture of critical infrastructure including voting systems, e-poll books, and other areas.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

The anticipated success indicators of the goal are the yearly review of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) for potential updates, the certification of a VVSG 2.0 compliant system, the successful piloting of a program for e-poll book testing and certification leading to the creation of a permanent program, conducting a pilot program for other election supporting technology, establishing a voting system vulnerability disclosure policy, independent security research for election technology, the creation of an online training system with courses focused on election cybersecurity fundamentals, and the successful cybersecurity defense of the 2024 presidential election.

1. Field Services Program, Evaluation of Election Supporting Technology

Under HAVA, the EAC is responsible for assisting states with improvements of voting systems through the distribution of federal funds and by creating and administering a voluntary voting system testing and certification program. The testing and certification program creates and maintains standards against which voting systems can be tested, works with EAC accredited voting system test labs to test voting systems against these standards, and certifies voting systems that successfully pass these tests. This standard is called the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG). States' use of this standard and the EAC's accompanying testing and certification program are voluntary, but most states choose to use the standard or its testing program in whole or in part. The VVSG helps states and localities, which are charged with selecting their own voting systems, select high-quality, secure, and accessible voting systems with confidence.

The EAC recognizes the national security need for robust voting system security testing in the Testing and Certification Program. To meet this goal, penetration testing is a requirement in the new program manuals for the VVSG. This testing is used to help assess the security posture of voting systems entering the EAC's Testing and Certification Program. Penetration testing will also be used to confirm mitigations are in place for known vulnerabilities. These additional requirements will work in concert with the expansion of the Testing and Certification division to further strengthen the nation's voting systems from domestic and foreign threats.

Under the authority of HAVA, the EAC also plans to establish specialty requirements and guidelines specific to equipment used for election supporting technologies in FY 2025. The Election Supporting Technology Evaluation Program (ESTEP) plans on building on the momentum of the electronic poll book pilot and certification program, by continuing to pilot additional technologies, such as electronic ballot delivery systems, voter registration portals, and election night reporting databases. The goal of these pilot programs will be to initiate a permanent program or best practices for stakeholders that will be informed by data and experience from the pilot. Ensuring the security of these systems is a major national security priority. The nature of these technologies and the lack of a coordinated testing program for them makes them inherently more vulnerable to intrusion or exploitation.

In addition to voting system certification and laboratory accreditation, the EAC and its 110-member Standards Board, 37-member Board of Advisors, and 14-member Technical Guidelines Development Committee (TGDC) continue to work together to annually review potential changes to the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines and update the requirements when deemed necessary.

2. Cyber Access and Security Program / Vulnerability Disclosure & Independent Security Research

The EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security (CAS) Program, providing cybersecurity support both to internal EAC operations and external customers. FISMA documentation and compliance functions as well as technical cybersecurity expertise are provided by the program in support of the EAC's IT operations. Additionally, the EAC will continue to bolster its cyber defenses to achieve full zero-trust capability. Externally, the program provides training, best practices, and other materials to assist election officials, voters, and others improve the cybersecurity posture of their systems, practices, and procedures. The program works with other federal partners through the Government Coordinating Council to ensure its products are focused and relevant and do not duplicate the efforts of other agencies.

Under the CAS Program, the EAC will work to establish a policy for voting system vulnerability management and public disclosure. Hiring election technology specialists with security expertise is required to support and execute these efforts. Additionally, infrastructure to host vulnerability testing, recruit security researchers, and offer bug bounties will be necessary as part of this effort.

THE FY 2025 REQUEST

For FY 2025, the EAC requests funds to meet its congressional mandates to create, manage, and administer voluntary voting system standards and accompanying testing and certification program as well as provide resources that help election officials administer elections and help Americans participate in the voting process. Specifically, the EAC will:

- Continue expanding a Field Services Program to assist election administrators with conducting fielded system configuration reviews and conducting audit activities.
- Implement a voting system vulnerability management and disclosure policy as well as an independent security research program for election technology.
- Produce and publish best practice resources such as toolkits, videos, educational tools, blogs, and white papers on topics including securing complex election and voter databases, making voting accessible for all voters, training and managing poll workers, auditing, chain of custody, and cybersecurity.
- Continue expanding efforts to support additional testing of voting systems. This includes security penetration testing for every voting system submitted to the Testing and Certification Program, applying strengthened cybersecurity and accessibility requirements, new interoperability requirements, and annual review of VVSG requirements that keep pace with advancements in technology.

Strategic Goal 2

Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.

Staff from the Clearinghouse, Communications, Finance, Office of the General Counsel, Grants, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Research, and Testing and Certification Divisions collaborate toward the success of goal two. Objectives and success indicators for the goal are as follows:

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the goal are to serve as a clearinghouse of election best practices by continually creating resources that help election officials improve the administration and integrity of elections and help voters participate in elections, increase confidence in America's elections and transform the common understanding of election administration through commissioning innovative research, and effectively and efficiently distributing federal resources to EAC stakeholders.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

Congress charged the EAC with acting as the nation's clearinghouse of election administration information by a) crafting and managing a national voluntary standard and testing program for voting system testing and certification, b) collecting and publishing information and research on election administration information and data, and c) collecting and distributing election administration best practices. In strategic goal two, the EAC fulfills these mandates by using its expertise to build and manage these clearinghouse and grants resources.

In FY 2025, the EAC will continue to expand the nation's comprehensive understanding of American election administration by managing and maintaining the nation's clearinghouse of election administration information and practices, analyzing 2024 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) data, conducting research of best practices and emerging topics in election administration in areas such as cybersecurity, accessibility, language access, and technology, and effectively distributing federal resources to stakeholders.

The success indicators for the clearinghouse of information on election administration and the use of EAC resources by election officials, the production and release of resources on top priorities as identified by EAC advisory boards, onsite and online trainings, fostering and platforming inter-jurisdiction communication, steady growth of engagement with the agency by election officials via newsletters and social media, and an increase in the use of the EAC website.

Additionally, anticipated success indicators of this goal include an analysis of EAVS data that produces insights into U.S. election administration; successful creation of tools to make responding to EAVS and analyzing EAVS data easier; increases in the number of entities providing information, research, and data related to U.S. election administration; and the ability to better design EAC assistance products for the agency's stakeholders.

Through its activities under this goal, the agency works to ensure the resources and expertise of the EAC, and the broader federal government are distributed effectively, efficiently, and responsibly. In the last three years, Congress has appropriated \$1.2 billion of federal funds for the improvement of election administration including a focus on election security. Congress designated the EAC to administer, monitor and audit these funds. In furtherance of this goal, the success indicators of the distribution of federal resources are the timely and accurate disbursement of funds, the resolution of audit findings, the timely closing of grants, and accurate and complete financial reporting.

The election administration space continually moves at a fast pace as it is increasingly interconnected due to increased scrutiny from the media and national security efforts such as DHS's Critical Infrastructure framework. For these reasons, the EAC plans to continue extensive work under Strategic Goal Two into FY 2024 in order to best serve the nation.

Note: The EAC's OIG activities impact the EAC's work under strategic goal two. The EAC's OIG request is detailed starting on page 40.

1. Clearinghouse

Congress charged the EAC with building and maintaining a national clearinghouse of election administration information and best practices. Maintaining this clearinghouse requires the EAC to regularly research current election administration practices, pressing election administration issues, and needs, as well as collect best practices from across the country. The clearinghouse function had become even more essential with the designation of voting systems as critical infrastructure in 2017, which requires additional staff, time, resources, and domain knowledge to protect the nation's critical infrastructure against emerging cyber and physical threats. In addition, since the 2020 election cycle, staff shortages and turn-over in elections offices have continued and led to an increased need for training and workforce development. To meet this need, the EAC produced nation-leading resources on chain of custody, audits, post-election procedures including results reporting, toolkits for communicating with voters and the public, poll worker recruitment and training, language access, accessibility for voters with disabilities, and general election security for states, localities, and voters. These resources have continued to expand and address the needs of election officials.

As the only federal agency that focuses on the whole of elections, the EAC's clearinghouse work serves as a powerful central hub and single "go-to" location for election officials and voters as they work to improve the administration of and participate in their elections. EAC stakeholders regularly use these resources to improve the administration of their elections, educate voters, and generally increase voters' confidence in the nation's elections. State and local election officials, Congress, other federal agencies, and voters regularly leverage these EAC resources.

In FY 2025, the EAC will continue to add best practices resources that focus on topics such as security, contingency planning, accessibility, voting system procurement, voter education and communication strategies, poll worker recruitment and management and other topics that emerged during recent election cycles. The EAC collects these best practices through hearings, in-person and virtual meetings, national election official and stakeholder conferences, leveraging its advisory boards' extensive knowledge and experience, commissioner led hearings, and an innovative annual contest.

Through each of these means, the EAC learns from the diversity of approaches taken by the nation's thousands of election jurisdictions and helps the rest of the nation learn from their peers. These election administration best practice areas regularly include:

- Poll worker recruitment, management, and training;
- Voter registration list management;
- Polling place management;
- Procurement of voting and voter registration systems;
- Voter education and communication strategies;
- Security of voting systems;
- Accessibility for voters with disabilities; and
- Access for voters with limited English proficiency.

Since the establishment of the Local Leadership Council (LLC) in 2021, the EAC has worked on recruitment and laying the structural framework for the Council so the agency can utilize this board to its full potential. As members work more with the EAC and understand their role and importance in providing analysis and recommendations to the EAC on local election administration topics, the EAC will continue to find ways to engage them and tap into this resource to better serve officials and voters. Membership in the LLC consists of 100 members with two members from each state who are currently or recently serving officers of each state's local election official association.

The clearinghouse is hosted on the EAC's website, <https://www.eac.gov>, and it contains best practices, research, instructional videos, and white papers on a wide variety of topics such as voter registration, voter registration list management, poll worker recruiting and management, staff training, voting system information, election system procurement help, chain of custody, audits, and security. These resources are essential to the nation as its election officials face the new and ever-evolving physical and cybersecurity threats. Election officials regularly look to the EAC as a starting place when understanding new issues and the EAC is dedicated to ensuring that when election officials look for help defending their election and voting systems, they are provided with what they need.

The EAC's website is a popular resource for voters and election officials as they seek help administering or improving elections in their jurisdictions. On the EAC's website, the agency hosts downloadable copies of all current and legacy resources. The most popular set of resources on the EAC's website is the agency's resources for voters, particularly voter registration. Every day, voters and potential voters come to the EAC's website to learn how to register to vote. Information like dates and deadlines, links and other updates requires regular monitoring to make sure the information provided is accurate. In 2024, the EAC continually added and updated information on registration and options to cast a ballot as well as information about becoming a poll worker. These efforts were further strengthened by efforts to the National Pollworker Recruitment Day and Help America Vote Day. Though the redesign process for the site was in process in 2023, the work to make sure information is updated and the site is easily accessible is an ongoing effort. Enhancements to the usability and functionality of the website are an ongoing effort and continual work to make this resource the most effective it can be is a priority for the agency.

In FY 2025, the EAC will continue to host election information and best practices on its public facing website, hold events and hearings, and it will continue to meet its congressional mandate by further researching election subjects.

2. Election Administration & Voting Survey and Subsequent Congressional Report

Congress mandates that the EAC study a number of election administration topics, and the EAC must study others to effectively carry its charge as the national clearinghouse. The additional topics that the EAC chooses to study are selected based on legislative mandates and the current and expected future needs of election officials and voters.

The EAC administers and oversees the biennial Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), the only comprehensive collection and report of data on election administration and voting systems of its kind. In FY 2025, the EAC will process, analyze, and release data from the 2024 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS), the 11th iteration of the survey since the first one in 2004. Through the EAVS, the EAC surveys the 50 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The survey, performed in conjunction with the Department of Defense's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), collects data for more than 650 variables related to voter registration, military and overseas voting, absentee ballots, polling places, poll workers, and provisional ballots. The survey data is used by election officials, academics, and others to improve their methods, metrics, and tactics in serving voters and maintaining voter registration lists. EAVS falls under the President's Management Agenda goal to leverage data as a strategic asset. The data collected in EAVS provides a unique perspective in election administration that can drive program decision making within the agency. The EAC looks forward to using data to enhance program areas that can produce more resources for election officials and voters. Currently, the EAC has limited resources to further synthesize the data and to provide more meaningful reports.

Much of the data collected through EAVS is congressionally mandated. The EAC uses the survey to help inform Congress on the impact of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) on the administration of elections for federal offices, and on the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). The EAC also uses the survey data to develop reference guidance for state election officials.

3. Monitoring and Providing Technical Assistance on Federal Grant Funds

Under HAVA, the EAC is responsible for awarding, monitoring, and providing technical assistance to states on the administration and use of grant funds. EAC staff members monitor the use of the funds by the states through progress and financial reports. The EAC further modernized and transitioned from the HHS' GrantSolutions shared services grant system in FY 2023 to an Appian based grant system, with full deployment expected in FY 2024. The system provides end-to-end grant lifecycle processes and enhanced efficiencies. Additionally, the system allows for risk assessment, performance measurement, data collection, analysis, and drives decisions for federal grantmaking. With more capabilities expected than previous grant management systems, EAC data analysis is further streamlined for the annual grants expenditure report to Congress, OMB expenditure updates, and the agency annual report. The EAC expects these data enhancements to fully onboard in FY 2024 and continue to broaden future capabilities.

For 2025, the EAC's work to monitor and provide technical assistance to grantees will continue, including expenditure oversight. The EAC expects the recent onboarding of a more modern grant system to allow the Grant Officers more time for grantee training, development, and other technical assistance activities. Grant Office staff members routinely provide technical assistance to the states as they design and implement their plans for federal funds.

The EAC's OIG conducts annual audits on selected grantees. The EAC's Inspector General audits the states' grant activities, with the assistance and participation of EAC Grant Officers.

THE FY 2025 REQUEST

For FY 2025, the EAC requests funds to continually meet its congressional mandate to serve as the national clearinghouse of election administration information by doing the following:

- Analyze EAVS data and conduct additional research on cyber security programs and other areas of election administration that will assist with decision making on the state and federal level.
- Produce and publish best practice resources such as videos, educational tools, blogs, and white papers on topics including developing and maintaining complex online registration databases, set up and use of accessible voting equipment, registering to vote, training and managing poll workers, and cybersecurity.
- Provide regular staff-level contact with election officials to collect and share information.
- Conduct forums, town halls, webinars, and hearings to gather information about potential best practices and information pertinent to election administration by bringing together election officials, federal partners, and subject matter experts in the elections field.
- Explore and study how states are using congressionally appropriated HAVA funds.
- Continue statutorily mandated HAVA studies.
- Provide post-award administration and oversight for existing HAVA grants – 101, 251 Election Security, and the FY 2023 College Program Grants.

Strategic Goal 3

Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

Staff from the Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Human Resources and Administration, Finance, Testing and Certification, Grants, Clearinghouse, Communications, and Research Divisions collaborate toward the success of goal three.

Objectives and success indicators for the goal are as follows:

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the goal are to increase customer service to key stakeholders and partners, update internal structures and policies to optimize performance, develop and continue to manage internal structures and tools that produce a culture of innovation and a driven workforce, and continue to build a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

The anticipated success indicators of the goal are the existence of interagency programs that provide unique value or generate efficiencies; continuing compliance with federal regulations and mandates; and internal strategic planning capacity development at the division and programmatic levels.

The EAC is dedicated to functioning as a modern, strategic agency supported by qualified, innovative professionals who help the agency achieve its mission in an efficient and impactful manner. Through strategic goal three, the agency reaffirms its dedication to being good stewards of public funds, contributing positively to the federal government, and continuing to build and operate an agency that is diverse and impactful. The agency has been historically underfunded. In recent years, the agency has received incremental funding allowing for the improvement of its operational structure. The EAC aims to create operational excellence by increasing customer service to key stakeholders, updating internal structures and policies to optimize performance, maximizing minimal resources, and building a skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.

1. Advancing Agency Management and Performance

The EAC aims to do its part to further the administration's FY 2025 priority of advancing agency management and performance by procuring consulting services to assist with performance management and the potential development of measurable performance metrics.

Performance management is measuring employee performance as well as managing performance. This is a complex task that focuses on three goals: (1) the efficiency of the manager-employee relationships; (2) if performance goals are being achieved, and (3) employee engagement and satisfaction. As the EAC continues to grow, maintaining a quality management and performance curriculum will be critical in the next few years for EAC leadership and staff. Therefore, it is important to dedicate the resources needed to advance management and performance by procuring consulting services.

The measures of performance management effectiveness include addressing mediocre performance; utilizing HR metrics to evaluate the cost to hire for budgeting purposes and highlight issues with management; and acting on annual employee survey results to improve employee satisfaction. This will help EAC evaluate the current situation, identify areas necessary to focus on to improve the agency's performance, and develop an adequate strategy to reach those goals. Again, leadership training and performance management guidance to the agency remains critical in the short term and the EAC has included in its FY 2025 budget request funding for these investments.

2. Advancing Equity

The agency hired dedicated staff tasked with advising, representing, and assisting the EAC's Executive Director on civil rights and equal opportunity matters that ensure:

- The elimination of barriers that prevent individuals from realizing their full potential.
- The promotion of equal employment opportunities in the recruitment, hiring, development, and retention of a highly skilled, diverse, and effective workforce.
- Equal access and compliance with internal civil rights programs and services affecting EAC employees and applicants for employment.
- Equal access and compliance with external civil rights programs and services relating to the beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of Help America Vote Act (HAVA) programs receiving federal financial assistance through EAC.

3. Cyber Access and Security Program (CAS)

The EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security (CAS) Program, providing cybersecurity support both to internal EAC operations and external customers. FISMA documentation and compliance functions as well as technical cybersecurity expertise are provided by the program in support of the EAC's IT operations. Additionally, the EAC will continue to bolster its cyber defenses to achieve full zero-trust capability. Externally, the program provides training, best practices, and other materials to assist election officials, voters, and others improve the cybersecurity posture of their systems, practices, and procedures. The program works with other federal partners through the Government Coordinating Council to ensure its products are focused and relevant and do not duplicate the efforts of other agencies.

THE FY 2025 REQUEST

For FY 2025, the EAC requests funds to create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming by doing the following:

- Procuring services to implement performance management assistance including the development of performance metrics.
- Provide leadership training and performance management guidance to agency staff.
- Hire dedicated staff to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in EAC agency operations.
- Utilize dedicated staff to advise on compliance with external civil rights programs and services related to the agency mission.
- Expand the Cyber Access and Security Program to support internal operations including compliance and training, and to advance the EAC to full zero-trust capability.



ATTACHMENT A

Office of Inspector General

BACKGROUND

The EAC Office of Inspector General (OIG) was established by Section 812 of Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to provide independent and objective reporting to the EAC and Congress through its audit and investigative activities.

Charged with the identification and prevention of waste, fraud, and abuse of federal resources, OIG strives to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in EAC programs and operations. OIG's mission is to safeguard the federal investment in our electoral system by conducting objective and meaningful oversight.

THE BUDGET IN SUMMARY

OIG's fiscal year (FY) 2025 request of \$2,324,429 includes \$9,088 as a transfer to the Council of Inspectors General for Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) in keeping with the provisions of the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008. Starting in FY 2025, the budget request for the Office of Inspector General is set aside in the proposed appropriations language as funds reserved for OIG activities. The request also includes \$53,469 for travel, training, and oversight. That amount includes \$33,469 for costs associated with training and professional development for OIG's full-time employees and \$20,000 for travel related to fraud awareness briefings and audit site visits.

OIG BUDGET REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS					
<i>(Dollars in Thousands)</i>					
		FY 2023 Enacted	FY 2024 Enacted	FY 2024 President's Budget	FY 2025 Request
	Full-Time Equivalent	4	6	6	6
	Salaries and Benefits				
11.1	Full-time permanent	564	728	722	758
11.9	Civilian personnel benefits	213	312	309	325
	Total Compensation and Benefits	777	1,040	1,031	1,083
	Contractual Services and Supplies				
21	Travel, training, and oversight	21	21	32	53
24	Printing and reproduction	-	2	-	-
25.2	Other services	1,056	1,048	1,135	1,013
25.3	Other purchases of goods and services from Government accounts	56	90	63	161
26	Supplies and materials	2	2	3	3
	Acquisition of Assets				
31	Equipment	2	2	2	2
94	Financial Transfers	7	7	7	9
	Total Program	1,921	2,212	2,272	2,324

OIG STRUCTURE

OIG is currently staffed by six full-time employees: the Inspector General, the Deputy Inspector General (also head of audit), Chief Counsel (also head of operations and investigations), a senior auditor, and two program analysts. OIG is not requesting any additional staff.

OIG will continue to rely on interagency agreements with other OIGs for investigative services. OIG's FY 2025 request for investigative services is \$150,000. OIG maintains \$10,000 for editorial services through an interagency agreement as OIG is responsible for publishing results of our work and other mandated reports.

OIG GOALS

As established and detailed in OIG's strategic plan, we strive to operate as a high-performing organization and help EAC be as efficient and effective as it can be. The plan sets forth three strategic goals:

1. Assess and improve OIG processes.
2. Increase performance and value-add oversight.
3. Foster stakeholder collaboration and encourage transparency.

OIG ACTIVITIES

OIG primarily engages in three activities: 1) audits of EAC's grant recipients, 2) audits of EAC's programs and operations, and 3) investigations related to EAC's staff, operations, or grant recipients.

Oversight of EAC Grant Recipients (States and Territories)

From 2018 to 2020, EAC awarded \$805 million in federal funds to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (American Samoa, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands). In 2022 and 2023, EAC received \$75 million in grant funds to distribute to all 56 states and territories for election security.

As described in the FY 2024 request, OIG will continue to conduct state audits through contracted audit services and internally when there are issues of recipient noncompliance with federal reporting requirements. Doing grant audits with internal staff for high-risk recipients allows us to forgo the contracting process, complete the work faster, and find waste or questioned costs earlier.

Recent oversight reports from state auditors and the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee indicate data gaps and increased fraud at the local level. The FY 2025 request includes \$20,000 for fraud awareness briefings and associated travel. These briefings will allow OIG to educate grant recipients at the state and local level on how to recognize fraud, waste, and abuse and how to submit a complaint to OIG. When possible, we will combine audit site visits with fraud awareness briefings.

FY 2025 Priority: OIG will continue to conduct grant audits, internally conduct audits of high-risk recipients, and complement audits with educational assistance to help states be more responsible recipients of federal election funds.

Audits of EAC Programs and Operations

OIG is also responsible for conducting reviews and audits of EAC's internal policies, procedures, and programs. OIG contracts with independent public accounting firms to perform statutorily mandated audits ensuring EAC's compliance with the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the annual audit of the EAC's financial statements.

In FY 2022, EAC OIG began conducting audits of EAC programs with its own staff. In FY 2023, OIG issued an audit of EAC's Testing and Certification program, three management advisories, and a HAVA audit that resulted in more than 50% of audited costs being questioned and five recommendations. OIG also conducted the mandatory review of EAC's compliance with the Procurement Integrity and Information Act (PIIA).

In FY 2023, the OIG issued a Manual for Conducting Evaluations, Reviews, and Inspections. Establishing these procedures will allow OIG to conduct more agile and timely work aligned with CIGIE's Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations. In FY 2024, we intend to pilot using impact evaluations to better understand how EAC funds are being spent at the local level. These products can provide timely information for decision makers and stakeholders.

FY 2025 Priority: OIG will meet statutorily mandated audit requirements, conduct audits internally on EAC programs, and improve capacity to conduct evaluations.

Investigations

When allegations are made concerning waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in EAC programs or involving a recipient of EAC funds, OIG is responsible for investigating those allegations. OIG receives complaints from a hotline voicemail, form submissions from our website, and direct email complaints.

During the first half of FY 2023, we processed 374 unique OIG hotline complaints. Complaints related to election crimes such as voter fraud are referred to the Department of Justice Public Integrity Section. OIG refers complainants to the appropriate state election officials when the issue relates to registering to vote or state election administration. OIG's most recent semiannual report to Congress includes a breakdown of the disposition of complaints received. In FY 2023, OIG finished configuration for an investigative software and new hotline portal to further automate the complaint process and increase the ability to transparently report hotline complaint trends.

When an allegation requires further investigation, OIG has an interagency agreement for investigative services. OIG also uses the agreement to consult with investigators on potential suspension and debarment, subpoenas, and other related actions.

FY 2025 Priority: OIG will continue to use interagency agreements for investigative services and to bolster investigation hotline capacity for efficiency and transparency. OIG's attorney will oversee these functions.

