

# EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:255 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.

North Dakota

### 2. Grant Number:

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

ND20201CARES

### 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

North Dakota Secretary Of State

#### Street Address

600 E Boulevard Ave., Department 108

#### City

Bismarck

#### State

ND

Zip

58505

## 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.**

What was hoped to be a backdrop only in North Dakota's June 9 primary election, the COVID-19 pandemic remained front and center as a planning issue for the November general election.

While North Dakota's June 9 election by mail was considered successful, the State recognized that elections are best conducted in manners that meets voters where they are—making voting as easy as possible, given the conditions, with as many alternative methods of casting a ballot as possible, including voting by mail, in-person early, in-person on election day, and, for overseas and military, through electronic ballot delivery. There remained a great unknown for November, and the State planned appropriately.

North Dakota's focus this fall involved mitigating the risk this pandemic could cause by disrupting voting methods in the election. Counties were encouraged to avoid relying on one single method of voting, and, instead, encouraged to provide options of voting by mail, return mail also with dropboxes, early in person voting, and election day voting. Vote centers were encouraged for all in-person voting.

Indeed, all counties offered the complete mix of voting options, and, in many cases, in-person voting vote centers were utilized.

From the June election, more than 150,000 voters requested a ballot-by-mail for that election AND the November election, so counties were required to purchase a significant number of ballots to handle that extra load and also be prepared should persons choose not to return their ballot by mail, and, instead vote in person. Counties purchased their own safety equipment, although the State provided single-use pens with a stylus, individually wrapped, so voters could use and keep their pen when voting.

Costs were impacted by the need for counties to reprint voter instructions to go with the ballot secrecy sleeves for these mail ballots, after a lawsuit against the state was presented to allow for a cure process related to signatures on ballots.

Another outcome of earlier litigation required that anyone having a Tribal ID and living on tribal territory without a verified physical address be allowed the capability to bring in a map provided by the tribal government to approximate their address and, thus, vote in relation to that address. This also impacted ballots by mail, and the Secretary of State's office began an initiative called Maps Without Gaps to create precinct maps and augment this effort.

Counties utilized electronic pollbooks for the first time, and to prepare for potential changes in locations because of the pandemic, the State utilized cellular Cradlepoint routers that could be moved to different locations and still allow for updates to the State's Election Management System, if necessary. Some equipment from the state's new contract with ES&S was also used for the first time in this election, and learnings from June led to significant contingency planning related to the ability to print reports and image new files locally if necessary. An additional high-speed scanner, and two additional ElectionWare computers, were purchased to be available on hot standby in anticipation of additional mail-ballots. The State purchased election night on-site support from ES&S.

All of the activities were supported by an extensive outreach campaign that encouraged voters to be mindful of options during the pandemic. The cumulative result of these efforts was the highest number of voters in a presidential election in North Dakota history, with 75 percent of the votes cast before election day (also a record). The preparations stretched county and state resources; many counties experienced untimely staff absences because of COVID-19, and the Secretary of State's office encountered significant overtime during most of 2020.

As in the June report, specifically related to the CARES grants, the State has continued to express concern to the EAC that

report deadline of 20 days after election day represents a fundamental misunderstanding of election administration. In fact, while the election was November 2, the state's canvass was not until November 13, and many counties conducted recounts for close races last week. The final recount was just certified today, 20 days after election day. Therefore, costs in many cases will be updated in subsequent reports and, in some instances, are estimates only. All costs are cumulative for 2020, but not all have yet been reported.

Further, we reiterate that while North Dakota was responsive to the deadline here, we have maintained that it would be much more difficult for all states to meet the 20 day deadline in November. The State continues to believe that 20 days after the election is certified is consistent with "20 days after the election." It had been our hope that our request for this 20-day deadline be extended for November be granted, particularly if there was consideration to giving any single state disposition to report later. If any state was given an extension, the State simply wishes that that all states were treated equitably.

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## **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?

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## **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	\$444,677.96	\$706,794.45
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff		
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		
Communications: Notifying public of changes in registration, ballot request options, precautions or voting procedures)	\$712,537.08	\$4,414.38
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks	\$170,078.53	
Additional Scanning Equipment	\$260,625.00	
On-site Election Day Support	\$398,200.00	
Some items are estimated or TBD when invoices are paid	\$0.00	\$0.00

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**

Brian

**Last Name**

Newby

**Title**

State Election Director

**Phone Number**

7013283721

**Email Address**

bnewby@nd.gov

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Newby', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Signature of: Brian Newby

## 5. Report Submitted to EAC

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### CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 23, 2020 17:59:24 Success: Email Sent to: bnewby@nd.gov