



U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
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**U.S. Committee on House Administration, Elections Subcommittee
Hearing on Examining Best Practices for Strengthening Election Security**

Testimony: Thomas Hicks, Chairman, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

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Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the work of the [U.S. Election Assistance Commission \(EAC\)](#), specifically our efforts on election security. As an independent, bipartisan agency, the EAC offers trusted support that is grounded in federal law and responsive to the practical realities faced by state and local election officials. We appreciate the Subcommittee's important oversight work and your close engagement with the EAC.

Election officials have been the first line of defense against escalating security threats and cannot be expected to defend their election systems alone. The EAC has helped to facilitate coordination, engagement, and the sharing of best practices between local, state, and federal government partners to improve the overall security of U.S. elections. These efforts serve a common goal: promoting safe, secure, accurate, and accessible elections for every voter.

Many officials describe their work as increasingly technical and security-focused, even though they do not have dedicated cybersecurity or emergency-management personnel. Election officials are being asked to manage these growing security responsibilities with limited staff and resources. In recent years, the demand for assistance has grown significantly. The EAC engages with officials from jurisdictions of all sizes to support [ongoing election security work](#) spanning four core areas: physical security, cybersecurity, personal security, and contingency management.

As the only federal agency dedicated solely to election administration, the Commission plays a unique role in protecting our elections. One of our most important contributions is the voluntary testing and certification of the nation's voting systems to ensure they meet rigorous federal standards. The success of this program in improving and standardizing voting systems across the country cannot be overstated, and is only possible because of the close partnership between states and the federal government. More than 40 states rely on some part of this program — whether through full certification of their voting systems to the EAC's Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG), testing to federal standards, or testing by an EAC-accredited laboratory. Beyond certification, the EAC supports election officials on a range of election security topics through information, training, and technical assistance.

Agency outreach to election offices allows Commissioners and staff to observe local challenges firsthand, provide direct support, and inform development of new agency tools and resources. In 2025 and early 2026, the Commissioners attended and presented at over 110 conferences and events to meet with state and local election officials, U.S. and international policymakers, students, and voters. During these visits, Commissioners and staff provided in-person training,

highlighted best practices, and shared information to support our mission to improve federal elections.

The agency has facilitated extensive stakeholder engagement through the annual meetings of our four Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) boards — the Technical Guidelines Development Committee, Board of Advisors, Standards Board, and Local Leadership Council. These forums help shape the agency’s priorities to help election officials address and mitigate escalating security threats. For example, when board members told us they needed more resources to manage challenging interactions at the polls, we developed an [election worker training video](#) on how to de-escalate tense situations to help ensure voters can cast ballots safely and securely.

This direct feedback allows the EAC to turn what officials are experiencing on the ground into actionable election security guidance. Our direct engagement with election officials, consultation with our advisory boards, and partnerships with local, state, and federal stakeholders, have shown a clear message: jurisdictions need flexible security resources that can be easily implemented and adapted to face and overcome evolving threats.

Election officials work daily to meet the demands of an increasingly complex election security environment, from natural and environmental hazards, tampering, vandalism, and theft. Physical security and cybersecurity measures focused on protecting infrastructure and systems are the backbone of election security. These measures range from securing facilities, ballots, and equipment to safeguarding voting systems, voter registration databases, and election night reporting systems.

As the public profile of elections has grown, election infrastructure has become an attractive target for a broad range of bad actors. Many offices have implemented chain of custody procedures and documentation, tamper-evident security seals, and limits to physical access. For example, [Fairfax County in Virginia built a custom chain of custody tracking system](#) to allow independent, real-time visibility into the County’s entire voting system of over 3,300 pieces of voting equipment across 280 locations. Staff scan a barcode every time a piece of equipment moves, creating an auditable record that is displayed on a dashboard monitored by supervisors, showing exactly where equipment is and where it has been. Election officials have also focused on basic cybersecurity practices and awareness of phishing campaigns, distributed denial of service attacks, and ransomware. Please see the Appendix for examples of security best practices from across the country.

To help offices update and formalize their procedures, the EAC has produced checklists, quick start guides, and other resources featuring foundational procedures and considerations. The EAC hosts the [Election Security Risk Profile Tool](#), which guides local election officials through a step-by-step assessment of their security controls to identify areas for improvement. Our [Best Practices for Election Technology and Security](#) guide offers general direction about different best practices, organized by the kinds of risks they are designed to mitigate, such as errors, physical access, and remote access.

The EAC offers online and in-person training, including topics like chain of custody and physical security for election facilities. To date, we have trained more than 7,000 election

officials across the country, who collectively serve over 100 million voters. The EAC's Learning Lab, our online training platform, currently includes 37 courses in seven categories, providing practical, accessible instruction on key aspects of election administration and security. For many jurisdictions, especially smaller and rural offices, these trainings are the only source of nationally recognized, nonpartisan election security guidance they receive and represent roughly \$1.6 million in savings for local offices. Officials tell us that these free trainings help them identify and address gaps and vulnerabilities in their procedures as they prepare for the next election cycle.

In addition to these trainings, the EAC's [Testing and Certification Program](#) assists state and local election officials by providing voting machine testing and certification. Penetration testing is currently mandated for all voting systems entering the program and is essential given that many states lack the capacity to conduct independent security testing. Since 2023, the EAC has administered this highly specialized, resource-intensive testing. The Commission is currently piloting a comprehensive security testing framework using existing resources, however, expanding this framework will require additional investment. Congress recently codified this mandate through the Strengthening Election Cybersecurity to Uphold Respect for Elections through Independent Testing Act (SECURE IT Act), recognizing the imperative to proactively identify and remediate vulnerabilities in election technology. This critical work cannot continue without dedicated financial support.

To respond to the development and increased integration of technology in the election process, the EAC's Field Services Program provides a combination of virtual and on-site services to assist election offices with the validation of their voting system's software integrity and quality monitoring of fielded systems. In particular, hash validation is a central focus of the program. It provides an important indicator to determine if the file or program has been modified or the wrong version is installed. Election officials compare the hash values of the voting system software to the original, expected hash value to ensure that no data has been altered and deployed systems matched their certified version. In the EAC's Field Services' hash validation reviews, every fielded system was found to contain the certified software on the machine. The Field Services Program has facilitated timely engagement between election officials on the ground, manufacturers, and voting system test laboratories, reinforcing hash validation as emerging best practice in election technology security and chain of custody.

The EAC was one of the first federal agencies to publish guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in elections, releasing an [AI toolkit](#) in August 2023. In response to requests from our Advisory Boards, we recently [updated](#) that guidance to include real-world examples of how election officials are responsibly using AI and best practices for maintaining security when using these tools. The EAC has also conducted in-person and virtual presentations on establishing effective AI governance for election officials.

In addition to the security of voting equipment and systems, election officials across the country have faced a growing number of threats to personal safety, including suspicious packages mailed to election offices, hoax bomb threats targeting election offices and polling locations, and swatting incidents. A [2024 national survey](#) of election officials found that one third have

experienced harassment in connection to their work, while half knew of someone who had left the profession due to safety concerns.

The escalation of threats to election officials and poll workers undermines the integrity of our elections. The EAC created a dedicated [election security preparedness webpage](#), which provides targeted guidance and practical tools designed to help election officials prepare for, respond to, and recover. The agency has proactively distributed these security resources through outreach, training, and direct engagement with election officials nationwide. The EAC's best practices include topics such as how to [limit access to sensitive information](#), [using two-person accountability for critical election procedures](#), and [how to coordinate with law enforcement](#). The agency's guidance also emphasizes prevention and early detection, to help election officials reduce vulnerabilities and quickly respond to issues when they occur.

Equally critical is contingency planning, which focuses on preparedness and response. The EAC provides resources and training to help election officials develop or refine [Continuity of Operations Plans \(COOPs\)](#), conduct emergency drills, and coordinate with public safety partners. We also emphasize the importance of exercising readiness plans to ensure they are relevant and up to date. One of our most popular resources is the [Election Scenario Test Deck](#), which provides 52 real-world scenarios that election officials can use to practice and evaluate their incident response. Building on the positive feedback we've received from election officials, the agency developed two expansion packs to include scenarios involving poll workers and natural disasters. To date, more than 5,500 decks have been distributed nationwide. EAC staff also facilitate in-person "tabletop exercises" that facilitate cross-coordination between state and local officials.

Beyond physical security and cybersecurity procedures, election officials have focused on how to effectively communicate their efforts to their voters and the public. Earlier this year, the EAC surveyed its Clearinghouse Community, our official network for state and local election officials to connect with resources and other professionals in the field, and found that more than half of the respondents identified election security as the topic they got the most questions about from voters. In response, the EAC proactively shared security-focused Clearinghouse resources, including a [video series](#) that explains how elections are secured at every stage, from voter registration through counting and certifying vote totals. Election officials have shared with us that they use this video series as an educational tool to help address voter questions and build confidence in the process.

At the federal level, the EAC works diligently to strengthen lines of communication among federal agencies, state and local election officials, and the public to help protect critical election infrastructure. While most election offices have existing relationships with their local law enforcement and regional contacts with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and U.S. Postal Service, stronger local, state, and federal coordination ensures that election officials have timely access to essential information needed to respond to threats.

To help facilitate this communication, the EAC produced a [federal contact list](#) for election officials to report incidents. After the [influx of hoax calls](#) making threats to voting locations on Election Day in 2024, election offices renewed the call for additional federal support and guidance. On March 24, 2026, the EAC convened a virtual forum with the Boston Field Office

of the FBI focused on election security and polling place safety. The forum drew more than 1,000 election officials, as well as local law enforcement, from across the country. This underscored the strong demand for real-time information sharing. The EAC will continue to work closely with our federal partners, including the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and others, to coordinate resources, share threat information, and support election officials.

Across the country, jurisdictions adopt best practices from their peers, identify solutions under constrained fiscal conditions, and pursue innovative approaches. State and local election officials often emphasize the [importance of the Help America Vote Act \(HAVA\) Election Security Grants](#), with one local official telling us that the grants are an, “essential funding source for us to implement security, accessibility, and more reliable operations for voters.” When HAVA was enacted in 2002, Congress allocated \$650 million for jurisdictions to replace outdated machines with voting systems certified to the newly developed VVSG 1.0 standards. This investment improved the security of voting nationwide. VVSG 2.0 certified systems represent a significant advancement in election security, but their widespread adoption will require a similar dedicated federal investment. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** According to a newly published [report](#) by the EAC, it would take roughly \$2.71 billion to replace all voting systems with VVSG 2.0-certified systems.

In addition to upgrading voting equipment, states also reported using these grants to improve the accuracy of voter rolls, bolster physical security, and implement post-election audit programs. For example, [North Carolina used HAVA funds to invent Attack Response Kits](#), which consist of laptops, software, and other necessary tools to access the county infrastructure in case of an emergency, which was developed in response to a county government experiencing a cyberattack during early voting in February 2020.

States and jurisdictions have also used HAVA funding to purchase election technology, including electronic poll books, and to upgrade, secure and modernize their voter registration systems. To respond to the evolving threat environment and election officials’ needs, the Commission has provided additional guidance on the allowable uses of these HAVA grants including cybersecurity defenses, physical security of election equipment and facilities, election staff’s personal security, social media threat monitoring, and addressing AI-generated election mis- and disinformation.

The common thread through all of the work outlined here is the human element — the election officials and staff who are on the ground serving voters. Election officials are the best tool to ensure elections are secure. While HAVA was enacted with security in mind, the threat landscape and the presence of malicious actors has since grown exponentially, in both number and complexity of attacks. Today, state and local officials are incorporating cybersecurity protections and physical security measures into nearly every aspect of election administration, even under significant staffing, funding, and other resource constraints.

I would be remiss if my remarks did not also address the importance of ensuring accessibility and security. Election officials do their best, but enhanced security measures can inadvertently create barriers to access for individuals with disabilities. As we continue to assess and strengthen election security, we must remain mindful of these often-overlooked impacts and work

collaboratively to prevent impediments to ballot access. As the only agency designated to address accessibility in voting, we incorporate these considerations into our [guidance and resources](#).

For the United States to continue to be the world leader in election best practices, the federal government must support and invest in our election officials and infrastructure. Please see the Appendix for other areas of opportunity identified for the EAC's election security work.

I have confidence in election officials' ability and dedication to the security and accuracy of our elections. The EAC will remain a steadfast federal partner through 2026 and beyond. Thank you for convening this important hearing and for your ongoing support. I look forward to continuing our work together and responding to any questions you may have.

Appendix 1: Areas of Opportunity for the Election Assistance Commission

<p style="text-align: center;">Improving Voter Registration Accuracy and Facilitate Interstate Data Sharing</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC develops voluntary voter registration standards and pilots interstate sharing of voter registration lists. <i>Why:</i> To improve voter list accuracy. Voter list accuracy ensures secure elections and improves voter confidence. <i>Investment:</i> \$8.5 million.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Expanding Testing for Election Technology Research</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC Increases scrutiny and vulnerability analysis of voting systems. <i>Why:</i> To safeguard our nation’s election infrastructure against persistent and evolving cybersecurity threats. <i>Investment:</i> \$5 million.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Expanding Quality Monitoring of Fielded Voting Systems</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC enables more voluntary onsite inspections of voting equipment and direct technical engagement with election officials. <i>Why:</i> To improve regional coverage, enhance responsiveness, and strengthen national election security through proactive oversight and collaboration. <i>Investment:</i> \$2 million.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Accelerating Research for Election Supporting Technology</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC enables the development of voluntary guidelines and best practices for expanded election technology, including voter registration and election night reporting systems. <i>Why:</i> To address Executive Branch and Congressional concern over the vulnerability of election systems that interact with the Internet while supporting elections. <i>Investment:</i> \$2 million.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Reviewing VVSG 1.0 Certified Systems</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC accelerates the review of systems certified under VVSG 1.0. <i>Why:</i> To ensure all fielded voting systems are secure. <i>Investment:</i> \$1 million.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Increasing Voter Awareness by Promoting Trusted Voting Information</p> <p><i>What:</i> EAC modifies and improves EAC.gov and Vote.gov to make EAC.gov a one-stop trusted messenger of election information. <i>Why:</i> To help voters access accurate information about election administration and voting procedures and provide information on how to improve elections nationwide. <i>Investment:</i> \$4 million.</p>

Appendix 2: Clearinghouse Award Security Best Practices

Under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is charged with serving as a clearinghouse for election administration information, including best practices. Each year, the EAC invites submissions for its [national Clearinghouse Awards](#), or Clearies. By celebrating innovative efforts from state and local election offices, the Clearies help the EAC fulfill this important mission.

Below are some examples of best practices in election security from the 2024 and 2025 Clearie winners.

City of Henderson, Nevada

[Operation Ballot Box](#)

Operation Ballot Box is a cross-departmental election security initiative strengthening coordination between the City of Henderson Clerk's Office; Emergency Management; and other local, county, and state partners. Through joint planning, tabletop exercises, and pre-election assessments, participating agencies aligned roles, communication protocols, and response strategies. This collaborative approach allowed teams to identify and address gaps in physical security, operational continuity, communications, and voter safety before Election Day. By integrating multiple offices into a unified plan and conducting coordinated exercises, the program strengthens preparedness and ensures all partners can respond effectively. The result is a more secure and resilient voting environment, with improved confidence and reduced operational risk.

Palm Beach County Supervisor of Elections, Florida

[Real-Time Transmission Oversight for the Modern Election Administration](#)

The Election Night Transmission Monitoring Dashboard is an in-house tool that simplifies how the county tracks results from up to 377 voting locations. Instead of relying on phone calls and spreadsheets, the system automatically processes transmission data and updates a live map. Staff can quickly see which locations have sent results, which are incomplete, and which need help. This gives everyone a clear, real-time view of election night activity. The dashboard reduces manual work, improves communication, and allows staff to focus on solving issues. In addition, the system was built entirely with existing tools and staff expertise, making it a cost-effective and scalable solution that many jurisdictions could adopt. The dashboard improves overall election processes, provides more accurate reporting, and offers a smoother, less stressful experience for both staff and voters.

Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, Ohio

[Election Integrity Series](#)

The Election Integrity Series is a nine-week educational initiative designed to build transparency, trust, and understanding around how elections are conducted and safeguarded. Created for voters, community groups, and the general public, the series explains the security measures in place at each stage of the election process. Topics include voter registration security and eligibility verification; vote-by-mail tracking, signature verification, and ballot protection; and 24/7 monitoring of the official ballot drop box. The series also covers voting equipment testing and logic and accuracy checks; secure ballot printing, storage, counting, and post-election audits;

and physical and IT security measures used to protect election facilities and systems. Through clear explanations and educational resources, the series helps voters better understand how election integrity is maintained from start to finish.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Utah

[12 Days of Election Improvements “Votemas” Social Media Campaign](#)

Welcome to the 12 Days of Election Improvements, also known as Votemas—a fun and engaging way to educate voters about the positive changes election workers have made in Utah. This initiative, inspired by the state’s Elections Director, highlights the new technologies, procedures, and laws that have strengthened the integrity, security, and efficiency of Utah’s elections. Throughout the 12-day social media campaign, staff shared daily posts on Facebook, Instagram, and X that featured fun graphics paired with short, engaging captions. To offer more context and in-depth explanations, the office also posted the graphics on their website, providing richer content where character limits on social media can sometimes fall short. This approach not only made the campaign more informative but also created an interactive opportunity for voters to learn more and become better connected to the election process.

Vermont Secretary of State’s Office

[Election Security in Vermont - Video PSA](#)

In the run-up to the 2024 November General Election, the Secretary of State’s Office sought to proactively promote trustworthy information about election security in Vermont through a coordinated public service announcement effort. The initiative involved clerks making a video PSA detailing how voters can trust that Vermont’s elections are secure. The video takes viewers through the entire election process, from voter checklist maintenance to vote counting procedures. Staff visited clerks at their offices across the state to create a unified message that featured recognizable people and places, rather than simply focusing on Secretary Copeland Hanzas and the Capitol in Montpelier. The video was promoted through social media as well as Front Porch Forum, a community-based email listserv with coverage throughout the state.

Washington Office of the Secretary of State

[“Mark the Ballot” Public Education Campaign](#)

Ahead of the 2024 elections, the Washington Secretary of State’s Office launched Mark the Ballot to build trust in the state’s electoral process. The campaign highlighted the security of Washington’s vote-by-mail system, addressed common concerns, and emphasized integrity through clear, audience-focused messaging. Localized media and culturally relevant visuals helped reinforce trust at the community level. A popular feature was Mark the Ballot, an animated character who made complex election topics engaging and entertaining. Content covered voter roll accuracy, ballot security, voting system certification, and more. Results included a 15% boost in security awareness, a 36% increase in trust in state government fairness, and a 12% rise in confidence in election officials.

California Secretary of State

[De-escalation Training Program for Election Staff](#)

The California Secretary of State’s Office, in partnership with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), developed a De-escalation Training Program to enable local election offices to provide high-quality, low-cost de-escalation training to all staff. The

program focuses on teaching election workers how to resolve tense situations, both in person and over the phone. Materials for in-person staff consisted of a training video and focused on providing instructions and demonstrations to poll workers. The video is easy to include in standard poll worker training. The training for phone operators is a scenario-based roleplay training that allows them to practice specific scenarios. Staff from the Secretary's office filmed and distributed the training video across the state.

Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk, California

[Electronic Chain of Custody Solution for Elections](#)

The Electronic Chain of Custody (CoC) Solution was developed to address security risks and inefficiencies in the paper-based custody process for voting equipment and materials. The traditional manual process resulted in extensive paper waste, time delays, illegible entries, missing documentation, and the risk of lost custody records during transport and multiple handoffs. Under the Voting Solutions for All People Program, the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk recognized the need for a reliable tracking system to safeguard election equipment from potential tampering or theft. Implemented in 2020, the CoC solution digitized custody tracking, enabling real-time monitoring and automated recordkeeping. This reduced manual tasks and improved efficiency, security, and compliance. By enhancing transparency and safeguarding election materials, the program has become a cornerstone of election integrity in Los Angeles County.

Pierce County Elections, Washington

[Securing Democracy's Inbox: An Air-Gapped Protocol for Processing Voter Email Attachments](#)

In 2023, Pierce County Elections developed a secure, air-gapped protocol for processing voter email attachments. This solution addresses the critical cybersecurity risks posed by handling unknown attachments while ensuring compliance with legal requirements. By implementing a dedicated workstation, network isolation, system protection software, and a direct-to-printer workflow, the program prioritizes security and safeguards election infrastructure from digital threats.

Tazewell County Clerk & Recorder of Deeds, Illinois

[Election Judge Badge](#)

Implemented for the 2024 presidential election, all Tazewell County Election Judges received and used an election judge badge. The new badge reflected changes the office requested to Illinois state statutes removing the requirement for the election judge's name to be printed on the badge. This was replaced with an individualized identification number, safeguarding the personal identity of the election judges. The county also included a listing of emergency contact phone numbers on the back of the badge for easy accessibility to election workers. Support for this new election judge badge came in the form of a joint press conference with the Tazewell County presiding judge of the 10th Judicial Circuit, where the judge spoke about the important role of election workers.

Ann Arbor City Clerk's Office, Michigan

["More Days, More Ways" – Planning for a Safe and Secure Election in Ann Arbor, Michigan](#)

Recently, Ann Arbor officials planned for a new tabletop exercise (TTX) that revolved around an election day event. The TTX anticipated a weather event causing widespread power outages. A

major takeaway from this exercise was the need for election officials, safety officers, and public works teams to all be invested in the security of the election process. Following the success of the tabletop, a written Emergency Election Operations handbook was created, and a second exercise was planned for August focusing on assisting the campus of the University of Michigan. The second TTX included a broader group of election partners from the University. After the first exercise, staff reached out to U-M officials to form a specific safety team in preparation for the opening of the satellite clerk offices on U-M's campus in the Fall. Additionally, the plan placed a focus on voters' rights and access to the ballot box.

Coconino County Elections Department, Arizona

[Empowering Poll Workers Through Situational Awareness Training: A Model for Collaboration Between Elections and Law Enforcement](#)

The Coconino County election training program emphasizes robust contingency planning through a two-phase approach. Phase 1, centered around the CLARA Model (Calm, Listen, Affirm, Respond), trains poll workers to respond effectively to voter concerns. Workers are equipped with tools, including providing legal handouts and escalating issues to polling location inspectors when needed. This proactive communication framework enhances voter experience and promotes calm under pressure. Phase 2 focuses on advanced situational awareness and emergency preparedness, especially for lead poll workers. Developed in collaboration with local law enforcement, this phase trains workers in threat recognition and emergency response protocols. The partnership ensures law enforcement expertise is integrated into election planning, addressing security concerns and enabling swift, informed responses to potential disruptions. Together, these phases represent a forward-thinking contingency strategy. The training ensures that poll workers are not only operationally prepared but equipped to handle any emergencies or irregularities.

Lexington County Voter Registration and Elections, South Carolina

[Election Training](#)

Lexington County Voter Registration and Elections developed two innovative training programs focused on improving communication with voters and enhancing the election experience in challenging situations. The first initiative was an Emergency Flip Book designed as a quick-reference guide for poll workers to use during emergency situations. This tool ensured that clerks and poll workers could respond swiftly and appropriately, reducing confusion and helping maintain voter safety and confidence. The second program consisted of situational training aimed at equipping clerks with the skills to manage public interactions calmly and professionally. This training empowered election staff to handle tense situations, prevent misunderstandings, and resolve conflicts. Both programs emphasized respect and professionalism, reinforcing the principle that voters are valued customers in the democratic process. By implementing these efforts, Lexington County ensured that all voters felt safe and welcomed at the polls.

Buncombe County Election Services, North Carolina

[Buncombe County, NC, Helene Disaster Response](#)

On September 27, 2024, Tropical Storm Helene struck Western North Carolina, causing widespread devastation. In Buncombe County, the hardest hit area in the state, floodwaters destroyed roads, homes, and businesses, and caused over 106 fatalities. Utilities were disrupted, and communication was limited to radio and word of mouth. With just three weeks until early

voting, polling sites were lost, and poll workers were unable to serve — uncertainty was everywhere. Thankfully, many were prepared to take action. Election Services and Emergency Services staff began working together in 2022 on an Incident Action Plan for implementation in the event of an emergency during an election. Relationship-building and psychological resiliency was a focus of this planning and proved critical in compassionately overcoming unforeseen problems. The result was that the community was reassured that voting would go on, and voters could take pride in casting their ballots.

North Carolina State Board of Elections

[Voting Through Helene and High Water](#)

Hurricane Helene struck Western North Carolina in late September 2024, six weeks before the election. Absentee voting had already begun, and in-person early voting was scheduled to start in three weeks. Flooding washed away homes, businesses, and communities. Sadly, many lives were lost. Power, water, sewer, and internet services were out for days — months in some areas. The State Board of Elections immediately started working to ensure voters could cast ballots despite the devastation. The state’s mantra: “We don’t stop an election. We figure out how to proceed.” State Board staff worked with Board members, county election boards, local, state and federal emergency and law enforcement partners, the N.C. National Guard, the U.S. Postal Service, FEMA, state and local IT professionals, and others to ensure voting in the 25-county disaster area. Voter turnout in those 25 counties was 74.88%, higher than the statewide turnout of 72.64%. In addition, state funding for an advertising campaign, existing relationships across the state, and the hard work and resilience of election officials helped make this effort possible.

Office of the Idaho Secretary of State

[A Proactive and Collaborative Approach to Election Security & Threat Response](#)

The 2024 Idaho Election Security Group (ESG) was established by the Idaho Secretary of State’s Office in 2023 to provide “whole-of-state” election security management, monitoring, tracking, advice, and response throughout the 2024 election cycle. Serving as the statewide nerve center, the ESG coordinated response, assistance, and messaging for large-scale cybersecurity, physical security, and natural disaster events before, during, and after the 2024 general election. This collaborative effort, involving federal, state, and local agencies, and private sector partners, ensured a secure and successful election in Idaho. The ESG was led by the Idaho Secretary of State’s CIO and supported by the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, the Idaho Office of Technology Services, the Idaho Military Division, the Idaho National Guard, and Idaho State Police’s Criminal Intelligence (Fusion) Center.

Wake County Board of Elections, North Carolina

[Wake County Election Day Emergency Action Plan](#)

The Wake County Board of Elections developed an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Ballot Style Comparison Tool to ensure seamless voting during disruptions. Using Excel, the EAP identifies alternative polling sites based on proximity, size, parking, and voter population, allowing quick rerouting if a polling place becomes unusable. The Ballot Style Comparison Tool streamlines ballot verification by enabling officials to compare precinct ballots and direct out-of-precinct voters appropriately. These cost-effective, scalable solutions enhance election resiliency, requiring only staff time for setup and maintenance. Using tabletop exercises, team training, and

structured contingency planning, Wake County ensures uninterrupted voter access, improved election official response, and a replicable model for other jurisdictions.