

2026 PARTISAN PRIMARY

MEDIA KIT

city.milwaukee.gov/election
voterinfo@milwaukee.gov
414-286-VOTE (8683)



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MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

The City of Milwaukee Election Commission (MEC) is dedicated to providing accurate, timely information to the public through the media. To facilitate this, the MEC has designated official media contacts to respond to interview requests and election-related inquiries. Media representatives should submit requests to the contacts listed below.

PRIMARY CONTACT

VoterInfo

voterinfo@milwaukee.gov

SECONDARY CONTACT

Maricha Harris, Deputy Director

maharr@milwaukee.gov

(414) 286-3962

To streamline the process, send an email and include the following:

- Subject of the interview, with as much information as possible
- Date(s) and time(s) available
- Live or recorded
- In-person or virtual

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIA RULES

The City of Milwaukee Election Commission welcomes and encourages media observation at polling places, early voting centers, and Central Count to promote transparency in the election process. To ensure elections are conducted lawfully and without disruption, all media observers must follow the requirements established by the Wisconsin Election Commission under Chapter EL 4 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

DO:

- **Identify yourself.** Members of the media must inform election officials upon arrival of their identity and any organization they represent.
- **Bring cameras.** At the discretion of election officials, you may take photos and videos outside of voting areas, provided you are not disrupting or interfering with election processes.
- **Listen to officials.** Election officials are allowed to limit cameras at their own discretion, so long as their rule is uniformly applied. Listen to and follow their guidance.

DO NOT:

- **Record confidential information.** Cameras are not allowed to be used for recording sensitive information, such as voted ballots. Stay outside of the voting area.
- **Disrupt election processes.** This includes, but is not limited to, blocking entrances and exits, intimidating voters, or any sort of electioneering. Media may act as an observer, but is subject to both rules set for observers and communications media.

If you plan on arriving at an observable site, please notify us in advance if possible. Questions regarding media conduct at observable sites should be directed to the designated contacts on the previous page.

CURRENT & UPCOMING ELECTIONS

SPRING PRIMARY:

Third Tuesday in February. This election is held to nominate nonpartisan candidates that will go on to the Spring Election. A primary is only held when more than two candidates for an elected office qualify for a ballot.

SPRING ELECTION:

First Tuesday in April. This election is held to elect nonpartisan seats including judicial, educational, municipal, and county. In a Presidential Election year, this election functions as Wisconsin's Presidential Primary.

PARTISAN PRIMARY (EVEN YEARS):

Second Tuesday in August. This election is held to nominate partisan candidates to be voted for in the General Election (other than the President).

GENERAL ELECTION (EVEN YEARS):

Tuesday after the first Monday. This election is held to elect United States senators, representatives in congress, presidential electors, state senators, representatives to the state assembly, district attorneys, state officers other than the state superintendent and judicial officers, and county officers other than supervisors and county executives.

2026	Spring Election:	Tuesday, April 7, 2026
	Partisan Primary:	Tuesday, August 11, 2026*
	General Election:	Tuesday, November 3, 2026
2027	Spring Primary:	Tuesday, February 16, 2027
	Spring Election:	Tuesday, April 6, 2027
2028	Spring Primary:	Tuesday, February 15, 2028
	Spring Election:	Tuesday, April 4, 2028
	Partisan Primary:	Tuesday, August 8, 2028
	General Election:	Tuesday, November 7, 2028
2029	Spring Primary:	Tuesday, February 20, 2029
	Spring Election:	Tuesday, April 3, 2029

*current election

MEC RESOURCES

The **Milwaukee Election Commission (MEC)** administers all elections for the City of Milwaukee. MEC's website is the central hub for elections in the City.

OUR MISSION:

The City of Milwaukee Election Commission's mission is to ensure that all elections are secure, fair, transparent, and accessible in order to instill voter confidence in the democratic process.

OUR VISION:

Every eligible voter in the City of Milwaukee is able to exercise their right to vote.

VISIT US ONLINE AT [CITY.MILWAUKEE.GOV/ELECTION](https://city.milwaukee.gov/election) FOR:

- Election notices and information regarding upcoming elections
- Candidate and campaign finance information for local candidates including how to run for public office in the City of Milwaukee
- Finding your polling place
- Locating information about drop box location and schedule
- Finding location and schedule information for In-Person Absentee Voting, commonly known as Early Voting
- How-to videos (early voting, voting by mail, and voting at a polling place)
- Election district maps ranging from State, County, School board and Municipal districts down to individual voting wards.
- Maps of local aldermanic and school board districts
- Application to become a poll worker

FOLLOW US ON:

STATE & COUNTY RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Elections Commission and the Wisconsin Ethics Commission maintain multiple websites providing resources for voters across the state of Wisconsin.

VISIT THE WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ([ELECTIONS.WI.GOV](https://elections.wi.gov)) FOR:

- Information regarding the Wisconsin Board of Election Commissioners
- Comprehensive information regarding election administration for the State of Wisconsin
- Statewide election results
- How to run for state public office including information regarding federal and state candidates



VISIT [MYVOTE.WI.GOV](https://myvote.wi.gov) TO:

- Register to vote or change the address or name on your registration (re-registering)
- Request an absentee ballot
- Check on the status of your ballot
- Review your voting history
- Find out what's on your ballot
- Find your polling place, Early Voting locations and drop box information

VISIT [ETHICS.WI.GOV](https://ethics.wi.gov)

The Wisconsin Ethics Commission handles state level campaign finance reports and tracking. It also provides comprehensive information on the rules and guidelines for tracking and submitting campaign finance reports at the state and local levels.



VISIT [THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION](https://www.milwaukeeelection.com)

The **Milwaukee County Election Commission** provides information on county level candidates and campaign finance information and election results for Milwaukee County, including how to run for public office for county-level positions.

ABOUT ELECTIONS IN MILWAUKEE

Following state law, the City of Milwaukee Board of Election Commissioners (BOEC) are appointed by the mayor from a list submitted by the two major parties, whereby the party that won the most votes in the City in the last governor's race receives two seats, and the second highest votes receives one seat. Commissioners serve four-year terms. The Commission is responsible for certifying candidates, ballot order, recalls and recounts, polling locations, appointing poll workers, as well as certifying election results for the city.

CITY OF MILWAUKEE BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS



- Terrell Martin, Democrat, Chair
- Patricia Ruiz-Cantu, Democrat
- Douglas Haag, Republican

[CLICK to find out about upcoming meetings for the City's Board of Election Commissioners.](#)

ABOUT THE PARTISAN PRIMARY IN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE

All races in this primary election are partisan. Voters may only vote in only ONE party's primary. If a voter chooses a party, votes casts in that party will be counted. Votes cast in any other party will not be counted. If a voter does not select a party, and there are votes in more than one party, no votes will be counted.

FEDERAL RACES:

- Representative in Congress, District 4

STATE RACES:

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Attorney General
- Secretary of State
- State Treasurer
- State Senators, Districts 3, 5, 7, 21
- Representatives to the Assembly, Districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 61, 63

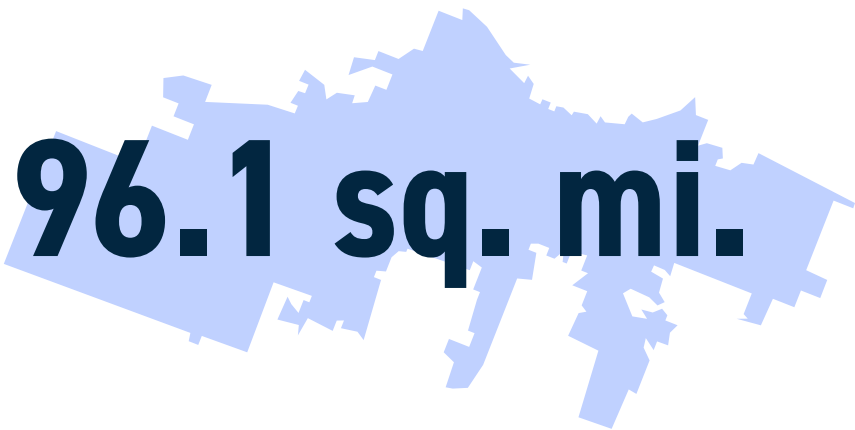
COUNTY RACES:

- Sheriff
- Clerk of Circuit Court

ELECTION NOTICES

Election administration is a secure and transparent process. There are many aspects that can be observed and tracked. Click [HERE](#) to review all official election notices for the upcoming election.

CITY OF MILWAUKEE STATISTICS



Total Estimated Population

577,385

via WI DOA

Total Voting Age Population

435,551

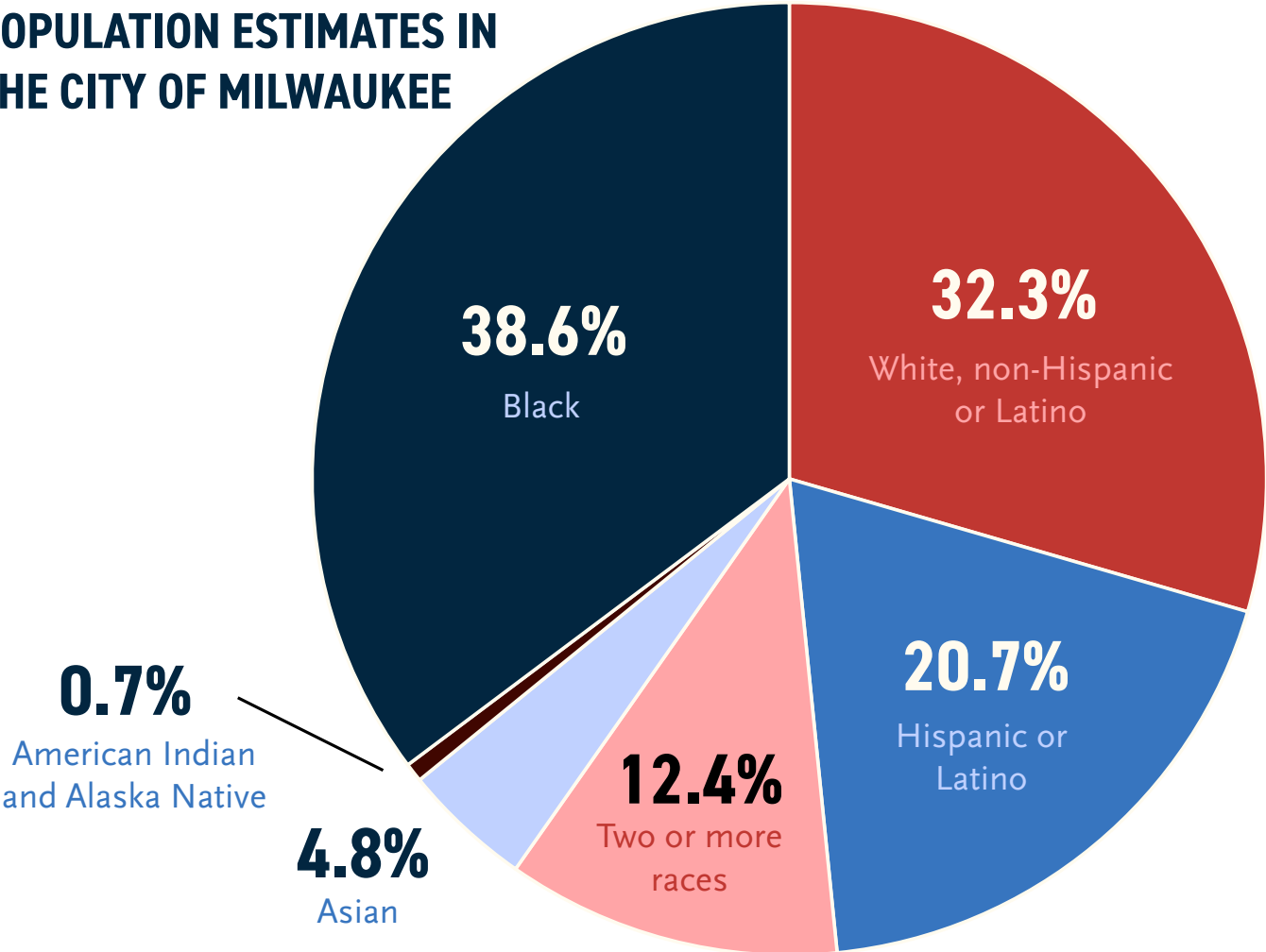
via WI DOA

Total Registered Voters

275,674

as of June 2026

RACE AND ETHNICITY POPULATION ESTIMATES IN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE



via census.gov

PARTISAN PRIMARY ELECTION TIMELINE

JUNE 1 | 5 PM

Candidate filing deadline for nomination papers, declarations of candidacy, and campaign registration statements for the General Election

Candidates may begin circulating nomination papers for signatures no sooner than April 15th. (Wis. Stat. §8.15(1), §8.20(8)(a), 8.21)

JUNE 2

Deadline for filing officer to receive referendum questions or petitions for referendum for the Partisan Primary ballot

School districts have until the next business day to file any referendums. (Wis. Stat. §8.37)

JUNE 4 | 4:30 PM

Candidate filing deadline for statement of economic interests and for filing officer to accept any challenges to nominations papers

Candidates must submit a Statement of Economic Interests on the 3rd day following the deadline for nomination papers with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. (Wis. Stat. §19.43(4))

JUNE 25

Municipal Clerks send absentee ballots to electors with valid requests on file for the Partisan Primary

47 days before Election Day is the earliest absentee ballots can be mailed out to absentee voters for the Partisan Primary and will be mailed out daily thereafter as valid requests are submitted until the Thursday before Election Day. (Wis. Stat. §7.15(1)(cm))

JUNE 29 | 12 PM

Drop boxes open in the City of Milwaukee

Only City of Milwaukee voters can drop off their absentee ballot at any of the 14 secure ballot dropboxes located all Milwaukee libraries, and the city hall complex 24 hours a day until Election Day, Tuesday August 11, 2026 at 6pm.

JULY 14

Last day to establish residency in Wisconsin

28 days prior to an election. Voters moving after this date may vote from their prior address. Wis. Stat. (§6.02(3), §6.10(3)).

JULY 22

Last day to register by mail and online (online registration closes at 11:59 PM)

JULY 28

Early Voting begins

Voters can head to any of the In-Person Absentee Voting (IPAV) Centers in the City to cast their ballot or drop off their mailed absentee ballot before Election Day.

AUGUST 1 | 8 AM

Public Testing of Voting Equipment

The public can witness the testing of voting equipment that is used on Election Day at MEC's Operations Center at 1901 S. Kinnickinnic Ave. Must be completed no earlier than ten days prior to Election Day (Wis. Stat. §6.86(1)(b))

AUGUST 6 | 5PM

Deadline to request an absentee ballot

AUGUST 7 | 5PM

Last day to register to vote in person at the Clerk's office or at an Early Voting Center.

Friday preceding the election. Wis. State. §6.29(2)(a)

AUGUST 9 | 3PM

Last day of Early Voting at select locations

Check MEC's website for the select locations open on the Sunday before Election Day.

AUGUST 11

ELECTION DAY

7 am – polls open

6 pm – dropboxes close

8 pm – polls close; if you are in line by 8PM, you will get to vote

8pm – absentee ballot drop off at central count closes

AUGUST 14 | 4PM

Deadline to cure Provisional Ballots

Voters who voted provisionally can present their missing information to the Clerk's office until 4pm for their ballot to be counted at canvass. (Wis. Stat. §6.97(3))

AUGUST 18 | 9AM

Deadline for the Milwaukee County Board of Election Commissioners to convene for the canvass of the Partisan Primary.

AUGUST 18 | 5PM

Deadline for a candidate to petition for a recount.

This occurs on the 3rd business day following the last meeting of the board of canvassers determining the election result (Wis. Stat. §9.01(1)(a)1)

AUGUST 26

Last day for the Chairperson of the Wisconsin Elections Commission to certify the results of the Partisan Primary.

This occurs is the 3rd Wednesday following the election (Wis. Stat. §7.70(3)(a))

VOTING ABSENTEE BY MAIL

Any registered voter in Wisconsin may request an absentee ballot by mail for any election, and state law does not require voters to provide a reason to vote absentee.

Before an absentee ballot is issued, a voter's registration is verified by MEC using Wisconsin's statewide voter registration system, WisVote. This verification ensures that ballots are only sent to eligible, registered voters.

Wisconsin law has also long provided additional absentee voting options for certain voters. For more than 30 years, voters who are indefinitely confined due to age, physical illness, or disability may request to receive absentee ballots automatically for future elections. Voters who will be out of state or living overseas may also request that their absentee ballot be emailed or mailed to an address other than their registered address. These categories have specific requirements, and voters are encouraged to visit our website for detailed information.

REQUESTING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

Requests for an absentee ballot must include a legible copy of a qualifying photo I.D., your full name, your voting address (and your mailing address, if different from your voting address), and the election(s) you are planning to vote by mail.

The simplest way to request an absentee ballot is by visiting **MyVote.wi.gov** and clicking the 'Vote Absentee by Mail' tile.

Applications can be submitted by mail at:

Absentee Ballot Request
Milwaukee Election Commission
200 E Wells St Room 501
Milwaukee, WI 53202

or via email at:

absenteeballot@milwaukee.gov

Any request for an absentee ballot must be completed in writing and must be submitted no later than the last Thursday before any election.

RETURNING YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT

MEC encourages voters to return their absentee ballots either via dropbox or in-person at any early voting center. Ballots must be received by Election Day, no later than 8 pm

VIA DROP BOX: Voters may use drop boxes as soon as they open. Drop boxes close at 6 pm on Election Day. After 6 pm, you may drop your absentee ballot at the Central Count Processing Center located at 1901 S Kinnickinnic Avenue until 8 pm

IN-PERSON AT AN EARLY VOTING SITE:

Voters can drop off their ballot at any in-person absentee voting site. Absentee ballots are not accepted at individual polling locations throughout the City on Election Day. You can only drop off your ballot in person if it is your own ballot or for someone who cannot drop it off due to age, physical illness, or disability.

VIA MAIL: If you must return your ballot by mail, do so as soon as possible. MEC recommends completing your ballot as soon as it arrives and placing it in the mail right away. MEC cannot accept ballots that arrive after 8 pm on Election Day regardless of the post mark date.

BALLOT DROP BOXES

Ballot drop boxes are a secure option for voters looking to return their mail absentee ballot. Boxes are made of heavy-duty steel, anchored in the ground, and under surveillance 24 hours a day. MEC follows best practices set forth by the Wisconsin Elections Commission, the Election Assistance Commission, and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in managing and placement of our drop boxes.

Drop boxes will be open by noon on Monday, June 29th at 12pm and will remain open until 6 pm on Election Day August 11th.

Milwaukee Public Libraries:

Atkinson Branch

1960 W Atkinson Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Bay View Branch

2566 S Kinnickinnic Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Capitol Branch

3969 N 74th St
Milwaukee, WI 53216

Center Street Branch

2727 W Fond du Lac Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53210

Central Library - Centennial Hall

733 N 8th St
Milwaukee, WI 53233

East Branch

2320 N Cramer St
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Good Hope Branch

7715 W Good Hope Rd
Milwaukee, WI 53223

Martin Luther King Branch

2767 N Doctor M.L.K. Jr Dr
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Mitchell Street Branch

906 W Historic Mitchell St
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Tippecanoe Branch

3912 S Howell Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Villard Square Branch

5190 N 35th St
Milwaukee, WI 53209

Washington Park Branch

2121 N Sherman Blvd
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Zablocki Branch

3501 W Oklahoma Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53215

Additional Location:

Zeidler Municipal Building (City Hall Complex)

830 N Market St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Visit city.milwaukee.gov/election for the most up-to-date information on Drop Box dates and locations.



PLEASE NOTE: MEC can only accept ballots from the City of Milwaukee. Ballots from surrounding cities cannot be accepted. Ballots from other cities are outside of our jurisdiction and will not be counted if they are delivered to one of our drop boxes.

EARLY VOTING

In-Person Absentee Voting – commonly known as Early Voting – gives Milwaukee voters the opportunity to cast their ballot before Election Day at convenient locations across the city. **Any City of Milwaukee voter may vote at any Early Voting center, regardless of their Election Day polling place.** Under Wisconsin law, absentee ballots cannot be opened or counted until 7:00 am on Election Day.

Voters should present a **valid photo ID** when voting early. Voters who are not registered, or who need to update their registration, may do so at an Early Voting center. If your photo ID does not show your current address, you will also need to bring proof of residence.

Early Voting in Milwaukee begins 14 days before Election Day. Hours and locations change for every election.

HOW THE EARLY VOTING PROCESS WORKS

Early Voting centers follow a secure, three-step process designed to protect both voter privacy and ballot security:

- 1. Check-In:** Voters present their photo ID and state their name and address. Election workers verify the voter's registration and provide a labeled absentee ballot envelope that is linked to the voter's record.
- 2. Vote:** Voters receive a blank ballot and mark their choices using a ballot marking machine. These machines print the voter's selections directly onto the ballot. They do not store votes and are not connected to the internet or any network.
- 3. Seal & Secure:** After confirming the ballot is correct, the voter places it into the absentee envelope. An election worker serves as the witness and seals the envelope. The voter signs the envelope, which is then placed into a secure ballot box.

All early voting ballots are transported daily to Milwaukee's Election Operations Center, where they are stored under constant security and surveillance. By state law, ballots remain sealed and are not opened or counted until Election Day, when they are securely tabulated at Central Count.

Visit city.milwaukee.gov/election for the most up-to-date information on Early Voting Center locations and hours.

EARLY VOTING IN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE

2026 Partisan Primary Voting Dates: July 28th–August 9th



	Tuesday 7/28	Wednesday 7/29	Thursday 7/30	Friday 7/31	Saturday 8/1	Sunday 8/2	Monday 8/3	Tuesday 8/4	Wednesday 8/5	Thursday 8/6	Friday 8/7	Saturday 8/8	Sunday 8/9
Good Hope Library 7715 W Good Hope Rd Milwaukee, WI 53223	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4:30PM	10:30AM -2PM	12:30PM -7:30PM	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4:30PM	10:30AM -2PM
Midtown Voting Center 4170 N 56th St Milwaukee, WI 53216	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -3:30PM	10:30AM -2PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	8:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -3:30PM	10:30AM -2:30PM
Washington Park Senior Center 4420 W Vliet St Milwaukee, WI 53208	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	Closed	Closed	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	9AM-4PM	Closed	Closed
Zeidler Municipal Building 841 N Broadway Milwaukee, WI 53202	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	10AM-4PM	11AM -2:30PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	10AM-4PM	10AM -3PM
Tippecanoe Library 3912 S Howell Ave Milwaukee, WI 53207	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4:30PM	10:30AM -2PM	12:30PM -7:30PM	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4:30PM	10:30AM -2PM
Zablocki Library 3501 W Oklahoma Ave Milwaukee, WI 53215	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4:30PM	Closed	12:30PM -7:30PM	12:30PM -7:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	10:30AM -5:30PM	9:30AM -4PM	Closed

For more information, visit: city.milwaukee.gov/earlyvoting

Note: Friday, August 7 is the last day to register to vote at an Early Voting site. After this date, you may register only at your polling place on Election Day, August 11.

ELECTION DAY VOTING

The City of Milwaukee operates **178 polling locations** on Election Day that are open from 7 am until 8 pm. Voters must vote at their assigned polling location.

WHAT SHOULD VOTERS EXPECT AT THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY?

- Voters should have their **photo ID** ready when they enter the polling place.
- Check in with the **greeter**, if your polling place has one. If the polling place covers multiple wards, the greeter will be able to direct you to the correct line.
- Fill out a new **registration** form if you are a new Wisconsin voter or if you have changed your name or address since you last voted. You will have to **provide proof of residence when registering**. You do not have to show your photo ID when registering, but you will have to show photo ID before being issued a ballot.
- State law requires poll workers to ask voters to **state their name and address**.
- Poll workers will ask you to [show your photo ID](#).
 - The voter's photo ID must be one of the acceptable documents specified by law.
 - The voter's photo ID must be current. For State of Wisconsin Driver License or State ID cards, Military IDs, and Passports, they can be expired, if they expired since the last General Election.
 - The voter's photo ID must reasonably resemble the voter.
 - The voter's photo ID must have the voter's name on it.
 - The name on the photo ID must conform to the voter's name on the poll list. An exact match is not necessary. For example, Bob conforms to Robert, Sue conforms to Susan, and Smith-Jones conforms to Smith if the voter has recently been married.
- Poll workers will ask you to **sign the poll book**. If you are unable to sign because of a physical disability, you are exempt from this requirement. You should inform a poll worker that you are unable to sign.
- Poll workers will write your Election Day voter number in the poll list next to your name, and issue you a ballot.
- If you forget to bring your photo ID, you are allowed to vote by provisional ballot. You can return with your photo ID to the polling place by 8 pm. You may also present your photo ID to the municipal clerk in person by 4 pm the Friday after the Election. If you provide photo ID by the deadline, the ballot will count. If you do not provide photo ID by the deadline, your ballot will not count.

Please be understanding and kind to your poll workers!

If you have questions or issues on election day, call: **414-286-8683 (VOTE)**

Find your polling place @ [**MyVote.wi.gov**](https://myvote.wi.gov)

VOTER ACCESSIBILITY

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 created a requirement that every polling place, including Early Voting Centers, have accessible voting equipment available. MEC provides accessible voting equipment and voting assistance at all of its Early Voting Centers and all of its polling locations on Election Day.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Voters unable to make it to their polling place on Election Day are able to request a ballot by mail. Additionally, voters who are indefinitely confined due to age, illness, infirmity or disability are able to request absentee ballots be automatically sent to them until they are no longer confined or fail to return a ballot. Additionally, voters unable to drop off their own absentee ballot due to a disability can have someone else do so on their behalf.

ASSISTANCE WITH VOTING AND REGISTERING

A voter may require an assistor if they need assistance with reading, writing, have difficulty with the English language, or have a disability which prevents them from being able to mark their ballot, certificate envelope, and/or a voter registration form. An assistor must then sign in the area marked on the ballot, certification envelope, or voter registration form. An assistor does not need to be a qualified elector, can be a family member or a poll worker.

ACCESSIBLE VOTING EQUIPMENT

Every polling location and Early Voting Center has ADA accessible voting equipment available. Voters can request those accommodations from a poll worker. Additionally, voters can receive assistance at the voting booth from any person except their employer or labor union representative.

CURBSIDE VOTING

At both Early Voting and on Election Day, voters needing accommodations can vote curbside. Voters must locate the designated curbside area and call the phone number posted. Poll workers will arrive to the vehicle, and the process of voting will occur curbside. Voter ID requirements and address verification is still the same.

MEC expects all poll workers to remain courteous when working with all voters, especially those requiring accommodations. If voters experience difficulties voting, they should immediately call the MEC office at 414-286-8683 (VOTE). For any other special accommodations, such as braille ballots or unique language translations, voters can call in advance of Election Day at the same number.

CENTRAL COUNT

Under Wisconsin law, absentee ballots may not be opened or counted until 7 am on Election Day. MEC processes absentee ballots at Central Count. This means all absentee ballots cast in Milwaukee are securely processed and counted at one central location rather than at individual polling places. Milwaukee is one of 42 municipalities in Wisconsin that currently use Central Count. As part of this process, **absentee ballots are not accepted at individual polling locations**. Central Count helps ensure accuracy, consistency, and efficiency.

As absentee ballots arrive, they are reviewed for eligibility to ensure they are connected to a qualified elector with valid absentee application in the system. They are scanned into the state system and then sorted by ward and last name. Absentee ballots remain sealed in their certificate envelope in our locked and secure ballot room under 24-hour surveillance. Voters can check the status of their absentee ballot on [MyVote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov). You can also check the total number of ballots issued and received on the [WEC website](#).

On Election Day, poll workers will conduct another review of eligibility of each ballot. Only eligible ballots are opened and prepared for processing. **Ballots are counted using secure tabulation machines that are not connected to the internet**. When counting is complete, results are saved to a secure USB drive and transported under police escort to the Milwaukee County Election Commission for reporting to the public.

Because Milwaukee processes a very large number of absentee ballots, counting can take many hours—often more than 14. For this reason, absentee ballot totals are reported later than results from individual polling places. This timing reflects the care and security built into the process and helps ensure that every eligible absentee ballot is counted



CENTRAL COUNT PROCESS

CENTRAL COUNT SIGN-IN

- Inspectors sign in
- Party affiliation verification, shift verification
- Issue color-coded bracelets to identify party

INTAKE & RECEIVING

Step 1

- Complete Chain of Custody
- Log and confirm seal number

Step 2 (secured room)

- Scan certificate envelopes into the statewide WisVote database
- Confirm envelopes are signed and witnessed
- Separate rejected or incomplete envelopes
- Sort envelopes by last name and ward for distribution

REVIEW, NUMBERING & EXTRACTION

PERFORMED BY
BIPARTISAN TEAMS

STEP 1: REVIEW

- Second review to confirm envelopes' ward and that they are signed and witnessed
- Remove rejected or incomplete envelopes and log the reason
- Track all rejected envelopes on the EL-104
- Number certificate envelope and track on the pink Voter Number sheet

STEP 2: OPENING

- Only verified envelopes
- Tapped to protect ballots during opening
- Envelopes placed opening side facing machine

STEP 3: EXTRACTION

- Remove ballot from envelope
- Record voter number on the ballot and Absentee poll log
- Sort ballots into groups: Paper, ExpressVote, Reconstruction
- Flatten all ballots to prepare for tabulation
- Band and store empty envelopes
- Ensure tray includes ballots to be tabulated, original reconstructed envelope, secure plastic ballot bag, and completed forms envelope

BALLOT RECONSTRUCTION

PERFORMED BY
BIPARTISAN TEAMS

- Pull blank ballots for the same ward
- Record original and reconstruction information on ballots and EL-104
- Duplicate original ballot selections onto reconstructed ballot
- Confirm that duplicate ballot and original ballot match
- Place original ballot into the designated Reconstructed envelope

TABULATION

- Review and confirm zero report and tabulator seal numbers
- Review and sign Tabulator EL-104
- Work one ward at a time, review all forms in the complete forms envelope
- Flatten all ballots
- Scan ballots and complete Tabulator Tracking sheet
- Secure in a ballot bag and sign ward's EL-104

ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS

ELECTRONIC TABULATING EQUIPMENT (DS450, DS850 & DS950)

The City of Milwaukee uses three different models of electronic tabulating equipment at its Central Count: the DS450, DS850, and DS950. While these models differ slightly, they all contain the same extensive security features that ensure secure tabulation of absentee ballots. There are multiple levels of security to ensure machines cannot be tampered with.

As election information is created via election management software prior to Election Day, users are unable to alter information on the electronic tabulating equipment. Along with multiple passwords only accessible to Chief Inspectors, physical locks and seals on the equipment protect against manipulation. Every data port and the power switch are behind clear doors that are lockable and sealable, both combating compromise and allowing unauthorized access to be easily detectable.

The Electronic tabulating equipment used at Central Count does not have the capability to connect to the internet. Results are transferred physically from the equipment via USB drive under a strict chain of custody in adherence to state law.

Only authorized users with credentials are able to access and operate the electronic tabulating equipment. User actions, such as log-ins (both successful and unsuccessful) and administrative actions, are logged. Users cannot add to, delete, or modify activity logs on the equipment. Election keys and election definitions are protected, as they are not stored in a decrypted format. There are multiple layers of security and protection to ensure the integrity of the election.

In addition, throughout the day, bipartisan teams are constantly checking the totals against multiple election records created during an election to ensure only legitimate and qualifying absentee ballots are counted once.



ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS

BALLOT MARKING DEVICES (ExpressVote)

Ballot marking devices (BMD) are used at all Early Voting sites across the city. All City of Milwaukee polling places also offer ballot marking devices as an option for voters who prefer or need assistance marking their ballot.

These machines, known as ExpressVote Machines, allow voters to make their selections using a touchscreen or an audio-tactile keypad. A poll worker will select the appropriate ward, and then the voter can proceed to make their selections. Once selections are made, the machine prints a paper ballot that the voter can review before casting it into the tabulation machine (at a polling location) or placing it in an absentee ballot envelop (at an Early Voting location).

The system is designed to improve accuracy and voter confidence. Ballot marking devices alert voters if they vote for multiple candidates in a race or if they do not select any candidate for a race. They include multiple accessibility features to support independent and private voting, including braille-labeled keypads, high-contrast displays, adjustable text size, audio ballots, and multiple language options in both text and audio.

For security reasons, ballot marking devices cannot connect to the internet or any network and do not store or record voter selections. Once the ballot is printed, no voting data remains on the machine.



ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEMS



ELECTRONIC TABULATING EQUIPMENT (DS200)

The DS200 electronic tabulating equipment is used at all polling locations. Each unit is programmed to accept ballots only from its assigned ward. After a voter completes either a hand-marked paper ballot or a ballot printed by an ExpressVote, the voter inserts the ballot into the DS200. The electronic tabulating equipment reads and tabulates the votes, then securely stores the ballot within the unit until polls close.

After polls close, the Chief Inspector and Election Inspectors at each polling place complete required reconciliation steps, print official reports, and announce vote totals for their ward. Once all paperwork and reconciliation are finished, the Chief Inspector initiates the secure transmission of results. Results are sent via a private, encrypted cellular network directly to the county, which posts official results on its website.

PUBLIC TESTING

All machines go through comprehensive logic and accuracy testing before every election. State law requires that municipalities conduct public testing no more than 10 days before an election. MEC administers public testing at its Operations Center. Anyone can come witness the process. Check Election Notices for the next Public Testing Notice.

Preparing for an Election – Logic & Accuracy Testing (L&A)	
1	BALLOT PROOFING - Methodical review of every single possible ballot in an election - Teams of 3 - Confirmation from the County
2	IMPORTING THE ELECTION DEFINITION DATA - The County programs the election - Each machine is qualified and cleared - Election is uploaded to each machine - Conduct review to ensure machines have accepted the new data
3	INSPECTION & MAINTENANCE OF MACHINES - Methodical review of machines for functionality - Inspected and cleaned - Maintenance as necessary
4	TEST DECKS OF ALL POSSIBLE SELECTIONS IN ALL WARDS - Programed by County - Delivered to jurisdictions
5	LOGIC & ACCURACY TESTING - Scanning the test deck on all machines (Election Day & central count) - Secure modem of test results to the County - Compare machine results to expected results
6	TOTAL BALLOTS CAST & PRECINCTS PROCESSED REPORT - Confirms successful modem of DS200s - Confirms accurate count of high-speed tabulators
7	ANALYSIS - Discrepancies, if any, examined, root cause determined and notated - Maintenance conducted as necessary - Reprogram and retest as necessary
8	PUBLIC TEST Central Count tabulating machines and DS200s are tested for logic and accuracy

RECOUNTS

Does Wisconsin have automatic recounts?

- No, an eligible individual must make a request for a recount in order for one to occur.

Who can request a recount? (Wis. Stat § 9.01(1)(a)2.)

- In the case of a ballot referendum, any individual who voted in the referendum is able to request a recount. Otherwise, only candidates in an election may request a recount in their individual races.

What is the timeframe to request a recount? (Wis. Stat § 9.01(1)(a)1.)

- For municipal and county races, a recount may be requested no earlier than the completion of the county canvass, and no later than 5pm of the 3rd day after that date.
- For state races, a recount may be requested no earlier than the completion of the last county canvass in the state, and no later than 5pm of the 3rd day after that date.

What are the margins for a recount? (Wis. Stat § 9.01(1)(a)5.)

- In elections with 4,000 or less votes cast, a candidate may request a recount if they trail the leading candidate by 40 votes or less.
- In elections with more than 4,000 votes cast, a candidate may request a recount if they trail the leading candidate by one percentage point or less.
- For a ballot referendum, a recount can be requested at any margin.

Who pays for a recount? (Wis. Stat § 9.01(1)(ag)1-2.)

- Who pays for a recount depends on the margins of the initial results.
- In elections with 4,000 or less votes, the state pays for a recount if the trailing candidate (or the difference between affirmative and negative votes) is within less than ten votes.
- In elections with more than 4,000 votes, the state pays for a recount if the margin is equal to or less than 0.25 percentage points.
- In all other situations, the individual requesting the recount pays.

Can a requester get a refund for a paid recount? (Wis. Stat § 9.01(1)(ag)3m.)

- Yes. If, as a result of the recount, the petitioner is the leading candidate, or the majority of the votes cast on a referendum changes, a full refund shall be paid.
- Additionally, if the initial fee paid is higher than the actual cost of the recount, then a partial refund for the difference can be paid.

The Wisconsin Elections Commission provides an overview on recounts, you can access it [HERE](#).