

FEDERAL FINANCIAL REPORT

(Follow form instructions)

1. Federal Agency and Organizational Element to Which Report is Submitted ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION				2. Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number Assigned by Federal Agency (To report multiple grants, use FFR Attachment)				
3. Recipient Organization (Name and complete address including Zip code) EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF STATE OF RHODE ISLAND 82 Smith St 217, Providence, RI 029031120								
4a. DUNS Number	4b. EIN	5. Recipient Account Number or Identifying Number (To report multiple grants, use FFR Attachment)		6. Report Type	7. Basis of Accounting			
				<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Annual <input type="checkbox"/> Annual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accrual			
8. Project/Grant Period (Month, Day, Year) From: March 28, 2020				9. Reporting Period End Date (Month, Day, Year) September 30, 2021				
To: December 31, 2020								
10. Transactions					Cumulative			
<i>(Use lines a-c for single or combined multiple grant reporting)</i>								
Federal Cash (To report multiple grants separately, also use FFR Attachment):								
a. Cash Receipts					\$3,022,037.00			
b. Cash Disbursements					\$3,022,037.00			
c. Cash on Hand (line a minus b)					\$0.00			
<i>(Use lines d-o for single grant reporting)</i>								
Federal Expenditures and Unobligated Balance:								
d. Total Federal funds authorized					\$3,022,037.00			
e. Federal share of expenditures					\$3,022,037.00			
f. Federal share of unliquidated obligations					\$0.00			
g. Total Federal share (sum of lines e and f)					\$3,022,037.00			
h. Unobligated balance of Federal funds (line d minus g)					\$0.00			
Recipient Share:								
i. Total recipient share required					\$604,408.28			
j. Recipient share of expenditures					\$604,408.28			
k. Remaining recipient share to be provided (line i minus j)					\$0.00			
Program Income:								
l. Total Federal share of program income earned					\$0.00			
m. Program income expended in accordance with the deduction alternative					\$0.00			
n. Program income expended in accordance with the addition alternative					\$0.00			
o. Unexpended program income (line l minus line m and line n)					\$0.00			
11. Indirect Expense	a. Type	b. Rate	c. Period From	Period To	d. Base	e. Amount Charged	f. Federal Share	
g. Totals:					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
12. Remarks: Attach any explanations deemed necessary or information required by Federal sponsoring agency in compliance with governing legislation: State interest earned (current fiscal year): \$0								
13. Certification: By signing this report, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the report is true, complete, and accurate, and the expenditures, disbursements and cash receipts are for the purposes and intent set forth in the award documents. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)								
a. Typed or Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official Halloran-Villandry, Colleen Director of Finance & Personnel					c. Telephone (Area code, number, and extension)			
					d. Email Address			
b. Signature of Authorized Certifying Official Halloran-Villandry, Colleen					e. Date Report Submitted (Month, Day, Year) December 29, 2021			

Standard Form 425
OMB Approval Number: 4040-0014
Expiration Date: 02/28/2022

Paperwork Burden Statement
According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 4040-0014. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: US Department of Health & Human Services, OS/OCIO/PRA, 200 Independence Ave, SW, Suite 336-E, Washington DC 20201. Attention: PRA Reports Clearance Officer

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(Additional Page)

Federal Agency & Organization : ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Federal Grant ID

Recipient Organization

DUNS Number

DUNS Status when Certified

EIN : September 30, 2021

Reporting Period End Date

Status : Awarding Agency Approval

Remarks : State interest earned (current fiscal year): \$0
State interest expended (current fiscal year): \$0
Program income earned (current fiscal year): \$0
Program income earned breakdown (current fiscal year): \$0
Program income expended (current fiscal year): \$0

Federal Agency Review

Reviewer Name

Phone #

Email

Review Date

Review Comments

2021-2022 EAC Progress Report

3. EAC Progress Report

1. State or Territory:

Rhode Island

2. Grant Number:

RI20101CARES

3. Report:

Final (Start of Grant - End)

4. Grant:

CARES

5. Reporting Period Start Date

03/28/2020

6. Reporting Period End Date

09/30/2021

4. Progress and Narrative

Final Progress Report:

The final report is your opportunity to share the significant features of your project and present information about the results your project achieved.

It should be written as if the reader has no previous knowledge of your project's activities. The report should cover the entire period of performance.

Review and Self-Assessment:

Review and highlight all activities that occurred during the implementation of the project, including an assessment of your performance.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Rhode Island moved its Presidential Preference Primary from April 28 to June 2. In addition, by Executive Order of the Governor, the primary was conducted primarily by mail ballots with fewer in-person polling places open on Election Day.

Rhode Island also conducted its State Primary Election on September 8 and General Election on November 3. For the September 8 primary, voters were sent postcards with information on how they can conveniently vote by mail, early in-person, or on Election Day. The Department of State sent mail ballot applications to all active voters for the November 3 election.

Among the key activities that took place during the 2020 election cycle are the following:

- For all of the elections in 2020, the requirement to have two witnesses or a notary public to vote by mail was waived. This was accomplished for the June primary via Executive Order and for the September and November 2020 elections by a Federal Court decision that was upheld by the United States Supreme Court. The change in mail ballot procedures necessitated outreach to voters to ensure they were aware of the process to apply and vote by mail.

- June 2020 Presidential Primary Election (PPP): Mail ballot applications were sent to all active and inactive registered voters. Due to the significant increase in mail ballot volume, the Department of State contracted with a vendor to print and mail the applications and mail ballots. We learned lessons from this initial experience mailing applications that informed our process and decision-making for the November election. We learned that sending mail ballot applications to inactive voters was not efficient because their mail ballot applications came back undeliverable. We also improved the way we send data to the mail ballot vendor and built in more time for the vendor to process mail ballots. The main lesson learned from the PPP was that the cities/towns barely handled the mail ballot volume for a primary that had been all but decided. We needed to update our processes because we expected double the amount of mail ballots for the general election. Our updated process is explained two paragraphs down.

- September 2020 State Primary Election: To provide voters with information on their voting options, all active households received postcards with information on how to cast ballots by mail, early in-person, or in-person on Election Day. The primary allowed many of the processes, regulations, Executive Orders, and court rulings to be implemented on a smaller scale to ensure their successful implementation in the November election. A number of general assembly and local races were determined in the September primaries. We used the primary to improve polling place operations, mail ballot processing, and early in-person voting procedures.

- November 2020 General Election: After the PPP, we realized the cities/towns would not be able to process mail ballot applications quick enough under the then-current, labor-intensive process. We decided to centralize the opening and sorting of all mail ballot applications at the state level. The Department of State secured a location to process mail ballot applications and worked with the Governor to activate the RI National Guard to process the applications. We also worked with our voter registration system vendor to modernize the mail ballot processing module to drastically reduce data entry while ensuring the integrity of every mail ballot application. The Department purchased scanners to input the applications and disseminate them to the cities and towns to validate signatures and process the mail ballots.

The State Board of Elections acquired a mail ballot processing system to streamline the process of opening and sorting the significant increase in voted mail ballots for the November election.

The mail ballot application opening and scanning process worked very well. The streamlined process ensured state officials kept up with the increased application volume. It also simplified the process for local elections officials to validate signatures and approve applications for mail ballots.

Another lesson learned from the June 2020 PPP was we used a vendor with more experience in mail ballot elections. This change worked well as the vendor processed the volume of mail ballots in a timely manner so voters received their mail ballot

with plenty of time to vote and return their ballot.

Due to the hard work of state and local election officials, improved processes and procedures, and funds provided by the federal government Rhode Island shattered its previous turnout record. Over 521,000 voters cast a ballot in the November election. 201,474 voters (39%) cast ballots on Election Day, 170,095 voters (33%) cast a mail ballot, and 149,616 voters (28%) cast a ballot early in-person. To put it in perspective, the previous mail ballot record was 41,000 voters and the previous early in-person record was 16,000 voters.

Recently, the Department held a conference call with cities and towns interested in replicating the scanning process of mail ballot applications for the 2022 elections.

7. CARES Grant Specific:

Describe in detail how you used the funds to address the pandemic.

Rhode Island conducted three elections in 2020. In past election cycles, most Rhode Island voters cast ballots at polling places on Election Day. However, due to concerns of the coronavirus Rhode Island's voter turnout was more evenly divided over the three methods of voting, early in-person, mail ballot, and polling place on Election Day.

Rhode Island used CARES Act funds to pay for the mailing of mail ballot applications in two of the elections. The funds were also used to pay for the cost of mailing additional mail ballots and for the postage-paid return envelopes.

Funds were also used for a centralized application processing center to ensure the volume of applications were processed in a timely manner for mail ballots to be sent to voters.

Additional funds were used to purchase cleaning supplies, pens for voter check-ins, and signage to emphasize social distancing.

Lastly, due to the increased number of mail ballots, the Board of Elections acquired equipment to process the larger volume of mail ballots.

8. Describe the major issues you faced in dealing with the pandemic and how you addressed or resolved those issues.

Rhode Island faced several major issues related to the pandemic in 2020. The issues included:

- Concerns that the coronavirus caused more voters to vote by mail or vote early in-person.
- The change in turnout meant election officials needed to change their processes and staffing to accommodate the different methods of voting.
- Additional mail ballots required the Board of Elections to acquire equipment to handle the processing of the increased volume.
- The Board of Elections and local boards of canvassers faced challenges finding suitable locations to serve as polling places.
- Local boards of canvassers struggled to find an adequate number of poll workers due to Coronavirus concerns.

9. Provide a description of any training conducted, including security training.

The Board of Elections conducted signature verification training for local and state election officials who were responsible for verifying signatures on mail ballot applications and mail ballots.

10. Subgrants:

Did your office provide subawards to local jurisdictions during this reporting period?

No

11. Match:

Describe how you are meeting or have met the matching requirement.

Rhode Island met its state match. A summary of how the state met its matching requirement is below:

We secured a grant from the Center for Election Innovation and Research (CEIR) to enhance our communications efforts to voters around changes to the elections processes during the 2020 election cycle. We utilized these funds to establish a voter information hotline with our United Way chapter. These funds also allowed us to expand our online and print communications efforts.

We were also able to improve the online mail ballot application for the disability community. In addition, we saw increased staff overtime due to the pandemic and the additional workload, including calls to our office, addressing issues with mail ballot applications and mail ballots and providing general voter information.

The Board of Elections incurred additional legal costs due to the pandemic including executive actions required to address changes in voting processes as well as rules and regulations needed to accommodate such alterations. Lastly, the Board of Elections received a donation of hand sanitizer that assisted the office in maintaining the health of voters and poll workers during the 2020 election cycle.

12. Report on the number and type of articles of voting equipment obtained with the funds. Include the amount expended on the expenditure table.

Two high-speed scanners were purchased to scan the additional volume of mail ballot applications to send to cities and towns for processing. Cost \$38,913.

One high-speed scanner was rented for the same purpose. Cost \$900.

13. Impact:

Write an assessment of how your project has impacted the problems you were trying to solve. Were there unexpected benefits? Shortfalls?

The CARES Act funds were instrumental in ensuring Rhode Islanders were able to cast ballots safely during the pandemic. In a traditional election, the vast majority (more than 95%) of voters cast ballots in-person on Election Day. During the November 2020 election, more voters cast ballots in advance of the election, either by mail or in-person, than did on Election Day.

Without this funding, Rhode Island would not have been able to send mail ballot applications to all registered voters or establish a centralized mail ballot application process. In addition, we would not have been able to contract with a vendor to print and mail the volume of mail ballots in the general election.

Also, the Board of Elections worked with the cities and towns to acquire security cameras for all of the secure mail ballot drop boxes in the cities and towns. This provided voters with the ability to deliver their mail ballots securely at any time in advance of poll closing times on Election Day.

14. Lessons Learned:

Provide a review of your successes and suggest ways that your experience may be helpful to others. Did you make permanent changes to your processes? What are some areas of potential improvement?

Our major success was the improvement of our mail ballot process that we will continue to utilize.

First and foremost was the improvement of the mail ballot module in our voter registration system. The improvement drastically reduced the data entry necessary to send a mail ballot. This process is here to stay and will continue to make the data entry process more efficient.

Centralizing the opening and sorting of mail ballot applications was key however we cannot afford to do this in the future. Instead, we will work with the cities/towns to secure scanners that will allow them to handle the future influx of mail ballots on their own.

We will also work with the Post Office and the cities/towns to establish Business Reply Mail (BRM) accounts so they can open and sort their own mail ballot applications.

Another major success (learned through a near-failure) was to work with a tested mail ballot vendor to send mail ballots. With over 170,000 people voting by mail, it was imperative that we guarantee the successful and timely delivery of mail ballots.

We expect to continue many of the processes that were implemented in 2020 however, we need support from our General Assembly to do so. For example, the witnesses/notary requirement is still Rhode Island law. We hope the General Assembly will remove that requirement in early 2022.

5. Expenditures

15. CARES COST CATEGORIES - FEDERAL

Voting Equipment and Processes: : \$2267621

Voter Education/Communications: : \$103855

Staffing: : \$464378

Supplies: : \$173579

Other (Specify below) : \$11094

Other (Specify below) : \$1510

Total : \$3022037

Comments: \$11,094 spent on reimbursing cities and towns (printing and mailing of voter information postcards and installation of camera for mail ballot drop box) \$1,510 spent on audit fees.

16. CARES COST CATEGORIES - MATCH

Voting Equipment and Processes: : \$305123

Voter Education/Communications: : \$217723

Staffing: : \$25499

Other (Specify below) : \$23597

Other (Specify below) : \$7498

Supplies: : \$24968

Total : \$604408

Comments: \$23,597 spent on legal fees and \$7,498 spent on Information Technology.

7. Expenditures

17. Confirm Total CARES Expenditure Amounts

Federal : \$3022037

Match : \$604408

Total : \$3626445

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 3265-0020

8. Certification

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

First Name

Rob

Last Name

Rock

Title

Director of Elections

Phone Number

Email Address

18. Add another contact to send a copy of submission confirmation and edit link?

Yes!

19.

First Name

Jason

Last Name

Martiesian

Title

Chief of Staff

Email Address

Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Rock', written in a stylized, cursive script.

Signature of: Rob Rock