

# State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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## Government Accountability Board Statement on Data Availability and Data Quality

### Data Availability

Municipalities are required to update voter participation and elections data with the G.A.B. within 45 days of a general election, and 30 days of all other elections. G.A.B. will notify those who request data beyond the 30 or 45 days after an election, as applicable, if the data is incomplete. Statewide voter participation and elections data is available from September 2006 to present. Information from February 2006, and April 2006, reflect only the jurisdictions in 21 counties that were using the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) during those elections.

The price for data from the SVRS is \$25 plus \$5 per 1000 voters (\$5 for up to the first thousand, and then rounded to the nearest thousand thereafter). The price for printed data from the SVRS is \$0.25 per page, plus the cost of postage and shipping. The system is constantly updated, so it is necessary to query the system before a price for a file can be provided. The price for the entire state list is capped at \$12,500. See Wis. Stat. §6.36(6) and Wisconsin Administration Code §GAB 3.50.

Quotes are valid for 15 days from the time they are produced. The Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (G.A.B.) reserves the right to re-estimate the quote after the 15-day period due to the fluidity of the data. The G.A.B. strives to provide quotes within 1-2 business days of receiving the request. The G.A.B. also works to provide the requested data within 5-7 business days of receiving payment.

There is no charge for quantity-only data (data without individual identifiers, e.g. the number of registered voters in a municipality, or the number of absentee ballots cast in a particular county during a particular election). There is also no charge for data from the Wisconsin Elections Data Collection System (WEDCS) regarding election voting and registration statistics, and election cost tracking. This information is available on the G.A.B. website at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>. Data from WEDCS is available for all statewide elections beginning with the 2008 General Election. For data not yet posted on the website listed above, please contact the G.A.B. Data Request Team by email at [GABdata@wi.gov](mailto:GABdata@wi.gov), or by phone at (608) 261-2028.

### Data Quality

In Wisconsin, elections are conducted at neither the state nor county level. Arguably, Wisconsin has the most decentralized elections administration systems in the nation. There are 1,851

municipalities and 72 counties in Wisconsin. The G.A.B. is charged by State law to maintain the official voter records and statistics. Wis. Stat. §6.36(1) (a). Responsibility for entering accurate information into SVRS and the Wisconsin Elections Data Collection System (WEDCS), however, resides with the individual municipal clerk and/or election commission.

Election cost data are provided by each municipality and county for each statewide election. G.A.B. staff asked that clerks provide these data based on actual paid invoices or the clerk's best available information (i.e. unpaid invoices, accepted bids, etc.) within the required reporting period. As clerks receive updates, they may revise their reports. The cost reporting is part of collecting elections statistics, and is intended to provide a greater understanding about the costs of conducting elections. Collecting these data allows the G.A.B. to provide detailed reports to the State Legislature, the media, voters, and the general public about elections throughout the State of Wisconsin, and will assist municipalities to prepare and budget for elections.

These figures should not be construed as a complete accounting of audited election-related expenses. The G.A.B. has published instructions on completing the election cost report, but clerks may interpret these instructions and report expenditures differently. In addition, cost data may be incomplete and reflect the information available when the data was reported. While initial reports are due 30 days after an election, municipal and county clerks have the ability to update their data as more specific information becomes available.

The G.A.B. is dedicated to maintaining the highest possible voter data quality and accurate elections statistics. Every effort is made to assure the accuracy and completeness. Given the complexity of Wisconsin's elections administration structure and business processes, despite best efforts and quality control management practices, some residual data error resulting from compilation by multiple partners may sometimes occur. Reviewers of Wisconsin's voter participation and elections data are encouraged to contact the G.A.B. if errors or omissions in the data are discovered.