

## **Homeless Voters**

### ***Wisconsin's New Voter Photo ID Law***

#### **What has changed in the voting law?**

- A valid photo ID, or acceptable substitute, must be provided when voting by absentee ballot or at the polling place, unless you are part of a group exempted by statute. **There is no exception for Homeless Voters in the statute – they must also provide photo ID.**

#### **What residential address should I use for voting purposes?**

- **Homeless individuals may designate a fixed location as their residence for voting purposes** if it is an identifiable location in the state of Wisconsin which could conceivably serve as a temporary residence. This location may be a homeless shelter, a park bench, or other location where a homeless individual may spend time or return to when absent.
- **For homeless voters, this means that if they have established a residence, they may continue to claim that residence as a voting address**, even if they no longer physically reside at that location, if they have intent to return. This would allow voters who had stayed with friends or family to continue using that address for voting purposes.
- **Note that P.O. Boxes are not acceptable** – your voting address must be a physical location, so election officials can determine which districts you vote in, and in which contests you get to vote.
- **Note that a shelter address is an acceptable residence for voting purposes**, notwithstanding any restriction in the shelter's rules prohibiting its use as a residential address. "Residence" for voting purposes is distinct from other types of residence.
- **Note that you may use a physical location that is not a valid mailing address.** If you can describe the place where you stay so the municipal clerk can locate it on a map, any fixed location may be used as your "residence" for voting purposes. However, you may still have to provide a document for proof of residence, and any such document would have to identify that physical location. See below for proof of residence rules.

#### **Can I register without a document that proves my address?**

- **All voters must provide a Proof of Residence document when registering.** See the list of acceptable documents below. Often homeless voters are able to produce a check or other document from a unit of government, including an affidavit from public or private social service agencies. A driver license or state ID card with your voting address can also qualify as proof of residence.

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### What Proof of Residence documents can I use?

#### Acceptable proof of residence documents include:

- An affidavit on public or private social service agency letterhead identifying a homeless voter and describing the individual's residence for voting purposes.
- A current and valid Wisconsin driver license or identification card.
- Any other official identification card or license issued by a Wisconsin governmental body or unit.
- Any identification card issued by an employer in the normal course of business and bearing a photo of the card holder, but not including a business card.
- A real estate tax bill or receipt for the current year or the year preceding the date of the election.
- A university, college, or technical identification card (must include photo) ONLY if the voter provides a fee receipt dated within the last 9 months or the institution provides a certified housing list to the municipal clerk.
- A gas, electric, or telephone service statement (utility bill) for the period commencing not earlier than 90 days before the day registration is made.
- Bank statement.
- Paycheck.
- A check or other document issued by a unit of government.
- Residential lease. (Not valid if registering by mail).

### How do I get a photo ID to vote?

- **The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offers free state ID cards if the voter indicates they will be using the ID in order to vote.** If you cannot find this checkbox on the form, you should ask a DMV service representative to help you. Note that you will have to provide the DMV with proof of identity, legal presence, name and date of birth, and residency in order to obtain a state ID card. If the ID card contains your voting address, you may also use it as proof of residence.

### Can I vote by absentee ballot?

- **If you are registered to vote, you may apply to vote by absentee ballot.** No excuse is required. You may apply for an absentee ballot in person in the municipal clerk's office, or by mail, email, or fax.
- **Absentee voters** must provide a copy of their photo ID with their absentee ballot request. Once photo ID is provided, the voter no longer has to provide photo ID with any future absentee requests, until they re-register (their name or address changes).
- **Absentee voters may request a ballot for one or more elections, up to one calendar year. (January 1 – December 31).** Please remember you will have to renew your absentee application to continue receiving ballots.
- **You may keep your "voting residence" the same even if you move, as long as you have the intent to return.** Update your absentee mailing address with the municipal clerk in order to keep receiving ballots.
- **The postage to return your ballot is paid for by the municipal clerk.**

For detailed information about the Voter Photo ID law, visit [bringit.wi.gov](http://bringit.wi.gov).  
For other information on the Government Accountability Board, visit <http://gab.wi.gov>  
or call the G.A.B. Help Desk at 608-261-2028.