

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 (permanent and temporary) 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. The FWAB form can serve as both an absentee ballot request and a write-in absentee ballot for some Wisconsin voters.

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:

Voter Type (found in Box 1)	What can they use the FWAB for?	Registration required?	Photo ID required?	Eligible to vote in what contests?	How can they receive their official absentee ballot?
Military Voter "I am a member of the Uniformed Services" OR "I am an eligible spouse" OR "I am an activated National Guard"	Write-In Ballot & Absentee Ballot Request	No	No	All contests	Mail, online, fax, email, or in person*
Permanent Overseas Voter "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."	Write-In Ballot & Absentee Ballot Request	Yes	No	Federal contests only	Mail, online, fax, email, or in person*
Temporarily Overseas Voter "I am a U.S. citizen residing outside of the United States, and I intend to return."	Write-In Ballot & Absentee Ballot Request	Yes	Yes	All contests	Mail, online, fax, email, or in person*
Regular/Domestic Voter Do not select any options in Box 1.	Absentee Ballot Request	Yes	Yes	Cannot use FWAB as a ballot	Mail or in person

*If receiving their ballot in-person, all voters must show a photo ID.

*All ballots must be returned by mail or in person.

When using the FWAB as an absentee ballot request: Voters may submit the FWAB by mail, email, or fax. No signature is required when the voter is using the form as an absentee ballot request.

When using the FWAB as a write-in absentee ballot: Voters must submit the FWAB by mail with the voter's original signature affirmation section. The FWAB must contain the signature of a witness (does not need to be a U.S. Citizen for overseas and military voters), but do not reject the FWAB if the witness did not list their address. The write-in selections on the voter's ballot will be counted on Election Day if the voter's official ballot is not received.

What does the FWAB look like?

You can find the FWAB online at www.FVAP.gov/election-materials.

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: This section of the form determines the **voter type** (see above) and will determine how the voter is able to use the form. This form also provides a place for the **voter's name** (and previous name, if applicable). It also asks for a Wisconsin driver's license number, social security number, and date of birth (these fields are not required).

Box 2: The voter will list the **address** they are registered at (or the address that ties them to Wisconsin for military voters). This must be completed by all voters.

Box 3: If the voter has a **mailing address** other than the address in Box 2, they will list it here. Send the ballot to this address if ballot delivery by mail is requested.

Box 4: These fields provide **contact information** in case you need to contact the voter or if they have specified fax or email delivery of their ballot.

Box 5: The first field allows a voter to specify their **preferred method of ballot delivery** – mail, email, online, or fax – if they are using the FWAB as an absentee ballot request. The adjacent field, regarding political party, is not required or collected in Wisconsin. Please disregard anything listed in this box.

Box 6: If the voter is using the FWAB as an absentee ballot request only, then a witness signature is not required. If the voter is using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, then a **witness signature** is required and should be placed in this box. Additionally, please look for any special instructions the voter may have listed.

Box 7: If the voter is using the FWAB as an absentee ballot request only, then the signature of the voter is not required. If the voter is using the FWAB as a write-in ballot, then the **voter's signature** is 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 must follow up by sending the voter an official absentee ballot.
- If a Military or Permanently Overseas voter asks to receive their ballot by "Email/Online," contact the voter to see if they would like to receive their ballot by email or online, but do not choose for the voter. If the voter does not respond within one business day, email the voter their ballot. If the voter did not provide an email address, mail the voter a ballot. If the voter asks to get their ballot online, then point the voter to myvote.wi.gov so that they may initiate their request online. Please do not enter the online absentee application into WisVote for the voter.
- 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 using the FWAB as a ballot, please remake the FWAB onto a standard ballot and issue a voter number as described in the Election Day Manual. 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 never required on the FWAB. The FWAB should still be counted if a witness address is not included.