

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
**Inter-Office Communication**

**Date:** March 20, 2017  
**To:** Supervisor Peggy West, Chairperson, Committee on Finance and Audit  
**From:** Jerome J. Heer, Director of Audits  
**Subject:** Status Report – Voter Registration Audit (File No. 16-371)

At its meeting on July 21, 2016, the Committee on Finance and Audit reviewed our audit report, "Voter Registration Program Must Overcome Obstacles To Be Effective," and adopted a resolution indicating concurrence with the report recommendations.

We reached out to the County Clerk in August 2016 to assess the progress made toward implementing our recommendations. Although this was only a short time since issuance of the audit report, the County Clerk reported to us that two of our eight recommendations were implemented, progress was made on four others and the remaining two would be addressed after the November 2016 election.

In addition, we recently requested the County Clerk to provide the current status of the recommendations. The County Clerk's March 2017 updates are highlighted in yellow in the attached status report. We noted that while all recommendations are reported being implemented, we believe that additional efforts are needed to fully implement recommendation no. 7.

In this instance, we believe that the County Clerk should initiate a draft resolution to repeal Chapter 112 of the County General Ordinances.

This status report is informational and assuming the County Clerk's follow through with the repeal of Chapter 112, no further status reports are planned.



Jerome J. Heer

JJH/PAG/cah

Attachment

cc: Scott Manske, Milwaukee County Comptroller  
Finance and Audit Committee Members  
Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive  
George Christenson, Milwaukee County Clerk  
Teig Whaley-Smith, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Colleen Foley, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Office of Corporation Counsel  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board Staff  
Steve Cady, Research & Policy Director, Office of the Comptroller  
Janelle Jensen, Chief Committee Coordinator, County Clerk's Office

**STATUS OF IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENT OF AUDIT REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Audit Title:** Voter Registration Program Must Overcome Obstacles to Be Effective

**File Number:** 16-371

**Audit Report Date:** June 2016

**Status Report Date:** March 2017

**Department:** County Clerk

Number & Recommendation	Deadlines Established		Deadlines Achieved		Implementation Status		Comments
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Completed	Further Action Required	

1. Clarify, document, and communicate procedures specific to Milwaukee County's VRP, including: where completed applications should be submitted and a process for recording and verifying the number of individuals (and in which municipality they reside) registered through the VRP.	X		X		X		Auditee – August 2016: We have created a VRP Procedures Manual (attached) that communicates the procedures specific to Milwaukee County's VRP.
2. Establish a County VRP training for new and continuing SRD's as a follow-up to the general SRD training provided by the City of Milwaukee so SRD's understand County VRP procedures.	X		X		X		Auditee – August 2016: We have set a SRD training meeting for September 8, 2016 and communicated this to all SRDs, municipal Clerks and other stakeholders.  Auditee – March 2017 Update: Wisconsin Act 295 launched MyVote Online Voter Registration System and eliminated the role of Special Registration Deputies in Wisconsin. As a result, the Wisconsin Election Commission now offers an online training for municipal clerks to use when training Election Registration Officials.
3. Set up a consistent channel of communications for updates, questions, and feedback surrounding implementation of the program.	X		X		X		Auditee – August 2016: We have designated Julietta Henry as the contact person for the VRP and communicated this to all SRDs, municipal Clerks and other stakeholders.
4. Work to establish program ownership and buy-in from all participating sites and SRD's.	X		X		X		Auditee – August 2016: To assist SRDs with the process of promoting the VRP, we have developed VRP Displays (sample attached) that will be provided to each VRP site. Further, we hope to achieve additional program ownership and buy-in during our upcoming SRD training meeting.



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5. Establish a system to track and report program outcomes, such as in the performance measurement section of the County budget narrative.	X		X		X		<p><u>Auditee – March 2017 Update:</u> The Milwaukee County Election Commission currently acts as a courier for registration applications for its nineteen municipalities. While we are able to receive applications for voter registration; they are then forwarded to its participating municipality.</p> <p><u>Auditee – August 2016:</u> We have developed a tracking &amp; reporting form as part of the VRP Procedures Manual.</p> <p><u>Auditee – March 2017 Update:</u> The Milwaukee County Election Commission currently tracks all incoming voter registrations which come into our office via mail or in-person. We maintain a record of the registrants name, municipality, how it was received, and the date. The applications are then forwarded to the corresponding municipality.</p>
6. Establish a plan to meet the spirit of assisting County residents with voter registration after SRD's are no longer allowed. Options include: a. Assembling voter registration information packets to be distributed to interested citizens utilizing County programs. b. Establish a training program for County employees to become voter registration specialists able to assist clients with completing the online registration process and/or paper applications, which the client can		X		X	X		<p><u>Auditee – August 2016:</u> We will address this recommendation after the November election.</p> <p><u>Auditee – March 2017 Update:</u> The Milwaukee County Election Commission currently allows for applicants to submit voter registration applications in-person or via mail. The application is then forwarded to the registrants' municipality in order to be processed.</p> <p>While Act 295 gives the Municipal Clerks the authority to appoint and train Election Registration Officials that will replace the SRDs, the Milwaukee County Election Commission will continue to provide voter registration information packets to the various Milwaukee County offices that were involved in the SRD program.</p>

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submit by mail or in-person.							
7. Submit updated ordinance changes to reflect the new program model for review and approval by policy makers.	X			X		X	Auditee – August 2016: We will address this recommendation after the November election.  Auditee – March 2017 Update: Wisconsin Act 295 launched MyVote Online Voter Registration System and eliminated the role of Special Registration Deputies in Wisconsin.
8. Use State-issued information to help prepare Voter Registration information packets in Spanish to be issued to Milwaukee County residents who are Spanish speaking and identify trained County voter registration specialists who are bilingual and may be able to assist such citizens.	X			X	X		Auditee – August 2016: We have included the state issued Spanish Voter Registration forms in our VRP packets.