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Wisconsin Election Guidelines

Prepared for Wisconsin Family Council's Voter Registration Resource Kit

Introduction

The laws and guidelines that govern elections are and have been for the most part decided upon by the individual states. This section will explain the way Wisconsin administers elections.

A number of races take place in Wisconsin during an election year and you are strongly encouraged to participate in all of them. The 2010 elections will be held on:

Tuesday, February 16	Spring Non-Partisan Primary
Tuesday, April 6	Spring Non-Partisan General (various court of appeals and circuit court races, local municipal elections)
Tuesday, September 14	Fall Partisan Primary
Tuesday, November 2	Fall General Election (Governor, Lt Governor, Atty. General, Sec of State, State Treasurer, one U.S. Senate seat, all eight U.S. House seats, even-numbered State Senators, all ninety-nine State Representatives, local partisan offices)

The next step is to clear away any deterrents from voting. The two main deterrents are being registered beforehand to avoid an extra line on Election Day and being assured you have properly registered.

Qualifications

If you are a U.S. citizen, 18 or older, a resident of a voting district within the state, and have not lost your right to vote through felony convictions or otherwise, you are legally eligible to vote within your voting district. Wisconsin law allows citizens to register on Election Day if they can prove they have been a **resident of that location for 10 days preceding the election** and can provide the proper form of identification.

Registering to Vote

In order to vote, you must be registered with your municipality under your place of residence. There are three methods of registration: in person, by mail, or on Election Day. No matter what method you use, **all methods require an acceptable form of identification, proof of residence, and an application for registration.**

To register in person:

Register in person at your municipal clerk's office up to **5:00 P.M. on the day before** the election. Be sure to bring proper ID and proof of residency—they will have application forms available.

To find your correct municipality and clerk, see Question 1 of the *Suggestions and FAQs* page of this kit.

To register by mail:

Mail the following items to your municipal clerk's office up to **5:00 P.M. on or before the 20th day before** the election. Your registration application must be postmarked no later than

- **Wednesday, March 17, 2010** for the April 6, 2010 election
 - **Thursday, October 14, 2010** for the November 2, 2010 election
1. Registration by mail application form. The *Voter Registration Application and Instructions* are enclosed in this resource kit. You can also find the application on the following web site:
<http://elections.state.wi.us/subcategory.asp?linksubcatid=1637&locid=47>
 2. Include a copy of a current and valid photo identification; **or**, a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document that shows your complete name and address.

You may also send the same forms to the Elections Division of Wisconsin's Government Accountability Board **20 days prior to an election**. They will in turn send them to your municipality for processing. **We recommend sending your application to the proper municipality.** The address for the State Elections Board is PO Box 2973, Madison, WI 53701.

To register on Election Day:

Go to your polling place with a proper ID (see list below) and be sure to **get in the line for unregistered voters**. If you do not know where your polling place is, see Question 2 on the *FAQs* page of this kit or simply call your municipal clerk.

Acceptable Identification for Registration¹

For purposes of voter registration, a form of identification will double as acceptable proof of residence ***if it includes both of the following:***

1. A current and complete name, including both the given and family name; and
2. A current and complete residential address, including a numbered street address, if any, and the name of a municipality.

Proof of Residence

The following constitute acceptable Proof-of-Residence ***if the document contains the information specified above:***

1. A current and valid Wisconsin driver's license.
2. A current and valid Wisconsin identification card.
3. Any other official identification card or license issued by a Wisconsin governmental body or unit.

¹ Taken from the State Elections Board website:

http://elections.state.wi.us/faq_detail.asp?faqid=119&fid=27&locid=47, accessed 02/12/10.

4. Any identification card issued by an employer in the normal course of business and bearing a photo of the card holder, but not including a business card.
5. A real estate tax bill or receipt for the current year or the year preceding the date of the election.
6. A residential lease which is effective for a period that includes Election Day (NOT for first-time voters registering by mail).
7. A university, college or technical institute fee card (must include photo).
8. A university, college or technical institute identification card (must include photo).
9. A gas, electric or telephone service statement (utility bill) for the period commencing not earlier than 90 days before Election Day.
10. Bank statement.
11. Paycheck.
12. A check or other document issued by a unit of government.

If you cannot supply acceptable proof of residence, your registration form can be substantiated and signed by one other elector who resides in your municipality, corroborating your residency information. **The corroborator must then provide acceptable proof of residence.**

Voting Absentee²

If you are not already registered, you will need to register to vote **before** an absentee ballot can be sent to you.

Request Absentee Ballot by Mail

An “Application for Absentee Ballot” form is enclosed in this resource kit and you may also access it at: <http://elections.state.wi.us/subcategory.asp?linksubcatid=1636&locid=47>. Complete the form and mail it to your municipal clerk's office. The application **must be received** by the clerk no later than **5:00 P.M. on the Thursday before** the election in order for an absentee ballot to be mailed to you.

The municipal clerk **must receive** the completed ballot **no later than the day of the election** so that it can be delivered to the polling location by 8:00 P.M.

In-Person at your Municipal Clerk's Office

This can be done up until **5:00 P.M. on the day before** the election. Due to the increased use of absentee ballots, many municipalities offer a one-stop alternative to mailing. Check with your municipality to see if they will allow you to apply for the absentee ballot, receive it immediately, fill it out, and hand it back all in a single visit. You will most likely be able to do this as the municipality incurs the mailing costs and wants to offer convenience for voters.

² Please note that there are exceptions for military voters. Please refer to the Military and Overseas Voting Manual for these rules. Manual is located at: <http://elections.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=9084&locid=47>.