

State of Wisconsin \ Government Accountability Board

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DATE: August 29, 2012

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
Wisconsin County Clerks
City of Milwaukee Election Commission
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Election Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: Use of Electronic Documents for Proof of Residence
(August 28, 2012 Ruling of the Government Accountability Board)

At the Government Accountability Board meeting held on August 28, 2012, the Board heard public testimony regarding the use of electronic documents as a sufficient form of proof of residence for voters required to present such proof as part of the registration process.

After considering public comments and after receiving staff's report and recommendation to await further comments from clerks before taking action, the Board unanimously directed that election officials shall accept electronic versions of any of the proof of residence documents under Wis. Stat. § 6.34(3)(a) that contain a current and complete name and address:

1. A current and valid driver license.
2. A current and valid Wisconsin identification card.
3. Any other official identification card or license issued by a Wisconsin governmental body or unit.
4. An official identification card or license issued by an employer in the normal course of business that contains a photograph of the cardholder or license holder, but not including a business card.
5. A real property tax bill or receipt for the current year or the year preceding the date of the election.
6. A residential lease.
7. A university, college or technical college identification card that contains a photograph of the cardholder together with either:
 - A fee payment receipt issued to the cardholder by the university, college, or technical college dated no earlier than 9 months before the election.
 - A certified and current list of students who reside in housing sponsored by the university, college, or technical college showing the current address of the students, if the election official verifies that the student presenting the card is included on the list.
8. A utility bill for the period commencing not earlier than 90 days before the day registration is made.
9. A bank statement.
10. A paycheck.
11. A check or other document issued by a unit of government.

Electronic versions of these documents may be presented to election officials as proof of residence on smartphones, tablets, or other electronic devices. This is a change from the former staff guidance that only paper copies establishing proof of residence were acceptable.

Election officials are still required to record the type of proof of residence presented along with the identifying number, if any, associated with the document on the voter registration form.

Special Note: The Board specifically indicated in its ruling that election officials are under no obligation to provide Internet access, computers, or smartphones in their offices or at the polling place to facilitate voter registration. The Board also reiterated that, while election observers may observe public aspects of the voting process, they do not have the right to view or handle proof of residence documents presented by voters to election inspectors.

Staff will soon provide additional information and guidance for implementing this decision. Your continued cooperation and diligence on behalf of Wisconsin's voters is, as always, greatly appreciated.

cc: Kevin J. Kennedy
Director and General Counsel
Government Accountability Board

Ross D. Hein
Elections Supervisor
Government Accountability Board