



# Guide to Registering Voters

# Introduction



In the following pages you will find many ways to become involved and learn about the election process. People involved with elections are passionate about what they are doing, and with the help of organizations and citizens we will be able to engage new voters and assist those who have questions about the election process.

The Secretary of State's Guide to Voter Registration Drives is designed to help political parties, voter registration drive coordinators, and volunteers understand their responsibilities and requirements when helping people register to vote.

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

Lori Augino  
Director of Elections

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Augino".

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4.4 m

Registered voters in Washington

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39

Counties in Washington

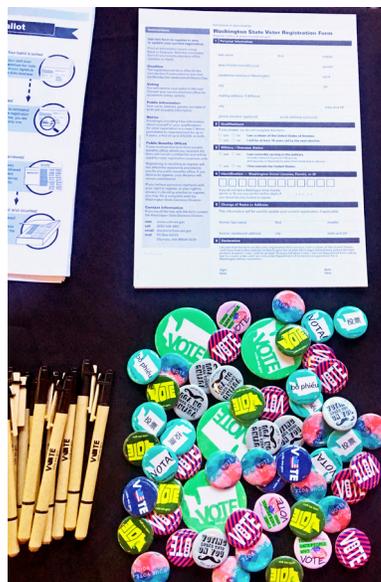
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82%

Percentage of voting eligible population (VEP) registered

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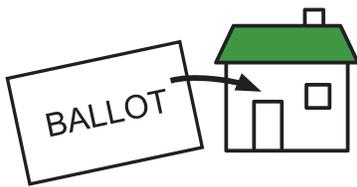
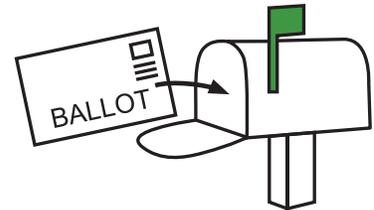
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# The Basics

## Vote By Mail

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

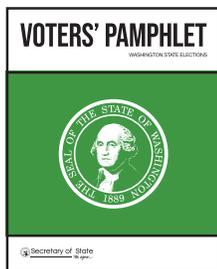


## Ballots

Ballots are mailed 18 days prior to an election.

## Registration

Registration deadlines are changing for the 2019 August Primary. See page 8 for details.

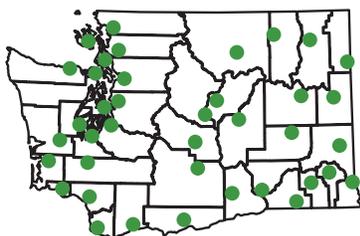


## Voter's Pamphlet

Voter's 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 division.

# Voter Eligibility

Voters must meet all of the following requirements in order to register to vote:

- 1 U.S. Citizen**  
Having a green card or permanent residency status is not citizenship.
- 2 Legal resident of Washington State**  
A person must establish a residential address in Washington at least 30 days before Election Day.
- 3 At least 18 years old by Election Day**  
If a person is currently 17 but will be 18 years old by the date of the next election, they may register to vote. Starting in July 2019, 16- and 17-year-olds may sign up to become registered once they turn 18.
- 4 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.
- 5 Not under the Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction**  
A person's right to vote is restored once they are no longer in prison or community custody (supervision, parole) with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). Once the right to vote is restored, a person must re-register to vote.

# Laws & Rules



## Volunteers

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Anyone may register voters. Volunteers who are not eligible to vote themselves may still register others to vote.



## Compensation for Volunteers

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



## Rewards, Prizes, or Gifts

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



## Partisan Materials

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

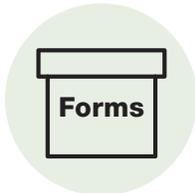


## Completed Registration Forms

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Make sure paper registration forms are physically returned to an elections office at least 8 days prior to Election Day, and no later than 5 days after you receive them. Form submitted within the 8-day deadline will take effect for the next election. An organization may make discrete marks on the voter registration forms to keep track of volunteers and for quality assurance purposes.

# Best Practices



## Storing Completed Forms

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Have a safe place set aside for completed forms. This could be a box, envelope, or other container to prevent forms from being taken or damaged.



## Forms from Multiple Counties

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



## Collaboration

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



## Name Changes

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



## Tracking

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If your organization wants to track the number of registrations and updates submitted through VoteWA, the State Elections Division can provide a unique URL. (See page 11)

# 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. Starting July 2019, mail and online registrations must be received no later than 8 days before Election Day. Voters may also register in person at their county elections department no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

**1**

The residential address must be in Washington. The residential address determines which races and measures will be on a voter's ballot. The residential address may either be a traditional or non-traditional address. 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. PO 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 questions regarding qualifications.

**3**

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

**4**

To complete this form, a person will need a Washington driver's license, state ID number, or last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Applicants without one of these standard IDs may leave this section blank but will be asked for alternative ID by their county elections department 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 person signs the declaration and that the signature is clear.

Voter Registration Forms are available in 20 different languages.

English

Chinese / 中文

Spanish / Español

Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt

Amharic / አማርኛ

Arabic / العربية

Bengali / বাংলা

Burmese / မြန်မာစာ

Farsi / فارسی

Hindi / हिन्दी

Khmer / ភាសាខ្មែរ

Japanese / 日本人

Korean / 한국어

Laotian / ພາສາລາວ

Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Russian / Русский

Somali / Soomaali

Tagalog

Tigrinya / ትግርኛ

Ukrainian / Український

Forms available at [vote.wa.gov](http://vote.wa.gov)

## Washington State Voter Registration Form

Register online at [www.votewa.gov](http://www.votewa.gov).

### 1 Personal Information

last \_\_\_\_\_ first \_\_\_\_\_ middle \_\_\_\_\_ suffix \_\_\_\_\_

date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_ gender \_\_\_\_\_

residential address in Washington \_\_\_\_\_ 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 eighteen years old, or at least sixteen years old and will vote only after 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.

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### 5 Change of Name or Address

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

former last name \_\_\_\_\_ first \_\_\_\_\_ middle \_\_\_\_\_

former residential address \_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state and ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

### 6 Declaration

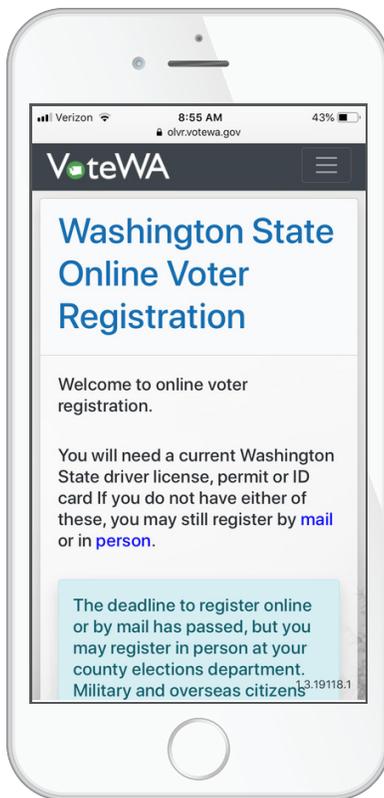
I declare that the facts on this voter registration form are true. I am a citizen of the United States, I will have lived at this address in Washington for at least thirty days immediately before the next election at which I vote, I will be at least eighteen years old when I vote, I am not disqualified from voting due to a court order, and I am not under Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction.

sign here [

date here ]

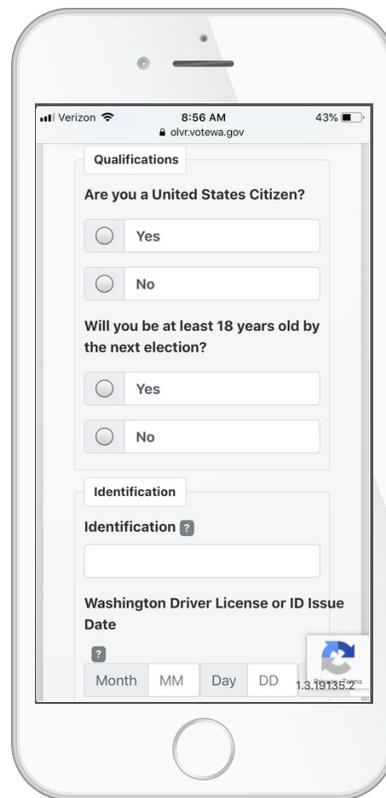
# VoteWA

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



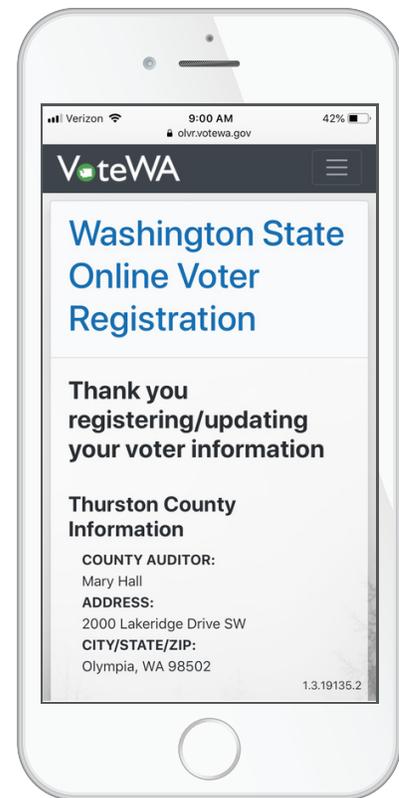
## 01

To register, go to [OLVR] at [votewa.gov](http://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" on the home screen.



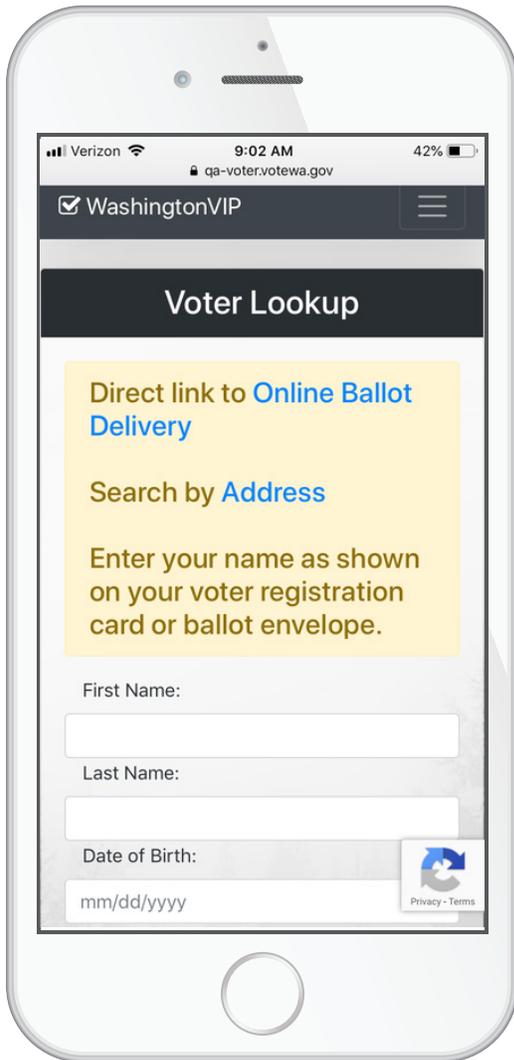
## 02

Users will then be directed to enter information regarding personal identification, language preference, military service, and their address within Washington. Users will then be asked to affirm the accuracy of the information entered, and to authorize the use of their signature on their driver's license for voter registration purposes.



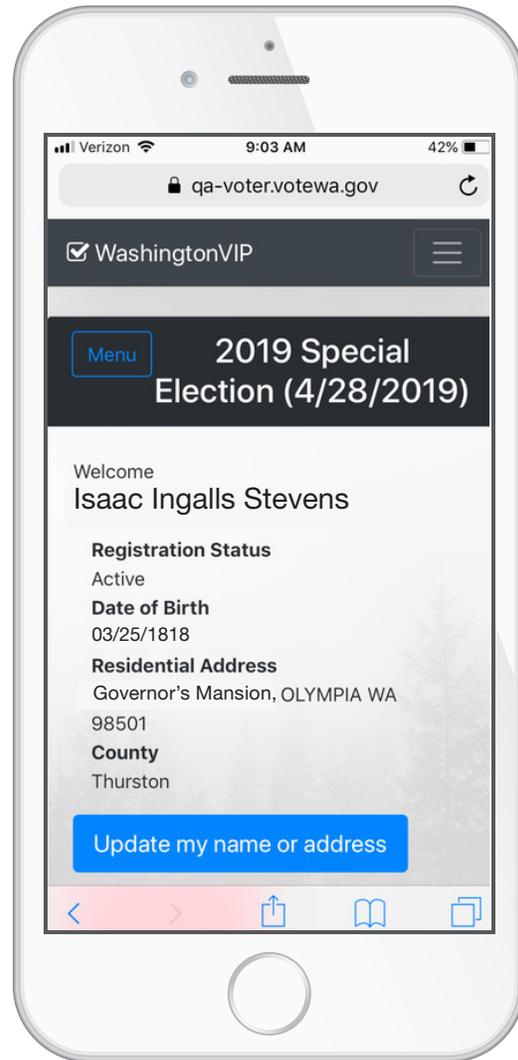
## 03

Upon submitting the registration, VoteWA users will be presented with a confirmation of its receipt, as well as information about their county of registration.



## 01

Voters who are already registered may log in to VoteWA 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 records.



## 02

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

# Registration FAQs

For a complete list of FAQs, please visit our website at [vote.wa.gov](http://vote.wa.gov). We have general and election-specific FAQs, which are regularly updated. If you still have any questions that haven't been answered, please don't hesitate to contact us.

## **How can I verify a voter's registration status?**

Roughly 60% of the registration applications submitted are from people who are already registered, but who either forget that they are already registered or need to update their address. The Office of the Secretary of State offers an online portal called VoteWA that allows voters to confirm whether they are already registered. VoteWA also allows voters to update an address if they moved within the same county, eliminating the need to submit a new registration application.

## **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 fails to notify the County Auditor;
- Become active again when the voter updates his or her registration in July 2015;
- Become inactive when the voter moves again in March 2016; and
- Be cancelled in 2019 if the registration remains inactive through two federal general elections.

## **What is an "inactive" registration?**

If an election-related piece of 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 his or her 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 cancelled?**

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

## **Is notice provided to a voter when the status of their registration changes?**

Yes. Both state and federal law require that a notice be sent to the voter any time a change in the status of a registration occurs.

## **Can a registration be cancelled if the voter does not vote?**

If the registration remains on inactive status through two consecutive federal general elections, the registration is cancelled. 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 may only have their registration cancelled for one or more of the following reasons:

- The voter requests that his or her registration be cancelled;
- The registration file duplicates another, more current registration file for the same voter;
- The registration has been on “inactive” status through two federal 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?**

If a voter wants to know why the status of a registration changed, or is concerned that a registration was changed in error, a voter can contact the county elections department in the county where the voter is registered to get specific information on a registration file.

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

RCW 29A.08, WAC 434-324, and 42 U.S.C. 1973gg.

# Elections Office Contacts

## Adams County

210 W Broadway Ave, Ste 200  
Ritzville, WA 99169-1897  
Phone: (509) 659-3249  
elections@co.adams.wa.us

## Asotin County

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

## Benton County

PO Box 470  
Prosser, WA 99350-0470  
Phone: (509) 736-3085  
elections@co.benton.wa.us

## Chelan County

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

## Clallam County

223 E 4th St, Ste 1  
Port Angeles, WA 98362  
Phone: (360) 417-2221  
elections@co.clallam.wa.us

## Clark County

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

## Columbia County

341 E Main St, Ste 3  
Dayton, WA 99328-1361  
Phone (509) 382-4541  
anne\_higgins@co.columbia.wa.us

## Cowlitz County

207 4th Ave N, Rm 107  
Kelso, WA 98626-4124  
Phone: (360) 577-3005  
elections@co.cowlitz.wa.us

## Douglas County

PO Box 456  
Waterville, WA 98858  
Phone: (509) 888-6402  
elections@co.douglas.wa.us

## Ferry County

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

## Franklin County

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

## Garfield County

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

## Grant County

PO Box 37  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
Phone: (509) 754-2011 ext 2793  
elections@grantcountywa.gov

## Grays Harbor County

100 W Broadway, Ste 2  
Montesano, WA 98563  
Phone: (360) 964-1556  
elections@co.grays-harbor.wa.us

## Island County

PO Box 1410  
Coupeville, WA 98239  
Phone: (360) 679-7366  
elections@co.island.wa.us

## Jefferson County

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

## King County

919 SW Grady Way  
Renton, WA 98057-2906  
Phone: (206) 296-8683  
elections@kingcounty.gov

## Kitsap County

614 Division St, MS 31  
Port Orchard, WA 98366  
Phone: (360) 337-7128  
auditor@co.kitsap.wa.us

## Kittitas County

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

## Klickitat County

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

## Lewis County

PO Box 29  
Chehalis, WA 98532-0029  
Phone: (360) 740-1164  
elections@lewiscountywa.gov

## Lincoln County

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

## Mason County

PO Box 400  
Shelton, WA 98584  
Phone: (360) 427-9670 ext 469  
elections@co.mason.wa.us

## Okanogan County

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

## Pacific County

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

## Pend Oreille County

PO Box 5015  
Newport, WA 99156  
Phone: (509) 447-6472  
elections@pendoreille.org

## Pierce County

2501 S 35th St, Ste C  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
Phone: (253) 798-VOTE (8683)  
pcelections@piercecounywa.gov

## San Juan County

PO Box 638  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250  
Phone: (360) 378-3357  
elections@sanjuanco.com

## Skagit County

PO Box 1306  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
Phone: (360) 416-1702  
sselections@co.skagit.wa.us

## Skamania County

Elections Dept, PO Box 790  
Stevenson, WA 98648  
Phone: (509) 427-3730  
elections@co.skamania.wa.us

## Snohomish County

3000 Rockefeller Ave, MS 505  
Everett, WA 98201-4046  
Phone: (425) 388-3444  
elections@snoco.org

## Spokane County

1033 W Gardner Ave  
Spokane, WA 99260  
Phone: (509) 477-2320  
elections@spokanecounty.org

## Stevens County

215 S Oak St, Rm 106  
Colville, WA 99114  
Phone: (509) 684-7514  
elections@stevenscountywa.gov

## Thurston County

2000 Lakeridge Dr SW  
Olympia, WA 98502-6090  
Phone: (360) 786-5408  
elections@co.thurston.wa.us

## Wahkiakum County

PO Box 543  
Cathlamet, WA 98612  
Phone: (360) 795-3219  
bergsengn@co.wahkiakum.wa.us

## Walla Walla County

PO Box 2176  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
Phone: (509) 524-2530  
elections@co.walla-walla.wa.us

## Whatcom County

311 Grand Ave, Ste 103  
Bellingham, WA 98227  
Phone: (360) 778-5102  
elections@co.whatcom.wa.us

## Whitman County

PO Box 191  
Colfax, WA 99111  
Phone: (509) 397-5284  
elections@co.whitman.wa.us

## Yakima County

PO Box 12570  
Yakima, WA 98909-2570  
Phone: (509) 574-1340  
iVote@co.yakima.wa.us

## SOS Elections Division

520 Union Ave SE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
Phone: (360) 902-4180  
elections@sos.wa.gov