



Wisconsin Elections Commission

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DATE: October 21, 2024

TO: Wisconsin Central Count Municipalities
Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: WEC Staff

SUBJECT: Central Count Reminders

Wisconsin statute §7.52 allows for a municipality to process and canvass their absentee ballots at an alternate, centralized location instead of the individual polling places. This communication provides helpful reminders of the various tasks required of central count municipalities.

Ordinance and Notification

A municipality that will centrally count their absentee ballots is required to submit notification, in writing, to the Wisconsin Elections Commission on how the municipality intends to process absentee ballots at a central location and the municipality is required to consult with the Wisconsin Elections Commission staff. Wis. Stat. § 7.52.

If you are unsure if you have filed the necessary documents with the WEC, please contact the WEC Help Desk at elections@wi.gov.

Reporting Election Day Information

All municipal clerks of absentee central count municipalities must meet the statutory requirement to post the number of absentee ballots that have been issued and returned in accordance with Wis. Stat. § 7.52(1)(c).

In 2019, the Wisconsin Elections Commission directed staff to work with municipal and county clerks to ensure that the following information is provided to the public:

- Prior to the polls opening at 7 a.m. on Election Day, the municipal clerk shall identify and announce a website on which an absentee informational statement shall later be posted.
- After the close of polls at 8 p.m. on Election Day, the municipal clerk shall post an absentee informational statement in the clerk's office and on the website identified by the clerk.
 - The statement shall list the number of absentee ballots that have been issued and the number of absentee ballots that have been returned by the close of the polls on Election Day. The statement shall not include the name or address of absentee voters.

Wisconsin Elections Commissioners

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Central count municipalities are asked to provide the WEC with the link where they will post the absentee data required by law as the WEC will be reviewing websites on election night to ensure compliance with the posting requirement.

Suggested Website Language

Absentee central count municipalities, and the counties in which those municipalities are located, should include language on their respective websites that clearly states if the unofficial results posted for a jurisdiction or reporting unit do or do not yet include absentee ballots from central count. This ensures that the public and members of the media understand that the posted unofficial results may not include absentee totals.

Central Count municipalities are required to post the number of outstanding absentees, counties may want to consider also posting this information or linking to the municipal page where this information is posted. Conversely, it is also important to note when the central count totals have been received and are included in the unofficial results that are posted to your website. Clearly communicating with the public and media what is and is not included in your unofficial results posting is of utmost importance.

Training Resources

Information about central count procedures and requirements can be found on page 178 of the Election Administration Manual.

There is also a central count-specific training in ElectEd. You can find this training at <https://electiontraining.wi.gov/group/416>.

Questions?

Please contact the WEC Help Desk at elections@wi.gov or (608) 261-2028 with any questions you may have.