



Legislation Text

File #: 22-4998, **Version:** 1

Department: Elections Administrator

Department Head: Beth Stevens, Interim Elections Administrator

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Investment Memo

Investment Memo Type: Final Investment Memo

Project Name: Election Management System for Harris County

Project ID (if applicable): 210218

Vendor Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Current Achievement (if applicable): N/A

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Managing Entity: Universal Services

Incremental Authorization Requested: \$1,144,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$1,144,000

Request Summary:

Request for approval of the Final Investment Memo for the Election Management System project for an initial capital investment of \$1,144,000 for the Election Management System project.

Project Description:

This project would supply a replacement of the current Election Management System utilized by the Election Administration Office (EA), VEMACS, which was last updated in 2003. Harris County Elections teams have used the VEMACS system to house voter registration rolls, election data, election worker payroll, voting location information, voter registration boundaries, mapping, and other functions. Since that time, substantial advancements have been made in the information technology space in the form of cloud servers, automation languages, integrated systems, mobile functionality, etc., that have outpaced the capabilities of VEMACS. Additionally, Oracle, the underlying system that

supports VEMACS, will no longer support this older infrastructure beginning in May 2022. Universal Services and the Elections Office request investment in a new Election Management System.

Project Scope:

Replace VEMACS, the 20-year-old election management system with a system that meets current industry standards related to scalability, functionality, security, and integration. In addition to necessary application replacement, the underlying database system is approaching end-of-life support from the vendor. The proposed package would be an end-to-end solution.

Justification:

The Election Office is still operating two separate databases: one for voter registration and one for election management. These dual systems are not running as efficiently as what the current technology can offer and require constant attention to ensure information flows between the two systems continuously and accurately to the State. The new system will increase functionality and efficiency in the following areas: election management, voter registration, voting by mail, election security, and vote center and election worker management.

This project supports the following Strategic Objectives:

- G3- Eliminate disparities in services provided to all stakeholders internal and external and eliminate disparities in outcomes for voter registration and election engagement.
- G4-Create a departmental organizational realignment focused on streamlining service, maximizing outreach, and eliminating disparities in services and outcomes.

The success of the project can be measured through the following performance metrics:

- Decrease the time it takes for data to flow from voter registration roll to ePollBook and election information update.
- Decrease number of voter registration corrective actions taken with the Secretary of State.
- Decrease inefficiencies of the Election Management System.

Alternatives and Engagement:

- *Delay:* As voter registration continues to expand and contemporary software becomes more cloud-based and streamlined, it becomes apparent that delaying a complete overhaul only allows for opportunities for inefficiencies and gaps. Delaying could also mean a new system is implemented just ahead of a major election, such as November 2024 Presidential Election, where the opportunity to utilize the system for the first time in a smaller election is lost.

- *Do not pursue:* Harris County Universal Services transitioned to take over the IT function for the EA office. Previously all elections-related IT fell to the responsibility of the County Clerk (elections) and the Tax Office (voter registration). Currently, there are two different election management systems that the US is required to maintain. In evaluating the systems, Universal Services determined there are no viable alternatives except replacement because of the age of the technology used in VEMACS.

Anticipated Project Expenditures and Timeline:

Scope of Work	Estimated Cost	Estimated Completion
Milestone 1: Begin RFP Process		March 2021
Milestone 2: Select Vendor and Initial Purchase		August 2022
Milestone 3: Project kickoff and schedules	\$32,500	September 2022
Milestone 4: Setup system environments, Security Review	\$362,500	December 2022
Milestone 5: Data mapping and data migration.	\$162,500	March 2023
Milestone 6: Functional Gap Analysis plus system modifications to address identified gaps.	\$145,000	April 2023
Milestone 7: Use select features of new system as a secondary backup in parallel with the legacy election system for the May 2023 Local Elections as a pilot.	\$25,000	May 2023
Milestone 8: Assess performance and any changes needed after the May 2023 Election (or June 2023 Runoff if applicable).	\$112,500	June 2023
Milestone 9: Transfer all necessary legacy information and voter file history to new system.	\$137,500	August 2023
Milestone 10: Host November 2023 City of Houston Elections on new election management system utilizing the major / key functions and modules with legacy system as backup.	\$0	November 2023
Milestone 11: Development of outstanding additional features, reporting, and integrations.	\$25,000	January 2024
Milestone 12: Final system acceptance, final completion date, and final payment resulting in project completion.	\$37,500	February 2024
Subtotal	\$1,040,000	
Contingency (10%)	\$104,000	
Total	\$1,144,000	

This timeline is somewhat speculative until official deadlines can be established with the vendor. A replacement of this critical system will have to be implemented between elections and will take many months to finalize. The project timeline should be developed and solidified over the course of fall and winter 2022.

Alignment with Goal(s):

- _ Justice and Safety
- _ Economic Opportunity
- _ Housing

- ☐ Public Health
☐ Transportation
☐ Flooding
☐ Environment
☒ Governance and Customer Service

Previous Court Action:

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken
08/10/21	325	Commissioner's Court approved starting the RFP process for an Election Management System.
6/28/2022	251	Commissioner's Court approved funding as part of the Office of Management and Budget of baseline budget expectations for FY22-23 accounting for cost drivers of labor and non labor related costs to maintain the current level of service being provided by County departments. In the amount of Yearly SaaS fees- approximately \$1,500,000, The one-time fees for implementation services: \$820,000, and Year 1 one-time fees for Project Management: \$220,000.

Address: N/A

Precinct(s): Countywide

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name		Election Technology	
	SFY 22	FY 23	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$	\$	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$	\$

Total Funding Sources	\$	\$	\$
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-

B. Serrano

Department Approval by:

OMB CIP Team Approval by: William McGuinness, Director-Capital Projects and Infrastructure, 8/11/2022

Commercial Paper Request (For OMB use only):

Receiving Department: N/A

Project PeopleSoft ID: N/A

CP Series Description: N/A

HB 1869 compliance confirmed by: N/A

OMB Financial Management contact: N/A