



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 23-0164, **Version:** 1

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Elections Department recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign a budget transfer increasing the Department's Fixed Asset appropriations by \$90,599.70 with an offsetting decrease in Election services appropriations;
- 2) Approve and authorize the addition of two (2) M72 extractors to the Fixed Asset list for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Board Adopted Budget;
- 3) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a purchase contract with Opex, contingent upon County Counsel and Risk Management approval, in the amount of \$90,599.70 in year one for the purchase of the M72 extractors and accessories, plus associated annual maintenance and support of \$6,400.00 per year starting in year two, for the three-year term July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026;
- 4) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to sign any additional amendments to the agreement during the awarded period that do not increase the term or the contract amount; and
- 5) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute a Purchase Order, contingent upon approval from Risk Management and County Counsel, for the purchase of two (2) M72 extractors and accessories in the amount of \$90,599.70 in accordance with Procurement Policy 3.4.2, Exemption from Competitive Bidding.

**FUNDING:** 100% Grant Reimbursable.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

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 efficient, thorough, and auditable receipt of mail ballots from voters.

With the move to vote centers, approved by the board on April 23, 2019, all registered voters in the County will be mailed a ballot, which was 138,537 ballots for the General Election on November 8, 2022. Returned ballots for the General Election were 89,079 ballots returned by mail, drop Box, and Vote Centers.

Without the Opex extractors, the process is to have one to two Election Department staff slice open the envelopes using a slitter. After enough envelopes have been slit open, approximately twelve temporary staff begin opening the envelopes and hand-extracting ballots. This manual process requires extensive time to remove each ballot properly and is extremely labor and time intensive to move the trays of ballot envelopes from table to table within the office to perform the task properly.

The Opex M72 extractors allow for all envelopes to be fed through the opener at a rate of up to 1,500 envelopes per hour. They are sliced on two sides and presented to the operator, allowing for easier extraction of the ballot. The ballots and envelopes are then placed in a mail tray for audit and tabulation. With four machines, the process is expected to take no more than eight temp staff.

The staff of the Elections Department selected the system after a careful review of the system in Sacramento County and other counties in the State. Two M72 extractors were purchased in 2019 and have been used for each election since. Due to an increase in voter turnout, it has been

determined the County needs two additional extractors.

If the request is approved, the CAO will process a budget transfer to move \$90,599.70 from Supplies and Services to Fixed Assets in the FY 2022-23 approved Budget for the Elections Department. The total cost is grant funded.

Elections Code Section 13001 and 14100 provide that elections officials are not required to use a county purchasing agent when acquiring election materials. Section 3.12.040(B) of the El Dorado County Code of Ordinances provides that, "The purchase of election materials and services shall not be subject to the provisions of this [Procurement] Chapter in accordance with Elections Code Section 13001." In addition, the County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors Policy C-17, Section 4.9 further clarifies that the procurement of elections materials are exempt from competitive bidding.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

N/A

## **PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

The board approved the purchase of two Opex M72 extractors, September 17, 2019, Item Number 7, Legistar #19-1292, for F/Y 2019-20.

## **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

County Counsel and Risk.

## **CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS**

Approve as recommended.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no change to Net County Cost; the purchase is 100% funded by Grant Reimbursement

## **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Please return the approved, signed documents to the Elections Department, Cynthia Morrison, x7481, [cyndi.morrison@edcgov.us](mailto:cyndi.morrison@edcgov.us)

## **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Good Governance

## **CONTACT**

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