

# VOTING IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

**A Briefing for MCOs, ICAs, & SSI Medicaid HMOs**

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# About the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition

- The WDVC is a non-partisan effort to help ensure full participation in the entire electoral process of voters with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places.
- The Coalition is coordinated by Disability Rights Wisconsin and Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.
- Members: people with disabilities, and community agencies including Access to Independence, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, NAMI Wisconsin, People First Wisconsin, Mental Health America of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Association of the Deaf, Disability Rights Wisconsin, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, the Arc Wisconsin, IndependenceFirst and others.
- Join us! [disabilityvote.org/](https://disabilityvote.org/) and [www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote](https://www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote)



# Where Are We and Where Have We Been?

- People with disabilities are underrepresented at the polls. The *Rutgers University Fact Sheet on Disability and Voter Turnout in the 2018 Elections* notes a 10.4% gap in Wisconsin voter turnout between citizens with and without disabilities.
- Major barriers historically:
  - Accessibility concerns
  - Photo ID
  - Failure to provide accommodations
  - Transportation
  - Lack of training for poll workers
  - Stigma and discrimination



# Voting During a Pandemic

- People with disabilities have high vulnerability for COVID 19; voting in person became high risk.
- Transportation often high risk or not available.
- DMV provides photo IDs for voting: DMV .only.
- No Special Voting Deputies in care facilities; no family members or other visitors to assist. Residents not allowed to leave facilities to vote in person
- Absentee ballots were late or did not arrive.
- Difficulties requesting absentee ballot including requirement to provide copy of photo ID.
- Witness requirement for absentee ballots was a barrier for some voters.
- For those who voted in person, concerns included long lines, lack of curbside voting, some issues with failure to provide accommodations, anxiety about health risk.
- Many voters disenfranchised.
- Confusion and changing environment due to changes in the law related to litigation.



# Your Role and Why It Is So Important

- With many members isolated and with limited mobility, MCOs, ICAs, HMOs, and their teams are trusted points of contact.
- Voting is one of the essential basic needs you can address along with personal care, medication, access to health care, food, and much more.
- Help your members to plan ahead and vote safely: Voting is now a public health issue as well as a civic responsibility and right.
- You are not alone. The Disability Vote Coalition, the DRW Voter Hotline, LWV and other resources are here to partner with you, to share resources, and to provide support to your staff and members, and expertise on voting issues.
- Identify your lead staff contacts for voting, such as member rights specialists, or internal advocates. Have them register for our Phase 2” Training: July 13 at 11 AM.



# The 2020 Elections: August

## August 11 Election:

- Partisan primary for US Congressional Representative, and Wisconsin Assembly Representative are up for re-election, as are State Senators from even numbered districts.

## Voter Registration Deadlines

- BY MAIL: Wednesday, July 22, 2020
- IN PERSON: Tuesday, August 11, 2020
- ONLINE: Wednesday, July 22, 2020

## *Deadline to Request an Absentee Ballot:*

- *For Regular voters: August 6, 2020 @ 5:00 PM*
- *For Indefinitely Confined voters: August 7, 2020 @ 5:00 PM*
- *Deadline to Return Absentee Ballot: August 11, 2020 @ 8:00 PM*



# 2020 Elections: November

## November 3, 2020: General Election Day

- This General Election is for President, U.S. Representative, even-numbered Wisconsin State Senate seats, all Wisconsin Assembly seats, and all District Attorneys.

## Deadlines for November 3 General and Presidential Election:

- Voter Registration Deadlines
- By Mail: Wednesday, October 14, 2020
- In-Person: Tuesday, November 3, 2020
- Online: Wednesday, October 14, 2020
- *Deadline to Request an Absentee Ballot:*
- *For Regular voters: October 29, 2020 @ 5:00 PM*
- *For Indefinitely Confined voters: October 30, 2020 @ 5:00 PM*
- *Deadline to Return Absentee Ballot: November 3, 2020 @ 8:00 PM*



# Voter Registration

- Develop a plan to support members with voter registration: establish an internal team who will attend the July 13<sup>th</sup> training. Member rights staff / member advocate could be a good choice.
- Have a script for staff to engage members about voter registration in a wellness call or home visit.
- Up to 20 days before Election day: Voters may register online at [myvote.wi.gov/](https://myvote.wi.gov/) or by mail or register in person at their municipal clerks office or at their polling place on Election Day. Must provide proof of residence and a Photo ID.
- Provide access to a voter registration form and assist with documentation.
  - All voters MUST provide a Proof of Resident Document when registering to vote.
  - Nondrivers may need assistance to obtain [Wisconsin ID Card for Voting Purposes](#)
- Assistance is available:
  - DRW Voter Hotline: 844-DIS-VOTE / 844-347-8683
  - League of Women Voters
  - Municipal Clerk (Find your clerk on [MyVote Wisconsin](#))
  - Wisconsin Election Commission: 866-VOTE-WIS / [elections.wi.gov](https://elections.wi.gov)





# Absentee Voting

- Due to the health risk of Covid 19, absentee voting is encouraged and is a public health imperative.
- Have a script for staff to ask members about absentee voting in a wellness call or home visit.
- Any **registered Wisconsin voter** is eligible to request an absentee ballot for any reason.
- Make the request as soon as possible for both August and November.
- Potential challenges:  
Providing a copy of photo ID, completing the ballot and envelope with signature from witness, returning it in time, lack of screen reader accessible ADA compliant absentee ballot.
- Assistance is available:
  - DRW Voter Hotline: 844-DIS-VOTE / 844-347-8683
  - League of Women Voters
  - Municipal Clerk (Find your clerk on [MyVote Wisconsin](#))
  - Wisconsin Election Commission 866-VOTE-WIS / [elections.wi.gov](#)



# Voter rights

- You have the right to vote privately and independently.
- You have the right to access the polling place, including an accessible route to enter the building.
- You have the right to use an accessible voting machine.
- All polling places are required by law to have an accessible voting machine.
- You have the right to assistance marking your ballot. You may bring someone to assist you or ask a poll worker for assistance. *Note: You cannot receive assistance from your employer or from your union representative.*
- You have the right to ask for reasonable accommodations at the polling place. Some common accommodations might be: a chair to sit on a signature guide a magnifying glass assistance with stating a person's name and address.
- If a voter cannot enter the absentee voting location or polling place due to disability, Wis. Stat. § 6.82(1) requires that curbside voting must be available.

*Tip: contact your clerk in advance to discuss how to access curbside voting.  
(number to call, bell to ring, honk horn etc)*



# Voting and Guardianship

In Wisconsin, a person under guardianship retains the right to vote unless the court expressly removes it.

If an individual is under guardianship and unsure of their right to vote, the Court's decision regarding the right to vote is recorded on a court form called "A Determination and Order on Petition for Guardianship Due to Incompetency." (GN-3170). The language in the court order will not specifically say that the person has retained the right to vote, however, a box will be checked if the right has been removed.

If someone is under guardianship and not sure if they have the right to vote, they should:

Ask their guardian to look at the "Determination and Order form" to see if their right to vote was removed. A copy of this form may be requested from Probate Court in their county (about \$2.00 for a copy).

OR

Contact the Municipal Clerk for their community. The Clerk can check the list they receive from the state of individuals adjudicated incompetent and ineligible to vote.

A person who has a guardian and has lost the right to vote may petition the court to restore their right to vote (Wis. Stat 54.64(2)(a)).

**You do not need to make a decision if someone is able to vote or not. The courts have the responsibility to decide.**



# How We Can Partner

DRW Voter Hotline: 1-844-DIS-VOTE

The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition:

DVC website: Fact sheets, postcards, posters, & videos (<https://disabilityvote.org/>)

Social media posts ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#))

Newsletter stories, PSA announcements

Script for conversations with members

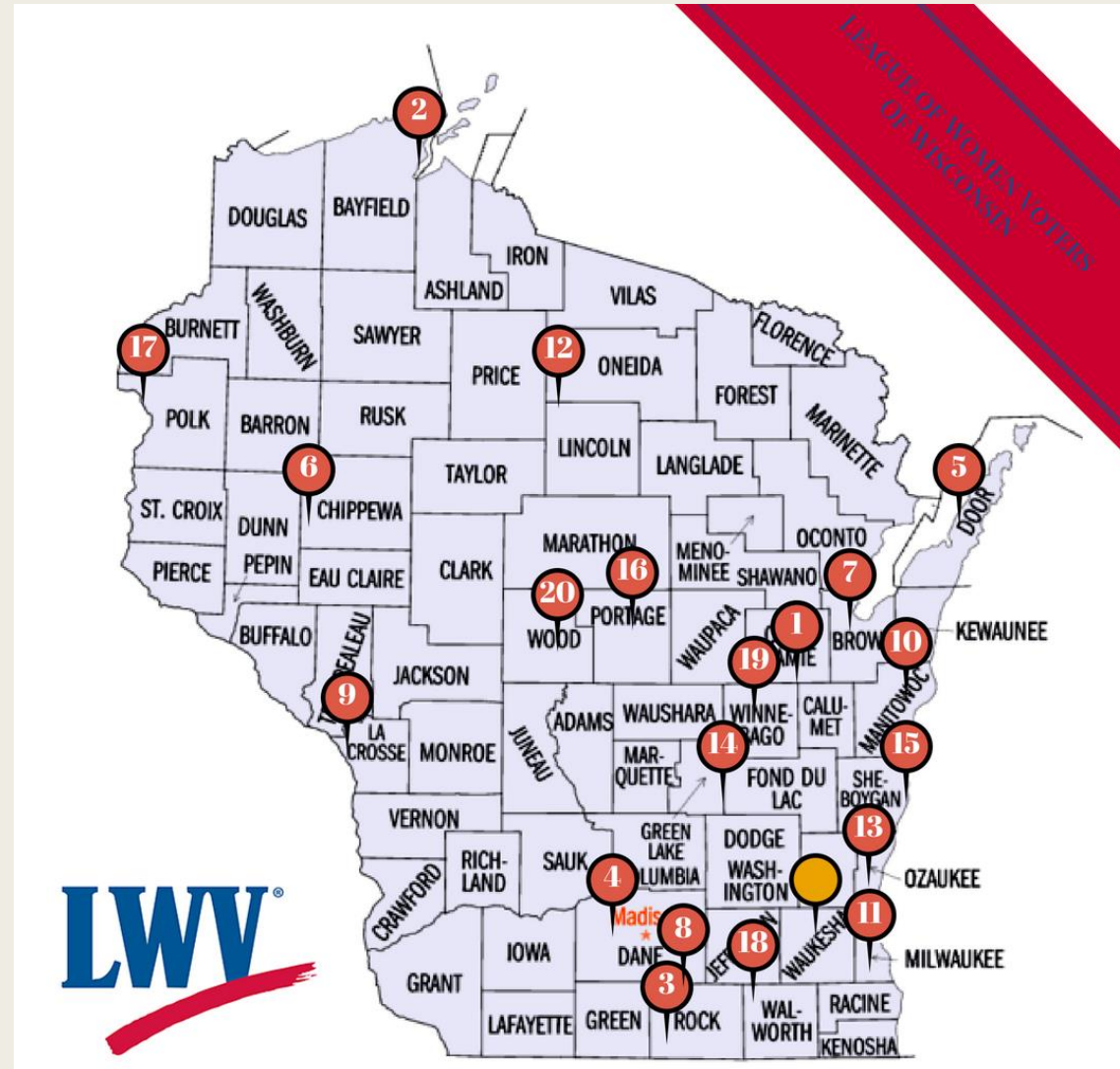
We can provide a training

Join our email list – sign up at [disabilityvote.org/](https://disabilityvote.org/)

League of Women Votes is ready and willing to partner



# League of Women Voters



# How You Can Make a Difference

- Develop a plan to support your members to safely participate in the electoral process.
- Identify a designated voting point person to be a liaison with the Disability Vote Coalition.
- We can work with you to develop a plan and provide resources:
  - Provide a script / flowchart that your staff can use to address voter registration and absentee voting.
  - Provide voting materials for you to mail
  - Provide online materials that you can link to and share
  - Provide you with voting postcards and other materials that your staff can leave in people's homes when they visit members.
  - Provide e-newsletters that you can forward to staff/ members/ clients
  - Partner with you to hold an online training or educational program for your members/staff/clients
  - Provide assistance to your members who need a hand with voter registration or to request an absentee ballot. (DRW Voter Hotline)
  - Provide Facebook posts about voting that you can post on your page



# Next Steps

- Identify your internal voting lead contact / team.
- Have them register for the July 13<sup>th</sup> training:  
*Voting in the Time of Pandemic: A Training on Supporting your members with Voter Registration, Rights, and Resources*
- Review the resources from today's training including the Sample Voter Outreach script, DVC Partnering Ideas, My Voting Plan, and Disability Vote Coalition resources. Resources for participants in today's training are posted at [disabilityvote.org/](https://disabilityvote.org/)
- Develop your organizations plan to support your members with voter registration and absentee voting. The DVC can provide social media content, speakers, resource material. Remember to sign up for our email list at [disabilityvote.org/](https://disabilityvote.org/)
- Refer members who need more assistance to the DRW Voter Hotline or other experts.
- Opportunity: **National Disability Voter Registration Week** is July 13 - 17
- Promote voting w/30th anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)/July 26



# Questions and Discussion

