

EAC CARES Progress Narrative Report

Response ID:257 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.

Washington

2. Grant Number:

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

WA20101CARES

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

Washington

Street Address

520 Union Ave Se

City

Olympia

State

WA

Zip

98501

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.

State match:

The legislature appropriated matching funds for the CARES grant in the amount of \$1,688,755.

How did you make funds available?

Each county in the state was awarded \$125,000 and \$1.098 per registered voter.

What challenges and major issues have you faced?

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an extremely difficult working environment in Washington State Elections. Providing essential election services to the public while maintaining the health, safety and welfare of our employees and the very public we serve remains a constant struggle. Though we have been vigilant in our efforts to minimize the effects of coronavirus and continue to provide exceptional elections services in this unprecedented Presidential Election year, we have not gone untouched. While our statewide election services have managed to prevent outbreak impacts to our operations; like others, we have had few positive test results and possible exposures.

Social distancing has been a major issue for us. Offices that were already having difficulty under normal conditions accommodating staff and observers while processing ballots, have been faced with six foot distance requirements and the need for many to work remotely. Voters often still come in person to register to vote, to receive new ballots, to return ballots, or to use ADA accessible services. Shared office supplies and equipment have all become health hazards. With an increase of ballots returned by ballot box from 42% in the March Presidential Primary, to 72% in the General Election; lines whether in person, or in a vehicle, posed an additional issue to be mitigated.

Many of our county sites are housed in small spaces, social distancing and air flow are serious concerns. Something as simple as staff breaks, or as difficult as accommodating observers have become social distancing problems needing to be solved. Historically, ballots in many areas of the state have been processed manually. Examples of this are hand inserting ballots and materials in envelopes, placing labels on envelopes, hand weighing mail pieces, and hand opening returned ballots. This can mean many people touching the same item multiple times and working side-by-side in an assembly line fashion. While automation has been a huge assist in service, often requiring less people to do the same job, and lending to a lot less handling of potentially contaminated materials; it has also required larger spaces to accommodate big machines, and has often meant moving staff to other areas.

Pandemic constraints and larger demand have made acquiring items from office and PPE supplies, to election automation machines, difficult to receive in a timely manner. Between lock downs, less staff working in most industries, high demand, small communities, and an extremely tight timeline; trying to complete space improvements rapidly to accommodate for social distancing in all areas of operation has been trying at best, maddening and possibly budget breaking for some of our small counties at worse.

Many Elections Departments had smaller staffs due to budget cuts because of the economic impacts of COVID-19. However, across the state we found ourselves asking existing staff to manage new projects responding to health threats, train to become "health checkers", improve spaces to manage distancing, imagine possible additional impacts in an unknown environment, find additional elections staff to work in hazardous conditions, and manage work in a high tech environment reliant on IT but be ready to work from paper. We asked them to accomplish all of this in less than six months, three of them during lock down. Add a historically unprecedented presidential election, and an increase in voter turnout of about 5% percent and this has put immense pressure on elections staff throughout Washington. Our operations in 2020 have been

strained in ways we never could have imagined, and our staff have become miracle workers.

How did this award allow the State to prepare for, prevent or respond to COVID19?

Cumulative Spend thru Nov 3rd Current Remaining

Federal Award \$8,343,778 \$4,252,811.05

State match \$1,688,755 \$847965.53

Total \$10,032,533 \$5,100,776.58 \$4,931,756.42

The CARES act funding assisted Washington State Elections in preparing for COVID-19 by providing funding for: the purchase of much needed PPE, sanitizing supplies and cleaning services; plastic or glass barriers were added for customer windows, work stations, and makeshift break areas; and easy to sanitize and wipe tables, chairs, and counter tops were added. CARES funds assisted in communications with printed signs, mailers and ballot inserts, and broadcasting ads explaining needed changes to current systems because of COVID-19. Our County's abundant preparations and careful planning with the CARES Grant funding effectively prepared our staff and the public while maintaining efficiency in our election processes.

We have been able to reduce the risk of many touching the same items by adding Ballot tabulators, envelope folders, scanners and other automation options. Windows and cameras have been added to allow observers to observe legally required elections operations, without sharing space with elections workers. Cameras and large screens now provide streaming opportunities so observers can watch from lobbies or even their own homes, reducing exposure to coronavirus. Mobile kiosks and voting stations have allowed voters and those in need of ADA accommodations to register or receive new ballots outside the day-to-day office operations. Drive-thru and curbside operations were added to assist with registrations, voter services, and ballot drop off allowing people to stay in their vehicles.

The CARES act funding assisted Washington State Elections in the prevention of COVID-19 by affording us the opportunity to invest in various types of larger spaces for elections operations to help assist with social distancing space needs. For instance the addition of walk up bank style windows, converting unused office space and storage rooms, removing doors between rooms, or even converting an old jail cell into larger operating spaces. Larger venues were temporarily rented for voter centers or election operations to occur. Our largest county had to increase their voter centers by 2/3rd to allow for proper social distancing this meant a 22% increase in staffing needs to cover the additional locations. Some of our county's used CARES Grant funds to create safe working environments for employees by replacing their workstations and cubical walls with taller barriers separating them from their coworkers. Other improvements included installing lockers for temporary staff and visitors to eliminate the contact-heavy regular check-in process that involves handing over belongings; making modifications to the HVAC system and flushing air in the building twice daily; and installing no-contact temperature screening units at entrances. Possible lines as people gather were seriously considered in prevention. Drive through options were offered, traffic plans were drafted, and a subscription to an online waitlist application was made. Voting Centers and ballot drop off sites were made available on additional days leading up to the election in hopes of alleviating lengthy lines.

The CARES act funding assisted Washington State Elections in responding to COVID-19 by funding hazard pay; paying overtime; hiring additional temporary workers; running the elections processing in shifts; and assisting with transportation. In some counties shifts were set up in order to reduce the risk of exposure to all employees at once, which sometimes meant more employees were needed. One county is comprised entirely of islands and has relied on volunteers to use ferry transportation between islands to collect ballots from ballot boxes and return them to elections when they come to work. Because of the COVID-19 constraints and telecommuting, they could not find enough people to pick up ballots. Additional people needed to be hired and ferry passes purchased. Another county doesn't have public parking near their facilities and usually shuttles their temporary workers. Because of coronavirus shuttling many people in one vehicle was not possible, parking passes were purchased. Counties added a second car for the ballot pick up teams to assure only one worker to a car, which meant car rentals were needed.

In Closing

The 2020 Election Cycle was, by all accounts, an extraordinarily daunting one for all involved. The CARES Grant funding award made answering this great challenge successful. It is hard to imagine how much harder it would have been without the CARES funding. Washington State greatly appreciates and recognizes the importance of the CARES Grant funding that assisted us in our preparations for the 2020 Federal Elections. Through this grant funding, we were afforded the means to absorb the burden of the costly provisions that had to be made to mitigate against the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. While acknowledging the great assistance this funding has provided; the short timeline and constraints related to vendor slowdowns has meant that some projects attempted couldn't be completed, or had to be eliminated completely. This has left a burden on a few of our Counties and meant we were unable to make full use of the funds awarded to us. CARES funds₃

awarded by other federal departments have been to assist in responding to the pandemic as a whole. The elections award has been constrained by only allowing response to the pandemic as it relates to a Federal election. While the CARES funding has been enormously beneficial, limiting the funding to a specific event ignores the continued need of safe elections facilities, staff and community members. It has become apparent the pandemic will not be ending soon and elections will continue to operate both local and Federal elections continuously regardless. The ability to continue to use the funding awarded to us until expended would assist us greatly in keeping everyone safe.

We do want to again state our huge appreciation for the help the CARES Grant has afforded us.

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	\$2,873,309.97	\$574,661.86
Staffing: Additional poll workers, election office staff diverted to pandemic response, temporary staff	\$173,109.95	\$31,320.54
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	\$190,070.88	\$38,014.17
Communications: Notifying public of changes in registration, ballot request options, precautions or voting procedures)	\$165,022.56	\$33,004.50
Supplies: Additional laptops, mobile IT equipment, cleaning supplies, masks	\$851,297.69	\$170,964.46

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

Lori

Last Name

Augino

Title

Director of Elections

Phone Number

360-725-5771

Email Address

lori.augino@sos.wa.gov

2. Signature of Certifying Official:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Augino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "L".

Signature of: Lori Augino

5. Report Submitted to EAC

CARES Funding Progress Narrative Submission

Nov 23, 2020 19:35:51 Success: Email Sent to: lori.augino@sos.wa.gov