

Common Cause WI: What you need to know in the next election

Posted on Thursday, Jul 14, 2022

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The August Election is unique in that when we vote, we have to choose a party and ONLY vote for that party's candidates. In Wisconsin, you can choose any party you want when you cast your ballot, but you can NOT cross over and vote for another party's candidates on this ballot. Wisconsin is an "open" primary state. Meaning, that Wisconsin does not require voters to register with a party and therefore, voters can choose their party preference on the ballot when they vote. BUT keep in mind when casting your partisan primary ballot, you only choose one party and you only vote for candidates of that party on this ballot.

First, choose your method to vote in the August 9th Election.

You can choose which method works for you to cast your ballot. Vote by:

1. mail-in absentee ballot,
2. in-person absentee ballot - "early voting,"
3. in-person on Election Day.

Your clerk is the best person to answer your questions about the details and deadlines regarding any of these methods. You can [contact your clerk on MyVote](#). Then, make a plan. Look over the information in this message to make sure you have what you need to vote in this important primary election, and share with others to help them be engaged voters.

In Wisconsin, your voting plan should include:

1. Being registered to vote: There are multiple ways to register to vote including on Election Day. [Find information about voter registration.](#)
2. Having acceptable photo ID: You must provide photo ID to vote in Wisconsin. If you have a WI drivers license or state ID, you're all set. Find more information about photo IDs that you can use for voting at [Bring It to the Ballot](#).
3. Knowing Your Ballot: Get to know what is on your ballot. [Preview your ballot on MyVote.](#)

Option 1: Vote by mail-in absentee ballots

Absentee ballots for August have begun to be mailed to voters. If you are choosing this method, make your request today! All registered voters may use www.myvote.wi.gov to request an absentee ballot by clicking "Vote Absentee by Mail." An acceptable photo ID must accompany your application, if you have not previously provided a copy of the ID.

You will receive your ballot in an official designated envelope from your municipal clerk. Remove all the contents, which should have one official, authorized ballot and one postage paid return envelope. There might also be additional instruction sheet(s). If your envelope is missing a ballot or return envelope, contact your clerk. Use black or blue pen to fill out your ballot. Instructions for filling out the ballot are right on the ballot. Follow those.

Details about the Partisan Primary Ballot

First choose the party you wish to vote for the offices on the remainder of the ballot. After you choose the party, find the beginning of that party's offices.

Continue to fill out the ballot, but only for that party. If you vote for multiple parties, your ballot will be spoiled and will not be counted. All the candidates running for offices will continue down the column and may continue into the next column. After the last office, you will see a note that says "End ____ Party Primary."

Read the instructions on the front of your return envelope. The next steps need to be done with a witness in sight. These steps can and should be completed using social distancing unless the person is from your household. (NOTE: Witnesses, like voters, need to be 18 years or older and a U.S. Citizen.)

- Put your marked ballot in the official envelope.
- Complete your address in section 2 (some clerks complete this section for voters)
- Sign and date your envelope
- Your witness will also sign and provide their mailing address

Your ballot needs to be received by your clerk on Election Day to be counted. If you are mailing it, it's a good idea to put it in the mail at least a week prior to Election Day. (For the August 9th Election, best to get it in the mail before August 1st).

Then you can also use MyVote to track your ballot, check your voter registration status, and make any updates to your voter file (like a change of address).

Remember if you get stuck or have questions, your [clerk contact information is also searchable on MyVote](#).

Option 2: Vote by In-person Absentee Ballot (Early Vote)

If you'd like to vote before Election Day in-person, check with your clerk on

locations and times beginning July 26, 2022 and ending August 7, 2022. Each clerk sets their own locations, dates, and hours so it's important to get specific information for your municipality. Casting your ballot early minimizes lines on Election Day, as well as fits best into your schedule. Visit your municipal clerk's website or contact them to find out about your opportunities to vote early.

Option 3: Vote In-person on Election Day

Prepare now if you're going to vote at your polling place on Election Day, August 9. Polls are open from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Election Day no matter where you vote in Wisconsin. You can register to vote on Election Day at your polling location if you need to register to vote. (See above note for more registration information.) You can look at [your voter registration status](#) and [find your polling place](#) all on MyVote. Get more information on the candidates:

Get to know who wants to represent you and which candidate best represents your values before you vote. Find candidate and ballot information from the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin at [Vote411](#).

Have questions or need some assistance?

Beyond the resources of your municipal clerk, help is just a call, text, or email away.

- Call or text the WI Voter Helpline at 608-285-2141 and you will be connected to a nonpartisan person who can help answer all your questions. You can also request services such as getting assistance at the DMV to get an ID to vote or having someone witness your absentee ballot.
- Voters with disabilities have the right to an accessible polling place. This includes the right to use an accessible voting machine, getting assistance marking a ballot, and using curbside voting. Call the Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline for assistance: 1-844-347-8683. Or email: info@disabilityvote.org. Additional online resources are also at the [Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition](#) website.
- Contact Vote Riders if you need immediate assistance with a photo ID to vote. You can get free, in-state ID assistance ASAP from the online form.
- If you experience problems at the polls or have questions, there is help. Call Election Protection at 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) for support from nonpartisan election protection volunteers with questions or to report problems.

Every election matters! Take the time to cast your ballot in August's partisan primary election.

Jay Heck

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