



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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DATE: May 18, 2020

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

FROM: Meagan Wolfe, Administrator

SUBJECT: CARES Act Grant Emails from Outside Group and Grant Updates

Over the weekend, many clerks received an email from an out-of-state group with information about the federal CARES Act grant funding the Wisconsin Elections Commission recently received. This group was not in touch with anyone at the WEC, and their suggestion that clerks apply to the WEC for grant funding is completely unnecessary. You do not need to submit an application to WEC requesting funds under this grant.

The WEC has scheduled a special meeting at 4:00 p.m. Wednesday that will include a discussion of how to spend the \$7.3 million Wisconsin received through that grant. The focus of the proposed program is to provide resources for the August and November 2020 elections and not to reimburse for expenditures related to the April 7, 2020 election. Municipalities should continue to pursue any other grant or reimbursement opportunities available to them for additional COVID-related costs related to April.

The WEC will consider these staff recommendations:

1. A subgrant to offset mailing expenses for Wisconsin localities.
2. A program to promote absentee voting in the general election.
3. Redesigned absentee ballot envelopes to enhance usability, which will be paid for and distributed by the state.
4. A program to fund sanitation supplies needed for the remainder of 2020.

Clerks would not need to apply for the mailing grants, which may be allocated based on the expected number of absentee ballots mailed for each election this fall. A copy of the recommendations, which includes the formula, is attached to this memorandum. Full meeting materials are available on the WEC website: <https://elections.wi.gov/node/6884>.

If approved by the Commission on May 20, new envelopes would be printed and distributed at no cost to all municipalities in the state in advance of the August and November elections. Any existing envelope stock could still be used for in-person absentee and care facility voting for all future elections. It is expected that existing envelope stock could still be used for by mail ballots for August, but transition to the new design should happen prior to the November election. This new design will all greater ballot tracking for voters of where their ballot is in the postal process.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

Dean Knudson, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Julie M. Glancey | Ann S. Jacobs | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thomsen

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

If you have feedback for the Commissioners about the recommendations, please email elections@wi.gov with “Message to Commissioners” in the subject line. All messages will be provided to the Commission members.

Once the CARES Act spending plan has been approved, WEC staff will provide further details to you about how the postage reimbursement funding, new absentee ballot envelopes and sanitation supplies will be distributed to clerks.