



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: June 24, 2020

TO: Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Meagan Wolfe
Administrator

SUBJECT: County Election Security Subgrant Announcement

- SUMMARY.** On January 6, 2020, the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (“EAC”) announced Wisconsin’s federal grant award of \$7,818,581, as authorized under Section 101 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (“HAVA”) (Public Law 107-252) and provided for in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-93). The purpose of this federal award is to “improve the administration of elections for Federal office, including to enhance election technology and make election security improvements” to the systems, equipment and processes used in federal elections. Wisconsin Election Commission (“WEC”) staff was directed by the Commission to submit a Wis. Stat. §16.54 request to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (“DOA”) requesting the acceptance of the HAVA grant funds.

After requesting and receiving feedback from Wisconsin clerks, the public, and others interested in the security of Wisconsin elections, there was a first round of subgrant distributions specifically allocated to municipalities to aid with improving the overall security posture of the local municipalities. With funds remaining, WEC staff submitted a proposal to the Elections Commission focused on specifically aiding counties with their election security needs.

- PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.** On June 10, 2020, the Elections Commission authorized a \$3.9 million County Election Security Subgrant to assist counties with improvement of their overall election security posture as they prepare for the remainder of the 2020 election year and head into future election cycles. These funds are specifically earmarked for assessment, remediation, and overall improvements to election security at the county level. The County Election Security Subgrant provides a maximum allocation of a base amount of \$35,000 per county, plus an additional amount based on the voting-age population estimated by the Department of Administration (“DOA”) Wisconsin Demographic Services Center. The additional amount is \$0.30 per person, based on the 2019 voting-age population.
- PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.** Counties must have two baseline security protocols in place, or if not in place, the subgrant application will include plans to implement the security protocols. Subgrant funds may be used to implement these protocols and should be included in the county’s plan submitted to the Commission to request subgrant funds.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

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

Administrator
Meagan Wolfe

- A. Secure Encrypted Websites (HTTPS). To be eligible to receive subgrant funds, the county's website on which unofficial election results are posted, must use HTTPS protocols; and
- B. Secure Email Host. To be eligible for subgrant funds, the county must use email services with DMARC (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting, and Conformance) enabled and encrypted with current transport-layer security (TLS) cryptographic protocols.

In addition to having baseline security protocols in place, counties must conduct a deliberate risk assessment of their overall security posture to identify areas of need that the subgrant could help fund. Subgrant funds may also be used to conduct this assessment and should be included in the county's plan.

- 4. **AUTHORIZED USES.** The County Election Security Subgrant is to be used for election security related expenditures to aid counties in improving their overall election security posture. The intent is to allow individual counties to apply for subgrant funds on an "individual needs basis" instead of a one size fits all approach. Funds may be used to make payments for activities that enhance election technology and make election security improvements, as authorized under sections 101, 103, and 104 of HAVA, which include: personnel, equipment, and training costs associated with cyber vulnerabilities, physical security, voter registration systems and management, election auditing, staff training, and communications. Because counties may have different election security needs, this subgrant is designed to allow a county to assess its unique security environment and to submit an application to the Commission that outlines its needs.
- 5. **HOW DO COUNTIES APPLY?** Clerks, or authorized representatives, must submit a completed and signed HAVA Subgrant Agreement accompanied by a narrative and/or plan specifying 2020 elections security needs which details the proposed use of the requested funds to:

Wisconsin Elections Commission
ATTN: Michelle Hawley
212 East Washington Avenue, Third Floor
P.O. Box 7984
Madison, WI 53707-7984
Michelle.Hawley@wisconsin.gov

Fax: (608) 267-0500

Commission staff will prepare a written summary of the request that assesses the subgrant narrative and plan submitted by the county and will recommend approval or denial of the request. Upon approval by the Commission, Commission staff will issue an award letter and release the funds to be used by the county to implement the approved plan. Applications must be received by the Wisconsin Elections Commission no later than **July 15, 2020**.

6. **DOCUMENTATION & REPORTING.** The receiving county shall report on its use of subgrant funds and compliance with the terms of the subgrant by completing the “Subgrant Compliance Form” provided by the Commission. The jurisdiction is required to sign, complete, and return the form to the Commission by **February 1, 2021**. If the county cannot complete their subgrant compliance form timely they may request an extension. . If a county does not spend the subgrant funds allocated, it must return any unused funds by **February 15, 2021**. All subgrant funds received are subject to audit by the Commission and/or the federal government to ensure funds have been spent in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.
7. **IMPORTANT DATES.** Below is a table of the important deadlines to remember:

County HAVA Subgrant: Key Dates	
Not later than July 1, 2020	Subgrant Application Period Opens
July 15, 2020	Deadline to Submit Subgrant Applications
Not later than July 31, 2020	Elections Commission Approves or Denies Requests
February 1, 2021	Compliance Reports Due to the Commission
February 15, 2021	Deadline for Counties to Return Unused Funds

8. **QUESTIONS?** If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to the Wisconsin Elections Commission at elections@wi.gov or call the Help Desk at (608) 261-2028.