

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Ballot Printers
Wisconsin County Clerks
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks

FROM: Diane Lowe, Lead Elections Specialist
Government Accountability Board

DATE: April 30, 2014

SUBJECT: Ballot Standards and Font Size

As we continue to work toward improved format and uniformity of ballots, several ballot printers have requested the Government Accountability Board staff develop general standards with respect to ballot layout, particularly font size. This memorandum outlines general guidelines and provides font size parameters.

General Guidelines

The following are general standards, most of which you are already aware.

1. Vendors may add instruction as to type of writing instrument to be used to mark the ballot.
2. Write-in lines
 - The word “write-in” will appear on the write-in line, rather than below it.
 - The word “write-in” will appear on each write-in line, in the case of multiple write-in lines.
3. No abbreviations
 - All words in office titles (including “district”) are spelled out.
 - When office titles are long, the district number may be placed below the office title.
Representative to the Assembly
District 99
Vote for 1
4. No splitting of offices between columns.
5. No splitting parties from one page to the next unless absolutely necessary.
6. Left justification
 - Notice to voters
 - Instructions
 - Title of Office
 - Vote for 1

7. Proper Office Titles
 - Please see attached list.
8. If you think any shading is too dark to read, lighten it up. If you can't make out the text for the shading, the voter won't be able to either. The idea is to set off ballot divisions and offices, not to obscure them.

Font Parameters

Use a sans serif font, preferably Arial. Use mixed case text unless otherwise directed on sample ballots provided for a particular election.

Rather than offer a range of font sizes for each portion of the ballot, I have listed series of "not less than" font sizes and the ballot text that applies. The color coding corresponds with the sample ballot attached.

The following text shall appear in no less than 8 pt. font (Yellow)

- Endorsement section:
 - "Original Ballot No."
 - "Duplicate Ballot Number"
 - "municipality and wards"
 - "initials of inspectors"
 - "initials of municipal clerk or deputy clerk"
 - "if issued by SVDs, both SVDs must initial"
 - "signature of assistor"

No less than 9 pt. font (Green)

- Endorsement section:
 - Ballot issued by
 - Absentee ballot issued by
 - Certification of Voter Assistance (title and paragraph following)
 - "Inspectors: Identify ballots required..."
 - Overvoted Ballot" / "Damaged Ballot"
- "write-in"

No less than 10 pt. font (Gray)

- Office categories (Statewide, Congressional, etc.)
- Office titles
- "Vote for 1"
- Candidate names (May not be smaller than office title or Vote for _.)
- Party Names in Party Preference Selection Section
- Ballot Title (endorsement)
- Notice to voters
- General instructions
- Party Preference Section Instructions
- "If you vote in this party section..."

No less than 11 pt. font (Blue)

- Headings, including Instructions to voters,
- Party Preference Selection, Democratic Party Section, Republican Party Section, Constitution Party Section
- “End” Party

No less than 13 pt. font (Orange)

- Ballot title and date
- “Page _ of 2-sided ballot - Ballot begins/continues on other side.”

I hope you find these guidelines helpful. Partisan Primary ballot samples (Series GAB-201) have been posted to the G.A.B. website <http://gab.wi.gov/forms/ballots>.

If you have questions or comments, please contact me.

Attachments: Proper Offices Titles
 Color-coded Sample Ballot showing font sizes