

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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DATE: October 9, 2012

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
City of Milwaukee Election Commission
Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Election Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: Inquiries about Absentee Voting Numbers

The G.A.B. has been informed that many clerks have received inquiries from research organizations or other groups asking for information about the municipality's absentee voting hours and location, or other election-related questions. While the request may not necessarily be a public records request if it does not seek actual documents, the G.A.B. encourages clerks to provide responses as soon as practical, especially when the responses are not burdensome. Voters and the public often rely on such sources in addition to or instead of traditional media outlets. Whatever purpose the requester has for the information, it is preferable that election officials take every opportunity to convey accurate information. The G.A.B. often receives inquiries regarding election laws or procedures from political parties, voter advocacy groups, and other nonprofit organizations, and has found that it is more productive and efficient to provide accurate information than to leave it to the requester to locate those facts, provide their own interpretation, and convey it properly to others. We encourage local election officials to take a similar approach when receiving such inquiries, and to consult your municipal attorney for any additional guidance.

cc: Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

Ross Hein
Elections Supervisor
Government Accountability Board