

WEC CARES FAQs

1. How has the subgrant changed since the webinar?

The only change that has occurred for the WEC CARES Subgrant program is that clerks no longer need to document expenses outside what they receive for the subgrant award. Clerks will only need to document those expenses they are using the subgrant towards. Municipalities are then free to submit their other pandemic-related expenditures to other subgrant/reimbursement programs, for any expenditures that are not already being claimed under this subgrant.

2. Where did we come up with the \$1.10? If it is due to postage, why are they not receiving the funds for both future elections to cover both sets of postage costs?

We had originally conceived of and presented to the Commission a \$2.6M postage-based subgrant that would allocate funds based on a \$1.10/per registered voters * % expected turnout * % expected by-mail absentee requests for the August and November elections. However, this current \$4.1M subgrant expands the amount awarded because it is 100% of \$1.10 for each registered voter, not then lowered by expected turnout percentage and again by expected percentage of those being absentee.

This increased subgrant program, up \$1.5M since the postage-based iteration, should allow municipalities to supplement both absentee and in-person voting pandemic-related costs.

3. Can this money only be used for the August and November elections?

No, these can be used towards all 2020 elections for pandemic related expenses. At this time though, none of us are sure what the August and November elections will look like, and we recommend ensuring you are prepared for them before using the funds for past expenses.

4. If we believe the subgrant funds won't cover the extra expenses for the next two elections, is there a possibility of additional funds?

This is the only opportunity that the Commission has approved for CARES federal funds to be distributed to municipalities. For extra expenses outside the WEC CARES allocation, please research the FEMA and Routes to Recovery Grants as they will also assist with election-related expenses incurred due to the Pandemic.

5. Can counties receive funds? If not, what is a good response for the Provider/Relier relationship we want explained.

No, counties are not eligible to receive the WEC CARES Subgrant as it is a municipality based program.

6. What type of equipment/supplies are covered?

Equipment that is necessary to process the higher volume of absentee ballots is allowable. This could include new Dymo and regular printers, automated letter opening equipment, high speed or central count tabulators, and necessary additional laptops and mobile IT equipment.

Equipment costs equal or greater than \$5000 per unit should be tracked under the “Equipment”; unit costs less than \$5000 should instead be reported under the applicable category above, most likely Additional Ballot Supplies.

Plexiglass/Sneezeguards and thermometers for use in the elections as protection against the pandemic are all allowable and would be categorized under Cleaning/PPE.

7. Do we need to provide additional proof of purchases to WEC with the WEC CARES Expenditure Report?

No. (Please don't.) But you are required to have documentation for all reported expenditures and to retain this documentation until December 31, 2024, in case of audit.

8. What staffing expenses can be covered? Would only additional needed staff be covered, outside the usual number scheduled to a polling place?

Additional election expenditures due to the pandemic are all allowable. Additional staffing for the processing of higher levels of absentee ballot requests and absentee ballot tabulation, as overtime and benefits costs for election staff and poll workers or temporary election staff or poll workers as well as hazard pay (within reason) are allowable.

All staffing expenditures being claimed must have documentation that justifies how that expenditure is additional and due to the pandemic. That documentation might include a comparison to the presidential elections in 2018 for the number of absentee ballot requests and processing or staffing time and/or documentation of time spent on pandemic-specific tasks such as cleaning polling places, setting up social distancing, and other additional safety measures.

9. In order to appropriately plan the use of funds, do we know what supplies and when they will be provided by WEC again through the \$500,000 commission approved? Do we know anything about NG Troops coming in to assist again?

The Commission approved \$550,000 for WEC to procure and disseminate sanitation supplies to municipalities for the August and November elections. We expect the supplies will be similar to what was previously received (sanitizer, spray bottles, isopropyl wipes, surgical masks, gloves, pens, painters tape, signage). Once again, WEC staff intends to coordinate this effort through the county clerks. They should be expecting a communication from us soon asking them to reach out to their municipalities to gauge the amount of supplies each municipality will need. Please respond to your county clerks timely and remember to take in

to account the number of polling places you will have open (and the number of poll workers) to accurately order supplies, especially the PPE (masks & gloves). WEC staff will work with the State Emergency Operations Center to procure and disseminate supplies to county clerk offices by the end of July. We hope that having the supplies in advance will help better prepare.

As it relates to the assistance of National Guard Servicemembers for August and November, please do solely rely on this option. While we have been able to get approval from the Governor and the Adjutant General for assistance during the April and May elections, WEC staff encourages clerks to continue to solicit volunteers through your communities. While none of know what the rest of the year will look like as it relates to Coronavirus, we will continue to monitor the need for poll workers as we approach each of the elections. Should a serious need arise, it is possible for WEC staff to request assistance from the National Guard, but please remember that we do not have any control over whether the request will be approved, and if it is approved, how many servicemembers will actually be available to assist with the mission.