

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

DHS Requires States to Adopt Common-Sense Election Security Measures Before Receiving Federal Funds

Release Date: July 10, 2026

Protecting the nation's critical infrastructure – including election security – is a top priority for President Trump and Secretary Mullin

WASHINGTON – The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is taking decisive action to safeguard the integrity of American elections.

Threats to election systems are constantly evolving. This week, FEMA published the funding opportunity for the [Homeland Security Grant Program \(https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/homeland-security\)](https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/homeland-security), making over \$1 billion of taxpayer funds available to state, Tribal Nations, territorial, and local governments. Before receiving award funds, states and other recipients must take critical, common-sense steps to protect U.S. elections.

*“Election security is national security and protecting the Nation’s critical infrastructure is a top priority,” said **DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin**. “Under President Trump’s leadership, we are taking decisive action to protect election systems from threats like foreign interference, insider threats, and cyberattacks. These new requirements for homeland security grant recipients will preserve election integrity and ensure that Americans can trust the results.”*

To strengthen election security, the Department of Homeland Security is requiring all grant recipients to take several key actions:

- First, states must submit a plan for transitioning away from unsecure electronic voting systems that use bar codes and QR codes to count votes and instead use equipment that accepts hand-marked paper ballots. This change helps create a necessary and reliable paper trail, making it easier to verify results and detect any irregularities.
- Second, after each federal election, states must conduct a manual audit of at least 5% of all ballots cast. This common-sense process involves physically reviewing a random selection of ballots to confirm that the machine reported results match results on the paper ballots. This will ensure accuracy and detect any machine errors or manipulation.
- Third, states are required to reconcile the number of voters who participated in each federal election with the number of ballots cast. This step ensures that the number of ballots cast matches the number of voters, a common-sense step that will help jurisdictions identify discrepancies prior to certification.

- Fourth, within 120 days of accepting the grant award, states must use the reliable and free U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system to verify the citizenship status of everyone listed in the state voter registration database. This measure helps ensure that only eligible citizens are registered to vote.
 - *[To the extent that the functionality of the SAVE system has been impacted by the June 22, 2026 order in the League of Women Voters v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Civ. Action No. 25-3501, while on appeal, for any person who is registered to vote but for whom a State does not have records of citizenship, the State may resolve this uncertainty by submitting relevant information to USCIS for an immigration records search consistent with the requirements of 8 U.S.C. § 1373.]*
- Finally, states must also use the SAVE system, or another authorized government system, to verify the citizenship of anyone working at polling places or operating election systems. This requirement applies to all individuals involved in the administration of elections, further protecting the process from potential vulnerabilities.

FEMA will withhold 20% of the grant recipient's total HSGP award until they submit proof of compliance with these requirements and the Department verifies that proof. Eligible applicants are encouraged to review the full [Notice of Funding Opportunity](https://simpler.grants.gov/opportunity/2d6d8098-795d-4ba6-a92f-1171a66ed66d) (<https://simpler.grants.gov/opportunity/2d6d8098-795d-4ba6-a92f-1171a66ed66d>) for more information on the requirements and the process for submitting proof of compliance.

FEMA's grant programs are voluntary. State, Tribal Nations, territorial, and local governments must apply to receive federal funding and agree to follow the grant's terms and conditions. Any recipient of federal funding should expect accountability for how taxpayer dollars are spent.

The Trump Administration is committed to ensuring that states, Tribal Nations, territories, local governments, and all recipients of federal funds are actively contributing to the security and integrity of our elections by implementing these common-sense measures.

#

Topics

[ELECTION SECURITY \(/TOPICS/ELECTION-SECURITY\)](#)

[HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE \(/TOPICS/HOMELAND-SECURITY-ENTERPRISE\)](#)

Keywords

[ELECTION SECURITY \(/KEYWORDS/ELECTION-SECURITY\)](#)

[FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY \(FEMA\) \(/KEYWORDS/FEDERAL-EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT-AGENCY-FEMA\)](#)

[SECRETARY MARKWAYNE MULLIN \(/KEYWORDS/SECRETARY-MARKWAYNE-MULLIN\)](#)

[GRANT \(/KEYWORDS/GRANT\)](#)

[HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM \(HSGP\) \(/KEYWORDS/HOMELAND-SECURITY-GRANT-PROGRAM-HSGP\)](#)

[PROGRAM \(/KEYWORDS/PROGRAM\)](#)

Last Updated: 07/13/2026