



Secretary of State

In Washington, we enjoy a unique tradition of promoting citizen involvement in our political system. Under the populist provisions of our state constitution, every voter has the right to run for office and to have his or her name appear on the ballot without approval from a political party.

Washington residents also enjoy other special rights, such as the right to initiative and referendum, the right to recall elected officials, and the right to a state Voters' Pamphlet containing detailed information on ballot measures and candidates.

The procedures for seeking elective office in Washington are grounded in our heritage of encouraging citizens to participate in our political process. This publication explains the state election law relating to filing for office. Please note, this publication is not a substitute for the statutes and regulations governing this process but rather should be read in conjunction with them.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact your county elections department or the Secretary of State's Elections Division.

We will be happy to assist you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Wyman".

Kim Wyman
Secretary of State

Office of the Secretary of State
Elections Division
520 Union Avenue SE
PO Box 40229
Olympia, Washington 98504-0229

Phone: (800) 448-4881
Fax: (360) 664-4619
Email: elections@sos.wa.gov
Website: vote.wa.gov



Alternate document formats are available upon request.

Checklist - you will need

- Filing Fee - if applicable.
- Voters' Pamphlet photograph, statement, biography

Where to file

The Secretary of State accepts candidate filings for federal and statewide offices and for any legislative, court of appeals, and superior court offices serving more than one county.

Your county elections department accepts filings for all other offices. Online filing is not available at all county elections departments. Contact your county elections department for directions and hours of operation (page 11).

There are three ways you may file:

1. Online

For the best possible service, file online at vote.wa.gov. Online filing begins May 14 at 9am and ends May 18 at 4pm. You will need an email address and a credit card.

2. By mail

If you file with the Secretary of State, you may mail your declaration and filing fee to:

Candidate Filing
Office of the Secretary of State
P.O. Box 40229
Olympia, WA 98504-0229

3. In person

The Office of the Secretary of State is open Monday through Friday from 8am until 5pm.

Washington Secretary of State's Office
110 Legislation Building
Olympia, Washington 98504

Important dates

- April 29 Candidates may file by mail
- May 13 Online and in-person candidate filing begins
- May 17 All candidate filing ends
- May 20 Last day to withdraw from ballot
- May 24 Last day to submit Voters' Pamphlet content

Approval

Please provide an email address when you file. This is how we will communicate with you.

Once you have been approved as a candidate for office, an email will confirm your candidacy.

After your filing is approved and your filing fee has been paid, your name will appear on any official list as a candidate for office.

The final ballot order of candidates in your race will be determined by lot draw after candidate filing ends.

Qualifications

You must be a registered voter and possess the qualifications specified by law.

If a candidate must be selected by voters from a geographic subdivision of a jurisdiction in the primary, the candidate must be registered to vote within that subdivision.
RCW 29A.24.075

Contact the jurisdiction of the office to learn if there are additional qualifications.



Online filing is fast and easy!

The online filing tool will give you step-by-step instructions, email a confirmation of your filing, alert you when other candidates file in your race, and provide a link to submit your Voters' Pamphlet content.

File online at vote.wa.gov.

All candidates must submit a Declaration of Candidacy during the regular filing period. This can be done online or at a kiosk available in the Secretary of State's office.

If you need to file by mail, visit our website to print a paper form to fill out and mail in. Mailed declarations cannot be received by our office before April 29.

Personal information

Enter your name and address exactly as it appears on your voter registration.

Campaign information

If you do not provide a campaign mailing address, your voter registration address will be published online in the list of candidates who have filed. It is strongly recommended that you also provide a campaign mailing address, telephone number, website, and email address.

Government offices may not be used for campaign contact information.

Office information

Choose the jurisdiction, office name and position or district number for which you want to be a candidate.

You are responsible for meeting all qualifications and filing for the correct office. The list of offices open for election is available online.

Ballot name

Enter your name exactly as you want it to appear on the ballot. Nicknames are acceptable.

Titles denoting occupations, including military rank, positions on issues, political affiliation, symbols, or anything intentionally designed to mislead voters are not acceptable.



Washington's Top 2 Primary

Washington State's Top 2 Primary is a process of winnowing a field of candidates. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast in a primary race will advance to the General Election ballot. Party preference plays no role in determining how candidates are elected to public office.

Party preference

If you are filing for a partisan office, you may state the party name you prefer using 16 characters or less.

The first letter of each word of the party preference will be capitalized (example: Progress For All). Acronyms or initialisms will be printed in all caps with or without periods. No changes to party preference will be accepted after the deadline for withdrawal of candidacy.

Your party preference will appear on the ballot and in the Voters' Pamphlet. If left blank, "States No Party Preference" will be printed.

Party preference plays no role in determining how candidates are elected to public office.

Party preference is entirely your decision and does not imply you have been nominated, endorsed, or approved by the party.

Judicial and most local offices are nonpartisan. Do not list your party preference if you are running for a nonpartisan office.

Filing fee

Your declaration will not be approved until the required filing fee is paid.

Filing fee petitions, submitted in lieu of money by candidates with insufficient funds or assets, must be submitted at the time of filing a declaration of candidacy. No signatures may be submitted later.

All filing fees are non-refundable.

Oath

You will need to read and approve the oath on your online filing to complete the filing.

You must submit your filing fee when you file for office.

Cost of filing

The filing fee is based upon the salary of the office.

Offices without a fixed annual salary have no filing fee.

For any office with a fixed annual salary of \$1,000 or less, candidates pay a filing fee of \$10.

For all offices with salaries exceeding \$1,000, candidates pay a fee equal to one percent of the office's fixed annual salary.

Specific filing fees are on the list of offices open for election at vote.wa.gov. Filing fees for offices filed with your County Auditor are available from your county elections department (page 11).

Accepted forms of payment

Online filing requires a credit card.

Candidates who file in person or by mail with the Office of the Secretary of State may pay via:

- Check
- Cash
- Money order
- Valid filing fee petition

If you file with your county elections department, contact their office to determine payment methods.

Filing fees are nonrefundable, even when you withdraw or file for the wrong office.

Filing fee petitions

Candidates without sufficient assets or income may submit a filing fee petition to pay the filing fee.

Candidates submitting petition signatures may not file electronically.

Filing fees may not be paid by combining petition signatures and currency.

Only signatures of registered voters in the same jurisdiction as the office are valid. Each petition sheet (next page) must:

- Be printed on uniform paper size and color
- Include a place for each voter's registration name, address, city, and county
- Provide 20 numbered lines or less
- Display the required warning and statement found in RCW 29A.24.101 and 29A.72.140.

A reproducible filing fee petition form is available online at vote.wa.gov/candidates as well as in this book on the next page.

Petitions must include a total number of valid signatures equal to the dollar amount of the filing fee.

Without the required number of signatures, the petition is insufficient and your Declaration of Candidacy is invalid.

No additional signatures are accepted after initial submission at time of filing.

Petition sheets are not returned to the candidate.

