Wisconsin Elections Commission

DATE: August 9, 2023

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

FROM: Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC)

SUBJECT: Absentee Envelope Designs Approved by Commission

1. **Summary.** On August 4, 2023, the Wisconsin Elections Commission approved the designs of the Absentee Mailer Envelope (EL-120) and the Absentee Certificate Envelope (EL-122). There are two versions of the EL-120, regular and military, and three versions of the EL-122; regular, military, and special voting deputy. There is also a Spanish language EL-122 available.

2. **Next Steps.** WEC staff suggest clerks contact their envelope printing vendors immediately with the new designs, attached to this communication and posted under the Forms tab of the WEC website, so that there is as much time as possible to fill the orders for the elections in 2024.

3. **Reminders.** Clerks should keep a few items in mind as they begin to order new envelopes:
   a) The new designs attached to this communication <u>must</u> be used for the elections in 2024 and beyond. Old envelopes may not be used per the Commission's June 1 directive.
   b) These envelopes must be printed in color.
   c) The 2023 Absentee Ballot Envelope Subgrant Reimbursement Program is open for applications until June 30, 2024. Find the MOU and application materials at this link: https://elections.wi.gov/memo/2023-absentee-ballot-envelope-subgrant-reimbursement-program
   d) Clerks are strongly encouraged to purchase enough envelopes for upcoming elections. However, please remember that while no changes are anticipated, a court order or legislation may require changes to the envelope design in the future. To assist with planning, absentee request statistics by municipality can be found at https://elections.wi.gov/statistics-data/absentee-statistics.

4. **Project Background.** The Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) directed staff to update the absentee certificate envelope to (1) ensure compliance with Wisconsin Law; (2) implement Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) recommendations; and (3) to make the envelope as usable as possible for both voters and election officials. The LAB explicitly determined that the old

envelope design did not comply with the law, because it did not have a space for the witness to print their name as required by Wis. Stat. §6.87(2).

Design studies and timeline development began immediately following the Commission's order on December 1, 2022. Through the first seven months of 2023, the WEC conducted several rounds of usability testing and design revisions with input from voters, poll workers, local clerks, and the U.S. Postal Service. Materials detailing the process were published and discussed in public Commission meetings on the following dates:
   a) December 1, 2022
   b) February 2, 2023
   c) April 28, 2023
   d) June 1, 2023
   e) August 4, 2023
Meeting materials and minutes for these meetings are available on the WEC website here:
https://elections.wi.gov/news-events/events/past

5. **Approved Designs**. There are six pdf attachments with this communication for each of the envelope designs.
   a) EL-120   Absentee Ballot Mailer Envelope
   b) EL-120M   Military & Overseas Absentee Ballot Mailer Envelope
   c) EL-122   Standard Absentee Ballot Certificate
   d) EL-122M   Military & Overseas Absentee Ballot Certificate
   e) EL-122SVD   Special Voting Deputy Absentee Ballot Certificate
   f) EL-122S   Spanish Language Standard Absentee Ballot Certificate

6. **Questions.** Call the WEC Help Desk at 608-261-2028 or e-mail elections@wi.gov.