

Information Technology Capital Investment Program
Project Status Report

To: Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee
John Vittner, Office of Policy and Management

From: Theodore Bromley

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Agency: Secretary of the State

Project: Election Infrastructure - Improving Voter Service at Polling Places

Project Manager: Theodore Bromley

Reporting Period: Project Inception through 12/31/2019

Total Funds Requested: \$4,550,000

Total Funds Allotted to Agency: \$4,550,000

Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date: \$2,413,900

Brief Project Description/Summary:

Electronic poll books provide the means for checking and managing voter registration records at the polling locations on Election Day. Currently the check-in system is completed manually with paper and pen and requires several poll workers to administer. Voters are divided into two or more lines based on their residential street name. At peak voting times, and during high turnout elections, this is an inefficient and sometimes confusing process that perpetuates long wait times, which, in turn will cause many to leave without voting. An unfortunate experience such as long wait times will also factor into the individual's likelihood of voting in the future. Electronic poll books will improve the speed of service to voters, without the need to separate voters in lines by street name because each poll worker involved in the check in process will have access to the entire voting list for the district. The poll books will also improve the speed and accuracy of post-election data reports such as turnout percentages and voter history. Currently that process is done manually and is quite laborious for the Registrars of Voters and poll workers.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), a federal law passed in 2002, requires that every voting location provide accessible voting machines to accommodate voters with disabilities, so that they may fully participate in the elections just as any other citizen would. Replacing the voting system for the disabled has been a long-held goal of the agency and the disability community. Currently there is a vote by phone system in place to serve those who cannot cast a paper ballot in the typical manner. Since it was adopted the current system both the local election officials and the voters the systems serves have been dissatisfied.

Summary of Progress Achieved to Date:

The Office of the Secretary of the State has published Requirement Specifications for an electronic poll book system. Solutions have been submitted by third party vendors and are being evaluated against the requirements specified in that Document. The University of Connecticut Center for Voting Technology Research (VoTeR Center) is performing the evaluation of vendor solutions. Four evaluations have been completed and documented. There is one additional system that was submitted late and evaluation has begun and is ongoing. Most of the systems provided for evaluation showed merit but will need additional work before they could be recommended for use in Connecticut. The University of Connecticut has released the evaluations to the vendors in the hopes that the systems' weaknesses can be addressed and resubmitted for evaluation. This work continues..

The Office of the Secretary of the State went out to bid on a new accessible voting system to serve voters with disabilities, as required by federal law, the Help America Vote Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act. With the assistance of the Department of Administrative Services, we have awarded a contract for a ballot marking device that will provide accessibility to the voting process for individuals with disabilities to IVS, LLC of Louisville, Kentucky. we have expended approximately 2.4 million dollars for the winning bid, and this part of the project has been successfully launched and is complete.

Issues and Risks:

None at this time

Next Steps & Project Milestones:

The University of Connecticut Voter Center is continuing to work with those vendors whose systems were lacking in certain mandatory and/or preferred requirements but show promise. We will continue to work with the Voter Center in order to have something in place for the 2022 election. Cybersecurity is of heightened concern because of the attempted interference by a foreign government in Connecticut's election systems, so we are carefully evaluating each system submitted for purchase. Currently, any system selected would create a substantial security risk to the voting process. Our future plan with UCONN is the following:

- 1) Work with current vendors to assess their ability to close or rectify the security risks within their systems.
- 2) If no security change can be made, work with UCONN to develop appropriate standards of use that would allow a municipality to use the system while at the same time minimizing the security risks.
- 3) Continue to solicit additional companies with poll book equipment that may have better and more secure equipment.

We plan to complete these tasks during 2020 with a full implementation plan for 2022. Currently, the security risk is great enough to warrant a delay in the implementation of the poll book portion of this project.

The purchase order for the accessible voting system has been completed and delivery of the units to all 169 towns was implemented in time for the November 2016 election. This part of the project is complete.