



# Wisconsin Elections Commission

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**DATE:** September 16, 2021

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

**FROM:** Meagan Wolfe, Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Important Badger Book Program Updates and 2022 Hardware Ordering Information

The Badger Book is Wisconsin's e-poll book system, the only electronic poll book authorized for use in Wisconsin elections. Developed by the Wisconsin Elections Commission in 2017, the software is free to municipalities around the state. It is safe, secure, and streamlines elections.

The Badger Book team at the WEC has spent 2021 reorganizing the program in preparation for the 2022 election cycle. In lieu of onboarding municipalities throughout the course of this year, staff instead focused on improving the program and restructuring it to ensure sustainable growth in the future.

## Hardware:

WEC staff researched alternative and varied hardware solutions that would be a good fit for the Badger Book program. This research was productive and a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in June, seeking potential vendors and innovative hardware packages. A second component of the RFP was a dedicated customer support model in which municipal end users would have access to a single-priced, optional hardware support service which had been procured through a compliant and competitive process resulting in a statewide contract.

The RFP response window closed on July 23, 2021. Unfortunately, the RFP prompted minimal interest from suppliers, and some of those vendors could not meet the RFP's requirements.

Badger Book program participants can continue to purchase hardware from Paragon Development Systems (PDS) under the terms of the Wisconsin Department of Administration's enterprise hardware contract. The hardware package will be the same Hewlett-Packard Point of Sale (POS) device that is currently in use in nearly 80 municipalities in Wisconsin. However, the RFP process itself was still productive. WEC staff have used the results of that process to begin discussions with PDS regarding the optimization of hardware packages, advance testing of future hardware releases, offsetting market shortages and delays, and offering increased discounting in exchange for enhanced ordering data. While WEC staff are working with PDS to finalize these refreshed terms of purchase, it remains critical that municipalities contact PDS immediately to order hardware before

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2022 election cycle (*i.e.* PDS needs to gauge purchasing interest immediately, and any additional discounts, etc., will be offered retroactively).

In past years, staff have facilitated a purchasing window for interested municipalities. Going forward into 2022, the program will move away from the purchasing window model and, instead, municipalities will be able to purchase equipment and onboard into the program at any time, provided that training is available and completed prior to the first election in which they wish to use the equipment. For more information on purchasing hardware, please contact Dana Berner, PDS Public Sector Account and Contract Manager, at 262-569-5366 or [dberner@pdsit.net](mailto:dberner@pdsit.net). Additional contact information is noted at the end of this communication.

Due to the current state of the global economy (*i.e.* computer chip shortages and general supply chain issues in multiple sectors) PDS is projecting at least a 16-week lead time to receive the devices once they are ordered. **For context, this means that orders for any devices intended to be used in the February or April 2022 elections will need to be ordered by approximately late September** and any devices intended to be used in the August or November 2022 election should be ordered by approximately early April, 2022. While the lead time is imprecise and may improve as supply chain issues are rectified, current forecasts show that this sector of the economy is unlikely to fully recover until at least the end of 2023.

**Takeaway: Municipalities planning on purchasing Badger Books or interested in learning more, contact Dana Berner at PDS immediately.** PDS may be able to mitigate supply chain deficiencies through bulk ordering and equipment warehousing, but the vendor needs municipal purchasers to contact them as soon as possible with relatively certain ordering data and quantities. Current Badger Book program participants, as well as new additions to the program, will want to begin securing necessary approvals from their governing bodies right away. WEC staff will continue to explore bulk purchasing options, improved forecasting, and increased equipment warehousing to better serve Badger Book users going forward, while also driving down equipment costs. A standalone Request for Bid process may also be conducted in the future to secure additional hardware purchasing options at the best possible cost.

### **Training:**

The Badger Book train-the-trainer program is live. This program seeks current Badger Book users to become regional providers of Baseline (introductory) training for municipalities who are new to the program. It is our hope that having additional trainers throughout the state will allow more municipalities to onboard than ever before. At this time, the pool of certified Badger Book trainers (*i.e.* WEC staff and the newly-certified trainers from the pilot of the train-the-trainer program) is limited, so bringing more trainers into the fold is crucial to ensure that everyone who needs training can receive it from someone familiar with the application and the program.

Additionally, staff has spent 2021 refreshing and updating the catalog of Badger Book training materials. In addition to the current manuals, several new webinars and interactive Storylines have been added. These will be highly useful resources for those new to Badger Books as well as anyone who would like a refresher or additional training resources for poll workers.

### **General Improvements:**

Several new features were developed and implemented into the Badger Book application. In addition to performance enhancements, updates have been made to the user interface and functionality of both the application and the associated processes in WisVote.

Municipalities that print barcode labels on their absentee certificate envelopes will now be able to scan those barcodes to directly process absentee ballots on Election Day. A new report has been added to facilitate completion of the Inspectors' Statement during end of night processes. Additionally, poll worker user credentials can now be maintained in WisVote and loaded into the Badger Book device with the poll book detail file prior to the election, streamlining the process.

**Additional Updates:**

Included with this communication is a Badger Book program brochure. It outlines the primary functions of the Badger Book, explains what the program can do for your municipality, and focuses on how Badger Books are kept secure. This can be used as a resource for voters, poll workers, or governing bodies who wish to learn more about the program. We are confident that the steps we took this year to restructure the program will ensure that it is able to grow sustainably across the state for years to come.

**Program Contacts:**

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