

STATE OF COLORADO
Department of State
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Jena M. Griswold
Secretary of State
Christopher P. Beall
Deputy Secretary of State

TO: Members of the Joint Technology Committee, 73rd General Assembly

FROM: Christopher Beall, Deputy Secretary of State, Colorado Department of State

Re: Addition of usability studies to CDOS Decision Item: “Combined Money-in-Politics System”

DATE: February 2, 2022

Pursuant to Joint Rule 45(a)(3)(B) and (b), the Joint Budget Committee referred the Department of State’s “R3 – Money In Politics System” request to the Joint Technology Committee for review and recommendation. The Department is requesting \$1.5 million General Fund to replace these two aging systems with a single, combined platform, creating a centralized money-in-politics disclosure system.

The Department presented before the Joint Technology Committee on January 24th and provided the committee with an overview of the request. During the meeting, Vice Chair Bridges requested that the Department include a formal usability testing component in the budget request to ensure that members of the general public, who are not experienced political operatives or lobbyists, can access, understand, and utilize the system fully.

The Department had envisioned convening focus and user groups before launching the development of the project to identify potential improvements to the combined system. However, the usability testing and review discussed with JTC members in the January 24th hearing is a more robust process than the Department’s initial plans contemplated. Such testing would require a contract with a firm that specializes in website usability and moderated usability testing. While the Department agrees that this proposal would benefit from these requirements, the Department does not have the internal capability to perform these studies and the current request of \$1,500,000 did not factor in the costs required to contract with firms that specialize in this work. To facilitate such work, the Department estimates that it would require an additional \$110,000 in General Fund dollars for the project.

This addition of \$110,000 to the decision item would enable the Department to engage in five moderated usability studies with five unique audiences as well as an expert website usability review. This would enable the Department to ensure that the system is being designed and customized in a way that meets the needs of the various discrete groups, including candidates for public office, registered campaign agents, members of the media, lobbyists, and members of the public. Based on the Department’s experience with vendors for moderated usability studies, we estimate the sum total of these moderated usability studies is \$35,000.

In surveying the cost of expert website usability reviews, the Department estimates \$75,000 is needed. This estimate is sourced from a firm with which the Department has worked in the past and that specializes in moderated user studies, featuring both expert and lay users. Specifically, the costs would come from: video

conference platform costs, recruiting fees, incentives for participants, planning & set up fees, session costs, as well as the costs for the conducting of the research and analysis for the data acquired.

The Department of State submits this memo to the JTC for formal consideration in advance of their February 3rd meeting. It is the hope of the Department that the JTC can consider this as an addendum to its R-03 decision item and, if amenable to it, amend the request during its consideration of the decision item at its upcoming meetings.

These additional components would raise the total decision item request to \$1,610,000.

Sincerely,

Christopher Beall
Deputy Secretary of State

CC JBC Chair Representative Julie McCluskie

CC JBC Vice Chair Senator Dominick Moreno

CC Senator Chris Hansen

CC Senator Bob Rankin

CC Representative Leslie Herod

CC Representative Kim Ransom

CC LCS Analyst Luisa Altmann

CC JBC Analyst Abby Magnus

ADDENDUM – COST ESTIMATE

Remote Moderated Usability Study - Estimates*	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Video-Conferencing App	\$15 / month	\$30 / month
Recruiting Fees	\$0 / participant	\$80 / participant
Incentives	\$80 / participant	\$250 / participant
Planning & Setup	16 hours	24 hours
Conducting Sessions	90 min / participant (60 min sessions)	
Analysis	8 hours	16 hours
Costs for a 5-participant study	\$415 + 32 hours	\$1,680 + 48 hours
Core costs	\$ 415.00	\$ 1,680.00
Researcher Hours	32 hours	48 hours
Researcher Rate	\$ 100.00	\$ 125.00
Researcher Costs	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 6,000.00
Total Estimated Costs, 5-participant study	\$ 3,615.00	\$ 7,680.00
Average Estimated Costs, 5-participant study	Midpoint Estimate \$ 5,647.50	
* Estimates from https://www.nngroup.com/articles/remote-usability-testing-costs/ , retrieved 1/25/2022		
Recommend multiples of 5-participant study groups: five media representatives, five campaign registered agents, five candidates for office, five lobbyists, five members of the general public		
Average estimated costs, five 5-participant studies		\$ 28,237.50
Expert Usability Review**		\$ 75,000.00
**Estimate from https://www.nngroup.com/consulting/expert-review/ , retrieved 1/25/2022		
Total Estimated Costs, Usability review + Moderated usability studies (\$75,000+\$28,237.50)		\$ 103,237.50
To account for potential fluctuations in pricing, the Department of State request \$110,000 for the purposes of engaging in these five moderated usability study groups and the expert website usability review.		