ROUTES TO RECOVERY

Instructions for Online Expense Reporter

UPDATED 11/10/2020: This Instructions document has been updated to reflect subsequent clarifications from program administrators issued via emails sent to clerks on 9/25/2020 and 11/04/2020. The affected sections appear in red text. All other instructions remain substantively unchanged.

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The "Routes to Recovery: Local Government Aid Grants" program is aimed at helping local governments cover the unanticipated expenses they have incurred to meet COVID-19 recovery needs in their communities. Administered by the Department of Administration (DOA), this program allocates $200 million in funds the State received under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to every Wisconsin county, city, village, town, and federally recognized tribe. For more information regarding the Routes to Recovery program, visit the webpage, https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/COVID-Grants.aspx.

Allocation amounts for each local government entity are available on the Program webpage.

The following Instructions explain how to submit expenditure claims for reimbursement via the online "**Expense Reporter**" application at the following website: https://covidgovgrant.wi.gov.

More comprehensive guidance, including questions and answers about cost reimbursement eligibility are included in the document Program Guidance for Local Governments, as well as other correspondence you may have received. The Program Guidance document must be carefully read before using the Expense Reporter app as it describes requirements for expenditure claim eligibility.

Reporting Periods and Timeline

There will be three reporting periods during which a local government may submit expenditures for reimbursement using the Expense Reporter (July 1-15, September 1-15, and November 7-18). The Program is making these funds available for eligible expenditures incurred from March 1 through November 17, 2020. **There is only one submission allowed per government entity per reporting period**.

Reporting Periods		
	Reporting Period	**Eligible Expenditures (Dates Incurred)**
Reporting Period 1	July 1-15	March 1-July 15
Reporting Period 2	September 1-15	March 1-September 15
Reporting Period 3	October 5-11	March 1-October 11
Reporting Period 4 NEW	November 7-18	March 1-~~November 6~~ March 1-November 17

The final day for submitting eligible expenses is November 18.

A local government's final submission for each reporting period may be submitted at any time during the reporting period. Each period, payments will be issued after submissions are received and processed.

IS MY EfXPENSE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT?

For eligibility criteria, see the Program Guidance section titled EXPENSES: GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS. To reiterate here, these funds may be used to reimburse:

(1) government expenditures that were
(2) unbudgeted,
(3) necessary to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and
(4) incurred on or after March 1,2020 and through November 17, 2020.

These four criteria can help a local government decide whether to submit a claim via the Expense Reporter app.

GATHER MATERIALS NEEDED TO SUBMIT CLAIMS

- Read the Program Guidance for Local Governments for a description of the program, eligible expenses, and records required to be maintained. Also review the Program's Terms & Conditions document.

- Gather materials necessary for entering claims for expense reimbursement and for documentation of expenses to be kept on file at the local government level.

  - You will need to identify and report the following:
    - Paying Agency
    - Cost Category
    - Vendor Name
    - Date Paid
    - Nature of COVID-19 Related Goods/Services Provided
    - Amount Paid

- You will see these fields on the "Edit Claims" page. They are defined as follows.

  - **Paying Agency**: List the local agency that paid the expenditure. This may be the central office of the local government or a department within the local government, depending on which entity paid the expense. For example, the paying agency could be "City of Badger" or "City of Badger Police Department."

  - **Cost Category**: Enter the category of eligible costs from the drop-down menu. Category descriptions are provided in the Program Guidance; choose the category that best describes the general nature of the expense. **Note**: if you are planning to seek FEMA public assistance to cover a portion of an eligible expense, you must choose the FEMA category when entering it in the Expense Reporter. This ensures that only the "local match" portion of the expense is reimbursed.

  - **Vendor Name**: Enter the name of the vendor that was paid by the local agency. Enter N/A for eligible sick/FMLA leave or payroll expenses.

  - **Date Paid**: List the date the expenditure was paid. The date must fall within the range of March 1, 2020 through November 17, 2020. For service or supply contracts, list the date of each payment for which the local government seeks reimbursement. Only one date can be entered per claim, so a new claim entry needs to be made for each separate payment on the contract.

  - **Nature of COVID-19 Related Goods/Services Provided**: Describe the goods or services provided and their COVID-19-related purpose. Entries can be brief where the COVID-19-related purposes are largely self-explanatory (e.g., "N95 respirators and related PPE for EMS calls"); others may require more explanation. In all cases, entries should provide enough description for outside reviewers to understand how the expense was necessitated by the public health emergency. In addition, certain payroll expenses require additional detail; see section 3.4 of the Program Guidance. When entering your expenses into the application, please **indicate how the expense is related to COVID**. Expenses such as "payroll", or "supplies", do not give the reviewers a clear idea of how that expense is related to COVID, and the expense will most likely be rejected.

- **Amount Paid**: List the total amount of the expenditure attributable to the COVID-19 public health emergency. For example, if the local government added services to an existing contract with a cleaning vendor to implement COVID-19 public health precautions, then the local government should only include the amount of the additional services. Expenses for sick/FMLA leave and eligible payroll expenses can be entered as lump totals for each pay period for each local government agency with eligible expenses, For example, a local government seeking reimbursement for the payroll expenses of fire department personnel in a given month would make lump sum entries for the fire department for eligible payroll expenses for each payroll date that month.

LOGGING IN TO THE EXPENSE REPORTER

https://covidgovgrant.wi.gov

- To start the reporting process, go to the Sign In page for the online Expense Reporter application located at https://covidgovgrant.wi.gov.
- You will need to have your local government's "**DOA code**" on hand. An email containing this code will be sent to the clerk—specifically to the local government **clerk's email address currently on file with the Department of Administration** for the Municipal Data System and Demographic Services.
- The first time you login, you'll need to **request a verification code**.
    - On the initial landing page, click the "If you need to request a verification code, you may do so here" link located below the Verification Code box.
- Enter your local government's DOA Code and the Captcha Code, then click the Submit button.
- The local government clerk will then receive a "Verification Code" via email.
    - The email will go to the local government clerk's email address currently **on file with the Department of Administration** for the Municipal Data System and Demographic Services.
    - Those others who added their email to the listserv by emailing subscribe-covidgovgrant@lists.wi.gov will receive an email notifying them of the availability of the Expense Reporter app, but they **will need to coordinate with their local clerk** to obtain the email with the Verification Code from the clerk whose email address is officially on file with DOA.
    - If someone other than the official clerk will be submitting the claims on behalf of the government entity, the clerk should forward these Instructions and the Expense Reporter application access information/code to their designated associate(s).
    - The Verification Code email will be sent from the email address donotreply@wisconsin.gov ("Wisconsin Routes To Recovery Grant Program"). If you do not see it within a minute or two, check your spam folder.
- Enter the Verification Code in the Verification Code box in the Sign In page and click "Submit" button.
- You will land on the main page for entering and reviewing claims. In the top portion of the screen below the header, there is a summary of the entity's allocation amounts and status of the reimbursement application for the current Reporting Period.
- Locate the pull down menu and **select the correct reporting period (Reporting Period 4)**

Reporting Period 1	▼	←
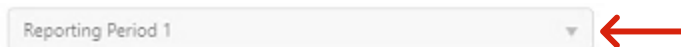
- On this page you will have two options for entering new expenditure claims:
    1) **Upload of claims in a .csv file**. Clicking on the "Upload Claims" button will allow you to programmatically upload a list of claims from a ".csv" file that conforms to the specified .csv template formatting. These claim entry options can be used exclusively or in combination during each Reporting Period. There is also the final action sequence button to "Submit All Claims" that will be described in more detail later in these Instructions.
    2) **Manual claim entry in the Expense Reporter.** Clicking the "Add New Claim" button will allow you to manually add claims one by one.

ADDING CLAIMS USING "UPLOAD CLAIMS" FUNCTION

- With the "Upload Claims" option, you can gather and organize your data for an upload entry using a Microsoft Excel file spreadsheet that conforms to the ".csv" template available through the link below.
  - There are 6 columns in the .csv template.
  - ***Only ".csv" files are accepted.***
- You may download the uploader template file from: ClaimUploadTemplate.csv.
- There is no limit to how many files you can upload. We recommend breaking large numbers of claims into multiple files. The uploader functions best if you break down your files into batches of approximately 200 claims.
- **Columns must be in the exact order as listed in the template's column headers, and their associated cell format definitions are as follows:**
  - **PayingAgency:** Text (512 character max)
  - **VendorName:** Text (512 character max)
  - **PaidOn:** YYYY-MM-DD (date, formatted as YYYY-MM-DD; with manually typed dashes)
  - **AmountPaid:** Decimal (e.g., 999999.99 – no commas allowed, two decimal places after a manually typed period are allowed)
  - **Description:** Text. Please **indicate how the expense is related to COVID**. Expenses such as "payroll", or "supplies", do not give the reviewers a clear idea of how that expense is related to COVID, and the expense will most likely be rejected.
  - **CostCategory:** Integer (a digit 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9), choose from options below

    <u>CostCategory</u>. Below are the CostCategory codes. When filling out the .csv file, **you must use the integer value**—and the integer value only for CostCategory—not the text:

    1 Emergency operation activities, including those related to public health, emergency services, and public safety response

    2 Medical and protective services and equipment, including PPE

    3 Cleaning, sanitizing, and other costs of COVID-19 mitigation in public areas and facilities, including those related to elections administration

    4 Temporary isolation housing for infected or at-risk individuals

    5 Testing and contact tracing costs above those covered by existing State programs

    6 Paid leave for public health and safety employees to take COVID-19 precautions

    7 Meeting local match requirements for expenses submitted for reimbursement by FEMA, to the full extent permitted by federal law

    8 Increased workers compensation costs due to COVID-19

    9 Purchases of services or equipment to facilitate telework by public employees

- If entering payroll expenses, do *not* enter for each person, rather say "public health payroll week/month of"… etc.
- To upload any or all of your claims from a .csv file, click on the "**Upload Claims**" button on the main page for entering and reviewing claims.
- On the Upload Claims page, review the .csv file format requirements to ensure that your .csv file is compatible.
  - Note that a .csv file is not the same thing as an Excel spreadsheet or .xls file—although you can use Microsoft Excel as the software for opening and editing .csv files.

- You can adjust the column width for the six required fields as desired, but make sure that the file format remains .csv.
- You cannot apply formatting to cells when using Excel to edit a .csv file. Simply enter the data by typing the characters as shown above. For example, in the "PaidOn" date column, you might type "2020-03-31"—where the dashes are inserted by pressing the dash key on your keyboard.
- Then scroll down to the bottom of the page to begin the Upload File process. Select your file for upload using the "**Browse…**" box.
- When ready, click on the blue "**Upload File & Preview Results**" button.
- On the subsequent "Preview" page, you will see the pending claim's line items.
  - If they are listed as expected, click on the blue "**Create Claims**" button.
  - If they do not display as expected or if not all items uploaded, click on the grey "**Back to Upload Form**" button to return to the previous screen to review your file's characteristics that may have caused the upload error.
- If you clicked on the "**Create Claims**" button in the prior instruction step, you will be returned to the main page for entering and reviewing claims. From here review all listed claims for accuracy. You may review and edit any claims on the list by clicking on its "**Edit**" button or you may delete the claim by clicking on its "**X Delete**" button.
  - If there are any blank lines in your claims list, make sure to delete them *before* moving on to the final Submit All Claims process.
- If you use the upload feature, you still need to **Submit** the claims you uploaded. Please don't forget this important step.

ADDING CLAIMS MANUALLY WITH "ADD NEW CLAIMS" FUNCTION

- If you choose to add expenditure claims manually, click the "**Add New Claims**" button.
- On the subsequent "Add Claim" page, enter the required data for each fillable box as explained in the "Gather Materials" section of this document.
- When you are done manually entering a single expense, click on the blue "**Save Details**" button.
- The screen will refresh so that it displays the "**Last Updated**" (saved) date/time in the lower righthand corner of the screen. The grey "Estimated Reimbursement" box near the bottom of the form will also change to reflect the addition of the new expense.
- Click on the "**Back to Claims**" button when you are satisfied that your entry is accurate and provides a description in the "Nature of COVID-19 Related Goods/Services Provided" box for outside reviewers to understand the nature of the expenditure and how it was necessitated by the public health emergency.
- Clicking the "**Back to Claims**" button will take you back to the main page for entering and reviewing claims. If the details were saved successfully, you'll see a new row of data for the claim that you just entered.
- Click on the "**Add New Claim**" button again and follow the same Add Claim procedure noted above as many times as needed to enter all additional expenses for that reporting period.
- **Special Processing Note**: The Expense Reporter app has a time-out feature. If you step away from an ongoing task to add a new expense claim or set of claims via the "Add New Claim" or "Upload Claims" functions for 20 minutes or more and fail to click "Save Claim" or "Create Claims" button, the Expense Reporter app will time out and log you off the system. When you login again, you will see that the claim or claims that you were working on, but didn't save, are not in your list of saved claims on the main page for entering and reviewing claims. Simply restart the "Add New Claim" or "Upload Claims" processes to add that claim or claim file and any others to move forward.

SUBMIT CLAIMS

- Once you are done entering _all_ claims for the current reporting period, you are ready to submit them to DOA for review.
- First, export a list of your saved claims in an Excel file that you can save for your records.
  - To do so, click the "**Export to Excel**" button in the upper left corner of the claims summary box and follow the typical save file instructions.
- Ensure you are ready to ready to click the "**Submit All Claims**" button.
  - Clicking on the "**Submit All Claims**" button initiates the final steps in the submission process**. You cannot submit any more claims for this Reporting Period after you complete this final "Submit All Claims" procedure.** Make sure you have entered _all_ eligible claims before that final step.
- A popup "Submit Claims" window will appear in which you should review the information therein before proceeding.
  - If the app detects any errors in your submittal, there will be an error message that briefly describes the nature of the errors and a red "**Close This Window**" button to use to go back one step to make the needed corrections on the prior main page for entering and reviewing claims.
  - This page includes the initial statement that:
    You are about to submit all claims for this reporting period. After submitting this form you will no longer be able to add, edit, or delete any claims or attached documentation for this reporting period.

Allocation Balance Transfers

- This program allows one local government to share its remaining allocation (after _all_ eligible expenditures have been submitted for reimbursement) with one or more other local governments.
- If you would like to allow another entity or entities to use funds from your remaining balance, then change the "**No**" button to "**Yes**."
  - Note: If you do not want to allocate your entire balance, or want to transfer different amounts to multiple local governments, please email your different allocation instructions to covidgovgrant@wisconsin.gov. These customized transfers can be accommodated, but they cannot be entered by the local government in the Expense Reporter and must be applied by the Department of Administration.
- Then choose the local government entity or entities that you wish to share them with.
  - The "County" and "Entity" boxes to fill in appear when you click on "Yes" and disappear again if you click back on "No."
  - Note that only those local governments that have not submitted their final claims are able to receive your shared balance. If the local government is not on the list, it is because they have already made their final claims submission.
- If you choose one entity, your Estimated Remaining Balance at that time will be transferred to that entity. If you choose two or more entities to share with, then your Estimated Remaining Balance will be evenly distributed amongst the designated recipients with immediate effect.
- **No further changes or corrections to your account are allowed if the "Yes" share remaining balance was chosen and submitted**, even if DOA has not completed the review of your submittal.
- Any remaining funds from the total program allocation not used or transferred by local governments will be redeployed by the state to cover other eligible costs within the state before the federal deadline to use them.

- After you have re-read the Terms and Conditions document, signify your agreement with them by marking the checkbox for the statement, "Yes, I agree to all terms and conditions linked above and on this website."

- The terms and conditions require a certification that:

    The person submitting these terms and conditions has the intent and legal authorization to agree to these terms and conditions on the entity's behalf.

- Enter your first and last name and email address in the boxes provided. An accurate email address entry for the submitter is especially important if someone other than the clerk on file with DOA is submitting the claims, so that the pending DOA review's "Review Complete" confirmation email gets sent back to the submitter.

- If you are sure that the listed claims are accurate and in good order, click on the green "**Submit All Claims**" button to finalize your submittal for that reporting period.
    - Again, please note that clicking that last "Submit All Claims" button on this popup window is final. You cannot submit any more claims for this reporting period after you click the green "Submit All Claims" button.

- A new window will appear with the message: "Your claims have been submitted for this reporting period." along with a short summary of your submittal.

- Click on the red "Close this Window" button to return to your government entity's "expenditure claims" home page. You will note that the listed claims are no longer editable, but may still be viewed by clicking on the "View" button.

- To exit the application, click on the word "Logoff" within the blue banner in the upper righthand corner.

- Note that **clicking "Submit All Claims" when "Yes [transfer allocation]" is selected is irreversible** within the app.
    - If you discover an egregious error in your claims soon after finalizing your submittal, we *may* be able to help you make the needed correction. Email covidgovgrant@wisconsin.gov immediately with your local government name and request that we "Unsubmit" your submittal with a specified reason for your request. If we haven't completed our DOA review yet, we may be able to send the entire submittal back to you in the Expense Reporter app for you to make the needed correction(s).

AFTER SUBMITTING CLAIMS: WHAT'S NEXT

- The person who submits the claims will receive an automated email to confirm DOA's receipt of the submittal.
    - Note that **the email will go to the person who submitted claims** and entered their email address in the final step of submission.

- DOA will begin processing completed submittals once they are received. DOA staff will perform a general administrative review of all reported claims to identify those that appear to be ineligible for reimbursement.

- When DOA review is completed, the Expense Reporter app will generate an automatic email to the submitter notifying them that the review is complete and that the results can be reviewed within the Expense Reporter app using the same Verification Code used earlier to gain access to the app.

- By logging back into the app, the submitter can review any claimed expenditures that were rejected and the reason(s) why.

- **For rejected claims**, if you feel the rejection was in error and have the necessary documentation to support your claim, you will have a chance to re-submit the claim *in the*

next reporting period with sufficient information/explanation to address the reason for the rejection.

- If you did not report an eligible expenditure from the current Reporting Period, you may enter it as a new claim in the next Reporting Period.
  - New claims for the next Reporting Period can be added once again after the window for the current Reporting Period ends and the new Reporting Period begins (July 16 and September 16). In other words, although the reporting period effectively closes for you when you click the "Submit All Claims" button but you will have another chance to add more eligible claims in subsequent Reporting Periods.

Update to the program [11/04/2020]:
- In order to be thorough and plan for all outcomes in this program, we offer communities the ability to submit any/all of your eligible program expenses, even if your total expenditures exceed your allocation amount. **This means you may submit expenses above your allocated amount.**
- **Please note, we offer no commitments these expenses will be reimbursed.** However, in the event all funds are not utilized during this final reporting period of Routes to Recovery, there may be additional reimbursement eligible. Again, we make no commitment this will occur as final counts are unknown.

CHECK CLAIM STATUS

- To check on the status of a submitted claim, log back into the Expense Reporter app and check out the Status column entries or click on the "View" button for any line item claim.
- To check whether your local government has received payment yet, you will need to coordinate with your local government's treasurer.
  - Note that payments will go to the same place at the county, city, village, or town that the Department of Revenue makes shared revenue payments to. You may need to coordinate with your Treasurer to confirm receipt of payment and, if necessary, to ensure that payment gets distributed to the correct internal department or account as you deemed appropriate. (You can use the "Paying Agency" field to help you keep a record of how your payment amount should be handled once it is received.)

Questions?

The associations representing local governments are some of the best resources for how to review your expenditures as to whether they appear to qualify as eligible expenditures for the Routes to Recovery: Local Government Aid Grants Program. The Wisconsin Counties Association, the League of Municipalities, and the Wisconsin Towns Association have coordinated with DOA on this Program and may be able to answer your questions if you contact them.

The Program website is the home for official Program materials and the Expense Reporter app. Questions can be emailed to covidgovgrant@wisconsin.gov.

If you email with questions, please include the name of your local government in the subject line (e.g., *Town of Adams - Adams County - FEMA cost category question*).

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