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Frequently Asked Questions about the Wisconsin Election Process

Prepared for Wisconsin Family Council's Voter Registration Resource Kit

1. *Who is my municipal clerk, where is the clerk's office, and how do I contact them?*

If you do not know who your municipal clerk is, go to the link below for a list by municipality. <http://elections.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=10506&locid=47>. If you do not have internet access, check the phone book for the number of your village, town or city hall/building.
2. *Where do I go to vote?*

To find out where you need to go to vote, please contact your municipal clerk's office. Typically, townships and villages have one location to vote (usually the village or town hall). Cities usually have varied locations within the city, and you will need to check your city's website or contact your clerk. Citizens can also find their polling place by going to a new state web site: <http://vpa.wi.gov>. Entering their address on the home page will give them the correct voting location, a sample ballot, and all their current elected officials.
3. *When are elections?*

There are four possible times for elections to take place: one spring and one fall general election with one spring and one fall primary election preceding both. Every year there is the possibility of at least one of these elections (some non-partisan and local government offices have elections on odd numbered years), but most elections are held on even-numbered years. Partisan elections are in the fall, while non-partisan elections are in the spring, although presidential party primaries are also in the spring. The 2008 elections are as follows:

Tuesday, February 19	Spring Non-Partisan Primary & Presidential Preference Primary
Tuesday, April 1	Spring Non-Partisan General (local elections, one State Supreme Court justice, referendum question on the so-called "Frankenstein Veto" authority of the Governor in appropriation bills)
Tuesday, September 9	Fall Partisan Primary
Tuesday, November 4	Fall General Election (all of the State Assembly, even-numbered State Senate districts, all US House of Representatives, Presidential, partisan county offices)
4. *What time of day are the polls open?*

Polling places by state statute are open from **7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.** on Election Day in all municipalities.
5. *Who will be on the ballot?*

To find out who will be on your ballot, contact your municipal clerk or check the local newspaper a few days before the election to receive a sample ballot. State law requires that sample ballots must be posted in designated areas (such as in the municipal building).

6. *Do I need to register in advance?*

No, Wisconsin law allows voters to register on Election Day; however, we strongly encourage you to register in advance because you will spend less time in line on Election Day and will avoid last-minute registration problems that could prevent your voting.

7. *Can I use my driver's license both as identification and proof of residency?**

Yes, but only if your driver's license has your current address on it. Additionally, if you are properly registered, you do not need your driver's license or other form of picture ID to vote on Election Day. If you are pre-registered, you simply need to give the poll worker your name and address to a for a ballot.

8. *Can any piece of mail be used as proof of residence?**

No, it must be on the list of acceptable identification on the *Wisconsin Election Guidelines* page of this kit.

9. *How do I know if I am registered?**

If you have not moved or changed names since last registering or voting then you are registered. Your name will be on the list at the Election booth. You only need to register the first time you vote or move. If do not remember whether you have registered, you can call your municipal clerk to see if you are registered at your current address. (See question 1 to find your municipal clerk's number.)

10. *What is the Electoral College?*

Since the founding of this country we have chosen our presidents through the process known as the Electoral College. This process was chosen because we are a Federalist country, which means each state is independent of the other. Under the Electoral College, each state chooses a set number of delegates to vote for a presidential candidate, based on the number of seats that state has in Congress. Since the last census in 2000, for example, Wisconsin has had ten because we have eight seats in the House of Representatives and two seats in the Senate. This allows each state (plus the District of Columbia) to have at least 3 electoral votes and prevents the states with the larger populations from overshadowing the regional prerogatives and interests of the smaller states. For more information on the Electoral College please visit the following link: <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=95>

11. *How does the Wisconsin Primary Work?*

There are both partisan and non-partisan primaries. Except for the Presidential Primary, all partisan primaries are in the fall, and all non-partisan are in the spring. Non-partisan primaries are conducted to narrow the candidacy to the two most popular candidates, who then go on to the non-partisan general election.

Wisconsin has open primaries, which means that you do not have to be registered with any particular party. In other words, anyone can vote in the Democratic Primary or Republican Primary. This does not mean that you can vote in both primaries, however. You have to choose which party's primary you will vote in. If you vote in more than one primary on the ballot, your ballot is invalid and will not be counted. If this happens, be sure to get a new ballot from a poll worker.

* Answers to these questions were gathered from the State Elections Board. However, they should not be used as a final authority on the question at hand. For clarification or assurance on these questions, please contact the Elections Division of Wisconsin Government Accountability Board calling, 608-266-8005, or by visiting their website: <http://elections.state.wi.us/>.