

# Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Information about the form and tips for Wisconsin clerks who receive a FWAB from a voter

## What is the FWAB?

The FWAB is a federal form that is provided to Military and Overseas voters by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP). FWAB forms are made available to voters through the various branches of the U.S. military, through U.S. embassies, or online at [www.FVAP.gov/election-materials](http://www.FVAP.gov/election-materials). The FWAB form can serve as both an absentee ballot request and a write-in absentee ballot for some Wisconsin voters.

## What does the FWAB look like?

You can find the FWAB online at [www.FVAP.gov/election-materials](http://www.FVAP.gov/election-materials).

## Who can use the FWAB?

The FWAB can serve as an absentee ballot request and/or a write-in absentee ballot depending on the type of voter using the form:

**Military Voters-** Military voters may use the FWAB as an absentee ballot request and as a write-in absentee ballot. They indicate their voter status in Box 2 of the form by checking either “I am a member of the Uniformed Services...,” “I am an eligible spouse...,” or “I am an activated National Guard...” Military voters do not need to register to vote in Wisconsin to request an absentee ballot. When using the form as an absentee ballot request, they may send their FWAB by mail, email, or fax. No Photo ID is required. No signature is required when using it as an absentee request only. Military voters may receive their absentee ballot by mail, email, fax, or online. Military voters may also use the FWAB as a write-in absentee ballot by writing in their votes on the ballot pages of the form. When a military voter uses the FWAB as a ballot, the clerk must also send the voter an official ballot by the method requested. When using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, the voter must submit the FWAB by mail, with their original signature and date in the affirmation section, and with the signature of their witness. The write-in votes on the ballot will be counted on Election Day if the voter’s official ballot is not received.

**Permanently Overseas Voters-** Permanently Overseas voters may use the FWAB as an absentee ballot request and as a write-in absentee ballot. They indicate their voter status in Box 2 of the form by checking, “I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States, and my return is not certain” or “I am a U.S. citizen and have never resided in the United States.” Permanently Overseas voters must be registered to vote in Wisconsin before they may use the FWAB. When using the form as an absentee ballot request, they may send their FWAB by mail, email, or fax. No Photo ID is required. No signature is required when using it as an absentee request only. Permanently Overseas voters may receive their official absentee ballot by mail, email, fax, or online. Permanently Overseas voters may also use the FWAB as a write-in absentee ballot by writing in their votes on the ballot pages of the form. They are only eligible to vote in Federal contests. When a Permanently Overseas voter uses the FWAB as a ballot, the clerk must also send the voter an official ballot by the method requested. When using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, the voter must submit the FWAB by mail, with their original signature and date in the affirmation section, and with the signature of their witness. The write-in selections on the voter’s ballot will be counted on Election Day if the voter’s official ballot is not received.

**Temporarily Overseas Voters-** Temporarily Overseas voters may use the FWAB in Wisconsin as an absentee ballot request. They may not use the FWAB as a write-in ballot. They indicate their voter status in Box 1 of the form by checking, “I am a U.S. citizen residing outside of the United States, and I intend to return.” Temporarily Overseas voters must be registered to vote in Wisconsin before they may use the FWAB. Temporarily Overseas voters must provide a copy of their acceptable photo ID with their absentee ballot request, unless the clerk already has a photo ID on file for the voter. They may submit their FWAB as an absentee request by mail, email, or fax. No signature is required when using the FWAB as an absentee request. Temporarily Overseas voters may receive their absentee ballot by mail, email, or fax.

**Regular/Domestic Voters-** Regular voters may use the FWAB in Wisconsin as an absentee ballot request. They may not use the

FWAB as a write-in ballot. Regular voters indicate that their status by not selecting any of the options in Box 1 of the form. Regular voters must be registered to vote in Wisconsin before they may use the FWAB. Regular voters must provide a copy of their acceptable photo ID with their absentee ballot request, unless the clerk already has a photo ID on file for the voter. They may submit their FWAB as an absentee request by mail, email, or fax. No signature is required when using the FWAB as an absentee request. Regular voters may receive their absentee ballot by mail, email, or fax.

### **What should I look for on the FWAB?**

The FWAB may arrive in a military mailing envelope or it may come to you in a regular envelope. When using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, voters are instructed to place the write-in ballot inside a smaller envelope; the small envelope should then be placed in a larger envelope along with the FWAB form/affirmation. You should always open the outer envelope to review the form/affirmation. You then keep the smaller envelope, containing the write-in ballot, sealed to be processed at the polls. If the voter did not use two envelopes as instructed, but the ballot and affirmation are otherwise complete, the ballot can still be counted. Please open the envelope as soon as you receive it; you have one business day to process the request. When looking at the FWAB, please note the information in the following boxes:

**Box 1-** In some states voters can use this form as a registration; voters may not register to vote in Wisconsin using the FWAB.

**Box 2-** This section of the form determines the voter type (see above) and will determine how the voter is able to use the form.

**Box 3-** The voter provides their name and possibly a previous name in this section.

**Box 4-** The voter can provide their Wisconsin Driver License or Social Security Number. They can also provide their date of birth. These fields are not required.

**Box 5-** These fields are not required

**Box 6-** Political party is not required. However, if the voter is using the FWAB as a write-in ballot for a Partisan Primary, the political party box can be used as a party preference to determine voter intent if there is crossover voting.

**Box 7-** The voter will list the last address where they lived in Wisconsin for 10 days.

**Box 8-** If the voter has a mailing address other than the address in Box 7, they will list it here. Send the official ballot to this address. The voter may also use this box to indicate how they would like to receive their absentee ballot.

**Box 9-** A witness address is not required, but may appear in this box.

**Affirmation/Signature-** If the voter is using the FWAB as an absentee ballot request only, then no signature of the voter or witness is required. If the voter is using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, then the voter's signature and a witness signature is required. A witness address is not required.

### **What are some tips for processing a FWAB request?**

- If you receive a FWAB from a voter who is eligible to use the form as a write-in ballot, the clerk needs to follow up by sending the voter an official absentee ballot.
- The clerk will hold onto the write-in FWAB until Election Day. If the voter's official ballot is not received by Election Day, then the clerk will send the FWAB to the polls to be counted. If the voter's official ballot is received by Election Day, then the official ballot is sent to the polls to be counted and the FWAB ballot is rejected.
- If an eligible voter is using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, the clerk will only count votes on the ballot for contests in which the voter is eligible to participate. For example, if a Permanently Overseas voter writes in a local or state contest, the votes for those contests cannot be counted.
- A witness address is not required on the FWAB. The FWAB should still be counted if a witness address is not included.