STATE OF MAINE

STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

Secretary of State
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and

New England Interactive NEI

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Maine stands ready to take an important step forward for democracy by building and implementing a centralized statewide voter registration system that will improve the accuracy and integrity of our voter lists, enhance services to voters and provide new efficiencies for election administrators.

This project was first conceived more than a decade ago and has been seriously considered in Maine since 2001. The Legislature directed a study to be undertaken at that time and, in 2002, established a standing advisory committee in law to help make a statewide voter registration system a reality in Maine. The United States Congress subsequently passed the Help America Vote Act, which requires all states to adopt such statewide voter registration systems.

This report, then, builds on all that has come before and adds its own new research, data and insights. Based on this document, Maine expects to release a request for proposals in 2004 to solicit competitive bids for the design and construction of this new system, which is to be in place by January 1, 2006.

Much appreciation is due to all who have contributed to this project to date and whose continued participation will be crucial to its success: the members of the Maine State Legislature, various offices, bureaus and individuals in the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, the Task Force to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration List, the Central Voter Registration Advisory Committee, the Help America Vote Act State Planning Committee, the staff of the Department of the Secretary of State, the private-sector partners in this project, and, of course, the dedicated local election officials in Maine's more than 500 municipal jurisdictions who are the bedrock upon which our election system depends.

Maine can imagine a time when voters will have greater electronic access to their democracy and voting information; when local administrative tasks that now consume hours or days will occur with the touch of a button; when paper-based postal communication between communities will occur electronically and instantly; when we will take for granted that all eligible individuals are registered to vote; and, when every individual will choose to exercise the right to vote.

This project is an important step toward that day.

Sincerely,

Dan A. Gwadosky
Secretary of State

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Statewide Voter Registration System Needs Assessment was conducted as part of Maine's effort to comply with the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). This document is the culmination of data gathered from site visits to 31 Maine municipalities, questionnaire results obtained from more than 455 local electoral jurisdictions, extensive interviews and survey results from 11 private-sector vendors, discussions with impacted Maine state agencies and other stakeholders, and interviews with five other states. The findings from these efforts are included in this document and are extensive. Core findings include:

- After careful, deliberate and detailed review, the Department of the Secretary of State (SOS) has determined that a centralized, real-time voter registration system (CVR) would enable Maine to comply with new state and federal laws and would maximize the efficiencies and improvements the new system is intended to provide to municipalities, voters and state election administrators.

- This assessment, which builds on the knowledge created and documented by previous studies and Task Force efforts authorized by the Maine Legislature, affirms the requirement for a CVR system to be implemented in the State of Maine, according to law and as defined by HAVA.

- A CVR system will help ensure that voters' rights are equally protected and their access to the democratic process is equally available across the state in the voter registration process. For the first time, all communities will conduct voter registration in the same way using the same system. It will help ensure that all eligible individuals can vote, and that ineligible individuals do not.

- Municipal election officials are the local administrators of voter registration in Maine and they overwhelmingly report that they support a CVR system, provided that local authority for voter registration decisions is preserved, that sufficient training is provided with the new system, and that the new system provides the functionality needed by municipal officials.

- The vast majority, or approximately 86%, of Maine's municipal offices already are connected to the Internet, which provides a solid foundation for a centralized, real-time voter registration system.

- The involvement and support of municipalities in the implementation of a CVR system is important to its success. As a measure of their interest in this project and the strength of their partnership with the Secretary of State, 88% of Maine municipalities voluntarily participated in this voter registration study.

- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (a Bureau of the Department of the Secretary of State), the Office of Vital Statistics, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Division of Purchases and the Bureau of Information Services, have all indicated their willingness to participate in this project to help it succeed by contributing their respective expertise, knowledge and other resources.

- The Needs Assessment confirmed that a mature vendor community population exists and is experienced with CVR systems, has the depth to allow for competition in the bidding process, and has delivered such systems to other states.

- The surveyed vendor group has extensive expertise and includes vendors which have provided central voter registration systems or consulted in the design of central voter registration systems in two countries, 18 states, and thousands of counties and municipalities.

- The existing packaged products produced by the surveyed vendor group may meet the CVR needs of the state as required by HAVA. These products are built with the requisite core functionality to conform to Federal and State law. These vendors also have extensive experience in other areas of the voter registration process and have added enhanced features to their products that could benefit Maine's municipalities. These features include, but are not limited to:
    - Signature scanning and imaging for the validation of signatures
    - Petition management functionality for the verification of petitions
    - Bar coding functionality for the rapid and accurate identification of voters' records
    - Absentee ballot modules for the tracking and printing lists of absentee voters
    - Report writing functionality for the analysis of voter lists
    - Street address and redistricting functionality for the accurate deployment of a redistricting process

- Maine is not alone. Some states currently are in the process of selecting a CVR vendor, some are implementing systems, and others have successfully installed a system. The experiences of other states have provided an important framework and insights for the procurement of a CVR vendor.

- Maine is unique. The electoral process in the State of Maine is administered centrally by the Secretary of State and locally by the state's 503 municipalities, approximately half of which have fewer than 1,000 voters. Also, Maine affords voters the right to register on Election Day and has a citizen initiative petition process. It is a challenging environment for implementing a statewide voter registration system.

- Data migration, or moving and standardizing the existing voting records from their current electronic or paper format to the new CVR format will be a complicated component of the implementation of any statewide system. The challenge is neither insurmountable nor unique, as other states have dealt with the issue successfully, but Maine should not underestimate the difficulty it presents.

- Voter registration lists are public records. A statewide system will bring significant new access to data that will be useful for a wide range of public purposes. It also may raise privacy concerns that will need to be carefully balanced against the public interest in access of information.

- Maine's development and statewide deployment of a voter registration system will benefit significantly from federal funding, a portion of which requires no matching funds and a portion of which requires only a 5% match by the state. At the municipal level, some cost savings will be realized, efficiencies will be gained, and some investments will be needed.

- Training will be crucial to the success of a new CVR system. Municipal officials must have the necessary training to be comfortable with any new system. From the start and increasingly in the out years of implementation, a statewide system will help strengthen the training available to local officials and increase the knowledge base among local officials because they for the first time will be sharing the experience of administering voter registration on a system common to all.

A comprehensive, real-time, statewide voter registration system with fully trained users and in compliance with the law will bring improvements in the quality of Maine's voter registration list, the integrity of the electoral process, the ability to safeguard voters' rights, and the practical ease and uniformity of administering the process.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Maine law requires individual residents who want to vote in the various elections within the State to register with their local municipality in order to establish a bona fide list of individuals who are eligible to cast a ballot. The cumulative effect of these individual actions is the creation of isolated voter registration lists in each municipality in the state. Those lists in turn are used to conduct local, State, county and federal elections in each municipality. Voter registration is fundamental to Maine's democratic system.

In its 1997 Report to Congress, the Federal Election Commission recommended that states that have not yet done so voluntarily: (1) develop and implement a statewide computerized voter registration database; (2) ensure that all local registration offices are computerized; and (3) link their statewide computerized systems, where feasible, with the computerized systems of the collateral public agencies relevant to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. At the time, Maine was one of only 11 states that reported not having some form of a centralized voter registration list.

In September of 2001, Maine first convened the Task Force to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration List. This task force was established in the First Regular Session of the 120th Maine Legislature and charged with reviewing the process for registering Maine citizens of voting age. The thirteen-member task force set out to study the requirements necessary to develop and implement a centralized voter registration system in order to: Eliminate duplicate registrations on a statewide basis; administer automatic changes of address within the state; provide for systematic list maintenance activities; and, produce current voter registration statistics and lists on a statewide basis, as well as by municipality, county and electoral district.

The findings of the Task Force in 2001 were threefold:

- the development of a centralized voter registration system will enhance the integrity of elections in the state,
- there are no insurmountable challenges to overcome in the creation of a centralized system, and
- the benefits of such a system outweigh the anticipated costs.

As a result of the findings of the Task Force and anticipating the passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Maine Legislature directed the Secretary of State in law in 2002 to begin planning for such a system and established the Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee (Public Laws of 2001, Chapter 637- An Act to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration System for the State). The Help America Vote Act of 2002, or HAVA, was in fact subsequently established in October of 2002 (Public Law 107 – 252, October 29, 2002). In addition to the statewide voter registration list requirements, there are a variety of significant aspects of the federal law, including voter education, auditing abilities for elections systems and accessibility requirements for voters with disabilities and voters who do not use English.

Title 21-A of the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated in part requires Maine fully to implement an information system and database for voter registration no later than December 31, 2007. The HAVA law sets a faster implementation timetable, requiring a statewide, centralized, computerized voter registration system by January 1, 2004. Maine has applied for a waiver, as provided for in the law, to extend this date to January 1, 2006, still two years earlier than stipulated by Maine law.

One of the main recommendations of the Task Force to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration List was that the Secretary of State oversee the creation of a formal Needs Assessment. This document is that needs assessment and represents the foundation on which Maine can proceed to build a formal request for proposals to implement a statewide, computerized, centralized voter registration system in compliance with state and federal law.

This report is organized into four major segments:

1. A detailed assessment of the voter registration procedures and processes of Maine's municipal election jurisdictions;
2. A detailed assessment of three Maine state agencies identified as critical to the establishment of a centralized voter registration list: The Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Office of Vital Statistics and the Office of the Chief Information Officer;
3. A detailed assessment of the processes and procedures of voter registration in five other states; and
4. A detailed assessment of vendors familiar with voter registration systems.

Maine's democracy is remarkably strong, and attains levels of participation unmatched by other states. Maine has been the top state in the nation for voter turnout in two of the last three presidential elections. The administration of elections and voter registration at the municipal level is an integral component of the strength of Maine's democracy.

The implementation of a statewide, computerized, centralized voter registration system seeks to build on that strength by providing a new tool for municipal and state election officials to use to the benefit of the voters of the state. Municipal officials will continue to be the front-line administrators of this system. The well-established and strong partnership between the Secretary of State and local election officials across the State will continue to be the basis for conducting voter registration and election activities in the State of Maine.

CURRENT PROJECT OVERVIEW

"The single biggest challenge Maine faces in complying with HAVA is the development and implementation of a statewide computerized central voter registration list."
- State of Maine Preliminary State Plan for the Implementation of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (Public Law 107 – 252)

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) is intended to update and standardize the management of election processes within each state, as well as across the country. Continuing its tradition of pursuing a strong statewide democracy while maintaining the "town hall" nature of its electoral processes, the State of Maine is working through a committee of stakeholders to ensure that HAVA's legal requirements are implemented in a timely, coordinated fashion while balancing the various interests of local election officials, individual voters, the general public, advocacy and political organizations, the State's overall democracy and other factors.

In addition to requiring states to undertake certain steps in election administration, HAVA also represents the federal government's first real investment of funding for the nation's electoral system. Maine stands to receive up to approximately $20 million from the federal act, provided that Maine supplies a 5% state match for a portion of the total funds. It is expected that this funding, if fully allocated by Congress, should be enough to allow Maine to meet the legal requirements of HAVA through 2006.

Different states face different challenges under HAVA. Some states, for example, are replacing all punch-card voting machines. Maine has no such machines to replace. Rather, the greatest challenge facing the State of Maine under HAVA is the implementation of a statewide, computerized voter registration list. Today, Maine employs a somewhat uncommon municipality-based system whereby each municipality in the State is responsible for maintaining its own individual list of residents who are eligible and registered to vote in elections. Anticipating the need for and the benefits of a computerized, statewide system and the possibility of the passage of HAVA, the Maine Legislature directed the Secretary of State beginning in 2001 and in law in 2002 to begin studying and planning for such a system. The Legislature established the Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee (Public Laws of 2001, Chapter 637- *An Act to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration System for the State*) to assist the Secretary of State.

Building on the Final Report of the Task Force to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration List of 2002, the Department of the Secretary of State, working with the HAVA State Planning Committee and the Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee, has conducted the analysis summarized in this document to better understand the environment in which the new voter registration system will be built and to help document the requirements, benefits, and challenges that it may involve.

Maine's local election officials will continue to be fundamental to the success of Maine's already remarkable democracy, and extensive feedback was solicited from local officials for this needs analysis. Additionally, other core stakeholders were surveyed as part of the needs assessment with the overall goal of gathering the knowledge and analyzing the information that will form a solid foundation on which Maine can (1) develop a detailed, results-oriented Request for Proposal (RFP) for a computerized, statewide voter registration list and (2) build the new statewide system by January 1, 2006, the deadline required by HAVA.

This report consists of findings and conclusions drawn from the following research:

- All 520 municipalities or electoral jurisdictions in Maine received a written survey and were invited to offer suggestions, concerns or other input. Approximately 88% provided written responses.
- 31 municipalities were physically visited for on-site interviews to collect more in-depth information.
- Several state agencies or departments were interviewed extensively, including the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Office of Vital Statistics and the Office of the Chief Information Officer in association with the Bureau of Information Systems.
- 5 other states, from Massachusetts to Oregon, with various electoral similarities to Maine were surveyed.
- 16 leading private-sector voter registration systems vendors and consultants were solicited for input; 12 vendors responded.

All of this research was conducted in 2003-2004, with the core of the research effort occurring in the period from October, 2003, through January, 2004. The knowledge and information gathered from this Needs Assessment and contained in this report will be used in the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to be delivered to qualified vendors in 2004 for a statewide, computerized voter registration system.

STATE OF MAINE

STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENTS

MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENTS

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Maine's voter registration system today relies on the efforts of the clerks and registrars of each of the 503 municipalities in the state. Each of these 503 municipalities is responsible for maintaining its own list of residents who are eligible and registered to vote. The systems used to manage voter registration in these municipalities vary greatly, from technologically advanced, commercial systems in some of the larger municipalities to simple typed or handwritten lists in some of the smaller municipalities. So, while the local administration of voter registration brings certain strengths, it also brings certain technical complexities. Perhaps most notably, Maine confronts a serious challenge in merging these hundreds of municipal voter registration lists with all of their variety and differences into a single, uniform, statewide list. Additionally, Maine is one of only eight states to offer election-day voter registration, which is both a great strength and safeguard of the state's democracy as well as an added system consideration for any voter registration system and the election officials who administer it.

A Centralized Voter Registration System will have a tremendous impact on the way municipalities operate their voter registration process. Consequently, this needs assessment would not be complete if the municipalities of the state were not deeply involved. In order to solicit as much feedback as possible from each of the 503 municipalities, the Department of the Secretary of State undertook two initiatives aimed at generating as much municipal data as possible:

- 31 site visits were conducted across the state. The results of the visits are organized in the **Municipal Site Visits** section. This section includes:
    - An introduction to the municipal site visit section
    - A wish-list of functional features mentioned as desirable by municipal officials
    - A list of common concerns expressed by municipal officials about moving to a new centralized voter registration system
- 520 questionnaires were mailed to each municipality and electoral jurisdiction in the state. The questionnaire was available for completion in both a paper format and on-line. The results of the questionnaires are presented in the **Municipal Questionnaire** section. This section includes:
    - An overview of the questionnaire
    - A quantitative analysis of the data gathered from the returned municipal surveys

OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS AND COMMONALITIES OF MAINE'S MUNICIPALITIES

Several common themes became evident through the site visits and the survey responses.

- Municipalities overwhelmingly support the implementation of a statewide system that preserves municipal authority for local voter registration decisions. Municipal officials said they look forward to the benefits of a new system and do not oppose the assistance of the Secretary of State in administering the system and the voter registration list as long as municipal officials also continue to have jurisdiction over the list for their own community.
- Increased communication between municipalities and with other state agencies (for example, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles) is crucial and welcomed. Municipal officials believe increased communication will reduce their workload by, for example, allowing for a better exchange of voter record information regarding when a voter moves, and will increase overall accuracy in municipal voter records.
- Most of the municipal officials in Maine are computer users and have a general familiarity with navigating the Internet. As the data in this section indicates, approximately 74% of the municipal offices in Maine use a computer on a daily basis (see Figure 4), while a minority of the municipal offices do not have a computer currently installed in the office of the registrar or clerk.
- Any new system must be accompanied by sufficient training for the users and must possess functionality that meets the needs of the local municipalities. As with any tool, even the best system will not have the maximum benefit unless the user is properly trained. Software systems are no different. Overall, municipal staffs possess considerable computer experience, using various computer systems and software applications on a daily basis. A majority also has experience using Internet-based services, such as email and the World Wide Web. However, a significant minority reported little or no computer or Internet experience. Throughout the course of the site surveys, even experienced computer users commented that they would require training to utilize a new system; less experienced users will certainly require additional training.
- Municipalities offered several suggestions and requests for a new, user-friendly system, including ideas and recommendations involving the handling of:
    - Voter history – for example, changes in voter party affiliation or municipality changes
    - Voter status – for example, "pending" for voters under 18 years of age and "active" for current voters
    - Voter searches
    - Printing capabilities – for example, Address Verification Notices or envelope printing for absentee ballots
    - Reporting and querying capabilities
- Internet connectivity of some sort is available throughout Maine; in order to minimize connectivity costs and maximize flexibility, the new system should use the public Internet as its communications medium, using encryption technologies such as VPN or SSL where necessary to protect data privacy and integrity.
- Many areas of Maine do not have access to high-speed Internet connections; the system should therefore offer acceptable performance when accessed over a typical dial-up modem connection.

- The system performs a mission-critical function; a failure close to an election could be disastrous. Therefore, the system should include fail-safe redundancy.
- Adequate attention should be paid to user-interface accessibility issues, to ensure the system may be used effectively by those with visual or other disabilities.

The migration of existing data into one consolidated and centralized database is expected to be the most significant technical challenge in the implementation of a statewide voter registration list. As with any such software implementation, this is a challenge to be expected and one that will need to be addressed fully in the Request for Proposal sent to qualified vendors.

Electronic voter registration list maintenance is quite widespread in Maine, even in the smallest municipalities. Some form of electronic voter list maintenance is used in 328 of 457 (72%) of the communities responding to the municipal survey.

- Since such a large proportion of municipalities already maintain electronic voter registration records, it is recommended that many of these records be migrated into the Statewide Voter Registration System.
- Some municipal populations may be small enough that data entry efforts will be more cost-effective than data migration. It is recommended that this population level or analogous threshold be determined prior to the formulation of the RFP.
- The state should have the vendors propose their most cost effective method for importing records based on the demographics provided from the municipal survey results.
- Data migration is complicated by the wide variety of computer-based voter registration systems in use, ranging from commercial systems to desktop database or spreadsheet systems developed by municipal users themselves. Given the diversity of these systems and the large number of data sources, both data migration and data entry likely will be used as tools for creating the initial statewide database. Careful consideration should be given to determining when it will be most efficient to use each tool. Several municipalities, particularly those with smaller populations, expressed concern about the cost of participating in a Statewide Voter Registration System. The municipal survey shows that 79 towns (17%) report they have no computer available for voter registration purposes, and 54 (12%) report no Internet connectivity in the facility which houses the Registrar's office, which is a potential issue since many available voter registration solutions require such a connection.
- While voter registration is a municipal responsibility, some financial assistance may be desirable to ensure that all municipalities have access to the necessary computer equipment to administer the Statewide Voter Registration System.
- The State may wish to investigate alternative Internet arrangements in towns where $200 to $300 in annual connection fees could constitute a significant budget impact. For example, the State may wish to become its own ISP for the municipalities by purchasing equipment allowing for municipalities to gain Internet access, also called dial-up pools, or by purchasing dial-up access in bulk at a discount from commercial ISPs.

OVERALL RESULTS OF MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT

- **Most municipalities express support for the goals of a new statewide system.** Overwhelmingly, the clerks and registrars are excited about the benefits of accessing statewide voter records and are looking forward to enhancing communication with other municipalities to improve the accuracy of their lists and reduce the amount of time needed for administrative tasks such as address changes. Current lines of communication are primarily manual in nature, requiring one municipality to initiate notification of an address change to another municipality, which then prompts that recipient municipality to manually deactivate a voter from its registration list. Complications in list maintenance can be created if municipalities are not properly notified of voter registration address changes. The hope of municipal election officials is that the new system will facilitate this exchange of voter record information, reducing work for all and improving the quality of each municipality's voter registration list.

- **Communities with sophisticated existing municipal systems express a strong desire to see any new statewide system match or improve on the functionality of their existing local systems.** The communities are concerned that a new system might offer less functionality than currently exists in their own system.

- **Report generation capabilities vary greatly from municipality to municipality.** Some voter registration systems, such as commercial vendor systems or the homegrown databases (often developed using Access software), offer report generation capabilities. Most systems allow for data queries, but many of those queries must be run by the municipality's information technology departments rather than by the clerk or registrar. Only a few systems generate the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) report needed by the Secretary of State's office and required by the federal government. Many municipalities, regardless of whether they utilize an electronic voter registration system or not, keep separate lists or files outside of that system to compile the information needed for the NVRA report.

- **A few municipalities already utilize scanned signature images in their voter registration systems.** Communities such as South Portland are using scanning technology and have found it extremely helpful in validating the signatures that must be collected by candidates, citizen initiative groups and others in the democratic process. Petition management and validation is a major effort for many municipalities. Municipalities without scanned signature functionality typically do not validate each signature; rather, they only validate signatures that appear suspicious. Election officials are prudent about spot-checking lists for potential duplicates or false signatures. Many without scanned signature image technology expressed an interest in using it.

- **While most systems have some facility for exporting voter registration data, not all are capable of exporting complete voter information.** For example, some systems capture information such as name or address in a single field rather than tracking "last" and "first" names with "middle initials" in separate fields. Many municipalities are using vendor software or homegrown solutions that utilize Informix or Access databases. Many municipalities also maintain lists such as absentee ballots or petition records in Excel or Quattro Pro spreadsheets. The relatively large number of distinct software systems in use means that data migration will be a significant undertaking.

- **No municipal system electronically interfaces with other local or state agency databases.** While communication among local agencies exists in some cases (e.g., obtaining street changes from the assessor's office or updating E-911 addresses), any change resulting from this communication requires manual data entry to complete updates into the voter registration system.
- **Municipalities are eager to take advantage of the benefits a centralized voter registration system but do not want to relinquish local authority.** Municipal officials are open to the Secretary of State having access to the new system to administer the technical components of the system and having access to the central voter registration list to support local voter registration list maintenance efforts. For example, some officials suggested that duplicate entries be identified at the state level (i.e., automatically in the system). However, they also wish to maintain the unique municipal responsibility for voter registration. For example, local officials do not want other municipal election officials around the state to modify voter records in their municipality and they do not want to lose the ability the update their own local voter list.
- **The concept of real-time, election-day voter registration brought mixed reviews from election officials.** While some municipalities favored this concept and believed it would be extremely beneficial, others expressed concern that their election-day volunteers may not feel comfortable using a computer or that data entry into a real-time system on election day would require a great deal of training. One municipal election official voiced some concerns about the comfort level of her election-day volunteers, but added that she thinks half of them would most likely be able to input data if a user-friendly system walked them through the voter registration process and clearly prompted their responses. Additional input from election officials indicated a high comfort level with permitting read-only access to the voter registration system for volunteers on Election Day and offered that an online tutorial for training deputy registrars might be helpful.

MUNICIPAL SITE VISITS IN DETAIL

Introduction

To better assess and more thoroughly understand voter registration processes and systems employed throughout the state, and to allow state officials to observe local voter registration operations, 31 municipalities were invited by the Secretary of State to participate in extensive, in-person, on-site interviews. Notes from these observations are included in Appendix Three. These participants were selected as a sample of the 503 municipalities around the state based on factors such as population of registered voters, geographic location and the type of voter registration system currently utilized.

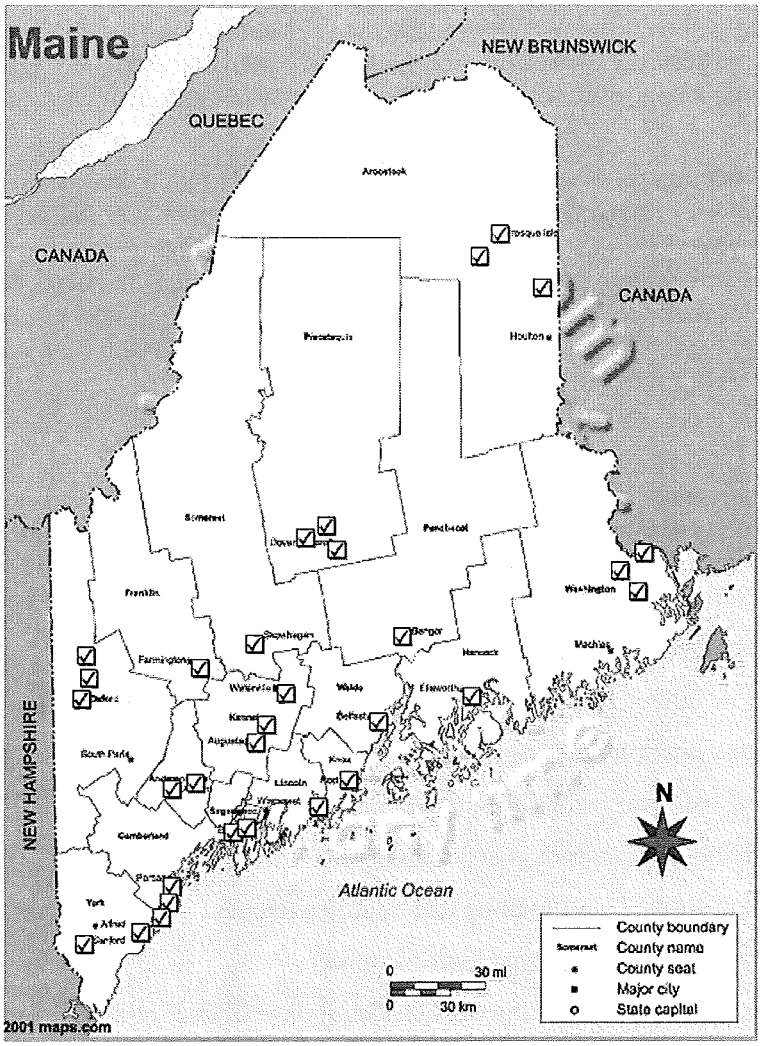
The municipalities selected for site visits employ a variety of voter registration systems ranging from commercial packages such as Northern Data Systems (NDS) or TRIO, to elaborate homegrown programs utilizing Access or Informix databases, to Excel spreadsheets or Word lists. At the other end of the spectrum, many small communities use hand-written or typed lists and one community maintains its records in a recipe box. The registered voter population of these municipalities ranged from more than 50,000 in the southern part of the state to barely 100 in some of the more rural regions. Every county in the state was included in the sample. In **Figure 1**, the map illustrates the geographic distribution of the municipalities visited.

Each site visit followed an agenda and lasted approximately 90 minutes, during which the interview team and the municipal election officials discussed each community's current voter registration systems and procedures. The agenda for the Municipal Site Visits included:

1. Introductions and overview of voter registration needs assessment project
2. A detailed discussion of the municipal needs assessment questionnaire
3. A review of the municipality's current voter registration process, including:
    a. A demonstration of the municipality's existing voter registration system functionality and reporting capabilities
    b. A review of voter registration procedures
    c. A discussion of election-day registration
4. Other pertinent voter registration information

During each site visit, the interview team reviewed with municipal election officials their local responses to the statewide needs assessment questionnaire, which generated additional discussion and led to further process and system discovery. Local officials graciously offered generous feedback based on the utilization of their existing systems and their clerk/registrar experience. The site visits proved extremely beneficial and brought to light a variety of process and system suggestions, concerns and requests. A compilation of those various suggestions and ideas for the new statewide voter registration system is outlined on the following pages.

Figure 1: Location of Site Visits



The following is a list of municipalities visited:

Alexander	***Brunswick***	***Lewiston***	***South Portland***
Auburn	***Byron***	***Meddybemps***	***Sanford***
Augusta	***Calais***	***Monson***	***Scarborough***
Bangor	***Chapman***	***Portland***	***Skowhegan***
Bath	***China***	***Presque Isle***	***Waldoboro***
Belfast	***Dover-Foxcroft***	***Rockland***	***Waterville***
Biddeford	***Ellsworth***	***Roxbury***	***Willimantic***
Blaine	***Farmington***	***Rumford***	

Data Analysis

The following data gathered during the site visits is segmented into two distinct sections: an analysis of the functionality and features connected with municipal voter registration systems and an analysis of the general concerns municipal officials have about implementing and using a centralized voter registration list.

This first section includes an extensive list of functional tools municipal officials would like to see in a centralized Maine Voter Registration system. This list is not intended to represent the functionality that ultimately will be included in any system implemented by the State, but rather to illustrate functionality that municipalities throughout the State already have or would like to have. In choosing a centralized voter registration system, the State will have to consider not only the wishes of the users, but also State and Federal policy, legal requirements, the cost of implementing certain functionality and the functional limitations of the vendor selected.

Functionality

Municipalities that maintain voting lists electronically have become accustomed to the functionality offered by their respective systems. Municipal satisfaction with a new system would be diminished if time- and labor-saving features present in existing systems are absent from the statewide system. The following "best-practice" features were identified during the municipal site visits:

- Voter registration card (or signature) image storage
- Bar-coded incoming voter list reports, and the ability to scan the list to capture voting activity
- Sophisticated petition-tracking features (including access to voter card signature images)
- Comprehensive voter record change and voting history
- Absentee ballot administration and tracking
- Printing of absentee ballot mailing and return envelopes
- Address validation by street and house number
- Automatic assignment of voting districts based on residence address
- Options for locally-defined voting districts

Functional Recommendations

I. **Design a user-friendly, intuitive system with functionality that improves efficiency and allows for the best utilization of staff resources.** Windows-type functionality seemed to be preferred by election officials, who also offered a variety of system functionality suggestions and requests:

   a. Facilitate navigation by incorporating links, dropdown boxes and common navigation bars/buttons.

   b. Enable voter record searches to be conducted by voter name or any portion thereof, address, voter identification number and birth date. For example, one system provided a drop-down box as last names or streets were entered. This drop-down selection menu was highlighted as user-friendly and efficient functionality.

c. Manage signature verification process within the system. Petitions for candidates or ballot issues require the signatures of qualified voters. Because only duly registered voters can sign a state petition and each voter can sign each petition only once, signature verification and the identification of duplicate signatures is a time-consuming, difficult task for many municipalities. Petition management facilitated through the use of signatures that have been scanned into a centralized system would significantly reduce the effort and increase the accuracy of the petition certification process.

d. Print Address Verification Notices (AVN), Voter Registration Acknowledgement Notices (VRAN), Change of Address Confirmation Cards (CACC) and other voter notifications from the system. Also allow functionality to print receipts for items such as absentee ballots and petitions.

e. Automatically generate notices to other municipalities or states when notified of a registrant's relocation.

f. Enable envelope printing capability (both outside and return envelopes), as well as labels, directly and automatically from the system.

g. Incorporate certain default functionality, including:

    i. Automatically assign ward and precinct information when an address is entered into system.

    ii. Automatically validate that a street number is within the municipality's specified range and zone (i.e., ensure the address is residential, rather than commercial).

    iii. Automatically update voter status from "pending" to "active," triggered by time elapsed. Two examples of this are: (1) when a voter applies to change political party enrollment, which carries a 15-day waiting period and (2) when a voter under the age of 18 registers. Each of these creates a "pending" status. Research indicates some systems deal with this issue through automatic status change notifications, which appear in the start-up screen of the system for the clerk's or registrar's approval.

h. Ensure the new statewide system can support the simultaneous demands of users across the state.

i. Provide strong vendor support for maintenance, upgrades and resolving any issues that arise.

j. The GUI, or Graphic User Interface, of any system should be easy to read and navigate. This includes font, button size, page flow, etc.

k. Voter registration lists are currently available online in several municipalities. Some election officials expressed a desire to expand or limit that service (with varying levels of data access) to three distinct stakeholder groups:

    i. Election officials: Need most access and whatever is necessary for administering the voter registration process.

    ii. Voters: May want to access their own information to learn the status of their registration, to confirm their address is correct or to find their polling place, etc.

iii. The General Public: These stakeholders would include research or advocacy groups, political parties, candidates and other individuals and groups that currently may be required to pay for lists. Voter registration lists currently are public records, but a new statewide database could provide unprecedented convenience for obtaining those public records and may prompt increased demand for access to the information.

Election officials encouraged the Secretary of State carefully to consider both the importance of access to the public voter registration records as well as the privacy concerns that may be raised by this system and to establish a process that strikes that difficult balance.

l. Municipal election officials want the authority to review and approve or at least to appeal any changes to their municipal list that may be initiated by another municipality, such as occurs when a voter moves from one town to another.

m. A special local districting option would be beneficial. For example, one municipality surveyed in Maine faces a water districting issue every seven years. Having this local function in the statewide system also would be useful during elections for city council, school board, etc., according to municipal officials.

II. **Enable easy report generation capabilities – not only for standard reports, but also for special queries.** Several election officials expressed a desire to enhance their report generation options. Findings indicate that many municipalities currently run only those reports needed for submission to the State or for election-day operations. Several examples of reports election officials suggested include:

a. NVRA – very few municipalities can actually run this required voter registration report from their voter registration system; some can extract pieces of information from their system to complete this report manually. Most are manually tracking all the data needed.

b. Election Day lists – Municipalities typically must print voter registration lists by 5:00 pm on the Monday prior to an election. Since all municipalities must allow for election-day voter registration, it would be helpful to generate those voter registration lists as close to the election as possible, and ideally have real-time voter records available at the polls.

c. Absentee ballots – print lists of absentee voters by name, address, method by which the voter requested and received the ballot (i.e., in person or via mail), and date ballot was requested, distributed and returned.

d. Petitions – There are five primary types of state petitions in Maine (Party Formation, Primary Candidate, Non-Party Candidate, Citizen Initiative and People's Veto Referendum). There are numerous local petitions. Where permitted, the registrar or clerk must review and certify that the signers of various types of petitions are registered voters. This can be a labor intensive and time consuming process for municipal officials. To alleviate this burden, a system that allows for generation of petition reports based on the name/type of petition or by petition date would be a considerable benefit. Also, the new system should allow for the ability to print petition receipts.

e. Party changes – produce a report that shows the number of people who changed from one party to another in a certain time period specified by user.

f. Polling lists – generate lists by House and Senate districts, wards or precincts.

g. Party lists – generate lists of registered voters for each party.

h. Special queries – have the ability to generate special one-time reports. Election officials mentioned they would like to generate reports:

   i. By voter identification number

   ii. By address – with the ability to print a report for all street addresses that ever had a registered voter

   iii. By last name

   iv. By inactive voter status

   v. By people who did or did not vote in last "X" elections

   vi. By underage/pending registrants

   vii. By deleted voters

   viii. By new registrants

   ix. By relocated voters

   x. By any variable in the system or voter profile

III. **Allow for the ability to track detailed data in each municipality's voter registration records.** This was not necessarily true for some of the smaller municipalities that have very few registered voters. Overall, though, officials requested the new system have the functionality to record and store:

a. Voter history, or a voter's participation in various elections, as required for determining active and inactive voter status under federal law.

b. Absentee voter histories for more than one year (preferably several years).

c. The date when an absentee ballot is distributed (as well as the method – in-person, mail, etc.) and received;

d. A history of petitions signed by a voter;

e. Voter registration changes; and,

f. Voter address changes, both within a given municipality and among municipalities around the state (including the dates changed).

IV. **Include a module for real-time election-day voter registration (desired by some municipalities and not by others).** Several election officials indicated an interest in training election-day workers to register voters at the polls. Others were concerned about the technical comfort level of their volunteers.

V. **Provide training for the new system in various locations around the state to make it easier for the more rural areas to attend.** Several municipalities around the state made this request.

VI. **Accommodate other languages.** One municipality suggested the system be multilingual. This was not a request heard from many election officials nor is it currently required, but this requirement may come into effect in the future as Maine's population becomes increasingly diverse.

Municipal Concerns

The greatest voter registration-related demands on many municipalities are petition certification, notification of changes to other municipalities, and absentee ballot tracking. System features that address these tasks will greatly ease the demands on municipal clerks and enhance the value of the statewide system in the municipality's estimation.

Privacy issues were raised in several site visits. While voter registration cards and lists importantly are public information to ensure transparency, fairness and security in elections, and although several municipalities already make voter registration information available on-line, the display of personal data on the Internet is a general concern and some municipalities are concerned about any public disclosure of voter information by electronic means.

During the site visits, municipal officials were questioned about the practical complications, the necessity, and the feasibility of using the Statewide Voter Registration System at polling places on Election Day. While some communities already use such systems that have been developed at the local level, the overwhelming majority of municipalities indicated that they would be unlikely to be able to use such a system at the polls for several reasons:

- Lack of computers at the polling places
- Lack of network connectivity or telephone lines at polling places
- Many poll workers are volunteers with unknown computer skills, and training would be difficult to accomplish and retain for once- or twice-a-year workers

The following lists represent common concerns from municipal officials:

- **Training on the new system for municipal officials as well as election-day volunteers (particularly as it relates to real-time voter registration) is a universal concern.** As stated previously, the success of any tool depends on understanding its proper use. The frequency, location, and manner of the training must be satisfactorily addressed by state officials and in the RFP.
- **Some municipalities noted that some of the polling facilities do not have phone lines.** Additionally, not all rooms in which voting is held have phone jacks (e.g., gymnasiums, conference halls, etc.). Given the fact that most polling places do not have phone jacks, electronic Election Day registration may be a considerable cost to the State.
- **When assigning municipality designations in the system, it was suggested that it not be done by zip codes, as some smaller municipalities share the same zip codes.**
- **Some municipalities would be concerned about the physical voter registration card not "following" the voter when he or she moves from one municipality to another**, leaving the new municipality with only the image of the card available in the system. For example, a voter moves from one municipality to another and initiates an address change in the CVR through the BMV when she or he updates a driver's license. The concern in this example is that the voter's municipality for voter registration purposes changes and the original voter registration card is available in the system, but the physical card does not move to the new municipality with the voter.
- **Scanned signatures can be a significant tool in the petition verification process.** There are some municipalities today that have scanned signature functionality as a part of their current voter registration system. These municipalities find this functionality to be helpful and are concerned about retaining the scanned images in the new system.

MUNICIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS IN DETAIL

Introduction

To gather quantitative voter registration data, a questionnaire was distributed on November 25, 2003 to all 503 municipalities in the state. In addition, 17 municipalities that also manage voter registration for townships close to them were asked to complete separate questionnaires for those townships. Five hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed throughout the state, of which 457 were completed by December 31, 2003, an 88% return.

Among other findings, the surveys determined that an estimated 83% of Maine communities have at least one computer in the local voter registration office, more than 70% use some kind of electronic voter registration list already, and over 90% of the voter registration offices have staff members with experience using a computer.

In detail, the municipal questionnaire consisted of 33 questions that probed the following categories:

1. **General Information**: municipal election official contact information, title, office hours, voter registration card file information, and petition management and challenged ballot statistics.
2. **Technical Information**: municipal office staff computer experience, office and polling place computer availability and connectivity, hardware and software used, and Internet connectivity available in the community.
3. **Voter Registration Process**: voter registration list maintenance and purging, report generation, absentee ballot tracking, petition management, voter histories, and voter list distribution.

Data Analysis

The data contained in this analysis is based on the following parameters:

- It accounts for 457 surveys submitted out of a possible 520, an 88% return rate.
- The State of Maine had a population of approximately 1,275,000 people according to 2000 census data. The total population of the communities surveyed in this sample is approximately 1,100,000 people, representing approximately 85% of the state's total population. (NOTE: These figures, as well as any population figures referred to in this analysis, do not represent "voting age population" but rather total population.)

The entire data set generated by the responses to this questionnaire is available in Appendix Two of this document.

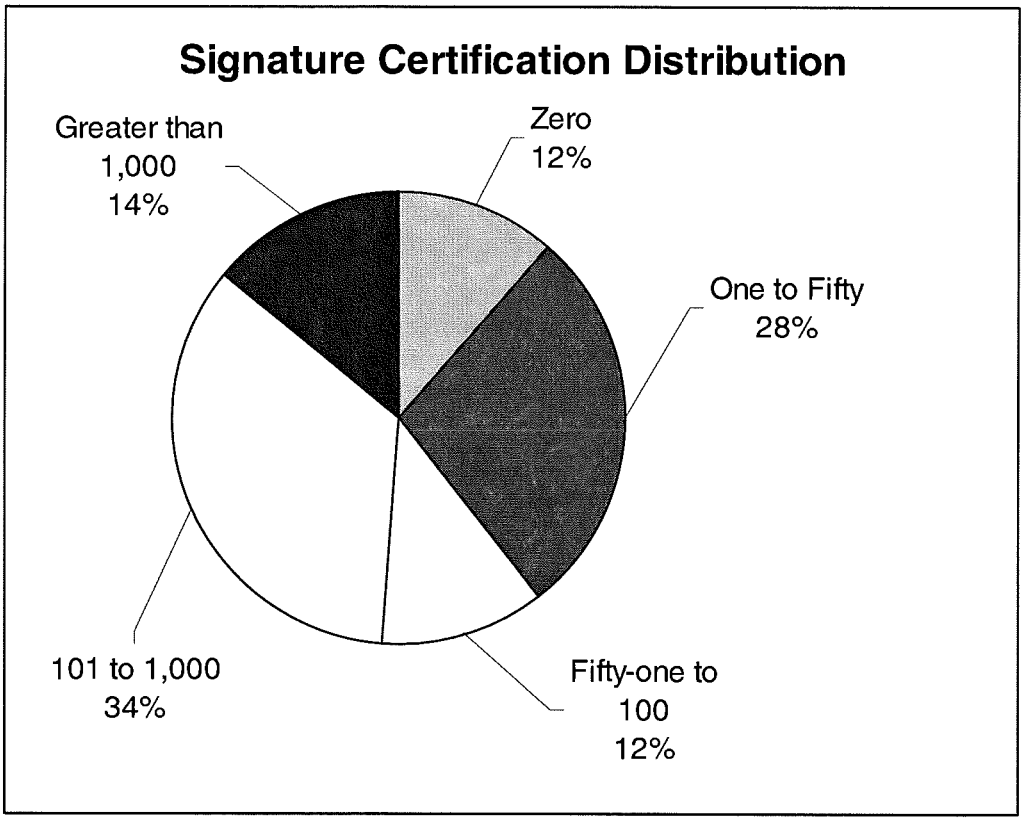
A selected analysis of the data received from the returned surveys is outlined on the following pages. The information below represents a selection of data, mostly in graphical form, ranging from the number of signatures which municipalities certify to the daily levels of computer use in municipal offices around the state.

Signature Certification

The following chart, **Figure 2**, illustrates the distribution of the number of signature certifications performed by the municipalities: 339 municipalities or approximately 65% responded to this question. Analysis of note includes:

- The largest segment of certification is between 100 and 1,000 signatures at 34% of those responding to this question, or 118 municipalities
- The second largest segment is between one and 50 signatures at 28% of those responding to this question, or 95 municipalities

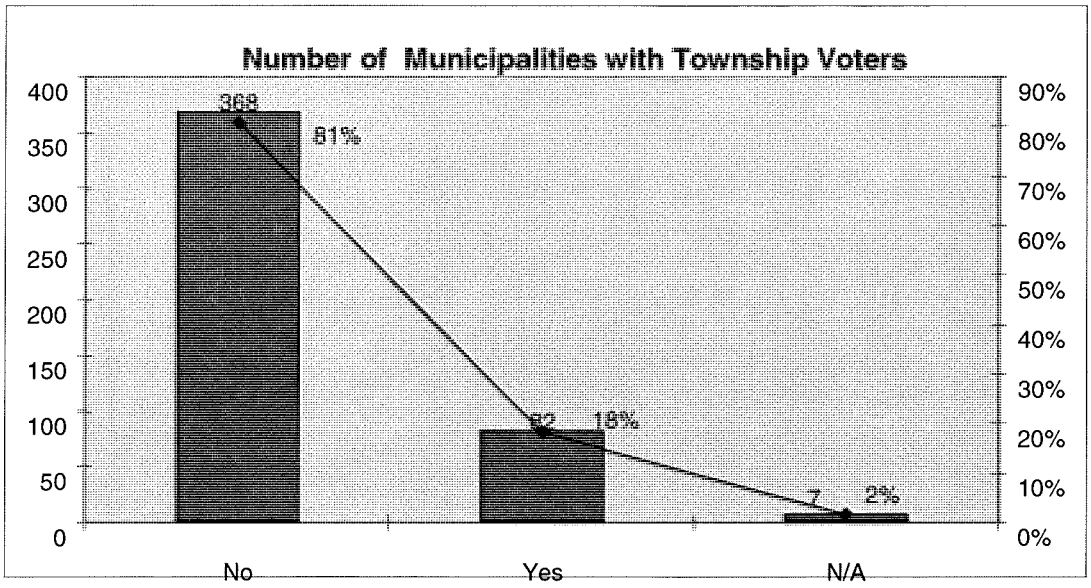
Figure 2: Graphic Representation of Signature Distribution



Township Voters

In some Maine electoral jurisdictions no local government exists. Voters in these townships vote in nearby municipalities. The vast majority of municipalities in Maine do not have township voters voting in the municipality, as represented in the following graphic, **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Township Voting in the Municipalities



Challenged Ballots

In the last gubernatorial election there were approximately 550,000 votes cast in the State of Maine. In response to a question asking how many challenged ballots the municipalities processed in the last gubernatorial election, respondents reported a total of 703 challenged ballots were cast, or approximately 0.01% of the total votes cast. Additionally, 375 municipalities indicated that they had processed no challenged ballots in the last gubernatorial election.

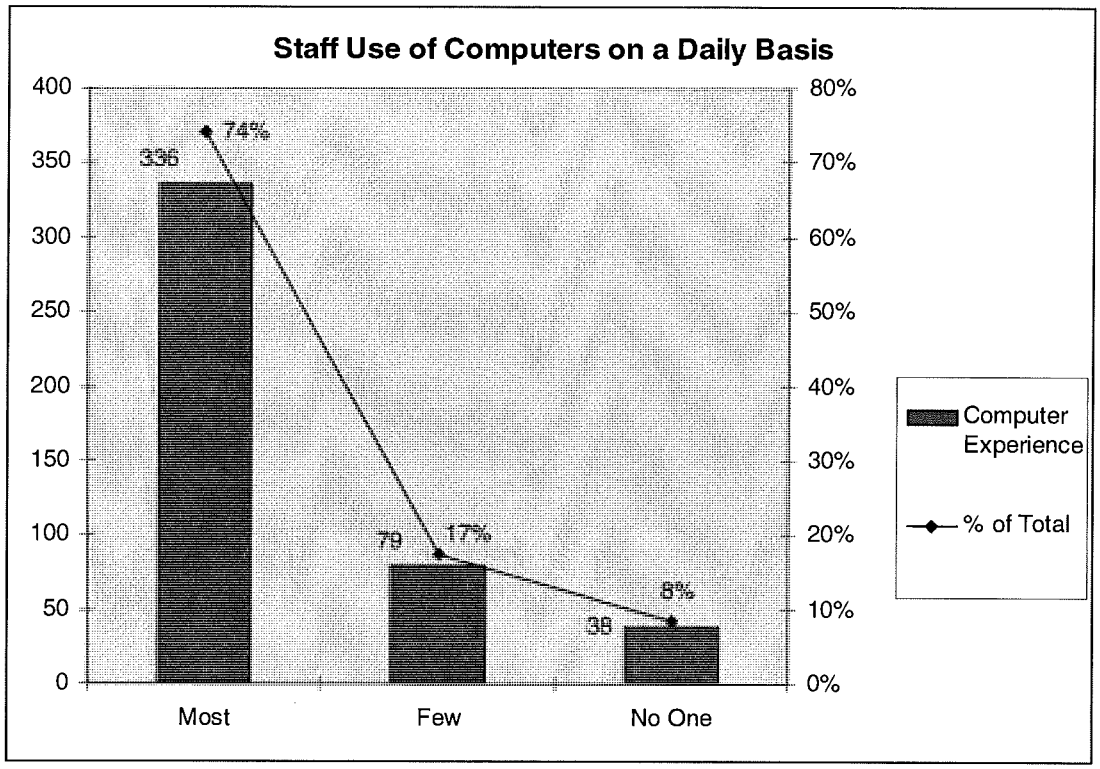
Computer Experience

The survey asked municipalities, which of the following statements best describes the computer experience in your office?

- ❑ Most of our staff use the computer daily
- ❑ A few people on our staff use the computer daily
- ❑ No one on our staff has computer experience
- ❑ Other

Findings indicate that approximately 74%, or 336 of the 453 municipalities that responded to this question indicated "Most" while 17% answered "Few" and only 8% answered that they had no one on staff with computer experience. This is shown in the chart, **Figure 4**, below.

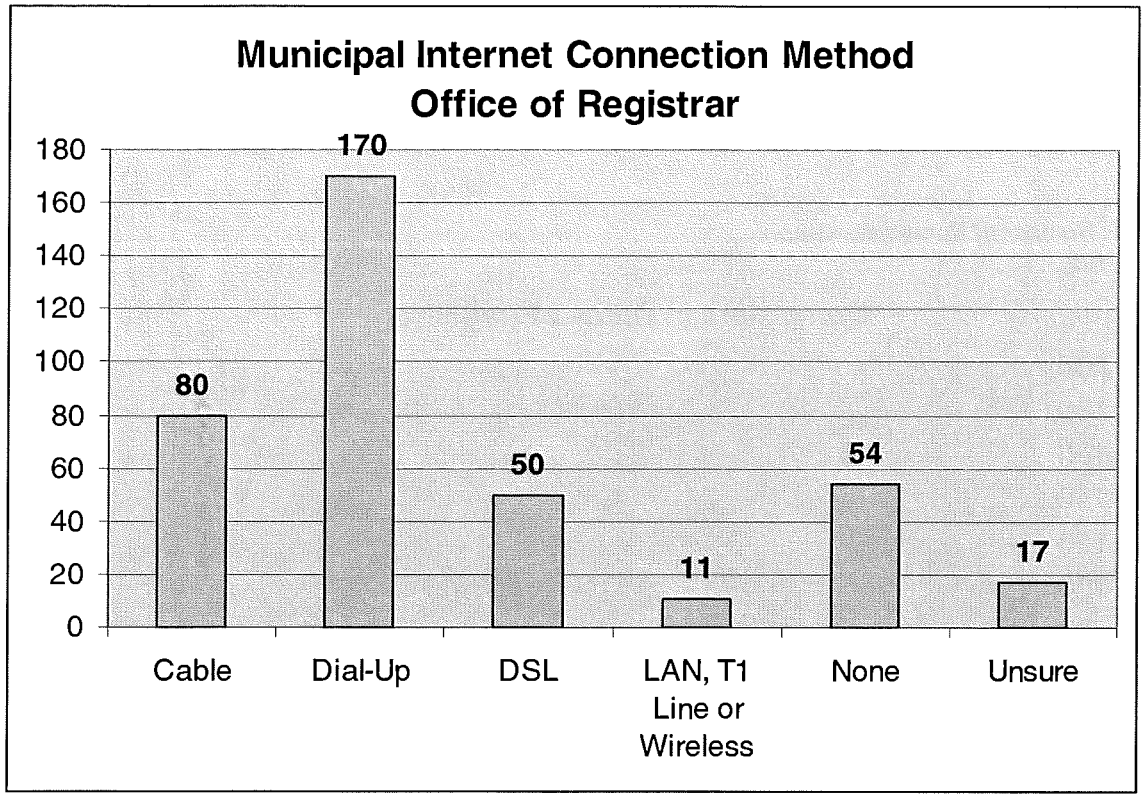
Figure 4: Graphic Representation of Daily Staff Computer Use



Internet Connectivity

A major consideration of the new CVR system is how municipalities will connect to the system. While the RFP will address this issue in detail, there exists some general agreement that municipalities may need secure access to the Internet to update the system. As the following chart shows, Maine's municipal office buildings are generally connected to the Internet. The most utilized method for connection is through a dial-up connection, but faster connections, such as cable or DSL are also greatly in use throughout the state, as shown in the following graphic, **Figure 5**.

Figure 5: Internet Connectivity by Type



Electricity

Registrar's Office

Four hundred and forty municipalities responded to the question of electricity in the registrar's office (96% of the municipalities responding to the survey answered this question). All municipalities that responded to the survey indicated they had electricity in the registrar's office. As with all the survey questions, the status of those jurisdictions that did not respond is unknown.

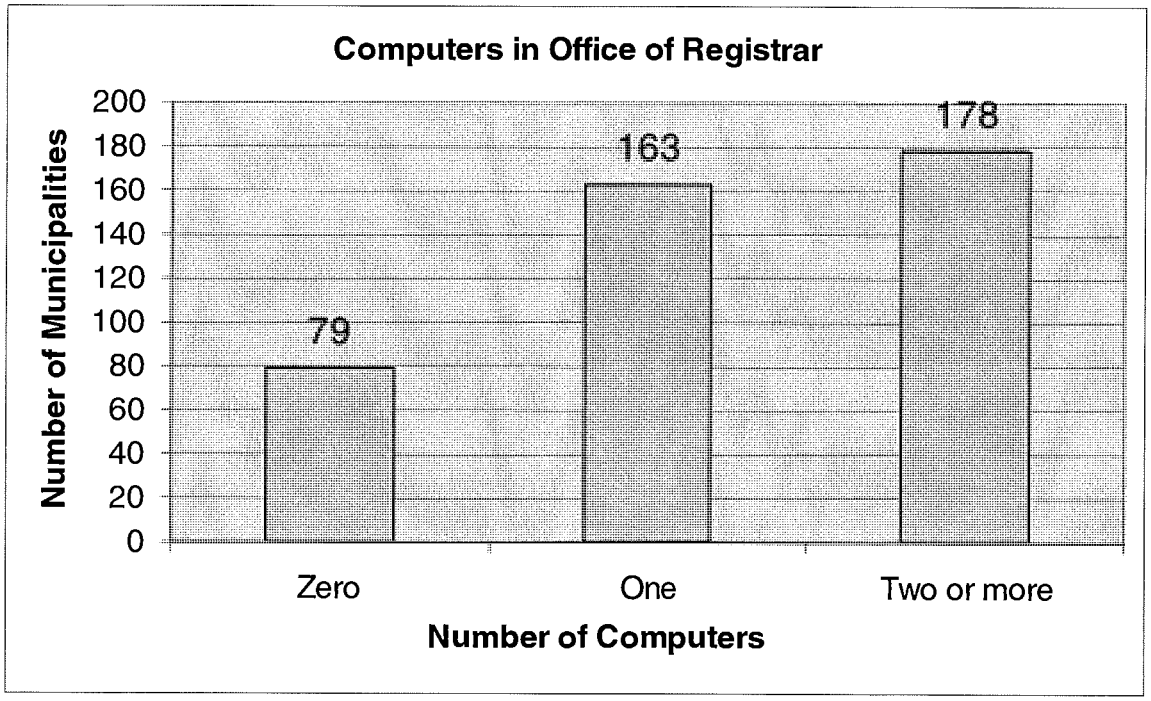
Polling Place

Three hundred and thirty-eight municipalities responded to the question of electricity in the polling place (74% of the municipalities responding to the survey answered this question). Of those responding, 336 indicated there is power in the polling place. The two polling places reporting no electricity do not conduct State elections within their jurisdiction.

Computers

The chart below indicates that 178, or approximately 41% of the 420 municipalities responding to this question, have two or more computers in the registrar's office and approximately 81% have at least one computer. Also, importantly, 19 percent of communities reported the office of the registrar has no computer.

Figure 6: Number of Computers Graphic



The entire set of raw data from the municipal survey project is presented in Appendix Two.

STATE OF MAINE

STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

MAINE STATE AGENCY ASSESSMENT

MAINE STATE AGENCY ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Title III of the HAVA Law, Section 303, addresses the requirements for a computerized statewide voter registration list. One of the primary requirements states: "The computerized list shall be coordinated with other agency databases within the State." In Maine, there are three primary state agencies that will be affected by this requirement: the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), the Office of Vital Statistics and the Office of the Chief Information Officer. The need for input from these key stakeholders is critical to the formulation of a comprehensive needs assessment and, in turn, a practical and informed RFP.

Maine citizens may obtain and submit a voter registration application at any Motor Vehicle branch office under the Motor Voter system. In this system, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles acts as a conduit for voter registration; that is, voter registration cards may be completed at the Motor Vehicle branch office but are not entered into the voter registration system at that point in the process. Rather, the cards are forwarded to the Bureau of Corporations, Elections, and Commissions, which distributes the cards to municipalities across the State. Those municipalities, in turn, update their local voter registration list. This is one significant way in which the BMV already integrates with the voter registration process.

Additionally, the BMV is also a gatekeeper of data that is critical to the voter registration process. The BMV collects and maintains a significant database that would be useful in implementing a statewide CVR. The database includes, for example, driver's license numbers, which are the required prime identifier under HAVA, and, with each new digital license, a digital signature. As discussed in the "Municipal Assessment" section, signature validation is a component of the petition process, and scanned signatures are a potential part of the solution to this challenging problem.

Similarly, one of the responsibilities of the Office of Vital Statistics is to maintain death records. It is a HAVA requirement that deceased voters names be purged from voter registration lists, so it is a natural partnership for the CVR and Office of Vital Statistics to work closely together. The Office of Vital Statistics receives approximately 12,000 to 13,000 death notices each year, which are entered into an electronic database. This database and the assistance of the Office of Vital Statistics will be a critical element in the successful implementation of the new CVR system. Coordinating with this database is a requirement of the federal law.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer, in conjunction with the Bureau of Information Services, or BIS, is a third key stakeholder in implementing a successful CVR system. The respective roles of the CIO and of BIS in providing leadership and information technology services and support make their input desirable and critical to informing both the needs assessment and especially the RFP development phases of this voter registration information technology project. The mission of BIS is to provide high-quality, responsive, cost-effective information technology services to the agencies of State Government. Clearly, the CVR initiative will not be successful without the involvement of the BIS, whose input is instrumental to the completion of a comprehensive Needs Analysis and will be important in the RFP phase of the project. The input of the BIS on questions ranging from the type of system to install, the hosting of such a system and the infrastructure needed to support such a system are all considerations discussed with the CIO for this assessment.

Also, the BIS currently is building a GIS system for mapping the State of Maine through its *Aptitude* software system, which holds the potential for municipal voter registration assistance through redistricting and assignment of wards and precincts. Vendors should be aware that this project is underway and make proposals for integration into the system, including the cost to integrate. Similarly, the Division of Elections currently uses the *Maptitude* GIS software package for election-related GIS and districting needs.

The success of Maine's Central Voter Registration system will benefit from open communication and ongoing cooperation among these agencies. A detailed breakdown of the in-depth discussions with these agencies follows. All state agency questionnaires were conducted in person in a question-and-answer interview style.

The following analysis and presentation of detailed data is based on extensive in-person interviews and follow-up discussions with BMV, Office of Vital Statistics and Office of the CIO.

OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS AND COMMONALITIES

- The BMV, Office of Vital Statistics and the Office of the State Chief Information Officer individually expressed a strong willingness to participate in the process to design and integrate the centralized voter registration system with relevant data sources as required by HAVA.
- The BMV (digitized licenses, access to SSA), Office of Vital Statistics (death records), the Office of the CIO, and BIS (State Data Center and network capabilities) have existing systems that can be leveraged by the CVR system to meet the mandatory requirements of HAVA. The vendor may choose to leverage these existing systems to meet the requirements.
- The existing BMV mainframe and planned client-side solutions present no obvious technical hurdles to integration with a centralized voter registration system.
- The proposed CVR system may be able to leverage the BMV's access to several important data sources that are required by HAVA. First, BMV's recent conversion to digitized licenses may provide valuable access to voters' digitized signatures and bar code information. Second, the BMV currently collects Social Security Numbers as part of the drivers' license process. These numbers may be used to validate information provided to the CVR system. Finally, the BMV has access to a real-time SSN search through the Social Security Administration. In all instances of data integration and sharing, this analysis concludes that there are no obvious technical hurdles that would preclude integration in the planned CVR system.
- Policy implications of sharing federal Social Security numbers and verification, which is currently a feature of the BMV system, for compliance with HAVA must be resolved.
- While the Office of Vital Statistics does not provide real-time, Internet access to its existing database of death records, the office is willing to provide a periodic feed to the CVR system based on an agreed-upon frequency.
- The Office of Vital Statistics database of death records may present a potential limitation regarding data integration and validation because the existing database does not include the driver license number or address.

RESULTS

BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires the development, implementation and management of a computerized statewide voter registration list. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), a bureau of the Maine Department of the Secretary of State, will have an impact on this requirement in two distinct ways. First, the BMV is already significantly involved in the voter registration data collection process through the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which requires access to voter registration services simultaneous with motor vehicle driver's license application or renewal. Secondly, the centralized voter registration list (CRV) will be matching information with the BMV's database to verify the accuracy of information provided on applications for voter registration.

The BMV has data and tools than can assist in implementing the centralized voter registration system in many ways. In particular, BMV:

- Maintains driver license numbers, the prime identifier according to HAVA
- Stores and updates digitized signatures
- Maintains social security numbers for licensees and holders of Maine identification cards
- Requires license holders to update address changes with the Bureau
- Utilizes a real-time web interface for querying social security numbers from the social security administration
- Plays an integral role in voter registration through the NVRA or Motor Voter

The discussion with the BMV centered around two major topics: (1) the current Motor Voter process and (2) the potential filter or matching mechanism that would allow the voter registration and motor vehicle systems to communicate for the purpose of checking addresses or updating addresses. In general, the meeting was extremely positive in nature and the BMV indicated a strong willingness to participate and assist wherever practical in the new CVR system. The BMV is currently in the process of updating its own database system, the timing of which will most likely affect any plans to interface with a new CVR database.

Motor Voter

Motor Voter is a provision of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. As a result of that Act, citizens of the State can apply to register to vote through the BMV, typically when conducting another transaction, such as a motor vehicle driver's license application or renewal. In this way, the BMV branch offices act as a collection point for voter registration cards. They forward them to the CEC (Bureau of Corporations, Elections, and Commissions) on a regular basis. The BMV staff does not manually enter any of the voter registration information into their system, nor do they keep copies of the cards. The CEC is responsible for sorting and distributing the cards to the municipalities. The BMV has not anticipated including a motor voter component in their system re-write, which was planned and begun long before HAVA was created and passed by Congress.

Migration Project

The BMV is undergoing a major migration from its BULL mainframe, COBOL system to a new client-server Oracle based system. As with many large-scale IT projects, it is difficult to estimate exact timeframes for launch of the new system. Given the uncertainty of the timing, it is possible that a BMV interface with the CVR database may need to be written twice – first to the existing system and again once the new system is in place.

Scanned Signatures and Social Security Numbers

Maine's BMV has recently converted to a digital license. The Bureau utilizes software from DigiMark, an ID system provider, which captures the photograph and signature of licensees. License applicants currently record their signature by writing on a digitized device, but the system can scan from paper as well. The BMV will capture new signatures at license renewals if the renewal is done in person. The BMV indicated a willingness to share and regularly update signatures for the CVR system, if desired. Signatures and images are currently stored offsite, but the Bureau has real-time access to all records. At the initial population of the CVR database it may be possible to get a batch download of all signatures indexed by driver license number.

The Social Security number is now captured in full by the BMV for all licensees and holders of Maine identification cards, and will continued to be captured under the new system. HAVA calls for only the last 4 digits of a voter's SSN to be stored in the voter's record. For the purposes of the BMV, the SSN is considered sensitive personal information and is not reflected as part of the driver's license record. Social Security numbers are currently shared with other government agencies. From a purely technical perspective, there does not appear to be an obvious impediment to incorporating this information into a centralized voter registration system. The BMV has access to an online search function for SSNs with the Social Security Administration. From a policy perspective, the agreement between the BMV and the Social Security Administration as it applies to the sharing of SSNs with the voter registration system for HAVA compliance is being evaluated at both the Federal and State level and remains an open item as of the writing of this Needs Assessment.

Validation of Unique ID

The Maine driver license number is a history number. All persons who interact with the Maine system, including Maine drivers or, for example, out-of-state drivers who receive a moving violation in Maine, receive a history number. This history number then becomes a driver's license number if the driver receives a license in the State of Maine.

HAVA requires the new voter registration system to support the ability to validate the information on the voter registration card. When checking the information against the information in the BMV database, the following fields are available for validation: <driver's license number>, <street address>, <city>, <state>, <zip code>, <social security number> and <birth date>.

Bar Codes

Maine is currently transitioning from a traditional laminated, photographically produced driver's license to a digital license, bearing a digital photograph, signature and bar codes. This transition is expected to take six years to complete. Until the transition is complete, both digital and non-digital licenses will remain in circulation.

The digital license contains two bar codes. The first is a linear bar code, which contains the driver's license number encoded in Code 128. The second code is a 2-D bar code, which contains the information printed on the front of the license (name, address, date of birth, height, weight, hair/eye color, etc.) encoded in PDF417.

Outside Access

For either system, the BMV would be willing to create a test environment for the vendor selected to build the CVR system. BMV would want to discuss the logistics of arranging and utilizing this access, but will participate to facilitate access to the data stored in the BMV system. Access to the state WAN would have to be arranged through BIS. As for access by municipalities, the BMV is flexible and will be open to discussing the best way to accommodate access.

Change of Address

BMV's current system has four address fields: <street address>, <city>, <state> and <zip code>. Changes in address are entered over the existing address and a new date is entered in the <update> field of the record. It is important to note that BMV is only required to obtain a mailing address from licensees (for example, a post office box), but also has a field for legal address. This legal address field was added for motor voter, but BMV currently reflects only the mailing address as part of the driver's license record. The new system will allow for multiple address types including mailing, legal, seasonal and credential. More fields will be added in the new system as well, including three lines for street address, plus: <town>, <city>, <state>, <zip code>, <extended zip code>, <county> and <province>.

As in the current system, there will not be a separate field for street number. A historical view of all addresses will also be a component of the new system.

Confidential addresses are flagged in both systems. According to BMV, there are 19 of these flagged addresses in the system as of the writing of this Needs Assessment. To break that confidentiality, the BMV must enter a "reason code." This may or may not be an issue for the CVR system.

OFFICE OF VITAL RECORDS

One of the HAVA requirements is to purge the names of deceased voters from the voting list on a statewide basis. The Office of Vital Records, therefore, is an important component of any statewide CVR plan in Maine due to the need for access to death records.

The Office of Vital Records in the Bureau of Health, Data, and Program Management can assist the Maine Secretary of State in implementing the centralized voter registration system by providing regular updates of death records.

System for storing registered death records

The Office of Vital Records receives approximately 12,000 to 13,000 paper death certificates annually on a continual basis from several sources including funeral homes and physicians. Each record is entered into an Access database and eventually formatted into flat ASCII files with the capability for export. The Office expressed an interest in migrating to an Oracle database in a few years time, but no specific migration plan is currently underway.

The death record file is frozen at a certain time each year (usually April of the following year) for statistical analysis. Certain information is indexed throughout the year including name, certificate number and date of death. At a municipal level, death certificates are filed at the place of death (municipality) first; then a copy of the certificate is sent to the state and to the municipality of residence.

Death records record the deceased name, town of residence, town of occurrence, social security number, date of birth and age.

Neither driver license number nor address are stored as part of the record. Cause of death is recorded but is considered private information and protected.

Sharing data with other state agencies

Online searches to the death records database are not currently available, but the agency does provide feeds to a variety of agencies, some as often as weekly. Public information on a death record is the name, age and place of death. Birth date and town of residence can also be provided if an agency completes a disclosure agreement stipulating use of the data. Data is provided via File Transfer Protocol and can be customized according to the needs of the requestor.

OFFICE OF THE STATE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Due to the requirements of HAVA regarding other state agency interfaces, in addition to general questions of hosting, connectivity, and bandwidth, an ongoing dialog with the Office of the Chief Information Officer has been opened.

The major issues that will need to be coordinated with the Office of the CIO and possibly through the Bureau of Information Services included such items as hosting, infrastructure, contract terms and connectivity.

Hosting

The RFP will need to address hosting, which is the issue of where the central database and hardware will be physically located, e.g. state-hosted, vendor-hosted, etc. The SOS is working with the CIO's office to determine the best hosting option. Benefits to hosting the new CVR system in the State's data center include system protection under the State's backup, security and disaster recovery best practices. If a third-party vendor is selected to host the new CVR, the state will want to ensure it has taken the requisite precautionary measures should the State become required to take over the system.

Infrastructure

The State of Maine has not issued formal standards that would require vendors to choose a specific platform. Vendors of the State must comply with existing state IT standards as defined in the Strategic Information Technology Plan, Statewide Technical Architecture, which will be provided to vendors in the RFP and can be found at http://www.state.me.us/CIO/ITstrat_plan/index.html.

Other Agency and Statewide Connectivity

In addition to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Vital Records, the CVR system may require a connection to a GIS system or some other mapping software for districting information, street indexing and address mapping.

As for statewide Internet connectivity, the CIO's office recommended a report entitled, *The Next Steps Toward the Last Mile*, dated 12/05/01. Vendors recommending a thin-client solution may wish to reference the report, which may provide useful data regarding statewide connectivity. The CIO's office may provide further information available on statewide connectivity as part of the RFP creation process.

STATE OF MAINE
STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

OTHER STATE ASSESSMENTS

OTHER STATE ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Congress passed The Help America Vote Act of 2002 seeking to enhance the accessibility and integrity of election systems across the country. HAVA authorizes federal funding to assist states in meeting the law's requirements. HAVA not only offers Maine an enormous opportunity to enhance elections in the state, but also provides the same opportunity for other states across the nation. Many states have already begun significant projects to implement a statewide voter registration system and, in fact, some states, such as Connecticut, already have implemented a centralized statewide voter registration system. As the third critical piece of this four-part Needs Assessment Process and Document (which includes the Municipal Assessment, the State Agency Assessment and the Vendor Assessment) the SOS determined that a close analysis of the systems and processes of other states would provide a context and source of ideas for the implementation of Maine's centralized voter registration system.

Six states were interviewed regarding their voter registration systems for inclusion in this needs assessment, as follows:

- Connecticut
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Oregon
- Virginia
- Wisconsin

Each of these states was recommended because of the unique systems they employ for voter registration. Specifically, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Wisconsin were recommended because they administer voter registration and elections at the municipal level. Michigan also has municipal elections, and, like Maine, the Michigan SOS administers the Bureau of Motor Vehicles as well as elections. Oregon recently completed its RFP and selection process for a new CVR system and generously shared lessons learned from that experience. Virginia, with 134 election localities, also contributed information about their system for this report.

Figure 7: High Level Overview of Other State Assessment

STATE	Population	Number of Voters*	Number of Municipalities	Number of System users
Connecticut	3.4 million	1.9 million	169	300-350
Massachusetts	6.4 million	4.0 million	351	650 daily users
Michigan	10 million	6.9 million	480 remote sites for db serving nearly 1700 municipalities	468 software installations plus 480 remote users
Oregon	3.5 million	1.9 million	36 counties	Unavailable
Wisconsin	5.4 million	Statewide voter registration is not required; 1.7 million registered to vote for 2002 governor's race	Voter registration is not required under a certain population--320 (of 1850) choose to do so	Unavailable
Virginia	7 million	3.8 million	134	298
Maine	1.3 million	882,337	503	Unavailable

** Based on 2000 figures and refers to the total number of registered voters as reported by the States from the Federal Election Commission:* http://www.fec.gov/pages/2000turnout/reg&to00.htm

OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS AND COMMONALITIES

- Voter ID and voter history travel with the voter throughout the system in each state. Each system assigns a Voter ID whether or not the system stored other HAVA suggested ID's such as driver license number or the last 4 digits of the SSN. Most of the surveyed systems use a system-generated Voter ID as the primary identifier of voters.
- Real-time query access to other state systems such as motor vehicles, death records, etc. was not a component of the systems of the states surveyed. Many, though not all, of the states receive system updates from these other entities, primarily in batch tape or FTP mode.
- Data conversion represented a huge investment of time and resources for all states that underwent a migration to a statewide system. Recommendations for data conversion varied widely, with some states recommending fresh data entry for most municipalities to those who strongly encourage electronic data conversion, even for towns with manual voter registration systems.
- Specific roles for municipalities as well as the central office also varied. Interviews revealed that some states' central office plays a primary role in deciding the status of registered voters, while other states leave all responsibility for voter lists to the local level, even with a centralized system.
- Municipal connectivity and support are fundamental to any statewide systems. Many states pay for some if not all Internet access/system connectivity costs and either directly provide PC's, routers, printers, scanners, bar code readers, etc. to municipalities or provide funding for the localities to purchase their own equipment.

- While the administration of voter registration is largely a municipal responsibility under Maine law and many municipalities may save money with a new voter registration system by avoiding the cost of maintaining their own local system, the State should be sensitive to any costs associated with a new statewide voter registration system, particularly in communities that currently report having no computer equipment or no Internet access.
- Long-term system viability is an objective for states implementing a CVR. To accomplish this goal, states either commit to maintaining a strong vendor relationship (even if the vendor is not their first choice) or they hire staff to maintain the system themselves. The vendor role often phases out slowly, progressing from a central role in the first year of the system rollout to infrequent contact, for example, to implement programming changes.
- Communication, training and help desk services all require a strong and sizeable commitment from the central SOS office. Some initial training can be contracted out or provided by the vendor, but during the implementation and into the "out years" the office of the SOS usually performs this work.

DATA SPECIFICS

Details from the in-depth interviews conducted with Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Michigan are listed below, as are key points derived from discussions with Wisconsin, Oregon and Virginia.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

System Overview

Age of current system

The Connecticut system, originally implemented as a voluntary system for the municipalities in 1995, was updated with a pilot release rolled out in early 2003 and a full state implementation in May of 2003.

Relationship with Vendor

Connecticut terminated its original vendor contract to form a relationship with a vendor who was originally a subcontractor on the initial system. This relationship continues to the present and the vendor was recently selected to perform the upgrade to the system discussed above. The SOS has had weekly status meetings with its vendor for five years, monitoring the system upgrade as well as HAVA compliance modifications.

Type – Centralized System

The Connecticut Voter Registration System is a centralized, web-based system connecting municipalities to the state system in real time and is used exclusively for voter registration purposes. The system is Windows based utilizing IBM Websphere software and is hosted on an IBM mainframe located in the state's data center. The state provides each municipality with a PC, router and printer and offers hardware maintenance and support. Access is regulated through IP addresses. The state also supplies each municipality with Internet connectivity through ISDN, T1, or frame relay depending on population. Connectivity charges are maintained by the state, though they have put in place a 30-minute time-out to manage costs.

Demographics: Number of Municipalities, Voters and System Users

There are approximately 2 million registered voters in the Connecticut system, with approximately 1.8 million of those records considered "active." The actual number of system users is defined by the 169 municipalities and is not regulated by the state, though the state estimates the number of system users to be approximately 300-350.

Roles of Municipalities and the Secretary of State

Voter Record Additions, Deletions and Modifications

Connecticut's SOS has no ability to add, modify, or delete voter records. All responsibility for voter list maintenance rests at the municipality level. Election officials can look up voters in other towns but cannot change any information in the record. Clerks communicate with one another through a reminder system. Requests for voter moves or other voter changes are submitted via this automatic system. When users log in, they are shown a list of reminders in a queue. They can respond to each individually and then the system will automatically make all approved changes.

Petition Certification

Connecticut does not have statewide petitions, though the system does allow towns to enter local petitions. This process can be very labor intensive -- petitions are only recorded on the individual voter record, but the system offers a voter petition history report that shows all petitions signed by that voter. The system does not contain any electronic signatures.

Communication and Collaboration Strategies

During development, the SOS project team brought together a core group of registrars and created a "think tank" for creative ideas. The registrars brought suggestions and ideas to the state team overseeing the project.

Noteworthy Features and Policies

Local Responsibility

Connecticut's policy towards "local ownership" of the voter registration data was a guiding principle in the development of the system. The Connecticut SOS team recognized that the ultimate responsibility of certifying the vote and maintaining voter lists rests with the municipality; therefore the system was designed to support and reflect that policy. Thus the role of the central office as it relates to voter registration is largely one of financial and technical support to the towns.

Statutory Focus

In developing their system, Connecticut focused strongly on what state elections statutes required regarding maintenance of voter registration records. The system is intentionally uncomplicated, therefore, in order to maintain that concentration on statutory fulfillment and, most recently, HAVA compliance.

Online Help

Online help in Connecticut's CVR system is categorized specifically by topic. Therefore, only the frequently asked questions and troubleshooting tips for that particular topic will appear when one accesses the online help system.

Mail Merge

The system enables a wide variety of communication with voters. Connecticut law requires annual system purges – a process Connecticut calls "canvass." Letters are printed from the system for every voter in the town requesting they sign and return the letter confirming their voter status in that town and their address. Labels can be generated from the system and are coded by household to avoid the added expense of sending multiple letters to the same household if there is more than one registered voter in residence. To date, Connecticut has not allowed this process or any other voter registration process to be performed online by the voter.

Media Reports

Connecticut prepared a voter registration summary which issues total registered voters by party. This report is highly valued by the media.

Data Conversion and Other Technical Challenges

Connecticut made a strong commitment to data conversion; for example, the state created a special program for manual towns to enter their data and prepare it for import into the state system. The state maintains dozens of conversion programs written for this purpose. In some cases the state found that individual voter history records were too challenging to export. In these cases the state converted only the voter record information and tracked history beginning on Day 1 of the new system.

Training and Ongoing Support

The Connecticut SOS offers an open training schedule to all registrars and their assistants from their central office training center in Hartford. Town personnel can attend training classes as often as they deem necessary. The SOS also maintains a help desk. The process flow for the Help Desk is as follows:

- Registrars call the SOS to report a problem;
- The Help Desk attempts to diagnose the problem over the phone. In many cases the issue can be resolved during the phone conversation, for example, an unfamiliar user navigating the system improperly.
- If the issue cannot be resolved over the phone, the issue is referred to the on-site contracted software developer;
- Application and up-time issues are referred to the Department of Information Technology's help desk where the application server and mainframe are hosted;
- If the issue is determined to be a bug in the system, it is referred to the vendor for a program change.

Recommendations

Municipality Involvement

The Connecticut team indicated that the biggest challenge in the CVR process was selecting a solution that all municipalities could use. Connecticut sponsored JAD (joint application design) sessions for municipalities and monitored attendance with sign-in sheets. While Connecticut highly recommends early municipal involvement regarding desired system functionality and local responsibility, the team cautioned against that kind of involvement at the actual system design phase.

As stated above, Connecticut's program was voluntary in 1995. As incentive to municipalities to participate in the new system the state offered new computers and Internet connectivity. Municipalities today in Connecticut are required to use the system, but the state continues to provide a new computer and/or Internet access, depending on the needs of the municipality.

Vendor Accountability to the Project Team

Connecticut's strategy has been to make a firm commitment to a vendor and maintain a high degree of accountability through regular weekly status meetings. In selecting a vendor, Connecticut recommends that the state make sure that vendor is prepared to fully customize their solution for the state.

STATE OF MICHIGAN

System Overview

Age and Description of Current System

Michigan's Qualified Voter File (QVF) was developed in 1998. Michigan has 1,514 cities and townships maintaining their own voter registration lists. In addition, 280 villages and a similar number of school systems keep their own records and manage their own elections. Michigan does not have election-day registration. The Michigan Secretary of State, like Maine, administers motor vehicles as well as elections.

Relationship with Vendor

Michigan maintained the relationship with its original vendor from start to finish of its system and continues to work with this vendor today, mostly utilizing development staff on a contracting basis. It took the state two years to implement the entire project, beginning with a test site launched within a year of commencing the project.

Type – Decentralized

Michigan's system is de-centralized. The state has over 1,700 user municipalities and determined that communication costs could be unacceptable with a thin client solution. Therefore, the state chose to have stand-alone systems in each user municipality that synchronize overnight using Oracle Replication.

It is the responsibility of each municipality to maintain its data and copy records onto either the PC or server located either in their municipal offices or in the county office. Approximately 85% of all voter registration activity takes place through Motor Voter transactions, which are electronically transmitted to the local database. Local data entry, therefore, is minimal. Each of Michigan's 83 counties plus the largest cities and townships (those with a voting age population of 5,000 or greater) has hardware and QVF software installed locally. Clerks who do not have access to the system at their own offices either travel to their county seat to modify their voter file or make arrangements for county personnel to make changes on their behalf. Jurisdictions with a voting age population between 3,000 and 5,000 are permitted to purchase their own hardware and ISP and access the QVF directly. The state provides QVF software at no cost. Additionally, 480 "remote users" access files on county PC's using "PC Anywhere." DMV updates are made on the state server at the time of daily synchronization (though the central system does not have live connectivity to that database at the current time.)

Costs for jurisdictions that have chosen to purchase their own equipment are $300 per year for the Oracle license, plus the cost of Internet access. The state pays all ongoing costs (Oracle licenses, ISP, etc) associated with the QVF for the counties and larger jurisdictions that were provided with QVF hardware and software. Larger municipalities have had ISDN lines installed and the state is responsible for the cost and maintenance of the ISDN lines. The state pays all costs associated with maintaining and enhancing the QVF software.

Database/OS

Michigan runs its system on a UNIX platform using an Oracle database.

Project Management

Michigan selected an experienced state election official as project manager with a team of approximately six full-time employees for project oversight. Temporary employees were brought on for data conversion. In hindsight, Michigan considers that the team was too small given the heavy workload. The project management team consisted of state election officials and state technical experts. Additional technical staff was provided by a vendor to assist with hardware procurement and to develop desktop software, server software and the Oracle database. The vendor developed the system to state specifications. State technical staff maintains the server and Oracle database.

Demographics: Number of Municipalities, Voters and System Users

The SOS does not regulate users of the system; rather, they limit who can have the software installed on their systems. There are 468 municipalities plus 480 remote users now using the QVF software, all running independently. Michigan has 6.7 million active voters and 8.4 million inactive voters, a result of the decision not to delete voters from the system for any reason.

Roles of Municipalities and Central Office

Voter Record Additions, Deletions, Modifications

Daily changes to municipalities' voter lists are posted to the central system overnight during a synchronization process. DMV address changes are done centrally and electronically sent daily to the affected municipalities along with daily "inbox" notifications identifying each change. Municipalities are able to search in other communities' lists through a web-based "statewide voter look-up" and may initiate a request to move a voter from one file to the other.

Petition Certification

Petitions are entered into the Michigan system by election, petition type, office, and candidate/issue. Once a petition is entered it can be tracked and compared to all other petitions entered for that election. The names of petition signers are entered individually within user-set parameters of start dates, end dates, and total number of signatures required. The QVF system will track who has signed which petition, how many signatures have been collected, and will ensure that a voter has only signed the allowed number of petitions for a particular office. The system has a link to digitized signatures allowing users to check signatures on petitions sheets against signatures on file.

Communication and Collaboration Strategies

Michigan organized an Advisory Committee for their QVF system. Any changes or suggestions for the system are filtered through the Advisory Committee. The Committee is currently comprised of eight individuals from municipalities around the state.

Noteworthy Features and Policies

Voter Changes

The Michigan DMV database distinguishes whether or not a person in the database is a registered voter. When an address change is made on a voter's DMV record, those updates are forwarded to the QVF to be included in the nightly synchronization process. If a voter has moved, each municipality will receive a notice that a voter has been removed or added to their respective list. The system has a dispute mechanism for changes, but the motor vehicle address change process has a very low error rate, resulting in low reversal of changes.

The Michigan Department of Community Health regularly transmits deceased voter information to the DMV system which (as noted above) has flagged any records pertaining to voters so that the same data sync and purge method as described above can be accomplished with death records on a monthly basis. County clerks can also update the QVF directly with death records they receive at the county level.

Data Conversion and Other Technical Challenges

Michigan characterizes data conversion as by far the most challenging aspect of its statewide voter registration project. Even with foresight and planning for data conversion, the complexity and burden of the conversion tasks were underestimated. Michigan had more than 800 data formats to convert, 400 to 500 of which eventually required manual data entry (keying). Michigan discovered large numbers of duplicates during the data conversion process requiring the writing of routines to perform data matching. The most challenging aspect of the conversion process was matching data being entered with data that had already been imported. Michigan estimates that it purged 1.2 million duplicates from the system during its conversion.

The Michigan SOS had 40 temporary employees working on data conversion over a period of three months, with a great deal of assistance from the SOS project team.

Training and Ongoing support

Online Help and Resources

The Secretary of State's Elections Web site has a special password protected area for users of the QVF. Frequently Asked Questions, past issues of newsletters, and access to the statewide lookup are accessible on the Web site. The system will not allow access to the Web site by more than one user logging in under the same user name and password. Michigan's user names and passwords expire if they are not used within a six-month period.

Initial Training Plan

Michigan recommends a measured rollout beginning with seven to 12 pilot sites, with on-site support from the SOS, the vendor or a contracted training vendor. Michigan employed a large traveling technical team that divided the state for installation and connectivity. State training staff traveled to larger jurisdictions and central training locations throughout the state and provided initial hands on software training. Today, new clerks are brought in to the central office for a full day of training.

Ongoing Training

In addition to a help desk staff at the central elections office, the SOS team takes an annual road show, visiting at least eight regional sites per year and inviting surrounding communities for training and consultation on software updates and enhancements.

Recommendations

Data Conversion

Data conversion is contingent on the quality of the data that currently exists in the individual systems. If the data is what the state would consider being of reasonable quality, Michigan recommends importing it into the new system. However, if there are any questions about the data integrity or difficulty of migration, key it in. In Michigan's experience, problems often occurred when the latest record in the system was assumed to be the best or most accurate. This was not always the case due to local data entry errors. Reliable hard copies of the data keyed into the system may save time over importing poor quality electronic data.

Discovery and Design

Michigan found that many issues that appeared "critical" in the discovery/design phase were not nearly as critical as they were originally considered to be. Be realistic about critical system functionality and then stick with it. Do not try to add too much. Many of the Michigan municipalities had sophisticated systems prior to the QVF. The SOS carefully set the expectation that the new system would not be able to give every municipality all the functionality they had before. Strive for the middle ground and be prepared to say no.

Help Desk and Training

Be sure to feature both technical and election expertise in both your initial and ongoing training initiatives. It is important to have both represented. Take advantage of the municipal association meetings, and ask for space and time for training and orientation purposes.

Street Indexing

A GIS street index can be of great assistance when going to a statewide system. With 50 Main Streets in as many municipalities, it is difficult to distinguish and maintain standards and accuracy. Have a good plan in place for this component early since it may cost extra.

Scanning and Bar Coding

The state of Michigan has had great success in utilizing inexpensive bar-coding and scanning devices with their municipalities. Voter cards are scanned so that signatures can be stored. Driver license numbers are bar-coded and used for tracking voter history at the polls on Election Day. Again, simpler is better in terms of the equipment – they are tremendous time-savers. Also, NVRA agencies that have automatic printing capability have bar-coded those applications. This has saved many data entry hours for the municipalities and the state.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

System Overview

Age of Current System

Massachusetts issued an RFP in 1994 for a new system that was developed in time for the 1996 election.

Relationship with Vendor

Massachusetts terminated the relationship with its first vendor and currently supports its own CVR system. They have utilized contractors for programming assistance in the past and continue to use contractors and consultants on an as-needed basis.

Type – Centralized System

Users connect to the state system over a frame relay network using a state-provided router. Approximately 70 communities are connecting via a fractional T1 line. The current system is not web-based, though the Commonwealth is considering a web enhancement. The SOS provides municipalities with a computer, router, and printer and the Commonwealth provides all of the maintenance (hardware, network, connection, etc.) Depending on the size of the municipality, additional PC's may be provided.

Demographics: Number of Municipalities, Voters and System Users

There are approximately 4 million registered voters in the Commonwealth out of a state population of approximately 6.4 million. Three hundred fifty-one municipalities are served by the CVR system, which is housed at the central office of the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State. The system has authorized between 800 and 1,000 user ID's. Average processing is in the range of 400 to 450 users but can range as high as 600 to 650 daily users.

Roles of Municipalities and Central Office

Voter Record Additions, Deletions, Modifications

Each municipality has access to its own records and has read-only access to other communities' records, including, but not limited to census information. If one municipality's edits to voter records impact another municipality, a notice is sent to the affected community's pending queue for further action.

Petition Certification

The system recognizes duplicate petition signatures by voter ID. The system is incapable of validating signatures; clerks manually check to verify that the name and address listed on the petition corresponds with the name and address listed within the system for that voter. The actual signature is not checked. If petitions are challenged in court, voter cards are used to verify signatures.

Communication and Collaboration Strategies

The SOS sponsors a User Group for the CVR system. Eight users from around the Commonwealth serve on the User Group. The primary function of the User Group is to discuss potential new features for the CVR system. The SOS does its best to accommodate all requests within the boundaries of election law.

The SOS also uses email as a communication tool for municipalities as evidenced by this quote from their user manual:

"The CVR provides each user with a personal email account. This is the CVR's primary method of communicating with the users. The CVR and the Elections Division inform users of planned system shut-downs, software releases and various legal notices regarding current issues. This email system also allows users to communicate with other communities. It is recommended that users check their email account at each log-on."

Noteworthy Features and Policies

Census Integration

The CVR system in Massachusetts allows for integration with census information and has the functionality to include census forms as scanned images. The system assigns Voter ID and Resident ID (including distinctions for "head of household") as well as Family ID. (Note: The Massachusetts system designates census descriptors such as "Family ID" and "Head of Household ID" as the same, called "Head of Household"). This census information follows voters throughout their activity and change history. The census information is included in barcodes created by the CVR system, which contains both the voter ID and head of household ID used for everyone in the family for census purposes. The barcode also assists in performing automatic features. For example, if an individual votes in a primary for a presidential election under an un-enrolled status, their vote automatically enters them into that party for the presidential election only. At the next election, they will be cued to ask them if they'd like to change back to un-enrolled.

Municipality Without Electricity

There is one municipality in Massachusetts that does not have power (the municipality is located on an island). In this case the SOS central office manages the local data on the system. There are only 87 people in the municipality, and survey results indicate that the burden on the central office is very small.

Data Conversion and Other Technical Challenges

Massachusetts elected to convert all municipal legacy data (as opposed to data entry) in order to bring municipalities into the new system. Their conversion efforts focused on converting the data into a flat file for import. The SOS found this to be challenging given considerable data integrity issues found during the process.

Training and Ongoing Support

The SOS central office has a help desk that has been historically staffed with two to four FTE's including a Help Desk Supervisor. In addition, two field representatives (one in Western Massachusetts and one in the Central part of the state) travel to perform on-site training and assistance to municipalities.

Recommendations

Bar coding – Keep it simple. Massachusetts started with pens, went to scan guns, and went back to pens, which seem to be easier for volunteers to use.

1. Participation - Insist or mandate that all municipalities use the system.
2. Project Management – Establish an internal team which will not only manage the project and work with the vendor during implementation, but who will also manage and work on the system post implementation.

STATE OF OREGON

Unlike the states of Michigan, Massachusetts and Connecticut, the state of Oregon is in the preliminary stages of the planning and design phase of its Centralized Voter Registration Project (Phase I). Because Oregon is in the early stages of the project, the state project team provided extensive insights about the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, including observations and recommendations addressing project management, the RFP creation, evaluation and contract negotiation. Finally, the state provided overall recommendations to any state releasing an RFP for a centralized voter registration system.

RFP Overview

Oregon began its HAVA analysis and needs assessment process in December 2002 and released its RFP in May, 2003. A total of seven responses were deemed by the state to be in compliance (one of the seven qualified vendors was later disqualified by the Evaluation Team). By August, 2003, the final vendor was selected, and the state signed the contract with the vendor in October, 2003. Per the contract, the pilot program is expected to be complete by May, 2005, with a mandate to migrate all data to the centralized system by November, 2005.

End-to-End Project Management

According to Oregon, state project management was a key component that began long before the final vendor was selected. Not only is a dedicated project management team necessary from the state, according to Oregon, but also the project management team must have executive sponsorship and external oversight. In particular, Oregon undertook several measures to ensure that the state had comprehensive oversight of the project from start to finish:

- Dedicated State Project Team: In December 2002, when Oregon began its HAVA needs assessment, the state committed to hire two permanent project managers. To supplement the two project managers, Oregon instituted a "state team" or a four-person PM team whose only job was to oversee the entire project from RFP to delivery and sign-off.
- Multi-Agency and Multi-Jurisdictional Oversight: The state established a 13-member committee comprised of Secretary of State staff (seven members), county clerks (4 clerks representing the 36 counties) and data processing staff (two members) from Oregon's centralized IT, the Department of Administrative Services.
- Third-Party External Oversight: The state hired an external third party to oversee Quality Assurance of the end-to-end project.
- Vendor Involvement in Project Management Process: Oregon contractually mandated that the vendor be part of the state's core project management team.
- Executive Sponsorship: To reinforce the no-fail aspect of this project, the state CIO is involved and active in day-to-day management of the contract and apprised of all developments. Additionally, Oregon involved its attorney general from the outset because of the policy implications of a centralized voter registration system.

Request for Proposal

Oregon spent approximately six months gathering information from counties and devising the final RFP for the Central Voter Registration and Election Management System. During the analysis phase, Oregon visited all of its 36 counties and documented major functionalities of each county-based system. After initial conversations regarding overall functionality, Oregon continued to meet two to three times a week with county clerks and technical staff to review all requirements of the RFP.

Based on the state's experiences, Oregon provides the following observations and recommendations when considering the formulation of the Request for Proposal:

- Oregon's proposal requirements were inclusive of hardware, software, networking, training, security, warranty, support, PM team costs (internal project costs), training, legal costs and QA costs.
- Oregon recommends that the state ask prospective vendors for fully burdened project costs, including all internal costs that will be borne by the state.
- As part of the RFP, Oregon did not mandate that vendors accept all defined terms and conditions at the time of submission without negotiation with the state. Instead, the state only mandated the acceptance of limited terms and conditions required by the constitution and state law. This afforded the state maximum flexibility to consider solutions from more vendors and to negotiate specific terms as part of the contract negotiation.
- Oregon separated the overall system requirements into 420 specific line items and asked vendors to individually address each requirement. This line item format allowed the evaluators to assess solutions for specific requirements and then evaluate the overall solution. The format also assisted evaluators in determining whether the overall solutions provided functionality in all requirement areas.
- Oregon recommends that states make the first deliverable a state engagement plan, created jointly with the vendor, which addresses how the vendor will interact and report to the state.

Evaluation

Oregon implores any state releasing an RFP to carefully consider the implications of the evaluation process before the RFP hits the street. This is important for several reasons. First, the state cannot change the process once it is underway. Second, the evaluation process is often the subject of protests. Finally, a well understood and carefully considered process understood by all evaluators and vendors will result in a fair and effective selection.

Specifically, Oregon felt strongly, based on its experience, that the following evaluation guidelines and observations should be considered:

- The evaluation committee should read each proposal once, and then read again scoring each of the 420 individual requirements. This will provide the evaluator with an overall sense of the solution before focusing on the individual requirements.
- The state should understand the implications of its scoring system ahead of time. In Oregon's case, cost factors comprised only 10% of overall scoring, putting a substantial focus on the technical proposals before considering cost. This weighting system was imposed deliberately because Oregon wanted to ensure that all top vendors could deliver the system technically before the state was ready to evaluate cost factors.

- Because the evaluation process is often the subject of protests, the state must strictly adhere to the evaluation process outlined in the RFP. Make sure this is a process you can hold to before you start.
- The state may wish to reserve a significant percentage of the evaluation scoring to accommodate vendor interviews/oral presentations. Oregon chose the top three vendor bids and scheduled them to a one-day, eight-hour videotaped interview. Each vendor was required to address every requirement in the RFP during the interview. The oral presentation/interview element was critical to evaluate how each finalist reacted to the time element, especially how the vendors will react to being under pressure and behind schedule.

Contract Negotiation

Because Oregon did not mandate vendors to accept standard terms and conditions as part of the proposal process, the contract negotiation for its system was extremely important to the overall process of selecting a vendor. Oregon elected to pursue a process that afforded flexibility in negotiation, but held the vendor's feet to the fire in terms of commitments made. Oregon makes the following recommendations:

- While Oregon has asked for a 100% performance bond in the past for other projects, the state elected to pursue a retainage strategy for this particular RFP to ensure that a full bond would not limit vendor participation. A retainage strategy is one that withholds a certain percentage of each payment at each step until final deliverables are completed.
- For this comprehensive project, Oregon also scaled back its liquidated damages clause to 10 to 12% of the value of the contract.
- Oregon employed a small state contract team with overall familiarity to build trust and facilitate an "across the table" format with the vendor.
- The state also used videotape from the oral presentations as part of contract negotiations to remind vendors of commitments.

Proposed System Features

While the system is still under development, Oregon has settled on several important features that will be critical to the success of the overall system:

- Oregon elected to enhance an existing county system for its centralized database and election management system.
- The state employed Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions involving election officials. Oregon stated that it is imperative that election officials continue to be involved in the development phases of the system to ensure ongoing buy-in.
- Through its analysis, Oregon determined it was too complicated to remove the voter registration piece from the election management piece, so Oregon elected to go to RFP for a single system for both capabilities. The final system cost more than $2 million for hardware, $3 million in software, $5 million total for five years of support and $6 million in total SOS staff costs.
- The solution operates in three geographically separated data centers in a cluster mode. Data vaulting occurs for all three data centers and there is a fourth site for archiving only.
- Vendor is required to provide Security Audits.

- Vendor must provide live monitored Intrusion Detection on election days.
- Vendor must provide a live hacking test prior to launch.

Lessons Learned

Oregon acknowledges that an RFP for a centralized voter registration system is a comprehensive and highly complex undertaking because of the public policy implications, competition for HAVA funds and the high profile nature of the overall system. Because of these particular factors, Oregon felt that there were several overall lessons learned that apply specifically to HAVA:

- The State will get public records questions. Be familiar with the laws and include the attorney general and other officials in discussions.
- When creating the RFP, pay particular attention to detailing the cost proposal/scoring sections. Work through the scoring system before releasing the RFP and document it clearly in the RFP.
- Liquidated damages/performance bonds drive cost up for the vendor and may limit competition and participation.
- Develop an evaluation process designed to bring in subject matter experts.
- Most of the protests revolved around Oregon's failure to follow the process, and were not in response to the proposal or the process itself. Make sure the state follows a clearly defined process exactly as documented.
- Oregon had each member of the team, including county officials, sign confidentiality agreements and conflict of interest statements to preserve the integrity of the proposal generation and evaluation process.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

The Commonwealth of Virginia has been on the forefront of elections system development for many years. In 1973, Virginia became only the third state in the country to develop a centralized voter registration database. The state's election night reporting system is one of the most advanced in the country, and Virginia features more than a dozen online services on its elections Web site. Virginia plans to enhance its voter registration system in the coming year with an eye towards modernization, improved reporting capabilities and further HAVA compliance. Though Virginia has contracted with outside vendors to perform work on their systems over the years, the state also has a strong in-house team for programming, hosting, and maintenance.

Online services pertaining specifically to voter registration can be found at http://www.vipnet.org/voterandelection and include:

- Absentee Ballot Tracking: Citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia who are registered to vote by absentee ballot may check the status of their ballot by logging into a secure page from the State Board of Elections' Web site. The system returns status of the ballot, including date of receipt, by the appropriate government entities.
- Voter Registration Verification: Virginia citizens may log into a secure page from the State Board of Elections' Web site using their Virginia DMV driver number, DMV PIN, date of birth and social security number to verify their current voter registration status.
- Polling Place Look-up: Voters who have relocated or have been placed in a new district may find their appropriate polling place by entering their address, online.
- Wireless Polling Place Look-up: This service allows a voter to find their polling-place using a PDA at any time from anywhere.

The following excerpt from the report entitled "Elections In Virginia: An Overview of the Current System" prepared by the staff of the State Board of Elections in May 2001 outlines the roles of localities and the central office.

> General Registrars and their staff hold the keys to the successful continuing operation of the system. As they enter registration information into the VVRS, registration files are updated daily to assure record accuracy. Each update produces a variety of reports used to verify the accuracy of the data entered. In addition, the VVRS produces printed voter cards. Voter cards are mailed to each person registering, or changing information to his current record. These cards notify registrants of the location at which they vote the districts in which they are eligible to vote, and how to contact the General Registrar of the county or city should they require assistance. New voter cards are also mailed to notify voters whenever their voting districts, precincts or polling places are changed (for example, by redistricting).
>
> In addition, the State Board of Elections uses the information in the VVRS to produce lists, mailing labels, Compact Discs and/or Diskettes containing registrant data for clients eligible under the law to receive them.

The Department of Information and Technology (DIT) **, located in Richmond, maintains a UNISYS computer that supports the VVRS. It operates in a database environment with remote computer terminals accessing the system. Terminals and other equipment necessary to interact with the VVRS are located in General Registrars' offices throughout the state. In 1999, State Board of Elections updated the terminals and provided two (2) Gateway Personal Computers and one (1) Hewlett Packard Printer to each locality, using funds specifically provided in the Appropriations Act for the purpose. A telephone communication network provides the link between local office and the UNISYS host computer. Also in 1999, the communication network was updated and each locality was provided with dedicated frame relay network circuit lines.

The State Board of Elections, located in Richmond, manages the VVRS. Its Virginia Voter Registration System Division provides support for the system and has the responsibility to assist all local offices with system-related problems or questions.

** *DIT has been absorbed by the new IT organization in Virginia called VITA, Virginia Information Technologies Agency. VITA performs the role of DIT as described above for the voter registration system.*

Interfaces to other state agency databases are also planned for the next enhancement of the Virginia system. At this time, the system does not connect to other state agency systems such as motor vehicles, GIS, social security, felony database, social security, etc.

Virginia's CVR system has components for tracking petitions, but does not have scanned signatures. Instead, SSN's are utilized for verification and to determine potential duplicates. Scanning, imaging and bar coding are not current features of the system, although some localities are beginning to experiment with using bar codes for the poll books to track voter history.

STATE OF WISCONSIN

The State of Wisconsin is currently working on a business analysis of its voter registration system needs, and hopes to issue an RFP. The state conducted an RFI earlier this year with vendors and worked on a needs assessment with large municipalities that have electronic voter registration systems.

In Wisconsin, county government entities are responsible for producing election ballots. The more than 1,850 municipalities administer voter registration and conduct elections. By current state law, only the 169 municipalities with a population exceeding 5,000 are required to register their voters. An additional 151 municipalities choose to have voter registration, which results in a total of 320 municipalities registering voters, representing 76% of the voter population. The Wisconsin SOS is working with the rest of the jurisdictions to investigate consolidation scenarios or cooperative arrangements that would allow one municipality to conduct voter registration functions on behalf of another. They are hoping to achieve a system user group of approximately 600.

Wisconsin does have Election Day Registration and is considering the feasibility of real time voter registration at the polls on Election Day. Wisconsin election practice has a 13-day cut-off for mail-in and satellite registration, but individuals can register in person at the municipality up to and on Election Day. They have a 10-day length of residency requirement, so individuals must show proof of residency for at least that duration in order to register.

STATE OF MAINE

STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

COMMERCIAL VENDOR ASSESSMENT

COMMERCIAL VENDOR ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

To help create a Request for Proposals (RFP) to implement a Statewide Computerized Voter Registration List that complies with the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), the Maine Department of the Secretary of State distributed a detailed survey to the vendor community in an attempt to better understand the opportunities and limitations of the current environment. The information gathered from the vendor community will be critical to the State's ability to receive competitive responses, evaluate those responses, finalize a contract, develop the system and provide a solution that can be supported and maintained in the future.

An initial list of vendors was screened for those who already had provided some level of voter registration services. Furthermore, several Maine municipalities already utilize services from the vendor community, and these companies with Maine-specific knowledge and experience were added to the survey set. Finally, this list was augmented by adding vendors discovered during research performed on other State implementations, including vendors who were awarded the work, responded to State voter registration RFPs and were short-listed in the RFP selection process. Efforts were made to include all known vendors who had delivered a statewide voter registrations system in some context while still keeping the number of responses manageable. After reviewing the vendor lists from all three sources, vendor surveys were sent out to 16 total companies, 11 of which responded completely and one of which responded through an oral interview.

The vendor survey was made up of 59 long-answer questions separated into the following categories:

- Vendor Background and Experience
- Vendor Product Information
- Petition Process Capabilities
- Absentee Ballot Process Capabilities
- Support and Additional Tools and Services
- Software Terms and Costs

The vendor responses, combined with any supplemental data they provided, was compared and contrasted by normalizing the survey result data to determine trends, best practices and information relevant to the State in order to write and evaluate an RFP. The primary focus of the vendor survey was to determine:

- The current offerings available in the vendor community for Statewide Voter Registration
- Whether the vendor population can support some of the unique requirements for the State of Maine
- Which technical aspects that should be considered when evaluating vendor proposals
- If vendors wanted to highlight any issues as important to a State starting this process
- Which features were integral and what features could be acquired a la carte
- What kind of support and Maintenance options could vendors provide
- The recommended policy actions and decisions the State needs to act upon

OBSERVATIONS, TRENDS AND COMMONALITIES

- There is a proven level of vendor competence in centralized voter registration systems that the State of Maine can leverage to reduce project costs, mitigate risks and shorten the time required to deploy the system.
- The surveyed vendors have provided central voter registration systems or consulted in the design of central voter registration systems in two countries, 18 states, the District of Columbia, and thousands of counties and municipalities.
- Seven of the responding vendors have systems that have been deployed on a statewide level and they would plan to use those systems as a baseline for Maine's specific requirements. Vendors existing products meet or exceed most of the State's requirements for a HAVA-compliant voter registration system with additional customization to bring the system to full compliance with the State's needs.
- The RFP should be written in a manner that allows the vendor to bid either a custom solution or a pre-packaged software product.
- A review of the relevant laws shows that both Maine and federal law call for a centralized voter registration system and that the Maine Department of the Secretary of State has determined, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General and through a review of the available assessment information, the current Maine voter registration system, and the requirements of state and federal law, that a real-time centralized system, even if not required by HAVA, will best serve the citizens of Maine.
- Vendors have proposed solutions using many different strains of development languages with the majority of responses (76%) using Microsoft technologies (C++/C#, ASP.Net, Visual basic, Visual FoxPro), but there is no current technical reason the State should make any recommendation for one language over another providing the solution conforms to State standards.
- The majority of vendors proposed an Oracle or SQL Server database solution as the storage mechanism for the centralized voter registration list.
- All vendors surveyed defined performance to be a product of the communication bandwidth and system architecture (hardware and database/application server software) and not the result of the voter registration software architecture. Therefore, the capabilities to scale to any increasing demands would not require a change to the underlying software module.
- All vendors stated that the administrative features were too numerous to list but that their software would provide administrative activities on most of the data functionality including street lists, districts, field changing, reports and other administrative tasks.
- All vendors surveyed provide the capability to build custom interfaces to all defined state data sources. Vendors have the capability to write custom integration modules for BMV, Office of Vital Statistics, and GIS as well as any custom batch data imports such as address imports defined during requirements gathering.
- The system must provide an interface for users to enter, store and report on voter activity and history and all surveyed vendors provide this functionality.

- Integrating bar code functionality into the system will provide the State with several important features that would enhance the overall functionality of the system. Based upon municipality survey data and current vendor installations, the ability to bar code voter registration information with certain activities seems to be core functionality for a complete forward-looking voter registration system.
- The system should provide imaging/scanning functionality since this will provide the greatest flexibility for the future and enable an efficient method of providing absentee ballot and petition management.
- The capabilities of building on-the-fly reports without programmatic changes is highly desirable and vendors should provide this feature either through a custom report generation tool or a third-party report writing tool.
- The State should require absentee ballot support through the centralized voter registration system, which would provide more efficient creation of absentee ballot lists and eligible voter lists (poll books) for elections.
- The State should have a transaction audit history that includes all of the necessary features to meet the reporting and researching requirements of the State provided in a manner that the vendor specifies.
- The State should make the functionality of associating street file addresses to districts and other voter characterizing traits a mandatory requirement of the system.
- The ability to manage addresses and redistricting through a GIS system would allow for better management of voter precincts and valid address checking, though this should not be a mandatory requirement of the system based upon the custom nature of the development.
- Vendors' software provides role-based access and the ultimate system must provide system roles that meet the election requirements of the State of Maine.
- The State has determined that the Internet will be the communications backbone for the system and that the system will be required to function with municipalities who have a dial-up connection at 56Kbps.
- The state needs to specify a recommended training approach that meets the needs of the municipalities. The state should have the vendor specify training and installation plans, system documentation, and proposed support offering in complete detail for the state to determine the overall merits of the vendor's proposed support efforts.
- The vendor should discuss the methods of surveying and following up with users to update the voter registration offering.
- The state should require all vendors to provide printed user manuals and context based online help within the applications to empower trained users to readily resolve issues without contacting customer support.
- Vendors must provide an installation guide that will include all necessary system requirements, a step-by-step guide for installing any client side components, and phone based installation support for the initial installation phase of the project.
- The vendor should be required to document the estimated level of effort for state staff to support the system throughout the period of performance.

- Given the State's desire to reduce costs and provide in-house expertise it is recommended that the State follow a "Train the Trainer" approach by having the vendor train select State staff in the solution to a level of expertise that will allow those individuals to train the municipalities on the system, ultimately without the vendor's interaction.
- The Department of the Secretary of State combined with the Bureau of Information Resources should provide support for any appropriate portions of the system. The vendor should only be required to provide application level support to the agency and not direct end user support.
- The State should provide the information necessary for vendors that would like to utilize the services of the State's existing data center and the hot-site location that is currently up for RFP.
- The State should have the vendor migrate electronic data of municipalities with populations above a certain threshold (to be determined prior to RFP) and just key enter those populations below a certain threshold.
- Voter registration cards should be migrated into the system as well as the data on the cards to perform signature verification tasks such as petition certification.

RESULTS

The following Vendor Assessment result section breaks down the information provided by the solicited vendors into the following functional areas that represent the 11 key features that the state will provide requirements and policy decisions for in the resultant RFP:

1. Vendor Background and Experience
2. Vendor Product Information
3. System Security
4. Communication Infrastructure to Municipalities
5. System Support
6. System Maintenance
7. Hosting
8. Cost and Licensing
9. Data Migration
10. Project Timeline
11. Contractual Issues

Each section discusses the data and documents provided in connection with the relevant issues. The analysis does not discuss any vendor individually but, rather, analyzes the vendor population as a whole.

1. Vendor Background and Experience

As a group, the surveyed vendors have provided central voter registration systems or consulted in the design of central voter registration systems in two countries, 18 states, the District of Columbia, and thousands of counties and municipalities. Two vendors were headquartered in Maine. Since there are so many potential opportunities for building HAVA voter registration systems, the State also needs to be cognizant of the potential for some vendors to take on many projects in multiple states, thus diminishing the vendor's experience pool. The State also will need to consider the vendor's project management methodology and the availability of a local project team as critical factors in the overall success of the system.

Several vendors have already partnered with other vendors to provide one solid team to meet all of the needs of the State for an end-to-end solution. The vendors who proposed partnerships consisted of a large-scale software integration firm, which proposed partnering with a niche elections firm.

There is a proven level of vendor competence in centralized voter registration systems that the State of Maine can leverage to reduce project costs, mitigate risks and shorten the time required to deploy the system. Particular care should be taken during RFP evaluations to ensure that the vendor can provide adequate resources, that the project team assigned from these experienced vendors is not working on multiple projects or switched for non-experienced project members.

The State needs to put metrics in the Background and Experience sections of the RFP that can account for the value of a vendor's experience. Scoring this section in the RFP should be fully defined by the State prior to the RFP release. The key decision factors with respect to the experience section should be based around the following areas:

- Vendor's Financial Strength and Stability
- Determining the Relevant Experience of Partnership Proposals (where they have worked together, what was the scope, etc.)
- References (Voter Registration and other relevant large scale software development projects)
- End to End Solution (ability to possibly provide other HAVA services)
- Existing Support Capabilities (application, infrastructure, PC)
- Project Management Methodology and Capabilities
- Staff Profile and Commitment to the Maine Project

Maine will want to explicitly consider a vendor's experience in true statewide voter registration solutions as well as a vendor's previous experience with voter registration or other information technology projects within the State of Maine.

2. Vendor Product Information

The vendors' current solution offerings include both custom developments as well as packaged software deployed with modifications to the State's unique business rules. Most vendors had developed systems prior to the passing of HAVA, and therefore the requirements for integration with driver's license data and death certificates as defined in a HAVA-compliant system were not in the initial scope of the vendor's deployed solutions. Most vendors subsequently have developed these features in their newest offering or leave this up to custom development to meet the individual integration requirements of the requesting State.

Vendors existing products meet or exceed most of the State's requirements for a HAVA-compliant voter registration system with additional customization to bring the system to full compliance with the State's needs. The key factors for custom development are:

- Integration with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and Office of Vital Statistics
- Number of standard reports and custom report development
- Complexity of administrative interface over baseline functionality
- Export and import requirements
- Interfaces with other systems (GIS, State's election system, redistricting software, ballot software, voting systems, etc.)
- Security model

Vendors were most concerned with the following issues:

- Municipality network
- Support responsibilities
- Maintenance responsibilities
- Report generation requirements
- Purchasing of hardware and software components
- Data center location
- Architecture preferences
- State IT standards

The following sections analyze the key features and functionality that were addressed in the Vendor Questionnaire. These sections will provide a broad overview of the types of solutions developed by the group of vendors for other jurisdictions.

Packaged Product or Custom Development?

Seven of the responding 12 vendors have systems that have been deployed on a statewide level and they would plan to use those systems as a baseline for Maine's specific requirements. The four other vendors plan either to adapt an existing system that has been deployed at a county or municipality level or to leverage a HAVA-compliant system that has not been deployed at an enterprise state level. One vendor proposed a completely custom development solution. Although this vendor has built two statewide centralized voter registration systems prior to HAVA, the vendor's response seemed to indicate that they planned to build a solution from the ground up.

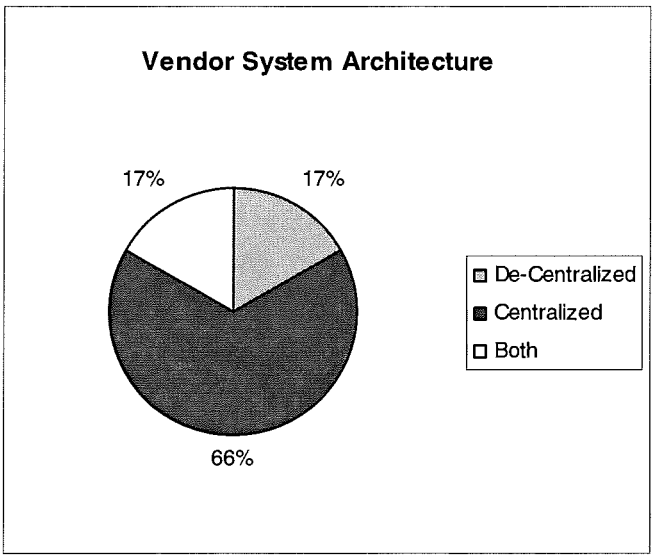
Based upon the responses to the survey, no vendor will provide a product that meets all of the functionality that is required by Maine without some degree of customization. It will be important when evaluating proposals to determine how much of the work is in the core module and how much work will be custom add-ons specific to the State of Maine. This is important because the baseline core functionality should be deployed in all of the vendors' client solutions, and, therefore, be more proven. These core components will have the advantage of capitalizing on improvements to the systems because upgrades to the core system will not generally provide improvements to custom developed modules.

The RFP should be written in a manner that allows the vendor to bid either a custom solution or a pre-packaged software product. For this reason, the RFP should not be prescriptive in requiring deliverables that are only applicable to a custom development approach and should provide requirements that are not so detailed as to not allow the vendor to propose a suitable method of performing the solution that fits within their product framework.

Real Time Centralized Systems versus Decentralized Distributed Systems

There was a general trend of vendors proposing a centralized thin client or web-based voter registration solution. Two vendors who had successfully deployed a decentralized solution have proposed their latest versions for Maine, which is an updated centralized solution. The two vendors who did not propose a centralized solution in any manner had never deployed a statewide solution and would be deploying their municipal level solutions and integrating them to a periodically updated centralized list. The following chart, **Figure 8**, breaks down the vendor's proposed system architectures for all twelve respondents.

Figure 8: Vendor System Architecture Represented as De-centralized Centralized or Both



It is important that the State think about what options are available and what solutions best fit current and future Department of State needs, especially with respect to interconnectivity, maintenance, support, and data integrity.

A real-time, centralized system will meet the requirements of HAVA in Maine. While some other states and some vendors have chosen to use decentralized or distributed systems in which the data is replicated to the state's system on a periodic basis from outlying municipal or other locations, it is not clear that such a system would meet the requirements and challenges in Maine. Decentralized systems can have certain advantages. For example, they do not require consistent statewide connectivity to perform regular tasks, they are generally faster, and they provide an inherent if partial back-up system since the data resides at more than 500 locations and local information could be accessible even without a connection to the system or in the event of a problem at a central location. Nevertheless, in Maine, only the deployment of a centralized system can meet the requirement of providing all election officials with immediate electronic access to all the information in the single, statewide voter registration list.

A review of the relevant laws shows that both Maine and federal law call for a centralized system. In part, the Help America Vote Act requires Maine to "implement, in a uniform and non-discriminatory manner, a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list defined, maintained, and administered at the State level." The Maine Department of the Secretary of State has determined, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General and through a review of the available assessment information, the current Maine voter registration system, and the requirements of state and federal law, a centralized system, even if not required, will best serve Maine. A centralized system also provides many practical advantages and can help establish a strong foundation for future enhancements to Maine's voter registration system.

Benefits of a centralized system include:

- **Maintenance and support**. A centralized system utilizing a thin-client or web-based access method will require less client-side software support for the end-user. Upgrades to the system software will occur on the centralized system and in most cases will not need anything to be deployed to the 503 municipalities and other end users.
- **One list in real-time.** Since all municipalities will potentially be working from the same data set, it will be easier to facilitate a variety of local tasks, such as:
    - Determining an individual's current voter registration status, regardless of residence.
    - Discerning whether a received registration is a new voter.
    - Avoiding and eliminating duplicate registrations.
    - Improved ease of updating records, such as when a person moves.
- **Central access to a single data set.** Using a single, central data set supports efficiencies that simply are not possible when such a data set does not exist or is not accessible to a central data administrator. For example:
    - Required data administration can be supported from a centralized level to assist municipalities.
    - Reporting can be done much more efficiently.
    - Verification of voter registration information in coordination with other information sources, as required by HAVA, can be accomplished.
- **Designed with an enterprise view from the ground up.** By choosing an enterprise centralized system the State can take advantage of several features only provided in systems built from the ground up.
- **Back up and recovery.** By centrally storing all data at the vendor or State data center, the State has the capabilities for performing data back-ups and providing disaster recovery mitigation and planning.
- **Election Day Registrations.** Being able to access the complete real-time enterprise set of data from the actual polling place is possible with a centralized system. While this may not be necessary in every community in the immediate future, it is highly desired by some communities.

Selected issues that would need to be addressed with a centralized system include:

- **Existing network resources.** To what extent can existing state telecommunications networks connecting municipal or county offices be leveraged for the CVR system?

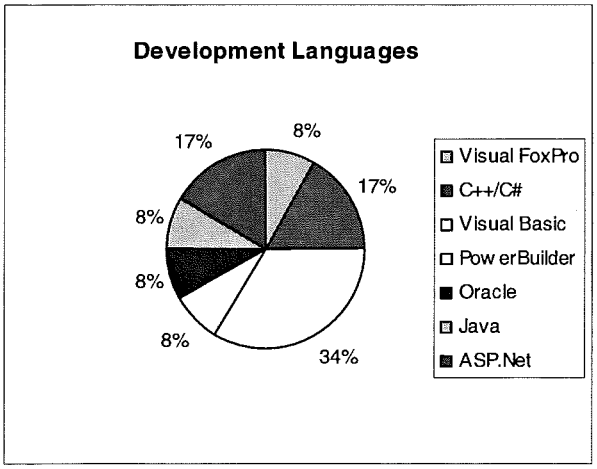
- **Network alternatives.** Will Maine require a Wide Area Network (WAN) for the system, or use the Internet as a communications backbone for the system (presumably via a secure connection, e.g. SSL or a Virtual Private Network). The Internet approach could potentially result in significant savings. More than 380 of the municipalities that responded to the voter registration survey reported having an Internet connection in the municipal office. That is an existing Internet connection rate of more than 80 percent.
- **Availability levels and system response times.** The State must determine what are the acceptable availability levels and response times in any new system. In general, a centralized system requires reliable bandwidth to each local office. More than half of Maine's communities have fewer than 500 voters and smaller jurisdictions that are processing only a few or maybe no applications on many days will not need as robust a connection. Still, even in those cases where dial-up bandwidth is sufficient, the periodic inaccessibility of most commercial dial-up services will be an issue that needs to be addressed with any system that incorporates dial-up access. Decisions regarding the required responsiveness and availability of the system for jurisdictions of varying sizes will drive the network requirements for the system, which in turn could have a dramatic impact on costs.

Through the RFP process, Maine should seek a real-time thin client centralized voter registration system as the solution to meeting the legal requirements it confronts and as the course that is most likely to provide the most benefits to the state's democracy in the future. Within that framework, Maine should allow vendors to propose the option that they feel best meets the needs of the state of Maine. Vendors should justify their recommendation and provide benefits and disadvantages from the proposed model. If there are specific requirements that might affect the vendor's choice of model (for example, requiring Election Day access to the centralized voter registration system from the polls), then the RFP should specify those requirements at this time.

Development Languages

Vendors have proposed solutions using many different strains of development languages. Though a majority of responses (76%) propose using Microsoft technologies (C++/C#, ASP.Net, Visual basic, Visual FoxPro), there is no reason the State should make any recommendation for one language over another. The detailed summary of the vendors' responses is included in the following chart, **Figure 9**.

Figure 9: Breakdown of Vendor's Development Languages

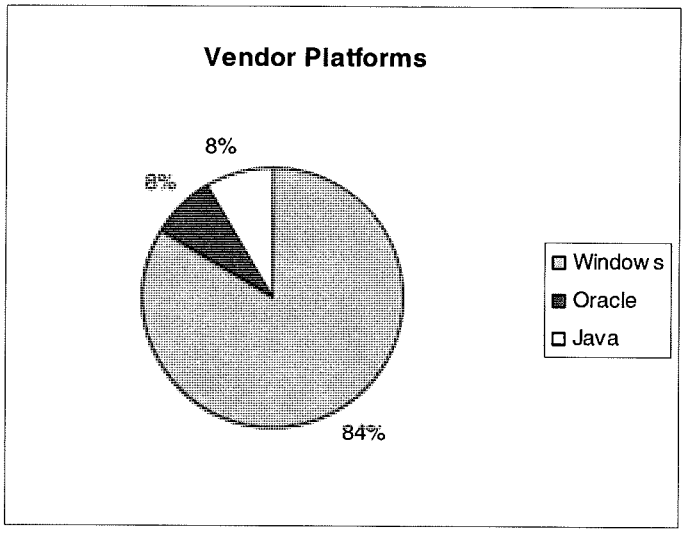


Vendors should explain their reasoning behind choosing their development environment and the State should evaluate how this fits into its IT standards and staff skill set in case the State needs to take over the development or maintenance of the project. The State should evaluate the proposed development language to make sure that it will not become obsolete and unsupported over the entire life of the voter registration system.

Proposed Development/Operating Environments

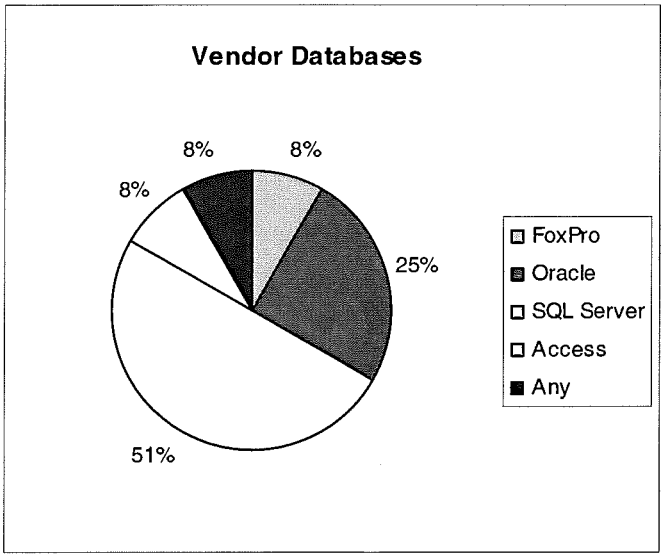
As can be seen in the chart below, the vendor community overwhelmingly proposed a Windows based platform (Windows O/S on Intel processor). Even the Oracle and Java proposed solutions could run on a Windows operating architecture if the State were so inclined. This approach would take advantage of the some of the underlying networking and features of the Windows Operating System, which includes RDM, VPN and directory services. Two vendors proposed a full Windows.Net architecture to take advantage of the latest XML and web service technologies and Microsoft's next generation .Net services.

Figure 10: Breakdown of Vendor Platforms



It is also of note, and presented in the chart below, that the majority of vendors chose Microsoft SQL Server as the database of choice for the database list. The State needs to determine whether it wishes to support another database system in addition to the current Oracle environment. The development languages proposed would be able to connect to the existing Oracle environment through some database connector regardless of what database is used for the centralized voter registration system.

Figure 11: Breakdown of Vendor Databases

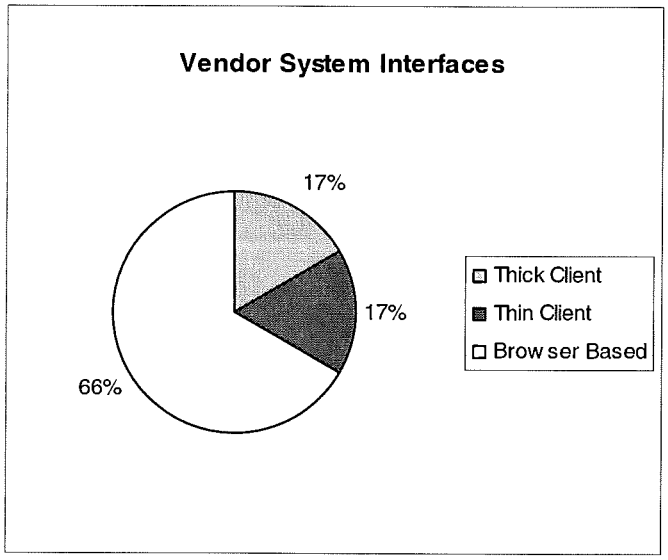


The State should allow vendors the flexibility to propose the solution that best fits the specified needs of the State while also maximizing the vendor's previous development effort and staff skills. The State should examine whether the current Oracle database for elections or BIS' Oracle infrastructure could be used for this project to save in licensing costs. Also, if the State is managing the centralized hardware and software environment, then there should be an assessment of whether or not new staff would need to be hired to maintain and support a proposed offering. With respect to database architecture, other than requiring a recent release of an enterprise-grade relational database management system, the RFP should not be prescriptive about database type, structure, normalization, archiving, etc., but provide vendors with the knowledge of the State's current technology and staffing proficiencies.

User Application Interface

Vendors predominantly proposed (see chart below) a thin-client or browser-based interface for the end users of the system. Thin client proposals used some form of management software like Oracle or Citrix to manage the connection and data flows, while the browser based systems required only the PCs browser to be of a supported type. Distributed or thick client proposals had a full client side application with local storage on the user's PC with periodic updates to the centralized registration system. These interfaces have been discussed in greater detail in the real-time centralized versus decentralized heading of this section.

Figure 12: Breakdown of Vendor System Interfaces



The State should allow vendors to propose and justify the system interface they feel best meets the technical needs and requirements of the State of Maine, while providing the best cost and on-going support and maintenance options for the State.

Load/Performance Information (users, processes, bandwidth)

All vendors surveyed defined performance to be a product of the system architecture (hardware and software) and not the product of the voter registration software architecture itself.

For vendors to propose an infrastructure that supports the State's needs, the RFP needs to define the estimated number of users (total and concurrent if possible), the bandwidth available to the municipalities and the number of registrations to be processed over a period of time (for example 100 registrations per month). The vendor will then use its expertise to recommend server software, scanning equipment, clustering, load-balancing and other techniques to meet any contracted Service Level Agreement.

Administrative Features

The vendors did not provide enough detail in the survey responses to provide an overview of what administrative features are currently available to voter registration system users due to their exhaustive capabilities in this regard. All vendors stated that the administrative features were too numerous to list but that their software would provide administrative activities on most of the data functionality including street lists, districts, field changing, reports and other administrative tasks.

The RFP should have vendors document all of the modifications, changes and administrative tasks that can be done on the system without requiring programmatic changes or vendor support (examples: changing validation rules, adding a third address line to the registration database table or adding a new recognized political party). With this information, the State can determine how much ongoing maintenance to the system can be accomplished without paying the vendor for maintenance or a fee for programmatic changes.

External System Integration

All vendors surveyed provide the capability to build custom interfaces to all defined state data sources. Vendors have the capability to write custom integration modules for BMV, Office of Vital Statistics, and GIS as well as any custom batch data imports such as address imports defined during requirements gathering.

The State should define all known systems with which the voter registration solution needs to integrate and should provide sufficient detail to allow vendors to propose their method of integration and to describe any issues surrounding that integration. The State should be aware that Maine's system will be unique, so the solution will need to be customized to the unique features of the Maine data sources no matter which vendor is chosen.

Analyze Voter History Tracking

All vendors surveyed provide an interface for users to enter, store and report on voter activity and history. This component should be fully tracked so that all changes made to the record are completely auditable. This module can be used to check voter eligibility with respect to absentee ballots. Combined with a bar code solution, voter history can be simplified and streamlined to scanning the resultant bar code and logging the corresponding transaction.

Since the State requires voter history tracking, the RFP will fully define what this means and any special nuances of tracking voter history in Maine of which the vendor may not be aware. The vendor should then propose a solution meeting these high-level requirements that makes the best use of technology to promote efficiency, cost savings and accuracy in the data.

Analyze Bar Code Acceptance Data

Ten of the surveyed vendors have integrated the generation, tracking and processing of bar codes into many registration and election process workflows. Integrating bar code functionality into the system would provide the State with several very important features that would enhance the overall functionality of the system. These features are listed here for the State's evaluation:

- Identifying voter history by printing bar codes on Election Day eligible voter lists.
- Identifying voters on correspondence with election offices:
    - Bar coding correspondence with voters to link responses and information supplied to the voter's record.
    - Bar coding absentee ballot mailings and voting records for easier tracking of requests, distribution and return of absentee ballots.
- Other process improvements that need to identify the voter, and their voting preferences/needs.

It should be noted that the State will need to acquire bar code scanners and the equipment to integrate that information with the PC connecting to the central voter registration system. This will be costly initially and will introduce some periodic technology refreshment costs for the system in the future. The Department of the Secretary of State currently uses bar code technology on Maine driver's licenses, so has some existing experience base with this technology.

Bar coding provides features the State may wish to implement for either this version of the system and/or future versions of the software. All but two vendors provide this feature as a standard component of their core solutions and think it is an integral part of an overall centralized voter registration strategy. Based upon municipality survey data and current vendor installations, the ability to bar code voter registration information with certain activities seems to be core functionality for a complete forward-looking voter registration system. Although bar coding is not a necessity of HAVA compliance the State has determined that providing this functionality will result in more efficient voter management, and will work on determining the purchase and support of bar coding equipment and tools.

Scanning/Imaging Information

Eleven of the 12 vendors surveyed provide scanning/imaging services with their standard offering. These images are stored in the centralized voter registration system database for use by other aspects of the program. Seven of the vendors also allow for the specification of a signature area so that the signature can be separated from the complete registration and used by itself for signature verification activities. All of these systems require the installation of software components on the user's PC and access to a scanning machine. The type of the scanner will determine the speed of storing an image, the ability to do batch scanning and whether double sided scanning can be done in one pass. The vendors should recommend the appropriate hardware given the population and transaction volume of Maine's municipalities.

The system should offer imaging components since this functionality will lead to the greatest flexibility for the future and enable a simplified method of absentee ballot and petition management. This process should include imaging of both sides of the registration card, and, if the vendor's software allows for it, the separation of the image from the rest of the data so that just the signature portion of the registration card can be used for comparison purposes. The State will need to have vendors document the necessary hardware and cost associated with providing imaging to all of the municipalities. There should also be a training component associated with bringing municipalities up to speed with imaging.

The state will need to evaluate vendor's proposed costs for converting existing records of paper voter registration applications to digital images for storage in the new system. In addition, the state should decide whether to perform this archive imaging for all registration information, or only for currently active voters. The RFP issued by the state for this project will provide sufficient information on the scope of the imaging task so vendors can appropriately price the imaging data conversion costs.

Report Generating Capabilities

The State will need to document all the mandatory reports necessary for compliance with Maine and Federal election laws that will be required within the System. The vendors surveyed provided numerous reports and the capabilities of exporting to most third-party report writing tools if necessary.

It is recommended that the State detail the necessary reports in the RFP and let vendors propose any additional built-in reports. The capabilities of building on-the-fly reports without programmatic changes is highly desirable and vendors should provide this feature either through a custom report generation tool or a third-party report writing tool. This functionality should allow the State to create, run and publish these new reports to the system for use by all potential users.

Petition Management Capabilities

The management of petitions, including the ability to track which specific petitions have been signed by a specific voter, to ensure that an individual is a registered voter, and to prevent the same voter from signing the same petition more than once, is included in most system offerings. However, this typically is an extra feature or "add-on" and not a core functionality of the vendor's voter registration system. This feature would support the current manual processes of a municipality and would promote efficiencies in managing the petition process especially on statewide initiatives. Some communities in Maine already have this functionality in their existing local systems.

Eleven of the vendors surveyed provided the capacity for petition management. One vendor proposed this as a stand-alone module, not integrated with the voter registration system. The other ten vendors proposed integrated solutions, either as part of their core solution or as an extra or "add-on" module.

Eight of the vendors allowed the administrator to assign a unique identifier for different types of petitions, and seven vendors allowed the administrator to enter identifying information concerning the candidate, office, initiative, or referendum that is the subject of the petition.

Seven vendors provided local election officials with the ability to record that a specific registered voter had signed a specific petition in order to prevent duplicate signatures. All vendors provided for the ability to verify signatures by entering and viewing the date of registration, name, address, confirmation of registration status, and qualified district for petition signers and candidates by petition.

Nine of the vendors provided an imaged view of the registration signature for petition signature comparison purposes and also tracked the digitally entered signatures by date.

The surveyed vendor community has the capabilities to provide petition management for the state of Maine based upon the survey results and currently deployed systems. The features of petition management seem to be quite useful for municipalities and would be a strong selling point of the new system. The State needs to weigh the fact that some customization will be required to provide this feature. HAVA itself does not reference petition management, though Maine has long considered petition management to be an integral component of its voter registration system. The State may be better served making this feature an optional but desired component and potentially using this feature to differentiate between similar featured/priced vendors.

Absentee Ballot Capabilities

Absentee ballot support through the centralized voter registration system would provide significantly more efficient creation of absentee ballot lists and eligible voter lists (poll books) for elections. Also, if combined with bar coding technology, absentee ballots could be tracked and processed in a more efficient and straightforward manner.

All surveyed vendors provided modules for tracking voters who requested absentee ballots, voters who were issued ballots and voters who voted through absentee ballots. Most vendors bar coded the absentee ballots for easier processing and managing with the voter registration list.

All 11 vendors provided a report that lists voters who have applied to vote via absentee ballots. This list could be bar coded so that a user could scan records that came in as being received to determine voter eligibility. Ten of the 11 vendors surveyed provided the capability upon entry of a received absentee ballot to dynamically check the voter activity file for that election and determine if a ballot has been returned already by that voter or if the voter has been recorded as having voted at a polling place. Dynamic recording of voter activity at a polling place through a live connection to the centralized voter registration system would automate Maine's existing manual system for preventing an individual from voting by absentee ballot at also at the polls. If there is no immediate recording at a polling place, the municipality could wait until the voting history is updated for the election prior to processing the absentee ballots to get this same functionality without requiring connectivity at the polls and still gain some of the benefits of automation.

The system should require absentee ballot processing and tracking via the new voter registration system. The State should ask the vendor to describe how this process works within their system as part of the RFP and then be prepared to delve into the process in more detail during the requirements gathering phase of the project.

Transaction History/Audit Capabilities

Every vendor surveyed provided data auditing and tracking capabilities to some degree. It is important for the State to decide what level of detail is necessary for its records. Eight of the 11 vendors stated that their system has the capability to retain all transaction history reflecting what fields were changed, the date/time of the change, and the values of those fields prior to any changes for all fields in the voter record. The other three vendors either did not keep the time or did not carry audit history for every field in the voter record.

Some transaction history options to consider are:

- Providing a history that logs the transaction before and after a change
- Keeping a record of who performed each change and the nature of that change to the record (which user, what automatic process, etc.)
- Date/Time stamp of the add/change/delete
- Search/Compare non-current data (e.g. previous names and addresses)
- Roll back transaction capabilities, including large-scale rollbacks such as undoing a voter relocating to a new municipality.

The State should have a transaction audit history that includes all of the options listed above provided in a manner that the vendor specifies. The system should have an administrative interface that provides authorized users access to audit information for researching and potentially reverse changes. The State should specify its auditing features fully and the vendor should address each need in detail in their RFP response.

Street File Addresses and Redistricting

Three vendors commented on implementing street file addresses and performing automatic redistricting from a centralized list perspective. The State will need to decide whether the system needs to keep a complete list of street addresses to determine whether a registered address is valid (including checking to see if it residential or business) compared to continuing the current manual process that registrars and clerks use today.

The State should make the functionality of associating street file addresses to districts and other voter characterizing traits a mandatory requirement of the system. It would seem based upon preliminary requirements and information from other states that managing and implementing the address lists requires a significant amount of effort on the part of the State. Furthermore, certain states that have had a system for several years are still not current with the addressing component. Also the State will need to determine if redistricting and address changes can be done automatically (for example from a change of address filed with BMV) or through a manual approval process at the affected municipality level.

GIS System Integration

The ability to manage addresses and redistricting through a GIS system would improve the management of voter precincts and valid address checking. Two vendors documented that their system had the capability to integrate with GIS data for addressing and redistricting. Both vendors would still need to customize their software to work with Maine's specific GIS software solution. This component would add a module to the custom development cost component of the system if a pre-existing GIS module cannot be utilized for the vendor's solution.

The State should list all the details of its GIS infrastructure maintained in the Bureau of Information Services and in the Division of Elections and list this feature as an optional component of an overall centralized voter registration system. The vendor response will most likely be evaluated in conjunction with an automatic redistricting or street file-addressing component. The State should leave it up to the vendors to propose the manner by which they will integrate and utilize the GIS software. If this requirement is made mandatory, it will add cost and risk to the project.

Since vendor responses have varied significantly on how they would handle each aspect of the desired centralized voter registration list functionality, the state should focus on providing its list of mandatory and optional requirements and any key information that vendors would require to provide the most complete response and cost to the State.

The State should not specify a particular technical architecture (e.g., client/server, web-based). If the State has preferences, these should be made clear, but the State should be open to the best solution the vendor can present—it better serves the State's interests to have a wide choice of offerings, and prescribing overly particular technical requirements will limit these offerings.

If necessary, the state may wish to distinguish between a mandatory capability and mandatory functionality. For example, the state could mandate the system be capable of absentee ballot management to preserve its future options, but not require the implementation of that functionality at the time of start-up.

The State will finalize the following issues discussed in greater detail in other sections of this document and determine which requirements are mandatory and which are optional, and then describe that information in its RFP.

- Scanning/Imaging
- Bar Codes
- Training Issues
- Petition Management
- Absentee Ballot Management
- User Support Responsibility and Service Levels
- System Maintenance
- Municipality Hardware/Software Purchasing and Support
- Centralized System Hardware/Software Purchasing and Maintenance
- Municipality Interconnectivity (Statewide WAN?)
- GIS
- Automatic Redistricting
- Street Files and Jurisdiction Comparison and Updating
- Real-time Election Day Registrations
- Training Method
- Data Migration

The following recommendations for how to structure the RFP were discerned from the vendor responses and State guidance:

- The State should refer the vendor to any applicable State standards that must be adhered to (e.g., database standards, security standards).
- The RFP should not include vague requirements such as "Must meet or exceed the functionality of existing municipal systems" unless the RFP also clearly and completely defines this existing functionality.
- Only those requirements that are necessary to provide basic voter registration functionality or to meet HAVA requirements or State law should be specified as mandatory. Avoid the kitchen sink approach. There are many things appearing in RFPs that may not be core functionality, such as:
    - OCR/ICR/IFR
    - Integrated campaign finance module
    - Integrated election night reporting module
    - Printing of blank forms (voter registration forms, absentee applications, etc.)
    - Customization of screen designs for packaged software products

- The RFP should be written in a manner that allows the vendor to bid either a custom solution or a packaged software product. For this reason, the RFP should not be prescriptive in requiring deliverables that are only applicable to a custom development approach.
- The RFP should be very clear about what is required in the vendor's proposal. It is often very confusing for a vendor to understand what deliverables are actually expected as part of the proposal. Ideally, a table would be provided that lists all the required sections.
- The RFP should be explicit about how the proposals will be scored. Maine needs to determine the scoring criteria during the RFP writing phase. Maine should consider a scoring procedure that permits and can meaningfully account for oral presentations of final candidates
- The RFP timetable should be realistic. Questions should be due with appropriate time for vendor review. The questions should be answered as soon as possible to give vendors the opportunity to clarify. The deadline should be extended as required if the State does not have time to answer the questions promptly.
- The State should consider a pre-proposal bidder's conference.

3. System Security

Vendor responses to the security questions were very similar for each question asked in the survey. Network level access should be controlled by standard network equipment and technologies such as firewalls, VPNs, database accounts, domain servers and routers. User transmitted data can be encrypted via SSL or use other encryption technologies such as triple DES and digital certificates. User authentication was provided by username and password at the network, application or database level. Several vendors recommended taking advantage of the built-in features of windows 2003 for VPN and directory services to manage users and access groups.

All vendors' software provided role-based access so that a user can only perform functions for the role for which they are assigned. The level and customization of those roles varied based upon the vendor. It is important that the state have software that has roles that conform to Maine's user base and are customizable and assignable through an administrative interface. This is especially important if the system is a centralized thin-client solution where all users are working with a system that has the entire data set but should only be able to view or modify certain data.

Vendors need to discuss what methods they will use to monitor the network, including intrusion detection, network monitoring, security audits and whether they will provide added staffing for elections and other important events. The State may be able to leverage some of its current infrastructure if the system is hosted at the State data center.

Vendor responses varied in the actual implementation of the security model but were tied very closely to the type of solution, method of interaction with the system (thin-client, web, decentralized), operating system deployed on the client PCs and security equipment provided at the hosting sites. It is recommended that the State have vendors fully detail the security model for the proposed solution. No requirements for certain technologies or manufacturer hardware should be made in order to allow vendors the flexibility to propose a security model that best fits their solution and is most cost effective for the State. It is important that the State require vendors to fully document all cost and support aspects of their proposed security model. This includes at a minimum documenting the end user's PC software and hardware requirements (PC, Browser, etc.), and the data center equipment and security software requirements (VPN server, firewall, intrusion detection software, network monitoring software).

4. Communication Infrastructure to Municipalities

The State's communication infrastructure was a topic of concern for many of the vendors who responded to the survey. The vendors' concerns centered on what existing capabilities were available to the state, whether the state wanted to provide a Wide Area Network or to use the Internet, and what level of uptime and performance were required from the vendor. The vendor's proposed solutions included the following options, represented in **Figure 13**, that are tightly integrated with what level of uptime and performance the municipalities' network connectivity must be able to provide.

Figure 13: Vendor Solutions and Options

Proposed Architecture	Bandwidth Requirements	Comments
Thin Client	56Kbps, the thin client software (Citrix, window terminal services, RDP, custom, other) will manage the connection and data speed	Provides an optimal solution for municipalities will lower bandwidth capabilities. May require additional software on the users PC or require them to have a specific version of an operating system.
Browser Based	Variable, system uses the full bandwidth but will be slower on slower connections due to the http communication medium.	Provides the capabilities to run the system from any browser compliant system, also provides other access medium support (pocket PC, etc), will not perform as well at lower speeds as a software controlled thin-client. Has low support costs.
De-centralized	Dial-up to send periodic batches to update the centralized list of voters and communicate changes and other actions.	Bandwidth does not become an obstacle, risks are frequency and currency of updates, lack of real-time list between updates, and need to deploy and support client software on the end-user's computer. There is a concern also that the off-line mode will not allow for the immediate checking of Driver's License information, Social Security Numbers, and death records. These checks will have to be made when the transactions are passed to the centralized system.

The state should not dictate the network architecture to vendors in the RFP but it will need to weigh the feasibility of the Internet as a medium against the cost of providing a WAN for the municipalities to use when working with the system. One of the benefits of a WAN is that by putting in this infrastructure the State will have a communication medium for other State services outside of voter registration (Rapid Renewal, Property Tax, other). Some research into whether this is a feasible joint solution is recommended and could potentially be done during the requirements and development phases of the project with a vendor whose solution is designed to work with either connection.

The state is researching to what extent the existing state telecommunications networks (MSLA, Police Network, others) connecting public offices or other facilities could be leveraged for the voter registration system. To the extent that such network assets are available, the State will need to gather detailed information regarding the bandwidth and reliability of this network as it applies to each jurisdiction that would be accessing the system.

Preliminary research determines that there is no existing statewide network that the State can leverage and the State should leverage the existing connectivity of municipalities.

The State has determined that the Internet will be the communications backbone for the system (presumably via a secure connection, e.g. SSL or a Virtual Private Network or VPN). The preferred approach will include using the ISP capabilities of the Bureau of Information Services. This approach could potentially result in significant savings versus paying for a statewide Internet for the project. The municipal survey indicates a large majority of municipalities have Internet capabilities. The State should have municipalities acquire a common baseline level of Internet access (dial-up) by selecting a common Internet Service Provider (ISP) via the appropriate means of procurement or as a service of the winning vendor (if they provide this service) so that the risk is reduced by providing a single vendor for issues with respect to Internet connectivity. Though managing the voter registration system will be more complicated if each municipality has its own ISP, the offset in cost savings will probably provide a better return on investment for the State.

The RFP must include all information necessary for vendors to make an informed decision about what networking capabilities are or will be available to all municipalities and how their offering would work within the given limitations.

The state should have vendors describe what level of bandwidth is necessary given the constraints provided by the State on network speeds. This should include performance levels of the system for all the differing levels of possible municipality connectivity (broadband, dial-up, etc.).

The RFP should specify whose responsibility it is to manage the performance and security of the network, including any required networking equipment (Load balancers, intrusion detection, VPNs, etc.).

The RFP should have vendors provide downtime scenarios and what happens with respect to response time and support with a loss of network operation in all the possible working scenarios for the municipality (off hours, working hours, pre-election days, election days, other).

5. System Support

Help Desk/Call Center

Each vendor provided some form of help desk and trouble resolution capabilities that could be customized to the unique needs of the State of Maine. These range from email only support to 24x7 call center services. The state needs to provide a detailed list of the required support levels in order for vendors to provide the appropriate cost level for their RFP response. Some of the requirements for support that need to be addressed for the RFP are:

- Hours of support – 24 x 7 x 365? 8-5? Extra hours on elections?
- Method of Support – Email with call back, call center, other?
- Response time – How quickly will the vendor need to respond to incidents based upon the level of severity?
- On-site vs. Off-site – Will the vendor be required to have support staff in Maine that could be dispatched to municipalities or the SOS if there are major issues? Would this be acceptable as a time and materials based option?

Support Documentation/Self-Help

All responding vendors provide online context sensitive help and user manuals to assist end-users. Only six of the vendors, however, provided technical or developer manuals to work with the system. This seems to be due to vendors providing a COTS solution versus a custom developed solution. The State of Maine should weigh the merits of having their developers be able to integrate to the system and take over the maintenance and support of the system versus purchasing a product with a formal release schedule and a large user population to facilitate a more robust baseline of functionality.

Installation

Though the survey did not establish which party will perform the installation and set-up of municipalities, the vendors that discussed this all preferred an installation package with calls to the help-desk for any problems that arise. The installation will need to be closely tied to the municipality's data migration efforts, so it is imperative that vendors address how both of these activities will be accomplished in their proposed system.

Training

All vendors who responded to the survey offered the capabilities to provide the necessary training as dictated by the State in the RFP. The types of recommended training plans proposed in the vendors' survey responses varied significantly based upon the following factors:

- On-site training
- Computer Based Training
- Number of Training Sessions
- Locations of Training Sessions

Equally critical is the level of investment in the training effort. System conversions in statewide election system operations, which involve both extensive process redesign and a new level of standardization among currently disparate users, is a challenging exercise that is best supported by a carefully phased training program that provides an incremental approach to achieving the necessary transfer of knowledge. The state should also carefully consider the role it may wish to take in the future training process. As HAVA invites states to expand efforts in the areas of election official and poll worker training, Maine may decide to expand resource capabilities in this area within the State elections office. Should this be the case, consideration can be given to partnering with the system vendor in the training effort, so that state training personnel become experienced in the full range of training process issues, can help shape the program from the beginning, and provide maximum transfer of knowledge through the system deployment.

The State needs to specify a recommended training approach that meets the needs of the municipalities. The State should determine the level of training necessary to support the initial rollout of the system. The State should have the vendor specify training and installation plans, system documentation, and proposed support offering in complete detail for the State to determine the overall merits of the vendor's proposed support efforts.

The vendor should also discuss the methods of surveying and following up with users to update the offering. If the system is a COTS product deployed to multiple clients, the vendor should explain the rollout schedule and the method of determining a core feature versus a specific custom requirement for one client.

The vendor should also be required to document the estimated level of effort for state staff to support the system throughout the period of performance. The RFP should provide as much detail as possible about the numbers of users to be trained, whether a centralized or regional training approach is acceptable, and how much participation the State wants to have in the delivery of training.

The State needs to be aware of the following support risks:

- Municipality and vendor connectivity to the centralized system
- Lack of high-speed bandwidth in remote areas
- The improved response and resolution time if a vendor customer service and municipality computer systems allow remote takeover of afflicted PCs
- Unknown support call volumes, especially during peak times such as around an election and during roll-out of the system
- Impact of additional applications/peripherals implemented on the same hardware used for the system. This will provide the most risk if existing municipality hardware is used to support the system
- Temporary or untrained election workers using the application

The following are some of the key decision points for the State with respect to Customer support:

- **Lack of a consistent desktop configuration throughout the State and jurisdictions.** Requiring a standard desktop configuration will make problem resolution easier and may be more cost effective in the long run but will require a significant investment in the short run of new equipment for 503 municipalities.
- **Delivery costs may be higher if the State's retained responsibilities (State WAN, hardware/ software support, etc.) do not have performance level requirements.** Lack of State performance requirements (SLAs) may impede the ability for a vendor to meet its own performance requirements especially if the State provides a WAN for the municipalities and decides to provide end-user hardware/software support.

The State should work with the vendor to reduce all possible risks associated with the ability to provide support and maintenance to the system's user population. This should include evaluating the option of providing one consistent desktop environment, the ability to remotely take control of user PCs and standardizing the connectivity method.

Help Desk/Call Center

It is recommended that the State request vendors provide a cost for application level support during normal State business hours and extra support levels during elections. Vendors should specify how they classify trouble tickets and their guaranteed response time for each error classification. Furthermore, this requirement should include a special category for pre-election support issues (poll-list generation, etc.). The State will need to determine if the extra support is required for non-statewide elections that local jurisdictions hold.

Support should include e-mail, fax, phone and system generated error reporting wherever applicable. The State should not dictate the type of support, but let the vendors propose the most cost effective solution that meets the specified support needs of the State. It is also recommended that the support be off-site unless the need is so great as to require the vendor to visit a jurisdiction. The State should have the vendors provide a cost model for such emergency support situations.

Support Documentation/Self-Help

The State should require all vendors to provide printed user manuals and context based online help within the applications to empower trained users to readily resolve issues without contacting customer support. The vendors response to the RFP should document all the features and methods of self-help their proposed system will provide for the State to evaluate the overall usability factor of the system. Developer and technical documentation is not recommended as a mandatory deliverable for the system until an event occurs that requires the State to take ownership of the software from the vendor either for itself or another vendor. The actions and requirements for this should be spelled out in the software licensing agreement and contractual terms and conditions.

Installation

For cost factors, it is recommended that the State have vendors provide an installation guide that will include all necessary system requirements, a step-by-step guide for installing any client side components and phone based installation support. If the chosen vendor's solution requires new equipment to be installed at the user site, it is recommended that the vendor develop a system installation disk that will set-up all equipment in the same manner and in case of software issues the system can be reset and reinstalled for easier support.

Training

It is recommended that the State evaluate all options provided by vendors and not preclude any potential solutions in the RFP. But given the State's desire to reduce costs and provide in-house expertise it is recommended that the State follow a "Train the Trainer" approach by having the vendor train select State staff in the solution to a level of expertise that will allow those individuals to train the municipalities on the system, ultimately without the vendor's interaction. The vendor should accompany the State staff on initial training runs to be specified by the vendor in their proposed training plan. This training could coincide with current mandatory election official training, special regional training or be done on another schedule that meets Maine's needs. The State should request that a vendor provide a computer based training solution. This could work in conjunction with State staff training sessions to reach the entire municipality population including smaller remote sites. The State should consider requiring vendors to detail the cost of creating a complete portable training lab suitable to the solution that would be used by the State to provide ongoing training on the system.

6. System Maintenance

The discriminating factor for system maintenance between the vendors was the level of maintenance support offered. The Secretary of State needs to decide whether its internal IT or State centralized IT staff can support the following items:

- Centralized System Support (Back-up, disaster recovery, hardware and software)
- Municipality Hardware Support (PCs, bar code readers, scanners, etc.)
- Municipality User Machine Back-up
- Voter Registration Software Support
- Voter Registration Software Changes/Enhancements
- Municipality Connectivity Support
- Process Support
- End User

Vendor's proposed annual software maintenance costs ranged from 10% - 25% of the software license cost or on a per incident basis. Some vendors expressed interest in supporting the system entirely, including everything listed above. Some maintenance agreements included support on third party COTS software (Oracle Forms, Microsoft SQL Server, etc.) but most would expect either the State or the vendor to provide this support at an additional cost.

The State should have vendors document and provide information on what estimated level of support the State of Maine would need to provide to take over the system for default or because of a lack of a maintenance contract.

The process for backing up data on the central server, whether at the State hosting location or at a vendor-hosted location should not be an issue. But, the backup of user machines at remote locations could be costly if the State requires the vendor to perform this task for each end user at all of the various State and local jurisdiction locations.

Most other states interviewed for this report utilize vendors for changes and updates in their system. Only one of those states uses internal staff to maintain application code.

The costs of maintenance and support vary based on whether the deployment is centralized or decentralized, based on the functional modules of the software that are purchased, and based on the level of service desired. Some states opt to outsource the support of the entire technical infrastructure supporting the system, including the telecommunications network and the hosting infrastructure, as well as a comprehensive user support and Help Desk system. Others simply purchase a simple software maintenance license that entitles them to new version releases and software corrections. The State's policy choices in this item should be driven by its in-house technical resources, relative costs, and user needs. All of these requirements should be clearly settled and defined in the RFP. The State should be flexible so that a greater range of creative options will be proposed that the State can choose from. The State should indicate whether it is open to fully-managed, outsourced hosting services from the selected vendor. The State should also indicate its desired timeframe for support.

The State should hire/provide a dedicated internal project manager (if cost feasible) to manage the development and implementation phases of the project and to provide process level support for the system.

The State's minimum maintenance contract should include software updates, and any required system updates for any state or federal election law changes that impact the system. These could be done on a time and materials basis if the State felt that the number of changes that could potentially impact the system were minimal.

- *Centralized System Support.* Provided by the State (if hosted at State Data Center), the hosting provider or proposing vendor.
- *Municipality Hardware Support:* Provided by the municipalities themselves for PCs, any hardware required by the system (bar code readers, scanners, etc. should be supported by the winning vendor).
- *Municipality User Machine Back-up:* Provided by the municipalities if a client/server solution is implemented (supported by the vendor), or not provided if a centralized solution without a client application is installed. In both cases the vendor should provide recovery disks containing all items to be installed and the procedures to enact that solution. In a centralized solution this should just be a driver for peripherals and any other system software.
- *Voter Registration Software Support:* Provided by the proposing vendor until the State determines that its current staffing levels can handle the level of support necessary.
- *Voter Registration Software Changes/Enhancement:* Provided by the proposing vendor on a time and materials basis, unless this is part of a new version and the State is provided the new version under the licensing agreement with the vendor. The State should make sure simple changes to the software (for example changing the list of political parties) are adjustable through an administrative interface and therefore will not enact a chargeable event.
- *Municipality Connectivity Support:* Provided by either the connectivity vendor or by the State.
- *Process Support:* Provided by dedicated State project manager or shared by a team of State staff.
- *End User Support:* Provided by State with vendor providing escalated support based upon the support requirements defined by the State.

7. Hosting

Only three vendors provided information on their hosting capabilities and infrastructures. The State needs to determine the feasibility of using the existing State data center for the centralized system that the municipalities connect to in a batch or real-time manner. The state needs to evaluate the feasibility of the State data center and hosting State information outside of the State to provide the proper information to vendors so they can accurately propose a hosting solution. This includes such issues as:

- What are the State data center's capabilities and what would the vendor need to know to use the facility?
- What are the State's uptime/performance requirements? Does the system need a geographically diverse hot site?
- Whose responsibility will it be to maintain, monitor, set-up, secure, back-up, etc., given each hosting scenario?
- Who is responsible and what type of security would be required between vendor and State networks?

- Can the State's voter registration data be located outside of Maine?
- Any other information relevant to working with the State's network and services

The State should provide the information necessary for vendors that would like to utilize the services of the State's existing data center and the hot-site location that is currently up for RFP. The State should examine any legal issues with storing private information outside of the State and on contractor facilities for back-up/disaster recovery possibilities. The RFP should have vendors address any privacy and security issues if they are proposing using their own or a third party's facilities. The vendor should also address their methods of accessing State systems from a non State operated data center.

8. Cost and Licensing

Vendors were asked to provide their normal licensing model, licensing terms, and a non-binding ballpark cost for a system meeting the basic functionality outlined in Maine and supporting Maine's voter population and estimated user population. Responses varied based upon the type of solution offered and the assumptions made by the vendors. The following information can be used as a starting point in determining the licensing model for the State.

Vendor licensing models varied from being licensed to the municipality to being licensed per voter. The following chart, presented as **Figure 14**, lists all the proposed options for licensing the central voter registration software, any provided cost ranges for that licensing arrangement (not including hardware, software, network equipment and connectivity), and pros and cons of the model.

Figure 14: Vendor Licensing Models with Detail

License Model	Ballpark Cost Ranges	Pros	Cons
Licensed Per Site (Municipality)	$3,500/site ~ $1.76 Million	State can anticipate its future licensing costs more accurately than population based costs.	Maine has a high number of sites.
Single Enterprise License	$1- $3 Million	State knows what its cost will be for the license with no variable dependency.	The State may have to pay the same price as a more populous State.
Custom Developed Software	~$2 Million	State owns the software so there is the option to get support and maintenance from another source.	System will be developed for Maine and State may not receive any cost benefits from reuse and sharing across the vendor's clients. Maine will be the only client for this particular software so support, maintenance and other factors are tied into just this vendor, whereas if the software is deployed across multiple States the vendor will be more inclined to support the software in the future.
Per Registered Voter	$2 - $7/voter ~ $2 Million - $7 Million	Takes advantage of the State's population and Maine may get a better deal than larger more populous states.	Potential for future costs to increase significantly if number of registered voters increases.

The following cost components of an RFP need to be determined prior to the release of the RFP so the State can get accurate cost estimates from the vendors. On some of these issues the State may ask the vendor to propose the vendor's preferred solution in order to be flexible and to secure the most cost effective solution that meets the needs of the State.

The State needs to determine who will perform the acquisition, installation, support and maintenance of all hardware and software components of the system. This includes those deployed at the municipality level and those for the centralized system located at a data center.

The State needs to determine who will perform the backup of user workstations and the central registration software. The process for backing up data on the central server, whether at the State hosting location or at a vendor-hosted location should not be an issue. But, the backup of user machines at remote locations could be costly if the state requires the vendor to perform this task for every user at all of the various state and local jurisdiction locations.

The State needs to be aware that certain things in the RFP may drive up a vendor's cost and will be reflected in the pricing passed on to the State. The following are items the State needs to make determinations on and give vendors proper information to make the correct cost assumptions:

- Training
- Support hours
- Maintenance requirements
- 100% Performance Bonds (this may actually prevent some smaller vendors from bidding at all)
- Mandatory requirements versus optional requirements
- Requirements that preclude a vendor bidding a COTS package
- Expensive procurement processes
- Unlimited liability and indemnification clauses
- Municipality hardware/software purchasing and support
- Centralized system hardware/software purchasing and maintenance
- Municipality Interconnectivity
- Data Migration

Most vendors assumed that the State would provide the hardware, software networking and connectivity and have proposed pricing separate from that. Other states have had the vendor price the costs associated with providing the entire system in their RFP responses regardless of who actually purchases the equipment.

The State needs to be completely clear on what is mandatory versus optional, who is responsible for what areas of support and who will purchase and maintain every aspect of the hardware, software, network and connectivity for the system. These issues and their evaluating criteria have been discussed in greater detail in other sections of this vendor assessment. The State needs to evaluate the requested HAVA funding, and other budgetary requirements to make sure that it can not only cover the initial aspects of this project, but the future maintenance and support of the project.

9. Data Migration

Though not a direct survey topic, vendors discussed the inherent cost, schedule and risk implications with migrating existing municipality data into the new system. Data migration was also one of the top project risks according to the peer states review by the project team. When evaluating migration options the State needs to consider the following migration concerns:

- The State needs to determine who will have responsibility for entering/converting existing municipality data and records to the new system.
- The process needs to decide whether currently scanned images and auxiliary data (notes, voting history, etc.) will be imported into the system. This needs to go into the RFP for vendors to provide the most accurate cost estimates.
- To receive accurate bids for data conversion, the State should consider as a matter of policy whether it wants to convert existing records of paper voter registration applications to digital images for storage in the new system. The State should also determine whether it wants the vendor or the local election officials to perform the data entry into the system for those registered voters whose information is stored only on paper, not in any electronic system. In addition, the State should decide whether to perform data conversion for all registration information, or only for currently active voters. Providing as much of this information as possible in the RFP will assist the vendors in developing the most accurate cost estimates.

Based on this information, it is recommended that the State have the vendor migrate only those municipalities with populations above a certain threshold (to be determined prior to the RFP) and key enter those populations below a certain threshold for efficiency. The State would benefit from imaging all existing voter registration cards into the new system but should weigh that against the cost associated with such an effort for larger municipalities. Vendors should be requested to provide cost estimates for both converting all existing data and imaging records into the system and for just importing/converting the existing data. The vendors should provide their recommendations and cost for working with auxiliary data (notes, voting history, other).

10. Project Timeline

One of the important requirements for vendors to determine how to price the project will be the State's project deadlines and milestones. The State needs to document a timeline for implementation, laying out major milestones and events. The State needs to formulate a blueprint for implementation in stages and a high-level timeline for the project to be fully implemented by January 2006. The State also needs to determine the project period of performance and renewal options based upon Maine laws and normal Maine purchasing standards.

Pilot Program: The State should discuss the method of including a pilot program (as defined in 21-A §191) in the project that includes the 10 municipalities with the greatest number of registered voters as of the 2000 general election and may include other municipalities as selected by the State. The State should also include additions to the sample populations to include those who do not have current systems.

The work plan presented in the RFP should include the contract period of performance and the actual schedule should be limited to a high-level timeline for implementation and a minimum set of required deliverables. Presenting too detailed a work plan and too many deliverables in the RFP limits the flexibility of the vendor to present the State with the best, most cost-effective solution.

The work plan at a minimum should have vendors show their timelines for the following phases:

- Contract negotiations
- Requirements gathering
- Implementation
- Testing Phases
- Pilot Program (if applicable)
- Data Migration
- Installation
- Training
- Implementation
- Maintenance and Support (including all milestones to set up the infrastructure)

11. Contractual Issues

Vendors and several States that were interviewed expressed that the following contracting terms and conditions could either prevent several competent vendors from bidding or significantly drive up the cost of the project. These provisions are defined below:

- **Performance bonds.** Vendors and States have expressed that the requirement of a full performance bond will limit the number of vendors responding and increase the overall price of the offerings to offset the inherent difficulty for software vendors to get performance bonds since 9/11.
- **Unlimited liability and indemnification.** A few larger vendors and several states have expressed that when the RFP for this opportunity is issued, its legal terms and conditions will contain a reasonable limit on the service provider's liability and narrow commercial-standard indemnification provisions. Insisting on unlimited liability and broad indemnification could place the State at a disadvantage as qualified vendors may choose to not bid due to the unreasonable risk they would be forced to bear. In addition, unlimited liability and broad indemnification often cause bid prices to be increased to cover the risk, thus increasing the costs to the taxpayers of Maine.

It is recommended that the State work with the Division of Purchases, the Office of the CIO, BIS and the RFP development team to develop the approach that best meets the contractual and legal needs of the State of Maine. The State may also want to notify the vendor that these issues may be negotiated at the State's sole discretion during contract negotiations upon award to a vendor.

STATE OF MAINE

STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

The following glossary provides definitions for HAVA, technical and state-specific terms and acronyms used and referenced in the Needs Assessment.

2-D Bar Code – flat, regular bar code

ASCII – American Standard Code for Information Interchange

AVN – Address Verification Notices

BIS – Maine Bureau of Information Systems

BMV – Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Batch Mode – a scheduled, periodic transfer of data

Browser-Based System – a voter registration system in which the client is managed by Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (http), and the application is housed on the server side.

CACC – Change of Address Confirmation Cards (CACC)

CEC – Maine Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions

COTS – Commercial Off-the-Shelf

CVR – Centralized Voter Registration, which is a requirement of HAVA to receive funds

Centralized System – all voter registration data resides in a centralized location and local offices connect to a single state system

Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee – a committee established by Public Laws of 2001, Chapter 637- *An Act to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration System for the State* to direct the SOS to research a centralized voter registration system.

DIT – Virginia Department of Information Technology. DIT has been abolished, and its functions will now be covered by the Virginia Information Technology Agency (see VITA).

DSL – Digital Subscriber Line

Decentralized System – a voter registration system that is maintained at the local or municipal level and is periodically transferred to a central location

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

FTP – File Transfer Protocol

GIS – Geographic Information System

GUI – Graphical User Interface

HAVA State Planning Committee – a Maine committee selected by the SOS to represent a cross section of election stakeholders

HTTP – Hyper Text Transfer Protocol

Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) – (Public Law 107 – 252, October 29, 2002). HAVA was passed by the US Congress in 2002 to establish a program to provide funds to States to replace punch card voting systems, to establish the Election Assistance Commission to assist in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes.

IVR – Integrated Voice Response

JAD – Joint Application Design

KBPS – kilobits per second is a measure of bandwidth. The standard dial-up access is 56 kbps.

National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) – Congress enacted the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the "NVRA" and the "Motor Voter Act"), 42 U.S.C. 1973gg-5(a), (b), to

enhance voting opportunities for every American and to remove the vestiges of discrimination. The NVRA requires states to provide:

- *"Motor Voter" Registration* (voter registration simultaneous with motor vehicle driver's license application or renewal) (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-3);
- *Agency-based Voter Registration* (voter registration opportunities must be offered to each applicant for services, service renewal or address change through all offices that provide public assistance and all offices that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities; applicants must be provided with a voter registration form, a declination form, assistance in completing the forms and forwarding the completed applications to the appropriate state official) (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-5); and
- *Mail-in Voter Registration* (voter registration must be accepted by mail-in forms developed by each state and the Federal Election Commission) (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-4).

OCR/ICR/IFR – various scanning technologies

PC Anywhere – a product of Symantec, pcAnywere is a remote control solution that provides integrated tools make it possible for personnel to resolve server and workstation problems remotely.

PDA – Personal Digital Assistant

PM – Project Management or Project Manager

Petition – There are five primary types of state petitions in Maine (Party Formation, Primary Candidate, Non-Party Candidate, Citizen Initiative and People's Veto Referendum). There are also numerous local petitions.

Polling List – a list generated of eligible voters by precinct, ward or voting districts

QVF – Qualified Voter File, which is the name of the system used in Michigan and referenced in this report

RDP – Remote Desktop Protocol (a Microsoft product)

RFI – Request for Information

RFP – Request for Proposal, which will be developed during Phase II to solicit competitive bids from vendors for a centralized voter registration system.

SBE – Virginia State Board of Elections

SLA – Service Level Agreement

SOS – Maine Secretary of State is the elected head of the Department of State. The acronym used in this document also refers to Secretaries of State in other jurisdictions.

SSL – Secure Socket Layer

SSN – Social Security Number

T&M – Time and Materials is a contracting method by which vendors charge the state based on the time and materials used to provide the product or service

Thick-Client Solution – the software to manage the client is installed locally on a local server or PC, and the applications are maintained locally

Thin-Client Solution – the client is managed by software (e.g., Citrix), and all applications are housed on the server side

VITA – Virginia Information Technology Agency is the newly-created Virginia agency that will handle centralize IT functions for all Virginia agencies

VPN – Virtual Private Network

VRAN – Voter Registration Acknowledgement Notice,

VVRS – Virginia Voter Registration System

WAN – Wide Area Network

WWW – World Wide Web

APPENDIX TWO: MUNICIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE DATA

Number of Municipalities and Towns to which this Survey was Sent: 520

Number of Municipalities and Towns that Responded as of December 31, 2003: 457

Response Rate: 88%

GENERAL INFORMATION

In your municipality, does the same person act as Registrar and Clerk?

- ❑ Yes: 344
- ❑ No: 110
- ❑ No Response: 3

Where are your voter registration cards, lists and other records located?

- ❑ Municipal Office Building: 389
- ❑ Home Office: 51
- ❑ Other, Clerk's Office, Town Office and Post Office: 12
- ❑ No Response: 5

Are there township voters who vote in your municipality?

- ❑ Yes: 82
- ❑ No: 368
- ❑ No Response: 7

Approximately how many challenged ballots did you process in the last gubernatorial election?

- ❑ Zero: 375
- ❑ One to Five: 35
- ❑ Six to Ten: 6
- ❑ More than 10: 16
- ❑ Not Available: 5
- ❑ No Response: 20

Which of the following statements best describes the computer experience in your office?

- ❑ Most of our staff use the computer daily: 336
- ❑ A few people on our staff use the computer daily: 79
- ❑ No one on our staff has computer experience: 38
- ❑ No response: 4

Which of the following statements best describes the Internet and email experience in your office?

- ❑ Most of our staff have experience with the Internet and email: 275
- ❑ A few people on our staff have experience with the Internet and email: 117
- ❑ No one on our staff has experience with the Internet and email: 48
- ❑ Other: 2
- ❑ No Response: 15

In your municipality, are any polling places in a separate building from the Registrar's office?

- ❑ Yes: 205
- ❑ No: 248
- ❑ No response: 4

Question	Registrar's Office	Polling Place(s)
❑ Does the facility have electricity?	Yes: 440 No: 0 No Response: 17	Yes: 336 No: 2 No Response: 119

❑ Does the facility have a phone line?	Yes: 428 No: 3 No Response: 25 Unsure: 1	Yes: 260 No: 59 No Response: 131 Some: 7
❑ How many computers are at the facility and available for voter registration and election purposes?	None: 79 One: 163 Two to Six: 164 Seven or more: 14 No response: 37	None: 204 One: 37 Two: 14 Three to Six: 14 No Response: 188
❑ Approximately, in what year were your computers purchased?	2002-2003: 102 2000-2001: 121 1998-1999: 67 Before 1998: 66 Not sure: 26 No Response: 75	2002-2003: 15 2000-2001: 27 1998-1999: 16 Before 1998: 11 Not sure: 20 No Response: 368
❑ Do the computers have a modem or network card?	Yes: 306 No: 45 Not sure: 28 No Response: 78	Yes: 53 No: 35 Not sure: 16 No Response: 353

❑ If known, what type of Internet connection(s) is currently used at the facility?	DSL: 50 Cable: 80 Dial-up: 168 None: 54 Not sure: 17 Other: 13 No Response: 75	DSL: 7 Cable: 11 Dial-up: 37 None: 47 Not sure: 7 Other: 1 No Response: 347
❑ What type of browser is available at the facility?	Internet Explorer: 302 Netscape: 11 None: 38 Not sure: 30 Other: 4 No Response: 72	Internet Explorer: 53 Netscape: 5 None: 39 Not sure: 10 Other: 1 No Response: 349
❑ If known, what type of Internet connection services is commercially available in your municipality? NOTE: Responses overlap due to multiple connections available in some municipalities.	DSL: 108 Cable: 128 Dial-up: 272 None: 14 Not sure: 60 Other: No Response: 68	

VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

How is your voter registration list maintained?

- ❑ Handwritten or typed: 127
- ❑ Electronically: 328
- ❑ No Response: 2

Does your system store a digital image of the voter's signature?

- ❑ Yes: 7
- ❑ No: 370
- ❑ No Response: 80

Does your system track the information needed to complete the NVRA report?

- ❑ Yes: 184
- ❑ No: 181
- ❑ No Response: 92

How do you certify and track petitions and duplicate signatures?

- ❑ Manually on paper: 331
- ❑ Electronically-using the municipal voter registration system: 83
- ❑ Electronically-separate from the municipal voter registration system: 6
- ❑ Combination: 27
- ❑ No Response: 10

How do you track absentee ballots issued and prepare a list/report?

- Manually on paper: 335
- Electronically-using the municipal voter registration system: 35
- Electronically-separate from the municipal voter registration system: 38
- Combination: 43
- No Response: 6

How do you track the history of which voters voted in each election?

- We do not track voter history: 198
- Manually-on paper: 79
- Electronically-using the municipal voter registration system: 158
- Electronically-separate from the municipal voter registration system: 8
- Combination (please explain): 10
- No Response: 4

Do you use a vendor's software for voter registration?

- Yes: 257
- No: 189
- No Response: 11
- If "Yes", what vendor's software do you use? TOTAL: 264 responses
  - TRIO Software Corp.: 126
  - Northern Data Systems: 50
  - Gemini Systems or Munis: 17
  - Barbour: 16
  - Elite: 3; Municipal Advantage: 5; Newburgh Assoc.: 8
  - Other: 39

What was the date your voter registration list was last purged?

In or prior to 1997: 12

1998: 22

1999: 55

2000: 92

2001: 42

2002: 46

2003: 90

"Never": 2

Unsure: 33

No Response: 63

What method was used to perform the purge?

- ❑ Targeted Confirmation Mailing (targeted AVN & CACC): 193
- ❑ Targeted Confirmation Mailing (NCOA & CACC): 40
- ❑ Mass mailing to all registrants (full AVN & CACC): 85
- ❑ No Response: 139

When do you plan to do your next purge?

- ❑ 2003: 9
- ❑ 2004: 228
- ❑ 2005: 41
- ❑ 2006 to 2008: 16
- ❑ Unsure or Not Necessary: 55
- ❑ No Response: 108

How do you distribute your voter registration list? (Please check all that apply.)

NOTE: Responses will overlap because more than one method applies in some cases.

- ❑ Publish on Internet: 6
- ❑ Paper: 432
- ❑ CD-ROM: 25
- ❑ Diskette: 174
- ❑ Tape: 3
- ❑ Email: 38
- ❑ No Response: 8

Approximately how many requests do you receive annually for copies of your voter list?

- ❑ Never: 17
- ❑ 1 – 10: 428
- ❑ 11 – 50: 8
- ❑ Over 50: Zero
- ❑ No Response: 4

If you charge for copies of your voter registration list what is the fee that you charge?

- ❑ No Charge: 8
- ❑ Less than $10.00: 69
- ❑ $10.00: 47
- ❑ $12.00 to $20.00: 51
- ❑ $25.00: 73
- ❑ $30.00 to $50.00: 67
- ❑ Greater than $50.00: 33
- ❑ No Response: 108

APPENDIX THREE: SITE VISIT NOTES

Community:	ALEXANDER
Date Visited:	December 3, 2003
Present:	Norma Donahue, Deanne Greenlaw, Chip Gavin, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Microsoft Word
Suggestions for new system:	Flag system from one municipality to another stating the voter has moved to the new municipality State to state moves Access to entire voter list (by first, last name, address, date of birth, registered date and party) Reporting Capabilities, including downloading of voter list
General Comments:	NVRA isn't that cumbersome, not a lot of activity due to the size of the municipality Privacy of voter information over the Internet is a concern Should not be driven with zip codes, because Alexander has Woodland zip codes

Community:	AUBURN
Date Visited:	December 4, 2003
Present:	Mary Lou Magno, Sec. Dan Gwadosky, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Barbour
Comments on Current System	Very user friendly, for example, it calculates signature counts automatically In last election they processed over 1,000 absentees System has historical record tracking capabilities System automatically assigns ward but not districts
Suggestions for new system:	Training for new users is important Detailed history tracking of changes to individual records Flag system from one municipality to another stating that the voter has moved to new municipality public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc. track absentee votes and produce lists Tracking of party changes Registration: Petition signature history, voting history, relocation tracking within municipality, relocation from another municipality, voter status (active, inactive, not-eligible; "delete") Extensive reporting capabilities
General Comments:	Signature updates due to possible changes in signatures over time may be helpful

Community:	AUGUSTA
Date Visited:	November 24, 2003
Present:	Linda Veilleux, Chip Gavin, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Informix database, built by IS department
Comments on Current System	Track petitions manually on paper voter registration list by writing a code (i.e., a letter for the petition) next to the voter's name. No history of voter record – only keep the last time the voter voted. Some querying capabilities System does not automatically update ward and district numbers when addresses change System does not automatically update registrations when parties change from pending to active; registrar manually maintains a paper tickler file Absentee ballots: combination of manual and electronic. On absentee form screen, they enter the voter number that pulls up the voter's name, but then they have to re-enter the name in the system. Thursday night before election is their typical cut-off for printing the voter registration lists for the polls. Typically takes 15 minutes per list (excluding equipment problems, jamming, etc.). Street addresses verified with Assessor
Suggestions for new system:	Would like to have access to E911 system – have had to manually update files. Auto generation of envelopes for absentee ballot.
General Comments:	Provide petition receipts – had 441 petition forms last year Polling places: 4 locations, including one central: The armory, council chambers, Civic Center and Ward Technical School. Phone lines are not necessarily available – they get cell phones to use on election day.

Community:	BANGOR
Date Visited:	November 26, 2003
Present:	Gail Campbell, Jeff Webber, Chip Gavin, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Informix-SQL v7.20 and Excel
Comments on Current System	Absentee ballot tracking separate from voter registration system – kept in an Excel spreadsheet. System doesn't differentiate between an absentee vote and an in-person vote. NVRA report data is extracted – their system cannot make the report itself. They keep a manual list of the number of voter registration cards mailed Voter history: tracks the past 8 elections; next purge scheduled for 2004 No unique voter identification numbers. As voter changes were made in the past the system would assign new numbers, giving one voter multiple ID numbers. As a result, they removed the number tracking feature from the system. System does not flag potential duplicate accounts or petition signatures System does not validate addresses that are commercial v. residential. No address range validation available. Petition history is maintained on system – contained in one text box.
Suggestions for new system:	
General Comments:	Polling places: many are in gyms and security is tight. Election workers are given cell phones Computers in the voter registration office are only used for voter registration Network has email capability, but it's just used internally Once entered in system, they are considered an active voter. Do not track pending on the system. Zip codes are not a pure indicator of the municipality in which someone lives

Community:	BATH
Date Visited:	November 20, 2003
Present:	Mary White, Ginger Kadlec, Deborah Cabana, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Munis
Comments on Current System	NVRA: the Munis system doesn't generate the report. Mary has to add the information to a separate system. System tracks petitions by voter and tracks cumulative petition history Typically it takes one FTE 2 days to validate a petition No reporting function for petition reporting Absentee ballots: keeps log in Word using table format Downloads information from Munis to Access for printing or labels, etc. Munis provided functionality for the download.
Suggestions for new system:	Labeling capabilities Reporting NVRA Statistical capabilities to sort and retrieve data
General Comments:	Phone lines are available at the schools, but they don't have connections in the gym and security "lock down" is tight. Voter registration process: 1. Voter presents DL or vehicle registration or bill with residence info on it. 2. Voter completes registration card. 3. Information entered in Munis Election day: new registrations are handled at the municipal building rather than at the polling locations Manual production of all voter registration acknowledgement notices.

Community:	BELFAST
Date Visited:	November 25, 2003
Present:	Roberta Fogg, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Gemini
Comments on Current System	Not particularly happy with current system. Petitions: validates signatures but does not enter them into Gemini or into a spreadsheet – no duplicate tracking Currently able to run full and ward voting lists Roberta assigns a unique voter ID number
Suggestions for new system:	Petition tracking Expanded voter histories Voter signatures Envelope printing capability Absentee ballot mailing capability in system Make list accessible to the public – be sure to keep personal information undisclosed and confidential Capture information like citizenship and combine with US census data
General Comments:	

Community:	BIDDEFORD
Date Visited:	November 19, 2003
Present:	Clairma Matherne, Deborah Cabana, John Smith, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	Do election day registrations at the polls using the NDS software Publishes voter list on the internet Voter record contains a miscellaneous field which they use to list petitions signed by voter; used to identify duplicate signatures System has an export function City IS department generates reports with Crystal reports via an ODBC driver
Suggestions for new system:	Have digital images for all cards Search or select by street Use signature images to certify petitions Reporting functionality Speed
General Comments:	Concerned about losing the functionality of scanners in their current system

Community:	BLAINE
Date Visited:	December 2, 2003
Present:	Delmar "Chappy" Clark, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	No electronic system currently in use
Comments on Current System	Duplicate registrations occur Town Office is not online at all School prints off the voter list and enters new voters in the system The school dept has a word processor that houses the list
Suggestions for new system:	User friendly Training provided Blaine would not like other municipalities to be able to remove voters from its list
General Comments:	One person on staff for the entire town, the hope is that a new system will assist where he is lacking in staff

Community:	BRUNSWICK
Date Visited:	November 20, 2003
Present:	Fran Smith, Secretary Dan Gwadosky, Deborah Cabana, Tamara Dukes, Ginger Kadlec and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	NDS and Access database
Comments on Current System	Log petition, how many pages, who dropped it off, the date dropped off, date mailed (don't track number signatures) – maintain photocopies of the petitions on file at office Handle election day registrations at the polls Can only pull up partial name for searches Petitions tracked via alpha identifiers but limited in number of petitions to track; cannot edit field without deleting all information first
Suggestions for new system:	History tracking -- Voter history, petitions and absentee tracking and histories are important. Reporting capabilities, including active/inactive voters, lists by street, absentee info Would like to see function where she can just enter street name or some other identifier and have system input city, zip, district numbers. User friendly Flexibility for special reporting Local petition ID assignment
General Comments:	10 offices up for election each year with 50-60 total petitions 7 voting districts – 2 are combined into one polling location; 6 total facilities Top three public requests: Entire list or portions of list (often in paper format), especially close to elections List of absentees or by party

Community:	BYRON
Date Visited:	December 11, 2003
Present:	Melissa Plourde and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Microsoft Word
Comments on Current System	Approximately 90 registered votes in their community The list has the individuals first name, last name, physical address, and party affiliation
Suggestions for new system:	Simple and user friendly
General Comments:	Training should be offered nearby The clerk works 4 other jobs This is a small town and they know everyone by first names, keeping the list current is very easy Clerk and deputy are both comfortable with computers Only processed about five (5) absentee votes for this past election Costs are a concern

Community:	CALAIS
Date Visited:	December 2, 2003
Present:	Theresa Porter, Chip Gavin, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	Miscellaneous field used to track absentee voting and petitions Help with generating NVRA numbers – done manually now
Suggestions for new system:	System assistance in notifying other towns when voters register in her town Flag system from one municipality to another stating that the voter has moved User friendly – consider large type Public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc. Reporting: Last Name, District, Party, etc.
General Comments:	Training – closer to Calais? Open to on-line training Receives a fair amount of duplicate registration cards

Community:	CHAPMAN
Date Visited:	December 1, 2003
Present:	Trudie Buck, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	The Mapleton town office houses business for Chapman and Castle Hill. These are separate municipalities. To request a copy of the voter registration list the people will need to contact NDS. NDS may charge for the list. The system is not able to identify by street address which town the individual is from. Unique identifier assigned by Trudie when entering a new voter.
Suggestions for new system:	Ability to manage multiple towns Assist with the NVRA Track individuals who move from one town to another Assist with absentee voting and tracking
General Comments:	

Community:	CHINA
Date Visited:	December 5, 2003
Present:	Rebecca Hapgood, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Trio
Comments on Current System	Has automatic update/audit function which allows review of pending changes to voter records Keeps history of last 10 elections Keeps date if record is changed; does not indicate what change was Has a petition tracking function, but name lookups are cumbersome System has good reporting function (she can search by name, ward, street, etc.) NVRA numbers are generated from the system to complete the report
Suggestions for new system:	Track absentee ballots Print envelopes
General Comments:	

Community:	DOVER-FOXCROFT
Date Visited:	December 9, 2003
Present:	Barbara Moore, Phyllis Lyford, Chip Gavin and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	List is exported to Excel spreadsheet to manipulate data Reporting functionality by: Address, Last Name, Voter status, Underage voters, Deleted voters
Suggestions for new system:	Access to voter information on-line should not present sensitive fields (i.e., DOB) Good customer service is important Flag system from one municipality to another stating that the voter has requested moving to their name to the new municipality Printing of absentee envelops
General Comments:	

Community:	ELLSWORTH
Date Visited:	November 26, 2003
Present:	Martha Kossick Bayer, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	Excel spreadsheet used for NVRA report and absentee ballots Petitions tracked by hand Voter IDs: first four (4) letters of the last name, first initial, middle initial. No numbering sequence used. No search capabilities No automatic date updates for party changes History tracking is limited
Suggestions for new system:	Link from voter list to the detailed voter information (image of voter card) Track absentee ballots and print envelopes Laptops at polls Interface with vital records and assessor to verify street addresses. Their assessor's office has GIS capability, which would be useful to connect to
General Comments:	Township voters vote in Ellsworth (ward 8) – 82 voters total. They are identified on the voter registration list with an "8" and their township name. They receive a different ballot and those ballots are hand-counted. Department heads have access to email, but not all staff currently uses it.

Community:	FARMINGTON
Date Visited:	December 10, 2003
Present:	Leanne Pinkham, Mavis Buzzell, Julie Flynn, Tiffany Glidden and Dave Neudeck
Current System:	Gemini
Comments on Current System	System is difficult to purge due to print limitations Searching functions are difficult Election history (just one date is kept) Reports by last name, district, party
Suggestions for new system:	Assist in notifying other towns when she has them register in her town Issue a voter id card with information needed Public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc.
General Comments:	Training is a concern for new users

Community:	LEWISTON
Date Visited:	December 4, 2003
Present:	Kathy Montejo, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Barbour
Comments on Current System	Very user friendly Maintains history of several past elections on the same screen as the information of the voter Automatically assigns ward and districts Flags voters for military, so when an absentee is processed, it indicates that a military envelope Flags individuals as college students, along with their graduation year, so when they purge they target the date and send a mailing Flags when an incorrect street or numbers of an incorrect one is entered, this avoids human error so her deputies do not have to manually determine which addresses are valid Reports available by Name, Address, Voter Status, NVRA, Account number
Suggestions for new system:	Provide scanned signature for petition tracking Using driver license or last three digits of SSN as a unique identifier Track individual change histories and to have the system indicate the type of change and the date Voter history and petition tracking accessible from the voter screen, perhaps a tab that would link her to the information Track absentee votes and produce lists
General Comments:	This last election they processed over 1500 absentees

Community:	MEDDYBEMPS
Date Visited:	December 3, 2003
Present:	Tammi Smith, Lisa Jones, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Microsoft Access Database
Comments on Current System	No petition certification currently The list has the individuals first name last name, physical address, mailing address and party affiliation
Suggestions for new system:	
General Comments:	Registrar (Tammy) works out of home, but is pretty mobile – the entire voter reg cards file is in a recipe box. They are planning to move town records and information into the Community Center Would like training close to community Only processed about 10 absentee votes for this past election

Community:	MONSON
Date Visited:	December 9, 2003
Present:	Julie Anderson, Chip Gavin and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Casio
Comments on Current System	Identifies if the person is located in a township or not Voting takes place at the municipal office/fire dept/library Allows her to maintain her records and add/update or delete voters History on Last Date Voted List printing capabilities, but does not allow her to view the list before she prints it
Suggestions for new system:	Assistance with notifying her when citizens move within the state, either into or out of her municipality.
General Comments:	They plan on participating with the Moses system so they plan on getting online and get computer training Only processed about 40-50 absentee votes for this past election Training is key

Community:	PORTLAND
Date Visited:	November 21, 2003
Present:	Carolyn Hannigan, Angela Mackie, Julie Flynn, Ginger Kadlec, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Access – designed in-house
Comments on Current System	Portlandvoters.com – list of registered voters. Includes entire voter registration list. People can find out polling places, district. The entire list can be viewed (over 900 pages). Can search for individuals by first and last name. VRAN: (Voter Registration Acknowledgement Notice) – Portland sends a special confirmation notice (copy in our files). Two different notices generated – one just to confirm; the other if additional information is needed. System assigns voter ID automatically. Use barcode system and scanner. Print lists for polling places and use scanning device to scan barcode when people vote. Print lists the Friday before election-day (captures information by EOD Thursday). Staff manually adds AV to the list (handwritten) and delivered to the polling locations on Tuesday. Absentee ballots can only be picked up at the Clerk's office. Capability to indicate the method of the last change, as well as a history of all changes
Suggestions for new system:	Enable list generation closer to election day Ability to print envelopes directly from the system for any voter correspondence (i.e., absentee ballots, petition Electronically communicate with other municipalities if voters need to be removed from other lists. System check for valid street addresses Have a field for housing units with multiple residences Purging capabilities for archives Signatures scanned into system Online tutorial for training deputy registrars Search database via date of birth.
General Comments:	CACC: Change of Address Confirmation Cards. Record is attached to voters and tracks the date the CACC was sent and received. It also tracks the 20-day period. Can also track CACC distribution volume.

Community:	PRESQUE ISLE
Date Visited:	December 2, 2003
Present:	Nancy Nichols, Traci Place, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Gemini
Comments on Current System	
Suggestions for new system:	User friendly Flexibility with entering local information like school district View voter information from other municipalities Petition tracking Bi- or Multi-lingual system Large fonts Auto voter status changes Track absentees, and printing of the envelops
General Comments:	Staff would be happy to assist in development and testing of new system

Community:	ROCKLAND
Date Visited:	November 25, 2003
Present:	Evelyn Smyth, John T. Smith, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Munis
Comments on Current System	Equipment is old Voter registration list is not readily accessible NVRA report must be manually created Voter numbers manually assigned Limited fields to enter (e.g., only tracks last election voted) Absentee ballots tracked in a separate Excel spreadsheet
Suggestions for new system:	More reporting capabilities
General Comments:	Clerk reports that residency base is primarily apartments.

Community:	ROXBURY
Date Visited:	December 11, 2003
Present:	Delia Knapp and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Spreadsheet-based (Quattro Pro 9)
Comments on Current System	List maintained on Quattro Pro 9 -- keeps current list and an inactive tab Backup on diskette Processed approximately 20 absentee votes for this past election
Suggestions for new system:	User friendly
General Comments:	This is a small town and they know everyone by first names, keeping the list current is very easy Registrar is comfortable with computers Training should be close to community

Community:	RUMFORD
Date Visited:	December 11, 2003
Present:	Jane Giasson, Beth Bellegarde and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	NDS
Comments on Current System	Not particularly happy with current system. Capturing DL number and last 4 digits of SSN in "miscellaneous entry" field on NDS List has the individuals first name last name, physical address, and party affiliation
Suggestions for new system:	Petition tracking Absentee tracking -- 223 absentee votes for this past election Reporting "Talk" to assessing department
General Comments:	Staff is generally comfortable with computers. Training is key

Community:	SANFORD
Date Visited:	November 19, 2003
Present:	Claire Morrison, Gilles Auger, Deborah Cabana, John Smith, Tiffany Gliden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Unix/Informix – designed in-house
Comments on Current System	Unix based voter registration system – home grown SCO Unix/Informix 4 gencase tool 1988 vintage Voter name is a single field – no first, last or middle initial.
Suggestions for new system:	Public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc Printing postcards for people who move within town Phone numbers internally, but concerned about privacy if publicly available
General Comments:	

Community:	SCARBOROUGH
Date Visited:	November 19, 2003
Present:	Tody Justice; Deborah Cabana, John T. Smith, Tamara Dukes, Ginger Kadlec and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Access Database
Comments on Current System	Voter registration form online Exporting is fairly simple out of Access Good reporting functionality
Suggestions for new system:	A wildcard districting option in the new system would be beneficial (ex. Water District issue every 7 years) Capability to view voter information from other municipalities Would be helpful to type in a voter's name and access info, rather than having to input an ID number Flag system from one municipality to another stating that the voter has moved Public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc.
General Comments:	

Community:	SKOWHEGAN
Date Visited:	December 10, 2003
Present:	Rhonda Stark, Joan Farnsworth, Julie Flynn, Tiffany Glidden and Dave Neudeck.
Current System:	ProActive Citizen Information System
Comments on Current System	Different access levels Keeps up to 4 previous addresses Voting history (currently not in use) Election history (currently not in use) Petition information Extensive reporting: voter lists, address confirmations, NVRA, etc.
Suggestions for new system:	Flag system from one municipality to another stating that the voter has moved Public voter lookup for ward, district, polling place, etc. Customer service is important
General Comments:	Does not want to lose physical cards – feels there is value on election day

Community:	SOUTH PORTLAND
Date Visited:	November 21, 2003
Present:	Jennifer Scholtz, Karen Morrill, Julie Flynn, Ginger Kadlec, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst
Current System:	Rosetta One v8.1 – windows-based system from Diverse Integrated Systems
Comments on Current System	www.southportland.org -- for online voter registration list Scanned signatures – just include signature, not entire card. System validates all signatures on petitions, but does not keep a history of the petitions an individual voter has signed… it keeps all the names by petition. System lets you select valid or invalid signatures when validating petitions Prints voter list the Friday before. For late registrations, they make handwritten notes on the paper or include names/info at the back of the list. Maintains voter history record System will update pending to active voters, but has to be told to perform that operation. Label printing, but not envelope
Suggestions for new system:	Separate municipality list by city to send them list of new voter registrations for people that moved from their city in Maine. Reporting – reports should be able to be e-mailed or saved into Word or Excel format
General Comments:	

Community:	WALDOBORO
Date Visited:	November 25, 2003
Present:	Linda Perry, John T. Smith, Ginger Kadlec and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	Trio
Comments on Current System	Voter list is on paper Motor Vehicle is on Trio Windows – voter registration on Trio DOS Voter history – system tracks previous 10 election dates Search: name or location System automatically changes from pending to active status
Suggestions for new system:	
General Comments:	

Community:	WATERVILLE
Date Visited:	November 24, 2003
Present:	Patti Dubois, Arlene Strahan, Ginger Kadlec, Tiffany Glidden and Todd Tolhurst – Theresa Hamlin (registrar) joined for a few minutes
Current System:	Access database
Comments on Current System	Use two laptops at polling places – they copy their voter registration database onto the laptops. Voter registration happens at polling place Cutoff voter registration list on Friday to print list. Bring a printer with them to the polling place to print results. Currently scanning vital records, not voting records. System captures all voting history
Suggestions for new system:	"Housing Unit" field so they can search by housing units (ex. Nursing homes, etc.) Searching capabilities Audit procedures Print letters and other communication for mass mailings or single COA cards, etc.
General Comments:	Currently redistricting from three to two districts Waterville runs by caucus, rather than by petition, so their total petition count is lower than others Just consolidated their polling places into one facility (the American Legion). Absentee voters: 1100 received at last even-year election. Volunteered their training facility as a regional training site.

Community:	WILLIMANTIC
Date Visited:	December 4, 2003
Present:	Jacquelyn Gorey, Debbie Pettigrew, Chip Gavin and Tiffany Glidden
Current System:	No electronic system
Comments on Current System	Voting takes place at the Grange Hall Only processed about 6 absentee votes for this past election Current list has the individuals first name last name, physical address, mailing address and party affiliation
Suggestions for new system:	System assistance with notifying her when citizens move within the state. Limited public access to voter information (i.e., no phone numbers)
General Comments:	Community does not perform very many petition certifications They plan on participating with the Moses system so they plan on getting online and get computer training Training is key

APPENDIX FOUR: STATE OF MAINE PRELIMINARY STATE PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2002

Note: The following is excerpted from the full State of Maine Preliminary State Plan for the Implementation of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. The full plan, and other information concerning Maine and HAVA can be found at http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/hava.htm.

To request a copy of the Preliminary State Plan or to share your thoughts or questions, please contact the Office of the Secretary of State at (207) 626-8409, or by emailing john.t.smith@maine.gov, or writing to Office of the Secretary of State, Attn: John Smith, 148 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0148.

§303, Computerized Statewide Voter Registration List Requirements and Requirements for Voters Who Register by Mail

Deadline for Compliance: January 1, 2004; State can submit a certification stating "good cause" that will move the deadline for §303(a) compliance to January 1, 2006.

The most significant challenge Maine faces in meeting the requirements of the Help America Vote Act is the development, implementation and management of a computerized statewide voter registration list as described in HAVA §303(a). Due to the decentralized nature of Maine's registration process, an enormous collaborative effort of the State and municipalities will be necessary to come into compliance with this particular requirement. The State will also need to invest the most significant portion of the funds made available under HAVA to ensure the success of this effort.

The State of Maine, like most other states, has at the foundation of its elections process a system for registering those citizens who are eligible to vote in local, state, and federal elections. As referenced earlier in this plan, Maine has consistently sought to ensure that the registration process is open, easy, and accessible to all eligible citizens, while maintaining the integrity of our elections. To prevent voter registration from becoming a barrier to citizen participation in our democracy, Maine has, for the past thirty years, allowed mail-in voter registration and in-person Election Day voter registration. Maine implemented voter registration at motor vehicle branches five years prior to implementation of the National Voter Registration Act. Maine law also permits voters, whose registration qualifications are questioned, to cast a challenged ballot.

Although Maine registration laws are uniform throughout the State, individual jurisdictions are responsible for the actual collection of registration data and maintenance of official voter registration lists. The Help America Vote Act provides Maine with a challenging mandate and an opportunity to enhance the citizen access, integrity, and administrative efficiency of our registration process by developing a computerized statewide voter registration list.

Currently, each municipality's registrar of voters is responsible for maintaining a list of residents who are eligible and registered to vote in elections. These official voter registration lists are maintained separately by 503 municipal jurisdictions, in a variety of disparate formats, including handwritten, typed, and computerized lists. The number of citizens registered to vote ranges from 2 in Maine's smallest jurisdiction to 50,799 in Maine's largest city. Nearly 400 municipalities have fewer than 2,000 registered voters.

The development of a computerized statewide voter registration list as described in HAVA will be a significant undertaking in Maine due to the State's current decentralized, municipal level voter registration process, and the rural nature of our state. This project will involve the acquisition of the technological capabilities for the State to administer the system, the integration of existing and varying municipal data, the development of the necessary infrastructural capabilities throughout the State, and extensive training for state and local election officials. A substantial portion of federal funds made available to the State of Maine under HAVA will be necessary for Maine to develop a computerized statewide voter registration system.

Development and Implementation of List

In anticipation of the federal requirement to develop a computerized statewide voter registration list, and in recognition of the benefits of developing such a system, Maine enacted enabling legislation to facilitate the list's development. Maine Public Laws 2001, Chapter 637 - *An Act to Establish a Centralized Voter Registration System for the State* (21-A MRSA §§191-195), sets forth the general process Maine will use to implement this requirement. The state law established a Centralized Voter Registration Advisory Committee, consisting of various stakeholders, to advise the Secretary of State with respect to planning for the centralized voter registration system. The law also creates a pilot program and calls for a staged implementation plan to bring the entire state online.

The Secretary of State has convened the Advisory Committee and is in the process of conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, defining the system parameters, and drafting a request for proposals (RFP). During this process, in addition to consulting with the members of the Advisory Committee, the Secretary of State may also consult with municipal election officials, state agencies, and other states to define the functional requirements of a computerized statewide voter registration list. The Secretary of State will also take necessary steps to ensure that the list will be coordinated with other agency data, specifically including data from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Vital Statistics.

The State may also consider hiring an outside consultant to assist with the needs assessment and drafting of a request for proposals (RFP) to build and implement the system. The RFP will incorporate each of the voter registration list requirements set out in HAVA. Maine's successful implementation of a computerized statewide voter registration list will require the combined efforts of state election officials, municipal election officials, other state agencies and any contracted vendor or vendors. The Secretary of State will coordinate these efforts and manage the implementation.

Mail-in Registrations

The Secretary of State and the State Plan Committee have reviewed Maine's registration procedures and have made modifications to those procedures, where necessary, to bring Maine into compliance with the requirements for voters who register by mail. Maine has established procedures to obtain the required ID for first time mail-in registrations received after January 1, 2003. The procedures include collecting required information prior to and on Election Day. The Secretary of State has also updated the voter registration card, mail–in voter registration acknowledgement procedures and forms to advise mail-in registrants of the HAVA requirements and to notify those with incomplete applications how they may complete their registrations. Maine's challenged ballot and Election Day voter registration laws will ensure that voters who fail to provide the required ID by the first federal election in which they vote will still be eligible for fail-safe voting in person or by mail.

Upon implementation of a computerized statewide voter registration list, Maine will be capable of matching the registrants' driver license numbers or the last 4 digits of their social security numbers with existing state identification records to confirm the ID of prospective registrants and to satisfy the ID requirements.

Voter Registration Goals

Maine, through its implementation of a computerized statewide voter registration list and its implementation of the requirements for those who register by mail, will seek enhanced access and ease of registration for voters, accuracy and integrity of voter registration information, administrative efficiencies, uniformity, and ease of operation by municipalities.

SEC. 303. COMPUTERIZED STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST REQUIREMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTERS WHO REGISTER BY MAIL.		
(a) COMPUTERIZED STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST REQUIREMENTS-		
(1) IMPLEMENTATION-		
(A) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in subparagraph (B), each State, acting through the chief state election official, shall implement, in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner, a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list defined, maintained, and administered at the State level that contains the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State and assigns a unique identifier to each legally registered voter in the State (in this subsection referred to as the computerized list), and includes the following:	Does Not Meet. *In 2002, the Secretary of State secured passage of state enabling legislation to implement a computerized statewide voter registration list (PL 2001, c.637). Pursuant to this law, an advisory committee was named, and has been convened in 2003 to begin to review system parameters and draft an RFP.*	The Secretary of State anticipates the need to request a waiver of the 1/1/2004 deadline, and to evidence progress toward completing implementation by 1/1/2006. The State will develop and issue an RFP. Maine will implement the system first as a pilot program, and then will deploy the system in stages.
(i) The computerized list shall serve as the single system for storing and managing the official list of registered voters throughout the State.	Does Not Meet.	The RFP will include this requirement.
(ii) The computerized list contains the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State.	Does Not Meet.	The RFP will include this requirement.

	(iii) Under the computerized list, a unique identifier is assigned to each legally registered voter in the State.	Does Not Meet.	The RFP will include this requirement.
	(iv) The computerized list shall be coordinated with other agency databases within the State.	Does not meet.	The RFP will include this requirement. The Secretary of State will coordinate the list with the databases of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and the Office of Vital Statistics, and may draft rules governing this procedure.
	(v) Any election official in the State, including any local election official, may obtain immediate electronic access to the information contained in the computerized list.	Does not meet.	The RFP will include this requirement.
	(vi) All voter registration information obtained by any local election official in the State shall be electronically entered into the computerized list on an expedited basis at the time the information is provided to the local official.	Does not meet.	Maine will address this requirement by policy or by rule.
	(vii) The chief state election official shall provide such support as may be required so that local election officials are able to enter information as described in clause (vi).	Does not meet.	Maine will address this requirement by policy or by rule.

	(viii) The computerized list shall serve as the official voter registration list for the conduct of all elections for Federal office in the State.	Does not meet.	Maine will address this requirement by policy or by rule.
	(B) EXCEPTION- The requirement under subparagraph (A) shall not apply to a State in which, under a State law in effect continuously on and after the date of the enactment of this Act, there is no voter registration requirement for individuals in the State with respect to elections for Federal office.		
	(2) COMPUTERIZED LIST MAINTENANCE-		
	(A) IN GENERAL- The appropriate State or local election official shall perform list maintenance with respect to the computerized list on a regular basis as follows:		
	(i) If an individual is to be removed from the computerized list, such individual shall be removed in accordance with the provisions of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973gg et seq.), including subsections (a)(4), (c)(2), (d), and (e) of section 8 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-6).	Partially meets. *Maine currently meets the requirements of NVRA for voter list maintenance at the local level.*	The Secretary of State will explore statewide methods for list maintenance and will update procedures to be compatible with the new computerized list.
	(ii) For purposes of removing names of ineligible voters from the official list of eligible voters– (I) under section 8(a)(3)(B) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-6(a)(3)(B)), the State shall coordinate the computerized list with State agency records on felony status; and (II) by reason of the death of the registrant under section 8(a)(4)(A) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-6(a)(4)(A)), the State shall coordinate the computerized list with State agency records on death.	Does not meet. *Maine does not prohibit felons from voting, so it will not be necessary to coordinate the computerized list with State agency records on felony status.*	The Secretary of State will coordinate the list with the Office of Vital Statistics and will require this functionality in the RFP.

	(iii) Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this subparagraph, if a State is described in section 4(b) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-2(b)), that State shall remove the names of ineligible voters from the computerized list in accordance with State law.	N/A	
	(B) CONDUCT- The list maintenance performed under subparagraph (A) shall be conducted in a manner that ensures that--		
	(i) the name of each registered voter appears in the computerized list;	Does not meet.	Maine will include this requirement in the RFP.
	(ii) only voters who are not registered or who are not eligible to vote are removed from the computerized list; and	Partially meets. *Maine currently meets this requirement at the municipal level.*	Maine will include this requirement in the RFP and will address in policy or rules.
	(iii) duplicate names are eliminated from the computerized list.	Does not meet.	Maine will include this requirement in the RFP.
	(3) TECHNOLOGICAL SECURITY OF COMPUTERIZED LIST- The appropriate State or local official shall provide adequate technological security measures to prevent the unauthorized access to the computerized list established under this section.	Does not meet.	Maine will include this requirement in the RFP.

	(4) MINIMUM STANDARD FOR ACCURACY OF STATE VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS- The State election system shall include provisions to ensure that voter registration records in the State are accurate and are updated regularly, including the following:		
	(A) A system of file maintenance that makes a reasonable effort to remove registrants who are ineligible to vote from the official list of eligible voters. Under such system, consistent with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973gg et seq.), registrants who have not responded to a notice and who have not voted in 2 consecutive general elections for Federal office shall be removed from the official list of eligible voters, except that no registrant may be removed solely by reason of a failure to vote.	Meets. *Maine currently meets this requirement at the municipal level.*	The Secretary of State will monitor implementation of the computerized list and ensure ongoing compliance.
	(B) Safeguards to ensure that eligible voters are not removed in error from the official list of eligible voters.	Meets. *Maine currently meets this requirement at the municipal level. Maine's Election Day registration law is an additional safeguard for voters.*	The Secretary of State will monitor implementation of the computerized list and ensure ongoing compliance.

	(5) VERIFICATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION-		
	(A) REQUIRING PROVISION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION BY APPLICANTS-		
	(i) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in clause (ii), notwithstanding any other provision of law, an application for voter registration for an election for Federal office may not be accepted or processed by a State unless the application includes-- (I) in the case of an applicant who has been issued a current and valid driver's license, the applicant's driver's license number; or (II) in the case of any other applicant (other than an applicant to whom clause (ii) applies), the last 4 digits of the applicant's social security number.	Does not meet.	Maine will meet this requirement upon implementation of the computerized statewide voter registration system.
	(ii) SPECIAL RULE FOR APPLICANTS WITHOUT DRIVER'S LICENSE OR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER- If an applicant for voter registration for an election for Federal office has not been issued a current and valid driver's license or a social security number, the State shall assign the applicant a number which will serve to identify the applicant for voter registration purposes. To the extent that the State has a computerized list in effect under this subsection and the list assigns unique identifying numbers to registrants, the number assigned under this clause shall be the unique identifying number assigned under the list.	Does not meet.	Maine will meet this requirement upon implementation of the computerized statewide voter registration system.
	(iii) DETERMINATION OF VALIDITY OF NUMBERS PROVIDED- The State shall determine whether the information provided by an individual is sufficient to meet the requirements of this subparagraph, in accordance with State law.	Does not meet.	Maine will consider what verification of voter identification is necessary and will adopt rules as appropriate.

	(B) REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE OFFICIALS-		
	(i) SHARING INFORMATION IN DATABASES- The chief state election official and the official responsible for the State motor vehicle authority of a State shall enter into an agreement to match information in the database of the statewide voter registration system with information in the database of the motor vehicle authority to the extent required to enable each such official to verify the accuracy of the information provided on applications for voter registration.	N/A. *The Secretary of State is both the chief state election official and the chief motor vehicle authority, so no agreement is required.*	Maine will ensure that the intended information sharing occurs.
	(ii) AGREEMENTS WITH COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY- The official responsible for the State motor vehicle authority shall enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Social Security under section 205(r)(8) of the Social Security Act (as added by subparagraph (C)).	Meets.	

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