

## Qualifications for Voting

**Age:** At least 18 years old on Election Day

**Residence:** U.S. citizenship and 10 days in Wisconsin and the district prior to Election Day. Residents of fewer than 10 days may apply at the municipal clerk's office or the polling place to vote for president and vice president only. In Milwaukee, the Board of Election Commissioners performs the election duties of the municipal clerk.

If you have moved within the state during the last 10 days before an election, you **must** vote in your former district either in person or by absentee ballot.

**Registration:** Required in ALL municipalities.

## Determining Legal Residence

You must be a legal resident of the place where you vote. Your legal residence is the fixed place where you live without plans to move. This fixed place is your residence even when you are away (vacation, hospital, etc.) as long as you plan to return. Students with a permanent residence in one community and a temporary residence at school may choose to vote at either place, but not both.

If you live in a soldiers' home, nursing or group home, any county home or other charitable institution, that is your legal residence unless you choose to keep voting from your old address before you moved.

If you were a Wisconsin voter and moved to another state and do not meet its voting requirements by the presidential election, you may vote absentee for president and vice president only using your former Wisconsin address for up to 24 months after leaving Wisconsin.

## Registering to Vote

Registration is required by federal law in all municipalities. Registration is permanent in Wisconsin if you vote at least once in any four-year period.

**Where:** At the municipal clerk's office in person during the regular office hours until 5 pm on the day before the election. Registration at any other location must be completed by 5 pm on the third Wednesday before the election. Registration at the clerk's office before the third Wednesday before the election does not require any proof of residence or any identification card (ID). A proof of residence (but no ID) is required for those who register after the third Wednesday

before the election. A proof of residence is a document that states the elector's full name and complete residential address, including house number and city name. These can include utility statements, ID cards, receipts or leases. A piece of mail addressed to the elector is no longer considered valid proof of residency.

**By mail:** A voter may write or call the clerk anytime prior to 20 days before the election and ask for a voter registration form to be sent in the mail. The form should be received by the clerk's office no later than 5 pm on the third Wednesday before the election. No proof of residence is required for mail registrations. An ID is required for mail registration for anyone who is voting in Wisconsin for the first time.

**As part of a voter registration drive:** Municipal clerks sometimes conduct door-to-door registration drives. Community groups sometimes register voters at public locations such as shopping centers.

**At a public high school:** Public high schools may register students and staff members.

**At other places before Election Day:** In some municipalities, you may register at fire stations, libraries, community centers or other locations. Check with the clerk for sites.

**At your polling place on Election Day:** If you miss the voter registration deadline, you may register at your polling place on Election Day and then vote. Proof of residence in the ward is needed, such as a Wisconsin driver's license or an official Wisconsin identification card with your address. If you do not have written proof, a qualified voter from your municipality can serve as your witness to verify your address.

If you move or change your name, you should notify the clerk's office as soon as possible. The change may be made at the polls on Election Day.

Military electors use their previous Wisconsin address and are not required to register before voting.

## Voting

**Polling Places:** Polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm. Call the clerk's office for the location of your polling place.

**Time Off for Voting:** You are entitled to up to three hours off of work to vote, but you must request the time before Election Day. The only penalty can be loss of pay for the time you are off.

**Challenged Ballot:** If your vote is challenged, contact the

clerk's office. Challenges to a voter's qualifications can be made by any qualified voter on Election Day.

**Instructions:** Sample ballots and instructions are posted at every polling place and often printed in newspapers. You may also ask for instructions on how to use a voting machine or how to mark a paper ballot.

A write-in vote may be cast for someone whose name is not on the ballot.

## Assistance in Voting

Any voter who needs help at the polls has a right to assistance. A polling place must be accessible to the handicapped. If it is not, a ballot will be brought to the curbside for a disabled voter. If your polling place is not accessible, notify your clerk and the State Elections Board to have the problem corrected.

You can have help in casting your ballot if you have problems reading or writing, have difficulty with the English language or have a disability which prevents you from being able to mark the ballot or operate the voting machine. State that you need help when you give your name and address to the poll worker. Anyone you choose may help you, except your employer, an agent of your employer or an officer or agent of your labor union.

## Voting by Absentee Ballot

Registered voters who cannot go to their polling place or are unwilling to go on Election Day may vote by absentee ballot.

Voters who have moved within the state during the 10 days before an election can vote by absentee in person at the clerk's office or by mail. Ballots are available for mailing or in-person voting 21 days before an election (30 days before the fall elections).

**In Person:** You may request and mark an absentee ballot in person at your municipal clerk's office. The deadline is 5 pm on the day before the election.

**In Nursing Homes:** Special voting deputies will deliver absentee ballots to nursing homes for all residents who requested them. Relatives of the residents may be present during the voting. The deputies will witness the completed ballots and return them to the clerk.

**By Mail:** You may request an absentee ballot by mail. Your

written request can go to the clerk any time from six months before the election until 5 pm the Thursday before the election. Send your full name, the address of your legal voting residence, your ward or election district, the fact that you are requesting an absentee ballot and the address to which you want the ballot sent. Your signature is required. When you receive your ballot, read the instructions carefully. If you need help in marking the ballot due to reading problems or physical disability, you can have someone help you. Your helper cannot be your employer, an agent of your employer or an officer or agent of your union. Mark your ballot when the person who will sign the envelope for you is present. Fold all ballots separately before putting them in the envelope. The certificate on the envelope must be signed by you and one other witness who is not a candidate. Mail the completed ballot promptly so that the clerk receives it by Election Day. It is wise to request, complete and return your absentee ballot at least a week or more before Election Day.

## ***Elections***

**Primary Elections:** Held to nominate candidates to be voted on in the general or spring election.

**Spring Primary:** Third Tuesday in February.

**Fall Primary:** Second Tuesday in September.

**Spring Election:** First Tuesday in April to elect judicial and non-partisan municipal, county and education officials.

**Presidential Preference Primary:** Held with the spring election in a presidential election year to indicate preferences within each party for president.

**General Election:** Even-numbered years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November to elect U. S. senators, representatives to Congress, president and vice president, state and county partisan officers.

**Special Elections:** Held to fill vacancies or for other designated purposes.

*For a full and current schedule of election dates and candidates, please visit: [www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org) or contact the state League office at 608-256-0827.*

The **League of Women Voters** is a non-partisan organization

working to promote active and informed participation in government. Please contact us to find out about League activity in your community.

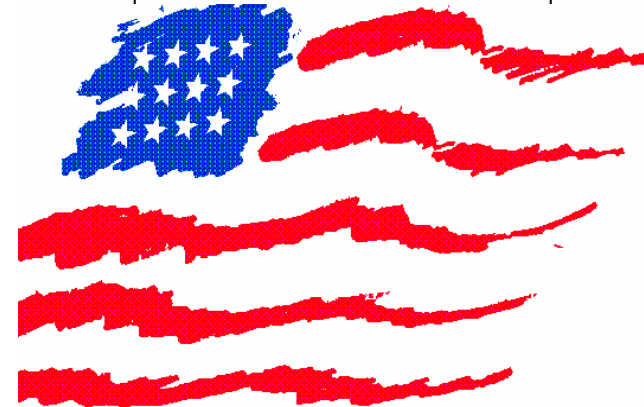
For further information visit:

[www.lwvwi.org](http://www.lwvwi.org)    [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

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This material is based on Wisconsin election laws and is believed to be correct and accurate. Questions on specific interpretation of the laws should be referred to the State Elections Board at 608-266-8005. <http://elections.state.wi.us/>

# *Voting in Wisconsin*



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