U.S. Election Assistance Commission

FY 2013 Summary of Performance and Financial Information

Assisting the effective administration of Federal elections

Purpose of the Report

This Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Summary of Performance and Financial Information represents the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's (EAC's) effort to provide a summary of key agency goals, information on how appropriated funds are used, and plans to both build on successes and address challenges.

Background

Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 in response to issues raised in the 2000 Presidential election. The law recognizes the need for States to invest in their election infrastructure and sets out a comprehensive program of funding to the States, voluntary guidance, and ongoing research into the improvement of Federal elections. To foster those programs and to promote and enhance voting for United States citizens, HAVA established the EAC.

EAC is charged with, among other activities:

- Serving as a clearinghouse of information on the administration of Federal elections for election officials and voters;
- Certifying voting equipment to voluntary voting system standards adopted by the Commission;
- Making information available to the public on voting activity of individuals covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), such as number of absentee ballots transmitted and received, and on the impact of the National Voter Registration Act ("Motor Voter") biennially via the Election Administration & Voting Survey (EAVS);
- Providing voluntary guidance on computerized statewide voter registration databases and provisional voting to the states;
- Maintaining the National Voter Registration Act form; and
- Distributing HAVA funds to States for improvements to the administration of elections for Federal office.

Federal election improvement resources include publication of materials such as Voter Tips cards and *Voter's Guides to Elections*, and providing voters with links on EAC's website, www.EAC.gov, to all 55 jurisdictions (the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) for information such as polling place location.

In FY 2013, EAC, worked with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Clemson University, and the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation in Washington, DC on the Accessible Voting Technology Initiative grants. The initiative supports research and development activities to increase the accessibility of new, existing, and emerging technological solutions in areas such as assistive technologies, interoperability, and the design of voting systems. Funding supports research for: 1) promising technologies and practices; 2) technology

testing and adoption; and 3) development of administrative processes and training improvements to increase accessibility of existing voting procedures and election systems.

In FY 2013, EAC worked with 12 grant recipients on the Voting System Pre-Election Logic and Accuracy Testing (L&A) and Post-Election Audit Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to develop and document processes and best practices for coordinating quality and cost-effective voting system pre-election L&A testing, and post-election audits. Outcomes will include tool kits, guides, best practices, research findings and recommendations that can be disseminated widely within the election community.

Additionally, EAC monitors funds for the College Poll Worker and Mock Election grant programs. The College Poll Worker program seeks to attract a new generation of poll workers, critical to the administration of elections. The College Poll Workers are trained on setting up polling places, greeting voters, checking voter names on voting registers, checking voter identification where required, staffing information booths, demonstrating use of the machines to voters, answering voter questions, serving as election observers, assisting voters with disabilities, securing voting machines at the end of election day, counting votes, and transmitting election results.

EAC's Mock Election grants promote voter participation in national elections through voter education activities for high school students and their parents. The students are provided with a "behind-the-scenes" look at the elections process, and learn about setting up polling places, registering to vote, and casting informed ballots. The grants help build community involvement in and awareness of the election process, and encourage future civic engagement and participation by the students involved in the program.

Strategic Goals

In March 2009, EAC adopted it first Strategic Plan for 2009 through 2014, with five strategic goals:

> **Communicate** -- Communicate timely and accurate information on the effective administration of elections for Federal office and on the operations and services offered by EAC.
>
> **Fund and Oversee** -- Deliver and manage Federal funds effectively.
>
> **Study, Guide and Assist** -- Identify and develop information on areas of pressing concern regarding the administration of elections for Federal office, issue recommended improvements, guidance, translations, and best practices as required by HAVA, and carry out responsibilities under the National Voter Registration Act.
>
> **Test and Certify** -- Build public confidence in elections by testing and certifying voting systems to improve system security, operation, and accessibility.

Manage -- Achieve organizational and management excellence.

Performance Data and Key Performance Measures

Communications & Clearinghouse

The Communications and Clearinghouse division began Fiscal Year 2013 focused on providing information and best practices to election officials and voters in the weeks prior to the November 2012 election. These educational materials, produced by EAC, save election officials time and money in preparation for Federal elections.

Through its website, www.EAC.gov, EAC provides:

- The Election Official Exchange: an online resource built by EAC to help election officials connect and leverage their collective knowledge by sharing best practices and information. Election officials can ask colleagues for advice about the myriad tasks they face, from testing voting equipment and training poll workers to creating an audit trail and conducting a vote recount.
- Webcasts: public events are offered live. On demand webcasts are available on EAC.gov within 24 hours. A meeting agenda accompanies each webcast so the viewer can select topics of interest.
- Customized program activity updates: a listserv for EAC's newsletter and automatic program updates. Users are routinely notified when new documents are posted based on their frequency of delivery and subject matter preferences.
- Information and updates for election officials and stakeholders about: (1) 2012 election survey data on the ability of military and overseas citizens to successfully cast their ballots; (2) the voting system certification program; and (3) remaining HAVA funds available to states.
- Links to state and local election social media sites as requests were received from election officials.

Via social media, EAC disseminates timely information with:

- Ongoing Blog posts on election updates and program activities. Topics include EAC resources; voting system testing updates; absentee and early voting; hurricane contingency plans; state elections; post-election information; EAC events; public comments on the Voting System Test Laboratory (VSTL) program manual, and the 2014 Election Administration & Voting (EAVS)/Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Survey; and critical or time-sensitive data; and
- @EACgov on Twitter to rapidly deliver information and updates to stakeholders and the public. Twitter topics include the voting system certification program, EAC activities and election information. Twitter facilitates communication with election officials and fosters building a community of expertise. The number of EAC Twitter followers increased from 970 to 1,602 between October 2012 and September 2013. EAC also maintained hashtags #BReady2012 and #FOV13 (for "Future of Voting") around preparation for Federal elections.

EAC hosted a number of forums for stakeholders (the public, election officials and academics) to discuss current issues in elections:

- Two public roundtable discussions: *Informing Change: A Review of Events and Issues of the 2012 Elections Cycle*, and *Transforming Election Administration, Voting System Accessibility, and the Certification Process*:
  - The first roundtable, held on January 9, 2013, was a post-election assessment of the November 2012 election. Participants shared successes and challenges presented during the election cycle. EAC heard from state and local election officials, poll workers and end users, leading academics, researchers and observers of the election process. The roundtable resulted in ideas for new best practices and improved future elections.
  - The May 9, 2013 roundtable was held to discuss the results of voting system accessibility grant work, and how recent innovations may be applied in the future.

  Both roundtables were webcast live and featured a live Twitterfall. EAC distributed press advisories to national media daybooks and contacts. Questions and comments were taken from the public through webcasts. The January 9th roundtable session was broadcast on CSPAN. Participants included election officials and subject matter experts who provided real-world solutions to the issues facing election officials and voters.
- Two joint EAC/National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) events: a workshop on accessible voting technology, and a symposium on the future of voting systems (see the Voting Systems Testing and Certification sections below for more information); and
- Nine webinars (see the Research, Policy and Programs section below).

Grants Management

In FY 2013, EAC:

- Disbursed requirements payment grants to States certifying compliance for the FY 2008 through FY 2011 awards;
- Provided technical assistance to grant recipients as they are responsible for establishing and maintaining internal controls that will reasonably ensure compliance with federal laws, regulations, and the provisions of the authorizing legislation and grant agreements for the applicable grant programs;
- Monitored and provided technical assistance for the Voting System Pre-Election Logic and Accuracy Testing & Post-Election Audit Initiative grants, and the Accessible Voting Technology Initiative grants. The projects focused on making pre-election information accessible to voters and using a specialized system in the field for elections;
- Continued to monitor and provide technical assistance to three-year award 2010 College Poll Worker and 2010 Mock Election Program grantees to help them carry out successful programs through May and June 2013, and then started the closeout process; and
- Closed all open Office of the Inspector General audits of State use of HAVA funds.

Research, Policy and Programs (RPP)

Work completed in FY 2013 includes:

- All reports and data related to the 2012 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) including the:

  - Statutory Overview,
  - mandatory National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) (or "Motor Voter") report,
  - mandatory Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) report, and
  - general EAVS report.

- An agreement with the Department of Defense Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for creating a combined 2014 EAVS.
- The first of two Federal Register public comment periods on the 2014 EAVS that will include 12 additional FVAP questions.
- Voter Tips cards and *Voter's Guides to Elections* in preparation for the 2012 Federal election to the general public and to each of the 55 States, territories and the District of Columbia.
- Nine webinars for election officials on Best Practices in Election Management on polling place and election-day management, contingency planning, voter registration and education, and poll worker recruitment training and retention. Each session was moderated by an election official and featured two local election officials as speakers. Each webinar involved 45 to 50 election officials representing the States.
- A work plan for updating EAC's Quick Start Guides, a series of concise and easy-to-read tips on a wide range of election topics. Quick Start update topics scheduled for FY 2014 include managing the voting process, recruitment and training of poll workers, educating voters, and collecting high-quality survey data.
- A national survey and final draft report ready to submit to Commissioners for adoption on findings from a HAVA-mandated study pursuant to Section 241(b)(15) on voting and administering elections in urban and rural areas.
- State requests for modifications to the state-specific instructions on the Federal National Mail Voter Registration Form. The States included Arizona, Georgia, Kansas, Wisconsin, Florida, and Washington State. The modified forms were posted in English and six additional required languages on EAC.gov.
- Several briefings for foreign delegations regarding EAC, and the U.S. election system and voting process.

Ongoing, RPP clarifies various data reported in the biennial EAC Election Administration and Voting Surveys and reports; provides assistance regarding the completion of the Federal National Mail Voter Registration Form; and responds to requests to clarify certain technical aspects of election procedures and processes.

<u>Voting Systems Testing and Certification</u>

In FY 2013, EAC:

- Certified three voting systems;
- Conducted testing campaigns for seven systems (with four systems currently in active test campaigns);
- Held the *Future of Voting Systems Symposium* in conjunction with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at the NIST facility on February 26-28, 2013. EAC and NIST hosted a symposium to explore emerging trends in voting system technology with the election community at large. Topics included: why some jurisdictions are exploring building their own voting systems; trends in voting system technology acquisition and deployment plans; how election officials, manufacturers, young voters, and academics view the future of voting system technologies; alternative standard development processes for voting systems; and alternative methods for voting system testing and certification at the Federal and State levels;
- Co-hosted the *Accessible Voting Technology Research Workshop* April 1-2, 2013 with NIST to discuss current and future research in accessible voting technology, and the transition of this research to industry. Topics included: innovative assistive applications and techniques; new approaches to accessibility in voting; accessibility research benchmarks and results; transitioning research to industry; new and existing devices that provide accessible access to elements of the voting process; and challenges in accessible voting;
- Drafted and published six Requests for Interpretation (RFIs) to the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG);
- Received public comments on a second draft revision to version 1.1 of the VVSG 1.1, and worked with NIST staff to resolve those comments and prepare the VVSG 1.1 revised draft document for final formatting in preparation for a forum of commissioners;
- Developed and implemented major updates to EAC's Virtual Review Tool (VRT) to track change orders for all EAC certified voting systems. This tool was also made available to State Certification Authorities to assist them in reviewing change orders that may be presented for certification in their individual States; and
- Performed one laboratory re-accreditation audit in Denver, Colorado.

Agency Assessment of Performance

Since the Strategic Plan was adopted mid-year in FY 2009, EAC has been refining metrics, and developing systems to collect performance data and the internal controls needed to ensure that reported performance is adequately supported. At this stage of development of agency performance measurement, we are reporting on outputs. The outputs establish the infrastructure required to begin the process of developing and improving program outcomes.

Key Management Challenges and Assurances

In FY 2013, the financial statement auditors were unable to opine on the agency's financial statements. Accordingly, the Commission provides a qualified statement of assurance that

internal control and financial management systems meet the objectives of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act.

In FY 2013, EAC hired a full-time accountant to implement an action plan addressing prior year audit findings and to improve internal controls. The action plan included detailed procedures and training related to advances, accruals, and accounts receivable; and a review of accounting treatment for FY 2012 financial entries. To address FY 2013 audit findings, a new financial system control will be added, and procedures at the agency and its financial service provider since July 2012 have been modified to strengthen internal controls. Further, EAC will streamline procedures around the grant payment process, and plans on providing a series of financial training sessions to staff during FY 2014.

Financial Results

In FY 2013, EAC's appropriations totaled $11.5 million for Salaries and Expenses. By the end of FY 2013, EAC had a balance of $3.4 million on hand in no-year Election Reform Program grant funds.

Since the passage of HAVA, Congress has appropriated nearly $3.3 billion to support States in improving the administration of Federal elections, primarily by purchasing and upgrading systems for casting votes and for registering voters in statewide voter registration systems. States have also used HAVA funds to:

> 1) implement provisional voting;
> 2) train election officials, poll workers, and voters;
> 3) improve polling place accessibility;
> 4) make voter information available at the polling places;
> 5) provide language assistance for citizens who are not proficient in English;
> 6) establish toll free telephone lines; and
> 7) institute requirements for first-time voters who register to vote by mail.

The FY 2013 Agency Financial Report and Annual Performance Report, and the FY 2015 Congressional Budget Justification can be found on the agency website www.EAC.gov under Operations, Budget and Finance.