

# State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE WILLIAM EICH  
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**DATE:** April 16, 2010

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

**FROM:** Nathaniel E. Robinson   
Elections Division Administrator  
Government Accountability Board

**SUBJECT:** Protocol for Improving the Accuracy and Consistency of Responses from Elections Division Staff

- When you asked us to involve you in election administration decisions that affect you, we did.
- When you asked us to better manage communications sent to you, we have.
- When you asked us to update our training policy to ensure training is provided closer to where you live and work, we are in the process of doing that.
- When you asked us to listen to you – effectively – we are and will continue to do so.

We welcome your concerns and encourage you to continue to share issues and ideas with us so that we can continue to improve our responsiveness and effectiveness to you as a reliable and dependable partner.

Here is what we are doing to improve the accuracy and consistency of our responses to your inquiries: In response to clerks' concerns raised during the Communications and Training Listening Sessions we conducted last fall, we are instituting the following three-step protocol for improving the accuracy and consistency of responses to clerk inquiries that is attached to this memo:

1. Establishment of an internal procedure that directs inquiries to the available staff member most qualified to respond.
2. Establishment of a practice of staff asking local election officials to place questions in writing for issues that are new, complex or require interpretation.
3. On a continuous basis, the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on G.A.B.'s website for clerks, elections officials and the voting public, will be updated.

The first step is an internal procedure for the transference of calls to the available staff member with the most relevant knowledge of the issue the caller is inquiring about. To facilitate this initiative, a table identifying staff and their respective areas of expertise has been distributed to all staff and clerks, and posted on our website (copy attached for your information). The objective of this action is to ensure that callers receive accurate responses in the least amount of time by directing them to the available staff person who has the most knowledge about the inquired matter.

The second step involves asking clerks to submit inquiries for issues that are new, complex, unique, or require a policy or legal interpretation in writing. For 95% or more of the inquiries on which you seek information from Elections Division staff members, your current means of communication (via telephone or email communication) are sufficient and should continue. However, there will be times that an issue or concern will come up which may be non-routine, new, unique, and complex or require interpretation. G.A.B. staff may ask for that inquiry to be placed in writing.

Memorializing these unusual types of inquiries in writing will help mitigate misunderstandings that could occur during a telephone conversation. Having such inquiries placed in writing will also allow Elections Specialists the time needed to collaborate with colleagues in order to ensure a thorough review so that the most timely and accurate response possible is provided to you. In such cases, clerks can expect feedback as soon as possible. If the situation is urgent, clerks should indicate to staff during their telephone conversation and in their written follow-up a “no later than” timeline that a response is requested to be received.

Suggested Process: If asked by G.A.B. staff to place an inquiry in writing, you are encouraged to send an email to the Help Desk at [GABHelpDesk@wi.gov](mailto:GABHelpDesk@wi.gov) (608) 261-2028, and specify which Elections Specialist you talked with on the phone. Utilizing this approach, if the Elections Specialist you specified is not available right away, your inquiry will be routed to the next best available Specialist. In any case, your inquiry will be subjected to our internal protocol to ensure that we provide you with the most accurate information available, in the most efficient and timely manner as practical. Please include in your email any information that is pertinent to your inquiry including background information, the problem as you see it and by what time you need a response.

The third step of the protocol involves the continuous updating and improving of the FAQs posted on our website. Updated information via the FAQ process will provide clerks with the resource needed to be able to quickly answer many of their questions perhaps without needing to call the G.A.B. The current set of FAQs are being reviewed and updated and will be expanded as needed. The organization of the questions and answers will be reordered to be more intuitive and provide you with easier access to the information you need. You are encouraged to periodically visit the FAQ information on our website. We will keep you apprised via our bi-monthly reminders whenever there are FAQ changes.

Thank you for letting us know what your needs are and how we can be a more effective partner to you. Your usual cooperation will go a long way towards increasing our ability to improve the accuracy and consistency of our responses to you.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to concerns raised by you, our valued customers and partners, county and municipal clerks. We believe this three-step approach will improve the accuracy and consistency of our responses to you. As usual, we always welcome your feedback on other ways you feel we can improve our Clerk-GAB Partnership. Thank you.

#### Attachments

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