

EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:178 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.

Puerto Rico

2. Grant Number:

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

PR20101CARES

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

Puerto Rico State Elections Commission

Street Address

550 Arterial B, St., Hato Rey

City

San Juan

State

PR

Zip

00919-5552

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.

PUERTO RICO STATE ELECTION COMMISSION
HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT (HAVA)
2020 HAVA CARES PROGRESS REPORT
Cumulative Report from 03/23/2020 to 10/30/2020

CEE has been awarded \$3,881,359 under the 2020 HAVA CARES Act, plus \$776,272 of the state match, recently approved by the Financial Oversight & Management Board for Puerto Rico (PROMESA). As per the established program and budget narrative submitted before, these funds were distributed to accomplish the following activities: prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus for the 2020 election cycle.

As opposed to recent years, CEE has faced new challenges regarding Puerto Rico's fiscal crisis, the polling center's relocation because of the current southern earthquakes, and the pandemic. Despite all the challenges we encountered, the primary issue we faced was the time and the delays in delivering electoral equipment and materials—the reason why CEE inevitably postponed the Local Primaries twice, though they are regularly celebrated in June.

Furthermore, due to a massive increase in Absentee Voting solicitations, and by judicial determination under order number 3:20-cv-01432-PAD, which extended the date of applications for Absent Voting for people and over 60 year old, the electoral process became much more difficult, requiring the celebration of two elections instead of one. As a reference, in 2016, the total absentee vote was 23,189, while for the 2020 Election it was 227,769, an increase of almost nine times more than in past elections. Considering the lockdown, one of the massive challenges faced was finding suppliers to provide us with the equipment and materials to carry out the activities for these two electoral processes, ensuring a safe environment for voters and electoral staff.

OTHER CHALLENGES

The Absentee Voting Projects Manager agrees that the significant challenges they faced to carry out the increment of the absentee voting request were as follows:

- Material shortages or late delivery
- Lack of more phone lines for each district
- Lack of equipment and technology such as computers, fax machines, scanners, and printers to be able to meet the volume of requests by email
- Internet band expansion (need for faster connection)
- Materials for printers (ink, etc.) for excess uncovered applications
- Systematic training processes, which would enable new staff to be trained efficiently, quickly, virtually and individually
- More aggressive disclosure of prevention protocols COVID_19 in mass media for voters
- Need for a more expansive place

- Need to establish two emails to address absentee and advance voting requests. The only email set from the source was used for both these tasks, delaying the debugging process to identify each submission.

In short, project managers presented the current need to amend the manual processes that mostly requires physically slow human resources to give way to an automated system that streamlines the voting process from their application to complete the count of these votes. It should be noted that the electoral knowledge to carry out these tasks requires a degree of specialty that could be difficult for some voters and polling officials. To this effect, project managers presented an interest in better paying for these tasks.

Hits

Human Resources were key to meeting all JAVA requests, complying with regulations, and deadlines stipulated by law. HAVA CARES funds were vital to acquire those temporary JAVA staffing, materials, prevention equipment, and educational campaigns, achieving greater control of COVID19 contagion prevention and ensuring the right to vote for all the electors.

To guarantee a safe place, CARES funds helped us to accomplish the continuous hygiene and disinfection of shared areas, the acquisition of thermometers for the temperature recording of all voters and polling officials, purchases for the acquisition of masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, face shields, and other prevention materials for the electorate and polling officials.

Despite all the factors against (time and restrictions on acquiring equipment), CARES funds assisted the CEE in complying with the electoral process in a safe, preventive manner, guaranteeing the democratic right to each electoral.

STATE MATCH

Regardless that the Financial Oversight & Management Board for Puerto Rico approved state funds on October 15, 2020, CEE ensures the state participation, covering under its electoral fund, tools, and materials to prevent COVID_19. Expenditures as additional ballots and envelopes for absentee voting, hand sanitizer, disposable mask, coverall, postal services as returned mail cost, and ink for the increased absentee voting solicitation. As a result of the high volume of work and the short time to carry out the Primaries and the General Election, long hours of work are reflected from the administrative staff and staff assigned to such election events.

As with the recent state allocation, CEE projects part of the overtime cost for the temporary electoral staff to fulfill the state match participation.

Undoubtedly, HAVA CARES funds were essential to complete an electoral cycle with the challenges of the current fiscal year, ensuring the safe electoral process in every way possible (absentee voting, home voting, hospital vote, advance vote).

However, we recognize that limitations such as the grant's usefulness period about the COVID_19 conditions have limited us to respond more effectively. Indeed, under normal circumstances, we would have acquired tools and equipment for a more significant impact on operations that improve electoral processes' administration. We understand that the extension of the expense period and the grant's permissibility could be beneficial to acquire tools that, in scenarios like this, help us respond more efficiently.

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	\$327,655.00	\$288,977.48
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff	\$418,253.36	
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	\$149,400.00	
Communications: Notifying public of changes in registration, ballot request options, precautions or voting procedures)	\$220,000.00	
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks	\$424,250.06	\$88,444.00
Additional Electoral Expenses (Ink increase for the printing of applications for Absentee Vote and Absentee Voting envelopes)		\$70,275.00

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

Francisco J.

Last Name

Rosado Colomer

Title

Chairman

Phone Number

787-766-8682

Email Address

frosado@cee.pr.gov

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'FROSADO'.

Signature of: Francisco J. Rosado Colomer

5. Report Submitted to EAC

CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 23, 2020 16:41:37 Success: Email Sent to: frosado@cee.pr.gov