



How Wisconsin Elections Work

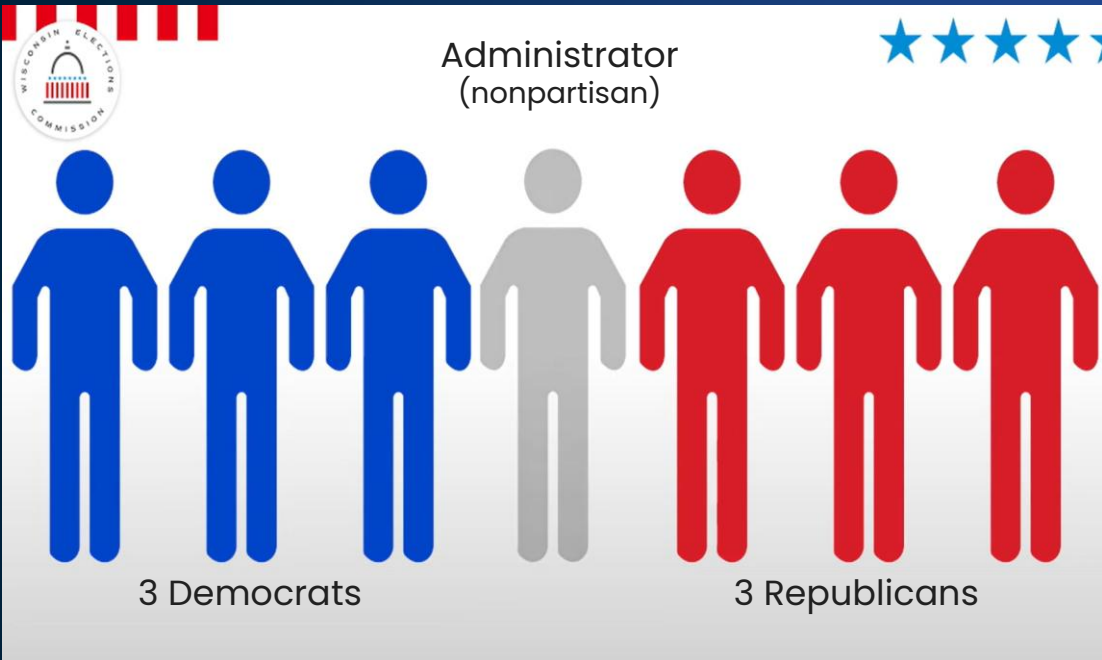


Did You Know?

- The WEC's role is unique compared to other states because Wisconsin's elections are decentralized
- Wisconsin is home to 1,851 municipal clerks and 72 county clerks
- Clerks at the municipal and county levels manage the hands-on operations and logistics for elections
 - For example, the WEC does not staff polling places, create or handle ballots, or report Election Night Results

The Bipartisan Elections Commission

- Six appointed, bipartisan Commissioners
 - three Democratic and three Republican Commissioners
- Need at least 4 votes in a public meeting to:
 - implement legislation and court decisions, start investigations, issue guidance to clerks
- Appointed to five-year terms by state legislative leaders.
 - Two Commissioners must be former clerks
- Non-partisan administrator, appointed by the Commission.
 - Oversees staff, implements Commission's directives
 - No vote on Commission
 - All WEC staff required to be non-partisan



Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC)

1) Administering Elections

- Evaluates nomination papers and determines who gets on the ballot for state and federal races.
- Tests & certifies voting systems, manages audits

2) Supporting Local Election Officials

- Provides training and guidance to clerks

3) Voter Outreach

- Educates the public/clerks on how Wisconsin elections work

4) Maintaining Voter & Election Data System

- Updates and verifies the state's voter registration list daily, stores data



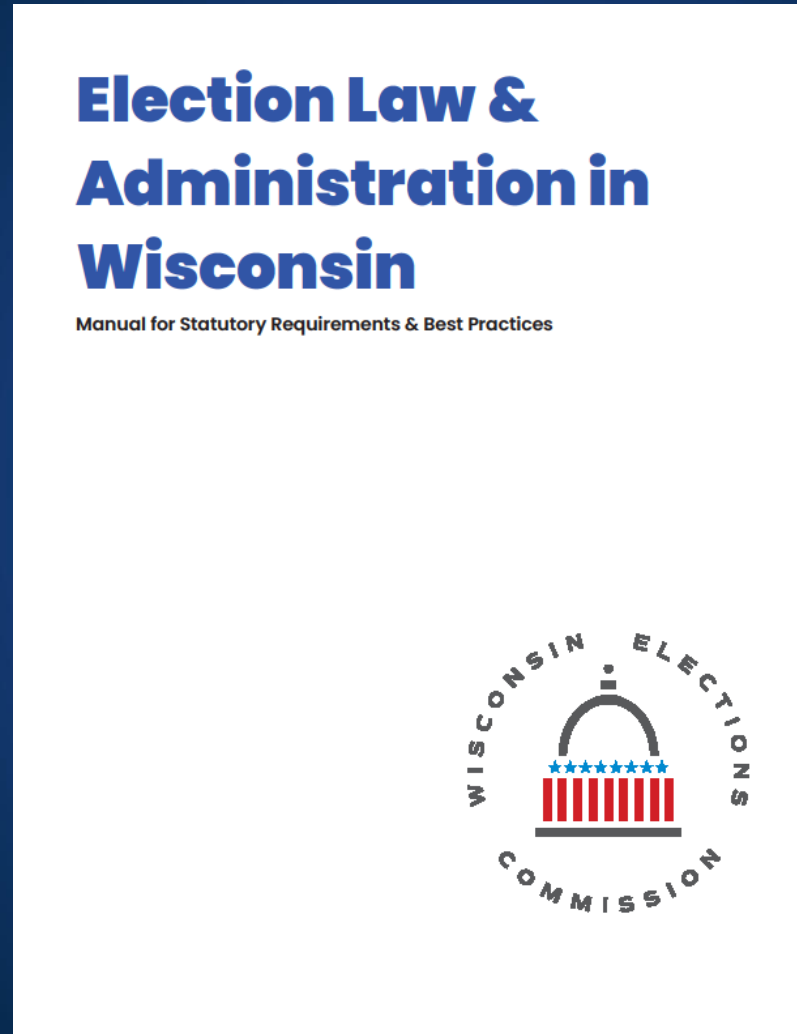
WEC'S ROLE (con't)

- Builds and maintains voter registration database technology- the clerks enter and maintain the data
- Administer Federal subgrants to municipalities
- MyVote.wi.gov



WEC Does **NOT** register voters, issue ballots, activate/deactivate voter records, staff polling places, create or handle ballots or report Election night results

Election Law and Administration in Wisconsin (ELAW) Manual



ELAW Manual available on [Elections.wi.gov](https://elections.wi.gov)



County Clerks

Who Are Our County Election Officials?

- **72 counties, vary greatly in size**
- **Important role, but much more limited than other states**
- **Elected, partisan office**
- **Run for election in a Presidential Election year, serve a 4-year term**
- **Constitutional Officer**
- **Chief Election Official of the County**



County Clerks Roles & Responsibilities

- Design and distribute ballots
- Post unofficial results on Election Night
- Responsible for conducting most recounts
- Some contract with municipalities to do data entry
- Some serve as trainers
- Some procure and/or program voting equipment for municipalities

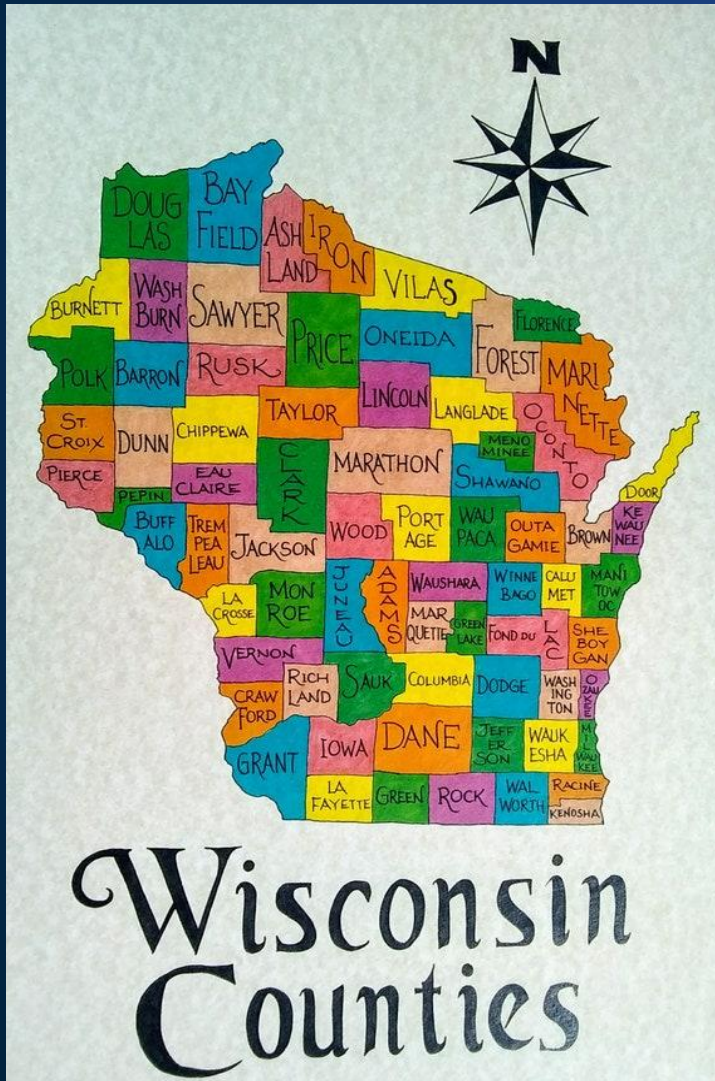


County Clerks Provide Support to Municipal Clerks



- Training
- Supplies
- Help Desk on Election Day
- Collect Election Results
- Help Run Recounts
- Moral Support...

Election Administration Flexes to Match Size and Needs

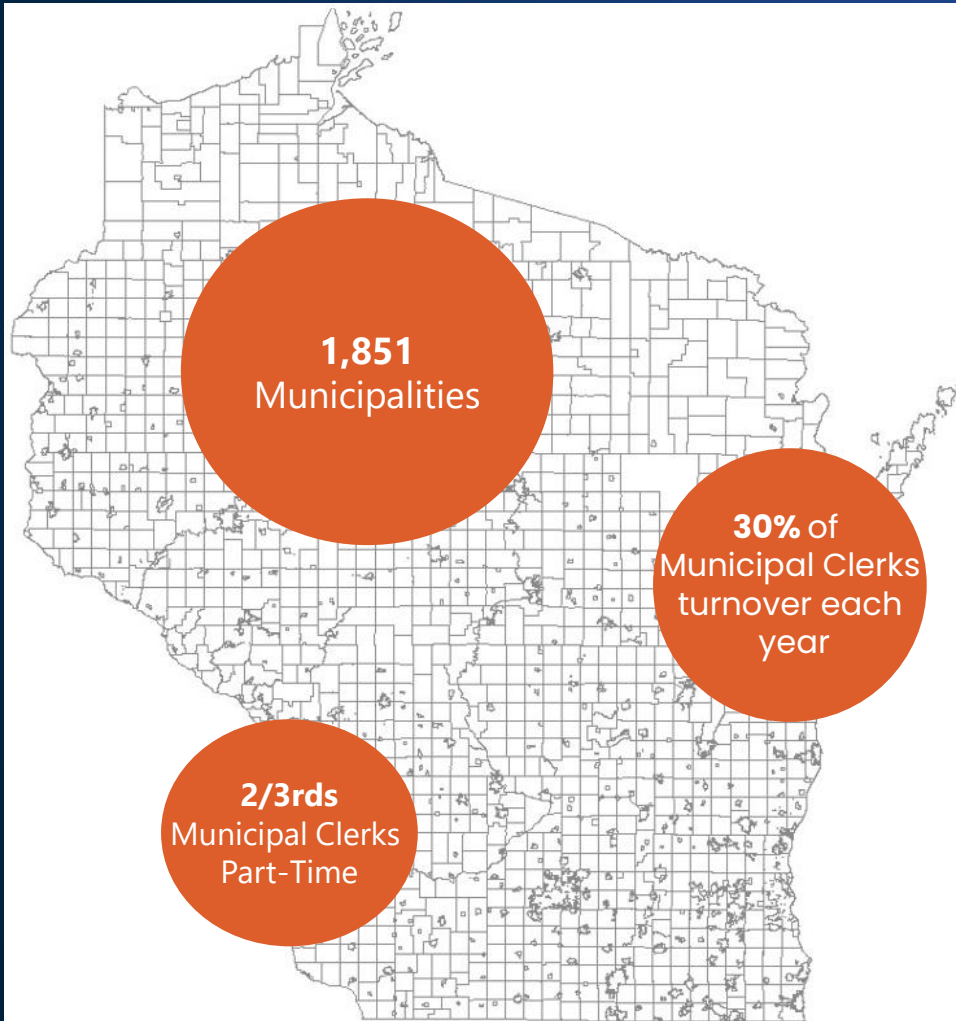


If you have experienced elections in one county, you've only experienced elections in one county

- Menominee – 1 municipality
- Marathon – 61 municipalities

Municipal Clerks

Roles & Responsibilities



- **Ongoing**
- **Pre-Election**
- **Election Day**
- **Post Election Day**

Municipal Clerks

Roles & Responsibilities



Ongoing

- Planning and budgeting
- Equipment Maintenance
- Voter Registration
- Voter List Maintenance

Voter List Maintenance

Daily maintenance of ineligible voters and updates from data received on moves, deaths, felons, competency orders.

- Only clerks have statutory authority to remove voters.
- Over 500,000 records have been inactivated or updated ahead of November 3, 2026 election.

WisVote System

Historical Database

6.6 million voter records



Poll Books

3.6 million active voters



Municipal Clerks Roles & Responsibilities

PRE-ELECTION

- Election Notices
- Evaluate candidate paperwork for municipal contests
- Conduct absentee voting
- Track absentee ballots
- Train and recruit poll workers
- Public Test of voting equipment
- Set up polling places



Municipal Clerks

Roles & Responsibilities

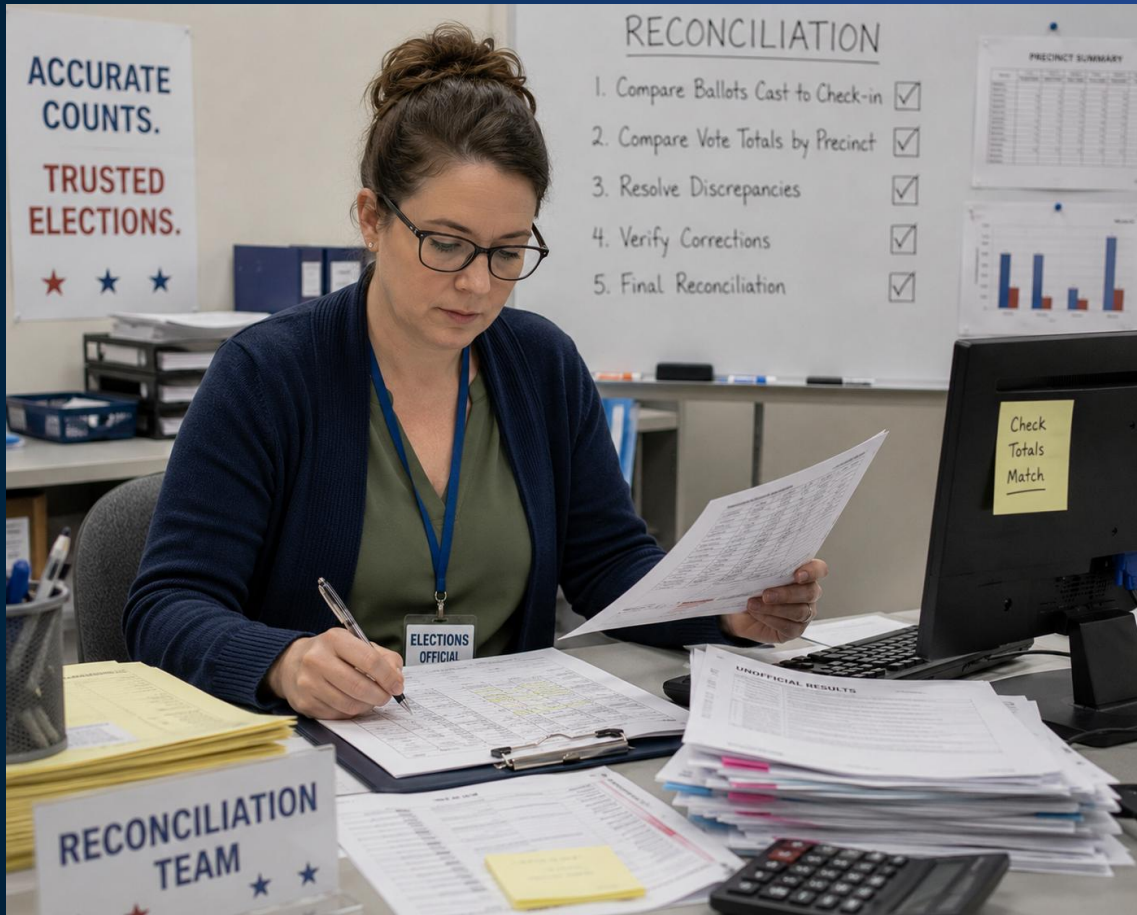


ELECTION DAY

- Support poll workers
- Help Desk
- Central Count
- Crisis Management
- Send unofficial results to the County Clerk

Municipal Clerks

Roles & Responsibilities



POST- ELECTION

- Canvassing & Certification
- Reconciliation
- Voter Record Updates
- Auditing
- Records Retention

Who are our municipal election poll workers?

- Between 30,000-40,000 poll workers in a general election
- Between 2,800-4,000 polling places
- From each of 1,851 municipalities
- Bi-partisan appointees from parties
- Chief inspectors in charge of polls
- Election observers can observe anywhere

Poll workers are your neighbors, friends, and family from your community!



How to Become an Election Official

1. **Be nominated by a party or can apply with municipal clerk. The governing body appoints the inspectors to a two-year term.**
2. **Be able to read, write and understand the English language.**
3. **Receive training from the municipal clerk**
4. **May not be on the ballot for the election they work.**
5. **Must be a qualified elector of the county.**

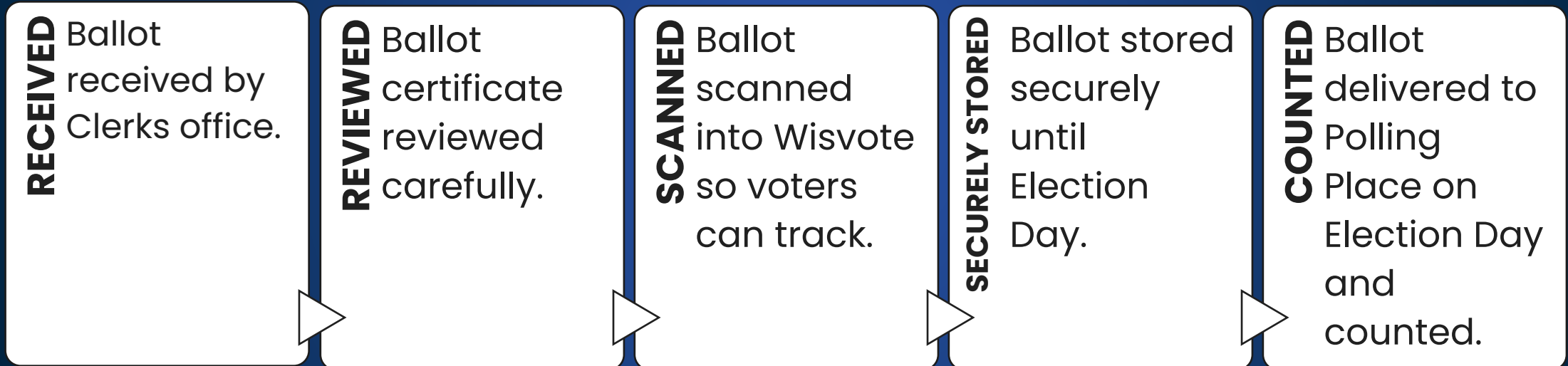
Poll Worker / Election Official

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Greet and direct voters to polling place**
- **Set up polling place – accessibility requirements**
- **Register and Record Voters**
- **Issue Ballots**
- **Monitor voting equipment**
- **Tabulate/Count votes**
- **Properly complete forms & report results to the County**
- **Maintain order, prevent electioneering and potential disruption to voters**
- **Assist Voters when requested**
- **Ensure safe and secure and fair process for all eligible voters**
- **Chain of custody**
- **Special Voting Deputies-trained to conduct voting at care facilities**
- **Process Absentee Ballots**

Life of an Absentee Ballot

5 Secure Steps:



Accommodations

- A voter can request reasonable accommodations. Municipal clerks are required to make reasonable efforts to comply with requests for voting accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Wis. Stat. § 5.36.

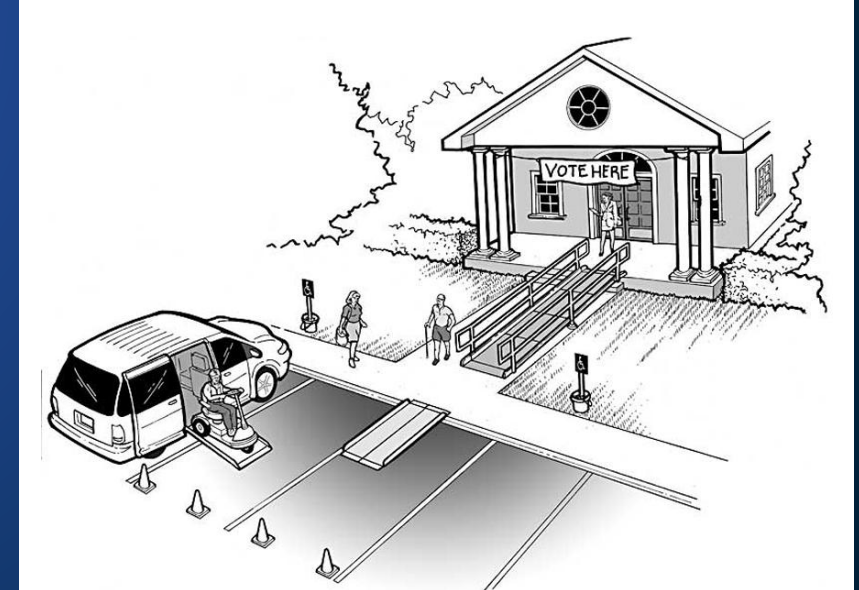
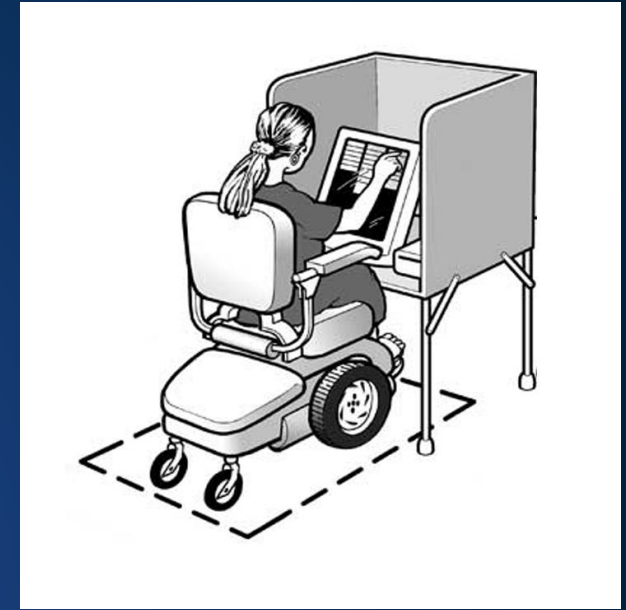
Voter Assistance

Voters can request assistance with (not limited to):

- Signing a Voter Registration Application
- Stating Name And
- Address at the Poll Book
- Signing the Poll Book
- Marking a Ballot
- Returning an Absentee Ballot

Accessible Ballot Marking Devices

- All municipalities are required to have accessible voting equipment, which is specially designed to assist voters with disabilities who may have trouble voting by other methods.
- All voters should be encouraged to use accessible voting equipment.



MyVOTE.WI.GOV



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MyVote will be unavailable from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Friday, October 9th for routine maintenance.



NEXT STATEWIDE ELECTION

2026 General Election

Tuesday, November 3, 2026



[Vote Absentee By
Mail](#)



[Where Do I Vote?](#)



[What's On My Ballot?](#)



[Register To Vote](#)



[Track My Ballot](#)

Reminders for Wisconsin Voters

- No changes to the rules
- Return your by mail absentee ballot at least 14 days before the election
- In-person Absentee Voting Starts on Oct 20th
- Third Party Mailers
- If you have questions contact your municipal clerk

Resources

- About the WEC: <https://elections.wi.gov/about-the-wec>
- Election Information Hub: <https://elections.wi.gov/2026>
- Upcoming Commission Meetings: <https://elections.wi.gov/about-wec/commission-meetings-and-minutes>
- “How Wisconsin is Ready for the November 3, 2026 General Election” Report: <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/reports/how-wisconsin-ready-november-2026-election>
- Badger Voters: To purchase data from statewide database or to view nomination papers for free visit <https://badgervoters.wi.gov>
- MyVote Wisconsin: To register to vote, view a sample ballot, request an absentee, view voter history and more visit <https://myvote.wi.gov>

