

# Wisconsin Elections Commission

## State of Wisconsin

---

212 E. Washington Ave., Third Floor ▪ Madison, WI 53703 ▪ [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov) ▪ (608) 266-8005 ▪ <http://elections.wi.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
October 4, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
Reid Magney, 608-267-7887

## What Voters Should Know about Registration and Absentee Ballot Mailings

MADISON, WI – As Election Day approaches on November 6, voter registration and absentee ballot mailings have begun arriving in Wisconsin residents' mailboxes.

Wisconsin voters' best sources of information about voter registration and absentee voting are their local clerks and the [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov) website, not mailings from political and independent groups, according to the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

The Commission has started receiving questions about a recent personalized direct mailing about absentee voting which contains some incorrect information, said Meagan Wolfe, interim administrator of the WEC.

“Every election we get complaints about these types of mailings,” Wolfe said. “Interest groups send out mailers encouraging voters to register or apply for an absentee ballot to vote by mail. While these mailings are permissible, they sometimes contain errors.”

It is legal for groups to send out voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms to encourage voting, Wolfe said. However, the Commission's advice to voters is to examine these mailers carefully before relying on them, especially the instructions on where to send registration forms or applications.

“If you are not sure everything is correct, contact your municipal clerk's office or visit our [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov) website,” Wolfe said. At MyVote, you can register online, check your voter registration status, and send a request to your clerk to vote absentee by mail.”

The latest problem mailer comes from the “Center for Voter Information,” which has a return mail address in Madison but is related to the Voter Participation Center, a nonprofit group based in Washington, D.C. The mailer includes a Wisconsin Application for Absentee Ballot with the voter's name and address already filled out and a pre-paid envelope to mail it to the municipal clerk.

However, the Elections Commission is aware that some of the mailers have wrong address information about the municipal clerk. One voter in the Village of Oregon in Dane County received a mailer for another voter with a similar name who lives in the Village of Prairie du Sac in Sauk County, and instructions to send it to the wrong place.

Also, the back of the application contains confusing information about the deadline to request an absentee ballot. The deadline for the clerk to receive a mailed-in absentee ballot request is 5 p.m. on Thursday, November 1. The deadline to vote absentee in the clerk's office varies by municipality. In most places, it is the close of business on the Friday before the election. However, some larger cities offer in-person absentee voting on the Saturday and Sunday before the election. Voters with questions should contact their municipal clerk's office.

Voters who are military or overseas, or who are indefinitely confined to their homes due to age, disability, infirmity or illness may request absentee ballots by 5 p.m. the Friday before the election.

All absentee ballots must arrive in the municipal clerk's office before the polls close at 8 p.m. on Election Day. It does not matter when a mailed absentee ballot is postmarked.

Incorrect addresses for the clerk's office can result in the request being misdirected or delayed or worse, the ballot not being counted, said Wolfe.

"Voter forms must be delivered to the correct municipal clerk's office," Wolfe said. "The Elections Commission and municipal clerks will do their best to send misdirected voter registrations and absentee ballot applications to the right place, but there are no guarantees they will arrive in time."

Additionally, voter registration and absentee voting mailers often contain political messages, leading some people to mistakenly believe the mailers are coming from their municipal clerk or the Wisconsin Elections Commission. "The WEC and Wisconsin's municipal clerks would never send out partisan political mailings," Wolfe said.

Voters who need to register or change their address should go to [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov), Wisconsin's voter services website, Wolfe said.

###

---

The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.