Disclaimer: This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision-making.

Note: This FAQ is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, contact your hotline captain or command center for assistance. Please make sure to record all of the voter’s contact information should follow-up be necessary.

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1. Am I registered to vote?

A voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking Wisconsin’s “My Vote” website using their name and date of birth (https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/RegisterToVote). Voters must re-register every time they move, even if they move within the same municipality or ward (e.g., even if they move to another apartment in the same building).

2. Where do I vote?

A voter can determine their proper polling place by checking Wisconsin’s My Vote website (https://myvote.wi.gov/en-US/FindMyPollingPlace). A voter may only vote at the polling place for their residence.

\[\text{NOTE: Polling places may have changed due to COVID-19, please ensure all voters check with their local clerk to determine their polling location: https://myvote.wi.gov/en-US/MyMunicipalClerk.}\]
3. When do the polls open and close?

All polls are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. A voter in line at the polling place by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.²

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?³

Voters may register in four ways.

1. Voters may register at the polls on election day (also known as “same day registration.”) Voters must provide a “proof of residence” document to do so. See Question # 5 for requirements.

2. Voters may register online up to 20 days before the next election (i.e., until the 3rd Wednesday preceding the election), at https://myvote.wi.gov/en-US/RegisterToVote, so long as they have a Wisconsin Driver License or Wisconsin state ID card.

3. Voters may register by completing a paper registration form and mailing, or delivery the form to the municipal clerk no later than 20 days before the next election (i.e., the 3rd Wednesday preceding the election). The forms must be accompanied by a “proof of residence” document. See Question # 5 for requirements

4. Voters may register in person in their municipal clerk’s office until the close of business on the Friday before an election. Voters cannot register on a Saturday, Sunday, or Monday before an election.⁴ There is no same day registration at early voting. (Voters must provide a “proof of residence” document to do so. See Question # 5 for requirements)

For more information, see the Wisconsin Elections Commission handout available at: http://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/154/voter_registration_guide_pdf_21165.pdf

5. What paperwork do I need to register to vote?

If you register online, you do not need any other documents, but you may need to change your address with the DMV (which you can also do online).

If you are registering to vote any other way you must show a document with your first and last name, and current (voting) address.

- The document must be valid on the day it is used to register.
- If you are registering in person at the Clerk’s office or at the polls on Election Day you can show an electronic copy from your smartphone or tablet. Otherwise, you usually have to show or mail a paper copy of the document.
- If you are registering by mail, send a copy of the document with your registration form.

The document with your name and current address can be:

- A recent utility bill (electric, gas, cell or landline phone, cable, internet, etc.);
- A lease (unless you are registering by mail);
• A WI drivers license or WI ID card;
• A contract or intake document prepared by a residential care facility that says you currently reside in that facility;
• Any ID card issued by a WI governmental body (like a fishing/hunting license, or concealed carry license);
• An employer ID card with your photo and home address (but not a business card);
• A bank statement;
• A paycheck;
• A WI college/university photo ID along with a tuition fee receipt;
• Any government document or check.

You CAN’T use credit card bills, collection notices, magazines or personal mail to prove your address.

For a more detailed list of the kinds of documents that can be used, see page 2 of this handout: https://www.aclu-wi.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/answers_to_some_voter_registration_questions_august_2018.pdf

6. Can I vote without providing identification?

No. Wisconsin voters are required to bring a photo identification to vote in person on Election Day or to cast an in-person absentee ballot at a municipal clerk’s office. Identification is also required for casting an absentee ballot by mail, with certain exceptions for military and permanent overseas voters and permanent absentee voters. The list of acceptable IDs include the following:

• A Wisconsin DOT-issued driver license (unexpired, or expired after the date of the most recent general election – for 2020 that means expired since 11/6/2018) [IMPORTANT: Out of state drivers licenses CANNOT be used as voter ID];
• A Wisconsin DOT-issued identification card (unexpired, or expired after the date of the most recent general election – for 2020 that means expired since 11/6/2018);
• A military ID card issued by a U.S. uniformed service (unexpired, or expired after the date of the most recent general election – for 2020 that means expired since 11/6/2018);
• A U.S. passport (unexpired, or expired after the date of the most recent general election– for 2020 that means expired since 11/6/2018);
• A certificate of naturalization that was issued not earlier than two years before election day;
• A driver license receipt issued by Wisconsin DOT (valid for 45 days);
• An identification card receipt issued by Wisconsin DOT (valid for 45 days);
• A temporary identification card receipt issued by Wisconsin DOT through the Identification Petition Process (IDPP) (valid for 180 days)
• An identification card issued by a federally recognized Native American tribe in Wisconsin (regardless of expiration date);
• A photo identification card issued by a Wisconsin accredited university or college that contains date of issuance, signature of student, and an expiration date no later than two years after date of issuance. Such identification must be accompanied by a separate document that proves enrollment. (May be used even if expired before the most recent general election.)
• A veteran’s photo ID card issued by the Veterans Health Administration (“The VA”) (unexpired);
The address on the identification does not need to be current (this is one of the most common points of confusion for poll workers and voters). The name on the ID doesn’t need to be an exact match for the name in the poll book. The voter’s photograph must “reasonably resemble the elector.”

If voters do not have identification with them, they may leave, get their photo ID, and return to vote on Election Day by regular ballot. Otherwise, they may vote by provisional ballot. If a voter casts a provisional ballot but returns with proper identification before the closing hour, the vote will be cast as a regular ballot. Otherwise voters who voted a provisional ballot need to provide the required identification to the municipal clerk no later than 4 pm on the Friday after election day.

7. I have moved and I did not update my voter registration, can I vote?

If it has been more than 28 days since the person moved, the voter should re-register to vote at the new address. If it has been less than 28 days since the person moved from one address in Wisconsin to another, the voter should vote where they voted before moving, either in person or absentee.

Each voter must vote at the appropriate polling place for his or her current residence if they have lived there for more than 28 days prior to election day. “Residence” is the “place where the person's habitation is fixed, without any present intent to move, and to which, when absent, the person intends to return.”

Voters who have lived in Wisconsin for less than 28 days are only eligible to cast a Presidential-only ballot. Voters should check with their prior state to see if they are still eligible to vote there. Voters should complete form EL-141 (http://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/gab_forms/4/el_141_new_wi_resident_application_for_presidential.pdf), either at the polling place or at the municipal clerk’s office.

8. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my ward?

Whenever a voting machine or electronic voting machine is rendered inoperable by malfunction, the municipal clerk can provide substitute paper ballots, together with ballot boxes and voting booths. Or, the clerk can collect any ballots, hold them in an auxiliary bin or safe location, and run them through the tabulating machine later.

9. My name is not popping up on the list of registered voters. Could it have been removed?

The most common reason a name isn’t on a registration list is that the voter is in the incorrect polling place. However, if a voter is not on the rolls at the polling place, they may have been removed from the rolls. A voter may be removed from the list of registered voters in one state, territory or possession if he or she registers in another state, territory or possession. A voter may also be removed under certain circumstances pursuant to voting list maintenance efforts by election officials. Maintenance efforts recently have wrongly removed registered voters from poll lists. If the voter’s name is not on the poll list, the voter should ask the election worker to check a supplemental poll list.

Voters should be reminded that any voter may register (or re-register) to vote on election day at their polling place if they have resided in the ward for 10 days or more, and can show Proof of Residence. If they have resided in the state of Wisconsin, but not at their current ward for at least 10 days, they must vote at their previous ward.
Note that you can take steps to help to determine why a voter’s name is not popping up on the list of registered voters:

- Check the voter’s registration status using the registration lookup tool to make sure he/she is registered to vote and at the right place. (See Question #1.)
- Has the voter moved recently? Could they be registered at an old address? Check that address in the registration lookup tool. (See Question #1 and Question #6.)
- Has the voter changed their name recently, or could they be registered under a different name? Check that name (and any variations of the voter’s name, especially for hyphenated names, which sometimes trip up databases) in the registration lookup tool. (See Question #1.)
- When/where did the voter register to vote? Was that before the deadline for online or mail registration?

10. I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?

For a felony conviction (or any conviction for bribery or treason), a person who has completed their sentence (including any extended supervision, probation, or parole) is eligible to vote. No additional documentation is required to establish that they have completed their sentence; however, the voter must re-register. Voters under correctional supervision for a felony may not vote.  

If you are in jail serving a misdemeanor sentence or awaiting trial, you are still eligible to vote -- usually by absentee ballot using the address where you lived immediately previous to incarceration. More information on voting for former felons and other incarcerated individuals is available on the Wisconsin Elections Commission’s website: [https://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/154/ex_felons_incarcerated_voters_wi_voter_guide_pdf_42117.pdf](https://elections.wi.gov/sites/default/files/publication/154/ex_felons_incarcerated_voters_wi_voter_guide_pdf_42117.pdf)

11. I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?

**Wisconsin Election Protection should handle all provisional ballot inquiries.**

Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot and whether it was for one of the following reasons:

1. A qualified elector who has a current and valid Wisconsin driver license or identification card number wants to register to vote at a polling place on election day, but is unable or unwilling to list the number on the registration form (if a voter has a valid Wis. license or ID card but doesn’t know the number or expiration date, the voter can get it from the DMV by calling 608-266-2261 and then put it on the registration form)

2. A registered voter is unable or unwilling to provide proof of identification at the polling place.

A provisional ballot should NOT be used when a voter is at the wrong polling place. Instead, direct the voter to the correct polling place.

A provisional ballot also can NOT be used if a person is unable to provide a proof of residence document in order to register on election day.

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot because Wisconsin allows same-day voter registration. Detailed instructions for voting by provisional ballot are available here: [https://elections.wi.gov/sites/elections.wi.gov/files/2020-](https://elections.wi.gov/sites/elections.wi.gov/files/2020-).
A provisional ballot should be a last resort because these ballots will NOT be counted unless the voter provides the required information or ID (a) to poll workers by 8:00 p.m. on election day or (b) to the municipal clerk by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday after election day. If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind them to ask the poll worker exactly what steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted.20

12. I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school?

Yes. A student (age 18 or older) may choose to register and vote at their home (parents’ address) or may choose to vote where he or she attends college (whether or not the voter lives on campus). This includes students whose home/family address is in another state. Once a student has registered to vote at the college location, they cannot start voting again from their parents’ home unless they re-establish residency at that location.

Student status shall not be a consideration in determining residency for the purpose of establishing voter eligibility. So long as you have resided at your location (including your campus address) for 10 days with no present intent to move, you may vote at the campus address. Returning home between semesters or for the summer does not change this. (Please note that students must still meet the ID and proof of residency requirements.)21 Voters must be 18 or older on Election Day.22


13. I am physically disabled and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?

There are several accommodations made for voters with disabilities and who require assistance. When polling officials are informed that a voter has a disability, they should allow the voter to be assisted in marking a ballot by any individual except the voter’s employer, agent of the voter’s employer, or an officer or agency of a labor organization of which the voter is a member.23

A voter also has the right to request a paper ballot and voting booth if he or she is voting in a municipality that uses a voting machine.24

14. I am blind, physically disabled, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?

Yes. Accessible voting machines will be available, along with other assistance.25 Curbside voting is available if a voter cannot enter the polling place due to a disability. If a voter cannot sign the poll list due to a physical disability the poll worker will write “Exempt by order of inspectors” for them. If a voter needs help marking the ballot or help reading and writing in English may have another person assist (including poll workers and persons not qualified to vote). Voters may also ask for a paper ballot and voting booth if a physical disability prevents use of buttons or levers on a voting machine.26

In addition, other reasonable accommodations may be requested with the municipal clerk or the chief inspector at the polling place.
15. I do not know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?

Yes. Any voter may request assistance on how to vote (except from their employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union) or may request a paper ballot, if the municipality is using a voting machine. 27

After you have marked your ballot, the person helping you must then sign the ballot in the space provided. Also, the election workers will write the name of your assistor on the voting list. Your assistor does not need to be qualified to vote.

For more information, see https://elections.wi.gov/clerks/guidance/accessibility/assisting-voters-with-disabilities.

16. Can I vote absentee or vote in person before election day?

Any eligible, registered voter can vote by absentee ballot without a reason. Convenience is a valid reason for requesting an absentee ballot. There are three types of voting before election day in Wisconsin:

1) Absentee voting by mail: Registered Wisconsin voters may vote absentee without a reason or excuse by filling out an application and mailing it to the municipal clerk’s office. Ballot requests must be received by the municipal clerk no later than 5 p.m. on the Thursday before an election. 28 The request can be made online at www.myvote.wi.gov or by email or fax to the municipal clerk. If you have not previously provided a copy of photo ID, photo ID must accompany your application.

An absentee ballot sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be received by the municipal clerk no later than 8 p.m. on election day (postmarking it on election day is NOT acceptable). 29 Ballots can also be hand delivered to the Municipal Clerk’s office on election day.


A list of municipal clerk offices is available here: http://elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory.

2) Early Voting: Wisconsin allows early voting (also known as in person absentee voting) at your local municipal clerk’s office. Each city, village and town in Wisconsin is responsible for setting the dates and hours of in-person absentee voting for their municipality. To find the dates and hours for in-person absentee voting where you live, contact your municipal clerk. 30


For more information on Elderly and Disabled voters, see https://elections.wi.gov/sites/elections.wi.gov/files/2019-10/Elderly%20and%20Disabilities%202019.pdf
17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on election day?

If you have obtained an absentee ballot but have not returned it, you may vote at the polling place on election day. However, an elector who has completed and returned an absentee ballot is prohibited from voting at the polling place on election day.31

18. What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?

Electioneering, campaigning, and anything that interferes with the orderly conduct of elections is not allowed inside of the polling place or within 100 feet of the entrance to any building containing a polling place.32 Some specific rules are:

*Electioneering:* Electioneering, i.e., activity intended to influence voting at an election, is prohibited on public property within 100 feet of any building entrance a voter may use to access the polling place. No person may post or distribute any election-related material during polling hours on election day at a polling place. Generally, clothing, buttons, bumper stickers on private cars, and other political expressions by voters is not considered electioneering and should not be interfered with unless those voters remain at the polling location as observers or otherwise interfere with the orderly conduct of the election. Any building that houses a polling place on election day is public property for the day, including banks, VFWs, schools, churches, etc., and any campaign materials must be removed. Conduct on private property unrelated to the election (e.g., a lawn sign on an adjacent private home near the polling place) is allowed even if it is within 100 feet of an entrance.

“Observers” inside of the polling place:33 Wisconsin allows for an “observer area” where individuals may observe the election. These areas will include an area between three and eight feet from where voters check-in, and an area between three and eight feet from where voters register, designated by elections officials. Observers must sign in. Observers may NOT electioneer, interfere with the conduct of the election, wear clothing or buttons related to parties or candidates, interact with voters, watch voters mark ballots, discuss candidates or parties, make voice phone calls, or use still or video cameras.

*Petitions, solicitations, and exit polls:* Formal petitions, solicitations, and exit polling is allowed so long as it do not interfere with the orderly conduct of the election.

*Media and News:* Members of the media are permitted inside and outside of polling places. They may use cameras so long as they limit contact with voters prior to voting and do not interfere with the election. Any problems should be reported to the chief inspector of the polling place, or to the municipal clerk. Inspectors are not required to patrol the area, but are required to address issues brought to their attention.34

19. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?

**Wisconsin Election Protection should handle all challenges.**

Under very limited circumstances, your right to vote may be formally challenged. These challenges must follow strict guidelines and not be used for intimidating or to discourage voting. If you believe you have the right to vote and the procedures are followed, you should be allowed to vote.

A voter’s right to cast their ballot may be challenged by (1) an election inspector, or (2) any other voter.
**Challenges by an Elections Inspector**

Any inspector may challenge for cause any person offering to vote whom the inspector knows or suspects is not qualified to vote. Hunches, stereotypes, rumors, and the like are not sufficient to support a challenge. Neither is a voter’s appearance, or the fact that the voter is not proficient in the English language, is adequate for a challenge. Inspectors may challenge based on (1) citizenship, (2) age, (3) residence in the election district, (4) felony conviction if rights have not been restored, (5) mental incompetency, (6) double-voting. If a person is challenged as unqualified by an inspector, the inspector will first administer an oath (“You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will fully and truly answer all questions put to you regarding your place of residence and qualifications as an elector of this election.”)

The inspector will then ask a question sufficient to determine the challenge (e.g., “are you a United States Citizen,” “Are you 18 years of age,” “have you already voted in this election.”). If the voter refuses to take the oath or to answer the questions, they will not be issued a ballot. If the voter does take the oath, answers appropriately and meets certain other requirements, they will be given a paper ballot.

**Challenges by another Voter**

Any other voter may challenge for cause any person offering to vote whom the challenging voter knows or suspects is not qualified to vote. Hunches, stereotypes, rumors, and the like are not sufficient to support a challenge. Neither is a voter’s appearance, or the fact that the voter is not proficient in the English language, is adequate for a challenge. Another voter may challenge based on (1) citizenship, (2) age, (3) residence in the election district, (4) felony conviction where rights have not been restored, (5) mental incompetency, (6) double-voting.

First, the poll inspector shall administer an oath to the challenging voter (“You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will fully and truly answer all questions put to you regarding the challenged person's place of residence and qualifications as an elector of this election”), and then ask the challenger why they are challenging.

Second, the poll inspector shall administer the oath and specific questions as described in the “Challenges by an Inspector” above.

The challenger may then withdraw their challenge. If the challenger does not withdraw the challenged voter shall swear (or affirm) their eligibility to vote, and if they meet certain requirements vote as described above.

Challenges are to be documented by the poll workers using forms EL-104. If the voter takes the oath of eligibility and answers the relevant questions, and the relevant questions show that they are eligible to vote, and they meet all requirements, they must be issued a ballot. Challenges may be reviewed by the Board of Canvassers during vote counting.
Any challenge based on an individual’s ethnicity, accent, or inability to speak English is unacceptable. A notation of the alleged grounds should be made on the Challenge Documentation form (EL-104c). The improper challenge should be dismissed and an unmarked ballot issued to the voter.

21. Can I vote in the primary election? 38

The presidential primary in Wisconsin is “open”, meaning that voters do not have to declare a party affiliation to vote but must be registered to vote.

1 Wis. Stat. § 6.77(1).
2 Wis. Stat. § 6.78(4).
4 Wis. Stat. § 6.29(2)(a)
6 https://bringit.wi.gov/frequently-asked-questions
7 https://bringit.wi.gov/frequently-asked-questions; see also Wis. Stat. § 6.34; Wis. Stat. § 6.79;
9 Wis. Stat. § 6.79.
12 ONE WISCONSIN INSTITUTE, INC. v. Thomsen, 198 F. Supp. 3d 896 (W.D. Wisc. 2016);
14 Wis. Stat. § 6.10(1).
15 Wis. Stat. § 6.10.
17 Wis. Stat. § 6.36 (d).
18 Wis. Stat. § 6.55(2)(a);
19 Wis. Stat. § 6.03(1)(b); Wis. Stat. § 304.078(3); http://elections.wi.gov/node/2473;
20 For more information, see https://elections.wi.gov/clerks/provisional-ballots; see also
21 Wis. Stat. § 6.10(12).
22 Wis. Stat. § 6.02(1).
23 Wis. Stat. § 6.82(1)(a).
24 Wis. Stat. § 6.82(3).
26 Wis. Stat. § 6.82(3).


Wis. Stat. § 6.86(6).

Wis. Stat. § 12.03.


Wis. Admin. Code EL 9.01 (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/el/9); Wis. Stat. § 6.92, 6.925

Wis. Admin. Code EL 9.03 (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/el/9)

Wis. Admin. Code EL 9.02 (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/el/9)