

VoteCal Kick-off

Frequently Asked Questions

Posting: December 17, 2009

Financial

1. Will EMS vendors be paid to remediate their systems?

Yes. The Secretary of State has established that use of HAVA funds is authorized for contracting with each EMS to perform the necessary system updates to ensure that the EMS system successfully interfaces with the VoteCal system. This is being referred to as EMS "remediation."

2. Will counties be reimbursed to migrate to a different EMS?

Yes, provided that ALL counties on a particular EMS agree to migrate to an EMS application currently in use in California. This reduces technological risk to the project, and we believe financial and scheduling risks.

The Secretary of State has established that HAVA funds are authorized to contract with counties to pay for the expense of migrating from their existing EMS to a VoteCal "remediated" EMS or an EMS that will be "remediating" their system to interface with VoteCal central system if ALL counties which have a particular EMS commit to migrate from that particular EMS to any one of the other existing EMSs. This is being referred to as EMS "migration" and "migration" could only be HAVA funded if ALL counties migrate from a particular EMS. This situation would eliminate the necessity for that particular EMS interface, thereby reducing project risk and cost.

Each county selects its' EMS based on their local voter registration needs. The Secretary of State is not attempting to influence counties to migrate from their existing EMS. Further, ongoing maintenance costs contracted between a county and their EMS are not authorized for reimbursement from HAVA funds.

3. Will counties migrate to another EMS before it is remediated?

For those counties that are migrating, each county will need to make this decision based on their own county circumstances within the timeframe specified by the VoteCal project schedule.

4. What is the process for county elections officials to be reimbursed for staff time and expenses directly associated with VoteCal implementation?

The Secretary of State is developing the initial contracts for reimbursement of these county expenses and sent these initial contracts to the counties in early November 2009. These contracts will need to be amended to cover future VoteCal activity when we know more details about those activities.

5. What happens if the costs of any activity (migration or remediate for example) exceed the budget?

If the overall development and implementation expenses are greater than projected, depending upon how much more they are and how much project spending authority remains, the Secretary of State may have to request authority for additional funds from the control agencies and Legislature. Regardless, counties can only be reimbursed for actual expenses.

6. Will HAVA reimburse counties for scanning existing affidavits?

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No. HAVA funds may only be used for the effort to develop and implement a HAVA-compliant statewide voter registration system, and may not be used for ongoing activities, such as affidavit scanning, that were part of the election process prior to HAVA.

7. Does HAVA pay for or reimburse counties for ongoing EMS maintenance costs?

No. Ongoing maintenance costs contracted between a county and its EMS are not authorized for reimbursement from HAVA funds.

8. Does HAVA pay for or reimburse counties to purchase equipment that will reside in the county that are needed to ensure the EMS can work with VoteCal?

The Secretary of State has established that use of HAVA funds is authorized to perform the *necessary* hardware and software updates for counties and their EMS systems to interface with the VoteCal central system to create a HAVA compliant single, uniform, central, statewide voter registration database. The Secretary of State will work with the counties to identify any specific equipment or software that may be required to ensure successful interface of the EMS with the VoteCal central system.

9. Does HAVA pay to replace equipment originally purchased using HAVA funds during this deployment?

No. Just like today, ongoing expenses are paid for by the county.

10. How do we determine what is a HAVA-approved activity or expense?

The Secretary of State will work with the counties and EMS to identify the necessary items that are required to ensure the EMS successfully interfaces with the VoteCal central system.

11. Once a county is using its remediated EMS, who pays the EMS for training new county staff as they are hired?

Just like it is done now, counties will pay for ongoing expenses with the EMS vendor.

12. Will counties be able to review contract language for reimbursement?

The SOS based the VoteCal contract language on prior HAVA contracts with counties. These contracts have been sent to county registrars for signature and/or approval by their Board of Supervisors.

System Performance

1. What will be the system response time and what will happen if that standard isn't met?

While some data transfers and communications between EMSs and VoteCal will continue to be batch processes in the background, many will become interactive in real-time, such as voter registration processing. For real-time processing, the VoteCal RFP established standards for performance, most specifically in Section VI.I technical requirements T4.1 through T4.3. (page VI-102) These standards include:

- o Ensure that routine transactions, including all user system activities functions involved in adding, deleting or updating a voter registration record, complete in less than one (1) second. Searches for records based on criteria that do not include the Unique ID must complete in less than two (2) seconds. VoteCal EMS functions not related to voter registration must complete in less than two (2) seconds.

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- Support two thousand (2000) concurrent users, and must support peak usage of two hundred (200) routine transactions per second while meeting all other performance requirements previously stated.

Because SOS contracted for development and delivery of a VoteCal system that meets all requirements, SOS will not accept the system until all performance standards are met. Catalyst will be responsible for making any necessary hardware or software changes at their expense to bring the system into compliance.

Data and Images

1. **Will the felon data from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) include sentencing information such as facility so that elections officials can determine voter eligibility? (Under State law, a felon is only ineligible to vote while serving out a sentence in State prison or while on parole.)**

We have confirmed with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation that only the data for ineligible felons in state prison or currently on parole is submitted to the Secretary of State and imported into CalVoter (StateProfile). The data for convicted felons serving their sentence elsewhere is withheld by CDCR. This is expected to continue unchanged under VoteCal.

2. **Will NCOA data continue to be applied within VoteCal monthly? When an NCOA change is made to a record, does it register in the EMS?**

Per our agreement with the US DOJ, SOS will continue to process NCOA data on a monthly basis. The VoteCal system will only apply the NCOA data automatically when the match is based on criteria that we've all agreed is sufficiently high confidence for automatic matching. Whenever changes are automatically applied by VoteCal, electronic notice will be sent to the EMS to update its copy of the data accordingly. Counties will retain the ability to reverse such changes if they are incorrect. When NCOA data matches don't reach a sufficient confidence level for automatic matching, notice of the potential match will be sent to the county elections official for research and processing.

3. **You said that VoteCal will be CASS standardizing voter addresses. Will this be changing our official address of record for the voter?**

We have required that VoteCal CASS standardize and store the effective mailing address for each voter so that SOS can obtain optimum mailing rates for voter mailings such as the State Voter Information Guide. This will not alter the official address of record for the voter that is recorded and submitted by the county.

In case counties find this data of benefit, we have also required that VoteCal forward CASS address correction data back to the county for their possible use. It will be left to the EMS vendors and their counties to determine how this data might be captured and used in their systems.

4. **You've said that DMV will be providing digitized signature images for voters who update their registration at DMV or who register to vote online. Will this signature image be provided to the counties? Is this to be used as the most recent signature for that registrant?**

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Under VoteCal, we expect that DMV will begin providing the most current signature image on file for a voter as part of the Motor Voter change of address data, as well as for voters who actually register to vote online under the provisions of EC §2196 (SB381, 2008). That statute actually stipulates that the signature provided by DMV is to be used as the voter's official signature for voter registration and election purposes.

- 5. What is the standard resolution that DMV uses for digitized signature images?**
SOS does not have that information, but that and other information will be defined when we meet with the DMV during the Design Phase of the VoteCal project.

- 6. How do we ensure that those people who are re-registering their cars to another county for an extended vacation are not re-registered to vote?**
DMV change of address information is only relayed to elections officials when people change their address with respect to their driver's license (or state ID). For those people, the DMV forms have options for voters to indicate that they want to have their voter registration updated (application for new DL or DL renewal) or to 'opt out' of an update to voter registration (DL change of address).

There is no comparable 'motor voter' process for people who register their vehicle or change the address of registration for their vehicle.

- 7. Will VoteCal resolve the issues we currently have with the 'motor voter' data?**
Most of these issues are related to the forms and processes at DMV, and are outside the control of SOS or VoteCal. While VoteCal will not be able to resolve these ongoing issues, VoteCal should be able to automate the processing of those transactions that are based on sufficiently high-confidence matching criteria that we collectively agree upon, so that your staff has more time to evaluate and make decisions on the remaining transactions. Further, because VoteCal will contain the complete record for all registered voters in the State, your staff should have more information available to research and resolve those transactions.

- 8. If a voter checks the website and discovers erroneous data about themselves, will there be a method by which the voter can send notification to that effect?**
The VoteCal requirements specify that there will be a public website for voters to verify their registration status. Additionally, the requirements specify that there will be an online capability for voters to register to vote or update their registration, upon electronic confirmation of the voter's identity with DMV.

- 9. Will the VoteCal public website voter registration status look-up replace current county voter registration web site look-up options?**
This is another item that will be discussed during the discovery sessions in which county elections officials' staff will need to address whether to use a county or state look-up option, or possibly both.

Training

- 1. Will training materials be available in writing?**
Yes. Requirements were identified in the RFP for the system integrator to address all training aspects, including providing training materials.

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EMS Vendor Participation

1. May EMS vendors attend the VoteCal regional meetings?

The Secretary of State is anticipating that all EMS vendors will attend the discovery sessions.

Voter Education

1. Will there be a voter education campaign to notify voters of the change in paradigm from registering with a county to registering with the state?

This particular topic of voter outreach was not conceived in the VoteCal project.

Procurement

1. Who were the other, unsuccessful bidders?

Saber Solutions and Quest Information Systems, Inc. were the other two companies who submitted proposals. The results of all proposals are summarized on page 11 of the Special Project Report for the VoteCal Project. This document is posted on the Secretary of State VoteCal web page at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/votecal_rfp.htm.

Election Night Reporting

1. What happens to election night reporting?

That functionality is in Calvoter II, a system that will continue once Calvoter I is replaced with VoteCal.