

# The Path to Becoming a Certified Elections Administrator



Submit application



2 years service



40 Hours Training



Pass the Exam



Elections 101



Office of the Secretary of State

Elections Division

## Introduction

As an Elections Administrator serving Washington State, you have the opportunity to take a professional path towards certification through the Office of the Secretary of State.

### Two Paths

If this is your **Initial Certification**, there are several things required of you to become certified for the first time. We are going to show you how to get through all the steps and join the elite group of Certified Election Administrators!

If you're maintaining **Renewal Certification**, it's important to understand only certain types of training apply. Review the list of approved sponsors (p.6) and additional requirements (p.9-11).

### Requirements

Each county is required to have at least two Certified Election Administrators on staff. In order to be initially certified, staff must attend a two day orientation class and pass a written exam. Election Administrators must have 40 hours of additional education and two years of service in an elections office during the three year period immediately prior to the request for certification. Assistant Election Administrators need 20 hours of additional education and must be employed for one year.

Once certified, Elections Administrators must maintain their certification with 18 hours of continuing education each year. For Assistant Election Administrators, only 6 hours of continuing education is required.

**WAC 434-260** requires you to:

- Attend a 2-day orientation class
- Pass the Administrator Certification exam
- Receive an additional 40 hours of education
- Have 2 years of continuous service in elections and a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Submit a completed application for Initial Certification

Policies about the certification of Election Administrators are also made by the Election Administration and Certification Board (EACB).

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## Required 2-day orientation class

The Secretary of State's office administers a 2-day orientation class called Elections 101. The class is offered annually and covers the basic information all Election Administrators should know.

This is a **mandatory** course. It is a separate requirement and does not apply towards your required training hours. Once fully certified, you may receive credit hours for taking E101 if it's been more than 5 years since taking the class.

You will receive training on:

- Voter Registration
- Candidate Filing
- Ballot Format
- Security
- Ballot Processing
- Canvassing Boards
- Certification
- Recounts

After taking the class, you must finish the rest of your certification requirements within 5 years.



Take an **additional**  
40 hours of training



# Exam

## Pass the Administrator Certification Exam

The exam will cover the applicable laws that govern elections (RCWs & WACs). It's important to learn how to read, research, and cite current election law. While the E101 notebook is a useful resource, election laws change frequently and the notebook is updated annually.

The exam has three sections – Multiple Choice, Fill in the Blank and Essay.

If you're not a fan of taking tests (who is?), don't worry. This exam is open book and you will have as much time as you need to research and complete the test. You are also allowed to work with others for the first two sections.

You will be asked to cite the applicable laws that helped you answer the questions, so be sure to read them all.

You must pass this test with 80% or better. Study hard!



Learn how  
to research  
election laws on the  
Washington State  
Legislature's website

[www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)

# Training

## Acquire 40 hours of additional education

This is where all those classes and trainings come in. You will want to attend as many as you can for the two years leading up to your initial certification. It's also important to track dates and course sponsors.

30 of the total 40 hours must be election-specific and offered by approved sponsors.

**Approved Sponsors** include:

- Washington Association of County Auditors (WSACA)
- Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS)
- Election Center ([www.electioncenter.org](http://www.electioncenter.org))
- United State Election Assistance Commission (EAC)
- Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP)
- Election-related courses approved by the Election Administration and Certification Board

If you're unsure if a training will apply to your required 40 hours, we recommend contacting our office before taking the class: [ctsupport@sos.wa.gov](mailto:ctsupport@sos.wa.gov).

*Applying for Assistant Level Election Administrator? You only need 20 hours of additional education (15 hours of which are from approved sponsors).*

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The annual Elections Conference is an excellent source of election-specific sponsor-approved training hours

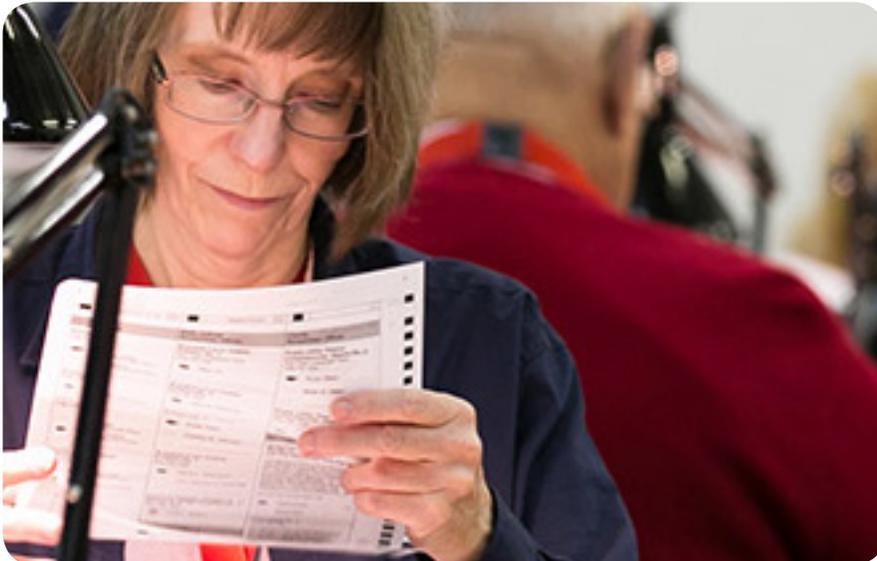




## Two years of continuous service

If you are a temporary (seasonal) employee, you will not be able to meet this requirement. However, if you're hired as temporary and then start on full time, two years of service can occur over a 3-year period.

You are also required to have a high school diploma or its equivalent.



Learn from your peers and visit other county election offices for up to 4 training hours



## Submit your Application for Initial Certification

**You did it!!**

You have:

- Attended E101
- Passed your exam with 80% or better
- Acquired 40 hours of training (30 hours at least of election-specific training)
- Worked in your elections department for at least 2 of the last 3 years

You are ready to register online and submit your application for Initial Certification.

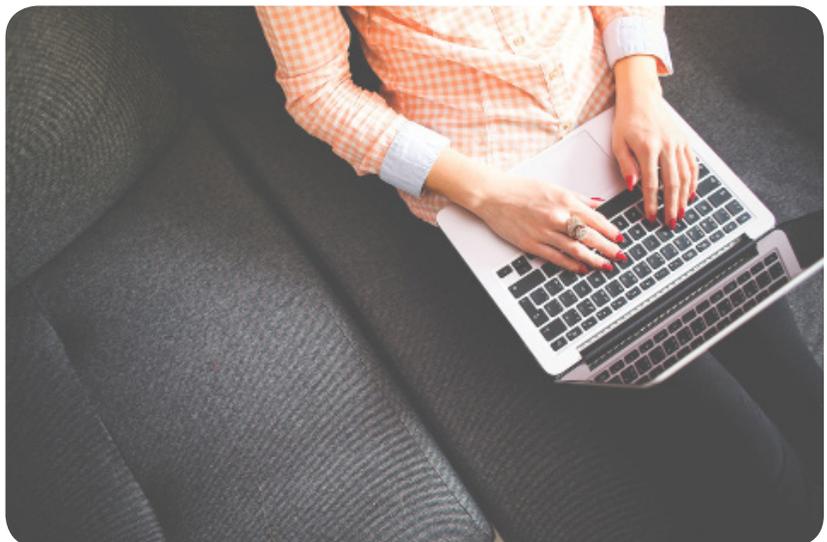
The application is available on the tab for Administrators on the OSOS website. ([www.sos.wa.gov](http://www.sos.wa.gov)) It's very easy to complete! Once submitted, your application is forwarded to your county for approval. Once approved, the application is forwarded to the Certification and Training Program for further processing.

You will receive an official Certified Election Administrator certificate in the mail once your application is approved. If you attend the annual Elections Conference, you may receive your certificate at the Secretary of State's recognition ceremony.

*If you are applying for an Assistant Level Election Administrator, you need to submit the application for Assistant Level Certification.*



If you wish to be recognized at the Elections Conference, submit your **application** early and allow time for processing



# Renewal of Certification



After attaining initial certification, you are responsible for maintaining your annual certification. For reference, see WAC 434-260-300.

You will not be required to take E101 or the Exam again, however you still need to attend sponsored trainings and apply for certification.

You are always welcome to attend E101 as a refresher! However, the hours will only count when it's been more than 5 years since you last took the class.

## Service



Continuous service during the year for which renewal is required

## Training



Minimum 18 hours  
*Assistant Level 6 hours*

At least 6 hours  
election-specific content  
from approved sponsors  
*Assistant Level 2 hours*

## Apply



Jan 31 deadline

Training completed in the year renewal is required

Rollover up to 6 surplus hours from previous year

Approved

## Applicable Training

Sponsor-approved | Election-specific  
WAC 434-260-220 | WAC 434-260-300

Not all trainings and sponsors qualify for state certification. Whether you become certified at the full or assistant level, track your training hours and sponsors. On our website, we maintain a 5-year list of sponsored Applicable Trainings.

### Approved Sponsors

- Washington State Association of County Auditors
- Secretary of State
- Election Center
- US Election Assistance Commission
- Federal Voting Assistance Program
- Election-related courses approved by the Election Administration and Certification Board



## Approved Training

- Election-specific training provided by an **approved** sponsor.
- Election-specific training **co-sponsored** with the Secretary of State's Office. (ie: USPS or State Patrol)
- E101 hours count toward **renewal** certification - only 5 years after the initial course.
- Visitations to other county election departments. (hours limited)
- Serving on elections-related committees with OSOS or WSACA. (2 hours for renewal certification **only**)
- **Remaining** required hours must provide continuing education relevant to elections work.
- Vendor training may apply to the **remaining** required hours **only** if it provides instruction. (ie: training on your VRS or tabulation system)

*Contact our office to confirm if the hours apply for any training not provided by an approved sponsor.*

## Not Approved Training

- On-the-job training through your county elections department.
- Product information, sales meetings and vendor demonstrations **do not** qualify as continuing education.
- E101 is **mandatory** for initial certification. It does **not** count towards the required 40 training hours.

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