

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.

What does the FWAB look like?

You can find the FWAB online at 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 1 of the form by checking either “I am a member of the Uniformed Services...,” or “I am an eligible spouse...” . 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 the FWAB as an absentee request only. Military voters may receive their absentee ballot by mail, email, fax, or online. When a military voter uses the FWAB as a ballot, the clerk must also send the voter an official ballot by the method requested. 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 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.

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 1 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. 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. 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 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 and 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. Temporarily 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 eligible to vote in all contests. When a Temporarily 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.

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 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 to request a ballot. 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- 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 last address where they lived for at least 10 days in Wisconsin. 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 FPCA 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 a write-in ballot, then a witness signature is required and should be placed in this box. A witness address is not required. Additionally, please look for any special instructions the voter may have listed.

Box 7- 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.

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.
- 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.