

# Transitioning to a .gov Email Domain



**WISCONSIN TOWNS  
ASSOCIATION**  

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**Empowering Town Officials**

**Lara Carlson**  
**WTA Legal Counsel**

# Outline

1. Email cybersecurity basics
2. Why using a .gov email domain enhances cybersecurity
3. How to set up a .gov email address
4. Resources



# Email Cybersecurity

**Email is the most common entry point for cyber attacks.**



## Spoofting

- Form of identity theft where a hacker disguises an email address or sender name - often just by changing one letter, symbol, or number - to convince the recipient that they are interacting with a trusted source.

## Phishing

- Type of fraud in which a hacker sends an email with the goal of stealing the recipient's sensitive personal data and/or spreading malware.
- Hackers frequently use spoofing when sending phishing emails to encourage recipients to take the "bait."

# Email Cybersecurity

## Spoofting Examples

• **Actual email address:**

• cheddartownchair@gmail.com

• sup1@townofcheddar.com

• **Spoofted email addresses:**

• cheddartwnchair@gmail.com

• townofcheddarchair@gmail.com

• officialtownchair@gmail.com

• sup1@townofcheddarwi.com

• sup1@townofchedddar.org

• sup1@townofcheddar.wi.us



# Email Cybersecurity

- How to protect yourself against spoofing and phishing:
  - Use caution opening emails from people you do not recognize, or emails with suspicious subject lines, links, or attachments.
  - Avoid clicking on links or attachments that come from sources you do not recognize or are not expecting.
    - If someone sends an unexplained link or attachment, **call them before clicking**.
  - Check with your email provider to see if you can use Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to protect your email account.

# What is a .gov Email Domain?


- Email domain = the portion of the email address after the @ sign.
  - [lara.carlson@wisctowns.com](mailto:lara.carlson@wisctowns.com)
- Wisconsin towns and villages can obtain either a .gov or wi.gov email domain.
  - .gov email domains = administered by federal govt
  - wi.gov email domains = managed by WI govt



# Why .gov Email Domains Enhance Cybersecurity

- *Restricted use* - .gov and wi.gov email domains are only available to government entities.
  - Prevents hackers from impersonating you by spoofing your email address.
  - Protects public and enhances public trust in government communications.
- *Additional oversight* - extra layer of security due to regulation of .gov/wi.gov domains by state and federal government agencies.

# WEC Push for .gov Email Domains

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  - Wisconsin's comprehensive voter database and election management system, maintained by Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC)
  - Clerks who access WisVote are responsible for maintaining accurate data and safeguarding Wisconsin electors' sensitive, personally identifiable information.
- **WEC's Goal = require anyone who accesses WisVote to use .gov and wi.gov email domains.**



# Setting Up a .gov Email Address

The screenshot shows the Wisconsin Elections Commission website. The main heading is "Election Security: wi.gov and .gov domains". Below this, there is a subheading "Election Security .gov Email Domain Subgrant Announcement" and a link to "Read the full memo to clerks from February 10, 2022 announcing the subgrant." The page is divided into three columns. The left column has a sidebar with "Elections" and "Quick Links". The middle column is titled "Obtaining a Trusted Domain for Your Municipality" and contains text explaining the difference between .wi.gov and .gov domains, followed by three links: "Elec Sec .gov domain process v1.1.pdf", "Small Custom Domain.pdf", and "Office 365 Custom Domain.pdf". A note at the bottom of this section states: "Note: When submitting the EL-363 Domain Authorization Form, you must also provide the DNS records associated with the domain name being requested." Below the note is a red button that says "Access the domain authorization form". The right column is titled "Subgrant Reimbursement Request And Certification" and contains text about the purpose of the document, followed by "SUBGRANT PROJECT PERIOD: August 24, 2021 through August 15, 2022.", "APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 31, 2022.", and "SUBGRANT CLOSING DATE: September 30, 2022." At the bottom of this column is a link to "Election Security .gov Subgrant Reimbursement Request and Certification\_1.pdf".

Step by step  
instructions

<https://elections.wi.gov/elections/election-security-integrity/election-security-wigov-and-gov-domains>

# Setting Up a .gov Email Address

- Contact your email provider (Outlook/Gmail/Yahoo/etc.).
  - *.gov/wi.gov domain is administered by federal/state government, but actual email account is managed by private email provider.*
  - May need to purchase a business account to support new .gov/wi.gov domain.
  - *May need assistance from your email provider or a local IT consultant to complete the process.*

The image displays four Microsoft 365 Business plan options in a grid layout. Each plan is presented in a white card with a blue header and footer. The plans are: Microsoft 365 Business Basic (\$6.00/user/month), Microsoft 365 Apps for business (\$8.25/user/month), Microsoft 365 Business Standard (\$12.50/user/month), and Microsoft 365 Business Premium (\$22.00/user/month). Each card includes a 'Buy now' button, a 'Try free for one month' link, and a list of features and included apps. The Standard and Premium plans also include 'Everything in Business Basic/Standard, plus' features.

Plan Name	Price (per user/month)	Key Features	Included Apps
Microsoft 365 Business Basic	\$6.00	Chat, call, meet up to 300 attendees; Web and mobile versions of Office apps; 1 TB of cloud storage; Business-class email; Standard security; Anytime phone and web support.	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Outlook, Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint
Microsoft 365 Apps for business	\$8.25	Desktop versions of Office apps with premium features; 1 TB of cloud storage; Standard security; Anytime phone and web support.	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneDrive, Access (PC only), Publisher (PC only)
Microsoft 365 Business Standard	\$12.50	Everything in Business Basic, plus: Desktop versions of Office apps with premium features; Easily host webinars; Attendee registration and reporting tools; Manage customer appointments.	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Outlook, OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange, Access (PC only), Publisher (PC only)
Microsoft 365 Business Premium	\$22.00	Everything in Business Standard, plus: Advanced security; Access and data control; Cyberthreat protection.	Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Outlook, OneDrive, SharePoint, Exchange, Intune, Azure Information Protection, Access (PC only), Publisher (PC only)

# Setting Up a .gov Email Address

- Contact federal or state government.
  - **.gov = registrar@dotgov.gov /**  
**wi.gov = electionsdomain@wi.gov**
  - Check availability and request authorization for your town's unique domain name.

Standard wi.gov Naming Conventions	Example email addresses with secure domains
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Preferred:</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. tn.&lt;name of town&gt;.wi.gov</li></ol></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• chair@tn.cheddar.wi.gov</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>If preferred town domain already taken:</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. tn.&lt;nameofthetown-nameofthecounty&gt;.wi.gov</li><li>3. townof&lt;nameofthetown&gt;.wi.gov</li><li>4. townof&lt;nameofthetown&gt;-&lt;nameofthecounty&gt;.wi.gov</li></ol></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• chair@tn.cheddar-shawano.wi.gov</li><li>• chair@townofcheddar.wi.gov</li><li>• chair@townofcheddar-shawano.wi.gov</li></ul>

# Resources

## Wisconsin Elections Commission

- Email electionsdomain@wi.gov or
- Call the WEC Help Desk at (608) 261-2028.
- *<https://elections.wi.gov/elections/election-security-integrity/election-security-wigov-and-gov-domains>*

## Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

- Email registrar@dotgov.gov or
- Call CISA's “.gov” line at (877) 734-4688
- *<https://home.dotgov.gov/registration/>*

# Resources

## WTA...

- **Website:** [www.wisctowns.com](http://www.wisctowns.com)
- **Phone:** (715) 526-3157
- **Fax:** (715) 524-3917
- **E-mail:** [wtowns@wisctowns.com](mailto:wtowns@wisctowns.com)
- **Address:** W7686 County Road MMM  
Shawano, WI 54166