

EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:205 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.

Vermont

2. Grant Number:

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

VT20101CARES

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

Vermont Secretary Of State

Street Address

128 State Street

City

Montpelier

State

VT

Zip

05633

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.

The Vermont Secretary of State's Office (SOS) is reporting \$1,572,390.19 in paid and billed expenses from the 2020 CARES Act funding to date. Significant expenses incurred for the November 2020 General Election, including ballot printing costs, are not yet reflected in this reporting as those invoices have not been either submitted or processed to date.

In response to the COVID pandemic, and in the interest of reducing the number of voters voting in person at polling places across Vermont, the Vermont SOS mailed a postcard to all active voters, and a separate postcard to all inactive voters, in advance of the Primary – urging these voters to request a ballot be mailed to them and to vote early from home. The cost for the printing and mailing service for these postcards being reported by the Vermont SOS is \$113,409.04.

The Vermont SOS also chose to print ballots in a number equal to 80% of the voters on the voter checklist, in light of the need to have ballots available for a significant increase in early voting, while also ensuring there were sufficient ballots for in-person voting at the polls. We typically only print ballots for 50%-60% of the voter checklist for the August Primary. In this regard, the Vermont SOS is reporting \$40,515.00 in additional ballot printing costs for the August Primary due to the pandemic.

For the ballots mailed to voters, again to encourage as many voters to vote safely from their homes during the early voting period as possible, the Vermont SOS agreed to pay for all postage costs associated with the mailing of ballots by clerks and also the return of those ballots from the voters to the clerks. The Vermont SOS also paid for the postage to send the postcards. In this regard, the Vermont SOS is reporting \$680,326.45 in postage costs for the mailing of the August Primary postcards and ballots.

For the General Election, the Vermont SOS chose to mail a ballot to all active registered voters. The SOS paid for all costs of the mailing – including printing all envelopes and ballots, and postage for ballots to be sent to voters and returned to the clerks. In this regard, the Vermont SOS is reporting a preliminary amount of \$396,734.30 for the printing and application of postage to envelopes for the General Election and for the shipping of extra ballots from the mail house back to the individual town and city clerks. The Vermont SOS anticipates significant additional costs for extra ballot printing for the General Election which have not yet been applied to this grant.

For the August Primary, due to time constraints, Vermont towns and cities were not able to all install secure ballot drop boxes. As an alternative, to give voters a quick option for returning their early/absentee ballots in person both before the election and on Election Day (enabling them to greatly reduce their exposure in the process of returning their ballot) the Vermont SOS agreed to reimburse towns for the purchase of convenient indoor ballot boxes. These ballot boxes were also critical in assisting the clerks to securely handle the significant increase in volume of ballots returned early. The Vermont SOS is reporting \$59,377.70 in expenses for the purchase of these ballot boxes.

For the Primary and General Election, the Vermont SOS agreed to pay the purchase price for vote tabulators for any of the towns that typically count their ballots by hand, in an effort to encourage these towns to avoid the unnecessary exposure to COVID-19 that would result from extended hand counts of ballots. In this regard the Vermont SOS is reporting \$32,250 in

costs for the purchase of five (5) vote tabulators. The Vermont SOS anticipates additional expenses for approximately five additional tabulators purchased for the General Election.

In an effort to encourage as many voters as possible to return their ballots early and thereby avoid crowded polling places for the General Election, the Vermont SOS agreed to reimburse towns for up to \$1,000 each in expenses for the installation or improvement of a secure ballot drop box for the General Election. The Vermont SOS is reporting \$45,391.74 in expenses to date on the installation or modification of ballot drop boxes by the individual towns and cities.

To ensure that polling places could be operated as safely as possible during the pandemic, the Vermont SOS purchased personal protective equipment for all polling places for the November General Election. The kits included gloves, masks, wipes, sanitizer and other PPE. Additional kits were also provided by the State Emergency Operations Center, for which the Vermont SOS was only charged for shipping to the towns. The Vermont SOS is reporting \$71,752.25 in expenses for the purchase and shipment of PPE to all polling places in Vermont for the Primary and General elections.

In an effort to assist the clerks in our larger towns and cities with the processing of an unprecedented number of early ballots returned by mail, and to limit the exposure required by election officials in opening those ballot envelopes, the Vermont SOS purchased letter openers for the 25 largest towns and cities in Vermont for the General Election. The Vermont SOS is reporting \$70,015.00 in expenses for the purchase of these letter openers.

Finally, in an effort to encourage as many towns and cities as possible to use their tabulators for the August Primary (which they are not required to do by law, unlike the General Election where they are required to use their tabulators), in order to reduce the exposure of election officials being required to count ballots by hand, the Vermont SOS agreed to pay the costs for the programming of the memory cards for the tabulators for the August Primary. The Vermont SOS is reporting \$48,694.75 in expenses for the cost of this memory card programming for the August Primary.

Finally, \$13,923.81 is reported for salary and benefits attributable to COVID-19 response among Elections Division staff.

The SOS would like to again emphasize that significant expenses from the 2020 CARES Act funding for the 2020 General Election are still outstanding. These include the printing of ballots in a number greater than we typically print them in order to account for mailing a ballot to all voters, while also still ensuring sufficient ballots were available at the polls. These costs and any other allowable costs incurred for administration of the General Election will be reported at the next reporting period when they have been invoiced and paid.

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	\$1,486,714.13	
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff	\$13,923.81	
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)		
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks	\$71,752.25	

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

Stacey

Last Name

Drinkwine

Title

Administrative Services Director

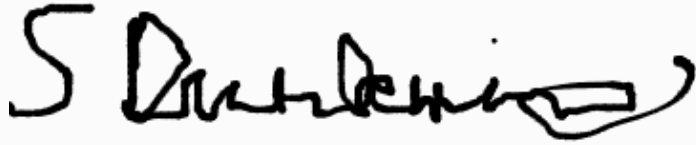
Phone Number

8028282477

Email Address

stacey.drinkwine@vermont.gov

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Drinkwine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a stylized "Drinkwine".

Signature of: Stacey Drinkwine

5. Report Submitted to EAC

CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 24, 2020 12:15:08 Success: Email Sent to: stacey.drinkwine@vermont.gov