



Wisconsin Elections Commission

212 East Washington Avenue | Third Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984
(608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

DATE: October 23, 2019

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

FROM: Meagan Wolfe
Administrator

SUBJECT: 2020 Vision: Elections Security Programs

- 1. Purpose.** This memorandum introduces the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) 2020 Vision plan and clerk survey.
- 2. Background.** Wisconsin clerks are leaders in elections security, having achieved many milestones still under consideration in other states. Some of the more significant programs here include WisVote multifactor authentication (MFA), an award-winning cybersecurity training program, the tabletop exercise (TTX) program, and the expansion of post-election audits. There is no finish line for election security, and we must continually adapt our approach to improve our defenses. This need particularly applies to cybersecurity, since both technology and threats evolve rapidly.
- 3. 2020 Vision.** Wisconsin recently announced the Election Security Subgrant program to help jurisdictions achieve basic cybersecurity standards. Over the next 90 days, the WEC will implement more programs to improve the state's election security posture, which have been developed with the input of our clerk advisory committees. These programs will directly address major security needs while creating limited changes for clerks.
 - a) *Upgrading WisVote.*** Throughout 2019 the WEC IT development team has worked behind the scenes to completely upgrade the foundation of WisVote. This includes upgrading all WisVote software to the latest standards. This upgrade will have minimal impact on users and user-facing processes will not change. The program is called the "365 Upgrade" and it is currently scheduled for a mid-November deployment. There may be short outages to WisVote and MyVote during the transition, but they will be announced to clerks in advance.
 - b) *Validating Device Security.*** The technical term for this initiative is "Endpoint Testing." This means that every computer connecting to Wisconsin elections systems will be checked to verify its security before access is permitted. In addition to protecting the network, this process will also allow the WEC to alert users if a problem is detected. This initiative requires users to install a small

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Meagan Wolfe

application on any computers used to access election systems such as WisVote. A staged implementation of this project is scheduled to begin in November and December 2019. This system will be mandatory for WisVote users no later than January 28, 2020.

- c) *Protecting Critical Information.* The WEC is creating new communication tools and establishing best practices to protect sensitive information such as voter PII (Personally Identifiable Information). These tools will allow clerks to receive information with voter PII or security procedures through private communication channels. Deployment will occur over the next few months.
- d) *Expanding Critical Communication Tools.* A “Rave” mass notification system for critical election information will allow the WEC to rapidly alert a large number of clerks through a variety of mechanisms such as email, telephone and text messaging. Clerks may, in turn, use the system to communicate with chief inspectors or other staff. The system is currently undergoing testing and will be rolled out to clerks within the next 90 days.
- e) *Emergency Support to Clerks.* The State of Wisconsin, through the Division of Enterprise Technology, greatly expanded the Cyber Response Team program in 2019. These teams provide local jurisdictions with free emergency repair and remediation services in the event of a cyber incident. Moving into 2020, additional support tools will be made available to clerks, including a computer hardware loaner program and a 24/7 hotline.

4. **Clerk Survey.** To prepare for 2020 Vision, we ask that all county and municipal clerks complete a short survey to confirm that the information they have on file with the WEC is accurate. The survey is online at this address: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WEC2020Vision>.

5. **Questions.** In a follow-up clerk communication, the WEC will publish five Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents to further explain the new programs. In the meantime, please contact the WEC Help Desk if you have any questions. Call 608-261-2028 or e-mail elections@wi.gov.