

Core Member Organizations

- Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)
- Alzheimer’s Association Wisconsin Chapter
- Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)
- Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)
- Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)
- Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)
- Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)
- Wisconsin Senior Advocates
- Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA)
- Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) is a collaboration of organizations and individuals working with and for Wisconsin’s older adults to shape public policy and improve the quality of life for older people. WAAN advocates for all older adults by educating the community and policy makers on particular issues impacting older adults; mobilizing people on priority issues; and advocating for change.

Protect the Right to Vote

Support Safe, Secure, and Accessible Voting for All

WAAN’s Position: Support improvements to the voting process to ensure every eligible older adult (and adult with disabilities) who wants to vote, can vote, no matter where they live.

Over the past several years, voting in Wisconsin has become increasingly more difficult, if not impossible for many people, especially for older voters and people with disabilities. These folks need “enhanced access” which allows them to vote with the necessary support and assistance. Many older adults and people with disabilities experience barriers to voting in person and rely on absentee voting. Maintaining access to voting by mail (including permanently for indefinitely confined voters) is critical.

It is unclear and sometimes confusing, as to who can provide assistance to individuals residing in facilities (nursing homes, assisted living facilities, group homes) and whether those assistants are trained to provide all the support individuals may need to vote.

Budget Requests

1. Increase DMV access by:

- **Expanding service hours at existing DMV locations** to include expanded weekday hours and Saturday hours in the four weeks preceding a statewide election, and
- **Co-locating DMV state identification (ID) operations at locations currently accessed by non-drivers and people with disabilities** such as Aging and Disability Resource Centers, income maintenance offices, and human service departments.

2. Allocate additional funding for specialized transportation programs (Wis. Stat. §85.21 and §85.215) **to fund transportation for voting related activities** including transportation to the DMV, municipal clerks, early voting locations, and to polling sites on election day.

3. Allocate additional funding to the Wisconsin Elections Commission for expansion of the Polling Place Accessibility Audits program (to fund an increased number of audits conducted on Election days) **and the Accessibility Supply Program** providing cost effective and simple solutions to address accessibility issues at polling places.

Legislative Requests

1. Enhance Election Inspector (aka poll worker)/Special Voting Deputy (SVD) training—There is wide variation in the content and amount of training election inspectors and SVDs (who conduct absentee voting in person inside residential care facilities and qualified retirement homes) receive. Wis. Stat. § 7.315(1)(b) requires all election inspectors and SVDs receive training at least once every two years. To ensure election inspectors have up-to-date information of voting regulations and voter rights, **change the state statute to require new election inspectors and SVDs to complete training on core competencies (including disability**



Contact WAAN

Janet L. Zander, MPA, CSW

Advocacy & Public Policy
Coordinator

Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging
Resources, Inc.

1414 MacArthur Rd., Ste A Madison,
WI 53714

Office: (715) 677-6723

Cell: (608) 228-7253

janet.zander@gwaar.org

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<https://gwaar.org/waan-issues-and-initiatives>

related content) before serving and a minimum of one training program annually, thereafter.

2. Improve access to obtaining a photo ID for voting by:

- **Expanding acceptable photo ID options for voting to be inclusive of non-drivers.** Options for consideration include: any photo ID card issued by the Federal Government, the state of Wisconsin, or a Wisconsin county, municipal government, or other governmental entity; college and university ID cards from all Wisconsin colleges and technical schools; Wisconsin high school photo ID cards; and an affidavit of affirmation for voters who have reasonable impediments to obtaining a photo ID; and
- **Expanding online services at the DMV by making the forms (MV3004 and MV3012) used to apply for a Wisconsin ID or paper receipt for voting (when the voter does not have certain documentation) available online.**

3. Improve access to secure, equitable and private absentee voting by:

- **Providing access to absentee voting by creating a screen reader accessible, Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliant, absentee ballot for voters with blindness, vision or other disabilities that restrict them from physically marking an absentee ballot and who rely on assistive technology to vote privately and independently, and**
- **Changing Wis. Stat. § 6.87(4)(b)1 to include ADA accessible and secure drop boxes as an allowable method for returning an absentee ballot.** Drop boxes have long been available in some Wisconsin communities and around the country. A recent review, conducted by the Associated Press, of the use of the boxes across the country determined that no state reported “any instances in which the boxes were connected to voter fraud or stolen ballots,” nor were there incidents of vandalism that might have affected election results by destroying ballots.”

4. Improve access to voting for care facility residents by:

- **Developing a protocol to ensure all eligible facilities offer SVD services;**
- **Changing Wisconsin law (§ 6.875(2)(a)) to allow all SVDs (as an extension of the municipal clerk’s office) to assist residents with voter registration (as needed) and voting absentee in person;**
- **Modifying the timeline for conducting SVD visits (§ 6.875(6)(a)) to expand the amount of time SVD visits overlap with open registration timelines and to allow adequate time for care facility residents who were unable to vote during the SVD visits to receive, complete and return their absentee ballots by mail; and**
- **Ensuring the process for allowing relatives of residents to be notified of and/or observe the voting process (Wis. Stat. § 6.875(6)(c)2) complies with federal Residents’ Rights Requirements related to Nursing Home Residents’ Right to Vote (<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-21-02-nh.pdf>).**

Older adults and people with disabilities contribute to our state’s high participation rate. Wisconsin must take the necessary steps to ensure secure and accessible voting are available to all eligible voters.