



# SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

Executive Office | 1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street | Sacramento, CA 95814 | Tel 916.653.7244 | [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

April 15, 2024

The Honorable Scott D. Wiener, Chair  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Vice Chair  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero, Chair  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair  
Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 553  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairpersons Wiener, Gabriel, Caballero, and Wicks:

Attached is the Secretary of State's quarterly status report on the progress of the CAL-ACCESS Replacement System (CARS) Project, in accordance with Government Code section 84602(c). Previous reports are posted on the Secretary of State's office website at [www.sos.ca.gov/administration/agency-reports/cal-access-replacement-project-cars-agency-reports](http://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/agency-reports/cal-access-replacement-project-cars-agency-reports). If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact me or my staff, Margie Hieter, Division Chief, Political Reform Division, at (916) 653-6224, or the Secretary of State Legislative Affairs Unit, at (916) 653-7244.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shirley N. Weber".

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.  
Secretary of State

Attachment

**Secretary of State's Quarterly Status Report  
CAL-ACCESS Replacement System Project  
Fiscal Year 2023-24, Quarter 3: January 2024 – March 2024**

### **Introduction**

Senate Bill 1349 (*Hertzberg—Ch. 845, Stat. of 2016*) requires the Secretary of State (SOS), in consultation with the Fair Political Practices Commission, to develop and certify for public use an online filing and disclosure system for campaign statements and reports that provide public disclosure of campaign finance and lobbying information in a user-friendly, easily understandable format.

### **Progress for the Period of January 2024 through March 2024**

The California Automated Lobbyist and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System (CAL-ACCESS) Replacement System (CARS) Project made the following progress this past quarter (January 2024 through March 2024):

- Received vendor bids in response to the CARS Prime Vendor Request for Proposal on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. The bid evaluation activities began the following day and were still underway at the end of the quarter. The onboarding of the selected prime vendor is expected in Summer 2024.
- Acquired Agile Training and Coaching consultant services to train and coach project staff in agile software development processes, terminology, and roles and responsibilities.
- Acquired Organizational Change Management (OCM) consultant services to assist the SOS and its stakeholders with adopting the new solution and revised business processes.

During the reporting period, the CARS Project team also continued work on several planning activities. A summary of activities currently underway is below:

- Continue activities required to complete the Project Approval Lifecycle (PAL) Stage Four Project Readiness and Approval (S4PRA), which is the final PAL stage. The S4PRA is scheduled for submission to the California Department of Technology (CDT) in June 2024. Once the S4PRA is approved by the CDT, the prime vendor contract will be executed. The S4PRA activities provide the framework for the CARS Project team to:
  - Evaluate and reconfirm that the business objectives will be achieved;
  - Ensure the solution approach selected in the Stage Two Alternatives Analysis (S2AA) continues to yield the highest probability of success, and;
  - Baseline the project's scope, schedule, and costs.
- Develop robust orientation and training curriculum for the prime vendor staff once onboarded to ensure they are knowledgeable of the business processes to be automated, the legacy CAL-ACCESS, and the project management processes already in place.
- Continue activities to acquire and onboard ancillary support services contractors in 2024 in the following areas:
  - Quality Assurance/Quality Control services to ensure the project develops a CARS solution that is free of defects and meets the needs and expectations of customers.

- Project Management Support Services to assist the CARS Project team, especially in project management processes that require a high level of experience and expertise.
- Meet regularly with both the project's Independent Verification and Validation contractor and the CDT Project Approvals and Oversight team to discuss project health, issues, and risks.
- Identify, track, and manage project risks and issues at the project's bi-weekly Risk and Issue Meeting.
- Convene the project's monthly Executive Steering Committee to brief committee members on critical project developments and introduce topics that require its formal decision-making authority.
- Continue to stabilize and monitor the legacy CAL-ACCESS until CARS is implemented. This effort includes the following achievements:
  - In October 2023, the SOS Information Technology Division (ITD) implemented a stabilization project that improved the CAL-ACCESS uptime from 97.40 percent to 99.96 percent. This included applying self-recovery processes across multiple servers to mitigate outages, ensuring minimal downtime, and allowing public users to continue to use the site.
  - This effort has dramatically reduced calls and help desk tickets regarding CAL-ACCESS outages.

Starting in Spring 2024, both the project's OCM and Agile Training and Coaching consultant teams will engage with specific CARS external stakeholders to prepare them for the new solution.

### **Scope, Schedule, and Budget**

**Scope:** The scope has not changed during this reporting period.

**Schedule:** The project is on schedule to meet its planning milestones. A project end date is not yet known and will be determined when a prime vendor is acquired and provides an estimated project completion date. Based on information contained in the CARS Independent Assessment Report, project development and implementation activities are estimated at 27 months.

**Budget:** The project is operating within its approved budget of \$12.31 million for Fiscal Year 2023-24.