

MyVote and You Webinar Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Does the failing to return a ballot mean after every election? Or just after certain ones?

Elections Commission guidance for Indefinitely Confined voters is to send a 30-day Indefinitely Confined letter only after an April Spring Election or November General Election. If a voter does not return a ballot for a Primary election (February or August), do not send a notice letter. There is not enough time between in-cycle elections when accounting for recording absentee ballots during post-election reconciliation, sending the notice and allowing 30 days for it to potentially return – it's likely the 30-day deadline will expire after deadlines for sending ballots to all voters with existing requests.

We had at least one elector registered through MyVote as a Military voter on election day Nov. 2018. This person then thought they could go to the polls and they would be in the pollbook. Is there a way that those voters who register during late registration (as it gets closer to the election) can be notified that they may not be in the pollbook? And that when they register in-person that they need to show photo ID?

Military voters are an exception to registration rules in WisVote as they are not required to be registered before voting (and are exempt from Proof of Residence requirements). Non-military voters are not able to register during late registration; all late registrants should be registering in-office and provided with an EL-133 Certificate of Registration. The EL-133 includes a section to be provided to the voter to present to the Election Inspector on Election Day – this notice indicates the date the voter registered in-office and their eligibility to vote. If the voter registered after poll books were printed, the voter would sign the supplemental poll book after presenting the EL-133.

It would be helpful if the absentee request included a phone number or email. Right now it's not required and many times we have to contact the voter and we have no way to do so.

This is something that has come up in discussions and we are looking at ways to prod voters to provide additional contact information for use by clerks. There are also privacy concerns on the part of voters because a phone number or email provided for a voter record or absentee request is considered a public record in Wisconsin statutes. This data would then be provided as part of any voter data request and state law does not allow for this information to be withheld at a voter's request (Confidential Voters are the exception).

It is unlikely we would be able to require this information as state statutes specify the information a voter must provide to constitute a valid absentee application. The Elections Commission does not currently have the authority to change these criteria or require additional information.

It would be helpful at least to let the voter know that if they don't receive a ballot to contact the municipality because there may be a problem with their absentee application. Maybe have that notation before they electronically submit their absentee request.

Thank you for this suggestion. MyVote does not currently include any specific instructions for following-up on a ballot request, beyond the notation to contact a municipal clerk to cancel/change an existing request. We will include this suggestion with the upcoming usability review of the MyVote website.

People sometimes attach selfies to the absentee request and think they've completed the absentee process. It would be great if it said "your absentee ballot will be mailed pending the photo ID that you submitted, etc." Maybe it already does say that but the people that sent selfies thought they submitted it correctly.

We have added text to the "Attach a Photo ID" step of the MyVote Absentee Application process indicating that they must provide an acceptable photo ID. There is a link to a list of acceptable photo IDs and also a specific, bolded, note that "selfies" or personal photos will not meet this requirement. Additionally, voters are advised an acceptable photo ID must be provided to receive a ballot.

After Election Day, we seem to still receive requests for the calendar year - is there a message that they receive that says "We've received your absentee request, but there are no future elections remaining this year." This seems to happen a lot and I would assume we'll get requests after April for the 2019 year not realizing that April is our only election.

The MyVote absentee process does include a section that lists the individual elections remaining in year, if there are any. An election is removed as an option once the deadline for election-specific requests has passed. However, there is a different deadline for receiving a ballot for an election when the request is submitted as Calendar Year – so there is a brief period where a voter would not be able to choose a specific election but would still be eligible for a ballot for a current election due to the different statutory deadlines.

A voter can still submit a calendar year request after all scheduled elections due to the possibility of special elections or referendum elections. For instance, in 2017 there was no scheduled statewide election after April, but several areas had local referendum elections in November – these referendum elections were not scheduled (or not visible in MyVote) until well after the Spring Election. Any voter submitting a calendar-year request during this lag was still eligible to receive an absentee ballot.

When the absentee request comes through via email, we print the PDF that is attached to the email. It's a 2-page document and the first page is just the clerk's name and address and the 2nd page is the actual absentee request. It would be great if the attachment was just 1 page. On busy days we receive hundreds of requests per day and must manually change our printer setting to print the first page only for each request.

Thank you for the feedback on the PDF notices. When MyVote was originally launched, the 2-page notice were included to simplify the email notice process and reduce potential problems with email generation. Like many things we've learned, what worked when user-volume was low is not necessarily efficient as usage increases. We will include this suggestion with the upcoming usability review of the MyVote website.

Are the emails going to be sent to the Providers as well as the Reliers for registrations and/or absentee requests?

Providers are not currently auto-copied on MyVote notification emails. Due to the different types of relier/provider relationships and that not all notices need to be acted upon, requiring providers to "opt out" of notification emails isn't appropriate. If a relier and provider decide they would like the provider to receive all MyVote notifications, please contact the Elections HelpDesk to request a provider's email address be added to your municipality's notification list.

Do the clerks need to let you know of the additional addresses for the emails? Or can the providers for the reliers add their own email addresses in the system?

Clerks would need to contact the Elections Commission Help Desk (elections@wi.gov or 608-261-2028) to add additional email addresses for MyVote notifications. Staff Contact records can only be edited by Commission Staff.

We have had issue with addresses not showing up in MyVote when a voter is searching when there is an S in their address (post office) but we do not show an S and the County GIS does not.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy answer to issues such as these because it crosses several pieces of the addressing process. WisVote will correct addresses using the USPS standards when the **Process** button is used during address creation. After an address is created, subsequent changes/updates may not follow this USPS standardization because the process button would not be used.

When using MyVote, the associated address service (Smarty Streets) validates the provided address against USPS standards before submitting to WisVote for a match. If this post-validation address does not match a record in WisVote, no result is returned. In the example above, if the WisVote address was created without the validation step or was edited to remove the S after creation, the matching would fail, and no result would return.

Apart from the matching/standardizing impact, there is also the issue of which address is "correct"? If the County GIS version is correct, it would need to be brought to the attention of USPS. If the USPS version is correct, this should be the version used in WisVote.

This also ties into the ongoing process for WisVote addressing and is an the issue we are hoping address later this year.

How long does it take to register a voter on MyVote on Election Day?

Assuming no issues, an online registration application (MyVote Pending on Election Day) can be completed in less than five minutes. If the voter is computer-savvy, they could complete the registration process in less than a minute.

How are we to know if we have a duplicate registrant if you remove the DOB?

Changes to the MyVote notification forms do not change the information stored in WisVote as part of the registration or absentee request process. DOB and other personally identifiable information (PII) will still be visible in WisVote and required for the registration process, we will be increasing the security of the voter's PII by removing it from the notification emails. The voter registration notification PDF still includes the unique voter registration number for identification. When DOB is removed from the absentee application notification PDF, it would be replaced with the same voter registration number. This will allow clerks to locate the specific voter record the request is associated with in cases where the application was not entered into WisVote directly (no photo ID on file requests). Duplicate matching in WisVote will not be impacted by any of these changes.

When going to an assisted living facility, sometimes the voter says they don't want to vote. Does that mean they have to fill out a new request for the next election?

No. When a voter in an assisted living facility states they do not want to vote in an election, the Special Voting Deputy should note the voter's name in the EL-126 (Elector Decline of Absentee Ballot). The form includes sections to note voters who still wish to receive future ballots and those who have chosen not to receive any further ballots. Indefinitely Confined voters who refuse a ballot in this way should have their ballot recorded in WisVote using the returned status Voter Refused.