



U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Fiscal Year 2024

Congressional Budget Justification

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Mission and Vision | 3 |
| FY 2024 Priorities | 4 |
| Appropriations Language | 5 |
| Administrative Provision | 5 |
| Agency Background and Structure | 6 |
| Goals and Structure of Budget Justification | 7 |
| U.S. Election Assistance Commission Organization Chart | 8 |
| Fiscal Year 2022 Accomplishment Highlights | 9 |
| Operating Plan Summary | 17 |
| FY 2024 Budget Request Highlights | 18 |
| Budgetary Changes Relative to FY 2023 President’s Budget Request | 23 |
| Budget Requests and Performance Measures by Strategic Goal | 24 |
| Office of Inspector General | 35 |

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 2022 Enacted | | FY 2023 President's Budget | | FY 2023 Enacted | | FY2024 Requested | |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| FTE* | Dollars | FTE | Dollars | FTE | Dollars | FTE | Dollars |
| 49 | 20,000,000 | 78 | 30,087,000 | 65 | 28,000,000 | 87 | 33,807,472 |

*\$1 million No-Year College Poll Workers Grants included

Election Security Grants

| FY 2022 Enacted | | FY 2023 President's Budget | | FY 2023 Enacted | | FY2024 Requested | |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| FTE* | Dollars | FTE | Dollars | FTE | Dollars | FTE | Dollars |
| - | 75,000,000 | 5 | *250,000,000 | - | 75,000,000 | - | 300,000,000 |

*Election Innovation Grant Request

FY 2024 Priorities



Continue to serve as a clearinghouse of voting information by providing election officials and voters with necessary and timely information and materials as they prepare to administer and participate in the 2024 presidential election, as well as future elections.



Help the nation administer elections with secure and accessible voting systems through utilization of the newly implemented Voluntary Voting System Guidelines 2.0, expanding quality monitoring efforts for certified voting systems in the field, as well as continue a pilot program dedicated to evaluation of election supporting technology.



Prepare to administer 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. Additionally, utilize increased funding to execute studies statutorily mandated by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).



Develop a Coordinated Vulnerability Disclosure (CVD) policy for voting systems and conduct testing campaigns of submitted VVSG 2.0 voting systems.



Administer a new round of \$300,000,000 in Election Security Grants for FY 2024. The EAC also requests a reprogramming of old HAVA 101 funds, 251 funds, and Data Collection Grants to be used toward expanding the FY 2023 competitive Help America Vote College Program.

Appropriations Language

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

SALARIES AND EXPENSES (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses to carry out the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-252), \$33,807,472, of which \$2,500,000 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.

ELECTION SECURITY GRANTS (APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE)

Notwithstanding section 104(c)(2)(B) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 20904(c)(2)(B)), \$300,000,000 is provided to the Election Assistance Commission for necessary expenses to make payments to States for activities to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology, make election security improvements, and improve access to voting, as authorized by sections 101, 103, and 104 of such Act: Provided, That for purposes of applying such sections, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands shall be deemed to be a State and, for purposes of sections 101(d)(2) and 103(a) shall be treated in the same manner as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the United States Virgin Islands: Provided further, That each reference to the “Administrator of General Services” or the “Administrator” in sections 101 and 103 shall be deemed to refer to the “Election Assistance Commission”: Provided further, That each reference to “\$5,000,000” in section 103 shall be deemed to refer to “\$3,000,000” and each reference to “\$1,000,000” in section 103 shall be deemed to refer to “\$600,000”: Provided further, That not later than two years after receiving a payment under this heading, a State shall make available funds for such activities in an amount equal to 20 percent of the total amount of the payment made to the State under this heading: Provided further, That not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Election Assistance Commission shall make the payments to States under this heading: Provided further, That States shall submit quarterly financial reports and annual progress reports.

Administrative Provision

Of the unobligated balances from prior year appropriations made available to the Election Assistance Commission under the headings “Election Security Grants” and “Election Data Collection Grants”, up to \$3,700,000 may be used by the Commission for the Help America Vote College Program as authorized by title V of the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

Agency Background and Structure

Congress established the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to help election officials improve the administration of elections and help Americans participate in the voting process. Congress charged the EAC with fulfilling its mission by administering a national election administration clearinghouse that studies election administration practices, provides best practices to the nation, helps voters register to vote and participate in federal elections, manages federal standards for voting systems, tests and certifies voting systems to the national standard, and distributes congressionally appropriated funds to states for the improvement of election administration and other purposes pursuant to the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

The EAC consists of four presidentially appointed Commissioners, professional staff, and four Federal Advisory Committee Act committees. 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 Board of Advisors, the Standards Board, 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).

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 meeting of the LLC took place on December 10, 2021. In 2022, the LLC held its Annual Meeting as well as several subcommittee meetings to draft the Council's inaugural Bylaws. The LLC voted and adopted those bylaws on February 21, 2023.

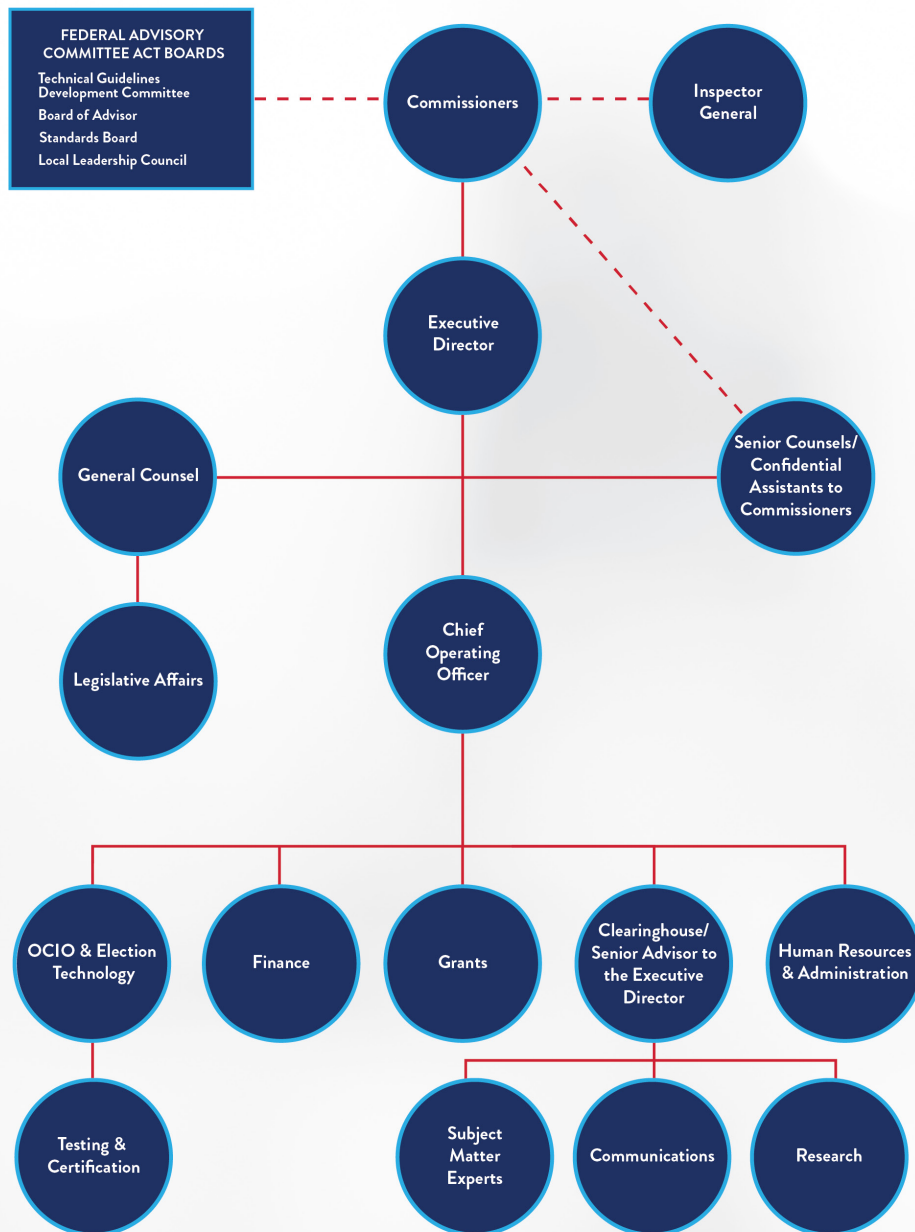
Goals and Structure of Budget Justification

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 serve as a clearinghouse of information on voting; test and certify voting systems; administer and maintain the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) voter registration form; assist states with administration of HAVA funds; 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 10 strategic objectives. The three strategic goals are as follows:

1. Strengthen and protect 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



This organizational chart is currently operational but is pending a final vote by Commissioners.

Fiscal Year 2022

Accomplishment Highlights

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is a trusted, proactive, and responsive bipartisan federal commission that tests the security of the nation's voting system and helps election officials administer and voters participate in elections. 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, serves as the nation's clearinghouse for information on election administration, conducts the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) and other studies, develops the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), accredits testing laboratories and certifies voting systems, and administers the National Mail Voter Registration Form in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. From coast-to-coast, the EAC is providing services for state and local election officials and the voters they serve. Among the EAC's most notable accomplishments during Fiscal Year 2022 are the following:

HAVA Grants

The EAC awarded \$75 million in Election Security Grant funds in FY 2022. The new funding came with increased reporting requirements, which included grantee reporting of financial data on a quarterly basis. This added two more reports per fiscal year for each grantee receiving Election Security Grant funds. The EAC pursued Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) approval to ensure that the required reporting was standardized to reduce the reporting burden across grant recipients. Beginning in January 2023, the agency is implementing the new quarterly financial reporting requirement.

Multiple training events were held to support the Federal Financial and Progress reporting for all HAVA grants. The emphasis of training at critical compliance points led to improved and increased reporting compliance. Grants staff reviewed over 500 financial and progress reports in FY 2022. The Grants office responded to a high volume of inquiries regarding allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary expenditures and funding activities.

CARES funding was available to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus pandemic for the 2020 federal election cycle. Per 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 grants and guidance was published on the EAC website. In FY 2022, the EAC continued the closeout process with individual grants for which activities had concluded and financials were reconciled, closing 19 CARES grants in FY 2022 for a total of 45 of 56 grants closed. The EAC expects to close the remaining 11 grants in FY 2023. 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 2022 totaled \$20,555,358.

The Office of Grants Management reports directly to the Executive Director. Additional personnel changes included hiring a third full-time Grants Specialist to oversee and support the increased grants administration responsibilities for the agency and recruiting a fourth Grants Management Specialist with a start date anticipated in FY 2023.

The EAC selected HHS' GrantSolutions grants administration software as a service to improve and automate its grants administration functions. This will allow for more time to be dedicated to conducting strategic activities and providing technical support to grantees. Utilization of a grant system is expected to reduce grantee time spent on administrative activities and free up staff time to execute and oversee grant activities. Until the selection and implementation of GrantSolutions, the Grants staff has been manually administrating and responding to inquiries regarding HAVA funding. All processing of applications, issuance of awards, review of reports and extraction and data-mining of emails and PDF documents was handled by staff without a centralized grants system like GrantSolutions to house and automate these functions. The GrantSolutions award management system allows the EAC to standardize financial assistance management procedures and increased transparency, accountability, and oversight for financial assistance funding. With this grant system, staff can develop better technical assistance training for award management, best practices, audit readiness, and education on federal assistance grants administration. The EAC fully deployed the system on November 1st, 2022 (FY 2023) ahead of the annual report deadline of December 29, 2022.

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. As demonstrated in recent elections, such challenges include election disinformation campaigns, threats to the physical safety of election officials, malicious attempts to breach voter registration databases and other election systems, the use of ransomware, and other emerging and evolving threats to election infrastructure.

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 2022, the EAC was invited to participate in the National Security Council Interagency Policy Group to advise the Administration regarding emerging threats to the nation's election security infrastructure. 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). 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. The EAC's remaining two Commissioners serve on the GCC as ex officio members. 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.

The escalation of threats to election workers is of great concern to election officials and the EAC. In an effort to provide additional resources on this important 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 personal identifiable information (PII) 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.

The EAC 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.

Election Technology, Advancing VVSG 2.0

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 finalized implementation of 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; the provision of guidance on Voting System Test Lab (VSTL) accreditation; deprecation of obsolete major standards; and definitions of 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 implementing 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. With implementation of VVSG 2.0 complete, the new Testing and Certification Program Manuals version 3.0, which include requirements for penetration testing of all systems submitted to the program going forward, are effective. The EAC is now accepting applications to test voting systems to the new standard.

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. The EAC and NIST are currently considering next steps in the process based on feedback received during the webinar.

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. 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, 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, to enhance the security and accessibility of these systems for all users.

In Q4 of 2022, the EAC moved forward with a voluntary Electronic Poll Book (EPB) pilot program. Nearly 2,000 jurisdictions in thirty-nine states utilize EPBs. The goal of this program is to help alleviate some of the burden currently shouldered by states in developing and maintaining EPB standards, as well as conducting testing of broadly applicable functionality, such as security, accessibility, and usability. A draft set of requirements has been developed by the EAC and NIST, and participants have been recruited for pilot testing.

After the pilot, the EAC will evaluate whether to enter a more formal standards development process similar to how VVSG is vetted with public comment periods and a full review by all stakeholders. The EAC has also been in discussions with the Center for Internet Security (CIS) on how we may integrate their RABET-V security testing methodology into our pilot program. We are considering conducting more “traditional” system testing in parallel with CIS’s more specialized security testing to be able to compare both approaches and their appropriateness for future testing efforts.

Information Technology Improvements

Throughout 2022, 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 EAC’s infrastructure to a Zero Trust Architecture. The EAC has developed a plan to implement a Zero Trust Architecture and is assessing funding and staffing needs to fully realize the transition. Throughout 2022, the EAC made progress toward this goal by implementing full encryption for data at rest and in transit, developing a data classification schema, and improving endpoint device signaling and telemetry.

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. Implementation of additional OMB guidance related to logging and multi-factor authentication was also ongoing throughout 2022. In FY 22, the EAC fully integrated with the CISA continuous diagnostics and mitigations (CDM) program. This capability allows fully automated reporting of EAC endpoint health to the CISA federal dashboard.

The EAC continues the decommissioning of legacy infrastructure including major efforts to migrate identity and access management to modern infrastructure. In FY 22, the EAC successfully migrated its data from remaining legacy systems to a cloud-based file storage system that allows more granular access management, versioning, and other functionality related to Zero Trust Architecture goals. Finally, the EAC coordinated with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to create a formal Operational Security (OPSEC) program. This included the creation of training materials for all staff, integration of OPSEC principles into existing policies and procedures, and the formal designation of personnel with OPSEC responsibilities.

Conducting Essential Research on Election Administration and Infrastructure

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.

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 FY 2022 the EAC initiated a needs assessment review by interviewing 27 states about their experiences completing the 2020 EAVS and gathered input from participants for implementation in 2022. Usability testing of the survey instruments also continued in preparation for 2022. Through this user-centered testing, EAVS and Policy Survey navigation was evaluated by real users under the observation of a trained researcher to improve user experience. EAC continues to work to improve data quality of these survey instruments. In January 2022, the EAC published 56 state-by-state 2020 EAVS data briefs and an online data interactive. The briefs are snapshots of key EAVS data points. Complementing these efforts, the EAC also released the 2020 EAVS Data Interactive. The EAVS Data Interactive is an online tool that allows visitors to explore, visualize, and compare election jurisdictions' EAVS responses. Both products help make EAVS data accessible and useful to a wide audience and provide summaries of state- and jurisdiction-level data.

The EAC accepted public comments for the 2022 EAVS in early 2022. OMB approved the 2022 survey instruments on April 14. The EAC conducted usability testing of the 2022 Policy Survey data collection template with 7 states in July 2022 and testing of the 2022 EAVS data collection templates with 5 states in September 2022. In July-August 2022, the EAC conducted pre-survey outreach calls to new state Points of Contact (POCs) from 10 states for the 2022 EAVS. In July 2022, the EAC updated A Guide to the Election Administration and Voting Survey for the 2022 EAVS. The EAC deployed the 2022 Policy Survey at the end of FY 22.

The EAC reconstituted the Section A Working Group in FY 2022. The working group consisted of six state election officials, two local election officials, and two other elections experts. The group discussed potential question changes to be made to Section A of the 2024 EAVS. A report of their recommendations was published in July 2022 titled Planned Changes to Section A of the 2024 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS).

The EAC is currently administering the 2022 EAVS by collecting and analyzing 2022 EAVS data. The final comprehensive report will be released in June 2023.

Election Accessibility

The EAC has been dedicated to supporting language accessibility in elections since its establishment by the Help America Vote Act in 2002. This includes creating glossaries and phrase books of common election terminology, providing Help America Vote Act funds to states to improve language accessibility, and offering the National Mail Voter Registration Form in 21 languages.

Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, the U.S. Census Bureau determines which voting jurisdictions must provide language assistance for specific minority groups who are unable to speak or understand English well enough to participate in the voting process. The most recent determination was announced on December 8, 2021, adding new language requirements for 68 jurisdictions. To assist states and localities in implementation of language and service requirements, the EAC hosted a virtual Language Access Roundtable in February 2022. The event highlighted a range of issues state and local election officials should consider when adopting new language requirements. Along with state and other federal resources, the EAC developed several best practice resources following the announcement of covered jurisdictions.

Election officials are responsible for ensuring accessibility in elections for voters with disabilities. To assist election officials in providing accessible options for voters with disabilities, the EAC released best practice checklists for voting in person and by mail. The EAC continues to actively engage voters with disabilities and advocacy groups focused on accessibility. This included distributing 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. EAC Commissioners and staff also participated at key stakeholder events focused on voting for persons with disabilities, including the African American Conference on Disabilities, Disability Policy Seminar, Access the Vote Florida, and the Elections Accessibility Summit.

To gather key information on voter access ahead of the 2022 midterm elections, the EAC conducted a national survey in March and April of 2022 to identify both the advancements and gaps in accessibility for voters with disabilities. The agency commissioned the study alongside veteran researchers from Rutgers University. The full report, titled “Disability, the Voting Process, and the Digital Divide” was released on July 26, 2022. The study was conducted with a focus on computer and internet use, sources of information on the voting process used in 2020, accessibility of information sources, preferred ways of receiving information about the voting process, trust in information sources, expectations about voting and information sources in 2022, and knowledge of rights for accessible information. Access to this data is critical for election officials who are continuously working to communicate and meet the needs of their jurisdictions. Understanding how to better communicate with voters with disabilities – regardless of access to the internet – is a crucial step in making elections more accessible.

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 2022, 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 election official security, election night reporting, the canvass, accessibility practices to serve voters with disabilities and language minority voters, and numerous other subjects. The agency also utilized FY 2022 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. The Clearinghouse Division also revised and published the **Quick Start Guides** series, which includes 26 guides that summarize and highlight election administration information in the United States.

In 2022, the EAC held the 6th 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 and to promote best practices in elections 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; and innovation in election cybersecurity and technology. The EAC also announced two new categories for “Outstanding Use of HAVA Grants in Election Modernization” and “Outstanding Election Official Association Program.”. Winners were selected by two independent panels of election officials from the EAC’s advisory boards with the EAC Commissioners serving as judges for the sticker category.

In 2022, the EAC issued Clearies awards to 20 programs with honorees ranging from large states with more than 10 million voters to townships of less than 100,000 residents. To provide even more best practices to election administrators, the EAC also recognized 14 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.

Operating Plan Summary

| Salaries and Expenses | FY 2022 Enacted Budget | FY 2023 President's Budget | FY 2023 Enacted Budget | FY2024 Budget Request |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full-Time Equivalent | 48 | 78 | 78 | 87 |
| 11 Payroll Personnel Compensation | 5,711,216 | 8,451,563 | 9,453,592 | 9,254,066 |
| <i>Subtotal Personnel Compensation (PC)</i> | <i>5,711,216</i> | <i>8,451,563</i> | <i>9,453,592</i> | <i>9,254,066</i> |
| 12.1 Benefits | 1,988,687 | 3,662,098 | 3,185,614 | 4,005,869 |
| Subtotal PC&B | 7,699,903 | 12,113,661 | 12,639,206 | 13,259,935 |
| 21 Travel | 215,150 | 600,000 | 500,000 | 428,009 |
| 23 Rent, Communications, Utilities | 731,476 | 682,309 | 982,779 | 796,716 |
| 24 Printing and Reproduction | 15,048 | 25,000 | 56,525 | 20,423 |
| 25 Other Contractual Services | 9,404,837 | 14,969,694 | 10,628,185 | 15,333,915 |
| 25.3 Funding Provided to NIST | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | 2,500,000 |
| 26 Supplies and Subscriptions | 89,230 | 90,000 | 351,969 | 174,083 |
| 31 Equipment | 159,019 | 100,000 | 335,000 | 1,287,738 |
| 94 Financial Transfer | 2,905 | 6,336 | 6,336 | 6,653 |
| FY 2022 Year-End Unobligated (<1%) | 182,432 | - | - | - |
| Subtotal, Non-Personnel | 12,117,665 | 17,973,339 | 14,360,794 | 20,547,537 |
| Total | 20,000,000 | 30,087,000 | 27,000,000 | 33,807,472 |

| Election Security Grants | FY 2022 Enacted Budget | FY 2023 President's Budget (Election Innovation Grants) | FY 2023 Enacted Budget | FY2024 Budget Request |
|---|---------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Full-Time Equivalent | - | 5 | - | - |
| 11 Payroll Personnel Compensation | - | 532,350 | - | - |
| <i>Subtotal Personnel Compensation (PC)</i> | - | <i>532,350</i> | - | - |
| 12.1 Benefits | - | 228,150 | - | - |
| Subtotal PC&B | - | 760,500 | - | - |
| 21 Travel | - | 27,300 | - | - |
| 25 Other Services | - | 815,000 | - | - |
| 26 Supplies and Subscriptions | - | 4,000 | - | - |
| 41.0 Grants | 75,000,000 | 245,000,000 | 75,000,000 | 300,000,000 |
| Subtotal, Non-Personnel | - | 245,846,300 | - | - |
| Total | 75,000,000 | 246,606,800 | 75,000,000 | 300,000,000 |

FY 2024 Budget Request Highlights

In November 2024, the nation will administer and participate in the 2024 presidential election. The mission of the EAC is to protect the nation's voting systems. The EAC's FY 2024 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 advance agency equity and diversity, enhance agency management and performance, and make substantial improvements in the areas of communications and web development.

HAVA Grants

Reprogramming Request for Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program

The EAC requests a reprogramming of up to \$3.7 million in no-year funds carried forward from HAVA 101 funds, 251 funds, and Data Collection Grants to be used toward expanding the FY 2023 competitive Help America Vote College Poll Worker Grant Program in 2024. The College Poll Worker Grant Program was reinvigorated in FY 2023 after more than a decade. The historic program was first established at the EAC in 2004. This program ran until 2011 with a total appropriation of \$3.177 million. The EAC requests existing funding to be repurposed to fund this program to relieve poll worker shortages, serve an ongoing need to encourage student participation as poll workers or assistants, foster student interest in the elections process, and to encourage state and local governments to use students as poll workers. The program would 1) Encourage students enrolled at institutions of higher education (including community colleges) to assist State and local governments in the administration of elections by serving as poll workers or assistants; 2) Encourage college students to become cognizant of the elections process and civic education, and to assist in the smooth administration of elections in their community; and 3) Encourage State and local governments to use the services of the students participating in the program. These would be two-year competitive grants with no match requirement.

Field Services Program / Election Technology Requirements / Vulnerability Disclosure

As a part of its FY 2024 budget request, the EAC requests funding for field inspections of certified voting systems and post-manufacturing audits of voting system equipment via a Field Services Program. This would be an expansion of the Regional Audit request for FY 2023 and would 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, 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 does not have dedicated personnel to perform hash validation checks or anomaly investigations on behalf of election officials to ensure the integrity of the EAC Testing and

Certification program. 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. Regional staff would be managed through oversight from six full-time employees hired to support this effort.

Additionally, the EAC 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 databases, 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. As part of this initiative, the EAC intends to hire election technology specialists dedicated to implementing and supporting these election support technology efforts. In addition, the EAC will fund expert contractors to assist with the development of these new programs.

The EAC will utilize FY 2023 funds to finalize a pilot testing and certification program for electronic pollbooks that closely contours the existing voting system testing and certification program and requests FY 2024 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 will develop 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 2024 funds to take learnings from the electronic poll book 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.

Lastly, the EAC Testing and Certification program has an urgent need to support voting system vulnerability tracking, mitigation, and public disclosure. To execute this essential effort, the EAC seeks to hire two full-time vulnerability security specialists. These specialists will set up and streamline voting system vulnerability disclosure processes. In addition, they will work with trusted researchers and manufacturers to manage vulnerability findings and mitigations.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Included in the FY 2024 EAC budget is an increase in the annual funding provided to the National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST) from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million for its work in supporting the agency with its Testing and Certification and Clearinghouse research efforts. The funding provided to NIST has remained relatively unchanged over the last 10 years and this increase will help compensate for the impact of inflation over that period. This increase provides a great opportunity for the EAC and NIST to look to the future on important aspects of voting systems and election administration such as human factor considerations and "usable" security, which will essentially make security easier to navigate for election officials. The EAC will utilize an Interagency Agreement (IAA) to ensure these funds are used to further the testing and certification of critical election infrastructure to bolster the security of elections.

Expansion of Communications

As a part of its FY 2024 budget request, the EAC requests funding to continue the expansion of the Communications division's capabilities. Communications continues to be a critical part of the agency as the EAC expands the resources and program provided to stakeholders. The Communications team's ongoing growth will support other departments' expansions and help raise awareness and expand capacity as a result.

Advancing Agency Management and Performance

While the EAC's mission remains unchanged, the current election environment is dynamic and the agency must maintain a workforce not only with the required technical and management skills for program and project delivery, but also one that is viable, committed, talented, and diverse. Plans are to increase the current agency workforce to 87 FTEs by FY 2024. This will require the Human Resources function to look beyond traditional administrative and compliance activities and be forward-thinking to provide guidance on strategic and operational human capital management issue. This type of 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 2024 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. Funding for such a study is 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 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 promotes greater efficiency in performance management, employee development, diversity initiatives, and other HR functions.

Achieving the agency's diversity and inclusion initiatives will require collaboration between the proposed Equity Office and the Office of Human Resources. Working together, the two offices will provide 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 does not currently have an Office of Civil Rights (OCR) or an equivalent office focusing on equality, equity, and diversity. The agency aims to fill this void by hiring an Equity Advisor 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.

Cyber Access and Security Program

In FY 2024, the EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security Program, providing cybersecurity support both to internal EAC operations and external customers. Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) documentation and compliance functions as well as technical cybersecurity expertise are provided by the program in support of 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. 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.

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. Additionally, a training program can address concerns about increased turnover in elections offices. In recent surveys, a significant portion of election officials surveyed plan to leave the field before 2024 and recruiting and retaining staff remain a challenge. 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. This program will allow officials from all jurisdictions to participate regardless of their local budget. It will facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices that is core to the EAC's mission.

Additionally, the EAC requests FY 2024 funds to establish a bi-annual training meeting for professional training of election officials. These trainings would allow election officials to gather in-person to learn from the EAC and each other, highlighting best practices and allowing for the development or furtherance of interpersonal relationships between the agency and its key stakeholders. Funds would be utilized to develop the training program and to provide for travel and hosting in-person training.

Mandatory Formula Grants

The Budget provides \$5 billion 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. These mandatory funds will be provided by formula over ten years to enable crucial election-related capital investments such as upgrades to registration databases, voting systems, and physical structures; support recruitment, training, and retention of election workers; improve physical and cyber security; and improve voters' access to elections.

Budgetary Changes Relative to FY 2023 President's Budget Request

(IN WHOLE DOLLARS)

PERSONNEL COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS: +\$1,146,274

Assumes full annualized rate for existing personnel, those assumed under the FY 2023 President's Budget, and an FY 2024 increase of 9 FTE with associated cost of living adjustment.

TRAVEL: - \$171,991

OTHER SERVICES: +\$363,221

Includes contracts and other contractual services reflected in the FY 2024 budget request as compared to the FY 2023 President's Budget Request.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Equipment: +\$1,187,738

Supplies & Subscriptions: +\$84,083

Printing & Reproduction: -\$4,577

Financial Transfers: +\$317

GRANTS: +50,000,000

Includes grants to States aimed at improving election administration, cybersecurity or other security safeguards, security of election officials, accessibility for voters with disabilities and other access needs, including vote-by-mail, voter education, language proficiency, usability, voter technology, or other programs to enhance processes and procedures in administering federal elections. This increase compares the Election Innovation competitive grants request in the FY 2023 President's Budget of \$250 million to the Election Security formula grants request of \$300 million for FY 2024.

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 Clearinghouse, Communications, Office of the General Counsel, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Research, and Testing and Certification Divisions collaborate toward the success of Goal 1. 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, the creation of an online training system with courses focused on election cybersecurity fundamentals, and the successful cybersecurity defense of 2022 midterm and 2024 presidential elections.

1. Field Services Program, Evaluation of Election Supporting Technology, & Vulnerability Disclosure

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.

In FY 2024, the EAC plans to significantly expand its Testing and Certification division through implementation of a Regional Field Services Program, including the hiring of regional voting system assessors that will require full-time staff to oversee and manage.

Under the authority of HAVA, the EAC also plans to establish specialty requirements and guidelines specific to equipment used for election supporting technologies such as electronic pollbooks, voter registration databases, and ballot delivery systems. A pilot program will be initiated for each type of election technology with a permanent program following 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.

Finally, 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 may be required as part of this effort.

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

The EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security 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 2024 REQUEST

For FY 2024, 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.
- Implement a voting system vulnerability management and disclosure policy and program.
- 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, 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 2. 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 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 2, the EAC fulfills these mandates by using its expertise to build and manage these clearinghouse and grants resources.

In FY 2024, 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 2022 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 are the use of EAC resources by election officials, the production and release of resources on top priorities as identified by EAC advisory boards, 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 2 into FY 2024 in order to best serve the nation.

Note: The EAC's OIG activities impact the EAC's work under strategic goal 2. The EAC's OIG request is detailed starting on page 27.

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 as well as pressing election administration issues and needs; and to 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 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 2024, 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, 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 2022, the EAC continually added and updated information on registration and options to cast a ballot as well as information about becoming a poll worker. 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 a priority for the agency.

In FY 2024, 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 researching further 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 2024, 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 has invested in a system of record, HHS' GrantSolutions software as a system with functionality to improve end-to-end grant lifecycle processes, enhance efficiencies and provide for better performance measurement, data collection, and analysis to drive decisions and follow up actions for the current and any future federal grant funding.

For 2024, the EAC's work to monitor and provide technical assistance to these grantees will continue, including overseeing the expenditure of funds. The EAC's Inspector General also audits the states' use of the funds, and EAC staff members provide technical assistance to the states as they design and implement their plans to use the federal funds.

THE FY 2024 REQUEST

For FY 2024, 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 FY 23 College Pollworker Grants.

Strategic Goal 3

Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

Staff from the Clearinghouse, Communications, Finance, Office of the General Counsel, Grants, Human Resources and Administration, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Research, and Testing and Certification Divisions collaborate toward the success of goal 3. 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 3, 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 2024 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 poor 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 the 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 2024 budget request funding for these investments.

2. Advancing Equity

The agency intends to hire 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

The EAC will continue to build on its Cyber Access and Security 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 2024 REQUEST

For FY 2024, 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 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) 2024 request of \$2,272,134 includes \$6,653 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. The request also includes \$31,875 for costs associated with training and professional development for OIG's full-time employees.

| OIG BUDGET REQUEST BY OBJECT CLASS | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | | FY 2022 Enacted | FY 2023 Enacted | FY2024 Request |
| | Salaries and Benefits | | | |
| 11.1 | Full-time permanent | 540,545 | 563,724 | 721,695 |
| 11.9 | Civilian personnel benefits | 199,071 | 212,783 | 309,297 |
| | Total Compensation and Benefits | 739,616 | 776,507 | 1,030,992 |
| | Contractual Services and Supplies | | | |
| 21 | Travel, training and oversight | 21,250 | 21,250 | 31,875 |
| 24 | Printing and reproduction | | | |
| 25.2 | Other services | 639,285 | 1,055,925 | 1,134,889 |
| 25.3 | Other purchases of goods and services from Government accounts | 56,000 | 56,000 | 63,000 |
| 26 | Supplies and materials | 2,454 | 2,000 | 2,625 |
| | Acquisition of Assets | | | |
| 31 | Equipment | 2,000 | 2,000 | 2,100 |
| 94 | Financial Transfers | 4,395 | 6,336 | 6,653 |
| | Total Program | \$1,465,000 | \$1,920,018 | \$2,272,134 |

OIG STRUCTURE

OIG is currently staffed by three full-time employees, the Inspector General, an Assistant Inspector General for Audit, and a senior auditor. OIG is also in the process of onboarding two program analysts and recruiting an attorney.

With the addition of a General Counsel, OIG will no longer require an interagency agreement for legal services (approximately \$10,000) and will establish elections subject matter expertise for legal advice related to our oversight work. This position will also be responsible for managing the investigations hotline, initiating investigative support when needed, and responding to Freedom of Information Act requests assigned to OIG.

OIG will continue to rely on interagency agreements with other OIGs for investigative services. OIG's FY 2022 request included \$50,000 for investigative services, the cost of services in 2007. The FY 2024 request for \$200,000 reflects what it would currently cost to conduct investigations into wrongdoing when the need arises. 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 updated 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.

Audits of EAC Grant Recipients (States and Territories)

Between 2018 and 2020, EAC has awarded more than \$1 billion in federal funds to 50 states, the District of Columbia and 5 U.S. territories (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands). This includes \$400 million under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

As described in the FY 2023 request, OIG will conduct more state audits through contracted audit services. In FY 2022, we commenced two internally conducted grant audits in response to reports of recipient noncompliance with federal reporting requirements. Doing these grant audits internally for high-risk recipients allows us to forgo the contracting process, complete the work faster, and find waste or questioned costs earlier. Waiting 8 or more years between each grant audit has made the audit reconciliation process more challenging. The additional staff will help support oversight of increased grant audits.

Additionally, EAC notes some states have difficulty submitting accurate required reports and reconciling financials. This is exacerbated by overburdened state election offices that have difficulty hiring and retaining grant and financial staff. When HAVA audits first began, OIG worked with EAC to educate states on the requirements that are associated with audits of federal funding and assistance in meeting those requirements. With additional resources we can resume a more robust technical assistance education program.

FY 2024 Priority: OIG will more frequently conduct grant audits, internally conduct audits of high-risk recipients, and complement audits with education and technical 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. OIG performed the mandatory review of EAC's compliance with the Procurement Integrity and Information Act (PIIA) and commenced an audit of EAC's Testing and Certification program. OIG's FY 2023 audit plan includes proposals to conduct risk assessments and review other EAC operations.

With the addition of a General Counsel, the Inspector General can focus on establishing procedures for Evaluations and Special projects to conduct more agile and timely work aligned with CIGIE's Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations. These products can provide timely information for decision makers and stakeholders.

FY 2024 Priority: OIG will meet statutorily mandated audit requirements, conduct audits internally on EAC programs, and build capacity to conduct evaluations and special projects.

Investigations

When allegations are made concerning waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in EAC programs or involving a recipient of funds distributed by EAC, OIG is responsible for investigating those allegations. OIG receives complaints from a hotline voicemail, form submissions from our website, and direct email complaints. Complainants can also reach OIG via [IGNET.gov](https://www.ignet.gov), [Oversight.gov](https://www.oversight.gov), and other oversight entities.

OIG has received over 600 complaints from October 2022 to February 2023. 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 2022, OIG began configuration for an investigative software 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 2024 Priority: OIG will continue to use interagency agreements for investigative services and to bolster investigation hotline capacity for efficiency and transparency. The General Counsel will oversee these functions.

