

# State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 17, 2012

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Nathaniel E. Robinson  
Elections Division Administrator  
Wisconsin Government Accountability Board

**SUBJECT:** Voting Residence of University and College Students for June 5, 2012 Election

The Government Accountability Board has received a number of inquiries from students, municipal clerks, and university and college representatives regarding the proper location for college students to cast votes at the June 5, 2012 recall election. This document provides guidance regarding the application of Wisconsin's residency laws to college students. While the determination of voting residency may depend on specific facts, the general principles and rules are outlined below. In this document, "campus address" refers to the student's residence at the university or college, regardless of whether it is university-sponsored housing or located "off campus."

### **1. What are the requirements for voting residency in Wisconsin?**

Under Wisconsin Statutes, an individual must reside in an election ward for at least 28 consecutive days and have no present intent to move. A person does not lose residency for voting purposes by leaving an established residence for temporary purposes with an intent to return to the residence. Student status is not a consideration in determining residence for the purpose of establishing voter residency.

### **2. If I am living at my campus address during the summer, where may I vote?**

A student who has registered to vote at a campus address and continues to live there during the summer must vote from that location. A student who has registered to vote at a home address and lives on campus during the summer may vote from the home address or may register and vote from the campus address.

### **3. If I have resided at my campus address for 28 consecutive days, will live at my parents' home or elsewhere during the summer, and intend to return to a campus address in the fall, where may I vote?**

Once a student has established residency at a campus address, the student may register to vote and may vote using the student's campus address until the student establishes a new voting residence. This is the case even if the student is temporarily away from campus and

does not know their campus address for the following school year. If the student has previously registered to vote at the campus address, the student may not register to vote at a home or other address (whether or not it is in the municipality where the campus is located) until re-establishing residency for 28 consecutive days prior to the election.

Alternatively, a student may register to vote from a home address if the student has not yet registered to vote from a campus address. In that case the student's home address is considered the permanent address for voting purposes and the student is only temporarily away from that address during the school year.

**4. If I have graduated or have left school, am moving from my campus address and do not intend to return in the fall, where may I vote?**

An individual who is registered to vote at a Wisconsin campus or home address, leaves that address permanently, and moves to another Wisconsin residence may continue to vote using the prior address until establishing residency for 28 consecutive days at the new location.

An individual who leaves their Wisconsin campus or home address and moves to an out-of-State residence, and who has no intent to return to the ward in which the prior address is located, may not vote in the June 5th recall election from the prior address.

**5. How and when may I obtain an absentee ballot for the June 5, 2012 recall election?**

Municipal clerks must make ballots available to absentee voters, in-person or by mail, by Monday, May 21, 2012. Absentee ballots may be obtained by submitting a written request to the municipal clerk (or the Election Commission in the City of Milwaukee) by mail, fax, email, or in person. Clerks may email or fax ballots for the recall election only to military voters.

Most requests for an absentee ballot must be submitted to the municipal clerk (or Milwaukee Election Commission) by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 31, 2012. Indefinitely confined voters and military voters must submit requests by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 1, 2012. Sequestered jurors and hospitalized electors must submit absentee ballot requests by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the election. Voters mailing in an absentee ballot must have it postmarked by Election Day, June 5, 2012, and it must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 8, 2012. Absentee ballots delivered in person must be returned by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

In-person absentee voting begins on Monday, May 21, 2012, and continues until 5:00 p.m. or the close of business, whichever is later, on Friday, June 1, 2012.

Individuals with questions regarding the information contained in this document may contact Elections Specialist Nadya Perez-Reyes at 608-267-0714 or [nadya.perezreyes@wisconsin.gov](mailto:nadya.perezreyes@wisconsin.gov). Media inquiries should be directed to Reid Magney at 608-267-7887 or [reid.magney@wisconsin.gov](mailto:reid.magney@wisconsin.gov).