

VOTING RIGHTS IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC –

A Training for Milwaukee County BHD Providers

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Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition



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/ and www.facebook.com/wisconsinindisabilityvote



Barriers for Voters with Disabilities & Older Adults

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
 - Limited knowledge of the law
 - Stigma and discrimination

HANDICAP ENTRANCE

KNOCK HARD

Call-

414 312 2925

to gain access
open door



Barriers reported for April, May, August Elections

- People with disabilities have high vulnerability for COVID 19; voting in person became high risk.
- Confusion and changing environment due to changes in the law related to litigation.
- Many voters disenfranchised.
- DMV provides photo IDs for voting: DMV was open by appointment only for months.
- Absentee ballots were late or did not arrive; lack of screen reader accessible absentee ballot.
- Difficulties requesting absentee ballot including requirement to provide copy of photo ID.
- Witness requirement for absentee ballots was a barrier for some voters.
- Confusion over completing and returning absentee ballots.
- 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
- Transportation often high risk or not available.
- For those who voted in person, concerns included long lines (April), lack of curbside voting, some issues with failure to provide accommodations, anxiety about health risk.



Your Role and Why It Is So Important

- With many clients isolated and with limited mobility, care managers, care coordinators, peer specialists and their teams are trusted points of contact.
- Voting is one of the essential basic needs you can address along with mental health, medication, access to health care, food, housing and much more.
- Help your clients to plan ahead and vote safety: Voting is now a public health issue as well as a civic responsibility and right.
- Develop an organizational plan to support your members with voter registration, absentee voting, and needed accommodations,
- 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.



Supporting your Clients to Vote Safely

- Develop a plan to support safe voting, including key deadlines for voter registration and absentee voting. Define roles and responsibilities.
- Make **voter registration** application forms available to your clients.
 - Assist clients with checking their voter registration
 - Offer to provide assistance with submitting their voter registration. This may be done by mail or online at <https://myvote.wi.gov/>
- Assist those who need to obtain a photo ID for voting.
- Help clients apply for an absentee ballot. This may be done by mail or online.
- For those who vote in person, encourage early in-person voting. Help them to make a plan to address transportation, curbside voting, or other accommodations.
- All voter forms are available on the [Wisconsin Election Commission](#) website.



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*



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.
- Wisconsin does not currently have an ADA compliant screen reader accessible absentee ballot.
- Make the request as soon as possible.
- Tip: [Check out the new update Disability Vote Coalition Absentee Voting Fact Sheet](#)

How to Request an Absentee Ballot

Online

- Request an absentee ballot at myvote.wi.gov/en-us/VoteAbsentee.
- If the voter has not requested an absentee ballot before, they will be asked to upload a copy of their photo ID.
- The ballot will be mailed to the voter.

By Mail

- Download the Application for Absentee Ballot from the Wisconsin Election Commission web site: elections.wi.gov/index.php/forms/EL-121-english.
- The voter must provide a copy of their acceptable photo ID with their application, unless exempt by law. Information about photo ID: bringit.wi.gov.
- Complete the form and mail it to your [municipal clerk's office](#).
- Mail the application as soon as possible to allow time to receive and return your ballot.



How to Request an Absentee Ballot (cont.)

By Email

- [Email your clerk](#) with a ballot request. State your full name, Wisconsin voting address, the election you would like a ballot for or if requesting for the calendar year, and mailing address if different than voting address. Include a copy of your photo ID with the email if it is not already on file.

Early voting (In-Person Absentee Voting) at your Municipal Clerk's office

- You can apply for and vote your absentee ballot in-person in your municipal clerk's office or another location designated for absentee voting in your municipality.
- Each city, village and town in Wisconsin is responsible for setting the dates and hours of in-person absentee voting for their municipality. **To find the dates and hours for in-person absentee voting where you live, [contact your municipal clerk.](#)**
- **TIP:** This is a good option for someone who also needs to register to vote.



What Is an “Indefinitely Confined” Voter

- Wisconsin law provides an option for a voter who is indefinitely confined because of age, physical illness or infirmity or is disabled for an indefinite period to sign a statement to that effect when requesting an absentee ballot. This requests that an absentee ballot be sent to the elector automatically for every election.
- Indefinitely confined voters are **not** required to provide a copy of their photo ID.
- **How to apply to be an “indefinitely confined” voter:** Complete the absentee ballot application and choose the “indefinitely confined” option in section 6 of the form, certifying that you are indefinitely confined, or send a request in writing to your [municipal clerk](#).

According to the Wisconsin Elections Commission, “Designation of indefinitely confined status is for each individual voter to make based upon their current circumstance. It does **not** require permanent or total inability to travel outside of the residence. Statutes do not establish the option to require proof or documentation from indefinitely confined voters.”



VOTE ABSENTEE

Vote Absentee

[Request An Absentee Ballot](#)

[View My Absentee Request](#)

Need Assistance?

Find your municipal clerk by searching for your name or address

[Find My Clerk](#)



Next Statewide
Election

2020 Partisan Primary

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

[Add To Calendar](#)

[More Information](#)

SEARCH BY NAME

Please use Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, or Safari. Older browsers, such as Internet Explorer ^{*}=Required Field 11, are no longer supported.

Registered Wisconsin voters may request an absentee ballot.

If you would like to request an absentee ballot, we will first need to see if you are registered to vote. If you are not registered or your name or address has changed, you will need to [register](#) or [update your registration](#) before requesting an absentee ballot.

If you are in the military, you do not need to be registered to get an absentee ballot, but first we need you to search for your record.

Please enter your name and date of birth to get started.

Search

[+ Search Tip](#)

First Name*

Last Name*

Date of Birth*

[Clear](#)

[Search](#)

Completing an Absentee Ballot

- **Voters should complete and return their absentee ballot AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**
- Be sure to read and follow the instructions included with the absentee ballot.
 - Find a time when you can have someone witness you completing your ballot. Absentee voters must have someone witness their absentee ballot by signing and providing their address on the certificate envelope. Your witness can be any adult U.S. citizen except for a candidate on your ballot. The witness should not view the voter's choices.
- Use blue or black pen to complete your ballot.
- August 11 Partisan Primary: you must choose a political party and only vote for candidates within that political party. Voting in more than one party may void your voting choices.
- Review your name and address on the return envelope to ensure it is correct.
- Put your ballot in the return envelope.
- Sign and date the certificate on the return envelope on the line marked "Signature of Voter"
- Have your witness sign the certificate envelope on the line marked "Signature of Witness" and write their address underneath the witness signature.
- Seal the envelope.



Returning an Absentee Ballot

- The completed absentee ballot must be delivered to the voter's municipal clerk's office, their [polling place](#), or a local drop box established by their clerk (if available) no later than 8 PM on Election Day. Milwaukee designates specific locations and does not current allow return at the voter's polling place.
 - By Mail: The U.S. Postal Service recommends absentee ballots be mailed one week before Election Day to arrive in time.
- A voter may ask someone else to deliver their completed sealed ballot for them.

Voting in person during a pandemic

PLAN AHEAD!

- Absentee voting by mail or in person is strongly encouraged.
- Voters should check their polling place on MyVote – it may have changed.
- Review your ballot online at myvote.wi.gov. This gives you time to research the candidates in advance and decide who you want to vote for.
- The voter should check in advance to make sure they are registered at their current address. If not, they will need to bring proof of residence.
- Curbside voting: if a voter is not able to enter their polling place due to disability, you may request curbside voting.
- Bring your photo ID with you, and a black or blue pen to mark your ballot. **Bring It to the Ballot** has a list of acceptable Photo Ids: bringit.wi.gov/
- Wear a mask. If you must get out of your car to vote, practice social distancing, and wash your hands before and after you vote.



Voters in Care Facilities

- Special Voting Deputies will **NOT** be dispatched to care facilities to administer voting for the April and November elections.
- The Wisconsin Election Commission has sent guidance documents to Care Facilities to address voting for the August and November elections.
- Residents of care facilities normally served by SVDs will instead be mailed absentee ballots for each election, if they have an absentee request on file. Staff may assist residents of their facility who are not registered to vote or who do not have an absentee ballot request on file or who need assistance with voting and returning their absentee ballot.
- Residents who receive ballots will have to vote their ballot, have a witness provide required information on the return envelope, and return their ballot by mail in order to participate.
- If a voter asks for assistance completing their ballot, staff may assist them, however, the person helping the voter must then sign the ballot in the space provided.
- **All ballots must be returned by mail or in-person delivery to the municipal clerk's office by 8:00 PM on election day in order to be counted.**
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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 at your polling place.
- All polling places are required by law to have an accessible voting machine.
Note: The law does not require this for early in-person absentee voting,
- You have the right to assistance marking your ballot. You may bring someone to assist you or ask a poll worker for assistance. Poll workers are required to assist a voter if they request it.

Note: You cannot receive assistance from your employer or from your union representative.



Voter Rights (cont)

- 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, tools to help poll workers interact with deaf and hard of hearing voters such as pen and paper or an easel for announcements.
- 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.)*
- Tip: For more information about voting rights, watch the Disability Vote Coalition video “Know Your Rights” before you vote in person:
disabilityvote.org/2019/know-your-rights/



If a Voter has a problem with accommodation request or accessibility concern

- If a voter has a problems on election day, ask to speak to the Chief Election Inspector at your polling place or ask for the municipal clerk.
- If you aren't satisfied with how the issue was resolved, you can contact the Wisconsin Elections Commission at elections.wi.gov/complaints or call toll free 1-866-VOTE-WIS (866-868-3947) for assistance.
- You may call the *Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline* at 1-844-DIS-VOTE (844-347-8683) to receive assistance with your concern.



For Help with Voting Concerns

- **DRW Voter Hotline:** 844-DIS-VOTE/ 844-347-8683 email: info@disabilityvote.org
- **Wisconsin Elections Commission:** 866-VOTE-WIS/868-3944 (staffed Mon – Fri from 7:45 AM – 4:30 PM/ longer hours on Election Day)
 - Email: elections@wi.gov Website: <https://elections.wi.gov/>
- **Your municipal clerk:** myvote.wi.gov/en-US/MyMunicipalClerk
- **Wisconsin Election Protection** Call 866-687-8683 or text “Our Vote” to 97779.
Non-partisan assistance from volunteer attorneys
- **DMV Voter ID Hotline:** (844) 588-1069. Apply for a free Photo ID for voting at the Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV).
- Vote411.org: nonpartisan information about the candidates
- **Disability Vote Coalition:** disabilityvote.org/
Like us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition



How Your Agency Can Make a Difference

- Develop your organizations plan to support your members with voter registration and absentee voting. Sample ideas:
 - Give staff a script to include voter registration and absentee voting in wellness checks.
 - Provide staff with voter registration / absentee voting materials to share with consumers, or schedule a mailing. [Disability Vote Coalition Postcards](#)
 - Work with the DVC to schedule a virtual training for your staff or clients.
 - Share our voting FAQ with staff.
 - Refer voters who need help to the DRW Voter Hotline.
 - The DVC can provide social media content, speakers, resource material. Remember to sign up for our email list at disabilityvote.org/



How We Can Partner

DRW Voter Hotline: 844-DIS-VOTE/ 844-347-8683 info@disabilityvote.org

- Assist with voting questions, accommodations, support voters to register, request absentee ballot, file a complaint.

The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition:

Resource material

We can provide training or educational programs

Can provide you with content for newsletter or social media

Join our email list – sign up at disabilityvote.org/

League of Women Votes is ready and willing to partner



Next Steps

- Review the Disability Vote Coalition resources posted on our website
- <https://disabilityvote.org/2020/supporting-voting-rights-in-the-time-of-pandemic/>
 - Sample Voter Outreach script
 - DVC Partnering Ideas
 - My Voting Plan
 - Disability Vote Coalition fact sheets, posters, postcards:
 - Absentee Voting Fact Sheet
 - August 2020 Voting FAQ
 - DVC Product List
 - Videos: Know Your Rights, Voter Registration, Wisconsin Youth Voices on Voting, Consider Becoming a Poll Worker,

Note: Powerpoint from this training will be posted at disabilityvote.org/ within 48 hours.



Questions and Discussion

