MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

DATE: April 16, 2007

SUBJECT: NYS/Federal Election Grants

New York State and the federal government have provided funding grants for three specific areas of election administration at the county level. The three areas include (1) polling place access improvement program, (2) voter education and (3) poll worker training.

Appropriate guidelines for use of these funds include:

1. The use of polling place access improvement funds will assist our county board in undertaking minor construction or renovation projects, and the purchase of proper signage, materials, and low-tech devices to help assist persons with disabilities on election days and to assure voter privacy and independence.

   The funds may be used for the following activities:

   Make polling places, including parking, the path of travel, door hardware, entrances, exits, and voting areas of each polling facility, accessible to individuals with the full range of disabilities (e.g. impairments involving vision, hearing, mobility, dexterity, emotional, or intellectual) through the use of varied accessibility tools (e.g. ramps, handrails, and signage).

   Provide the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) to individuals with the full range of disabilities.

2. Voter education is designed to educate voters concerning voting procedures, voting rights and voting technology. The essential purpose of voter education is to train voters on the proper use of new voting systems to ensure that their votes are counted and to ensure that voters thoroughly understand new voting procedures.

3. Poll worker training is used to provide essential training to election officials, poll workers and election volunteers on how best to promote the access and participation to all voters, including those individuals with disabilities, as well as those with language barriers.

   An essential element to effective poll worker training is to provide extensive hands-on-training. Poll workers should diligently practice each important component of the election process, especially using the voting equipment. It is important to instruct poll workers how to configure polling places in order to maximize voter privacy. In addition, poll workers should be trained on how to configure polling places to ensure routes to voting units are safe and accessible.

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Board of Elections Update

1. BOE process improvement efforts – Personnel Dept funding
   - BOE personnel facilitated by Hawthorne Consultants conducting a very productive self analysis of entire BOE operation
   - currently – testing new registration process
   - evaluating all current processes
   - creating cost effective interdepartmental cooperation/initiatives

2. Annual Inspector Training - $7,115
   - Partnership with Onondaga Community College
   - professional instructors provide better Election Day performance
   - staff trainers can assume new responsibilities such as identifying polling place accessible sites
   - enable staff more time to answer phones

3A. Voter Registration document conversion – use 4 temps 20 weeks - $36,400
   - eliminate time consuming hard document filing and storage
   - provide ability to find original documents eg party registration enabling correct voting
   - if we used current staff, project would not be completed before 2010
   - other vendors more costly, not timely for completion (NTS, Passages, IQS)

3B. Mail check processing – Use 4 temps for 3 weeks - $6,000
   - timely changes to registrations
   - moving registrants precludes affidavit ballots
   - clean up registration lists for poll books, phone lists, street lists

4. Overtime pay versus comp time - $30,000
   - more staff available to respond to queries from voters etc
   - less need for permanent staff
   - use as a management tool option

5. NYS BOE Conference 4/30 – 5/2
   - OCBOE successfully lobbied peer group statewide conference to be held in Syracuse for third year in a row
     
     - Economic impact of conferences = 150 rooms x 3 days $ spending, food, entertainment etc