



## TWO PATHS TO ELECTION MODERNIZATION

# The Tortoise and the Hare

THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO WAYS OF INTEGRATING GIS IN ELECTIONS;  
TWO SEASONED EXPERTS SHARE THEIR INSIGHTS FROM HAVING DONE THE WORK

### Grassroots Approach

- Start small and simple, obtain buy-in locally, county by county
- Build relationships and pool knowledge and resources
- Repurpose, retool to fit the situation

#### HOW DO THEY DIFFER?

- Think big, strategic
- Be purposeful, methodical, and flexible
- Requires influential champions and leaders

### Statewide Comprehensive Change Approach

- If the conditions for a statewide comprehensive effort are not present

#### CHOOSE THIS APPROACH IF...

- The state has the resources and capacity to devote to this initiative
- GIS leadership and Elections leadership know each other
- Election data is digital with the last updated date identified

- Readiness, knowledge, and capacity gain through prototype and pilot programs
- Foundational learning and relationship building

#### BENEFITS OF EACH

- Uniformity
- Accuracy
- Inevitability

- Build relationships
- Assess resources and capacity
- Evaluate data in election database and data currency

#### GETTING STARTED

- Review inventory of data resources
- Determine resources you own
- Determine resources you need (and who owns them and how to obtain access)

“Participating as a pilot study state really gave our GIS team the necessary tools to engage the state elections team on geo-enabling elections. Utilizing best practices and taking advantage of mentors allowed for the groundwork to be set in advance of our election system modernization. The result will be that our voters will have the information they need to know that their vote and their voice matters.”

**Mary Fulton,**  
Chief, Geospatial Services, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

“Sometimes going bold with comprehensive change is less risky than continuing with the status quo that is systemically inefficient and arguably less accurate.”

**Veronica Degraffenreid,**  
Acting Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**RESOURCES** Using geographic information systems (GIS) in elections can save time, reduce the risk of errors, and contribute to transparency in elections. To find resources about how to geo-enable elections, go to the website and download the Best Practices Guidance, pilot and case studies, and more. [elections.nsgic.org](https://elections.nsgic.org)

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