



# Secretary of State

*Kim Wyman*

## **Voting Opportunities through Education Act (ESB 6313) Advisory #1**

Universal Registration

July 27, 2020

ESB 6313 removed the requirement that in person registration must take place at the county of residence. State law now allows a voter to register and receive a ballot in any Washington county. This section of the law went into effect June 11, 2020.

The procedure for implementing Universal Registration is outlined in this Advisory.

### **Registering Out-of-County Voters**

Any Washington voter may come in person to your office to register or change their residential address. Registrations received by any election official in Washington on or before a deadline are considered valid and on-time.

### **Timeline - What Action to Take and When:**

#### **19 Days or More Before an Election - Accept the registration and forward to county of residence.**

- Paper forms are forwarded to the county of residence for processing and retention.
- The county of residence will send a ballot when applicable.

#### **18 - 8 Days Before an Election – Accept and process the registration. Issue current ballot if requested by voter.**

- Registration – The voter may submit their registration online and appear in person for processing or fill out a paper form.
  - For paper forms, enter the registration information into VoteWA.
    - Scan the form and attach the signature to the voter’s record no later than the Friday following Election Day.
    - Hold the paper form until after the election is certified, then mail to the county of residence for retention.
  - For online registrations, locate and process the voter submitted registration from the online registration queue in VoteWA. If unable to locate, have the voter complete a new registration and enter the information into VoteWA.

- Total Address - If a voter submits a residential address or location that cannot be found in Total Address, you may temporarily precinct the voter until the county of residence can review it. Work with the voter to correctly place a temporary pin at the location they specify and add any narrative or notes that will help the county of residence's research.  
*Best Practice:* Use all tools available to help identify where to drop the pin such as Google Maps, county assessor office websites, etc. Out-of-county users will be unfamiliar with other counties' geography and landmarks.
- Ballot Delivery – Once the registration is active, the county of residence will mail the ballot to the voter or you will print and issue the current ballot over the counter. (See “Issuing Out-of-County Ballots”) It is up to the voter to determine the ballot delivery method.  
*Best Practice:* Make sure the voter is aware of how and when they will receive their ballot. Clearly communicating the ballot delivery methods to the voter not only helps to ensure their participation in the election but may also cut down on last minute lines and correspondence on Election Day.

**7 Days Before – 8:00 p.m. Election Night – Accept and process the registration. Issue current ballot to the voter.**

- Registration – The voter may submit their registration online on a kiosk and appear in person for processing or fill out a paper form. The voter may have also used the voter portal from home after the 8-day deadline.
  - For paper forms, enter the registration information into VoteWA.
    - Scan the form and attach the signature to the voter's record no later than the Friday following Election Day.
    - Hold the paper form until after the election is certified, then mail to the county of residence for retention.
  - For online registrations, locate and process the voter submitted registration from the online registration queue in VoteWA. If unable to locate, have the voter complete a new registration and enter the information into VoteWA.
- Total Address – If a voter submits a residential address or location that cannot be found in Total Address, you may temporarily precinct the voter until the county of residence can review it. Work with the voter to correctly place a temporary pin at the location they specify and add any narrative or notes that will help the county of residence's research.  
*Best Practice:* Use all tools available to help identify where to drop the pin such as Google Maps, county assessor office websites, etc. Out-of-county users will be unfamiliar with other counties' geography and landmarks.
- Ballot Delivery – Once the registration is active, print and issue the current ballot to the in person voter. (See “Issuing Out-of-County Ballots”)

Timeframe/When	When to Send Paper Form to County of Residence?	Enter Registration Info into VoteWA?	Issue Current Ballot to In-Person Voter?
19+ Days Before Election	Immediately	Not Required	Not Required
18 – 8 Days Before Election	Forward paper forms after certification	Yes	If Voter Chooses
7 Days Before – 8 PM Election Night	Forward paper forms after certification	Yes	Yes

### Alternative Registration Method

If an in-person registration cannot be processed in VoteWA, you must contact the county of residence for assistance.

1. Transmit a copy of the registration to the county of residence via fax, email, or other immediate electronic means.
2. Upon receipt, the county of residence will promptly enter the registration into VoteWA and notify you when the registration has been processed.
3. Access the registration by logging into the VoteWA Public Voter Portal and print the online ballot packet and issue to the awaiting in-person voter.

If VoteWA is not available to either county, follow procedures for a conditional registration. (WAC 434-250-110(d)) (See also the “Same Day Registration” Clearinghouse notice)

### Issuing Out-of-County Ballots

Once the out-of-county voter is registered, a ballot may be issued to them in much the same manner as you would for an in-county voter. The procedure to issue a ballot in VoteWA is summarized in the following steps:

**Step 1. Locate the voter’s record.** Use the Advanced Search function and select all counties or the county of residence.

**Step 2. Create a new ballot.** In the “Ballot Info” tab of the voter’s record, click the “Create New Ballot” button. Make the appropriate selections in the applicable drop-down menus and click the “Submit and Process Now” button.

**Step 3. Print the ballot.** There are different methods for printing a ballot depending on available resources and preference:

1. Print from the Ballot Info tab – In the “Ballot Info” tab of the voter’s record, locate the newly created ballot and click on the “Online Ballot” link. In the next screen, click the “Print and Mark” button, then click the “Print Ballot” button.
2. Print from Ballot PDF Files – If the county of residence has uploaded PDF ballot files into VoteWA, print the correct PDF of the voter’s current ballot. If a PDF is not available, refer to method #1.
3. Print from Public Voter Portal – Access the online ballot by logging into the public Voter Portal (voter.votewa.gov) using the voter’s name and DOB, select “Online Ballot” from the “My Ballot” drop-down menu. Click the “Print and Mark” button, then click the “Print Ballot” button. This is also the self-serve option for voters to print their own online ballot packet.

**Step 4. Issue a ballot packet to the voter.** A complete ballot packet includes the printed ballot, security envelope, all required instructions and/or inserts (if applicable), and a postage-paid return envelope. To provide postage, you have two options:

1. Give the voter a postage stamp with a generic envelope that contains the address of their county of residence. The USPS rules do not allow you to put another county’s address on one of your BRM postpaid envelopes. *Note:* Remember to include the ballot declaration on the envelope or on a separate sheet enclosed within.

To print a mailing label from VoteWA for the return envelope – In the “Ballot Info” tab of the voter’s record locate the current ballot, click the “Label” link and in the next screen click the “Print WA Label 1.0” button. *Note* – you must have the necessary label printer installed.

2. Give the voter a postpaid envelope for your county. The ballot will be mailed to you from the voter and you will then forward the ballot to the county of residence.

*Best Practice:* Mark the envelope in a manner that identifies it as a ballot for the specific county.

### **Alternative to Printing a Ballot in VoteWA**

If you are unable access the voter’s current ballot in VoteWA or the Public Voter Portal:

- Contact the county of residence to send you the correct ballot. Print and issue the ballot packet for the voter.
- Issue a provisional ballot using the county of residence sample ballot, if available. This should be the very last resort as the voter may not have the correct offices/issues on the ballot.

## Paper Registration Forms – Forwarding, Processing, and Retention

There are additional steps to take if an out-of-county voter uses a paper form to register in person at your office:

- **Registration forms accepted 19 or more days before an election** - Forms, marked with their received date, are sent to the county of residence within 2 business days for processing, ballot issuance and retention.
- **Registration forms accepted 18 days or less before an election** – Forms must be scanned and the signature attached to the voter’s registration record in VoteWA. Retain these forms separate from your in-county forms through certification of the election. Within 7 days following certification, forward the forms to the county of residence for retention.

*Best Practice:* Include a notation with the forms indicating the total number being transmitted and what actions have been taken.

Example:

These forms are:

\_\_\_ Ready for processing.

\_\_\_ Ready for archive. Scanning, signature attaching, and data entry in VoteWA complete.

\_\_\_ Total number of forms being transmitted.