



Federal Qualifications & Responsibilities

Except for the President and Vice President, all federal officials elected in Washington must be registered voters of the state. Only federal offices have age requirements above and beyond that to be a registered voter.

President & Vice President

The President must be at least 35 years old and a natural born U.S. citizen. Voters indirectly elect the President through the Electoral College. The President is elected to a four-year term and cannot serve more than two elected terms.

The chief duty of the President is to ensure the laws of the nation are faithfully executed. This duty is largely performed through appointments for thousands of federal positions, including secretaries of cabinet-level agencies and federal judges (subject to confirmation by the Senate). The President is the commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces, has the power to sign and veto (reject) laws passed by Congress, and makes treaties with foreign governments (with Senate approval).

The Vice President serves as the presiding officer of the Senate. The Vice President becomes President if the office is vacated.

Congress

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have equal responsibility for declaring war, maintaining the armed forces, assessing taxes, borrowing money, minting currency, regulating commerce, and making all laws and budgets necessary for the operation of government.

U.S. Senator

Senators must be at least 30 years old and citizens of the U.S. for at least nine years. Senators serve six-year terms. The Senate has 100 members; two from each state.

The Senate has several exclusive powers, including consenting to treaties, confirming federal appointments made by the President, and trying federal officials impeached by the House of Representatives.

U.S. Representative

Representatives must be at least 25 years old and citizens of the U.S. for at least seven years. Representatives are not required to be registered voters of their district, but must be registered voters of the state. Representatives serve two-year terms.

The House of Representatives has 435 members, all of whom are up for election in even-numbered years. Each state has a different number of members based on population. After the 2010 Census, Washington was given a 10th Congressional District.



Executive Qualifications & Responsibilities

Statewide-elected executives must be registered Washington voters and are elected to four-year terms.

Governor

The Governor is the chief executive officer of the state and makes appointments for hundreds of state positions, including directors of state agencies (subject to confirmation by the Senate). The Governor has the power to sign or veto (reject) legislation, and annually submits a budget recommendation and reports on state affairs to the Legislature.

Lieutenant Governor

The Lieutenant Governor is elected independent of the Governor, and serves as the presiding officer of the state Senate. The Lieutenant Governor is first in line of succession for Governor, and acts as Governor if he or she is unable to perform the duties of the office.

Secretary of State

The Secretary of State certifies election results, files and certifies initiatives and referenda to the ballot, publishes the state voters' pamphlet, registers corporations, limited partnerships, trademarks, and charitable organizations, and collects and preserves historical records of the state. The Secretary of State is second in line of succession for Governor.

Treasurer

As the state's finance officer, the Treasurer manages and disperses all funds and accounts, is responsible for the safekeeping and interest of all state investments, accounts for and makes payments of interest and principal on all state bonded indebtedness, and maintains a statewide revenue collection system for the purpose of expediting the deposit of state funds into the Treasury.

Auditor

The Auditor works with more than 2,600 state and local governments to conduct independent financial and performance audits. The Auditor investigates state employee whistleblower claims about agencies and reports of fraud, waste, and abuse of public resources received through its citizen hotline. Results are made public.

Attorney General

The Attorney General serves as legal counsel to the Governor, members of the Legislature, state officials, and more than 230 state agencies, boards, commissions, colleges, and universities. The Office of the Attorney General enforces consumer protection statutes and provides public information about consumer rights and fraudulent business practices.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Superintendent of Public Instruction is the only nonpartisan state elected executive. The Superintendent heads the state education agency and is chief executive officer of the state Board of Education. The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of the state's kindergarten through twelfth grade education program. The office certifies teaching personnel, approves and accredits programs, and apportions state and local funds.

Commissioner of Public Lands

The Commissioner of Public Lands is the head of the Department of Natural Resources, overseeing management of more than 5.5 million acres of state forest, agricultural, range, aquatic, and commercial lands. These lands generate more than \$200 million a year to support schools, state institutions, and county services. The land is also managed to protect wildlife habitats, water, and public access.

Insurance Commissioner

The Insurance Commissioner regulates insurance companies doing business in Washington, licenses insurance agents and brokers, reviews policies and rates, examines the operations and finances of insurers, and handles inquiries and complaints from the public.



Legislative Qualifications & Responsibilities

Legislators must be registered voters of their district.

Legislature

Legislators propose and enact public policy, and set a budget and provide for the collection of taxes to support state and local government.

State Senator

The Senate has 49 members; one from each legislative district in the state. Senators are elected to four-year terms, and approximately one-half the membership of the Senate is up for election each even-numbered year. The Senate's only exclusive duty is to confirm appointments made by the governor.

State Representative

The House of Representatives has 98 members; two from each legislative district in the state. Representatives are elected to two-year terms, so the total membership of the House is up for election each even-numbered year.



Judicial Qualifications & Responsibilities

Washington judges are nonpartisan. They must be in good standing to practice law in Washington and are prohibited from making misleading comments or statements that appear to commit them on legal issues that may come before them in court. Judges must be registered Washington voters.

Supreme Court Justice

The Washington Supreme Court is the highest judiciary in the state. State Supreme Court justices hear appeals and decide cases from Courts of Appeals and other lower courts. Nine justices are elected statewide to serve six-year terms. Three Justices are elected every two years.

Court of Appeals Judge

Court of Appeals Judges hear appeals from Superior Courts. A total of 22 judges serve three divisions headquartered in Seattle, Tacoma and Spokane. Each division is further split into three districts. Court of Appeals Judges serve six-year terms.

Superior Court Judge

Superior Courts hear felony criminal cases, civil matters, divorces, juvenile cases, and appeals from lower-level courts. Superior Courts are organized by county into 31 districts. Superior Court Judges serve four-year terms.