



Texas Secretary of State
ELECTIONS DIVISION



Safeguarding Elections – Election Security Assessments

43rd Annual
Election Law Seminar
for County Election Officials
August 11-13, 2025



**It's not a matter of "if"
but "when" a security
incident will occur**



**“The best time to meet your
incident response partner is
not during an active incident.”**

John Paras (Arlington County, VA)

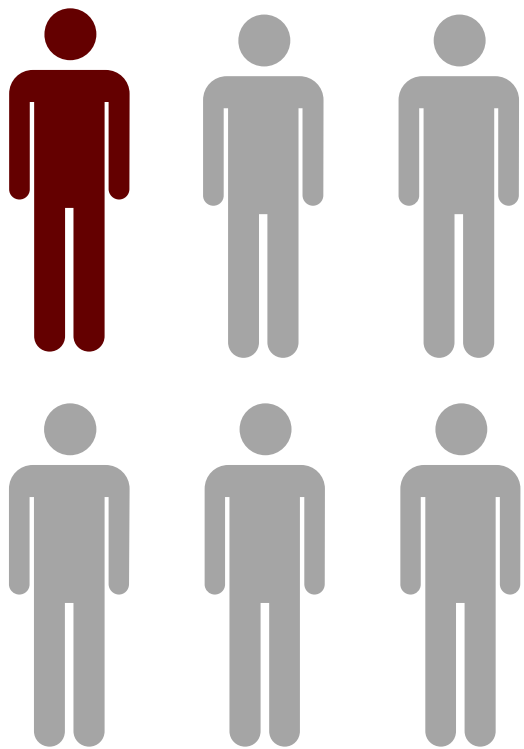


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**“Cybersecurity is not
just an IT issue.”**

SANS Security Institute



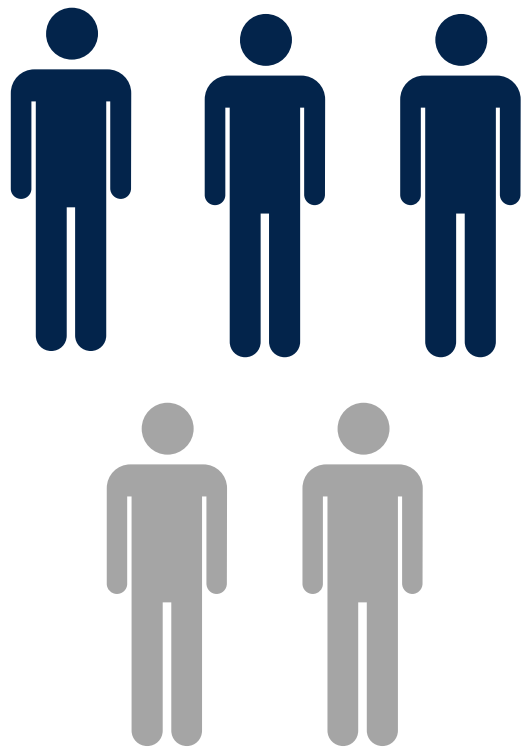
1 in 6
local election officials
had experienced threats.

Brennan Center for Justice Survey (2022)



More than half of
these local election officials
that experienced threats **did**
not report it to law
enforcement.

Brennan Center for Justice Survey (2022)



3 in 5

local election officials
were concerned threats
and harassment would
make it **harder to**
recruit election workers.

Brennan Center for Justice Survey (2022)



**Tabletop Exercises and
Election Security Assessments
are the ideal space to
identify vulnerabilities**



Brainstorm

Prompt:

- What are some possible threats to elections?

Paper supply
shortage

Phishing attack
with successful
malicious access
to network

Election worker
targeted after
doxxing event

Misinformation
or disinformation
campaigns

You will have
5 minutes
to brainstorm



Work together with people
at your table and the table
directly behind you



Elections as Critical Infrastructure

- Federally, elections was designated as Critical Infrastructure under the Government Facilities Sector in 2017
 - Improved access to resources
 - Prioritized elections for incident preparedness and response



National Protection
and Programs
Directorate



MS-ISAC®



Texas Department of Information Resources





Elections as Critical Infrastructure

Elections infrastructure includes:

- **Physical Security**
 - Storage Facilities, Polling Locations, Central Counting Stations
 - Election Officials, Poll Workers
 - Election Equipment
 - Supply Chain
- **Information and Communication Technologies**
 - Voter Registration Databases, Election Management Systems, Election Night Reporting Systems
 - Processes and Procedures
 - Internal Networks, Communication channels



Table Share

Prompt:

- With these infrastructure components in mind, what is one thing your county could do to better prepare your elections office ahead of the Election Security Assessment?

Physical Security

- Storage Facilities
- Polling Locations
- Central Counting Stations
- Election Officials
- Poll Workers
- Election Equipment
- Supply Chain

Information and Communication Technologies

- VR Databases
- Election Management Systems
- Election Night Reporting Systems
- Processes and Procedures
- Internal Networks
- Communication Channels



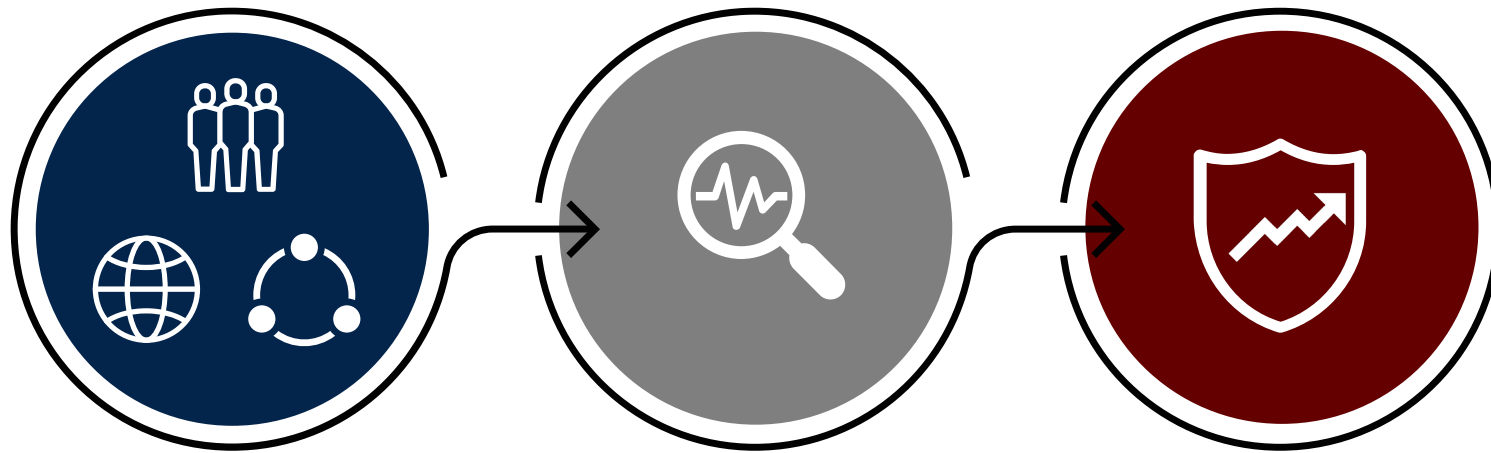
Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you

Ensure that everyone has a turn to share their thoughts, ideas, or perspective

You will have
5 minutes
to brainstorm



Election Security Assessment



Review

Complete a comprehensive review of elections procedures, technology, and staff

Analysis

Determine the current security posture of an elections department at the county level

Recommendations

Then provide recommendations to improve the security of the election process



2018-2019 Election Security Assessments

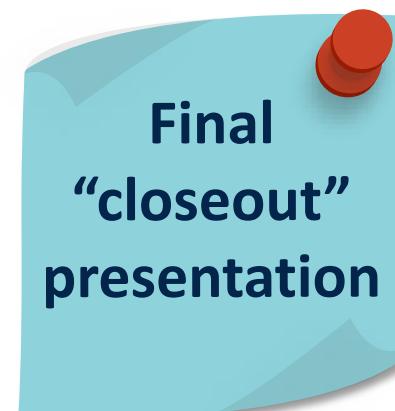
- In 2018, Texas received funding from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) as a result of 2018 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) Security Funding
- The Texas Secretary of State partnered with the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)
 - The Election Security Assessment project was performed by AT&T Cyberdefenses

HAVA
HELP AMERICA
VOTE ACT



2018-2019 Election Security Assessments

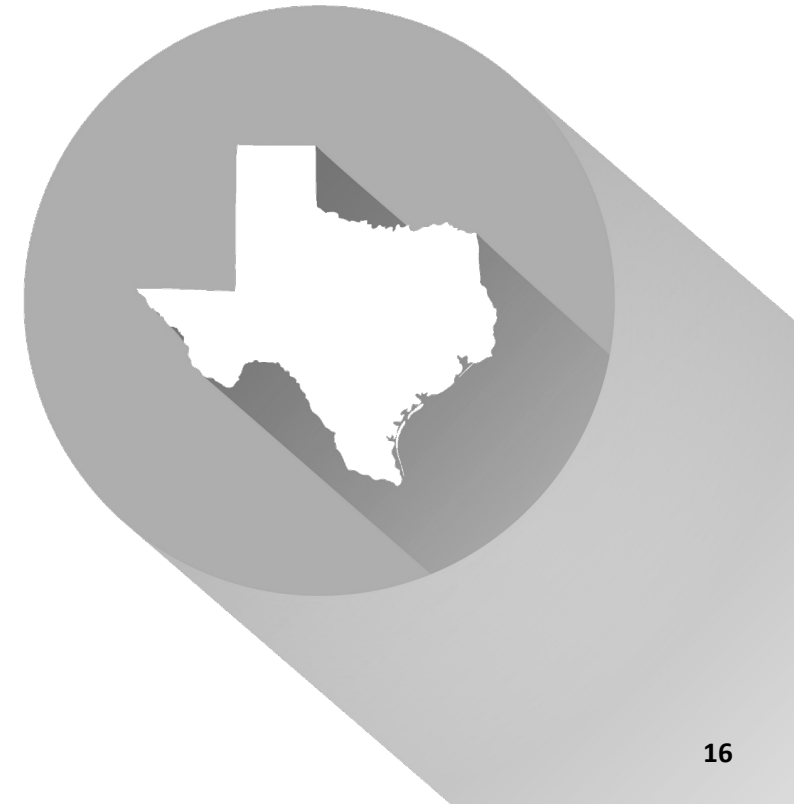
- All 254 counties participated
- Counties received:

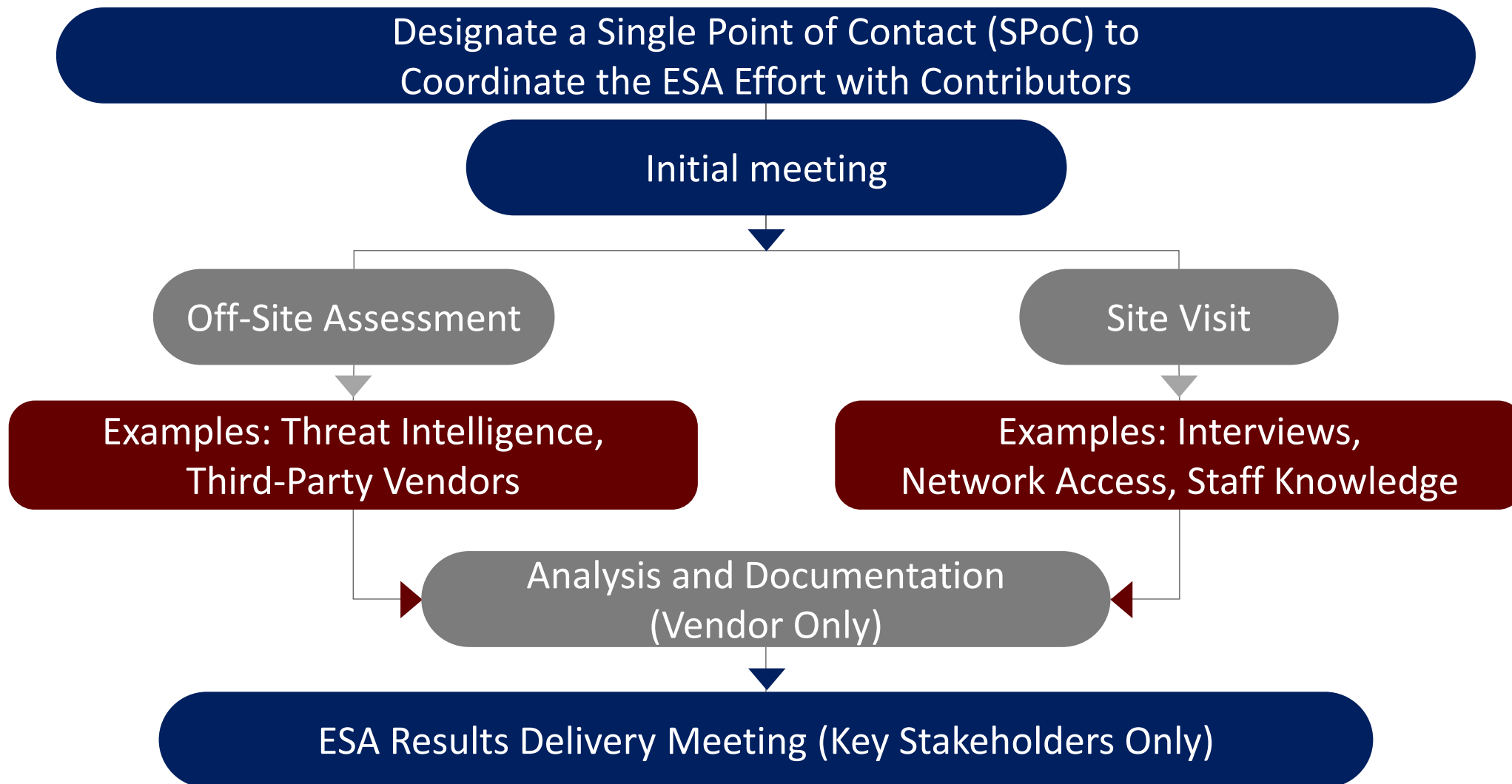




2025-2026 Election Security Assessments

- Texas has secured funding to complete a new round of Election Security Assessments.
- For all 254 counties
- Start date will be announced upon final vendor selection







Collection of Artifacts



Provided Artifacts

Information that is stored and needs to be collected



Intelligence Artifacts

Information that is gathered through investigation of the internet, darknet, and/or external individuals



Interview Artifacts

Information that is not collected in documents and needs to be verbally gathered



Scanned Artifacts

Information that is collected through the use of technology like software scanning tools or network inspection



Mapping it Out

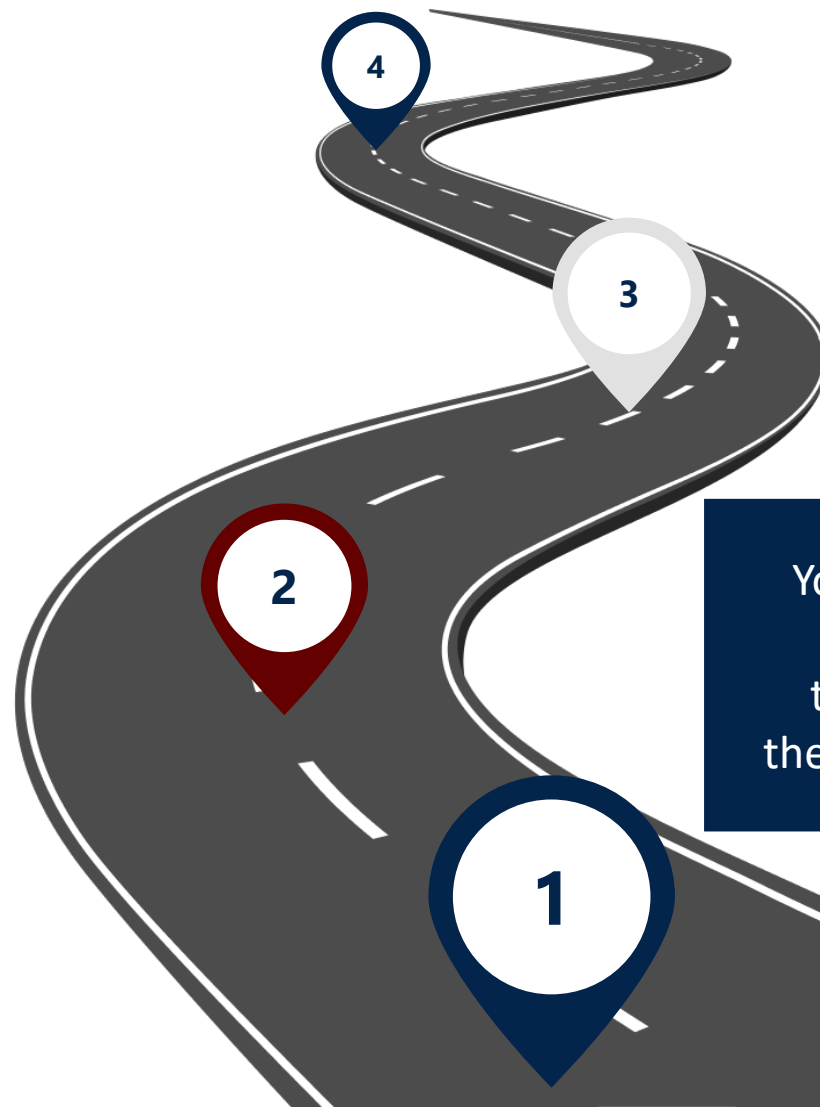
Prompt:

- Choose one security weakness that may exist in your county.
- Map out the steps your county could take to improve security in that area.

TIP: Start with the goal and work backwards. What are the steps needed to achieve this goal?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you.



You will have
7 minutes
to map out
these processes



Prepare for the Assessment

Tools

- [CIS CSAT](#)
- [CISA Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Resources

- [Center for Internet Security](#)
- [Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency](#)
- Department of Information Resources – [2019 ESA overview](#)
- [Election Assistance Commission](#)
- [Georgetown EDU](#)

Prepare for the Assessment

- [Texas Security Control Standards Catalog](#)
- [NIST SP 800-53 – Cybersecurity Framework \(CSF\) Standards](#)
- [NIST 8310 – CSF Election Infrastructure Profile](#)



Available Support



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TRAINING



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