

Election Security: OIG's Role

November 2, 2022



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Introductions



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Who is in the Audience Today?

Federal IG?



**State/Local Audit
Organization?**



Other?



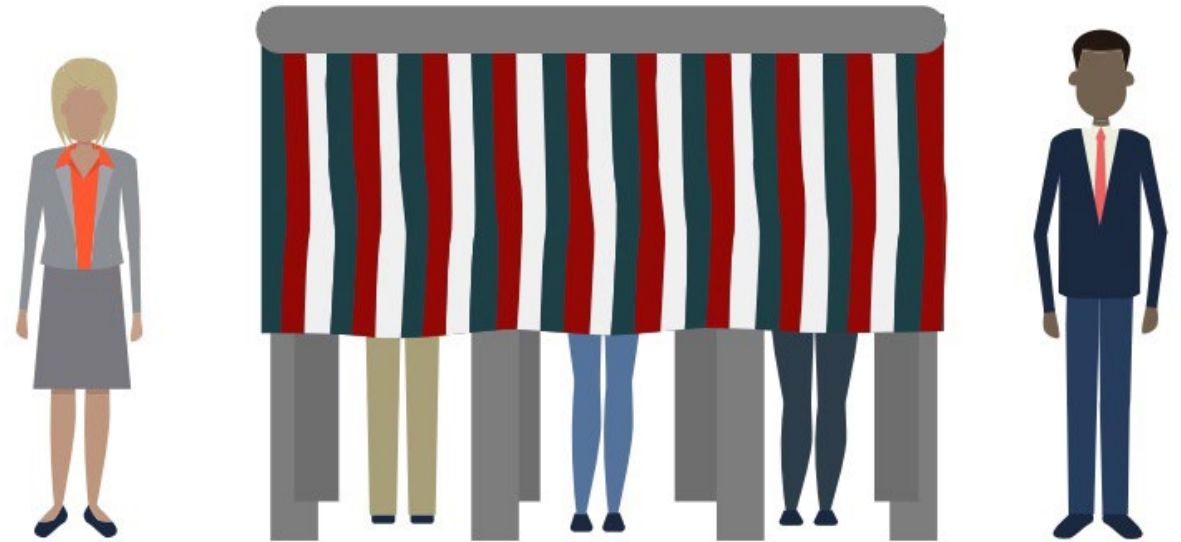
Setting the Stage



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The Importance of Elections

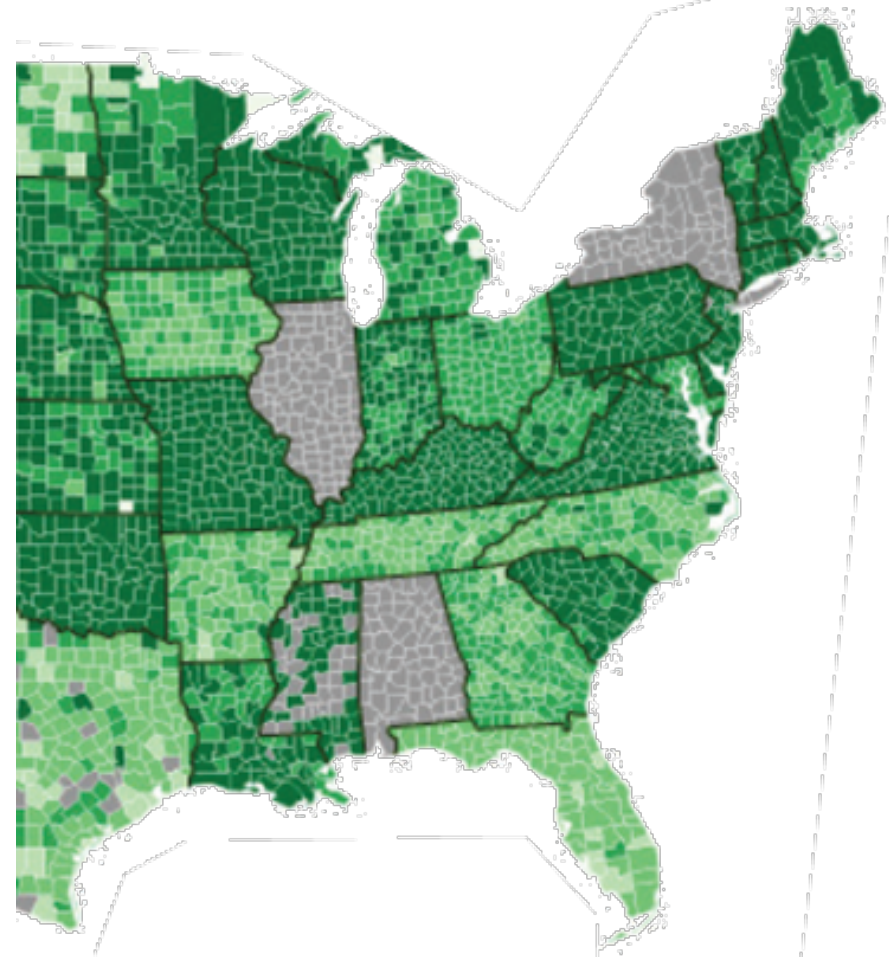
- The Constitution established the U.S. as a democratic republic.
- It is democratic because the people govern themselves, and it is a republic because the government's power is derived from its people.
- A secure and resilient electoral process is vital to the national interest.





The American Election Administration System

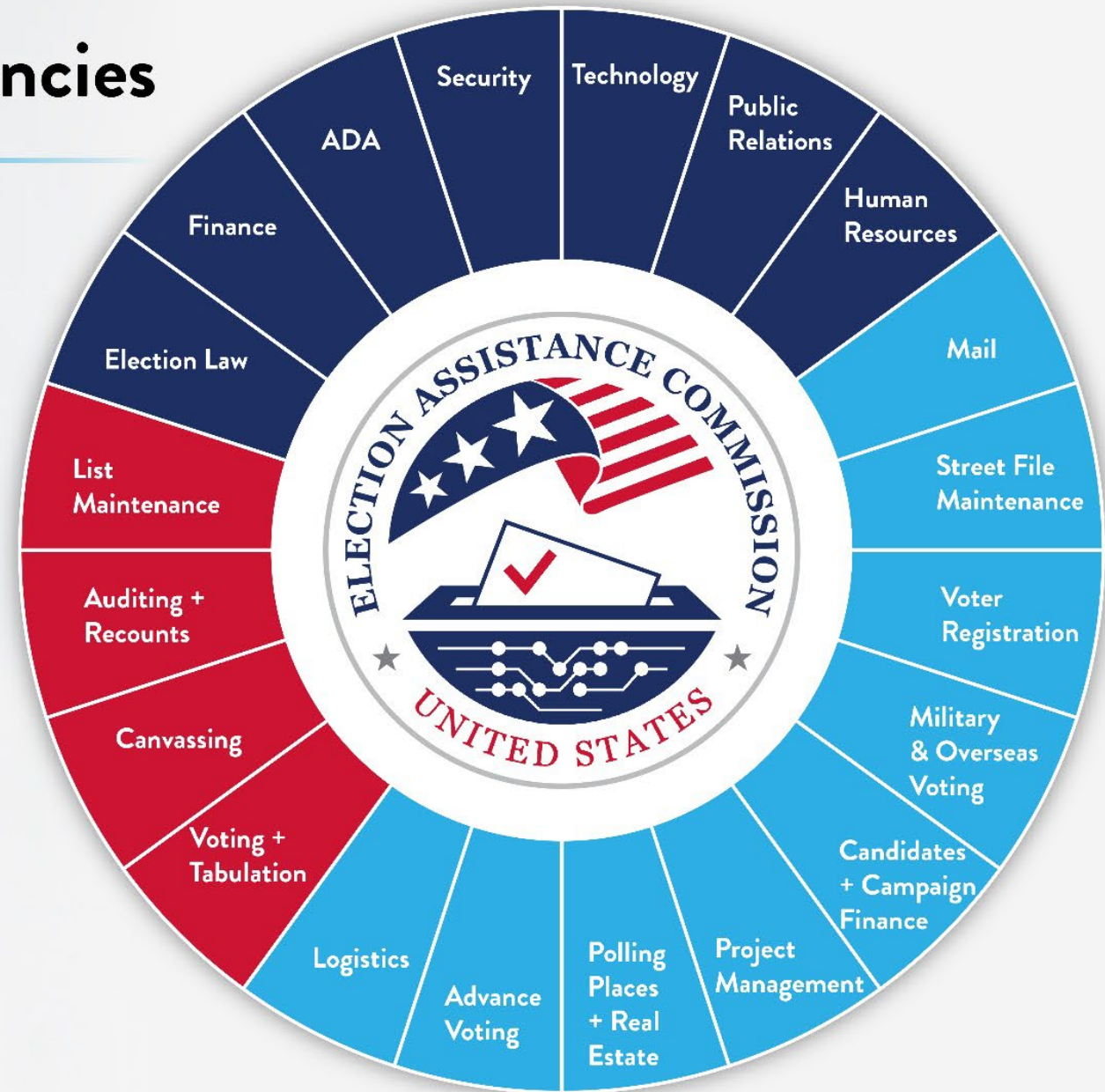
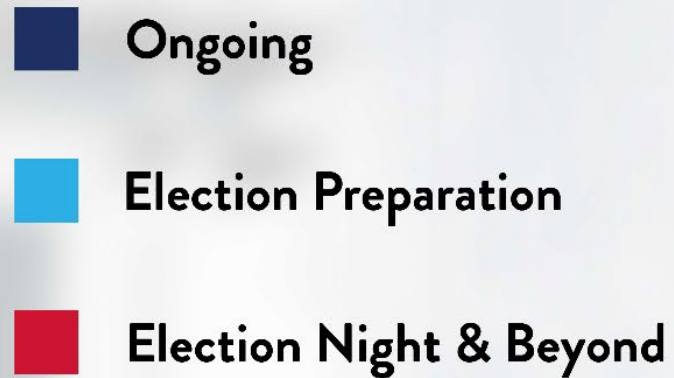
- Decentralized
 - States and local jurisdictions run elections - There are more than 50 election administration systems
- Non-uniform
 - Election administration systems vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and from state to state.
- Thousands of jurisdictions
 - Over 6,400 jurisdictions



Election Infrastructure

- Election infrastructure is designated as part of the nation's **critical infrastructure**.
- Election infrastructure includes, but is not limited to:
 - Voter registration **databases** and associated **IT systems**
 - **IT infrastructure and systems** used to manage elections (such as the counting, auditing and displaying of election results, and post-election reporting to certify and validate results)
 - **Voting systems** and associated infrastructure
 - **Storage facilities** for election and voting system infrastructure
 - **Polling places**, to include early voting locations

Election Administrator Competencies



Threats to Election Administration



- Can be intentional or unintentional
- May originate from within the U.S. or from overseas

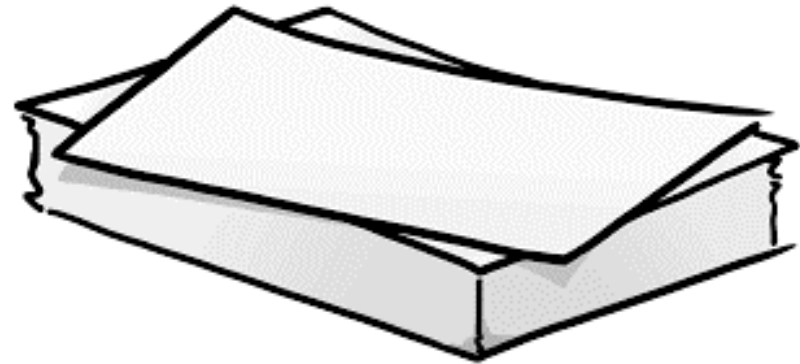
Current Threats



- Mis-, dis-, and mal-information
 - Misinformation may consist of false rumors and misconceptions about elections, while disinformation could be targeted messages spread to purposely mislead voters
- Cyber operations targeting election infrastructure, political parties, campaigns, or public officials
- Threats against election workers

Paper Shortage

- Paper is essential for ballots, ballot envelopes, voter registration forms, etc.
- Long term trends exacerbated by recent market factors have put the nation's paper supply at risk
 - Costs rising by 40% or more
 - Paper orders that once took days or weeks now take months



Election Security

Goal

- Ensure **safe, accurate, fair**, and **accessible** elections

Approach

- No two jurisdictions approach election security the same.
- However, each approach is designed to ensure **information security, physical security, cybersecurity, and continuity of operations** in the event of a disaster.

Election Security



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbXO5821SIw>

The Federal Government's Role



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The Major Players

- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
- Federal Election Commission (FEC)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Election Assistance Commission (EAC)
- Select non-Federal Partners

CISA

- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
- Lead federal agency in charge of election security
- Operational component of the **Department of Homeland Security**



Federal Election Commission

- Regulates election activity
 - Candidate behavior
 - Campaign finance



NIST

- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- Operational component of the **Department of Commerce**
- Key roles:
 - helping to realize nationwide improvements in voting systems
 - assist with the development of voluntary voting system guidelines



Office of Director of National Intelligence

- Coordinating authority for the intelligence community on election security



FBI

- Investigates **federal election crimes**



Department of Justice

- Detects, investigates, and pursues **violations of federal civil and criminal law**



Election Assistance Commission



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d70PFtOhFNc>

Help America Vote Act



- Also known as HAVA
- Enacted by the Congress to make sweeping reforms to the nation's voting process
- Established the EAC
- Improved voting system and access issues identified following the contested 2000 presidential election
- Created new mandates for states to follow in several key areas of election administration

EAC Commissioners



Chairman
Thomas Hicks



Vice Chair
Christy McCormick



Commissioner
Ben Hovland



Commissioner
Donald Palmer

- Bipartisan
- Selected by Congressional leaders of the majority and minority parties
- Appointed by the President
- Confirmed by the U.S. Senate

EAC's Strategic Goals

- Strengthen American elections through the development and implementation of responsive and dynamic voting system guidelines and cyber resources for election officials.
- Encourage improvements to election administration through the development and distribution of resources that assist election officials in modernizing American elections.
- Create operational excellence throughout agency management and programming.

Voluntary Voting System Guidelines



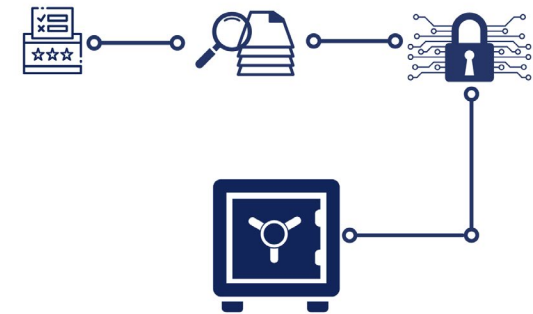
- VVSG are specifications and requirements against which voting systems can be tested to determine if the systems meet required standards
- VVSG 2.0 was unanimously approved by the EAC Commissioners in February 2021
 - paves way for next generation of voting systems across the country
- The EAC is currently working on the implementation process

Clearinghouse Division



Clearinghouse division consisting of eight SMEs

- Division consists of former election officials and experts on election administration, election law, and accessibility
- Led the creation of additional guidance documents to address best practices and respond to election official challenges in a timely manner



Best Practices:
Chain of Custody



U.S. Election Assistance Commission
633 3rd Street NW, Suite 200 | Washington, DC 20001
www.eac.gov

July 13, 2021 V 1.1

EAC Security Resources



- Voting System Security Measures Guide
 - broad list of common security measures, best practices, and procedures to protect the integrity of an election
- Quick Start Guides
 - Planning & Outreach,
 - Election Preparation, and
 - Election Day & Post-Election Processes

Election Security Resources



Security Resources for Election Officials

- Personal Security for Election Officials Checklist
- Removing Personal Identifying Information (PII) from a Google Search
- Incident Response Checklist



HAVA Election Security Funds



- Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022: \$75 million in Election Security grant funds
- Total Election Security grant funds to date
 - \$380 million (2018)
 - \$425 million (2020)
 - \$75 million (2022)
 - **\$880 million Total**
- 52% expended for the 2018 and 2020 funds as of June 1, 2022

HAVA Election Security Funds

- Election Security funds are intended to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements.
- Budget categories include:
 - Voting equipment replacement and upgrades
 - Election auditing
 - Voting registration systems and management
 - Cyber vulnerabilities
 - Training
 - Communication
 - Other

OIG's Role



Federal OIGs

- Federal agencies have their own OIGs whose duty it is to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the programs and operations of that agency.
- In the Election space, coordination between OIGs is key.



Role in Good Government



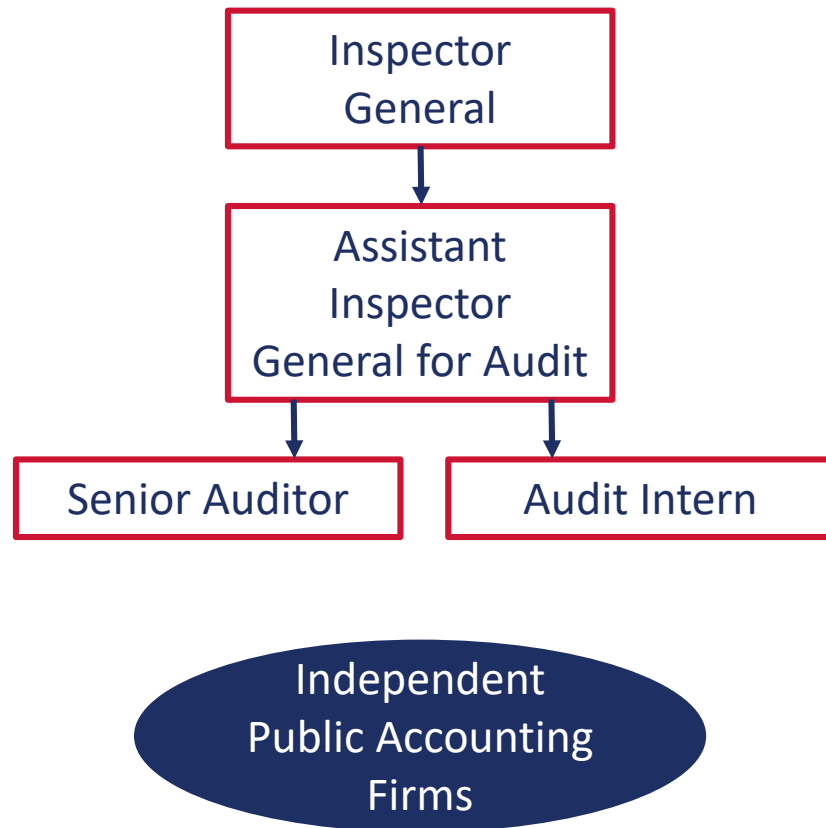
- IGs look independently at problems and possible solutions.
- They issue fact-filled reports based on professional audit, investigative, and inspection standards.
- They provide technical advice as new plans are developed.
- They can perform independent investigations of allegations.
- IGs maintain hotlines for employees and others to report confidential information regarding allegations of fraud and abuse.

EAC Office of Inspector General



- **Mission:** To safeguard the Federal investment in our electoral system by conducting objective and meaningful oversight.
- **Mandate:**
 - Prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.
 - Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of EAC programs.
- **Work:** Audits, evaluations, and investigations.

EAC OIG



Legal: AbilityOne
Commission OIG

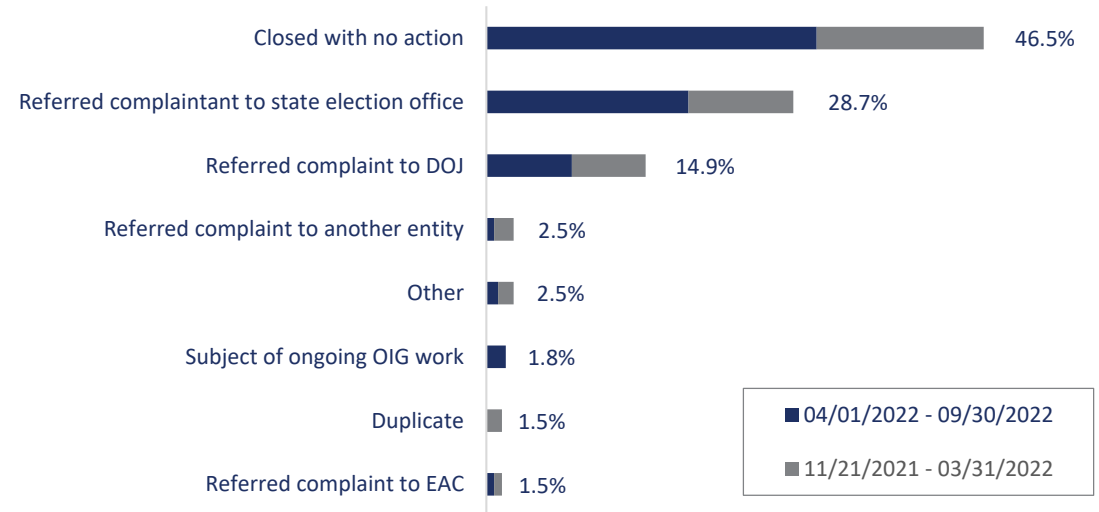
Editing: Dept of
State OIG

Investigations:
Dept of Interior
OIG

OIG Hotline

- EAC employees and members of the public report suspected fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.
- Significant number of referrals.

Disposition of Complaints Received in FY22



Outreach

- One of our goals is to foster stakeholder collaboration and encourage transparency.



Mandatory Reporting



- Audit of the EAC's Financial Statements
- Audit of the EAC's Compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA)
- Review of EAC's Compliance with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019
- Top Management Challenges
- Semiannual Reports to Congress

Single Audit Reviews

- OIG reviews single audit reports to identify findings and recommendations that are EAC's responsibility to resolve.



Discretionary Projects

- Audit of EAC's Testing and Certification Program
- Review of EAC's Contracting and Procurement Activities
- Risk Assessment of EAC Grant Closeout Procedures
- Audit of Interest Allocation to Grants Received Under the Help America Vote Act
- Audits of the Administration of Grants Received Under the Help America Vote Act

HAVA Grant Audits



6 HAVA Audit Reports Issued
25 Audit Recommendations
126.1 \$ Audited, in Millions
1,070,503 \$ Questioned

Audit Recommendation Categories

Inventory Control (7)

Interest Earned (5)

Questioned Cost (4)

Grant Documentation (3)

Reporting (3)

Subrecipient Monitoring (2)

Supplanting (1)

Coordination – Georgia

- In March 2022, the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts issued a [report](#) that covered the office's administration of HAVA funds.
- The auditors found the Secretary of State office needs to improve compliance with federal grant requirements and implement an adequate system of internal controls related to its contracting and procurement activities.
- Rather than duplicate the work of the State auditors, EAC OIG will perform an audit in FY23 to ensure the corrective actions were implemented.

GAO Work Products



- 2020 Elections: State and Local Perspectives on Election Administration during the COVID-19 Pandemic (GAO-22-104731)
- Election Assistance Commission: Assessment of Lessons Learned Could Improve Grants Administration (GAO-22-104313)
- Election Security: DHS Plans Are Urgently Needed to Address Identified Challenges Before the 2020 Elections (GAO-20-267)

GAO Opinions



- GAO issues decisions regarding federal bid protests, appropriations law, and other legal matters.
- Election Assistance Commission—Use of Grant Funds for Security Services (B-333826, April 27, 2022)

Contact us

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Questions?