Local Elections Officials Need our Help

Overview

In the USA, elections are managed at the local level - which means that local elections offices each have the responsibility to make sure that all eligible voters can safely and securely participate. While the Constitution leaves it to individual states to run and regulate elections,[1] it is up to Congress to make sure that they have the resources that they need to keep elections functioning. But many offices across the country need help making basic upgrades such as **internet access, desks and chairs for employees, shelves & storage for voting equipment, and full time personnel to staff polling places and tabulate results.**

The Problem

In over one-third of the nearly 2,000 local elections offices surveyed by CTCL in 2020, elections officials highlighted urgent, tangible needs that are critical for both election administration and general safety & essential infrastructure of those offices. **This included such extremes as needing wood to burn for heat, doors with locks for voting equipment, and even a single full time employee dedicated to elections.** Regions are defined in the heat map below[2] via a **"Essential Infrastructure Needs Score" (EIN Score)** as follows:

> **EIN Score - 1:** These offices lack basic necessities such as a permanent office, internet access, necessary staff, and basic safety equipment.
> **EIN Score - 2:** These offices lack full-time personnel to manage elections, and do not have basic tools such as printers, scanners, or sufficient desks.
> **EIN Score - 3:** These offices have not upgraded technology in ~a decade and do not have the resources to implement new voting legislation.
> **EIN Score - 4:** These offices lack storage space and are limited in their voting locations due to personnel and equipment shortages.
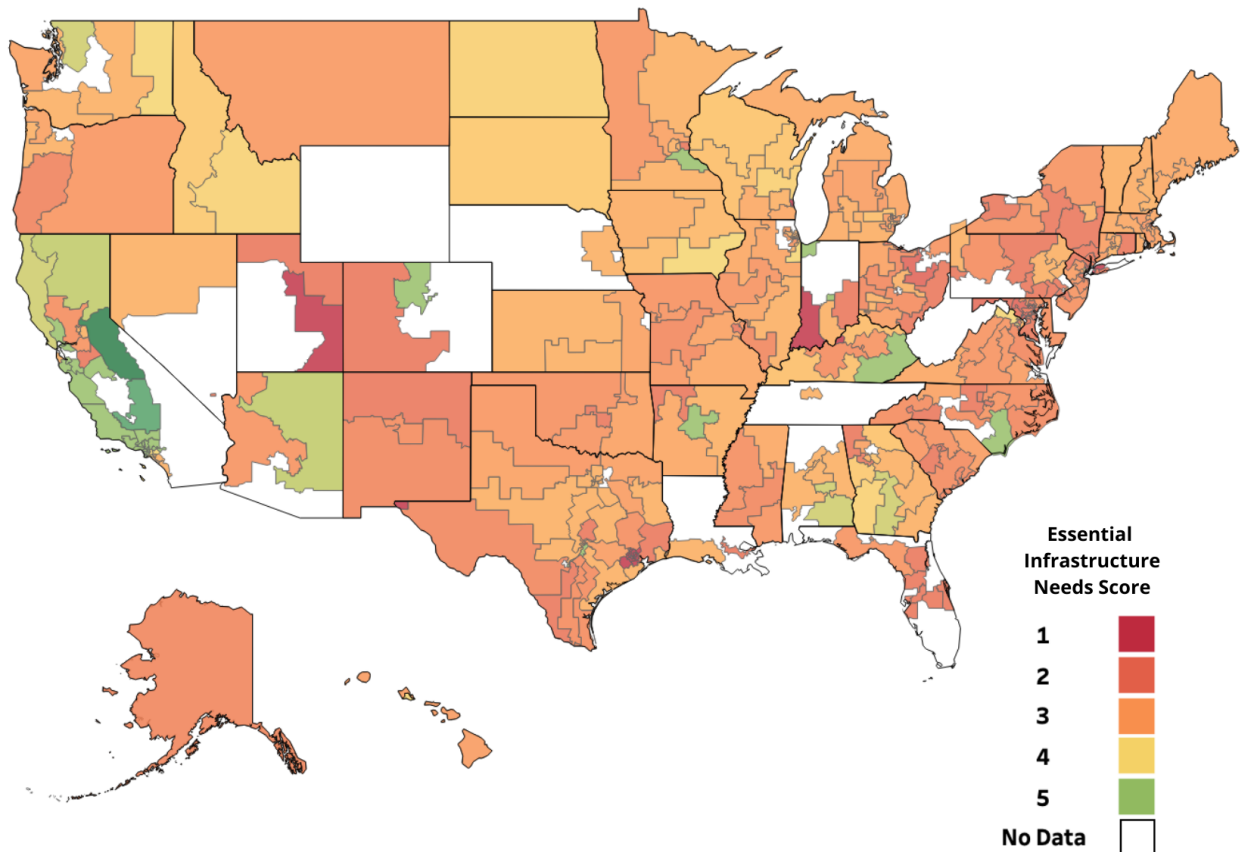> **EIN Score - 5:** These are well-funded offices who would use a surplus in funds to innovate in their election administration.

A **"critical need jurisdiction"** is defined as an office scoring a 1 or a 2, who needs basic equipment, office space, and personnel to safely and securely administer elections to their municipality or county.

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[1] U.S. Constitution, Article I § 4.
[2] Essential Infrastructure Needs Scores are estimated by a 2020 survey of elections officials conducted by CTCL. Congressional districts are presented as an average of scores of surveyed offices in district.

Average Essential Infrastructure Needs Score by Congressional District

Essential Infrastructure Needs Score

1
2
3
4
5
No Data

How to Help

In order to get every elections office in the country the supplies and people-power they need to run 21st Century elections, Congress needs to invest <u>$5 billion in elections infrastructure funding in FY 2023</u>. Funding for human (strategic operational & temporary/seasonal support positions), physical (voting hardware, polling locations, storage, etc), and technology (servers/networks, software, etc) would make a measurable impact in bringing these high-need offices, often in rural areas, out of crisis.[3] It would provide the basic funding to ensure that all offices have the following:

- **Computers** with the ability to run the most current Operating Systems;
- **Basic physical equipment** such as printers, scanners, tablets, and telephones;
- Sufficient **office supplies** such as paper, folders, stamps, and filing cabinets;
- Adequate **staffing levels** to manage systems safely, securely and effectively;
- Appropriate **physical space** with electricity, locking doors, heat, and designated desk space for employees.

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[3] Homeland Security: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. "Election Infrastructure Subsector-Specific Plan." Accessed on Feb 24, 2022 . <u>Link</u>

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These public servants work around the clock to facilitate our democratic system, and do so under extreme conditions. We have a responsibility to alleviate these obstacles and make it possible for them to do their jobs with the tools that they need.

THE URGENT ASK: Congress must support a $5 billion investment in election infrastructure in the 2023 fiscal year to help meet the needs of a quarter of the jurisdictions who have critical needs.

Looking Ahead

Just satisfying these basic upgrades does not address the full spectrum of needs of local elections officials. The Election Infrastructure Initiative's research has surfaced that just 2% of elections offices surveyed have all of their needs met to administer elections. Many offices are still relying on equipment that they purchased before the iPhone was invented.

Local elections offices need modern tools, equipment, trained staff & election workers, and improved security practices to support election administration in the modern era. The table below establishes estimates for the use and potential impact of what federal election grants would provide in meeting needs over the next 10 years. **These critical investments would be a downpayment toward the Election Infrastructure Initiative's call for Congress to invest $20 billion to bolster election infrastructure over the next 10 years.**

10-year Federal Election Funding[4]	Human	Physical	Technology	% of jurisdictions whose critical needs are met
$5 billion	3.45 billion	1.4 billion	150 million	27%
$10 billion	6.9 billion	2.8 billion	300 million	55%
$15 billion	10.35 billion	4.2 billion	450 million	82%
$20 billion	13.8 billion	5.6 billion	600 million	100% + more improvements

WE MUST INVEST IN LOCAL ELECTIONS OFFICES TODAY IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE SECURITY, ACCESS, AND SAFETY OF THE ELECTIONS OF TOMORROW.

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[4] Calculations used a sample of election jurisdiction budgets provided to us to determine estimated amounts to be spent on human, physical, and digital needs. Additional information taken from the Election Infrastructure Initiative's "50 States of Need" report.

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