

# Resources for Voters with Disabilities

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The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition is a project of Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities.

**Website:** [www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org)

**Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote](http://www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote)

# **Voting is a constitutional right.**

Voters with disabilities who live in residential facilities have the right to participate in Wisconsin elections.

## **Factsheets in this packet:**

- Voting Tips for Voters Living in Residential Facilities
- Voting Rights
- Registering to Vote
- Ways to Vote
- Getting a Photo ID for Voting
- Competency, Guardianship, and Voting in Wisconsin
- Voting Dictionary



# Voting Tips for Voters Living in Residential Facilities

**It is okay to ask support staff for  
help with things like:**



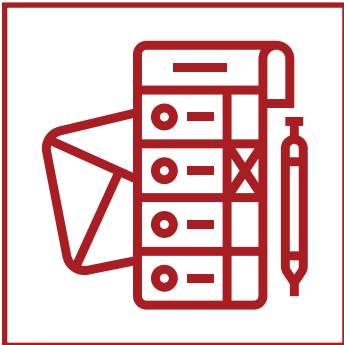
**questions about the voting process**



**finding voting resources**



**registering to vote**



**getting absentee  
voting information**



**giving you a ride or helping  
you find a ride**

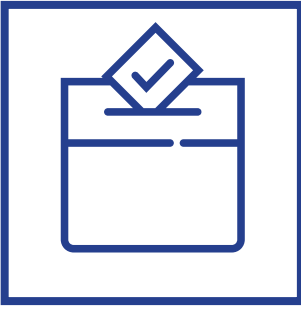


**helping you with marking  
your ballot**

## Important things to know:

- Your employer or union representative may not help you vote.
- No one should tell you who or what to vote for. Staff cannot tell you to vote for one candidate or the other.
- All polling places are required by law to have an accessible voting machine.





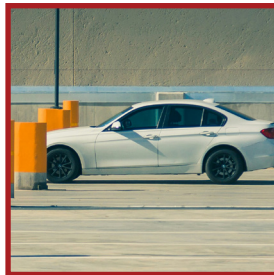
# Voting Rights

## You have the right to:

- vote privately and independently.
- access the polling place, including an accessible route to enter the building.
- use an accessible voting machine.
- have help with marking the ballot.
- ask for help or reasonable accommodations at the polling place.

# Some reasonable accommodations include:

- a chair to sit on
- a signature guide
- a magnifying glass
- help with stating your name and address
- curbside voting, if you can't enter the polling place because of your disability
- bringing someone to help you
- asking a poll worker for help







# Registering to Vote

## Your Address of Residence

You may register to vote using any address where you reside or intend to return to, even if you are not sure when you are returning. Where you vote from depends on where you say your home address is. This can be the residential facility you live in or your previous address. Either choice is an acceptable way to vote.

You may check your registration status at [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov). If you have moved since you registered, you can update your address.

When you register, you must provide a proof of residence. You can use your intake document from your residential care facility as your proof of residence.

## Your Address of Residence, cont.

Learn more about other documents that can be your proof of residence at the Wisconsin Elections Commission:

[elections.wi.gov/Register](https://elections.wi.gov/Register)

## Options to Register

### Register at the Polls on Election Day.

Bring your proof of residence documentation.

### Register Online at [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov).

You can use your Wisconsin driver license or state issued ID card to register. The deadline to register online is 20 days before the election.

## Options to Register (continued)

### Register in-person at your Municipal Clerk's office.

You can register in-person until 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day.

You need an acceptable proof of residence document.

### Register by mail.

Print out, fill in, and mail a **Voter Registration Application form** to your Municipal Clerk. You can find a Voter Registration Application form:

- on My Vote Wisconsin: [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov)
- on the Wisconsin Elections Commission website: [elections.wi.gov/forms/el-131-fillable](https://elections.wi.gov/forms/el-131-fillable)

## Options to Register (continued)

### Register by mail. (continued)

**Unable to print the form or get it online?** You also can write to or call your Municipal Clerk and ask them to send you a Voter Registration Application.

Follow the instructions on the form carefully. Mail it back before the deadline with a copy of your proof of residence document. The mailed form must be postmarked at least 20 days before the election.

### Register with an Election Registration Official.

A Special Voting Deputy (SVD) may visit your facility to help with absentee voting. Examples of facilities they visit are:

## Options to Register (continued)

### Register with an Election Registration Official. (continued)

- Nursing Homes
- Community-Based Residential Facilities
- Residential Care Apartment Complexes
- Adult Family Homes

Residents can register to vote with a Special Voting Deputy who is also appointed as an Election Registration Official 20 days or more before an election.



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[www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org)





# Ways to Vote

## You can vote ...

- at the polling place on Election Day.
- by absentee ballot.
- by Special Voting Deputy.



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[www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org)

[www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote](https://www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote)

# How can I vote?

## Voting At the Polling Place on Election Day

You can look up your polling place by entering your address at [myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Find-My-Polling-Place](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Find-My-Polling-Place).

All polls are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

## Voting by Absentee Ballot

Any registered Wisconsin voter can get an absentee ballot. If you are not registered, you must register to vote before you can get an absentee ballot.



# How can I vote? (continued)

## Voting by Absentee Ballot (continued)

### In-Person Absentee Ballot

You can apply for and vote using your absentee ballot in-person in the Municipal Clerk's office, or at another location chosen for absentee voting in your municipality.

In-person absentee voting begins 14 days before each election. Dates and times are different by location. To find the dates and hours for in-person absentee voting, contact your Municipal Clerk for the city, village, or town where you live.

- Find your clerk and their contact information by using the My Municipal Clerk tool on My Vote Wisconsin:

[myvote.wi.gov/en-us/My-Municipal-Clerk](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/My-Municipal-Clerk)

# How can I vote? (continued)

## Voting by Absentee Ballot (continued)

- Find your clerk in the full Directory of Wisconsin Clerks: [elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory](https://elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory)

### Can't vote using an in-person absentee ballot?

You can ask your Municipal Clerk to mail you an absentee ballot. You can make your request in writing by mail, email, fax, or online at [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov).

If you plan to mail or fax your request, you can download **the Application for Absentee Ballot** from the Wisconsin Elections Commission website and send it to your Municipal Clerk:

[elections.wi.gov/wec-form/absentee-ballot-request](https://elections.wi.gov/wec-form/absentee-ballot-request).

# How can I vote? (continued)

## Voting by Absentee Ballot (continued)

Your Municipal Clerk must receive your request for an absentee ballot by **5:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the election**. Although this is the legal deadline, you will not have enough time to receive and return your ballot by Election Day. **You should make your request at least 2 weeks before the election.**

You must give a copy of your acceptable photo ID with your request, unless you are part of a group exempted by law. More information about acceptable photo IDs can be found at [www.bringit.wi.gov](http://www.bringit.wi.gov).

You must deliver your completed absentee ballot **no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day**.

If you are hospitalized or a sequestered juror, you may request and vote by absentee ballot on Election Day.

# How can I vote? (continued)

## Voting by Special Voting Deputy

Some people have problems getting to their polling place on Election Day. These people can be people who live in Residential Care Facilities such as:

- nursing homes.
- community-based residential facilities (CBRF).
- residential care apartment complexes.
- adult family homes.

### Requirements for Special Voting Deputies

There are special procedures for absentee voting in residential facilities. The process uses Special Voting Deputies (SVD) who administer an absentee ballot.

# How can I vote? (continued)

## Voting by Special Voting Deputy (continued)

Special Voting Deputies may visit a residential care facility if:

- there are at least 5 people registered to vote in the municipality where the facility is located; and
- at least one resident has requested an absentee ballot for the election.

### **Do you need Special Voting Deputies to come to your facility?**

You should contact the Municipal Clerk for the community where your facility is located. They can decide if it is possible for a Special Voting Deputy to visit your facility and help residents with voting. Depending on the number of requests they get, they may not be able to help with every request.





# Getting a Photo ID for Voting

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## Introduction

Wisconsin law requires voters to show an acceptable photo ID to vote at the polling place. A list of acceptable IDs can be found at [bringit.wi.gov](https://bringit.wi.gov).

If you do not have an acceptable photo ID, you can get a free Photo ID for Voting from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Find out how here:

[wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/how-to-apply/petition-process.aspx](https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/how-to-apply/petition-process.aspx)

If you need help getting an ID, call the Department of Motor Vehicle's Voter ID Helpline: 844-588-1069



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[www.disabilityvote.org](http://www.disabilityvote.org)

## Important Note

You must give a valid photo ID or acceptable substitute when voting by absentee ballot, unless you are part of a group exempted by law. The groups exempted by law are:

- voters who are indefinitely confined, meaning you have trouble getting to your polling place due to age, illness, infirmity, or disability.
- voters living in nursing homes or other residential facilities.

These voters are NOT required to provide a photo ID. If you are exempted by law, you may have your witness make sure of your identity, instead of sending a copy of your photo ID.

Residents of care facilities served by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs) do not have to provide photo ID to complete their ballot. The Special Voting Deputies will make sure that the voter's name and address are correct.





# Competency, Guardianship, and Voting in Wisconsin

## Having the Right to Vote under Guardianship

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

The court order will not specifically say that the person has kept the right to vote. If the right has been removed, a box will be checked on your “Determination and Order” form.

## Having the Right to Vote under Guardianship (continued)

If you are under guardianship and not sure if you have the right to vote, you can:

- ask your guardian to look at your “Determination and Order” form to see if your right to vote was removed. You can request a copy of this form from the Probate Court in your county. It costs about \$2.00 for a copy.
- ask the Municipal Clerk for your community to check the state’s list of individuals adjudicated incompetent and ineligible to vote.

### Important Things to Know:

- If you lost the right to vote and are under guardianship, you may petition the court to restore your right to vote (Wis. Stat 54.64(2)(a)).
- A judge is the only person that can determine incompetency for voting purposes.

## Important Things to Know (continued)

- Family members, doctors, or caretakers may not determine that you are incompetent to vote.

## Want to Learn More?

To find out more, you can read the Disability Rights Wisconsin Competency, Guardianship, and Voting brochure. The brochure and other resources about this topic are available on:

- the Disability Rights Wisconsin website:  
[disabilityrightswi.org/resource-center/guardianship-and-voting/](https://disabilityrightswi.org/resource-center/guardianship-and-voting/)
- the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition website:  
[disabilityvote.org/2023/guardianship-and-voting-resources/](https://disabilityvote.org/2023/guardianship-and-voting-resources/)





# Voting Dictionary

## **Absentee**

Not present

## **Absentee Ballot**

A vote cast by a person who does not vote in person

## **Accessible**

Able to be used

## **Accommodation**

A modification, adaptation, or adjustment that fulfills a need

## **Ballot**

Document that lists the choices in an election

## **Candidate**

A person running for an office or applying for a position

## **Constitutional right**

Something that Americans are entitled to because of our constitution

## **Election**

The process where citizens choose their government representatives or what will be done about a particular issue

## **Exempted by law**

The law says that something does not apply to someone

## **Indefinitely confined**

A voter who will always need an absentee ballot due to age, physical illness, infirmity, or disability

## **Individuals adjudicated incompetent and ineligible to vote**

People who cannot vote because a judge said that they do not understand voting.

## **Guardian**

A person who looks after and is legally responsible for another person

## **Guardianship**

The position of being legally responsible for the care of someone else

## **Municipal clerk**

The person in charge of elections for your city, town, or village. They handle voter registrations, absentee ballots, and all local parts of the elections process.

## **Municipality**

A clearly defined territory or section of land. All the people living on that territory share one common local government.



## **Nursing home**

A residential facility that houses people who need a wide range of health, personal, and medical supports

## **Petition**

A formal request sent to a court

## **Polling Place**

The building where people go to vote on Election Day

## **Poll worker**

People who work at polling places on election day or at early voting sites during early voting

## **Primary**

An election in which qualified voters choose:

- a candidate or group of candidates for political office; or
- party officials; or
- delegates for a party convention

## **Privately and independently**

Not known publicly and on your own, without needing or requiring other people

## **Proof of Residency**

A document that proves where a person lives

## **Registered voter**

A person who is qualified to vote and has their name recorded in the voting district where they live

## **Residential community**

A group of people living in a common physical location.

Residential communities can be:

- adult family homes
- retirement communities
- nursing homes

## **Resident**

A person who lives somewhere

## **Right(s)**

Something that a person is entitled to

## **Special Voting Deputy (SVD)**

A person who is appointed by the Municipal Clerk to conduct voting in certain residential care facilities

## **Voter Registration**

The process that a voter goes through to enroll as a voter

## **Wisconsin Elections Commission**

The agency that administers and enforces election laws in Wisconsin. It has 3 Democrat representatives and 3 Republican Representatives.