
NEWS RELEASE

**Louisiana
Department of State**



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LOUISIANA TO RECEIVE MILLIONS FOR VOTING MACHINES

State Releases Request for Proposals

BATON ROUGE, La. – States across the nation received welcomed news from Congress last week with the passage of a bill (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018) that allocates unused Help America Vote Act (HAVA) dollars to be used for the purchase of voting equipment. As a result, Louisiana stands to receive approximately \$5.889 million from the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) in the coming weeks.

At the same time, Louisiana has released a Request for Proposals for new voting machines statewide. The Secretary of State envisions replacing approximately 10,000 early and election day electronic voting machines and replacing them with smaller, more secure, touch screen models that provide a voter verified paper receipt to enhance post-election recounts or audits when necessary.

“Louisiana, like many other states, purchased our voting equipment back in 2005 when HAVA dollars were first sent to states,” said Schedler. “Secretaries of State from across the country have been fighting for this final allocation of funding in light of recent security concerns, including hacking threats, brought to light during the 2016 Presidential Election cycle. While this money will not cover the full cost of replacement, it certainly provides a strong infusion of welcomed federal funding without strings attached that will be pooled together with state funds to better secure and update our process.”

To date, the Secretary of State’s Office has invested approximately \$500,000 self-generated dollars to jump-start voting technology efforts at the local level including secure laptops for vote tabulation and additional cybersecurity measures at registrar of voters offices. An additional allocation of \$1.5 million, approved by the Legislature for the current fiscal year, could be coupled with a recommended \$3 million which is included in the Appropriations Bill (HB 1) being debated the capitol. The HAVA dollars provided to Louisiana require a \$294,400 state match bringing the potential total dollars available for voting equipment to almost \$10 million dollars.

“Looking at the total available to date, Louisiana is in a much better position than we ever envisioned in terms of funding for new machines,” said Schedler. “Our plan is to roll out any new equipment purchased in phases over multiple fiscal years, and the current amount funding can certainly cover our first phase. In phase one, we would replace all early voting machines 5 parishes at a time, across the state starting in 2018. Phase two would include election day machines rolled out in the same manner, 5 parishes at a time with full implementation expected by 2020.”

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The state's Request for Proposals for new voting equipment can be found online at:

<https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/agency/pdf/6770300-01.pdf>

Bids for new voting equipment will be accepted beginning May 1, 2018. Depending on the bid amounts, Secretary Schedler has anticipated needing somewhere between \$40-60 million to replace both the hardware and software necessary to conduct the state's elections.

“The good news is, discussions at the Congressional level are continuing to address the long term fiscal needs states will face in replacing old voting equipment,” said Schedler. “This is a positive first step, but there must be additional support in order to increase our cybersecurity defenses and replace aging voting equipment not just in Louisiana, but nationwide.”

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