How many candidates may I vote for?

The November 6, 2018 General Election is a partisan election. Candidates run under a party name or designate themselves as running independent of a party. At this election, you may vote for only one candidate per office.

Unlike the partisan primary where you must restrict voting to one party, in the general election you may vote for any candidate for an office regardless of party affiliation.

What is an "undervote"?

An undervote occurs if you vote for fewer candidates than you are entitled to. Undervotes are less common at the general election, as all offices are "Vote for 1." You are not required to vote in all contests on the ballot and you may skip as many contests as you please.
Sometimes undervotes are inadvertent. Marks may be indistinct, or appear to have been erased or struck, as in this example:

Secretary of State
Vote for 1
⬭ James Lee (Republican)
⬭ Jane Brown ✗ (Democratic)
⬭ write-in:

Perhaps this is a vote for Jane Brown or maybe it means the voter does not want to vote for the candidate. If voting equipment cannot identify a vote, election inspectors will decide whether or not to count the vote, based on a determination of voter intent. To avoid a third party determining your intent, always make sure your voting decisions are clear.

What is an "overvote?"

An overvote occurs if you vote for more candidates than you are entitled to. If you overvote for an office and do not request a new ballot, no votes will be counted unless inspectors can determine your intent. If an optical scan ballot is overvoted, and intent can be determined, two election inspectors must transfer the marks to a new ballot, marking the overvoted office so the tabulator can record the votes accurately. If voter intent cannot be determined, the ballot may be processed by the tabulator and the votes in the overvoted office are not counted.

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For more information about elections and voting, contact the Wisconsin Elections Commission.

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Make Your Vote Count!
A Guide to Marking Your Ballot Effectively

Whether you vote at the polling place or by absentee ballot, you take for granted that your vote will be counted as you intended. Unfortunately, a hastily or carelessly marked ballot can cause your votes to be counted incorrectly or not at all.

The act of voting is a responsibility that should be executed with care and consideration. This brochure will help you avoid common ballot-marking mistakes and provide you with other helpful information, such as:

✓ the importance of reading and following ballot instructions
✓ types of ballots and voting devices
✓ tips for properly marking your ballot
✓ the cause and effect of undervotes and overvotes, and
✓ what to do if you make a mistake and require another ballot.

Don't miss the boat!
Save your vote!

Ballots and voting devices currently used in Wisconsin:

Optical Scan (OS) Equipment. A paper ballot is marked by hand and read by an optical scan tabulator which records and counts the votes. Ballot instructions direct voters to either "fill in the oval" or "connect the arrow" next to their choices. The voted ballot is inserted into the tabulator for counting.

Hand-Count Paper Ballots. Votes from paper ballots are hand-counted and recorded on tally sheets by the election inspectors (poll workers). The voter will "make an X or other mark" in a square next to their choices. Voted ballots are placed in a ballot box for counting and recording by the election inspectors.

Accessible Voting Equipment. All polling places must have at least one piece of accessible voting equipment. Most polling places are equipped with either a Ballot Marking Device or a Direct Recording Electronic voting machine as their accessible voting option.

Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs), such as the ExpressVote, AutoMark and ImageCast Evolution, allow voters to use a touch screen to make their ballot choices. The machines produce a marked ballot that the voter can review before inserting it into an optical scan tabulator for counting.

Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) machines allow voters to make their selections by touching the screen next to their choices. The machine produces a paper record for each ballot and votes are counted and recorded electronically.

Tips for Marking a Ballot:

1. **Read the ballot instructions**. Whether your ballot will be tabulated electronically or manually by election inspectors, it is imperative that your choices are clear. Optical scan tabulators are programmed to read the ballot according to the rules for that specific election. If you do not follow ballot marking instructions or mark carelessly, the optical scanner may not correctly read your ballot. Even where poll workers count ballots by hand, if the intent of the voter cannot be determined, the votes cannot be counted. If you are not sure what the instructions mean, ask an election inspector for assistance.

2. **When marking your ballot, use the pencil or marking pen provided and completely fill in the oval or connect the arrow**. The sensors on an optical scan tabulator "read" the ballot by looking for filled-in ovals or connected arrows. If the tabulator cannot detect the marks made by other marking pens, including highlighters, the ballot will be rejected as blank.

    Be sure to completely fill in the oval or fully connect the arrow to ensure your vote is counted.

    Here is an example of a good mark on an optical scan ballot that uses ovals:

Tips for Marking a Ballot (Cont.):

Here is a good mark on an optical scan ballot that uses arrows:

3. **Vote for only the number of candidates indicated in the instructions**. If you vote for more candidates than are allowed by law, your votes may not be counted.

4. **Mark your ballot carefully**. Fill in the oval or complete the arrow carefully, without making stray marks. If marking a paper ballot, be sure your choices are clear.

5. **When voting an optical scan ballot, check the back of the ballot for offices or referenda**. An optical scan ballot may be two-sided, so check both sides. There are also navigational cues to guide you through the ballot.

6. **Review your choices carefully**. Review your choices once more before placing your ballot into a ballot box or tabulator.

7. **If you make a mistake, you can spoil your ballot and receive another**. State law allows you up to 3 ballots. If you make an error on your ballot, tell an election inspector you need a new one. If you are voting by absentee ballot, contact your municipal clerk.