



# Wisconsin Elections Commission

212 East Washington Avenue | Third Floor | P.O. Box 7984 | Madison, WI 53707-7984  
(608) 266-8005 | elections@wi.gov | elections.wi.gov

---

**DATE:** April 8, 2026

**TO:** Wisconsin Candidates and Political Parties

**FROM:** Wisconsin Elections Commission

**SUBJECT:** 2025 Act 126- Qualifications of Nomination Paper and Petition Circulators

## Summary

On March 30, 2026, [Act 126](#) was signed into law. [Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10, 8.15, 8.20, 8.40, and 9.10](#) were amended to require a circulator of nomination papers and recall petitions to be a “qualified elector of this state.” The key change was that in the past, circulators could be residents of other states who *would* have been eligible to vote in Wisconsin if they lived in the state. **Under the new law, circulators must be residents of Wisconsin for voting purposes.** Note: Circulators for presidential nomination papers and referenda petitions may still be adult U.S. citizens who are not Wisconsin residents but who would be otherwise qualified to vote under Wisconsin law.

The new law requires that all petition circulators be a “qualified elector.” A qualified elector of Wisconsin is someone who:

- Is a U.S. citizen
- Is at least 18 years old
- Has resided at their residential address in Wisconsin for at least 28 consecutive days with no present intent to move
- Is not currently serving a felony conviction, including incarceration, parole, probation, or extended supervision
- Has not been adjudicated to be incompetent with a finding that they do not understand the voting process
- Has not made a bet or wager on the result of the election

This means individuals who are not Wisconsin residents, or individuals who reside in Wisconsin but are disqualified from voting, cannot serve as a circulator. Specifically, circulators must have lived at their Wisconsin residential address for at least 28 days.

*Wisconsin Elections Commissioners*

Ann S. Jacobs, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Don M. Millis | Carrie Riepl | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thomsen

---

Administrator  
Meagan Wolfe

On April 6, 2026, the Wisconsin Elections Commission held a public meeting to approve this memo and updated nomination paper templates to reflect this change in the law. The forms can be found on the WEC's website at <https://elections.wi.gov/forms>.

Candidates and petitioners must follow the new law immediately. **Any person who is circulating nomination papers for the 2026 Fall Election cycle must reside in Wisconsin and must be qualified to vote in Wisconsin.**

## Legal Analysis

**On March 30, 2026, Wisconsin 2026 Act 126 required that all circulators reside in Wisconsin and must be qualified to vote in Wisconsin.** The law includes circulators of nomination papers, and recall petitions.

Circulators for presidential nomination papers and referendum petitions do not need to be Wisconsin residents. However, they must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old, and otherwise eligible to vote under Wisconsin law.

While circulators are not required to be registered to vote, they must be *qualified* to vote. Therefore, if an individual is under 18, not a U.S. citizen, serving any portion of a felony sentence, or is otherwise disqualified from voting in Wisconsin, they may **not** serve as a circulator.

Qualified Wisconsin electors **can** serve as circulators. [Wis. Stat. 6.02](#) defines a **qualified Wisconsin Elector**:

*(1) Every U.S. citizen age 18 or older who has resided in an election district or ward for 28 consecutive days before any election where the citizen offers to vote is an eligible elector.*

*(2) Any U.S. citizen age 18 or older who moves within this state later than 28 days before an election shall vote at his or her previous ward or election district if the person is otherwise qualified. If the elector can comply with the 28-day residence requirement at the new address and is otherwise qualified, he or she may vote in the new ward or election district.*

Disqualified Wisconsin electors cannot serve as circulators. [Wis. Stat. 6.03](#) defines a **disqualified Wisconsin Elector**:

*(1) The following persons shall not be allowed to vote in any election and any attempt to vote shall be rejected:*

*(a) Any person who is incapable of understanding the objective of the elective process or who is under guardianship, unless the court has determined that the person is competent to exercise the right to vote.*

*(b) Any person convicted of treason, felony or bribery, unless the person's right to vote is restored through a pardon or under s. 304.078 (3).*

*(2) No person shall be allowed to vote in any election in which the person has made or become interested, directly or indirectly, in any bet or wager depending upon the result of the election.*

*(3) No person may be denied the right to register to vote or the right to vote by reason that the person is alleged to be incapable of understanding the objective of the elective process unless the person has been adjudicated incompetent in this state. If a determination of incompetency of the person has already been made, or if a determination of limited incompetency has been made that does not include a specific finding that the subject is competent to exercise the right to vote, and a guardian has been appointed as a result of any such determination, then no determination of incapacity of understanding the objective of the elective process is required unless the guardianship is terminated or modified under s. 54.64.*

## Action Items for Candidates and Circulators

### **Effective immediately, all circulators must follow the new law.**

The first day potential candidates for the 2026 Fall Primary and General Election may start circulating nomination papers is **April 15, 2026**. Candidates are responsible for ensuring all their circulators comply with the new law.

### **Use the new nomination paper template.**

The WEC has approved new nomination paper templates. The new templates include updated "Certification of Circulator" language. The new language clearly states that the circulator is a qualified elector of the State of Wisconsin. Please use the new templates when preparing your nomination papers for the 2026 Fall Primary and General Election. If you have already submitted your nomination papers to the WEC or your local filing officer for review, we encourage you to modify your templates to include the new "Certification of Circulator" language.

### **Challenges to the old template.**

During the WEC staff's facial review of nomination papers, staff will not check that each circulator is a qualified elector. The WEC staff will also not strike signatures if a candidate uses the old nomination paper template. However, the signatures must be valid, which means that the circulator must provide information showing that the circulator has a Wisconsin residential address. If a circulator provides an address outside of Wisconsin, all signatures on the page will be struck.

Candidates and recall petitioners **could face challenges** to their signatures and petitions if they use the old template or use circulators who are not qualified electors. The Commission cannot pre-judge challenges and will make determinations on the outcome of any such challenges at its June 9, 2026 ballot access meeting.

#### **4. Communication with Candidates.**

This communication is being sent to political parties who have ballot access status. Most candidates on the 2026 Fall Primary and General Election ballot file their nomination papers with the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC). However, WEC encourages county, municipal, and school district clerks, who are filing officers for the 2026 Fall Primary and General Election, to contact candidates and parties in their area to inform them of the law change ahead of the April 15 circulation period.

#### **5. Questions?**

Please direct any questions to our Help Desk at [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov) or 608-261-2028.