



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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DATE: April 12, 2021

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
Wisconsin County Clerks

FROM: Meagan Wolfe, Administrator
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SUBJECT: Two Research Organizations Are Surveying Wisconsin Clerks in April

Wisconsin municipal and county clerks should be aware of two surveys being conducted this month by the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW).

The first survey, which went out on Monday, April 12, is being conducted by the LAB (<https://legis.wisconsin.gov/lab>) as a part of its performance audit of the 2020 election. The audit was [ordered on February 11, 2021, by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Legislative Audit](#). (Please click the link for background information about the scope of the audit.) Several clerks have contacted the Wisconsin Elections Commission about the LAB survey, wondering whether it is legitimate and if it is something the WEC asked LAB to do. The WEC had no role in creating this survey, and the WEC did not have an opportunity to review it prior to the survey's launch.

The second survey is from UW's Elections Research Center (<https://elections.wisc.edu>) and it will be going out to all municipal clerks via email later this week. It is funded by a grant from the Tommy G. Thompson Center on Public Leadership. There will be a separate survey of voters. According to the lead researcher, Professor Barry Burden, the main goals of the project are to assess how well clerks and voters thought the 2020 election went and to gauge their support for various kinds of proposed improvements or reforms. Both surveys will be conducted online, and respondents will be contacted by email to participate. Professor Burden and his team have previously conducted academic research about Wisconsin clerks, election inspectors and election administration. Some of the questions were asked in a clerk survey approximately 10 years ago.

The LAB and the UW are legitimate research organizations, and clerks should not worry that their online surveys are suspicious or malicious. That said, the WEC has no official position on either of these surveys. It is up to individual clerks to decide whether they wish to participate.

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