DONOR REGISTRATION GUIDE

Donation is a personal decision. This guide walks you through what deceased donor registration means, how to register in Wisconsin or the National Donate Life Registry, how to review your record, and how to discuss your wishes. You can use it before making a decision or return to it when your preferences change.

Understand the decision first

Deceased donor registration records authorization for donation after death. It is a meaningful decision about what you want, rather than a medical assessment of what will be possible. Suitability is evaluated when donation is considered. Age, health history, the circumstances of death, and the organs or tissues involved can affect actual donation.

Read the authorization on the registry you choose. Donation purposes and available preferences may include transplantation, therapy, research, or education. Do not assume that every registry offers identical choices. Ask the registry to explain a term before submitting if you are unsure what it authorizes.

Four decisions that are separate

1. **Deceased organ, eye, and tissue donation:** recorded through an appropriate donor registry.
2. **Living donation:** a separate voluntary process involving evaluation, informed consent, surgery, recovery, and risks.
3. **Face or hand donation:** specialized transplantation requiring separate authorization.
4. **Whole-body donation:** arrangements made with a medical school or other program, with its own acceptance requirements.

Before you open a registry

Choose the official registration route you want to use. Think about what questions you want answered and whether you have registered previously. You do not need to decide your own medical eligibility. For a specific question about your record or authorization, use the registry's help process rather than sending personal information to an awareness organization.

Because of One provides education and links. Registration happens on an external official website; Because of One does not collect or store your donor registry information.

Read more: Donate Life America registration FAQ | Registration and authorization | HRSA donation FAQ

Register in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin DHS FAQ states that online registration is available beginning at age 15 with a Wisconsin driver's license or state identification card. For ages 15–17, registration records intent; a parent or legal guardian makes the final donation decision before age 18. Adults provide their own authorization.

Step 1 Use the official website

- ➔ Open the Wisconsin Donor Registry using the link below. Read the current instructions. Enter identifying information only into the official service, and avoid sending a photograph of your license to a community volunteer or placing it in an ordinary contact form.

Step 2 Check whether you already have a record

- ➔ Use the registry's status-check instructions. If you registered through a state channel previously, a second registration may be unnecessary. Ask the registry for assistance if you cannot locate a record or the information does not match.

Step 3 Read and submit the authorization

- ➔ Follow the site's registration prompts. Review the scope of the decision and enter an email address if you want the confirmation offered by the system. Submit only after you understand the choices. Save any confirmation and note which registry you used.

Step 4 Verify completion

- ➔ Follow the processing guidance on the website. Revisit the status-check option if you need confirmation after processing. A saved browser page or an unfinished form is not the same as a completed registration.

Other Wisconsin registration routes

DHS also lists registration opportunities through the DMV, when applying for certain DNR licenses, and when filing Wisconsin income tax forms. The exact prompts depend on the service. Use the current official instructions for that route and confirm your record if you are uncertain it was completed.

If you do not have the required state identification

Do not invent identification details to finish an online form. Review National Donate Life Registry eligibility and ask the state registry what options apply to your circumstances. Different registration routes can have different requirements.

Read more: Wisconsin DHS registration FAQ | Wisconsin Donor Registry | Wisconsin DHS donation program

Use the National Donate Life Registry

Donate Life America provides national registration through RegisterMe.org. Adults 18 or older can register; ages 15–17 may record intent, with a parent or guardian making the final donation decision before age 18. Registration through the iPhone Health app requires age 18 or older.

A careful registration workflow

1. Open RegisterMe.org directly or follow the official Donate Life America registration link.
2. Read the authorization and privacy information. Review any available preferences rather than assuming the default represents your wishes.
3. Enter the requested information accurately. Keep account access or confirmation details somewhere you can find later.
4. Review the confirmation and record which service holds your decision.
5. Tell a trusted family member where you registered and what you decided.

Optional living donor interest

A national registration service may also offer a separate opportunity to express interest in living kidney donation. That is an additional voluntary choice. Completing deceased donor registration does not itself commit you to living donation or surgery. If you explore living donation, a transplant program must evaluate you and explain the risks and alternatives.

If you may have more than one record

State and national systems can both contain records. An update to one should not be assumed to update the other. Use Donate Life America's location and management guide to identify where your information is held. If your preferences change, review each relevant record and ask for help resolving uncertainty.

Keep a simple private record

Record the registry name, the date you completed or reviewed it, where you saved confirmation, and how to find its official management page. Keep passwords and identity documents out of shared worksheets. This note helps you find your record; it is not a substitute for registration or for the registry's authorization.

Read more: National Donate Life Registry | Donate Life America registration FAQ | Find and manage your registration | Donate Life America living donation

Talk with your family

The conversation does not need to sound formal. Explain what you have decided, what matters to you, and where you recorded it. If you have not decided, say that you are learning and would welcome questions. Give people time to react rather than trying to settle every concern immediately.

Conversation starters

- "I have been learning about organ and tissue donation, and I want you to know what I would want."
- "I recorded my decision in this registry. I wanted you to hear it from me."
- "What would you want to understand before you made this decision?"
- "There are parts I am still thinking about. Can we look at a reliable source together?"

Make the discussion useful

Ask whether your family knows that deceased and living donation are separate. Explain any preferences you recorded without expecting family members to interpret unfamiliar medical language. If someone is worried about death determination, care, costs, or funeral arrangements, write down the exact concern and use an appropriate professional source.

For an adult, registration can provide legally effective authorization. Talking with family is still valuable: it helps them understand the decision and can assist communication with donation professionals. For minors, a parent or guardian has a different decision-making role. Ask the relevant registry about the rules that apply.

Review or change your decision

For a national record, follow RegisterMe.org's "Access Your Registration" process. For Wisconsin, use the state registry's management instructions. If you cannot access the record, use its official support route. Review other records that may exist. Removing an online record does not necessarily change a printed donor designation on an existing license; ask the DMV what is needed if that designation must be updated.

A personal review checklist

- ☐ I understand the authorization and any options I selected.
- ☐ I know which registry holds my decision and how to access it.
- ☐ I have checked whether another record needs review.
- ☐ Someone I trust knows my wishes.
- ☐ I know whom to contact for questions I still have.

Read more: HRSA donation FAQ | Wisconsin DHS registration FAQ | Donate Life America registration FAQ | Find and manage your registration

Troubleshooting and questions to ask

I signed up years ago and cannot remember where

➔ Start with the location guide below. Consider whether you enrolled through a DMV, a state website, Donate Life America, RegisterMe.org, or the iPhone Health app. Avoid guessing that a missing record in one system means no record exists elsewhere.

My medical history has changed

➔ A health change is not a reason to assume you must remove your registration. The decision to register and the clinical decision about actual suitability are different. Ask donation professionals if you need help understanding that distinction.

I want certain limits or purposes explained

➔ Ask: “What does this authorization include? Which preferences can I record? How do I review those preferences later?” Use the actual registry terms rather than relying on a general guide to describe every legal or clinical situation.

I want living donation or whole-body donation information

➔ Follow the separate specialist route. Ask a transplant program about living donation and the relevant whole-body program about its eligibility and arrangements. Do not assume one form completes all types of donation.

Trusted resources

Read more: Wisconsin DHS registration FAQ | Wisconsin Donor Registry | National Donate Life Registry | Donate Life America registration FAQ | Registration and authorization | Find and manage your registration | HRSA donation FAQ | Donate Life America living donation

Questions to keep for your next conversation

Write down the issue, the source you checked, the person or organization you will ask, and any answer you receive. If an answer is unclear, ask for it in plain language and request a link to the applicable guidance. You can take time to understand your options before deciding.

Reviewed October 21, 2026. External organizations have their own programs and requirements; links do not imply affiliation. General education does not replace individual medical guidance.

One donor. Countless lives.