

S.F. No. 1548 – Local Election Cost Reimbursement & Grant Programs (as proposed to be amended by A-5 amendment)

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Section 1 [Local election expense reimbursement] requires the secretary of state to reimburse local governments for specified election expenses.

Paragraph (a) establishes the local election reimbursement account in the special revenue fund. The money in the account is appropriated to the secretary of state to make reimbursements to local governments. Money in the account is available until it is spent.

Paragraph (b) requires the secretary of state to reimburse local governments for election-related expenses. The following expenses are eligible for reimbursement: preparation and printing of ballots; postage for absentee ballots; polling place preparation; electronic voting system preparation; compensation for temporary staff, election judges, and canvassing board members; overtime payments; and other expenses approved by the secretary of state.

Paragraph (c) requires local governments to submit a reimbursement request every January in an odd-numbered year. The request covers actual costs incurred in the previous two years. The request must include an itemized description of actual expenditures.

Paragraph (d) requires the secretary of state to provide the reimbursement requests forms. The secretary of state is prohibited from reimbursing a request that is not properly submitted.

Paragraph (e) requires the secretary of state to reimburse 80 percent of the costs of each local government. If there is not enough money in the account, the secretary of state must reduce all reimbursements proportionally. Reimbursements must be made by April 1 of each odd-numbered year.

Paragraph (f) requires the secretary of state to submit a report by May 1 in each odd-numbered year. The report must include details on the reimbursements made.

Section 2 [Voting equipment and infrastructure grant account] amends the existing voting equipment grant program. Local governments may apply for a grant for certain types of election-related equipment and infrastructure.

Subdivision 1 [Voting equipment and infrastructure grant account] updates the name of the account.

Subdivision 2 [Authorized purposes] allows local governments to apply for a grant for the following election-related purposes: hardware or software, cybersecurity, and security-related infrastructure.

Subdivision 3 amends the grant application to reflect the additional eligible expenses. Strikes the requirement that the local government state that it has insufficient resources to purchase the equipment or infrastructure and instead requires a statement of why the equipment or infrastructure is needed.

Subdivision 4 [Amount of grant] provides that grants are to be made for 80 percent of the total cost. This is an increase from current law, which allows for 75 percent of the cost of electronic rosters and 50 percent of other equipment or technology.

Subdivision 5 [Report to legislature] amends the reporting requirement to require annual, on-going reports.

Section 3 [Appropriations] transfers money from the general fund to the special revenue fund in each of fiscal year 2024 and 2025 to fund the grant programs proposed in the bill. Establishes a base for the transfers in fiscal year 2026. Authorizes the secretary of state to retain a portion of a transfer for administrative costs.