



SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

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October 15, 2025

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, Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8220
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. 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,



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

Attachment

**Secretary of State's Quarterly Status Report
CAL-ACCESS Replacement System Project
Fiscal Year 2025-26, Quarter 1: July 2025 – September 2025**

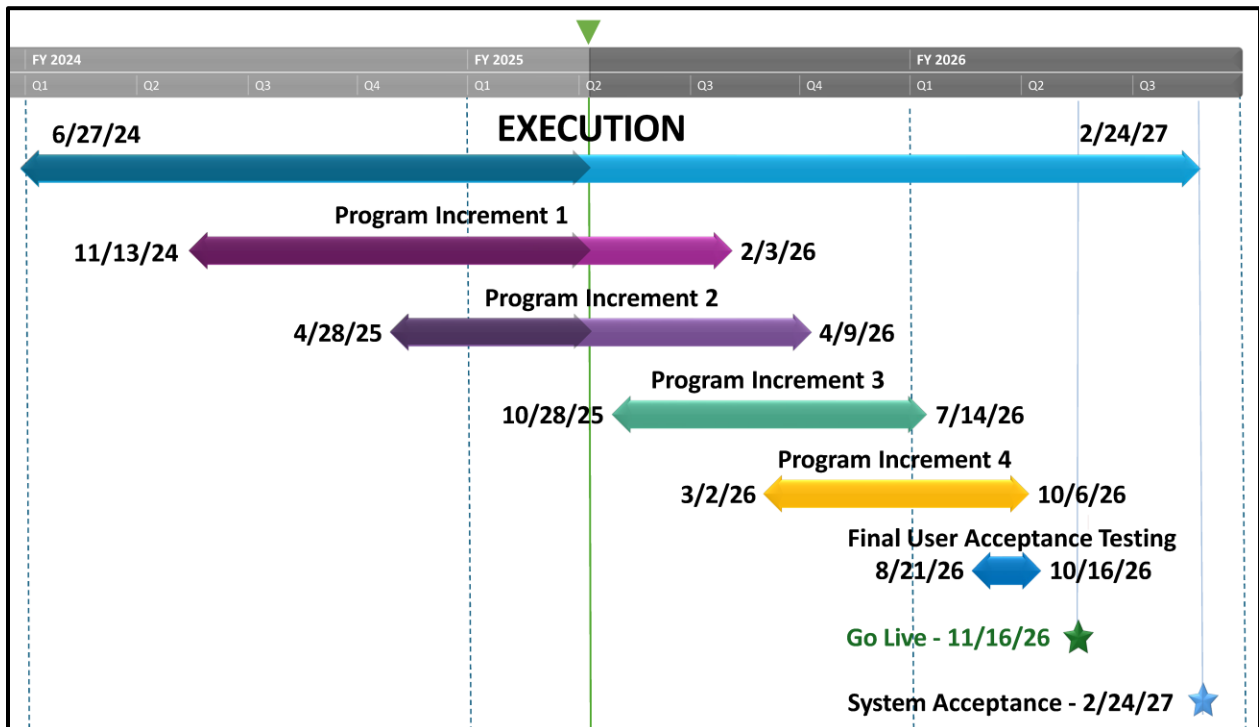
Introduction

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 a comprehensive online filing system for campaign statements and reports. This system will ensure public access to campaign finance and lobbying information in a user-friendly, easily understandable format.

Progress for the Period of July 2025 through September 2025

The California Automated Lobbyist and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure Search System (CAL-ACCESS) Replacement System (CARS) Project made the following progress this past quarter (July 2025 through September 2025):

- Accomplished significant development activities within the first and second of the four Program Increments (PI) that comprise the completed CARS system. Each PI is composed of a distinct set of business functionality required for the CARS online filing and disclosure system. Before formal acceptance of each PI, the SOS will perform robust technical and user acceptance testing.
- Below is a project schedule chart that indicates current project status within the entire development and implementation timeline. The CARS Project is on track to go live on November 16, 2026.



- Completed user acceptance testing for a significant portion of PI 1's functionality, including Filer Registration, Slate Mailer Organization, Lobbyist, and Lobbyist Employer. The remaining PI 1 user acceptance test will begin in November after which the entire PI deliverable will be submitted for formal acceptance.
- Onboarded the independent third-party Americans with Disabilities Act/Section 508 compliance tester who will identify any accessibility barriers within CARS so they can be addressed prior to go live.
- Onboarded the project's independent third-party security compliance and vulnerability consultant to ensure the solution is both in compliance with data privacy and security regulations and is protected against cyber-attacks.
- Regularly engaged with external stakeholders about CARS Project progress, including the preview of the new system's functionality.
- Continued application programming interface testing activities with the third-party software vendor partners who submit data electronically to the SOS. In the next few months, all vendors who intend to submit data files to CARS will be required to perform robust testing with the application programming interface and to certify their electronic filing system with the SOS in preparation for go live.
- Continued regular engagement with the Fair Political Practices Commission, including collaboration on programmatic decisions that affect CARS functionality.

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

- Data conversion and migration activities, including the mapping of the legacy system data to the new CAL-ACCESS system.
- Organizational change management activities for CARS Project stakeholders to assess their readiness for change and prepare them for implementation of the new solution.
- Regular meetings with the SOS executive sponsor team and the Executive Steering Committee to brief them on critical project risks and issues and introduce topics that require their formal decision-making authority.
- Bi-Weekly Project Risk and Issue Meeting needed to manage risks and issues that arise during the project.
- Regular meetings with both the project's Independent Verification and Validation contractor and the California Department of Technology Project Approvals and Oversight team to discuss overall project health and risk and issue mitigation and resolution.
- Ongoing activities to ensure the stability of the legacy CAL-ACCESS until the new solution is implemented.

Scope, Schedule, and Budget

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

Schedule: The project has met its execution milestones during this reporting period per the project schedule.

Budget: The project operated within its approved appropriation of \$20.5 million during Fiscal Year 2025-26.