

September 15, 2020

City of Minneapolis
Minneapolis City Clerk
350 S 5th St., # 304
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Minneapolis City Clerk:

I am pleased to inform you that based on and in reliance upon the information and materials provided by the City of Minneapolis, and the special circumstances the City of Minneapolis faces administering elections in 2020, the Center for Tech and Civic Life (“CTCL”), a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code (“IRC”) section 501(c)(3), has decided to award a grant to support the work of the City of Minneapolis (“Grantee”).

The following is a description of the grant:

AMOUNT OF GRANT: \$ 2,297,342.00

PURPOSE: The grant funds must be used exclusively for the public purpose of planning and operationalizing safe and secure election administration in the City of Minneapolis in 2020 (“Purpose”).

Before CTCL transmits these funds to Grantee, CTCL requires that Grantee review and sign this agreement (“Grant Agreement”) and agree to use the grant funds in compliance with the Grant Agreement and with United States tax laws and the laws and regulations of your state and jurisdiction (“Applicable Laws”). Specifically, by signing this letter Grantee certifies and agrees to the following:

1. Grantee is a local government unit or political subdivision within the meaning of IRC section 170(c)(1).
2. This grant shall be used *only* for the Purpose described above, and for no other purposes.
3. Due to special circumstances Grantee faces administering elections in 2020, Grantee has produced a plan for safe and secure election administration in 2020, including an assessment of election administration needs and budget estimates for such assessment (“Safe Voting Plan”). The Safe Voting Plan is attached to this agreement. Grantee shall expend the total amount of grant funds listed in the Safe Voting Plan as detailed in the Safe Voting Plan, but may reallocate funds between budget items listed in the Safe Voting Plan with notice by electronic mail to CTCL. Such reallocation does not require the permission of CTCL.
4. Grantee shall not use any part of this grant to make a grant to another organization, except in the case where the organization is a local government unit or political subdivision within the meaning of IRC section 170(c)(1) or a nonprofit organization tax-exempt under IRC section 501(c)(3), and the subgrant is intended to accomplish the Purpose of this grant. Grantee shall take reasonable steps to ensure that any such subgrant is used in a manner consistent with the terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement, including requiring that subgrantee agrees in writing to comply with the terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement.
5. The grant project period of June 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020 represents the dates between which covered costs may be applied to the grant. The Grantee shall expend the amount of this grant for the Purpose by December 31, 2020.
6. Grantee is authorized to receive this grant from CTCL and certifies that (a) the receipt of these grant funds does not violate any Applicable Laws, and (b) Grantee has taken all required, reasonable and necessary steps to receive, accept and expend the grant in accordance with the Purpose and Applicable Law.
7. The Grantee shall produce a brief report explaining and documenting how grant funds have been expended in support of the activities described in paragraph 3. This report shall be sent to CTCL no later than January 31, 2021 in a format approved by CTCL and shall include with the report a signed certification by Grantee that it has complied with all terms and conditions of this Grant Agreement.
8. This grant may not supplant previously appropriated funds. The Grantee shall not reduce the budget of the Minneapolis City Clerk (“the Election Department”) or fail to appropriate or provide previously budgeted funds to the Election Department for the term of this grant. Any amount supplanted, reduced or not provided in contravention of this paragraph shall be repaid to CTCL up to the total amount of this grant.



9. CTCL may discontinue, modify, withhold part of, or ask for the return all or part of the grant funds if it determines, in its sole judgment, that (a) any of the above terms and conditions of this grant have not been met, or (b) CTCL is required to do so to comply with applicable laws or regulations.
10. The grant project period of June 15, 2020 through December 31, 2020 represents the dates between which covered costs for the Purpose may be applied to the grant.

Your acceptance of and agreement to these terms and conditions and this Grant Agreement is indicated by your signature below on behalf of Grantee. Please have an authorized representative of Grantee sign below, and return a scanned copy of this letter to us by email at grants@techandcivicliflife.org.

On behalf of CTCL, I extend my best wishes in your work.

Sincerely,



Tiana Epps Johnson
Executive Director
Center for Tech and Civic Life

GRANTEE

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____





CENTER FOR TECH & CIVIC LIFE
HELLO@TECHANDCIVICLIFE.ORG

To: Center for Technology and Civic Life
From: Grace Wachlarowicz, Director of Elections & Voter Services (EVS)
Date: September 4, 2020
Re: Minneapolis Safe Voting Plan

Overview

Please note that Minnesota election laws and procedures do not accurately reflect the categories identified in the grant template provided. The grant application submitted will follow the template as close as possible with notations as appropriate.

Under COVID-19 pandemic conditions, Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services (EVS) faced significant non-budgeted expenses and dramatic operational changes in order to serve voters in the MN State Primary held August 11, 2020. EVS furthermore anticipates the Presidential General Election on November 3, 2020 to be under the same conditions as the state primary.

Election planning always requires contingency plans for multiple scenarios including worst case scenario. As such, EVS was able to prepare multiple, respective plans in mid-March for the state primary (8/11/20) and general (11/3/20) elections – assuming administering both elections under COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

The utmost priority is a safe and secure election. To be able to keep voters and election staff safe while maintaining the integrity of the election, EVS researched and developed COVID-19 Safety Protocols for facility and polling location operations. This included identifying and purchasing PPEs and locating facilities large enough to maintain safe distances.

MN Election Administration

Overview, Absentee Voting, Election Day Registration, and Election Day Voting

Overview

Minnesota has varying models for conducting elections throughout the state in order to reflect the communities served. Local jurisdictions (like Minneapolis) primarily conduct all aspects of Election Day voting for local, state, and federal elections. Functions include, but are not limited to recruiting, training, assigning, and compensating election judges/poll worker, identifying polling locations, facilitating election equipment testing, preparing all supplies and materials for polling places, and deploying and retrieving thereof to and from the polls. Absentee voting functions are shared at varying levels with the respective county based on needs and capacity of the community.

Minneapolis, located in Hennepin County, administers all aspects of the election except for county specific duties such as voter registration, ballot design and production, Election Day rosters (via e-poll books), and results reporting.

Absentee Voting

Minnesota has absentee voting (or AB – short for absentee ballots) both in-person and by mail 46 days prior to every election.

- All AB mail ballots include a prepaid stamped return envelope.
- AB mail ballots may be hand delivered by the voter instead of returning via the mail.
- An individual may return up to 3 AB mail ballots with documentation. The individual presents ID, the individual and voter's information is hand recorded.
- In-person AB voting occurs at the Minneapolis Early Vote Center for all 46 days.
- During general elections, Minneapolis opens additional Early Voter Centers throughout the City for the final 7 days of voting.
- Direct Balloting: Voters who choose to vote absentee in-person within 7 days of the election may insert their ballot directly into a tabulator instead of the series of envelopes.

Processing the completed ABs is a two-step process:

- Reviewing the outer envelope for accuracy and completeness known as accepting and rejecting may commence as soon as AB ballots are returned.
- ABs that are rejected are 'voided' and a new ballot is issued to the voter with an explanation of the rejection or error so the voter can correctly cast another ballot.
- Seven days prior to the election, AB ballots are extracted from the envelopes and tabulated (totals are not public).

Election Day Registration

MN has same day registration for voters who vote either by absentee or in the polls.

- At least 21 days ahead of an election, Minnesota residents may choose to pre-register either online or by paper application. If this deadline is missed, voters may register in person on Election Day or in person when voting early (absentee).
- In both scenarios, a registration application must be completed with various methods of documentations for proof of eligibility and residency.
- This requires additional time for manual review and entry.

Election Day Voting

Based on lessons learned from election colleagues (i.e. Wisconsin), EVS has planned and prepared new election day procedures for 2020 – executed in the Aug. 11 State Primary and planned for the General Election on Nov. 3:

Polling locations:

- Identified current polling locations that housed at-risk populations (residential facilities) or were too small to maintain safe distances. 134 precincts in 125 locations were consolidated to 96 locations city-wide.
- Collaborated with Minneapolis School District #01 and Minneapolis Park Board for the sole use of school buildings and park and recreation centers as polling locations. The use of these larger building provides better opportunities for distancing and shelter in inclement weather.
- Combined several precincts (the legal ability to check in voters from 2 precincts by the same election judges) to maximize election judge coverage.

Election Judges:

- Quickly shifted all previously conducted in-person trainings to an online training module and portal with limited hands-on training for new election judges.
- Over-hired and staffed precincts to compensate last minute illnesses or no shows.

- Provided extended pay to election judges in order to set up the polling place the day prior to relieve stress on the morning of the election (i.e. extra tables, signs, marking 6 feet on the floors, voting booths spaced apart, etc.)
- Provided PPEs and extra staffing for regular sanitizing of touch points throughout election day.

2020 Changes in Absentee Voting Administration: Legislation and Legal

Minnesota Legislation for the elections held in 2020:

- Extended the AB processing time for jurisdictions to prepare and tabulate AB ballots from 7 to 14 days.

Consent Decrees:

- Extended the acceptance of AB ballots that are received in the mail and post-marked on or before Election Day. Previous election law required all AB ballots mailed back to be received by election officials 8 p.m. on Election Day. The consent decree extended this deadline to:
 - State primary was extended to 3 days after the election
 - General election is extended to 7 days after the election
- Eliminated the witness requirement for all registered voters voting AB. Voters who are not yet registered, or need to change their registration, still require a witness signature.
- An individual may return unlimited number of AB mail on behalf of voters (documentation still required).

Challenges of Absentee Voting in 2020 with Dramatic Increase of AB Mail Balloting

The AB process is labor intensive requiring increased staffing:

- Processing applications is manually entered.
- Labeling, stuffing materials, and inserting the correct ballot (based on ward/precinct of voter) is performed manually.
- Manually extract the mail return envelope from the AB envelope (secures private voter data).
- Accepting and rejecting completed AB ballots must be performed by teams of 2 staff.
- AB preparation and tabulation must be performed by teams of 2 staff.

AB functions performed safely under COVID-19 environment:

- Face coverings, regular sanitizing, and socially distanced workspace requires large spaces for AB mail workers and in-person AB voting both workers and voters.

Last minute consent decrees

- State Primary: Notice received 4 days before the first mailing of mail ballots. Required reprinting all instructions and inserts, manually removing invalid materials and replacing with the new-first mailing 24,000 ballots.
- General Election: Notice and instructions received August 28, 2020. First mailing is September 18 (by law); to date uncertain if vendor will be able to pre-stuff instruction or if it must be manually stuffed (for planning purposes preparing for the worst-case scenario of manually stuffing).

The state primary was historic in 2 ways as Minneapolis had record breaking voter turnout at over 130,000 ballots cast (most in past 50 years for a primary) at 49% registered voter turnout and saw a dramatic increase in AB Mail (over 100,000 ballots mailed out).

For the general election, the number of total registered voters in Minneapolis is expected to be approximately 260,000.

Statistical Comparison of Previous years

Election	Total Votes/%	Polls/%	AB Total/%	AB Mail**/%	AB In-person+/%
2016 Primary	35,227/15.44%	30,781/87.37%	4,654/13.21%	2,059/44.24%	2,577/55.37%
2016 General	219,832/78.91%	159,294/72.46%	60,538/27.54%	22,237/36.7%	38,301/63.3%
2018 Primary	101,266/41%	86,258/85%	15,008/15%	6,753/45%	8,255/55%
2018 General	207,114/76%	154,801/75%	52,313/25%	23,507/45%	28,806/55%
2020 Primary	130,889/49%	45,670/35%	85,219/65%	79,861/94%	5,358/6%

** Include health care facilities and agent/voter drop offs

++Includes ballots from Hennepin County

Presidential general election projected voter turnout

The state primary breakdown between voting methods was 65% AB and 35% on Election Day. For planning purposes, the general election will most likely be comparable, with an added 'buffer' of 5% as a backup or 70% and 40% respectively

- Register Voters: 260,000
- Total Voter Turnout: 85% or 225,000
- AB Voting: 70% or 182,000
- Election Day Voting 40% or 104,000

NOTE: As of August 31, 2020, EVS has received 112,000 mail absentee applications.

A preliminary budget estimate on top of what is already available to the City is as follows:

Category		
1	Absentee Ballot Assembly and Processing Equipment	\$ 2,082,312
2	Early Voting Sites and Ballot Drop-off Options	\$ 48,900
3	In-person Voting at Polling Places on Election Day	\$ 3,295
4	Secure drop boxes and related needs	\$ 82,525
5	Voter Outreach and Education (VOE)	\$ 50,000
6	PPE	\$ 30,310
	Total	\$ 2,297,342

Needs Assessment & Costs

The following sections outline initial details of the operation and costs associated with each of the aforementioned categories.

To mitigate the challenges for AB administration and adhere to additional requirements to ensure a safe and secure election for election workers and voters, EVS has expended funds for both the primary and general election that are above the approved 2020 budgets. Projected costs are for incurred and projected costs.

Absentee Ballot Assembly and Processing Equipment

As indicated above, the grant template is modified to reflect the business needs for EVS.

EVS had a strategic advantage in being able to plan and prepare for the August state primary and November general election beginning in mid-March. As described above, the absentee ballot process is very labor intensive. Minneapolis immediately researched options for automating the parts of mail ballot processing. Unfortunately, much of the equipment and software that make mail voting more efficient is not compatible with the Minnesota Statewide Voter Registration database and/or with Minnesota election law.

Automation is critical to efficiently and accurately managing ballot envelopes and ballots in the weeks leading up to Election Day and in the canvassing process afterwards. However, based on the trends, projections, and challenges outlined above the following is needed:

- **High-speed Printer:** N/A
- **Automated Registration and/or Ballot Assembly Equipment/Software:** N/A
- **Extractors:** N/A Due to the city's purchasing policies and procedures leasing or purchasing is not an option
- **Personnel:** Please note that EVS cross-trains staff to be able to shift to specific workload needs at any given time. The numbers below reflect total staffing for all programs of election administration such as absentee voting in-person and mail; logistics and operations; election judges, administration; and voter outreach and education
 - State Primary: Original staff hired increased by 13 additional staff for a total of \$16,839. Due to limited capacity – both staff and space – EVS incurred \$64.5K in overtime charges.
 - General Election: Projected staff increased by 103 additional staff to a total of \$1.142M.
- **Outreach Materials:** Please see Voter Outreach and Education Category
- **Letter Openers:** Four letter openers, 2 high speed. Restricted to pre-approved vendor and leasing options of 24 and 36 months, calculations are based on monthly lease plus 3-month penalty for early termination. Monthly lease for 1 high speed letter opener at 7 months (state and general); 1 high speed and 2 standard at 3 months (general only).
- **Facility Expansion:** Due to increased staffing and social distancing, all mail operations relocated to the Minneapolis Convention Center. Costs reflect overhead (i.e. utilities) and

estimated costs including and not limited to security, custodial, and secure internet connectivity for 3 months.

- **Van rental:** Daily transport (i.e. materials, documents, mail, etc.) for 3 months.
- **AB Mail Materials and Supplies:** AB envelopes; postage (including prepaid return envelopes for all AB mail voters); inserts/instructions; misc. supplies; and ancillary equipment for computer stations (city inventory does not have) Dymo printers and barcode scanners.

TOTAL	Primary		General
\$ 2,082,312.00	\$ 266,109		\$ 1,816,203
<u>Personnel</u>			
AB mail staff above original 2020 budget (Sept-Nov)			\$ 741,380
Additional Staff (96)			\$ 400,302
Overtime expenses due to high demand and lack a space to expand staffing	\$ 64,500		
Additional Primary staff	\$ 16,839		
• Letter Openers - Minimum lease: 24 or 36 months including 3-month penalty for early termination			\$ 12,411
• Additional facility space including utilities, IT & security			\$ 300,000
• Vehicle rental			\$ 1,200
<u>Materials & Supplies</u>			
Envelopes	\$ 28,070		\$ 77,000
Postage	\$ 124,400		\$ 248,300
Inserts	\$ 25,700		\$ 14,400
Misc. supplies including printing	\$ 6,600		\$ 14,500
Dymo Printers			\$ 4,110
Barcode Scanners			\$ 2,600

Early Voting Sites and Ballot Drop-off Options

Minneapolis plans to have one full-time, 46-day early voting location and two additional locations for the Direct Balloting period (7-days prior to Election Day). Voters who have a completed mail ballot may also hand deliver it to these locations. Voters who are unable to enter the building may vote using curbside voting - a MN law in which the ballot and materials will be brought to the vehicle and vote from there.

To maintain a safe voting environment for election workers and voters, it will cost **\$48.9K** to cover the items in the table below.

Total		\$ 48,900
Additional Primary Staff		\$ 31,400
<u>EVCs</u>		
Signage		\$ 5,000
Plexiglass barriers-past and future costs		\$ 4,500
Space heaters		\$ 500
Printing		\$ 2,000
Tents for curbside		\$ 500
Stanchions		\$ 5,000

Secure Dropboxes

Minnesota law requires that all mail absentee ballot drop-off locations (for mail ballots dropped off in person) must have staff present in order to review the ballot envelope and document or log information of individuals delivering ballots on behalf of the voter. This is different from other states where unattended dropboxes are legal.

For the primary, we provided a 'drive by' mail drop off option in our facility's parking lot for 3 days prior to the election and on Election Day until 3 pm (by law). It was extremely popular; accepting 5,291 ballots. As such, for the general, EVS is planning to expand this service for the 7 days prior to and including Election Day in up to 5 locations across the city. This will help ensure that voters can return their mail ballot if it may be too late to send via USPS.

In addition to staffing, materials, and ballot boxes, each site would require a van to house the required materials and transport to and from the site parking lot and secure overnight parking and protection from inclement weather.

It will cost **\$82.5K** to cover the items in the table below.

Total		\$ 82,525
Ballot boxes		\$ 5,000
Transfer containers		\$ 1,000
Tents		\$ 2,000
Space heaters		\$ 2,000
Signage		\$ 2,000
Printing		\$ 2,000
Supplies misc.		\$ 3,000
Staff		\$ 62,000
Vehicle		\$ 3,225
Pallet jack		\$ 300

In-person Voting at Polling Places on Election Day

Minneapolis is committed to secure, safe, and fully staffed polling places on election day. Through collaboration with the Minneapolis School District #01 and Minneapolis Park Board, EVS was able to secure schools and park recreation centers – which are closed to all other activities – to ensure social distancing and minimize potential large groups. Minneapolis has 134 precincts which were previously housed in 125 locations. Leveraging the larger buildings made available to us, and the ability to legally combine 2 precincts for voter check-ins, we reduced the total locations to 96.

Minneapolis is fortunate to have a strong dedicated group of poll workers. For the state primary, we achieved our target coverage and we are trending the same for the general election. Poll worker coverage for both elections did not change; pre-pandemic duties were diverted to sanitizing, wayfinding, and line management.

It will cost **\$3.3K** to cover the items in the table below.

Total		\$ 3,295.00
Electrical cords		\$ 825.00
Social distancing tape for floors		\$ 350.00
Door stops		\$ 320.00
Printing for COVID specific signs		\$ 1,800.00

Voter Outreach and Education (VOE)

Minneapolis has a robust social media presence that is the cornerstone of the VOE program. As with overall staffing, the EVS budget for VOE is combined rather than reflecting needs by program. Strategies and implementation are multi-faceted to reflect pertinent messaging throughout the year.

The dynamics of this year has created economic and budgetary challenges for the City of Minneapolis. As such, budgets were reduced enterprise wide including the EVS budget. VOE expenditures are now very limited, yet the need for VOE is critical specifically in voter communications. The EVS social media channels are an important outreach tool.

The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) launched a #TrustedInfo2020 campaign in 2019 to promote election officials as the trusted source of election information. At a time where most people are staying home due to COVID-19, we are more connected online and via social platforms. This is an even more crucial time for election officials to amplify trustworthy information online.

Our voter outreach efforts in Minneapolis have been affected as most voter registration drives and voter education events have either been cancelled since they cannot be held in person, or have been moved online to a digital space. Leveraging social media advertisements can help us share important messages with voters – especially our main message of “Stay at home. Vote by Mail.” We can use

targeted advertisements (directed at Minneapolis residents age 18-65+) across Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to share this information in a timely manner and give the link to the online absentee (mail) application. This is the most direct form of communication we can use since the user, and viewer of the advertisement, has the ability to immediately click on the link and complete the application in real time.

To leverage key, accurate, and consistent information would require \$10,000 for social media advertising and \$40,000 for all household mailer (postcard) for a total of \$50,000 could be achieved.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment was bulk ordered to meet the needs of all election functions for election workers and poll workers; election facilities and polling locations; and for the state primary and general election.

The total of **\$30,310** reflects the costs incurred as follows:

Total	\$ 30,310.00
Masks & Face shields voters & Staff	\$ 8,010.00
Sanitizing solution for hands & surface	\$ 10,100.00
Disposable gloves	\$ 4,200.00
Additional PPE Sept -Nov	\$ 8,000.00

Conclusion

The investments outlined above will allow Minneapolis to reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus for voters, election staff and poll workers; identify best practices; innovate to efficiently and effectively educate our residents about how to exercise their right to vote; be intentional and strategic in reaching our historically disenfranchised residents and communities; and, above all, ensure the right to vote in a diversity of communities throughout the city. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this request.

Respectfully,



Grace Wachlarowicz CERA

Assistant City Clerk

Director Elections & Voter Services

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980 E Hennepin Ave.

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