

EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:249 Data

1. EAC-CARES Progress Narrative Report Login

Please enter your userword and password to begin the CARES Funding Progress Narrative. If you require assistance or have any questions, please contact CARESFunding@eac.gov.

2. Not a Bot Verification

reCAPTCHA answered

3. EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

1. State:

Enter the name of the state or territory that received the grant and is submitting this report.

Delaware

2. Grant Number:

Enter the grant agreement number from the notice of grant award.

DC20101CARES

3. Report:

November 23 after general election

4. DUNS/UEI:

Enter the recipient organization's Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number or System for Award Management (SAM) extended DUNS Number or the Unique Entity Identifier.

5. EIN:

Enter the recipient organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) provided by the Internal Revenue Services.

6. Recipient Organization:

Enter the name of the recipient organization and address, including zip code.

Organization Name

Commissioner Of Elections

Street Address

905 S. Governors Ave., Ste. 170

City

Dover

State

DE

Zip

19904

7. Progress Narrative:

Progress During Reporting Period

The CARES Act requires states to submit a report after each primary and general election that includes a “full accounting of the State’s uses of the payment and an explanation of how such uses allowed the State to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” Please provide a narrative report that describes how you used the funds to address the pandemic, the challenges you faced in responding to it and how you are meeting the state match requirement. Describe the major issues you faced in dealing with the pandemic in the election cycle and how you made funds available to local jurisdictions. Complete the cost table below describing your major expenditures under the grant. Add additional cost areas as needed that do not fit into the other categories.

Like many other states navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, Delaware has had to make fundamental, systematic changes in the landscape of election administration in a very short period of time amidst very challenging circumstances.

A State of Emergency, declared by Delaware’s Governor early in 2020 shortly after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, remains in effect, and has been augmented by various declarations by the Governor (known as Modifications of the State of Emergency), including several concerning election-related activities. For the state’s Presidential Primary election, this included an order for the Department to mail absentee ballot applications to all registered Democrats and Republicans, while continuing to operate a reduced number of traditional polling places as vote centers. In addition, the election itself was rescheduled from 4/28 (original date), to 6/2 and then, ultimately, to 7/7. These changes resulted in a shift of voting behaviors from the historical levels of 3-4% of votes cast by absentee ballot to 45% of votes being cast by absentee ballot in this election. In actual numbers, this entails more than 56,000 absentee votes cast, vs. approximately 3,000 absentee votes cast in the 2016 Presidential Primary Election.

Legislative action also fundamentally reshaped Delaware’s election landscape for the fall 2020 elections. Delaware’s General Assembly enacted legislation law creating a time-limited provision for voting by mail, without any excuse or reason needed, to be in effect for Delaware’s State Primary Election (9/15/2020) and General Election (11/3/2020). This legislation directed the Department to mail vote by mail applications to all eligible voters. All of the mass mailings entail a very substantial amount of coordination internally to process data and to orchestrate the various aspects of the endeavor with an outside mail vendor. The Department, while undertaking this fundamental change in traditional operations, was required to operate all traditional in-person polling places for the Primary Election and General Election. This entailed recruiting more than 3,000 election officers (poll workers)—including many new or first-time workers to replace those workers who have traditionally worked in these positions, but who opted out of working this election cycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the State Primary, 43% of voters cast their ballot via absentee or vote by mail ballot. This compared to approximately 4% of such votes cast via absentee methods. In actual numbers, this entails more than 76,000 absentee and vote by mail votes cast, vs approximately 5,000 absentee votes cast in the 2016 State Primary election.

For the General Election, the Department anticipates a similar percentage of ballots being cast as absentee or vote by mail ballots. The overall turnout for the General Election will likely be record-breaking, which could entail more than 150,000 absentee and vote by mail ballots being cast, among an expected total turnout of more than 450,000 votes. just over 32% of the record turnout of 509,241 votes cast in the General Election (163,591 ballots). Again, this will need to be managed while, simultaneously, operating close to approximately 300 polling locations (and more than 430 election districts), staffing these locations with by more than 3,000 election officers (poll workers).

Needless to say, these changes have placed significant pressure on the Department to meet these multiple and simultaneous challenges, with the same modest staffing levels (full-time staff).

The Department has expended CARES funds to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for election officers (poll workers), materials to preserve social distancing protocols in polling places, and supplies to clean and sanitize voting equipment (voting machines and pollbooks used for voter check-in). An additional challenge the Department has faced and continues to face is integrating into the poll worker training regimen additional content on these COVID-19-related practices.

The Department has also expended CARES funds to purchase the various supplies for vastly expanded absentee (and now vote by mail) voting, to support automation and expand capacity to support the inbound and outbound ballot preparation and mailing processing operations, as well as inbound processing of returned mail ballots. In more detail, this includes printing of materials, preparing and packaging these items for mailing, and taking appropriate action for the voter upon the return of these materials. These actions include entering completed absentee or vote by mail applications into elections systems, appropriately updating individual voter registration records, and then preparing ballots to be mailed to the voter. Subsequently, when the voter returns the completed ballot, staff will scan these ballots to log their return (and update the voter registration record), sort the ballots, prepare these ballots for scanning for tabulation, and then scanning and, ultimately, tabulate these ballots (with tabulation only completed following the close of polls on Election Day). Grant funds have also been expended to cover costs for additional temporary staff to support all of the tasks associated with these efforts. In addition, this staff (as well as full-time staff) handled significantly heightened levels of voter inquiries (walk-in, phone, and email/online inquiries) about these new processes and routine issues such as ballot status, as well as related process and procedural questions.

The Department remains vigilant in tracking and, as mentioned earlier, satisfying the required State finding match whenever expending CARES funds. Our partners on the State level, in particular the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), have been exceptionally accommodating and flexible and are committed, in partnership with the Department, to satisfy all requirement of the CARES program.

FINAL PROGRESS NARRATIVE REPORT

PROGRESS DURING REPORTING PERIOD

The CARES Act requires states to submit a report after each primary and general election that includes a “full accounting of the State’s uses of the payment and an explanation of how such uses allowed the State to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” Please provide a narrative report that describes how you used the funds to address the pandemic, the challenges you faced in responding to it and how you are meeting the state match requirement. Describe the major issues you faced in dealing with the pandemic in the election cycle and how you made funds available to local jurisdictions. Complete the cost table below describing your major expenditures under the grant. Add additional cost areas as needed that do not fit into the other categories.

The final report is your opportunity to share the significant features of your activities and present information about the results you achieved. The document should be written as if the reader has no previous knowledge of your activities. EAC would like to share the final reports with all states. The report should cover the entire period of performance. Review and highlight all activities that occurred during the period of the grant. Include the table of expenditures with cumulative expenditures for the entire project period.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summarize your entire project and the lessons learned during its implementation. Include a review of your successes and an assessment of how your activities addressed the pandemic. What did you learn about dealing with and preparing for a major crisis during an election year that can be helpful to other states? Did you make permanent changes to your processes? Were there unexpected benefits? Shortfalls?

8. 2020 HAVA CARES GRANTS

Current Period Amount Expended and Unliquidated Obligations

PANDEMIC GRANT COST CATEGORIES

	Federal	Match
Voting Processes, including additional costs for printing and mailing ballots, ballot tracking software, high speed scanners and letter opening equipment, mail drop boxes, hardware and software associated with signature comparison of returned ballots	\$125,735.72	\$86,326.83
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff	\$72,022.38	\$47,323.84
Security and Training: Security for additional absentee or mail drop-boxes, pre- and post-election cleaning of polling places, staff and poll worker training on prevention processes		\$1,886.56
Communications: Notifying public of changes in registration, ballot request options, precautions or voting procedures)		
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks		\$2,599.00

If you need additional rows for the summary table, please upload an Excel document with the same layout.

4. Certification

Name and Contact of the authorized certifying official of the recipient.

First Name

SOMMER

Last Name

STURGEON

Title

FISCAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Phone Number

3027353745

Email Address

SOMMER.STURGEON@DELAWARE.GOV

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sommer L Sturgeon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Signature of: SOMMER L STURGEON

5. Report Submitted to EAC

CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 23, 2020 14:43:08 Success: Email Sent to: SOMMER.STURGEON@DELAWARE.GOV