



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Minnesota Secretary of State
Steve Simon

2023 Legislative Report on
Voting Equipment Grant Account Awards

COST OF REPORT PREPARATION

Estimated costs to prepare the report are provided in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197. The total cost for the Office of the Secretary of State to prepare this report was approximately \$715. These costs are exclusively staff time needed to prepare the written report.

Background

In 2021, \$1,500,000.00 was appropriated to the Voting Equipment Grant Account (VEGA-3). The legislature authorized use of these funds to offset up to 50% of the cost of optical scan precinct counters, optical scan central counters, or assisted voting devices; up to 75% of the cost of electronic rosters. See Minn. Laws 2021, 1st Spec. Sess., Chap. 12, Art. 1, sect. 6. In addition, the balance remaining from VEGA-1 and VEGA-2 was made available for the VEGA-3 round of grants. A total of \$1,936,575.04 was awarded through the VEGA-3 in 2022. This report includes a complete report for the VEGA-3 grant awards.

A VEGA-3 Grant Work Group consisting of county election officials and staff from the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State established a process for awarding the grants. The work group created three levels of priority for consideration when awarding the funds.

The group first prioritized the replacement of aging optical scan assistive voting devices and the purchase of precinct-based ballot counters that were capable of processing a four-column ballot. Per statute, these requests required a 50% local match.

Their second priority, if there were funds left over after all first priority requests were filled, was to allow for the purchase of electronic rosters. Per statute, these requests required a 25% local match.

Finally, if there were funds left over after all first and second priority requests were filled, the group allowed for applications to purchase certified electronic voting equipment that did not fit in the first or second category. Per statute, these requests required a 50% local match.

If the requests were larger than the amount of funds available, the awards would be made on a pro rata basis for whichever category it applied to.

Overview of Election Equipment Grant Account (VEGA-3)

Because the amount requested was in excess of the funds available, grants were awarded based on a pro-rata rate of .6907 of the amount requested, resulting in \$1,936,575.04 being awarded to 40 counties and 18 municipalities for the first priority grouping of optical scan precinct-based ballot counters and optical scan assistive voting devices.

Report of VEGA-3 Grant Expenditures

When the Grant Applications were submitted the amount of the requests for First Priority purposes was larger than the amount of funds available therefore only First Priority Grant requests were awarded. The amounts of the First Priority grants were awarded on a pro rata basis at 69.0699997% of the total requested. There were no 2nd or 3rd Priority requests that were granted.

The quantity and type of equipment purchased was as follows:

Democracy Live (MNCCC/SeaChange) – Omni Ballot Tablets – 915
Dominion – ICE (Combination Assistive Voting Device and Ballot Counter) – 22
ES&S – DS200 (Ballot Counter – Precinct or Central Count) – 83
ES&S – DS200 (Ballot Counter – Precinct) – 112

Breakdown of fund make up for VEGA-3 grants:

Remaining Balance from Previous Rounds of VEGA Grants = \$435,058.86
Funds authorized by Legislature for Fiscal Year 2022 = \$750,000.00
Funds authorized by Legislature for Fiscal Year 2023 = \$750,000.00
Secretary of State’s Funds = \$1,516.23

After all awards were allocated, \$1,516.23 was returned to the Secretary of State’s Office from the \$3,430.76 returned from the jurisdictions. That leaves a current balance in the VEGA Grant Account of \$1,914.53.

The attached VEGA-3 Grant Tracking Spreadsheet contains the details for amounts spent and equipment purchased for each of the jurisdictions that were awarded VEGA-3 Grants.

