

EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:264 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.

New Hampshire

2. Grant Number:

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

NH20101CARES

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

New Hampshire Secretary Of State

Street Address

107 North Main St.

City

Concord

State

NH

Zip

03301

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.

Progress During Reporting Period

The New Hampshire Secretary of State's (NH SoS) Office is reporting the following expenditures for processing of additional absentee ballots for the Primary and General Elections that occurred on September 8, 2020 and November 3, 2020. The figures reported in this narrative are amounts incurred since the State Primary Election Report to the EAC on September 28, 2020 ("Progress Report #1"). The Table in Section 8 and figures under 'Cumulative Match' include cumulative expenses incurred for both the 2020 State Primary and General Election to date.

State Primary, in addition to amounts previously reported on 9-28-2020 - Standard Cost Rate \$123,748.98

General Election - Standard Cost Rate \$2,150,828.72

Other costs (see below) \$569,340.42

Total incurred since 9-28-2020 State Primary Report: \$2,843,918.12

Background

These expenditures were determined using the allocation methodology submitted by the SoS in its letter dated July 7, 2020, and approved by the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) as communicated by Executive Director Mona Harrington in an email dated August 5, 2020. Utilizing that methodology, the NH SoS developed statewide standard cost rates to allocate the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) emergency funds to participating New Hampshire cities, towns and unincorporated places "to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally, for the 2020 Federal election cycle" Section 1500.1 Independent Agencies Election Assistance Commission Election Security Grants of the CARES Act.

Applying that approved methodology, the NH SoS issued a competitive request for proposal and contracted the accounting firm Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker P.L.L.C. ("BerryDunn") to develop two separate standard cost rates to reimburse participating municipalities. The first rate was developed to reflect costs necessary to process each single absentee ballot issued pursuant to a request. The second rate was developed to reflect the costs necessary to process an absentee ballot cast. To develop these rates, BerryDunn conducted a time study of absentee ballot processing in five cities and towns that were randomly selected from population pools of similarly sized cities and towns. The time studies collected data for the time and costs required to process the absentee ballot requests and ballots cast.

With guidance from the NH SoS, BerryDunn calculated the following statewide standard cost rates:

- \$7.13 – to process an absentee ballot request and issue an absentee ballot
- \$4.39 – to process an absentee ballot cast

Under the direction of the NH SoS, BerryDunn used the approved methodology, gathered data regarding the numbers of

absentee ballots issued and absentee ballots cast for the State Primary Election. To determine the number of State Primary absentee ballots resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency, the numbers of absentee ballots issued and cast during the 2016 State Primary (baseline) were subtracted from the count of absentee ballots issued and cast during the 2020 State Primary. The difference between 2020 and 2016 State Primary absentee ballots for each participating municipality was multiplied by the standard cost rates to calculate total estimated costs to process the additional absentee ballots.

Primary Election

In advance of the State Primary, the cities, towns and unincorporated places submitted signed grant agreements including all of the certifications required to fulfill federal requirements. The cities, towns and unincorporated places submitted requests to the NH SoS on the Monday following the State Primary to report the total number of absentee ballots issued and cast for reimbursement purposes. Preliminary, pre-canvassing figures in the statewide ElectioNet system were used to validate the total number of absentee ballots issued for 2020 submitted by the cities, towns and unincorporated places on reimbursement request forms. The data reported to the NH SoS immediately after the State Primary on the "Official Return of Votes" was used to validate the total number of Absentee Ballots Cast in 2020 submitted by the cities, towns and unincorporated places on reimbursement request forms.

One challenge encountered through the review of reimbursement requests submitted was that the data was still being collected and entered by the cities, towns and unincorporated places in the weeks following the State Primary. The NH SoS worked with the cities, towns and unincorporated places to reconcile any differences between the State's records of absentee ballots issued and cast and the internal records of each city, town or unincorporated place. Due to updates to the State Election records, additional payments of \$1,609.88 were made to various cities, towns and unincorporated places after Progress Report #1 was submitted to the EAC.

Another challenge during the State Primary process was that many cities, towns and unincorporated places were interested in participating in the Grant, however, they did not submit their paperwork timely. The NH SoS issued a grant amendment dated October 5th, 2020 in an effort to allow the remaining 82 cities, towns and unincorporated places to participate in the grant opportunity. Under the grant amendment, the cities, towns and unincorporated places were to submit a reimbursement request following the General Election that also included data for the State Primary. As a result of this amendment, an additional \$122,139.10 of expenditures were incurred for the State Primary since Progress Report #1 was submitted.

General Election

For the 2020 General Election, the NH SoS office modified the reimbursement request process in order to create a more efficient process than the one used in the State Primary. The reimbursement request forms were pre-completed for the cities, towns and unincorporated places utilizing reports available to the NH SoS office. The 'Absentee Ballots Issued' were derived from the statewide ElectioNet system as of the Tuesday following the General Election. The 'Absentee Ballots Cast' were derived from "Official Return of Votes" as of the Friday following the General Election. These pre-completed forms were then individually emailed to the cities, towns and unincorporated places for their approval and were signed and returned. The total expenditures incurred by the cities, towns and unincorporated places for the General Election amounted to \$2,150,828.72. The NH SoS is working with the cities, towns and unincorporated places to reconcile any differences between the information currently available to the NH SoS on Absentee Ballots Issued and Cast to the internal records of each city, town or incorporated place. The NH SoS has pulled reports from State systems as of specific dates for initial reimbursement purposes.

Total Costs under the Standard Cost Rate Methodology incurred since Progress Report # 1

The NH SoS is reporting \$2,274,577.70 of total costs under the Standard Cost Rate Methodology since Progress Report # 1 under the 2020 HAVA CARES Act Grant. Of these costs, \$1,925,177.71 represents the federal share, while the remaining \$349,459.99 represents the match passed on to the cities, towns or unincorporated places. This amount constitutes the total payments to cities, towns or unincorporated places for the eligible costs to process the additional absentee ballots of participating municipalities for the 2020 State Primary and General Elections. Each municipality has certified that their share (match) has not been used as match for any other federal grant funds, is not other federal funds, and was funded by local or state general funds.

Other Expenses

Due to the Pandemic, the NH SoS sent out two mailings to every voter household in the State explaining how to vote during

the pandemic, incurring \$346,365.98 in direct expenses related to the mailings. The NH SoS incurred \$2,582.40 of expenses for ballot boxes that were purchased to enable cities, towns and unincorporated places to store absentee ballots until Election Day. The NH SoS has contracted with an accounting firm, BerryDunn to establish the Standard Cost Rate and support the NH SoS in accounting for and managing sub-granted CARES Act funds. To date, the State has paid \$98,105 to BerryDunn for grants management.

Cumulative Match

The NH SoS is reporting the following cumulative match through the end of the General Election:

Direct Expenditures - Recount hardware acquired due to COVID: \$23,875.00

Diverted Staff Costs due to COVID: \$86,200.04

In-Kind Donation - Anheuser Busch Gift - Sanitizer: \$12,212.00

Match - Standard Cost Rate: \$527,911.15

Total Cumulative Match: \$650,198.19

Below is the narrative for the two line items starting with "Other Costs" in the table in Section 8, 2020 HAVA CARES GRANTS:

Other Costs - EAC-Approved Standard Cost Rate -Town & City Reimbursements: Based on the time studies performed, costs included are associated with additional temporary staff or existing staff diverted to process the increased number of absentee ballots processed resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency. The standard cost rate also includes the postage incurred to mail the absentee ballot requests.

Other Costs - Contracted Grants Management: The NH SoS, following a competitive selection process, contracted with an accounting firm, Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker P.L.L.C. ("BerryDunn") to establish Standard Cost Rates and support the NH SoS in accounting for and managing sub-granted CARES Act funds.

Upcoming Activities

The NH SoS is actively working with the cities, towns and unincorporated places in New Hampshire, as needed, to enter updates in ElectioNet that may affect 'Absentee Ballots Issued' and to correct and re-submit the "Official Return of Votes" that may affect 'Absentee Ballots Cast.' These updates could result in changes to the payments due to the cities, towns and unincorporated places.

As of the current date, there are approximately \$183,518.25 of Federal funds expenditures and \$3,700.81 of State matching funds for which the NH SOS is working to complete accounting. The 2020 calendar year-end report to the EAC will contain a complete accounting of 2020 CARES Act expenditures and match.

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	\$2,582.40	\$23,875.00
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff		\$86,200.04
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)	\$346,365.98	
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks		\$12,212.00
Other Costs - EAC-Approved Standard Cost Rate - Town & City Reimbursements	\$2,638,922.37	\$527,911.15
Other Costs - Contracted Grants Management	\$98,105.00	

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

Anthony

Last Name

Stevens

Title

Senior Elections Specialist

Phone Number

603-271-8245

Email Address

Anthony.Stevens@sos.nh.gov

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Stevens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "A".

Signature of: Anthony Stevens

5. Report Submitted to EAC

CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 23, 2020 17:45:55 Success: Email Sent to: Anthony.Stevens@sos.nh.gov