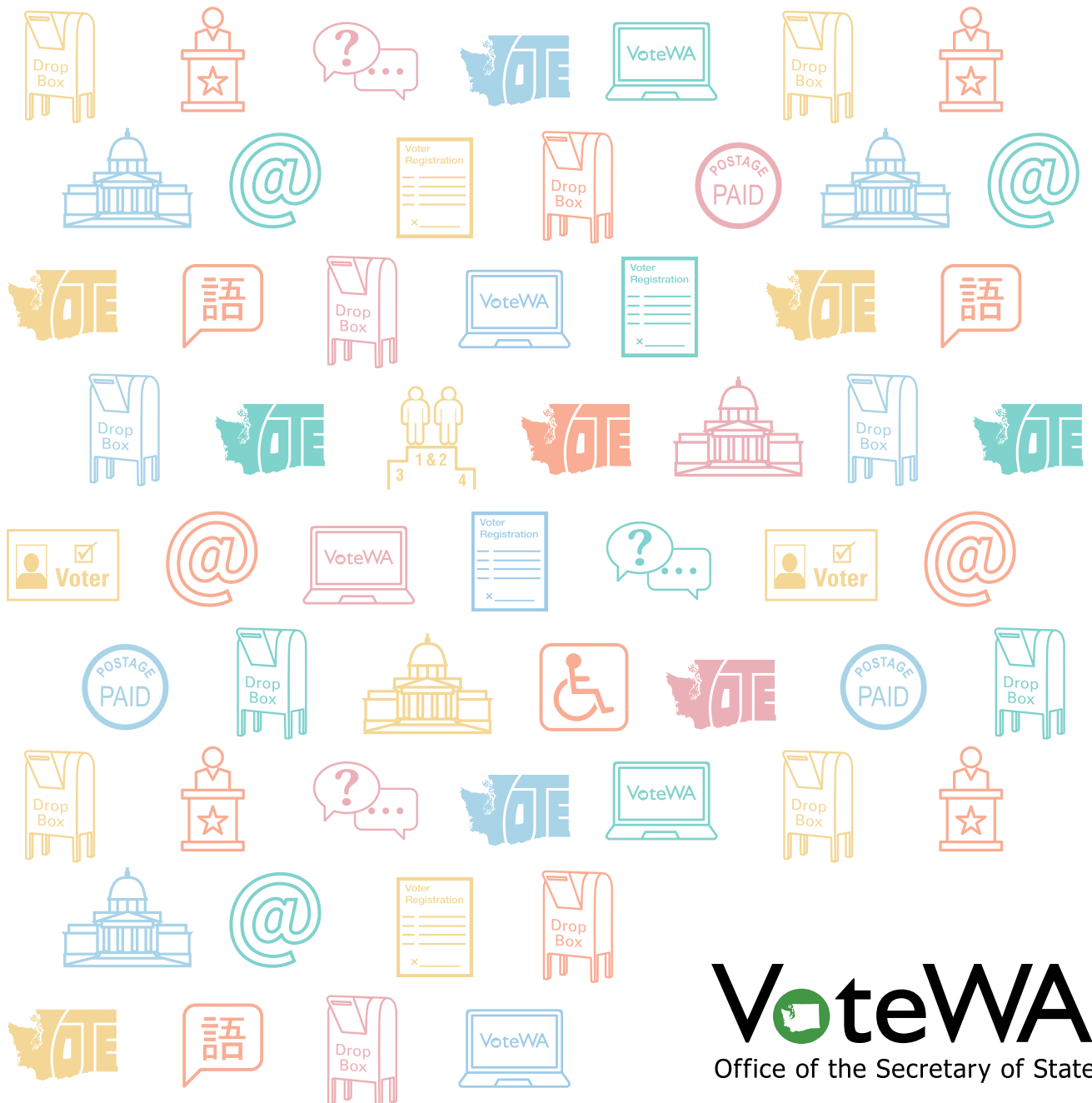


Guide to Registering Voters



Introduction



Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country, and this world. — Sharon Salzberg

The Secretary of State’s Guide to Registering Voters is designed to help voter registration drive coordinators, volunteers, and political parties understand their responsibilities and requirements when helping people register to vote in Washington state.

In the following pages you will learn more about the election process. People involved with elections are passionate about their work, and with the help of organizations and citizens we will be able to engage new voters and help them when they have questions about the election process.

As our state becomes increasingly diverse, we seek to make voting as inclusive and accessible as possible. We will continue to work with organizations and provide tools and resources to help you run successful voter registration drives.

4.8M

Registered voters in Washington

39

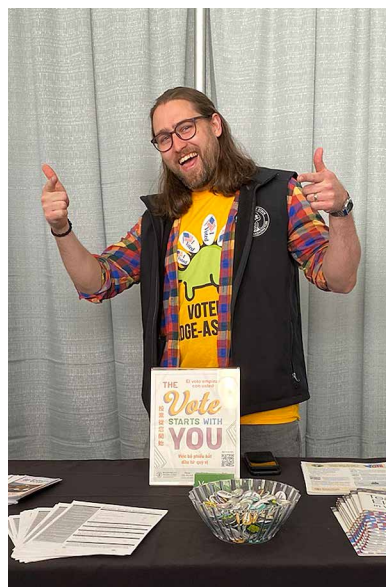
Counties in Washington

87%

Percentage of voting eligible population (VEP) registered in 2022

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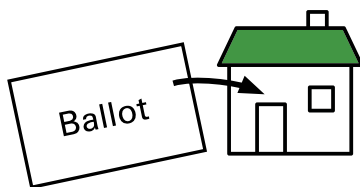
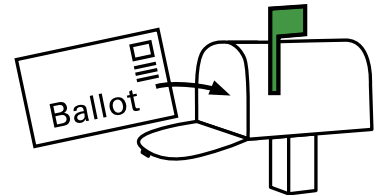
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The Basics

Vote by Mail

Washington voters receive and return their ballots through the U.S. Postal Service.

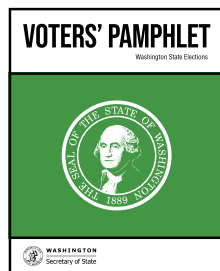


Ballots

Ballots are mailed at least 18 days prior to an election. Registered voters do not need to request their ballots.

Registration

Registration forms must be received by an elections office no later than eight (8) days before Election Day. See p. 8 for details.

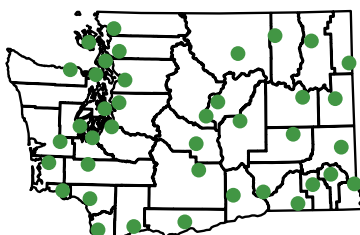
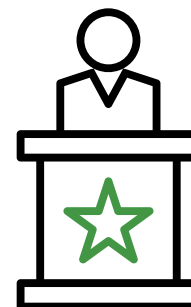


Voters' Pamphlet

Voters' pamphlets are sent to every household in Washington before ballots are issued.

Party Affiliation

Voters in Washington do not register by political party.



Administration

Elections are administered by each county elections office.

Voter Eligibility

To register to vote, a person must meet all of the following requirements:



U.S. Citizen

Having a green card or permanent residency status is not citizenship.



Legal resident of Washington state

A person must establish a residential address in Washington at least 30 days before Election Day.



At least 18 years old by the day of the election in which they first vote

To qualify for the Future Voter Program, a U.S. citizen must be at least 16 and a Washington resident. When they become eligible, Future Voters are automatically registered.



A 17-year-old who will be 18 by the November General Election can vote in the Primary.



Not disqualified from voting due to a court order

Only a Superior Court Judge can declare a person unable to vote due to mental incompetency. Do not assume that a person under guardianship is ineligible to vote.



Not under total confinement for a Washington felony conviction

A person's right to vote is restored once they are no longer in total confinement for a felony conviction in Washington. Once a person is released from the Department of Corrections (DOC), the right to vote is restored and they are able to re-register to vote.



Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you. — Pericles

Laws & Rules



Volunteers

Anyone may register voters. Volunteers who are ineligible to vote are permitted to help register others to vote.



Compensation for Volunteers

Voter registration coordinators may not compensate or reward staff members or volunteers based on the number of voters they register. However, compensation is permitted for time spent registering voters (**RCW 29A.84.130**).



Rewards, Prizes, or Gifts

Rewards, prizes, or gifts may not be offered to new voters in exchange for registering to vote. However, promotional gifts, such as buttons or candy, must be given to anyone who asks, regardless of their eligibility, party preference, or intention to register.



Partisan Materials

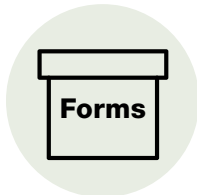
Partisan materials cannot be handed out or displayed if your organization is a 501(c)(3) or if you receive state funds.



Deadline to Return Completed Forms

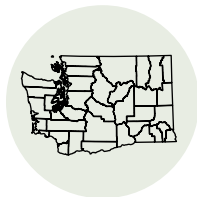
Make sure paper registration forms are physically returned to an elections office at least eight (8) days prior to election day, and no later than five (5) business days after you receive them. Forms submitted after the eight-day deadline will not take effect until the next election. An organization may place marks on the voter registration forms to keep track of volunteers and for quality assurance purposes.

Best Practices



Storing Completed Forms

To prevent completed forms from being damaged or taken, store them in a safe place such as a box, envelope, or other container.



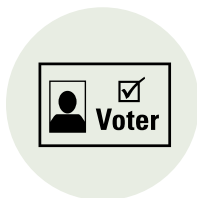
Forms from Multiple Counties

If you have forms from many counties, send the forms to the Secretary of State Elections Division. The state will forward the registration forms to the appropriate counties.



Collaboration

Team up with event organizers if there's something going on in your city, town, or campus that's sure to draw a crowd.



Name Changes

Voters with name changes must complete a new registration if their driver's license or state ID is issued with their new name.



Tracking

If your organization wants to track the number of registrations and updates submitted through VoteWA, the state Elections Division can provide a unique URL.

Paper Registration

When using a paper registration form (like the one on the following page), double-check that all the required fields have been completed. Missing information can cause registrations to be delayed or rejected. The deadline for voters to register by mail or online is eight (8) days before election day. Mailed forms must be physically received, not postmarked, by the deadline. Voters also have the option to register in person at a county elections office no later than 8 p.m. on election day.

1

The *residential* address must be in Washington. The residential address, which may be either a traditional or nontraditional address, determines which races and measures will be on a voter's ballot. A nontraditional address consists of a narrative description of a voter's residence, and must provide enough detail to assign a precinct and locate the voter to confirm their address. P.O. boxes may not be used as a residential address. The *mailing* address is where the ballot will be sent, and can be anywhere in the world.

2

Verify the person has answered both qualification questions.

3

If the applicant qualifies as a military or overseas voter, make sure they complete this section.

4

A person will need a Washington driver's license, permit, state ID number, or last four (4) digits of their Social Security number in order to complete this form. Applicants without any of these standard IDs may leave this section blank but will be asked for alternative ID by their county elections office before the registration can be approved.

5

If a person was previously registered in Washington under a different name or address, they should complete the fifth section of the form.

6

Make sure the applicant signs the declaration and that the signature is clear.



By voting, we add our voice to the chorus that forms opinions and the basis for actions.
— Jens Stoltenberg

Voter Registration Forms are available in different languages.

- Amharic / አማርኛ
- Arabic / العربية
- Bengali / বাংলা
- Burmese / မြန်မာစာ
- Chinese / 中文
- English
- Farsi / فارسی
- French / Français
- Haitian Creole / Créole Haïtien
- Hindi / हिन्दी
- Japanese / 日本語
- Khmer / ភាសាខ្មែរ
- Korean / 한국어
- Laotian / ພາສາລາວ
- Portugese / Português
- Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
- Russian / Русский
- Somali / Soomaali
- Spanish / Español
- Tagalog
- Tigrinya / ትግርኛ
- Ukrainian / Український
- Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt

Forms available at sos.wa.gov/elections

Sample Voter Registration Form

Washington State Voter Registration Form

Register online at www.votewa.gov.

1 Personal Information

last first middle suffix

date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) gender

residential address in Washington state apt #

city ZIP

mailing address, if different

city state and ZIP

phone number (optional) email address (optional)

2 Qualifications

If you answer *no*, do not complete this form.

- yes no **I am a citizen of the United States of America.**
- yes no **I am at least sixteen years old and will not vote in a special or general election until I turn eighteen.**

3 Military / Overseas Status

- yes no **I am currently serving in the military.**
Includes National Guard and Reserves, and spouses or dependents away from home due to service.
- yes no **I live outside the United States.**

4 Identification — Washington Driver License, Permit, or ID

If you do not have a Washington driver license, permit, or ID, you may use the last four digits of your Social Security number to register. x x x - x x x -

5 Change of Name or Address

This information will be used to update your registration, if applicable.

previous last name first middle

previous residential address city state and ZIP

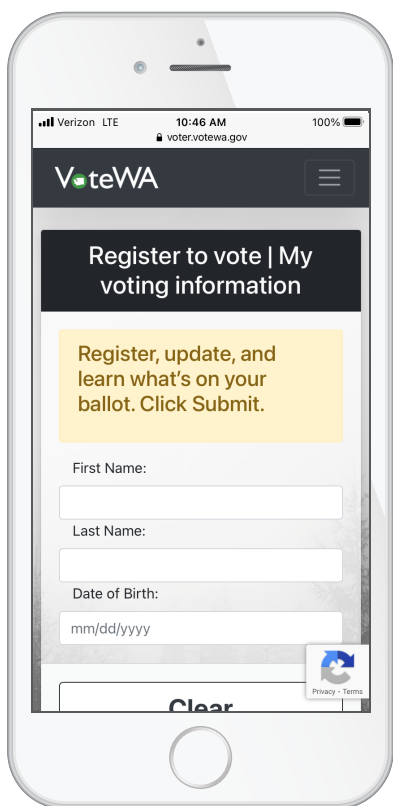
6 Declaration

I declare that the facts on this voter registration form are true. I am a citizen of the United States, I will have lived at this address in Washington for at least thirty days immediately before the next election at which I vote, and I am at least sixteen years old. I am not disqualified from voting due to a court order, and I am not currently serving a sentence of total confinement under the jurisdiction of the department of corrections for a Washington felony conviction, and I am not currently incarcerated for a federal or out-of-state felony conviction.

sign here [] date here []

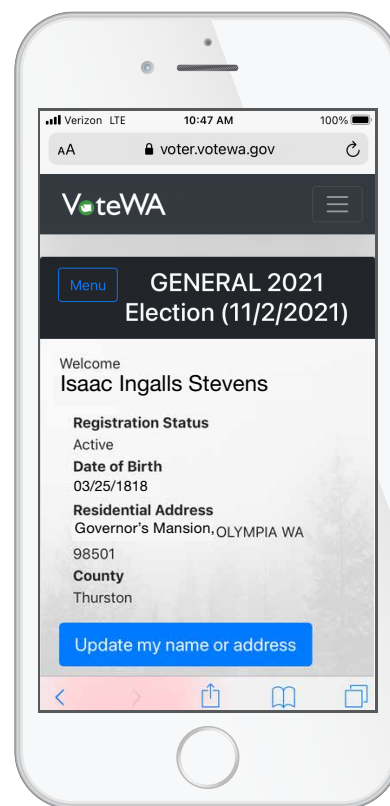
VoteWA

VoteWA is an easy-to-use online voter portal where people can register to vote, update their address, access their voters' guide and voting history, and get up-to-date voting information on elected officials, ballot drop box locations, voting center locations, and current ballot status. Using VoteWA to submit a new registration or voter information update requires a valid Washington state driver's license, permit, or ID. VoteWA is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, and Somali.



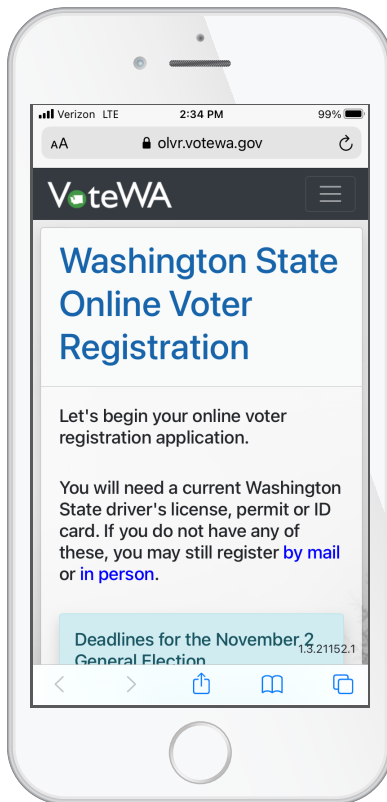
01

Voters who are already registered may log in to **VoteWA.gov** by providing their first name, last name, and date of birth. This information must be entered exactly as it appears in the voter's registration record.



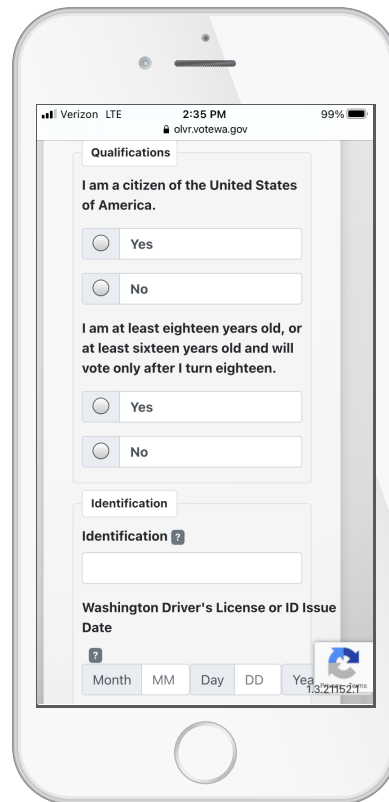
02

Upon logging in, voters can verify their residential and mailing addresses and their voter registration status. If the residential or mailing address is not current, or if the registration status is inactive, the voter may click "update my address" to activate their registration status.



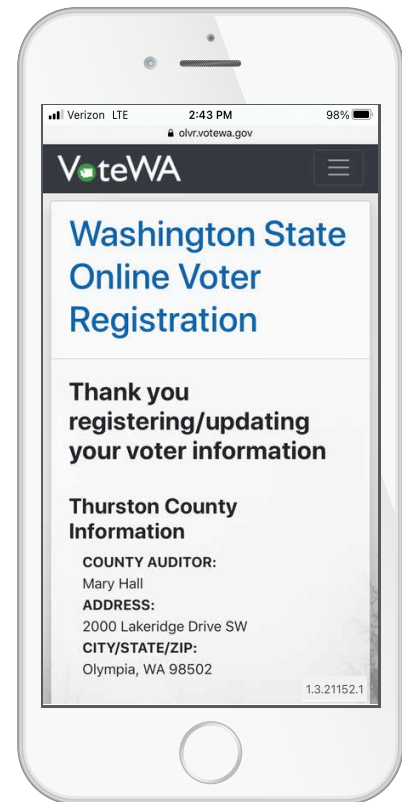
01

To register, go to olvr.votewa.gov. The system will notify users if the deadline has passed to register electronically for an upcoming election, and direct them to in-person voter registration services. To begin an electronic application, click "Start."



02

Users will be directed to enter their personal identification, language preference, military service, Washington address, mailing address if different, and other information. Users will then be asked to affirm the accuracy of the information and to authorize the use of their signature on their driver's license.



03

Upon submitting the registration, VoteWA users will be given a confirmation of receipt, and information about their county of registration.

Outreach & Social Media Tools

We encourage Washingtonians to be civically engaged, but we must ensure the information they receive or share is accurate and reliable. Here are some resources and information from our elections officials you can use for your outreach and on social media.

State Elections Division

Visit sos.wa.gov/civics for educational and voter registration materials.

Our expert Elections staff can meet with you or your group in person or virtually to discuss:

- The importance of civic engagement.
- How elections work and why we vote.
- How to register and vote.
- What it means to be an informed voter.
- How to register voters and conduct a voter registration drive.

Contact elections@sos.wa.gov for more information.

Hashtags to follow:

#TrustedInfo
#VoteReady
#TheVoteStartsWithYou
#VoteEarly

Important accounts to follow and share information from:

Twitter: [@secstatewa](https://twitter.com/secstatewa)

Instagram: [@secstatewa](https://www.instagram.com/secstatewa)

Facebook: [WaSecretaryOfState](https://www.facebook.com/WaSecretaryOfState) and [WashingtonStateElections](https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonStateElections)

Helpful links to use in social media posts:

- Print a registration form to mail in:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/Print-Voter-Registration-Forms.aspx>
- Current Election Information:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/current-election-information.aspx>
- Frequently Asked Questions about Elections in Washington State:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/general-election-faqs.aspx>
- Frequently Asked Questions about Voting by Mail:
https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/faq_vote_by_mail.aspx
- New Washington Resident:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/New-Washington-Resident.aspx>
- Find your county elections office:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors.aspx>
- Future Voter program:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/future-voter-program.aspx>
- Voters Away at College:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/Voters-Away-at-College.aspx>
- 3 Ways to Register to Vote [video]:
<https://youtu.be/NkuhRpP-TY4>
- Descriptions of Elected Offices:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/descriptionsofelectedoffices.aspx>
- Top 2 Primary:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/Top2PrimaryFAQ.aspx>

Translated social media messages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese)

Early voting:

Don't wait until election day! Vote today. Go to VoteWA.gov for information about voting center and ballot drop box locations near you.

¡No espere a que sea el día de las elecciones! Vote hoy. Visite VoteWA.gov para obtener información sobre las ubicaciones del centro de votación y las urnas electorales más cercanas.

Đừng chờ đến Ngày Bầu cử! Hãy bỏ phiếu ngay hôm nay. Truy cập trang VoteWA.gov để biết thông tin về trung tâm bỏ phiếu và những địa điểm đặt thùng phiếu ở gần quý vị.

不要等到選舉日！即日投票。請前往 VoteWA.gov 了解更多關於投票中心及您附近選票箱位置的資訊。

Election day:

It's election day! Your ballots must be turned in to a ballot drop box by 8 p.m. tonight! Find a drop box near you: VoteWA.gov

¡Es día de las elecciones! ¡Debe entregar sus boletas en una urna electoral antes de las 8 p.m. de hoy! Encuentre la urna electoral más cercana: VoteWA.gov

Đã đến Ngày Bầu cử! Quý vị phải bỏ lá phiếu của mình vào thùng phiếu trước 8 giờ tối nay! Tìm một thùng phiếu gần quý vị: VoteWA.gov

選舉日到了！您的選票須在今晚8點前交至選票箱！查找您附近的選票箱：VoteWA.gov

Informed voter:

Anytime is a good time to be an informed voter! Check out candidates and measure information on VoteWA.gov.

¡Cualquier momento es buen momento para ser un votante informado! Consulte la información sobre los candidatos y las propuestas de ley en VoteWA.gov.

Trở thành cử tri thông thái lúc nào cũng là điều tốt! Xem xét các ứng cử viên và so sánh thông tin trên trang VoteWA.gov.

任何時候都是成為知情選民的好時機！在 VoteWA.gov 上查看候選人及議案資訊。

New Washington resident:

New to Washington state? Make sure you update your address to reflect your new residence. Go to VoteWA.gov to register to vote and update your address.

¿Se acaba de mudar al estado de Washington? Asegúrese de actualizar su domicilio con su nueva residencia. Visite VoteWA.gov para inscribirse a votar y actualizar su domicilio.

Có điều gì mới tại tiểu bang Washington? Đừng quên cập nhật địa chỉ cư trú mới của quý vị. Truy cập trang VoteWA.gov để đăng ký bỏ phiếu và cập nhật địa chỉ.

您是Washington州新居民？請務必更新您的地址，以顯示您的新住所。前往 VoteWA.gov 登記投票並更新您的地址。

New Washington resident: in-person services

New to Washington state? Make sure you update your address to reflect your new residence. Visit your county elections office or voting center to register to vote and update your address. County elections office info: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors/>

¿Se acaba de mudar al estado de Washington? Asegúrese de actualizar su domicilio con su nueva residencia. Visite la oficina electoral o el centro de votación de su condado para inscribirse a votar y actualizar su domicilio. Información sobre la oficina de elecciones del condado: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors/>

Có gì mới tại tiểu bang Washington? Đừng quên cập nhật địa chỉ cư trú mới của quý vị. Hãy đến trung tâm bỏ phiếu hoặc văn phòng bỏ phiếu tại quận của quý vị để đăng ký bỏ phiếu và cập nhật địa chỉ của quý vị. Thông tin về văn phòng bỏ phiếu của quận: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors/>

您是 Washington 州新居民？請務必更新您的地址，以顯示您的新住所。造訪您所在郡的選舉辦公室或投票中心，以登記投票並更新您的地址。郡選舉辦公室資訊：<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/auditors/>

Registration FAQs

For a complete list of frequently asked questions, please visit our website at sos.wa.gov/elections. We have general and election-specific FAQs that are updated regularly. If you still have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

What if a person is not 18 yet?

If they are 16 or 17, they can sign up for the Future Voter Program with the regular voter registration form. If they have a Washington state driver's license, permit, or ID, they can sign up online at VoteWA.gov. Future Voters are automatically registered to vote when they become eligible.

A 17-year-old who will be 18 by the November General Election can vote in the Primary. For assistance, contact your local elections office.

How can I verify a voter's registration status?

It's easy to verify a voter's status using the lookup tool on VoteWA.gov. Roughly 60% of registration applications are from people who are already registered but who either forgot they are already registered or need to update their address. With VoteWA, voters can confirm if they are already registered. Also, voters can visit VoteWA to update an address if they have moved.

Can a voter's registration status change?

Yes. The same registration may have multiple transactions. For example, the same registration may:

- become active in 2014;
- become inactive when the voter moves in February 2015 and neglects to notify the county auditor;
- become active again when the voter updates their registration in July 2015;
- become inactive when the voter moves again in March 2016; and
- be canceled in 2019 if the registration remains inactive through two federal general elections.

What is an "inactive" registration?

If election-related mail is returned by the post office as undeliverable to the voter at that address, the registration is placed on "inactive" status. A voter who is on inactive status may return to active status at any time by updating their address, requesting a ballot, or submitting a new voter registration application. This process is pursuant to state and federal law.

Can an inactive registration be canceled?

If the registration remains inactive through two consecutive federal general elections, the registration is canceled. This is in compliance with state law and the federal National Voter Registration Act.

Is a voter notified when the status of their registration changes?

Yes. Both state and federal law require that a notice be sent to the voter any time there is a change in the status of a registration. Notices are sent by postal mail from the county elections office.

Can a registration be canceled if the voter does not vote?

If the registration remains inactive through two consecutive federal general elections, the registration is canceled. This is in compliance with state law and the federal National Voter Registration Act.

Can a registration be “removed” or “purged” for no reason?

No. A voter’s registration may only be canceled for one or more of the following reasons:

- The voter requests that their registration be canceled;
- The registration file duplicates another, more current registration file for the same voter;
- The registration has been “inactive” through two federal general elections;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to a court order;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to incarceration for a felony offense; or
- The voter is deceased.

What if a voter wants to know why their registration status was changed?

Voters who want to know why their registration status changed, or are concerned that their registration was changed in error, may contact the county elections office in the county where they are registered.

Where can I find the state and federal laws that govern voter registration?

RCW 29A.08, WAC 434-324, and 52 U.S.C. 20501.

Elections Office Contacts

Adams County

210 W Broadway Ave, Ste 200
Ritzville, WA 99169
(509) 659-3249
elections@co.adams.wa.us

Asotin County

PO Box 129
Asotin, WA 99402-0129
(509) 243-2084
dmckay@co.asotin.wa.us

Benton County

PO Box 1000
Richland, WA 99352-1000
(509) 736-3085
elections@co.benton.wa.us

Chelan County

350 Orondo Ave, Ste 306
Wenatchee, WA 98801
(509) 667-6808
elections@co.chelan.wa.us

Clallam County

223 E 4th St, Ste 1
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(360) 417-2221
elections@clallamcountywa.gov

Clark County

PO Box 8815
Vancouver, WA 98666-8815
(564) 397-2345
elections@clark.wa.gov

Columbia County

341 E Main St, Ste 3
Dayton, WA 99328
(509) 382-4541
auditor_elections@co.columbia.wa.us

Cowlitz County

207 4th Ave N, Rm 205
Kelso, WA 98626
(360) 577-3005
elections@cowlitzwa.gov

Douglas County

PO Box 853
Waterville, WA 98858
(509) 888-6402
elections@co.douglas.wa.us

Ferry County

350 E Delaware Ave, Ste 2
Republic, WA 99166
(509) 775-5225 ext 1139
delections@co.ferry.wa.us

Franklin County

PO Box 1451
Pasco, WA 99301
(509) 545-3538
elections@co.franklin.wa.us

Garfield County

PO Box 278
Pomeroy, WA 99347
(509) 843-1411
mlueck@co.garfield.wa.us

Grant County

PO Box 37
Ephrata, WA 98823
(509) 754-2011 ext 2704
elections@grantcountywa.gov

Grays Harbor County

100 W Broadway, Ste 2
Montesano, WA 98563
(360) 249-4232
elections@graysharbor.us

Island County

PO Box 1410
Coupeville, WA 98239
(360) 678-8290
elections@islandcountywa.gov

Jefferson County

PO Box 563
Port Townsend, WA 98368
(360) 385-9119
elections@co.jefferson.wa.us

King County

919 SW Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057
(206) 296-8683
elections@kingcounty.gov

Kitsap County

614 Division St, MS 31
Port Orchard, WA 98366
(360) 337-7128
auditor@kitsap.gov

Kittitas County

205 W 5th Ave, Ste 105
Ellensburg, WA 98926
(509) 962-7503
elections@co.kittitas.wa.us

Klickitat County

205 S Columbus Ave, Rm 203
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-4001
voting@klickitatcounty.org

Lewis County

PO Box 29
Chehalis, WA 98532
(360) 740-1164
elections@lewiscountywa.gov

Lincoln County

PO Box 28
Davenport, WA 99122
(509) 725-4971
elections@co.lincoln.wa.us

Mason County

PO Box 400
Shelton, WA 98584
(360) 427-9670 ext 470
elections@masoncountywa.gov

Okanogan County

PO Box 1010
Okanogan, WA 98840
(509) 422-7240
elections@co.okanogan.wa.us

Pacific County

PO Box 97
South Bend, WA 98586-0097
(360) 875-9317
elections@co.pacific.wa.us

Pend Oreille County

PO Box 5015
Newport, WA 99156
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