



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Minnesota Secretary of State
Steve Simon

January 15, 2019

Brian Newby
Executive Director
Election Assistance Commission
1335 East-West Highway, Suite 4300
Silver Spring MD 20910

Mark Abbott
Director of Payments and Grants
Election Assistance Commission
1335 East-West Highway, Suite 4300
Silver Spring MD 20910

Dear Executive Director Newby and Director Abbott,

As I noted in my letter to Executive Director Newby dated June 6, 2018, it was my plan to convene a working group to advise me in developing a plan for the use of the Federal funds. This working group was comprised of county and city election officials, representatives of voter advocacy groups, legislators, and legislative staff. The working group has now met several times and has broken into various subcommittees tasked to address items within the following categories:

- Minnesota's Statewide Voter Registration System
- Auditing
- Communications
- Cybersecurity
- e-Pollbooks and equipment

Each subcommittee proposed recommendations to my Office which were then approved by the larger working group.

Based on the recommendations of the working group, below is the proposed use of Minnesota's 2018 HAVA Election Security Funds. The implementation timeline shall be within the five-year grant award period.

- **Strengthen, secure, and modernize Minnesota's Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS)**

The Office plans to invest in a re-work of Minnesota's Statewide Voter Registration System. Instead of creating a new system from scratch with a large rollout, this would be a rewrite of the current system and would be done piece by piece over an estimated four years' time. To complete this, the

Office will hire three additional staff, including an IT Business Analyst, IT Developer, and an Elections Administration Specialist to supplement current staff during this project.

- **Assess Minnesota's data sharing and post-election review/audit process**

The Office will engage outside experts to 1) analyze and make recommendations regarding Minnesota's current post-election review/audit process, including examining unadjusted differences, with the goal of quantifying its likelihood of detecting tabulation and other errors, and 2) thoroughly examine and audit the security of information sharing between the Office and other agencies and entities.

- **Invest in improvements for securing information sharing with counties**

The Office will develop or contract with a third party vendor for solutions to improve the security of sensitive information and data exchanges between counties and the Office. This may take many forms, including enhanced email security and developing a secured portal where links and other sensitive information is to be shared.

- **Enhance website security and accessibility**

The Office will invest in additional security measures to enhance the security of the Minnesota Secretary of State's website. Additionally, we will ensure all pages of the website are accessible to those who may have a disability and make all webpages mobile-friendly. This will allow all Minnesotans to have equal access to the same reliable and accurate information, regardless of how they visit the website or any disabilities they may have.

- **Recruit and train election officials**

The Office will use a portion of the federal funds to assist counties and cities in recruiting election judges and conducting additional election judge training related to accessibility at the polling place, using and securing e-Pollbooks, physical security, and cybersecurity.

- **Cybersecurity and Information Technology upgrades**

The Office will invest in additional cybersecurity and information technology upgrades including: next generation antivirus software, automatic behavioral analysis, network segmentation, security and information event management, privileged access management, infrastructure upgrades, additional network and backup storage, continuous data protection, cybersecurity training for election officials, contracting with a policy writer to codify cybersecurity and information technology security practices, and ongoing support for multi-factor authentication.

Investing in these upgrades will safeguard Minnesota's election integrity by swiftly identifying bad actors, minimizing their impact, and keeping them out entirely of separate systems.

- **Expand absentee and mail-voting for voters with a disability**

The Office will make absentee and mail voting for voters with a disability accessible. Accessible absentee and mail voting can be accomplished by expanding and improving the current process for military and overseas voters or purchasing software that will allow voters with a disability to receive and mark their ballot electronically, and then return the printed ballot to their local election official.

This will allow Minnesota's voters with disabilities to vote privately, independently and securely as possible, with meaningful access to the ballot.

- **Provide sub grants to local jurisdictions for improved election security and accessibility**

The Office will use a portion of the federal funds to invest in local jurisdictions' election security by providing sub grants for updating and upgrading local IT infrastructure used for election administration, additional physical security for election equipment storage, and/or increasing polling place accessibility.

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 5.30, the Legislature must appropriate the funds already received from EAC before we can make any expenditures. The Legislature convened on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 and I will continue to update EAC as the Legislature passes, and the Governor signs, the appropriation of these funds to my office for the purposes authorized under Public Law 115-1410.

Best regards,



STEVE SIMON
Secretary of State of Minnesota

