



VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGN REPORT

July 2021

Prepared by the Office of the Milwaukee County Clerk -
Milwaukee County Election Commission

George L. Christenson
County Clerk

Julietta Henry
Elections Director



**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**



GEORGE L. CHRISTENSON
MILWAUKEE COUNTY CLERK

July 2021

Honorable Members of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors:

As your Milwaukee County Clerk, I am responsible for and serve as Executive Director of the Milwaukee County Election Commission.

The 2020 Adopted County Budget included a \$50,000 allocation to the Office of the County Clerk – Election Commission to support voter education and outreach to encourage voter registration and turnout. Subsequently, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 20-146, which allocated an additional \$50,000 in response to the attempted purge of Milwaukee County voter registrations. Resolution 20-146 included the provision requesting that a report be provided to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors detailing the voter education and outreach efforts made and results for the 2020 Spring and Fall elections.

I am proud to present this Voter Education and Outreach Report to provide insight as to how my office and other election officials across Milwaukee County persevered in performing their statutory duties despite some serious challenges, including but not limited to the COVID-19 global pandemic. This report outlines in detail how the funding for voter education and outreach provided by the Milwaukee County Board was utilized and leveraged to meet the goal of enfranchising eligible county residents to register and to vote.

I would like to recognize and thank the Milwaukee County Board of Election Commissioners and the entire Milwaukee County Election Commission (MCEC) staff, led by Elections Director Julietta Henry, for their hard work and dedication during a very challenging year. Ms. Henry and her staff literally *risked their lives* to ensure our 2020 elections were conducted uninterrupted. The MCEC office remained open and our staff bravely performed their duties despite the health risks.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to you for demonstrating leadership and vision in providing funding to the Office of the County Clerk - Election Commission to supplement voter registration and education efforts and help support the enfranchisement of Milwaukee County voters.

Like each of you, I swore an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Wisconsin, and to faithfully discharge the duties of my office, to the best of my ability. In accordance with that oath, I support all efforts to improve our democratic process, including efforts to improve the accuracy, security, transparency, and accessibility of our voting processes.

While the Office of the County Clerk is a partisan office in the State of Wisconsin, I do not wear a partisan hat when it comes to elections administration. It is our sacred duty to remain non-partisan and carry out our charge as election officials before, during, and after Election Day. Our job is to count the votes and whoever gets the most votes wins. If our personal choices for candidates win, we're happy – if they lose, we complain. That's Democracy and that's America!

While this voter education and outreach campaign was a success, the important work of educating voters and assisting them in exercising their constitutional right to vote must continue. The right to vote is one of the most sacred tenets of our democracy and public officials have the duty to do everything within their power to ensure that everyone who has the right to vote on Election Day is able to do so unhindered. Our work is not done until every eligible voter casts their ballot on Election Day – regardless of the candidate, party, or issue. Voting is a solemn right guaranteed by our Constitution and it must never become a privilege that some who are eligible to vote cannot attain. Voter suppression is real, ongoing, and those who perpetrate it have no intention of slowing down. It is the duty of government units on all levels to band together and fight against it at every step.

Should any members of your honorable body have any questions or concerns regarding this report, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George L. Christenson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

George L. Christenson
Milwaukee County Clerk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2020 ELECTION YEAR IN REVIEW	2
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	3
OMNICHANNEL ADVERTISING	4
Electronic/SMS Marketing	4
Creative Messaging	5
Public Transit Advertising	6
Billboard Advertising	7
Advertising by Radio & Social Media	8
Advertising in Print & Digital News Outlets	8
Video Public Service Announcements for Social Media	9
NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY 2020	11
VOTER REGISTRTION KIOSKS	12
ABSENTEE BALLOT DROP BOX OPPORTUNITIES	13
ELECTION RESULTS WEBSITE	15
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	16
CONCLUSION	17

2020 ELECTION YEAR IN REVIEW

The Milwaukee County Election Commission's (MCEC) mission is to administer federal, state, and local elections in a manner that fosters public trust in the accuracy, efficiency, and fairness of elections and develops public confidence in the democratic process. When the 2020 calendar year began, the Milwaukee County Election Commission was prepared, ready, and eager to carry out its mission while administering four statewide elections scheduled for 2020. This included the Spring Primary (February 18), Spring (April 7), Fall Partisan Primary (August 11), and the Fall General and Presidential (November 3) Elections. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic, general civil unrest, and electoral challenges, including a Presidential Election Recount, the 2020 election cycle became one that we will not soon forget.

On March 12, 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and issued several Executive Orders to protect the citizens of Wisconsin. Among these, Executive Order 105 mandated the shutdown of all non-essential services and businesses effective March 16, 2020. This order did not affect elections, election processes, or timelines. The MCEC office remained open and our staff bravely performed their duties despite the health risks. However, there were only 21 days to prepare for the April 7, 2020 Election under these dangerous conditions. Two immediate challenges were a limited supply of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and a greatly reduced availability of poll workers. The fear and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, coupled with the fact that one of our most vulnerable populations were senior citizens, caused a major shortage of poll workers. To address the PPE shortage, MCEC staff worked with the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) who in turn worked with the State Emergency Operations Center and Wisconsin National Guard to procure and disseminate over 100,000 products of critical cleaning supplies and PPEs for all polling and central count locations across Milwaukee County.



To address the poll worker shortage, the Governor activated the Wisconsin National Guard to help support the Spring Election (and every subsequent 2020 statewide election in Wisconsin). In April, over 260 National Guard Service Members, our citizen soldiers residing in local Milwaukee County municipalities, reported in civilian attire to designated polling locations on Election Day. They were trained and served to support their local municipalities as poll workers, greeters, and support personnel at polling places across our county and across the State. The Milwaukee County Election Commission is grateful for the support of the staff at the Wisconsin Elections Commission, State Emergency Operations Center, and the Wisconsin National Guard for their extraordinary efforts to ensure the safety of our election workers and voters.



Election officials in Milwaukee County and across the state worked tirelessly all year to ensure elections were administered in an efficient, fair, transparent, and safe manner during an unprecedented time in history. Citizens navigated and adapted to a "new normal" amidst a global pandemic and during a period of civil unrest following the death of George Floyd. For weeks, the nation was faced with protests and rioting, including protests outside the MCEC office located at the Milwaukee County Courthouse. Still, election officials worked day and night successfully meeting their statutory responsibilities to safeguard one of our most fundamental rights as citizens of the United States. On top of the pandemic and protests, election officials adjusted to a

dramatic shift from in-person voting to mailing out hundreds of thousands of absentee ballots, overcame a very contentious year filled with attacks on the credibility of election systems hardware, software and processes, battled against misinformation and disinformation, and in some unfortunate scenarios, were forced to endure threats to their safety.

To top off an already extremely busy and contentious year, within days of the November 3, 2020 Election, a Presidential Recount was requested and ordered in Milwaukee and Dane Counties. Once again, the Milwaukee County Election Commission planned, prepared, and performed its non-partisan duty with exceptional grace. At the conclusion of the seven-day event, we were proud to report that the recount process demonstrated the security, integrity, and transparency of elections in Milwaukee County as the Milwaukee County Board of Election Commissioners certified the recount results with only an infinitesimal variance from the election night results.

During the 2020 cycle, the Milwaukee County Election Commission successfully accomplished numerous initiatives, on top of their everyday responsibilities, through dedication and the financial assistance of the County Board and other outside sources. The MCEC staff worked to promote and empower Milwaukee County citizens to vote, and to encourage the enfranchisement of every eligible individual to be able to register and vote through educational outreach campaigns to ensure the success of elections in Milwaukee County. This report highlights the great work done in support of the 2020 election year.

VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Background

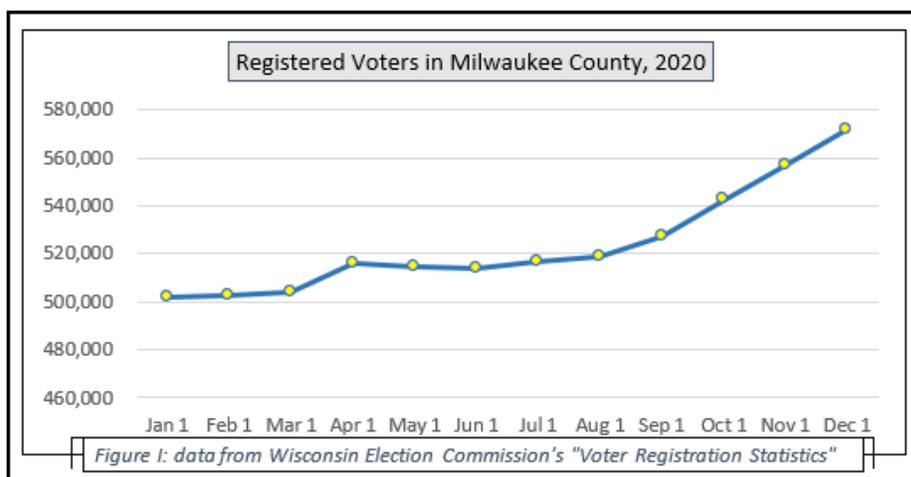
As part of the 2020 Adopted County Budget, the Milwaukee County Election Commission was allocated \$50,000 in additional budget authority to support voter education and outreach. Subsequently, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors allocated an additional \$50,000 in response to the attempted purge of Milwaukee County voter registrations. MCEC was able to leverage these funds with \$138,000 from public and private grants as to successfully implement a wide variety of voter education and outreach approaches to achieve its goals, despite the pandemic year's many unexpected hurdles in 2020.

In January 2020, the primary outreach goals were increasing public awareness about the voting process, encouraging voter participation, and educating electors about Voter ID Law requirements. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic, MCEC pivoted its messaging to focus on educating the public about the availability and security of absentee voting options, and the importance of making a plan to vote as safely as possible. In addition, because of the global pandemic, many traditional voter outreach activities were not possible providing opportunities for MCEC to be creative.

Outcomes and Impact

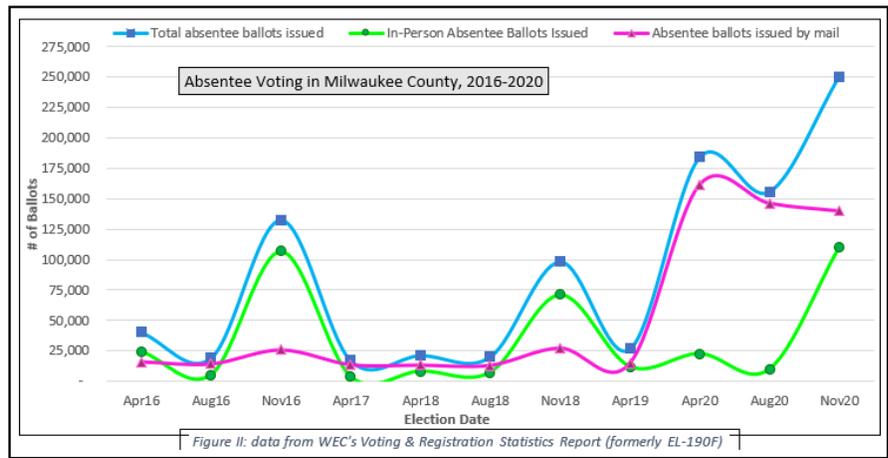
As this report details in the coming pages, voter registration throughout Milwaukee County rose by 14% between January 1, 2020 and December 1, 2020.

Overall absentee voting also increased, especially voting by mail. Compared to the 2016 November General Election, absentee voting by mail approximately **quintupled** in Milwaukee County, and in-person absentee voting proved to be a popular choice as well.



MCEC ordered production and placement of advertisements via all relevant sources, including local radio stations, print and digital journalism, social media, bus and transit shelters, and billboards.

These incredible results were due, in large part, to the hard work of MCEC staff.



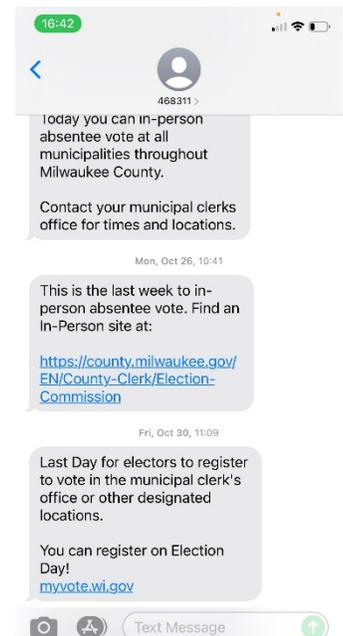
OMNICHANNEL ADVERTISING

Electronic/SMS Marketing

One of the tools MCEC utilized to reach voters is the Granicus/GovDelivery (formally known as Communications Cloud). GovDelivery is a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution that enables government organizations to connect with more people. By using this existing tool, the Milwaukee County Election Commission was able to utilize multiple different outreach mediums (email notifications, SMS/text messages, RSS feeds) to connect with our large target audience, which is comprised of approximately 73,000 subscribers. This included informational notifications (8-10 per election) to inform or remind subscribers about:

- the deadlines to register to vote for each election (online and in person)
- the date in-person absentee voting began
- the last date for in-person absentee voting
- the date of each election (messages prior to and on Election Day)

These outreach messages also included a link to MyVote.wi.gov, where interested voters can seek assistance with their election-related questions. Messages with information about in-person absentee voting would also offer a link to MCEC's In-Person Absentee Voting Schedule.



Outcomes and Impact

In the table below, Engagement Rate measures how many recipients opened these messages and/or clicked on links, relative to the total number of recipients.

Month (2020)	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Recipients	73,511	73,829	72,878	72,033	-	72,051	72,069	72,261	71,507
Engagement Rate	44.04%	49.85%	41.88%	26.77%	-	42.62%	43.09%	48.70%	50.54%

Creative Messaging

MCEC contracted with KW2, a women-owned full-service marketing and communications firm specializing in digital marketing and media services, web development, creative design, brand strategy, and earned media to create a **bi-lingual** communications strategy for outreach to Milwaukee County voters. In furtherance of MCEC's mission, KW2 developed and refined a variety of creative messaging that:

- Reinforced the importance of exercising the right to vote
- Informed voters of recent changes to local voting procedure and requirements to vote
- Explained the voting options available to them to vote safely during the COVID-19 pandemic

MCEC also contracted with Forever Changed Consulting, a minority woman-owned consulting agency that specializes in digital marketing services, social media management, media relations and grassroots organizing. MCEC contracted Forever Changed to consult on voter outreach strategies and provide grassroots community organizations, faith-based organizations, and individual constituents with the resources to prepare for voting in 2020. Forever Changed Consulting:

- Organized contacts with organizations; material drop-off and pick-up
- Organized and developed messaging for public service announcements for social media
- Organized and developed messaging for radio commercials; inbound marketing, delivered in the form of blog articles, videos, lead magnets, and social media posts
- Developed an enhanced voter education message, developed a media strategy, and worked directly with professional services firm, KW2

Message 1 – Your Vote Matters

Many voters have become frustrated with the negativity associated with elections due to campaign attack ads, false information, wild conspiracy theories and lack of civility among candidates. Further, voter suppression efforts have become far more prevalent. To combat these negative aspects, MCEC strove to reinforce how the importance of voting with its Your Vote Matters theme.



Message 2 - Every Vote Counts/Know Before You Go

For many Milwaukee County residents, how they are able to vote may decide *whether* they vote. They need to know there are safe, secure, and easy options that can meet their needs. Directing voters to the informative and user friendly myvote.wi.gov website was the best and most obvious choice as part of our campaign.



Message 3 - Vote Your Way

Vote Your Way was our hallmark campaign leading up to the November 3rd election. With the pandemic still in full swing, the main focus of our education efforts became informing the voters how to safely cast their vote utilizing additional means other than in person voting.

Messaging Examples

“Just so you know, this year you’ve got a lot of ways to vote! You can request an absentee ballot or vote at the polls. You can cast your vote early at your municipal clerk’s office, or wait until Election Day to vote in a booth, at the curb or even outdoors — with help from local election officials with the safety training and tools to protect voters during COVID-19.”

“You’ve got options, and one place to go where you can learn more about them all: county.milwaukee.gov. See election deadlines, find easy-to-use tools and connect to the latest



news and information on voting in the upcoming election. Want to vote your way? Don't wait. Visit county.milwaukee.gov today!"

Campaign Headlines

This election, you've got options. Vote your way. Register to vote online or in person. What's your way? At the polls or absentee ballot. What's your way?

Campaign Content Focus

- Registering to vote
- Making a plan to vote
- Polling place and drop box locations

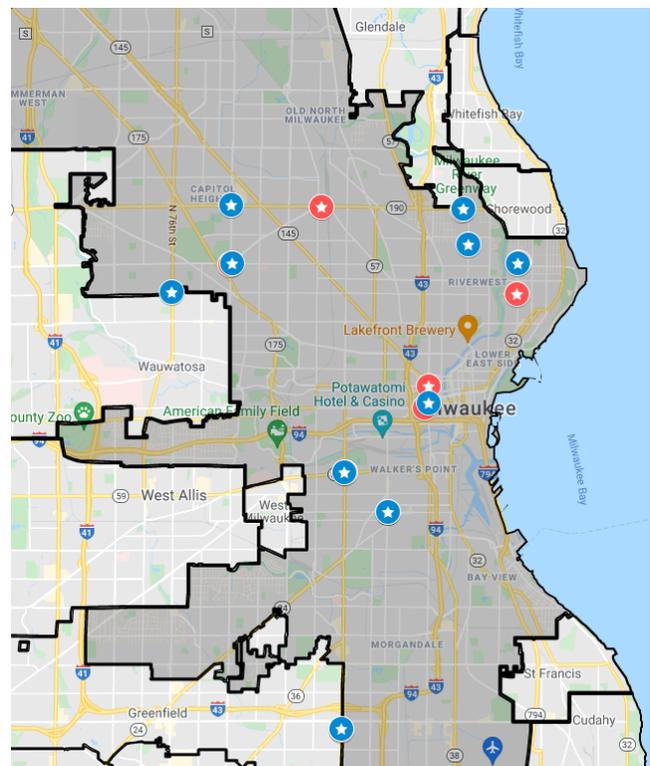
Public Transit Advertising

MCEC achieved further voter engagement by contracting Vector Media to advertise on Milwaukee County Transit System's (MCTS) buses and bus shelters. Beginning on March 10, 2020, in anticipation of the Spring Election, every bus in the MCTS fleet was outfitted with "Every Vote Counts!" posters.

Similar artwork, offering voter information & resources via MCEC and MyVote.wi.gov (Wisconsin Election Commission's informational hub for answers about voter registration, absentee ballot tracking, location of polling places, etc.) was displayed on bus shelters around Milwaukee County (locations indicated by **red** stars on the map below).

Beginning October 6, 2020, in advance of the November General Election, MCEC again ordered production and placement of advertisements on every bus in the MCTS fleet—"Your Vote Matters" posters, which again included the MyVote.wi.gov website address and phone numbers for voters to access resources and answers.

This artwork was also displayed on bus shelters (locations indicated by **blue** stars on the map below).

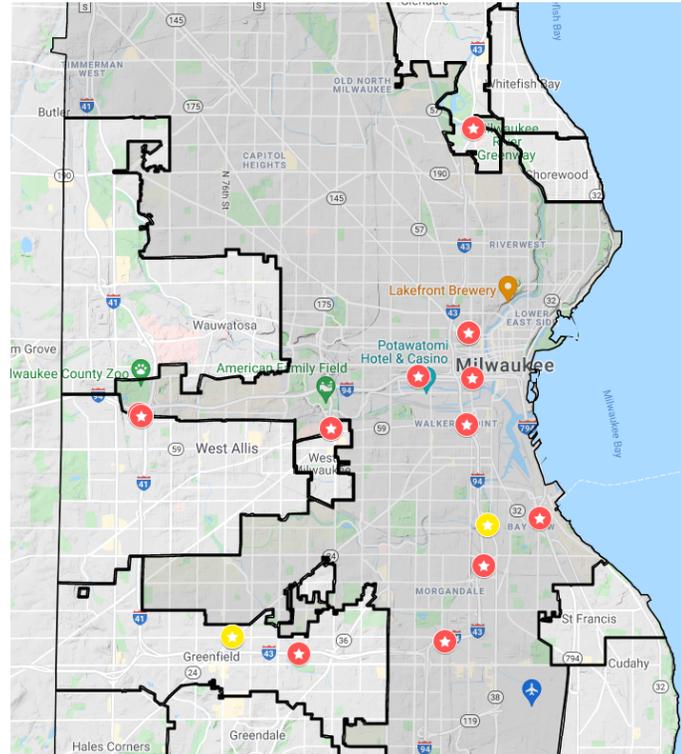


[Click here for a map of MCEC's bus shelter advertising locations.](#)

Billboard Advertising

Clear Channel Outdoor provides outdoor advertising space on billboards across Milwaukee County. As part of MCEC’s outdoor advertising campaign for 2020 elections, Clear Channel displayed “Your Vote Matters” artwork at 16 billboard locations in advance of the November General Election.

[Click here for a map of MCEC’s Clear Channel Outdoor Billboard locations.](#)



Digital Bulletins

13 locations (see red stars on map):

- Large format offered maximum visibility and impact
- Delivered high reach and frequency over an extended time
- Provided continuous exposure of an advertising message
- Sustainable production available in recyclable, eco-friendly material
- Positioned on highly visible, heavy traffic locations (expressways and major roadways)
- Approximately 14' h x 48' w in size

Digital Posters

3 locations (see yellow stars on map):

- Highly effective for short term campaigns that required rapid consumer attention including product and service introductions or call to action messages
- Enhanced visual integrity through new single-sheet, eco-friendly materials
- Widely distributed throughout markets along major highways, surface streets and intersections
- Community positioning around desirable neighborhoods and major commercial or retail centers
- Approximately 10' 5" h x 22' 8" w in size



Advertising on Radio & Social Media

To broadcast MCEC's messaging over the airwaves, iHeartMedia, Bustos Media, and Forever Changed Consulting were contracted to contribute to the 2020 voter outreach and education project.

Bustos Media

Bustos Media is an independent Hispanic owned radio group in the U.S. As part of their proposal they highlighted that on a weekly basis, AM/FM radio reaches 97% of U.S. Hispanics aged 18 and older, the highest reach of any medium.

Bustos Media was contracted to play MCEC's voter outreach messaging on WDDW (La Grand), a Spanish-language radio station with a majority Hispanic audience.

Timeline:

- February 11, 2020 – February 18, 2020 (48 radio spots)
- October 20, 2020 – November 3, 2020 (46 radio spots, streaming, and social media)

iHeartMedia

iHeartMedia, Inc. specializes in radio broadcasting and the company owns more than 860 full-power AM and FM radio stations in the U.S., making it the country's largest owner of radio stations. Individual station brands deliver the ability to connect with diverse audiences in local markets across the country.

iHeartMedia was contracted to play MCEC's voter outreach messaging on a variety of radio stations with diverse listenership throughout Milwaukee County. Below are the details involving their involvement.

- Timeline: October 22 - November 8, 2020
- Schedule Summary for October 22, 2020 – November 8, 2020:
- Gross impressions: 236,400

Station, Genre	# of Ad Spots
WRIT 95.7 (oldies)	15
WKKV 100.7 (hip hop, R&B)	14
WMIL 106.1 (country)	15

Advertising in Print & Digital News Outlets

MCEC also engaged local magazines and news outlets to publish MCEC outreach messaging in advance of the November General Election.

Black Women 50+ Magazine

February-March 2020 Edition

- An informative article appeared on pages 12-13 of the original publication
- "Every Vote Counts" Full-page Ad

May-June 2020

"Your Vote Matters" Full-page Ad

November-December 2020 Edition

"Your Vote Matters" Full-page Ad

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19
Spring Primary
Milwaukee County Executive, City of Milwaukee Mayor, City Attorney, City Comptroller, City Treasurer, Justice and Advertisers (all districts)

THURSDAY, APRIL 2
Spring Primary Elections
Presidential Preference, Judicial General Elections for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Circuit Court

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11
Autumn Primary
Wisconsin State Senate

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3
General Presidential Election
U.S. Representatives, Wisconsin State Senate, Assembly seats, and District Attorney

MyVote WISCONSIN

TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Primary Election — is when registered voters select a candidate a political party's choice for elected office. This person will run Early Voting — Wisconsin residents can cast ballots (vote) in person before an election.

ABSENTEE VOTING — Applications must be received by the municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m., Thursday before Election Day. Using U.S. mail service, the returned ballot must be postmarked no later than Election Day and received by the municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m. Friday after the election.

POPULAR VOTE — is the total number or percentage of all voters from all 50 states. The candidate who gets the most votes nationwide wins the popular vote. The winner of the popular vote picks the election.

ELECTORAL VOTE — 538 electoral votes are required to elect the President. The eight members of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation plus two for Wisconsin Senators.

CONSTITUENT — a person who lives, works, or pays taxes in an area that a politician represents.

DISTRICT / WARD — A specific area that an elected official serves or represents.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

EVERY VOTE COUNTS KNOW THE RULES

2020 ELECTIONS
PULLS OPEN 7 AM
CLOSE AT 8 PM

tee Ballot
lections in 2020
rough MyVote.wi.gov.
erson voting availability.

11, 2020
ry

er 3, 2020
bn

i.gov
ive your ballot 4. Complete the
r drop it off at your municipal
your ballot at MyVote.wi.gov.

ote Counts!

CTION COMMISSION
278-4060.

Milwaukee Community Journal

Week of October 21, 2020
"Vote Your Way" Full-page Ad

<https://content.communityjournal.net/content/uploads/20201022115032/October-21-final-REDUCED.pdf>

Milwaukee Courier

Week of October 24, 2020
"Vote Your Way" Full-Page Ad

Milwaukee Times

Week of October 22, 2020
"Vote Your Way" Full-page Ad
https://issuu.com/miltimesnews/docs/miltimes_10-22-20_issue_16_pgs

Spanish Journal

"Vote Your Way" / "Vota a Su Manera" digital ads in October

Shepherd Express

October 19, 2020 and October 23, 2020 Email Newsletters
"Vote Your Way" Digital Ad on Website



Example of a banner ad displayed on the Shepherd Express website.

Video Public Service Announcements for Social Media

The Milwaukee County Election Commission created a series of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to inform electors about ballot drop boxes and security, election results, and the variety of options available to them for casting their vote.

MCEC identified several notable Milwaukee County residents and personalities to record Public Service Announcements leading up the November 3rd election. The PSAs stressed the importance of voting and touted the themes of the "Vote Your Way" campaign. In addition to MCEC Elections Director Julietta Henry, participants included well-known Milwaukee musician Pat McCurdy, community activist Tiffany Henry, municipal Judge Derek Mosley, business owners Steph Crosley and Trueman



McGee, civil rights leader Sean Lowe, American Family Insurance Community and Social Impact Investment Director Leana Nakielski, County Executive David Crowley, and County Board Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson.

In addition to those linked below, several more video PSAs featuring county residents and non-partisan elected officials were created and posted on both the Office of the Milwaukee County Executive's [YouTube channel](#) and on the Office of the Milwaukee County Clerk's [Facebook page](#) for public viewing.



David Crowley



Derek Mosley



Leana Nakielski



Marcelia Nicholson



Pat McCurdy



Steph Crosley



Sean Lowe



Tiffany Henry



Trueman McGee

National Voter Registration Day 2020

Background

The Milwaukee County Election Commission participated in National Voter Registration Day 2020 on Tuesday, September 22, 2020. This holiday has been endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED), the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), and the National Association of Election Officials (The Election Center).

National Voter Registration Day is a non-partisan civic holiday celebrating our democracy. It is celebrated on the fourth Tuesday in September. The goal of this holiday is to create awareness of voter registration opportunities and to make sure everyone can vote.

Drive-Through Drop-Off Option and New Normal

★ MILWAUKEE COUNTY VOTERS ★

Voter Registration Day Drive-Thru at Miller Park

Wisconsin residents are encouraged to register to vote and request an absentee ballot at:

**Miller Park
1 Brewers Way, Milwaukee
September 22, 2020 from 2 - 7 p.m.**

TO PARTICIPATE:

- Please bring an acceptable proof of address. A valid photo ID is required to request an absentee ballot in most circumstances.
- Participants are asked to stay in their cars and follow signage through Miller Park where they will be met by a volunteer, in appropriate PPE, to help them through the process.
- In compliance with the state-wide mask policy, participants are asked to please wear a mask when interacting with volunteers.
- Walk-up registrants cannot be accommodated due to COVID-19 precautions and are instead directed to [MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.mycvotewi.gov) to receive more information about in-person registration help.

If you have questions or concerns, call the Milwaukee County Election Commission at (414) 278-VOTE (6683).

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, safety was a priority. Therefore, the Milwaukee County Election Commission, City of Milwaukee Election Commission, and Milwaukee Brewers joined forces in hosting its first Statewide Voter Registration Drive-Through event. This 5-hour event took place at Miller Park (now American Family Field) on September 22, 2020 from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Brewers involvement was a part of the Major League Baseball's effort to support voting initiatives.

Signage was created to help citizens (County and non-County) navigate from the point of park entry to the area designated for voter registration. Volunteers were also available on foot to help direct the flow of traffic.

COVID-19 precautions were taken. Partners and volunteers masked up for safe in-person service. Participants were required to stay in their cars, wear masks, and follow the signage through Miller Park where they could be met by volunteers and served.

In addition to the hosts, many others played a role in celebrating this holiday. This included the Milwaukee County Executive, Milwaukee County Board of Election Commissioners, Wisconsin Voices, Women League of Voters, Milwaukee Alumnae Panhellenic Council, Milwaukee County Municipal Clerks, and many more.

Outcomes and Impact

National Voter Registration Day 2020 was successful and produced the following results:

- 130 citizens were registered to vote
- 87 citizens applied for mail-in absentee ballots
- Partners, volunteers, and citizens came together in civic unity and celebrated the rights and opportunities we all share as Americans, one of which is the right to vote.
- By leveraging the reach of partners and through event flyers, many citizens were educated about [MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.mycvotewi.gov), a Wisconsin Election Commission online product and service. This allowed countless individuals to register to vote and/or apply for absentee ballots from the safety and convenience of their homes.

Voter Registration Kiosks

The Milwaukee County Election Commission collaborated with the City of Milwaukee on the placement of voter registration kiosks at public facilities throughout the county, including Milwaukee City Hall, all City of Milwaukee public libraries, all County senior centers, some suburban public libraries, MCEC offices, Register of Deeds offices, and in the County Courthouse Jury Management room, County Courthouse Register of Deeds office, among other locations.

The voter registration kiosks enable visitors to register to vote, find their polling place, see who is on their ballot, and perform other useful tasks that myvote.wi.gov enables them to do. Voters can also print registration forms and receive instructions on how to submit the required documents to register to vote. The kiosks play an important part in our mission of ensuring that every single eligible voter is registered, knows when to vote, where to vote and what they need to bring when they go to vote.



To save money, Clerk Christenson and Deputy Clerk Dostanic delivered several kiosks to municipal libraries across the county, including the Franklin Public Library, as seen here.

Absentee Ballot Drop Box Opportunities

Background

For the Fall 2020 General Election, the Milwaukee County Election Commission provided several Countywide absentee ballots drop off opportunities. The goal was to provide a secure and convenient means for any Milwaukee County voter to return their mail-in absentee ballot in person. This option addressed the following citizen concerns:

- COVID-19 exposure and risks
- Skepticism about the U.S. Postal Service and a perceived threat that ballots could get lost, stolen, or destroyed
- Physical or work-related challenges that made it hard for voters to deliver their ballots to their municipal clerk

This effort was guided by an August 19, 2020 memo from the Wisconsin Election Commission, which was adapted from a resource developed as part of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council and Sector Coordinating Council's Joint COVID Working Group.

Absentee Ballot Drop Box Definition, Types of Options, and Option Used



An absentee ballot drop box provided a means for voters to drop off by mail absentee ballots in a safe, secure, and convenient way. The drop box was a secure, locked structure operated by local election officials.

These boxes come in many sizes and shapes. The Milwaukee Election Commission purchased and used one large ballot box and two medium rolling bins.



Throughout Milwaukee County, there were many types of drop box options. Outdoor options included staffed, temporary drive-through drop boxes and unstaffed 24-hour drop boxes. Indoor options provided temporary indoor drop boxes and were staffed or unstaffed.

An outdoor, staffed, temporary drive-through drop off option was selected and used, because it addressed every citizen concern outlined earlier. It was also the easiest way to keep people safe and traffic flowing. All locations were set up in well-lit parking lots or curbside on the street.

Partnerships and Locations

Representatives from the Milwaukee County Department on Aging and faith-based organizations expressed an interest in supporting the voting process in some way. Therefore, partnerships were created with five senior centers and eight churches of various denominations.

For senior centers, drop off opportunities coincided with meal pick up times. The senior centers included Clinton Rose, Kelly, McGovern Park, Washington Park, and Wilson Park.

For churches, drop off opportunities were based on church preference to participate in this effort. The churches included Ascension Fellowship, Christ the King Baptist, Christian Faith Fellowship, Cross Lutheran, Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ, Parklawn Assembly of God, Progressive Baptist, and St. Francis Catholic Church.

News of the Countywide absentee ballots drop off opportunities was delivered primarily through outreach to community partners and flyers. The Milwaukee County Election Commission spread the news to countless voters while interacting

with them by telephone and in person. This allowed a diverse group of voters to benefit, including seniors and church parishioners.

Protocol and Security

Ensuring safety and the integrity of the election was paramount. Before each event, Milwaukee County Election Commission staff were required to:

- Lock each box and seal it with a pre-numbered tamper-resistant seal
- Equip each site with the ballot boxes, pop-up tents, tables, chairs, road signs, and PPE such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers

The teams staffing the event were required to:

- Verify that the absentee ballot envelope was signed, dated, and contained a witness certification before accepting it
- Offer voters the option of placing their envelope in the ballot box provided unless the voter asked the volunteer to perform this task while they watched (e.g. unable to exit their vehicle due to disability)
- Complete a tally sheet to document the ballot box serial number, their arrival and departure times, the number of ballots collected, and the number of persons who registered to vote or applied for a mail-in ballot.

Following each event, Milwaukee County Election Commission staff were required to:

- Pick up the ballot boxes
- Review each box to ensure that the lock and pre-numbered tamper resistant seal remained intact
- Open the boxes, record the date, and time opened
- Retrieve absentee ballot envelopes from the boxes
- Record each envelope, the voter name, and municipality on a tracking sheet
- Prepare chain of custody forms to document the transfer of all envelopes to the appropriate municipal clerk
- Deliver the envelopes to the appropriate clerk
- Secure the signature of the municipal clerk (or designee) on the chain of custody form, sign it, retain the original, and give a copy to the clerk.

Outcomes and Impact

The County managed absentee ballot drop off events were a success.

- 94 absentee ballots were collected
- 9 citizens registered to vote
- 4 citizens applied for mail-in absentee ballots
- Countless citizens were educated about [MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.myvote.wi.gov), a Wisconsin Election Commission online product and service. Absentee voters learned how to track the status of their absentee ballot online and about the many other features [MyVote.wi.gov](https://www.myvote.wi.gov) offers.

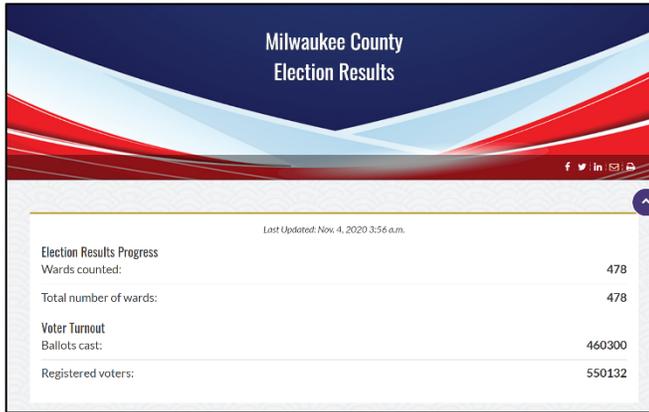


Elections Director Henry staffing a drop box site.

Election Results Website

Background

Milwaukee County is sometimes unduly scrutinized for being among the last counties to report results across the State of Wisconsin. This makes sense because it has the greatest number of ballots to be counted. For example, during the November 2020 election, the City of Milwaukee alone processed almost 170,000 absentee ballots on Election Day (and pursuant to State Statute, ballot counting cannot start until 7am on Election Day). In addition to the City of Milwaukee, Franklin, Greendale, Oak Creek, Shorewood, South Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis also count their voters' absentee ballots at a central location.



MCEC felt it was important for its website to contain a clear explanation about central count and how results may be delayed due to the amount of time it takes to process so many absentee ballots. Lastly, it was imperative that the site helps us better communicate expectations with the public while providing accurate and timely election results.

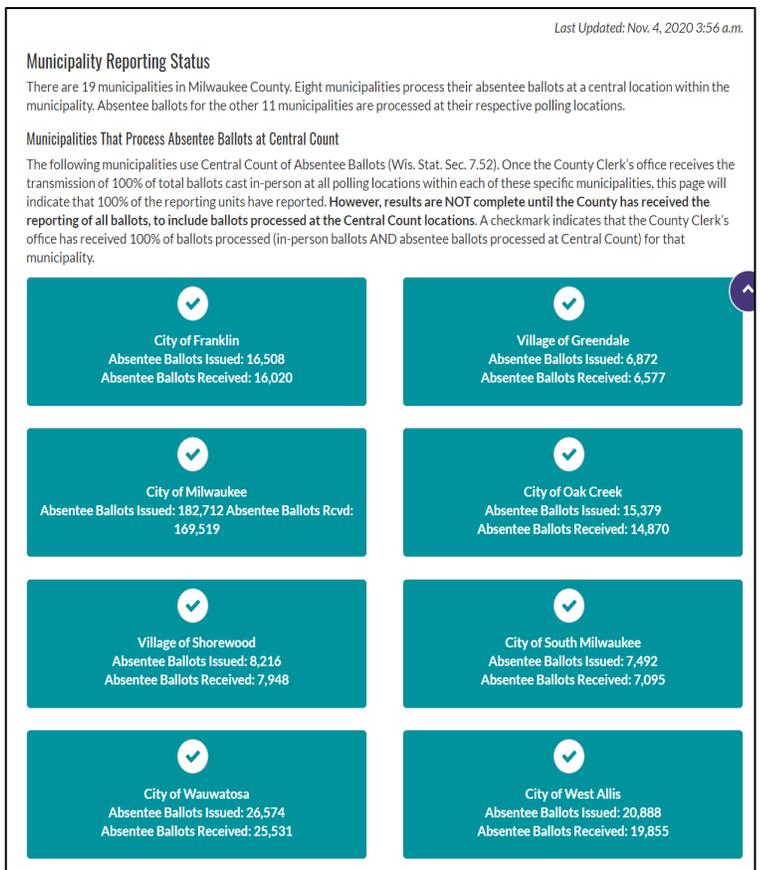
Due to the factors as well as the anticipated influx of interested visitors to our site, MCEC secured a \$10,000 grant to develop and improve the Election Results page.

Outcomes and Impact

With the support of the County IMSD Department and local vendor, Northwoods, MCEC revamped its Election Results page and rolled it out for public consumption during the November 2020 General Election. The new site proved to be easier to access and more user-friendly. In conjunction with providing accurate and timely election results, new interactive features included the ability for visitors to jump to specific races of interest and to expand races to see ward-by-ward results quickly and easily.

Most importantly, the site provided a visual indicator that clearly communicated when results were complete, increasing transparency and explanations as to why results in some municipalities took longer to appear than in others, as will typically happen for our central count municipalities.

MCEC has used the new web page to display unofficial election results for every election since November 2020 and looks forward to using this tool in the future. As we do not remove the unofficial results from our website to show what happened on election night compared to the results after completing the canvass, the November General Election page still exists on our website and can be visited at <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/County-Clerk/Off-Nav/Election-Results/Election-Results-Fall-2020>.



Voter Education and Outreach Program Financial Summary

The financial summary below illustrates MCEC’s success leveraging outside dollars to have a greater programmatic impact. Utilizing a grant from the National Vote at Home Institute (NVHI), MCEC was essentially able double its social presence and non-partisan message via OmniChannel Advertising (billboards, bus shelters, radio spots, newspaper ads, etc.) The grant from the Center for Technology and Civic Life (CTCI) was used exclusively to improve the MCEC election webpage to report the election results.

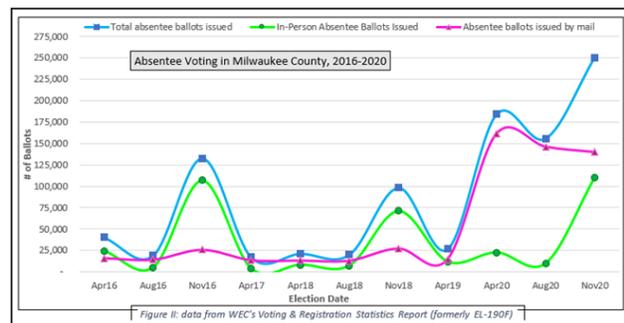
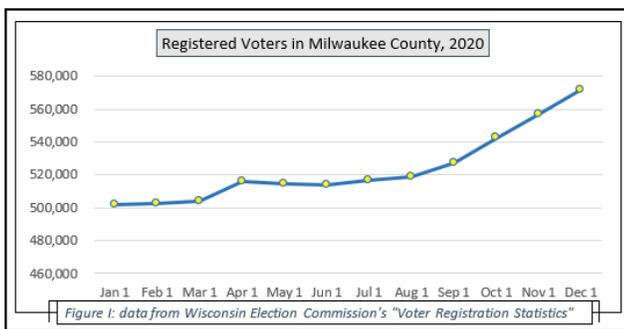
Revenue	
Funding from Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors	\$ 100,000.00
Existing MCEC Budget Line Item - Granicus (GovDelivery)	\$ 16,721.05
Grant - National Vote at Home Institute	\$ 128,000.00
Grant - Center for Technology and Civic Life (CTCI)	\$ 10,000.00
Total	\$ 254,721.05
Expenses	
Outreach & Advertising - Billboards	\$ 20,300.00
Outreach & Advertising - Consulting	\$ 49,000.00
Outreach & Advertising – Digital	\$ 68,000.00
Outreach & Advertising – Print	\$ 19,812.00
Outreach & Advertising – Radio	\$ 38,590.00
Outreach & Advertising - Transit	\$ 28,573.50
Outreach & Advertising - Internal Printing	\$126.27
Granicus (GovDelivery)	\$ 16,721.05
National Voter Registration Day Event	\$ 1,701.12
Election Results Website	\$ 10,000.00
Voter Registration Kiosks	\$ 1,897.11
Total	\$ 254,721.05



Conclusion

The Milwaukee County Election Commission conducted a successful and effective voter education and outreach campaign in 2020, notwithstanding the challenges faced over the course of the year – including a global pandemic. In doing so we completed the charge put forth by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, via the 2020 Adopted Budget and the County Board Resolution 20-146, that provided a total of \$100,000 in funding for voter education and outreach.

As illustrated at the beginning of this report, voter registration throughout Milwaukee County rose by 14% between January 1, 2020 and December 1, 2020. Overall absentee voting also increased, especially voting by mail. Compared to the 2016 November General Election, absentee voting by mail quintupled in Milwaukee County, and in-person absentee voting proved to be a popular choice as well.



While this voter education and outreach campaign was a success, the important work of educating voters and assisting them in exercising their constitutional right to vote must continue. Our work is not done until every individual eligible to vote on each and every Election Day casts their ballot – regardless of for which candidate, party, or issue. Voting is a solemn right guaranteed by our Constitution and it must never become a privilege that some who are eligible to vote cannot attain. Voter suppression is real, ongoing, and those who perpetrate it have no intention of slowing down. It is the duty of government units on all levels to band together and fight against it at every step. It is our hope that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the Milwaukee County Executive will continue to work with the Milwaukee County Clerk's Office and the Milwaukee County Election Commission and provide us with means necessary to defend democracy in Milwaukee County and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding any of its content, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Milwaukee County Clerk's Office or the Milwaukee County Election Commission.