



## PRO-DEMOCRACY ACTIONS FOR WISCONSIN LOCALITIES

September 2020

**Our democracy is at risk this November and we need your help to save it!**

Local elected officials cannot sit back as our democracy comes under attack. Wisconsin localities can take action to make it easier for residents to register to vote and cast a ballot. This menu offers several ways for cities, counties, and schools to make this a reality.

### City and County Governments

- Host voter registration, absentee ballot, & poll worker drives**

Have all local government offices host voter registration and absentee ballot application drives, as well as drives to recruit poll workers, in the weeks and months leading up to Election Day. Such drives can also be held at city housing locations as well as outside COVID-19 testing sites, unemployment insurance agencies, and other places residents are likely to gather. The election code does not restrict third party individuals or groups with regard to absentee/mail ballot applications. But the voter ID requirement makes an absentee ballot request drive more difficult.
- Advertise election information and deadlines in public places**

Advertise election information and reminders of voter registration and mail-in absentee ballot deadlines throughout the city, including at bus stops and train stations.
- Have government entities provide regular reminders**

Require local government entities to provide employees and residents with regularly scheduled reminders via mail, email, and social media regarding important election deadlines and information about updated election procedures, including which early voting and Election Day locations are ADA compliant.
- Encourage government employees to serve as volunteers**

Allow and encourage local government employees to serve as election volunteers (poll workers, etc.) without losing vacation days, make it a goal to have as many employees as possible serve—ideally including an incentive, or find ways to celebrate public employees that choose to serve.
- Offer free transit on Election Day**

Offer free public transit on Election Day, including city bike sharing, if applicable. Ensure all transit options are following proper safety and sanitation guidelines. Create specialized bus lines during early voting and on Election Day that shuttle voters directly to and from polling places in compliance with public health guidelines. If you cannot make all public transportation free that day, at least make these shuttles free.
- Work with the WI Election Commission/Clerk for a clear plan**

Form relationships with local Clerks—ask them, what is the plan for the November election? What issues came up during the primary (be sure to check with community groups in your area to get the full story!)? How are they addressing any issues that came up during the primary?



## Ensure a strong WEC/Clerk final budget

Do not approve the WEC/Clerk final budget before you are sure they have enough funding to provide enough staff, create enough signage, and inform voters of key information before the November election—be sure to get a clear plan from them once the budget is approved and hold them accountable!



## Partner with local businesses

Encourage them to spread voting information (e.g., signage in stores, links on their website), provide paid time-off to their employees to vote, and/or prizes or discounted products and memberships for consumers who serve as poll workers. Encourage/partner with private ride-sharing companies to offer free transportation services during voting periods.

## Public Schools



## Hold voter registration drives & offer "welcome back" packages

Hold voter registration drives especially during registration and orientation, if you are holding in-person classes. For example, you could provide students with voter registration applications, absentee ballot applications, and important election information as part of their "welcome back" packages, along with masks and sanitary supplies. All materials must be available in alternate formats and plain language.



## Allow third party voter registration on campuses

Allow third party voter registration organizations to register students to vote on campus, if holding in-person classes.



## Encourage students to volunteer as poll workers

Encourage students to train and volunteer as poll workers—ideally incentivize them to do so by offering class credit, a stipend, or some other incentive.



## Make Election Day a school holiday

Make Election Day a school holiday to encourage eligible students and teachers to serve as poll workers and participate in elections. Alternatively, students serving as poll workers should be provided automatic excused absences as well as school credit (noted above), and eligible students should have automatic excused absences for casting ballots during voting periods.



## Make a transportation plan for students on Election Day

Make a transportation plan around how students should plan to get to the polls on Election Day.