Election Day is Coming—Are You Prepared for EAVS?

The 2020 General Election is in 25 days and voting is already well underway in states and territories across the country. While this is undoubtedly a busy period, it is also a good time to assess your state's readiness to complete the 2020 Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS). If you haven't already done so:

- Review the 2020 EAVS questions, taking note of what has changed since 2018 (Newsletter 1 and the Excel crosswalk on the EAVS Portal provide more detail on this).
- If your state will rely on local jurisdictions to provide some or all of your state's EAVS submission, notify jurisdiction officials now and make sure they understand the data they will provide, how it will be provided, and the EAVS project deadlines.
- Review the information in this newsletter about the data collection templates to determine which is best for your state's or territory's needs. The survey help desk (eavs@forsmarshgroup.com) can help you develop a data submission plan and assist you in customizing the online template.
- Assess whether your state will need to collect any EAVS data prior to Election Day. Examples of data you may be able to collect in advance of the election could include the number of mail ballots transmitted to Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) voters (Section B) and to domestic civilian by-mail voters (Section C); the number of precincts and polling places that will be used, both on Election Day and during any in-person early voting (Section D); the ages of poll workers and difficulty of recruiting poll workers (Section D); the election technology used and how many voting machines were deployed (Section F); and where the vote tally takes place (Section F).
- Complete the Policy Survey for your state or territory. It is crucial that the EAVS project team receive your Policy Survey submission before we can release your EAVS data collection templates. Contact the survey help desk if you are unsure whether you have submitted your response or need assistance completing the Policy Survey.

Overview of the 2020 EAVS Data Collection Templates

There are two templates available to assist you in submitting data for the 2020 EAVS. The Excel template is a flat-file format that allows large amounts of data to be cut and pasted all at once. The online template is an online survey that facilitates entering data item-by-item at the jurisdiction level. Both templates ask the same questions and incorporate built-in error checks to improve the quality of your data submission, but the templates have different layouts and functionality. State and territory EAVS points of contact (POC) are responsible for reviewing the data from their local jurisdictions and preparing final data files for submission via the Excel template.

There are multiple ways to incorporate these templates into your EAVS data submission plans. States or territories that can provide all of their EAVS data from their centralized database will use the Excel template throughout the entire process. States that collect data directly from their local jurisdiction officials can use the online template to assist with that.

Below is a description of the functionality of each template. When the templates are released in November, the EAVS project team will also provide a detailed user guide that outlines, step-by-step, the process for using each template. In addition, if you wish to tailor either template to your needs, please reach out to the EAVS team at eavs@forsmarshgroup.com and we will work with you to fulfill these requests.

Excel Template

The Excel template is ideal for states that have most of their election data in a central database, as this template makes it easy to enter data for multiple jurisdictions at once. In addition, each state or territory will use the Excel template to formally submit its draft and final data to the EAVS project team.

Each column of the Excel template represents an EAVS item, and each row represents a jurisdiction within your state or territory. The Excel crosswalk lists the columns that correspond to each EAVS question in the Excel template. Other features of this template are:

- It offers flexibility in how you input your data. Data can be copied and pasted one row at a time, one column at a time, or multiple columns or rows at once.
- Data can be copied from multiple documents, such as Excel, Word, text, etc. As long as your data has delimiters (e.g., commas or tabs) separating the data values, you can easily paste it into the Excel template.
- It has a pre-populated list of jurisdictions for which you will need to provide data.
- It contains complete instructions about each section and question of the survey and how to use the responses of "does not apply," "data not available," and zero within the context of each question.
- There are built-in error checks and totals columns to help you review your data for completeness, accuracy, and formatting issues. Color coding will highlight cells with data anomalies so you can easily identify potential errors (including math errors, logic errors, inconsistencies with your state's Policy Survey data, and missing data), and the list of validations has been revised from 2018 to assist you in focusing on the most common data issues. You may correct and re-check your data as many times as needed before submission.
- It is easy to download and submit—once your template is ready, log in to the EAVS Portal with your credentials to download the template to your local computer, then once you have input your data in the template, use the EAVS Portal to upload your completed file for the EAVS project team to review.

Online Template

The online template is ideal for local jurisdictions that answer EAVS, as it helps users enter in data item-by-item and can be completed entirely online. Twelve states and territories used the online template in 2018 to assist them with collecting data from local jurisdictions. Using the online template to collect data from your local jurisdictions eliminates the need to create your own data collection template, simplifies the process of collecting data from jurisdictions, and reduces the time burden involved.

Other features of the online template are:

- It is compatible with multiple computer types, operating systems, and browsers. It does not require any software expertise or significant computing resources. Each jurisdiction will have a unique password they can use to access the online template.
- The format of the questions as they appear in the online template closely match the question layout used in the PDF. All survey instructions for each section and question appear in the online template, plus additional instructions for how to use the responses of "does not apply," "data not available," and zero within the context of each question.
- It allows users to fill out the survey at their own pace and enter data one question at a time. The template allows users to save their progress, enter their data in multiple sessions, and review their data prior to submitting. The online template has a main menu and section menus that allow easy navigation between sections and question blocks.
- Built-in error checks help users ensure their data is complete and accurate. Soft prompts give users the opportunity to correct mathematical or logical errors, inconsistencies with your state's Policy Survey responses, and missing responses as they input their data.
- It integrates with the Excel template. Once submitted, data from the online template are ported into the Excel template and made available to state and territory POCs through the EAVS Portal. In

addition, the portal allows state and territory POCs to track the progress their jurisdictions are making through the survey.

- State and territory POCs maintain the ability to review data submitted through the online template before it goes to the EAVS project team for review.

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Total In-Person Voting: Question D1

D1. Total In-Person Voting

For question D1, report the total number of people in your jurisdiction who voted either at a physical polling location on Election Day or voted at a physical polling location prior to the November 2020 general election.

	[?]	Data not available[?]	Does not Apply[?]
D1a. Voted at a physical polling place on Election Day: This category includes all individuals who cast a ballot at a physical location on Election Day, regardless of whether their ballots were ultimately counted or rejected (not including provisional ballots or absentee ballots dropped off at the polls).		☐	☐
D1b. Voted at an early vote location: This category includes all individuals who cast a ballot at a physical location before Election Day, regardless of whether their ballots were ultimately counted or rejected.		☐	☐

D1 Comments:

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Customizing the Online Template

The online template can be customized to the needs of the jurisdictions within your state. Data that can be provided from the centralized state database can be pre-filled into the online template, and sections that local jurisdictions do not need to answer can be hidden. These features allow the online template to be customized in a variety of ways. Here are three examples of how the template could be customized based on specific needs:

- If your state can pull the data in Section A (voter registration and list maintenance) from its centralized database and wants to have jurisdictions review and correct those numbers, the online template can be customized to make this process easier. Your state can provide the Section A data through the Excel template and the EAVS project team will fill the Section A data into your jurisdictions' online templates. Jurisdiction officials will be able to review, correct, and update the Section A data when they log in to the online template and will be able to enter information for the

remaining sections of the survey. The online data provided to you on the EAVS Portal will contain the corrected Section A numbers and the Sections B–F data submitted online by jurisdictions.

- If your state can provide the data in Section E (provisional balloting) from its centralized database and does <u>not</u> want jurisdictions to review that data, then Section E can be hidden from jurisdictions' online templates and only Sections A–D and F would be completed by jurisdictions. Your state office can then download the data from the EAVS Portal and fill in Section E before submitting data for the state.
- If your state only needs local jurisdictions to complete Section D (in-person voting and polling operations), then Sections A–C and E–F can be hidden from jurisdictions' online surveys. The Section D data can be downloaded from the EAVS Portal and combined with the rest of the state's EAVS submission.

In all cases, state or territory POCs will be able to review the online data prior to submitting their state's data to the EAVS project team.

If you plan to customize the online template for your jurisdictions, please reach out to the EAVS project team at eavs@forsmarshgroup.com. Our help desk team can help you determine the best option for your state or territory.