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SOS Toulouse Oliver Prioritizes County Election Security with \$3.6M in Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Funding

SANTA FE – Today, New Mexico Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver released the [New Mexico 2018 HAVA Election Security Grants Program Narrative](#), which details how the Secretary of State's Office will utilize the \$3,699,470 in HAVA funding that was allocated to the state earlier this year by the federal government. A majority of the funds will be used on initiatives that will directly benefit New Mexico counties with a focus on supporting county needs for equipment and other improvements.

“New Mexico continues to be a leader on effective election security policies and procedures but we must continue to stay vigilant in protecting the integrity of every vote,” said Secretary Toulouse Oliver. “Strengthening the security of our county election systems will go a long way to ensure the safety and security of every election.”

The majority of the funding is focused on ensuring the security of our elections. For example, Secretary Toulouse Oliver has initiated the New Mexico Election Security Program that will address any election cyber vulnerabilities to include county security and risk assessments, county system upgrades, training and cyber incident communication guidance and protocols.

As part of this program, the Secretary of State's office intends to improve and maintain a cyber incident communications plan and evaluate the feasibility of including regular table top exercises for further practice and preparation. The purpose of the plan is to ensure election officials are prepared to respond to and communicate about potential disasters prior to their occurrence. The county risk assessments will highlight any security vulnerabilities and allow the Secretary of State's office to focus resources where they are needed most.

A portion of the funding will be expended for immediate improvements prior to the 2018 General Election, while the remainder will be used on activities extending to the five year HAVA expiration deadline. The funds have been allocated for voting equipment replacement and upgrades, election auditing, as well as voting registration systems and management. Secretary Toulouse Oliver has also designated a portion of the grant funds to minority language voter outreach, particularly to Native American voters.

The HAVA funding for States was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018, which became law on March 23, 2018. On May 21, 2018, Secretary Toulouse Oliver wrote a [letter to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) to request that New Mexico's allocation be drawn down in its entirety.

To learn more about how New Mexico will spend its HAVA funding click on [New Mexico 2018 HAVA Election Security Grants Program Narrative](#).

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