

Wisconsin Elections Commission

State of Wisconsin

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 26, 2016

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Wisconsin Mails 1.28M Postcards to Unregistered Adults

MADISON, WI – The Wisconsin Elections Commission is getting ready for November 8 with two initiatives to increase voter turnout and ensure a smooth Election Day.

“Tomorrow is National Voter Registration Day, and the State of Wisconsin wants everyone eligible to be able to vote,” said Mark L. Thomsen, chair of the bipartisan Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC). “That means helping people get registered and get IDs.”

“One in four Wisconsin adults will soon be getting an official postcard in the mail urging them to register to vote before the election,” said Thomsen, a Democratic appointee to the commission. “Getting people to register early helps reduce lines and make Election Day better for voters and election workers.”

“Sending this postcard to 1.28 million unregistered residents would not have been possible without the Legislature’s authorization,” said Commissioner Don Millis, a Republican appointee to the WEC. “Contacting unregistered voters is vital to ensuring that Wisconsin has a high-quality, complete voter registration list.”

“Getting more voters to register in advance, rather than on Election Day, translates into shorter lines at the polls, greater turnout and less stress on poll workers who essentially volunteer their time so that democracy functions smoothly,” Millis said.

In addition to helping eligible voters register, the Elections Commission is working with the Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles to make sure the public is aware of the option to get an ID through the DMV petition process, known as IDPP.

“Whether or not voters have all of the required documentation to prove identity and residence, they can get a free receipt after one visit to the DMV that will serve as acceptable photo ID,” Thomsen said. The IDPP receipt is good for 60 days and will renew automatically.

The week before the election and the week of the election, the DMV will send receipts by overnight delivery, Thomsen noted. “However, we encourage voters to prepare now.”

The registration postcards are being mailed this week, said Michael Haas, Wisconsin’s chief elections official. They can take up to nine days to arrive, and should start arriving in mailboxes this week.

Potential voters will be inundated with election-related mailings from candidates, political parties and independent groups in advance of the November 8 General Election. Haas said this postcard from the Wisconsin Elections Commission is different because the mailing list comes from Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles records. The state identified DMV records of people who have a driver license or a state ID card who are not registered to vote.

The postcard encourages voters to register ahead of the election. To do that, they can contact their municipal clerk or visit MyVote.WI.gov. The postcard also has a toll-free number for people without internet access.

Voters who need to register or change their address should go to MyVote.WI.gov, Wisconsin's secure voter services website, said Meagan Wolfe, the WEC's voter services specialist. Electors who need to register for the first time, or need to update their voter record, are strongly encouraged to do so as soon as possible and not wait until Election Day.

Using MyVote.WI.gov, people can fill out the registration form online, print it out, sign it and send it to the correct clerk's address which the website will provide, Wolfe said. Voters registering by mail must also send a copy of a proof-of-residence document, such as a driver license, utility bill or bank statement with the voter's current address.

The postcard mailing was mandated by the Governor and Legislature in 2015 Wisconsin Act 261, which directed state election officials to join the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). This multi-state group helps its members keep their voter registration lists current by identifying voters who may have changed their address, moved out of state or died. One of the requirements to join ERIC is to send a mailing to residents who may be eligible to vote but are not yet registered.

The Pew Charitable Trusts, which helped create ERIC, has provided Wisconsin with a \$150,000 grant to help offset the cost of this postcard mailing, Haas said. The cost of the mailing is approximately \$225,000, he said.

Wisconsin Voter Registration Facts

- Wisconsin has a 2016 voting age population of 4,461,068 people, according to estimates from the [Demographic Services Center](#) of the Wisconsin Department of Administration.
- On September 1, 2016, Wisconsin had 3,496,198 registered voters.
- In 2015, 81,310 voters were inactivated as a result of the Four-Year Maintenance process.

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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.