

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY
REGISTER OF DEEDS OFFICE**

Inter-Office Communication

Date: July 5, 2018
To: Milwaukee County Board Chairman Theodore A. Lipscomb, Sr.
cc: Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic
Kelly Bablitch, Adm Sec Chief Of Staff, County Board
Steve Cady, Research & Policy Director, Office of Comptroller
County Executive Chris Abele
From: John La Fave, Register of Deeds
Subject: Status of Free Birth Certificate Program

In July 2017 I informed the County Board that the 5000 birth records that were funded in the 2012 budget would soon be depleted. The Board then passed a resolution funding an additional 380 certificates to continue the Free Birth Certificate Program through the end of 2017. This program is for both individuals seeking a birth certificate to obtain identification (ID) for voting purposes and for youth ages 15-21 who need a birth certificate to secure employment.

It was my guesstimate that the additional 380 records would be just enough to continue through the remainder of 2017. It turned out that the program lasted longer with the last free record given out on April 9, 2018.

During the Finance Committee hearing on the 2018 Register of Deeds budget last October, I discussed the status of the free birth certificate program. I stated that if the County desired to continue the program then a provision could be added to the 2018 budget with my recommendation that 1000 records would be needed for voting and 500 for youth jobs, for a total of 1,500 records.

If the Board wishes to renew this program for the remainder of 2018, I recommend 500 records for voting and 250 for youth jobs, for a total of 750 records.

Please note:

- **The WI DMV does not require a birth certificate be presented** to obtain a Wisconsin ID card for voting purposes. <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/how-to-apply/petition-process.aspx> "Just bring what you have to the DMV, fill out two forms (form [MV3004](#), and form [MV3012](#)), and you will get a photo ID document in the mail that you can use in time for voting. [Here is a sample](#) of the document you'll be receiving."
(MV3004 and MV3012 are attached)
- **Individuals routinely receive birth records from our office at no cost to that person.** This is through the assistance of the St. Ben's Community Meal/Capuchin Community which funds an escrow account in our office. They send persons to our office to obtain a vital record along with a letter authorizing their escrow account to pay for the vital record for that named person. ***A sample letter is attached.*** **This year through 6/28/18 we have given out 202 vital records funded by the Capuchin Community** (almost entirely birth certificates).
- Please consider this: if there's a need to have government spend money to give out free birth certificates, **shouldn't the City of Milwaukee step up and participate?** The City's Health Department sells birth and death records. **Approximately 99% of all free birth records given out by the Register of Deeds are for persons residing in the City of Milwaukee.**