

Voting System Replacement Business Case

Project Name: Voting System Replacement for the Elections Department

Project Short Name: Voting System Replacement

Department: Elections

Business Unit/Program Area:

Type of Project: Application / Hardware Replacement

Date: 02/20/2019

Version: 2.4

Project Description:

The Election's department is replacing the current Voting System with a comprehensive, modern system to meet the changing needs of elections within the state and County.

Business Need/Problem:

The current voting system is aged. The company that originally sold it to the County closed and support was transferred to a different company, Dominion Voting. While Dominion continues to provide support, system hardware components are no longer produced, making it difficult to maintain. Over the past decade the system has had at least two critical failures, and the department had to purchase old technology to replace the already old technology because State certification requires this system to run on the same equipment it was certified on in 2005.

The proprietary tabulation software has not been updated since first implemented in 2005, making it difficult to meet changing voting regulations, or address system shortcomings. The operating system for the tabulation server is Windows 2000 Server, and has not been allowed a patch or update since 2005. The tabulation hardware is locked by law at 2005 technology, requiring the department to purchase 14 year old back up hardware.

The touchscreen/ADA components are Windows CE, last updated in 2004. The County is not allowed, by California law, to update the operating systems because it would require recertification which is a responsibility of the vendor and the vendor is not investing in the system so no new certification will be sought.

Consistency/Fit with Organization's Mission:

The County of El Dorado Elections Department is responsible for running transparent, open, thorough, and accurate elections for the voters of El Dorado County. A critical component of this responsibility is the production and tabulation of ballots using a system that is not only supported, but updated and current with proper security and compliant with all existing and changing election law.

The County is also responsible for providing an equal voting experience to all voters, including voters with disabilities and specific needs. Significant accessibility improvements have been made since the current system was implemented and it is incumbent upon the County to keep up with those improvements to ensure an equal voting opportunity for those voters with disabilities and specific needs.

Cost Benefit Analysis

Anticipated Benefits:

Current Operating System

Current Security

Current Accessibility components

Current and Supported Hardware

Current and Supported Software
Training Support
Usage Support
Compliance with State and Federal Election Laws
Improved ballot processing speeds
On screen adjudication

Cost Estimate:

Polling Place:

Software Licensing and Implementation cost:
Annual Maintenance:
Hardware and storage:
Backup Licensing:
Implementation/Training:

Vote Center:

Software Licensing and Implementation cost:
Annual Maintenance:
Hardware and storage:
Backup Licensing:
Implementation/Training:

Analysis:

Alternatives

The County can continue using the current system. Given the age of the system and lack of support or upgrades, it is recommended the County replace the voting system with one that is currently certified and uses the best available hardware and software. Additionally, since the SoS decertified the system on February 27, 2019 it cannot be used in the Presidential Preference Primary unless they grant us a waiver.

Project Risks:

- *Workload/Staffing - There are several elections scheduled for 2019, and the Presidential Preference has moved up to March 3, 2020, which requires preparation to start in the fourth quarter of 2019.*
- *Timing – With the Presidential Preference preparation starting in fourth quarter of 2019, it is critical the system is implemented and staff trained as soon as possible, but no later than October 31, 2019.*
- *Certification - There are currently only three voting systems certified for use in California, and only two of those are certified to the California Voting System Standards dated October, 2014, limiting the selection to two vendors.*
- *Failure to select or implement - A system is not selected, or cannot be implemented by October 31, 2019.*

Risk Mitigation

- *Workload/Staffing - The selection of the voting system will require dividing up the selection with department staff, county staff, and the public. The amount of time required by department staff will be managed around the current election cycles.*
- *Timing - Since there are a limited number of potential responding vendors the procurement, demonstrations, and implementation can be streamlined and fast tracked. If the system cannot be successfully implemented and staff trained by October 31, 2019, the implementation will be put on hold until 2021 and the department will continue with the current system.*

- *Certification - The two vendors meeting the selection criteria will need to be thoroughly vetted and a decision made based on the merits of the systems and not on the lack of choice.*
- *Failure to select or implement - In the event a system does not meet the County's needs and a system is not selected, or the system cannot be implemented by October 31, 2019, the County will continue with its current system. To limit the risk of doing this, the department will need to ensure we have adequate backup hardware systems, improve our security for handling the touchscreen/ADA devices, and increase technical staffing to respond to technical issues.*