



From the Office of Secretary of State

**John A. Gale**

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### **Timely Federal Funds to Enhance Election Security**

Lincoln, NE – Secretary of State John Gale has received the green light from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to proceed with the program objectives submitted by his office for spending the \$3.5 million federal grant received from Congress. The purpose of the grants are “to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements.” The 2018 HAVA Election Security Grants are being made by the EAC from a total appropriation of \$380 million available to states and territories. In addition to the federal funds, each state is required to provide a 5% match to be used for the same grant purposes. The funds must be used within a five-year period. The planned use of the funds can evolve as new technology or vulnerabilities are discovered, but the funds must be used by the Secretary of State for the intended grant purposes during that time and be accountable to the EAC through annual program submissions and federal audit.

The EAC completed the review of the Secretary of State program objectives on August 10, 2018, and commented that “Your plan reflects a clear, well-designed and robust effort to strengthen your election security and infrastructure.” Following that review, the Nebraska program objectives were posted on the EAC website for public information.

The objectives for the Secretary of State include, among other things:

- Funding replacement of ballot tabulation and ballot marking devices owned by the state and used by the county election officials for counting paper ballots where such devices have become inoperable or unreliable;
- implementing two-party authentication tokens for state and county employees to provide increased security from hacking and spear-phishing attacks pointed toward gaining access to the voter registration database;

- joining the Electronic Registration Information Center (E.R.I.C.), a multi-state partnership that will enhance the list maintenance accuracy of the state’s voter registration list;
- security training for state and county election staff through state-conducted sessions or through national or regional conferences;
- funds to purchase supplies for county election offices to help ensure their voting precincts remain compliant under the Americans with Disabilities Act and investigate online accessibility enhancements for ballot access for voters with disabilities;
- partnering with DHS to install Albert Monitors for prompt notification of impending or identifiable threats to state and county election offices.

The Secretary of State objectives were developed with guidance from the EAC, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), interaction with the Nebraska Election Systems Task Force, a 24-member group organized by Secretary Gale in 2017 to provide a wide cross section of views of various county election officials and voter-advocacy groups on election system issues, and an internal working group of the Secretary of State Office.

Secretary Gale remarked that “Congress deserves a round of applause for providing these federal funds at a very critical time. The funds will help insure our 55 states and territories meet cybersecurity threats and help sustain current election technology while states figure out how to finance a new generation of election equipment. Nebraska’s HAVA Grant funds will definitely make a difference over the five year grant. We have been very inclusive to insure that we consider our military and overseas civilians and our disability community in our planning.”