



ELECTIONS
& VOTING
FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS



Washington

Secretary of State
SAM REED



CONTENTS

- 4 Election Administration
- 6 Voters and Registration
- 15 Voting Systems
- 19 Precincts, Polling Places
and Accessibility
- 20 Qualifications, Terms, and
Requirements for Elective Office
- 22 Filing for Office
- 25 Voters' Pamphlets
- 27 Ballots and Voting
- 31 Absentee Voting
- 34 Polling Places and Poll Workers
- 38 Primaries and General and
Special Elections

- 40 Recalling an Elected Official
- 42 Canvassing
- 44 Recounts
- 46 State Initiative
and Referendum
- 50 Congressional Districts
- 51 Political Parties
- 52 Military and Overseas Voters
- 55 Help America Vote Act (HAVA)
- 57 Miscellaneous Elections
and Voting Information
- 61 County Elections Departments
in Washington State
- 69 Washington State Agencies

CHAPTER 1

Election Administration

RCW 29A.04

What are the duties of the Secretary of State?

The Secretary of State is the chief election officer for all federal, state, county, city, town and district elections. The Office of the Secretary of State maintains records of elections held in all 39 counties of the state. The Office of the Secretary of State makes election records available to the public upon request, and coordinates any state election activities that are required by federal law.

What are the duties of the County Auditors?

The Auditor of each county oversees and administers all Primaries and General Elections or Special Elections in his or her

county. It is the Auditor's duty to provide physical locations for holding elections, appoint and pay precinct election officers, provide supplies and materials the precinct election officers need to conduct elections; and publish and post notices of the dates of scheduled elections in the manner provided by law.

Are election procedures used at the county level reviewed by the Office of the Secretary of State?

A review of any county's election procedures may be done at the request of the County Auditor, the Secretary of State, or when a recount is required for a statewide or legislative race. All 39 counties must have their election procedures reviewed every three years.

CHAPTER 2

Voters and Registration

RCW 29A.08

How and where can I register to vote?

To register to vote in Washington State, you must be:

- A United States citizen;
- A resident of Washington State;
- 18 years of age on or before the next election; and
- Not denied the right to vote based on a felony conviction or on a court order determining mental incompetence.

You must be registered with the County Elections Department in the county where you reside before voting. Registration forms may be

obtained from your County Elections Department, public libraries, post offices, unemployment offices, public high schools and universities. You may also register to vote when you apply for a driver's license or identification card at any of the Department of Licensing driver's licensing offices. Registration forms are also available online at the Secretary of State's website (www.secstate.wa.gov). You must not register in more than one county or in more than one state at any time.

What are the deadlines to register to vote in an election?

If you are not registered to vote in Washington, you must register either by mail no later than 30 days before an election, or in person at your local County Auditor's office no later than 15 days before an election.

If you are currently registered to vote in Washington and need to change your address, you must do so either by mail or in person no later than 30 days before an election. Your application must be postmarked by this deadline or your new address will not become effective until after the election.

How do I update the name on my voter registration?

If you change your name for any reason, you must update your voter registration information by contacting the County Elections Department in the county where you reside. You may also update your voter registration information at the Department of Licensing when you update your driver's license.

What do I do about my voter registration when I move?

Whenever you change your residential or mailing address you must alert your County Elections Department. This will ensure that you are provided the correct ballot in a timely manner.

What information must I have in order to register?

To register to vote, the following information should be included on your registration form:

- Full name;
- Date of birth;
- Washington residential address;

- Mailing address if different from your residential address;
- Address of your former registration (if applicable);
- Gender;
- Washington driver's license, or state ID number; If you do not have either of these, then last four digits of your Social Security number;
- Affirmation of U.S. citizenship; and
- Signature on the voter oath.

Does Washington State require me to register with a political party in order to vote?

No.

How long does the registration process take?

The voter registration process can take four to six weeks to complete. Please contact your County Elections Department if you have not received your voter registration card within this time frame.

Are voter registration forms available in other languages or formats?

Voter registration forms are currently available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Cambodian, Korean, Laotian, Russian, and Vietnamese. Registration forms are also available in Braille.

Is voter information public information?

Certain voter information is available to the public, including your name, date of birth, gender, voting record, date of registration and registration number.

Your residential or mailing address and the political jurisdictions where you are registered to vote are also public information.

If I don't vote, does my registration expire?

No, your registration does not expire. You may ask to cancel your registration if you are moving to another county or state.

If your County Elections Department receives information that you are no longer at the registration address, your registration will be listed as inactive.

An inactive voter is cancelled if he or she remains inactive after four years, or through two Federal Elections.

It is important to keep your address and signature up to date. Please contact your County Elections Department to update your voter registration information.

What is the Address Confidentiality Program?

The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) assists victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking who have relocated to avoid further abuse. It helps participants keep their home, work and/or school address secret by providing a substitute mailing address. Program participants' registration information is kept confidential. Contact information for the ACP can be found at the end of this booklet.

How is voter fraud dealt with?

Voter fraud is a class C felony punishable by five years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine. If an election official has any indication that fraud has occurred, the information is given to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation and prosecution.

What should I do if I want to report a person whom I suspect is not eligible to be a registered voter?

Any registered voter in Washington may challenge another voter's registration. The challenge form and procedures are available at your County Elections Department.

What are the requirements for getting the right to vote restored following a felony conviction?

At a minimum, a felon must complete any prison term imposed by the court. The other requirements for having the right to vote restored are under review. For current information, please contact your County Elections Department, or go to the Office of the Secretary of State's website at www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/faq.aspx.

What does a residential address mean for the purposes of voter registration and voting?

A residential address means a person's address where he or she physically resides and maintains his or her home.

EXCEPTIONS TO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS:

A voter does not lose his or her voting

residency if absent due to state or federal employment, military service, school attendance, confinement in a public prison, out-of-state business, or is overseas. A voter who lacks a traditional address, such as a person who resides in a shelter, park, motor home or marina, is assigned a precinct based on the voter's physical location.

My son/daughter is away at college. Can he or she still use my address for purposes of voting?

Yes. Once a residence is established, it is valid until a new residence is established. You must physically leave the residence with the intention of establishing a new residence at another location in order to change your voter registration information.

Can a person subject to full or limited guardianship register to vote?

A person under full or limited guardianship has the right to vote unless the court determines that the person lacks the capacity to understand the nature and effect of voting to the extent that he or she cannot make an individual choice.

Is there a minimum competency for voter registration?

Washington does not conduct any testing to determine voter competency.

Why can't a Power of Attorney sign my ballot?

Power of Attorney authority does not extend to voter registration or voting rights.

What is the statewide Voter Registration Database?

The statewide Voter Registration Database is an interactive, computerized data management system connecting all 39 counties through a centralized state database. It allows the state to identify duplicate voter registration records between counties, perform voter registration information updates and verify new registrations.

CHAPTER 3

Voting Systems

RCW 29A.12

What kind of voting equipment is used in my county?

The type of voting equipment used in each county is determined by each County Auditor. The County Auditor must use equipment approved by the Office of the Secretary of State. Current types of voting equipment approved for use in Washington are optical scan, digital scan and electronic voting devices.

Is electronic voting equipment safe and accurate?

All voting equipment used in Washington is certified by the Office of the Secretary of State and tested at the federal, state and county levels to ensure that the equipment accurately records and reports the choices made by the voter.

All electronic voting equipment must print a paper record of each voter's choices so he or she can verify his or her votes were accurately recorded by the equipment.

How is voting equipment certified?

All voting equipment in Washington must be certified by the Office of the Secretary of State prior to purchase. Principal requirements of state certification include:

- Testing and authorization by federally-approved independent testing authorities; and
- Testing and review by an outside panel of experts who recommend certification to the Office of the Secretary of State if the system meets the legal requirements of federal and state law.

Is it required that all polling places have voting equipment accessible to individuals with disabilities?

Federal and state law requires that every polling place have voting equipment that is accessible to individuals with disabilities. The law requires that the system provide individuals with

disabilities the same opportunity to vote privately and independently as other voters.

In vote by mail counties, the County Auditor's office must be used as a polling place and at least one accessible voting unit must be made available there.

How do I vote on an optical or digital scan ballot?

Optical and digital scan ballots are paper ballots that require you to fill in a specific area next to each candidate for whom you want to cast a vote. Every absentee/mail voter in the state will use an optical or digital scan ballot. Carefully read and follow all instructions on the ballot.

How do I vote on electronic voting equipment?

A direct recording electronic voting device presents a ballot to you on a screen similar to a computer monitor or bank ATM and stores your choices in multiple locations on a computer disc. The device allows the voter to make choices in a variety of ways.

On electronic voting equipment, voters can make choices by touching specified areas of the screen next to the candidate name or by using a specialized tool to highlight the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote.

Visually impaired persons may use headphones that provide audio feedback to allow them to navigate through the ballot and confirm their choices. There are also devices that can be attached to the electronic voting equipment which enable people to vote independently even if they have severe limitations in the use of their hands and feet.

CHAPTER 4

Precincts, Polling Places and Accessibility

RCW 29A.16

What can I do if I am unable to access my assigned polling place?

Please contact your County Auditor if you are unable to access your assigned polling place. Any disabled or elderly voter assigned to an inaccessible polling place will be permitted to vote at an alternative accessible polling place or by absentee ballot.

CHAPTER 5

Qualifications, Terms, and Requirements for Elective Office

RCW 29A.20

Who can run for office?

Any registered voter who possesses the qualifications specific to the office sought may file a Declaration and Affidavit of Candidacy.

How much does it cost?

- **\$1** for precinct committee officers.
- **\$10** for any office with a fixed annual salary of \$1,000 or less.
- **1 percent of the annual salary** for any office with a salary of more than \$1,000 per year at the time of filing.

A candidate who is not able to pay the filing fee because of a lack of income or assets may submit a petition in lieu of the fee. The petitioner may substitute an equal number of signatures of registered voters for every dollar specified in the filing fee.

CHAPTER 6

Filing for Office

RCW 29A.24

When and how do I file for office?

The filing period runs from the first Monday in June through the following Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Candidates must submit a Declaration and Affidavit of Candidacy and filing fee or petition in lieu of filing fee with the Office of the Secretary of State or with the County Elections Department, depending on the office.

Candidates who must file with the Office of the Secretary of State include:

- Federal and Statewide offices;
and

- State Legislators, Court of Appeals Judges, and Superior Court Judges where the office encompasses more than one county.

Candidates who may file with **EITHER** the Office of the Secretary of State **OR** the County Elections Department include:

- State Legislators, Court of Appeals Judges, and Superior Court Judges where the office is solely within one county.

All other candidates must file with the County Elections Department, including:

- Nonpartisan offices, other than judicial. School Directors, where the office encompasses more than one county, must file with the County Elections Department of the county in which a majority of the registered voters of the district reside; and

- School Directors in joint school districts must file with the County Elections Department in the county designated by the State Board of Education.

Candidates may file by mail with either the County Elections Department or the Office of the Secretary of State beginning 10 business days before the first day of filing week.

Candidates may file electronically with the Office of the Secretary of State beginning at 9:00 a.m. the first day of filing through 4:00 p.m. the following Friday.

CHAPTER 7

Voters' Pamphlets

RCW 29A.32

Where can I find information about issues and candidates?

The Office of the Secretary of State produces a Voters' Pamphlet for every General Election that includes information on statewide measures and how and where to vote. In even-numbered years the Voters' Pamphlet also includes information on candidates running for State Legislature, statewide offices and federal offices. Voters' Pamphlets are distributed throughout the state, and are available electronically on the Secretary of State's website at **www.secstate.wa.gov**.

Why do I get a Voters' Pamphlet for some elections and not others?

The Legislature allocates a budget to the Office of the Secretary of State to produce a Voters' Pamphlet prior to each General Election. A Voters' Pamphlet for Primaries is only produced if the Legislature allocates additional funding.

Are Voters' Pamphlets available in languages other than English or in alternate formats?

The Voters' Pamphlet is printed in Spanish and Chinese. The pamphlet information is also formatted in Braille, large print, and audio cassette. In addition, information published in the Voters' Pamphlet can be found on the Secretary of State's website at **www.secstate.wa.gov**.

How do political candidates get their information in a Voters' Pamphlet?

Candidate statements and photographs are submitted with a candidate's Declaration and Affidavit of Candidacy at the time of filing with either the Office of the Secretary of State or the County Elections Department. Candidate statements are not edited for truth or factual claims made by the candidates.

CHAPTER 8

Ballots and Voting

RCW 29A.04, RCW 29A.40, and RCW 29A.60

What is a provisional ballot, and why would I need one?

A provisional ballot is a ballot issued to a person seeking to vote who might otherwise be denied the opportunity to vote a regular ballot. Provisional ballots are researched to confirm the voter's registration before the ballot is counted. Provisional ballots may be issued under the following circumstances:

- The name of the voter does not appear in the poll book;
- The voter's name is in the poll book but there is an indication that the voter was issued an absentee ballot;

- The voter fails to produce identification when required; or
- Other circumstances as determined by election officials.

How do I find out if my provisional or mail ballot was counted?

After the election you may contact your County Elections Department to confirm that your ballot was counted.

How is my ballot secured after I vote?

FOR ABSENTEE AND VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOTS

Some counties conduct all elections by mail. All absentee and vote-by-mail ballots are kept in secure storage while not being processed. Processing includes the verification of signatures and postmarks, removing the inner envelope from the outer envelope and removing the ballot from the inner envelope. Ballots are typically secured with numbered seals and a log is kept of the seal numbers to detect any inappropriate access.

FOR POLLING PLACE BALLOTS

Ballots at the polling place are deposited into sealed or locked containers that are

not opened until the ballots are ready to be tabulated. A detailed record is made using a ballot accountability form that accompanies the ballots back to the counting center. Election officials, one representing each major political party, transfer the sealed ballot containers to the counting center or a designated collection station.

Will my ballot count if I choose not to vote on certain issues or candidates?

YES, it will.

What happens if I vote for more than one candidate?

When more votes for an office or issue are selected than are permitted by law, the votes will be considered an overvote and no votes will be recorded for that office or issue. In this case, the remainder of your ballot that is valid will be counted. You may only vote for one candidate in most instances. In rare instances, when you may vote for more than one candidate, it will be clearly indicated on the ballot.

How do I correct my ballot?

To make a correction on a ballot, you must cross out the incorrect vote and vote the correct choice. You may also provide written instructions directing how you would like the vote to be counted. If you are unable to correct your ballot, you may request a replacement.

CHAPTER 9

Absentee Voting

RCW 29A.40

What are absentee ballots and how do I get one?

Absentee ballots are ballots mailed to voters who live in a county with polling places, but who have requested to vote by mail rather than at a polling place.

You may choose to mark a box on your voter registration form to request an ongoing absentee ballot. You will then receive a ballot by mail for each election in which you are eligible to vote. If you choose not to receive an absentee ballot automatically and your county does not vote entirely by mail, you may either vote at the polls or request an absentee ballot for any given election.

If you decide at a later time you would like to receive a ballot by mail for each election, you may do so by written request to your County Elections Department.

When are absentee ballots mailed?

Absentee ballots must be available in the County Elections Department 20 days prior to an election. In addition, the County Elections Department must mail all ballots to voters 18 days prior to an election. Military and overseas ballots must be mailed 30 days prior to an election.

If I'm on vacation or have moved, will my ballot be forwarded?

Some counties may allow absentee ballots to be forwarded. However, the best thing to do is contact your County Elections Department and ask for a temporary change in your mailing address. You should also contact the County Elections Department when you return to the address where you are registered to vote, or if you have permanently moved.

Will my vote count if I forgot to seal my ballot in the security envelope?

YES, it will.

How do I obtain a replacement ballot?

A replacement ballot may be obtained by contacting your local County Elections Department when you have destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received the original ballot.

Are votes 100 percent confidential?

There are procedures in place at each County Elections Department to ensure all votes, whether recorded at a polling place or by absentee ballot, are confidential. The only time your vote may not be confidential is when you choose to fax your completed ballot to the County Elections Department. You must first sign a waiver of secrecy before choosing to vote in this manner.

When might a signature be rejected?

If the County Elections Department determines that your signature did not match the signature on your original voter registration, the department is required to notify you and give you an opportunity to update your signature prior to certification of the election.

CHAPTER 10

Polling Places and Poll Workers

RCW 29A.44

How do I find out which precinct I'm in and where I vote?

After you are registered to vote you will receive a voter registration identification card in the mail from your County Elections Department. The card will include your precinct number and your designated polling place.

What multilingual services are available at polling places?

This is a specific matter for each polling place. Please contact your County Elections Department to learn about multilingual services that may be available at your polling place.

What do poll workers do?

- Pick up supplies prior to Election Day;
- Set up and open the polling places at 7:00 a.m.;
- Identify voters in the poll book;
- Issue the correct ballot to each voter;
- Ensure that every completed ballot goes in the ballot box;
- Issue provisional ballots;
- Assist voters as requested;
- Close the poll site at 8:00 p.m.;
- Reconcile the number of ballots to the poll books; and
- Transport the ballots to the counting center.

Do I need to show identification to vote?

If you vote at a polling place, you will be required to show a copy of one of the following documents that shows your name at the time of voting:

- Current and valid photo identification;
- Current utility bill;
- Bank statement;
- Government check;
- Paycheck;
- Voter registration identification card; or
- Other government documentation.

If you do not have a proper document when you vote, you may fill out a provisional ballot. It will be counted when your voter registration information is verified.

Are poll workers trained and/or certified?

Yes. In fact, prior to each state Primary or General Election, County Auditors are required to provide all poll workers with training related to the proper and professional conduct of their assigned duties.

Are poll workers paid for their service?

Most County Elections Departments pay poll workers. To inquire about becoming a poll worker, contact your County Elections Department.

CHAPTER 11

Primaries and General and Special Elections

RCW 29A.52

What is the purpose of the Primary?

A Primary is held to reduce the number of partisan candidates from the major political parties who will advance to the General Election ballot.

When are elections held?

The Washington State Constitution provides that General Elections shall be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

The Primary is held on the third Tuesday of August.

Special elections may be held on:

- The first Tuesday after the first Monday in February;
- The second Tuesday in March;
- The fourth Tuesday in April; or
- The third Tuesday in May.

CHAPTER 12

Recalling an Elected Official

RCW 29A.56

What is the process to recall an elected official?

Every elected public officer in Washington State, excluding judges in courts of record, is subject to recall and discharge by the voters of the state.

A recall is based on a belief that a public officer committed some act or acts of malfeasance or misfeasance while in office, or has violated an oath of office. Several procedural steps must then be taken, including a review of the charges by a Superior Court. If the court determines that the charges, if true, constitute recallable offenses, a recall petition may be circulated.

A petition demanding the recall must bear a specified number of valid signatures from registered voters determined as a percentage of total votes cast for all candidates who ran for the office in the most recent election contest.

The percentage of signatures necessary to put a recall vote on the ballot is:

- 25 percent for state officers, other than judges, senators and representatives; city officers of cities of the first class; school district boards in cities of the first class; county officers in counties of the first, second and third classes;
- 35 percent for officers of all other political subdivisions, cities, towns, townships, precincts, and school districts not herein mentioned; and state senators and representatives.

After the signatures are checked and accepted, a Special Election is called as provided by the General Election laws.

CHAPTER 13

Canvassing (counting)

RCW 29A.60

When are election results considered final and certified?

State law requires each County Canvassing Board to certify election results 15 days after a Primary or Special Election and 21 days after a General Election.

The Office of the Secretary of State must certify the returns of all Primaries that involve candidates for state offices no later than the third Tuesday following the Primary and no later than 30 days after a General Election.

Who is on the County Canvassing Board and what do they do?

The County Canvassing Board consists of the County Auditor, the County Prosecuting Attorney, and the chair of the County Legislative Authority, which is usually a County Commissioner. The Canvassing Board is responsible for processing absentee ballots, determining provisional ballot validity, hearing voter registration challenges, administering recounts, determining voter intent with regard to write-in votes and questionable ballots, and certifying the election. The Board may delegate some of these responsibilities to election staff.

Recounts

RCW 29A.64

What determines whether there will be a recount?

Washington law authorizes a mandatory **machine** recount if the difference in the number of votes cast for two candidates running for the same **statewide** office is:

- Less than one-half of 1 percent of all votes cast for the office; and
- Less than 2,000 votes.

A mandatory **hand** recount is conducted when the difference in the number of votes cast for two candidates running for the same **statewide** office is:

- Less than one-fourth of 1 percent of all votes cast for the office; and
- Less than 1,000 votes.

For offices that are not elected statewide, a mandatory **machine** recount is conducted when the difference in the number of votes cast for two candidates running for the same office is:

- Less than one-half of 1 percent of all votes cast for the office; and
- Less than 2,000 votes.

A mandatory **hand** recount is conducted when the difference in the number of votes cast for two candidates running for the same office is:

- Less than one-fourth of 1 percent; and
- Less than 150 votes.

During the count, final determinations are made by the County Canvassing Board on which votes will be counted. The recount does not allow a review of decisions by the County Canvassing Board of what constitutes a vote. Thus, the ballots in the original count will simply be retabulated, although the Canvassing Board does have the authority to investigate and correct errors and discrepancies in the original count.

CHAPTER 15

State Initiative and Referendum

RCW 29A.72

What is an initiative?

An initiative is the direct power of voters to enact new laws or change existing laws. Any registered voter, acting individually or on behalf of an organization, may propose an initiative. Initiatives allow voters to petition for proposed legislation on the ballot. However, the initiative process cannot be used to amend the State Constitution.

How does an initiative get on the ballot?

To be certified for the ballot or Legislature, the sponsor of an initiative must first circulate the complete text of the proposed legislation among registered

voters and obtain the legal signatures equal to 8 percent of the number of votes cast for the office of Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election.

What are the two types of initiatives?

INITIATIVES TO THE PEOPLE

If certified to have sufficient signatures, this type of initiative is submitted for a vote of the people at the next state General Election.

INITIATIVES TO THE LEGISLATURE

If certified, this type of initiative is submitted to the Legislature at its regular session each January. Once submitted, the Legislature must take one of the following three actions:

1. Adopt the initiative as proposed, in which case it becomes law without a vote of the people;
2. Reject or refuse to act on the proposed initiative, in which case the initiative must be placed on the ballot at the next state General Election; or
3. Approve an amended version of the proposed initiative, in

which case both the amended version and the original proposal must be placed on the next state General Election ballot.

Initiatives submitted to the people that do not deal with gambling or lottery measures require a simple majority of voter approval to become law.

Gambling and lottery measures require a 60 percent voter approval to become law.

What is a referendum?

There are two types of referenda: Referendum Measures and Referendum Bills. The primary purpose of both is to give voters an opportunity to approve or reject laws either proposed or approved by the Legislature.

What are the differences in the two types of referenda?

REFERENDUM BILLS

This type of referendum is a proposed law referred to the voters by the Legislature for a vote at the next state General Election.

REFERENDUM MEASURES

Referendum Measures are laws recently

passed by the Legislature that are placed on the ballot because of petitions signed by voters.

Any registered voter, acting individually or on behalf of an organization, may demand, by petition, that a law passed by the Legislature be referred to a vote of the electorate prior to its going into effect. The only acts that are exempt from the power of referendum are emergency laws — those that are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health or safety, and the support of state government and its existing institutions.

How does a referendum measure get on the ballot?

A referendum measure must be certified by the Office of the Secretary of State to have a number of petition signatures of legal voters equal to 4 percent of the total votes cast for the office of Governor in the last regular gubernatorial election.

A referendum certified to the ballot that does not deal with gambling or lottery requires a simple majority of voter approval to become law. A referendum certified to the ballot that deals with gambling or lottery requires a 60 percent voter approval to become law.

CHAPTER 16

Congressional and Legislative Districts

RCW 29A.76A

How would I determine what my Congressional and Legislative districts are?

- Call your County Elections Department;
- Look on your voter registration identification card; or
- Visit the State Legislature's online District Finder at:
www1.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/default.aspx

CHAPTER 17

Political Parties

RCW 29A.80

What involvement do the political parties have with election administration?

County Elections Departments must request political party observers for all phases of the election process. This includes processing absentee ballots, receipt of ballots at the counting center, inspection of ballots and tabulating ballots.

Each County Elections Department must conduct elections to choose precinct committee officers, who act as the representatives of the political parties for that particular precinct. The political parties are responsible for providing each County Elections Department with a list of potential poll workers if polling places are used.

Military and Overseas Voters

Can I vote if I am in the military or live overseas?

Generally, all U.S. citizens, 18 years or older, who are or will be residing outside the United States during an election period, are eligible to vote using an absentee ballot in any election for federal office. In addition, all members of the Uniformed Services, their family members and members of the Merchant Marine and their family members, who are U.S. citizens, may vote absentee in federal, state and local elections. In Washington you may register and vote using your last residential address in this state.

How do I register to vote while living overseas?

Send your completed Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to the County Elections Department in the county where your voting residence is located or to the Office of the Secretary of State.

An online version of the FPCA is available at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's website: **www.fvap.gov**. This form must be printed, filled out, signed, dated and placed in an envelope affixed with proper postage. Then it must be mailed to your County Elections Department or the Office of the Secretary of State.

If I live abroad can I register or vote at the nearest U.S. Embassy?

Currently there are not any provisions for in-person voting or on-site registration to be conducted at U.S. Embassies or Consulates. However, embassy and consulate officials may assist U.S. citizens in completing FPCA forms for their state. The forms are then used for both registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot. You may also submit a written request for a ballot to your County Elections Department.

What is a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot?

Military personnel and their voting age dependents in the United States and overseas, and U.S. citizens overseas may use a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot available through Voting Assistance Officers at military installations or at U.S. Embassies and Consulates. Washington State law allows all eligible election contests to be voted on this ballot.

When should I receive my mail-in ballot?

Ballots are required to be mailed to military and overseas voters 30 days before a Primary or General Election. If you have not received your ballot one week before the election, contact the FVAP Ombudsman Service or your County Elections Department or the Office of the Secretary of State.

When should I return my completed ballot?

Your ballot must be returned to the County Elections Department or postmarked on or before the date of the election. If you are an overseas, out-of-state or military voter, the date you sign the oath on the envelope constitutes a postmark.

CHAPTER 19

Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

What is the Help America Vote Act?

The Help America Vote Act is a federal law enacted in response to the 2000 Presidential Election. This significant national election reform affects nearly every facet of elections in the United States.

The law created a bipartisan Election Assistance Commission and expanded the role of the federal government in elections through mandates, standards, and funding. Key aspects of the Act include updating voting equipment, expanding disability access, providing provisional ballots, creating statewide voter registration lists, training poll workers and educating voters.

How do I submit a complaint about voting irregularities?

HAVA outlines requirements for uniform and non-discriminatory election technology and administration. An individual who believes that a violation of these requirements has occurred, is occurring or is about to occur, may file a complaint with the Office of the Secretary of State. All complaints must be in writing, notarized and filed within 30 calendar days after the certification of the election at issue.

Miscellaneous Elections and Voting Information

What is inactive voting status?

An inactive voter is one who has an invalid address in the voter registration database. This information may be discovered when a County Elections Department sends out a piece of mail that cannot be forwarded, such as a voter registration card. If it is returned to the county with no new address information from the post office, or an address that is outside of the county's jurisdiction, the voter is placed on inactive status and a confirmation card is mailed to any address that is available for that voter. An inactive voter is cancelled if he or she remains inactive after four years, or through two Federal Elections.

At any time an inactive voter may reactivate a registration by updating his or her residential address with the County Elections Department.

What is voter intent?

Washington is a “voter intent” state. State law provides that votes will not be rejected if it can be determined how the voter intended to cast the vote. The County Canvassing Board is the only authority that may determine voter intent. For more about voter intent, go to www.secstate.wa.gov/elections.

What does ballot inspection mean?

Before ballot tabulation begins, ballots are carefully checked to ensure that all intended votes will be counted by the ballot tabulator. If needed, a ballot may be duplicated onto another ballot or sent to the County Canvassing Board for clarification. When ballots are tabulated at the polling place, they are inspected by the voter before being placed into the tabulator. In all counties, absentee ballots are always visually inspected prior to tabulation.

When is the latest I can turn in my completed ballot?

Ballots must be postmarked or deposited at a designated location before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Is vote by mail safe?

Safeguards against fraud, as implemented by County Elections Departments, ensure that every signature on an absentee or mail ballot matches the signature on the original voter registration record. It is important to keep your signature up to date with your County Elections Department.

When are voting materials printed in languages other than English?

When there is a 5 percent population of citizens of a single language in a jurisdiction, the jurisdiction must provide voting registration, notices, forms, instructions, assistance or other materials or information in that language.

When are absentee ballots counted?

Absentee ballots are tabulated after the polls close at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Is personal information shared among governmental agencies?

Each agency has different laws regarding the use and access of personal information. However, under the National Voter Registration Act, the Department of Licensing will share change of address information with County Elections Departments when you renew your driver's license.

Some voter registration information, such as an address change within a county, may be done over the phone. But new registrations, transfers from one county to another and cancellations must be done in writing to the County Elections Department or the Office of the Secretary of State.



County Elections Departments in Washington State

In Washington, elections are administered at the county level by County Auditors (except King County, which has a Director of the Department of Records, Elections, and Licensing Services). These County Elections Departments are available to help you with registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot, and other election related services.

For up to date contact information for your County Elections Department, visit **www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx**.

Adams

210 W Broadway Ave
Ritzville, WA 99169-1897
Phone: 509-659-3249
Fax: 509-659-3254

Asotin

PO Box 129
Asotin, WA 99402-0129
Phone: 509-243-2084
Fax: 509-243-2087

Benton

PO Box 470
Prosser, WA 99350-0470
Phone: 509-736-3085
Fax: 509-786-5528

Chelan

PO Box 400
Wenatchee, WA 98807-0400
Phone: 509-667-6808
Fax: 509-667-6818

Clallam

233 E 4th St
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Phone: 360-417-2221
Fax: 360-417-2517

Clark

PO Box 8815
Vancouver, WA 98666-8815
Phone: 360-397-2345
Fax: 360-397-6007

Columbia

341 E Main St
Dayton, WA 99328-1361
Phone: 509-382-4541
Fax: 509-382-4830

Cowlitz

207 4th Ave N
Kelso, WA 98626-4193
Phone: 360-577-3005
Fax: 360-414-5552

Douglas

PO Box 456
Waterville, WA 98858-0456
Phone: 509-745-8527
Fax: 509-745-8812

Ferry

350 E Delaware Ave
Republic, WA 99166
Phone: 509-775-5200
Fax: 509-775-5208

Franklin

PO Box 1451
Pasco, WA 99301-1451
Phone: 509-545-3538
Fax: 509-545-2148

Garfield

PO Box 278
Pomeroy, WA 99347-0278
Phone: 509-843-1411
Fax: 509-843-3941

Grant

PO Box 37
Ephrata, WA 98823-0037
Phone: 509-754-2011 ext. 343
Fax: 509-754-6562

Grays Harbor

100 Broadway Ave W
Montesano, WA 98563-3614
Phone: 360-249-4232
Fax: 360-249-3330

Island

PO Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239-5000
Phone: 360-679-7366
Fax: 360-240-5553

Jefferson

PO Box 563
Port Townsend, WA 98368-0563
Phone: 360-385-9117
Fax: 360-385-9228

King

500 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98104-3280
Phone: 206-296-8683
Fax: 206-296-0108

Kitsap

1026 Sidney Ave
Port Orchard, WA 98366-4206
Phone: 360-337-5769
Fax: 360-337-4645

Kittitas

205 W 5th St
Ellensburg, WA 98926-3129
Phone: 509-962-7503
Fax: 509-962-7687

Klickitat

205 Columbus St S
Goldendale, WA 98620-9279
Phone: 509-773-4001
Fax: 509-773-4244

Lewis

PO Box 29
Chehalis, WA 98532-0029
Phone: 360-740-1278
Fax: 360-740-1421

Lincoln

PO Box 28
Davenport, WA 99122-0028
Phone: 509-725-4971
Fax: 509-725-0820

Mason

PO Box 400
Shelton, WA 98584-0400
Phone: 360-427-9670 ext. 469
Fax: 360-427-1753

Okanogan

PO Box 1010
Okanogan, WA 98840-1010
Phone: 509-422-7240
Fax: 509-422-7163

Pacific

PO Box 97
South Bend, WA 98586-0097
Phone: 360-875-9317
Fax: 360-875-9333

Pend Oreille

PO Box 5015
Newport, WA 99156-5015
Phone: 509-447-3185
Fax: 509-447-2475

Pierce

2401 S 35th St
Tacoma, WA 98409-7484
Phone: 253-798-7430
Fax: 253-798-2761

San Juan

PO Box 638
Friday Harbor, WA 98250-0638
Phone: 360-378-3357
Fax: 360-378-8856

Skagit

PO Box 1306
Mount Vernon, WA 98273-1306
Phone: 360-336-9305
Fax: 360-336-9429

Skamania

PO Box 790
Stevenson, WA 98648-0790
Phone: 509-427-9420
Fax: 509-427-4165

Snohomish

3000 Rockefeller Ave
Everett, WA 98201-4061
Phone: 425-388-3444
Fax: 425-259-2777

Spokane

1033 W Gardner
Spokane, WA 99260-0020
Phone: 509-477-2320
Fax: 509-477-6607

Stevens

215 S Oak St
Colville, WA 99114-2836
Phone: 509-684-7514 / 866-307-9060
Fax: 509-684-8310

Thurston

2000 Lakeridge Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98502-6090
Phone: 360-786-5408
Fax: 360-786-5223

Wahkiakum

PO Box 543
Cathlamet, WA 98612-0543
Phone: 360-795-3219
Fax: 360-795-0824

Walla Walla

PO Box 1856
Walla Walla, WA 99362-0356
Phone: 509-524-2530
Fax: 509-524-2552

Whatcom

311 Grand Ave
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
Phone: 360-676-6742
Fax: 360-738-4556

Whitman

PO Box 350
Colfax, WA 99111-0350
Phone: 509-397-6270
Fax: 509-397-6351

Yakima

128 N Second St
Yakima, WA 98901-2639
Phone: 509-574-1340
Fax: 509-574-1341



Washington State Agencies

Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division

520 Union Avenue SE
Olympia, WA 98504

PO Box 40229
Olympia, WA 98504-0229

(360) 902-4180
(800) 448-4881
(800) 422-8683 TDD/TTY

Email: elections@secstate.wa.gov

www.vote.wa.gov

Legislative Information

Legislative Information Center
106 Legislative Building
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

If you have questions or need information, send an email message to:
support@leg.wa.gov

or call

(360) 786-7573

You may send a brief message to your district legislators through the in-state toll-free hotline number:

(800) 562-6000

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Office of the Chief Clerk
of the House of Representatives
PO Box 40600

Olympia, WA 98504-0600

(360) 786-7750

www1.leg.wa.gov/House/Representatives

SENATE

Office of the Secretary of the Senate
PO Box 40482

Olympia, WA 98504-0482

360-786-7550

www1.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Senators

Restoring Your Right to Vote

INDETERMINATE SENTENCE REVIEW BOARD

PO Box 40907

Olympia, WA 98504-0907

(360) 493-9266

www.srb.wa.gov/restorevotingrights.html

CLEMENCY AND PARDONS BOARD

Office of the Governor

PO Box 40002

Olympia, WA 98504-0002

(360) 902-4111 (voice)

(360) 753-4110 (fax)

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

PO Box 41170

Olympia, WA 98504-1170

(360) 753-3365 (voice)

(360) 586-8869 (fax)

www.courts.wa.gov

Address Confidentiality Program

(800) 822-1065 (Washington only)

(800) 664-9677 TTY

(360) 753-2972 (Out of State)

(360) 664-0515 TTY

Email: acp@secstate.wa.gov

01/2007