

## IT Expansion Request Form - State Board of Elections 2023

1. *Who will directly and indirectly benefit from this request? Please designate the direct or indirect beneficiaries (e.g., general public, local government, state agency, etc.) of the project and how they will benefit.*

**Directly:** The primary users of the 12 modules that make up the State Election Information Management System (SEIMS) are the staff of the county boards of elections, county poll workers, and staff of the State Board of Elections—all of whom, combined, number in the thousands. The primary users of the Campaign Finance software are approximately 2,000 campaign committee treasurers throughout the state and the staff at the county boards of elections and State Board of Elections. The State Board staff provides technical support to tall users. All these applications and software were developed at the State Board of Elections beginning in 1998. The user interface is antiquated and cannot be updated to modern computer programming and security practices. For comparison, Microsoft has released 11 Windows operating systems for personal computers in this time period. Smart phones and tablets did not exist when SEIMS was first developed. Users will benefit from better user interfaces, multi-factor authentication, additional security measures that are not compatible with old programming, and the ability to modify the system quickly when changes in the law require enhancements. Also of note, neither county boards of elections/county government nor campaign committees have ever contributed financially to SEIMS or Campaign Finance software – since 1998, this system has been fully State supported and funded.

**Indirectly:** The general public, legislature, candidates, and media all indirectly benefit from SEIMS and Campaign Finance applications and software as this system provides the mechanism for processing voter registration, checking in voters during in-person voting, processing mail-in ballots, filing candidates, generating data for a wide range of requests including election results, reporting committee contributions, identifying precinct boundaries, and providing sample ballots. A modern system of applications and software would be more user friendly for these indirectly affected groups, improve efficiencies in responding to requests, and provide better overall data.

2. *Which government services, functions, or processes are impacted by this request? Please provide a list with some detail of how these elements will be impacted.*

This effort is a complete overhaul of the system that was first developed in 1998. Moving to a secure, modern web-based platform with current software development coding and standards will affect the entire statewide administration of elections to support 7.4+ million registered voters, 2,000+ campaign committees, 2,600+ Election Day polling places, approximately 500 one-stop early voting sites, and 25,000 poll workers.

The administration of elections and voting across the entire state require a functioning and secure SEIMS system and Campaign Finance software. Through multiple software applications, the 100 county boards of elections and the State Board of Elections administer:

- Voter registration, lookup, assignment, and records
- Voter registration list maintenance
- Creation of ballot styles
- Data reports

- Election results reporting
- One-stop Early Voting voter check-in/poll book
- Election Day voter check-in/poll book
- Absentee-by-mail ballot processing
- Assignment of county geography to voting districts (Geocoding)
- Petition processing
- Provisional ballot logging and review
- Training
- User access and security protocols
- Disclosure reporting for all political committees
- Searchable data for political committee contributions and expenditures.

3. *Explain the impact to impacted agencies. (We identified SBE and NCDIT as impacted agencies)*

Aside from the impacts detailed above that impact the State Board of Elections and the 100 county boards of elections, NC DIT could experience minor network changes and minor billing changes.

4. *Please provide the quantitative benefits (dollar savings or cost avoidance) of this request. Will this request save money by increasing efficiency in some way? Will it increase revenue? Please provide a dollar figure.*

Moving to a centrally managed web application will have both a tangible cost savings of roughly \$75,000 per year (possibly more based on usage) due to the elimination of the Azure Virtual Desktops. There will also be an increase to staff efficiency due to the usability and programmability advantages realized after migrating from desktop applications to a web application environment.

5. *Please provide the qualitative benefits of this request. Please describe the non-monetary benefits you expect to gain from this request.*

Qualitative benefits for modernizing SEIMS and Campaign Finance software include:

- Improved system security (Note: elections have been designated as critical infrastructure)
- Increased productivity and efficiency by reducing labor required to perform tasks
- Reduced data-entry errors or delays from better user-experience design
- Increased system stability
- Increased scalability
- Improved adaptability
- More dynamic report and document management
- Integration of GIS-based addressing, mapping, and election district assignment (currently based upon manual entry of street ranges)
- Integration of voter data and campaign finance applications (currently unable to share information between the two systems)
- Expansion of imaging, scanning, and import of more documents and document formats
- Guided entry for campaign finance treasurers to increase compliance, reduce reporting errors, and increase accuracy
- Increase efficiency and timeliness of campaign finance audits

- Increase functionality of the public website to provide more information and data to the public
- Greater uniformity in election administration across the 100 county boards of elections

6. *What are the risks to NOT receiving this funding? Please provide all risks for NOT funding this project. This response may include, but is not limited to, risks such as legacy application no longer being supported, the inability to meet a federal requirement, or the identification of a data security vulnerability.*

If the project is not funded, then the State risks the potential failure of the systems due to an unsupported platform using antiquated development coding and standards. A potential failure during a statewide election could result in having to conduct a new election, the costs for which exceed \$17 million .

Also, many stakeholders are demanding easier, quicker access to publicly-available data from the system and relying on the old system means they will continue to be frustrated by the lack of speed and reporting capabilities of the old system.

A failure of the current system could potentially lead to a data breach of confidential voter registration information for over 7 million registered voters (and millions of additional records of removed registrants).

A failure of the current system would also put the State in violation of state and federal requirements for a statewide, computerized voter registration list that securely protects confidential personally identifiable information. Below are some of the laws that our SEIMS system is implementing and must include functionality to comply with:

- G.S. 163-82.10, -82.10B - ensuring confidentiality of certain voter records
  - G.S. 163-82.11, -82.12 - requirements for computerized statewide system to maintain the voter list
  - G.S. 163-82.14 -- requirements for uniform statewide processes for maintaining accurate voter rolls
  - G.S. 163-82.19 - requirement for data interface with DMV for receiving registration applications through DMV and for checking all new registrants' identities
  - The above are state laws that implement federal laws imposing requirements on our voter registration system, including the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), particularly 52 USC ch. 205 and 52 USC 21083.
  - G.S. 163-278.9 - requirement for the State Board to provide software for regulated political committees to file campaign finance reports required by the law.
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