



A Short Guide to Helping Voters Register Under Wisconsin Law

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

In Wisconsin, a person is eligible to register if he or she is:

- At least 18 years of age on or before election day;¹
- A resident of the Wisconsin ward or district he or she wishes to voter at least 10 days before the election;
- A United States citizen.²

Wisconsin restricts the following individuals from registering to vote:

- Any person convicted of treason, felony or bribery, unless the person's right to vote is restored through a pardon or by completing his or her sentence and probation.³
- A person who is adjudged by a court of law to be incompetent or who is under guardianship, unless the court has determined that the person is competent to exercise the right to vote;⁴

WHAT CONSTITUTES A COMPLETE VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION?

In Wisconsin, the following information about the applicant must appear on the voter registration application in order for it to be considered complete:

- 1) Full name.
- 2) Residence address and mailing address if different from residence;
- 3) Date of birth;
- 4) Citizenship;
- 5) Indication that applicant resided in municipality more than 10 days;
- 6) Driver's license number, last four digits of Social Security Number or an indication that the applicant doesn't have either a driver's license or social security number;
- 7) Indication whether applicant has been convicted of a felony, and, if so, whether she has had civil rights restored or been pardoned;
- 8) Indication of whether the person is a new registration, change of name or change of residence.
- 9) Indication whether applicant is registered to vote in another jurisdiction.
- 10) Applicant's original signature or applicant's original mark.

If the applicant is registering for the first time by mail, she may include a copy of one of the following:

- A current driver's license or other photo identification.
- A utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government

If a mail-in applicant who is registering for the first time does not send a form of identification with the registration application, she will be asked to present identification at the polls. It's important to advise applicants of this.

¹ Any person who has resided in Wisconsin for less than 10 days before the presidential election is entitled to vote for the president and vice president, but not for other offices. He or she must appear in person at the election board and sign a sworn statement in order to be permitted to vote. Wis. Stat. § 6.15

² Wis. Stats. § 6.02

³ Wis. Stats. §§ 6.03(1)(b), 304.078(3)

⁴ Wis. Stat. § 6.03



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WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS?

Registration closes 20 days before the election. If the registration application is mailed in, it must be postmarked by the third Wednesday before the election (20 days)⁵ After the close of registration, a person can still register in person with the municipal clerk up to 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election.⁶ Anyone who registers in person after the third Wednesday before the election will have to show proof of residence before the election.

Wisconsin also permits Election Day registration, with proof of residence.⁷

When the voter registration application is processed, the county election board notifies the applicant. If applicant doesn't receive her card within two or three weeks, she should contact the county election board.

WHAT ARE THE STATE RULES GOVERNING VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES?

A. Are there restrictions on copying completed voter registration applications prior to submitting them to the registrar?

There are no restrictions in the Wisconsin election code on copying completed voter registration applications before they are submitted to the county elections clerk.

B. Are voter registration groups subject to time limits for submitting the voter registration applications they have collected?

There is no specific time limits for returning registration cards.

C. Are voter registration groups prohibited from putting identifying marks on completed voter registration applications?

There are no restrictions in the Wisconsin code on putting identifying marks on completed registration applications.

D. Are there special rules requiring a third party to sign her name to the completed voter registration application?

A third party does not have to sign her name on the completed registration unless she is a special registration deputy.⁸

E. Does the state require voter registration organizations to register or file other information detailing its voter registration activities?

Wisconsin law does not require voter registration organizations to register or file information about its voter registration drives.

When third parties assist others to register by providing application forms and returning the forms for the applicants, the state prefers that they register to become special registration deputies. A special registration deputy has authority to accept the applications as if they were delivered in person.⁹

When a third party who is not a special registration deputy delivers the voter registration application is it considered to be a mail-in registration and proof of residence is required. If the applicant doesn't provide proof of residency with the application, she must bring it to the polls the first time she votes.

⁵ Wis. Stats. § 6.28(1)

⁶ Wis. Stats. § 6.29

⁷ Wis. Stats. § 6.55

⁸ Wis. Stats. § 6.26(4)

⁹ Telephone conversation with Diane Lowe, elections specialist with Wisconsin Elections Division, Sept. 12, 2007.



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Qualified Wisconsin voters may apply to become special registration deputies for all Wisconsin municipalities or for select municipalities.¹⁰

F. Does the state require any training in order to conduct voter registration drives?

Wisconsin law does not require training to take part in voter registration drives. The state does prefer that people who help others to register apply to be appointed as special registration deputies, who are trained before they are appointed.

G. Does the state have restrictions on who may help others register to vote?

There are no Wisconsin laws restricting who may assist others to register.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR CORRECTING INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS?

A. If a voter registration application is incomplete, may the voter registration drive write the missing information on the application with the consent of the applicant?

No.

B. How may an applicant correct an incomplete application after it has been submitted to county election officials.

The applicant receives notice from the municipality advising her whether the application was approved or denied. She can provide any information that it lacking from the application or resubmit an application. The Wisconsin statutes do not address the process for amending an incomplete applications.

For more information, contact:

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1-800-546-8683
www.projectvote.org

¹⁰ Wis. Stats. § 6.26(2)(am).