Guide to Registering Voters

Introduction

VOTING IS THE EXPRESSION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO OURSELVES, ONE ANOTHER, THIS COUNTRY AND THIS WORLD. - SHARON SALZBERG

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

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Registered voters in Washington State

39

Counties in Washington State

82%

Percentage of voting age population registered

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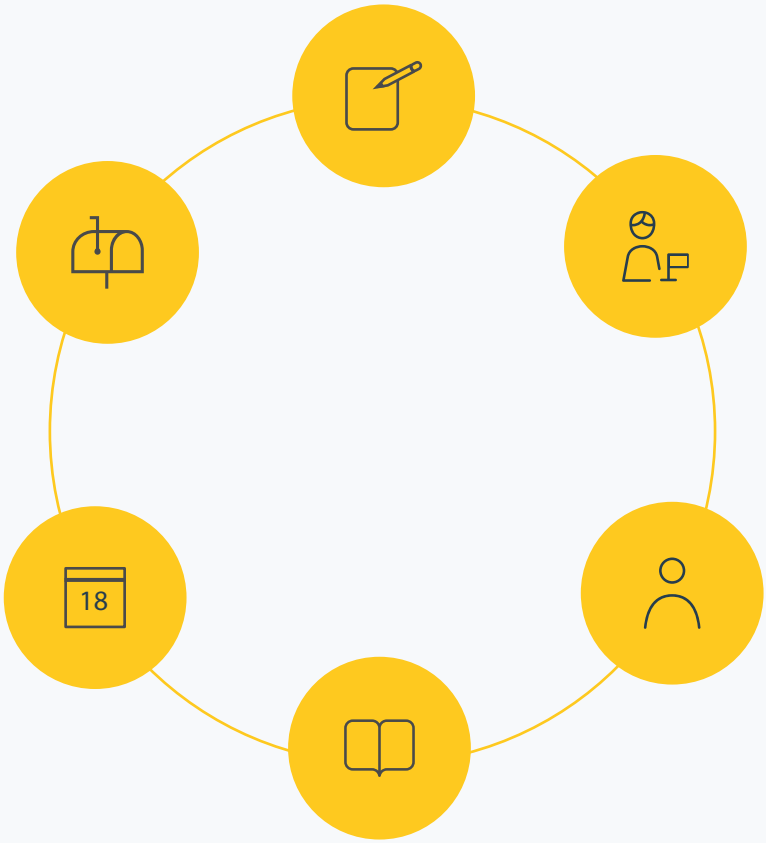
The Basics



Vote By Mail

Washington State votes by mail.

Ballots

Ballots are mailed 18 days prior to an election.

Registration

Voters must register at least 29 days before election day to receive a ballot.

Voters' Pamphlet

Voters' Pamphlets are sent to every household in Washington state before your ballot.

Party Affiliation

Voters in Washington state 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**

   Permanent residency or having a green card is not citizenship.

2. **Legal resident of Washington State**

   A person must establish a residential address 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 Election Day, they can register to vote.

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 due to mental incapacity is ineligible to vote.

5. **Not under the Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction**

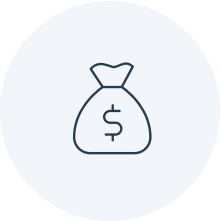
   A felon's right to vote is restored as long as they are no longer in prison or on community custody (supervision, parole) with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). Once their right to vote is restored, a citizen must re-register to vote.

> "JUST BECAUSE YOU DO NOT TAKE AN INTEREST IN POLITICS, DOESN'T MEAN POLITICS WON'T TAKE AN INTEREST IN YOU." — PERICLES

Laws & Rules

Volunteers

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



Compensation for Volunteers

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

Rewards, Prizes, orGifts

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

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

Completed Registration Forms

Return completed registration forms no later than five days after you receive them, or at least 29 days before election day (whichever is first). New registrations and updates submitted after the deadline will take effect for the next election and will prevent voters from participating in the current 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

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

Forms from Multiple Counties

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

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

The voter must complete a new registration if the driver's license or state ID has the new name. (See pages 12-15)

Tracking

If your organization wants to track the number of registrations and updates submitted through MyVote, the State Elections Division can provide a unique URL. (See page 14)

Paper Registration

When using a paper voter registration form, double-check that all the required fields have been completed. Missing information can cause registrations to be delayed or rejected.

1. The residential address must be in Washington State. The residential address determines which candidates and measures will be on a voter's ballot. PO boxes may not be used as a residential address. Include a mailing address if it is different from the residential address. The mailing address is where the ballot will be sent. The mailing address can be anywhere in the world.
2. Verify the person has answered both questions.
3. Complete this section if they are a military or overseas voter.
4. To complete the form, a person will need a Washington State driver licence, state ID number or the last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Applicants without one of these standard IDs may leave this blank but will be asked for alternative ID by their county elections department before the registration is approved.
5. If a voter was previously registered under a different name or address, please complete this section.
6. Make sure the voter signs and that the signature is clear.

> BY VOTING, WE ADD OUR VOICE TO THE CHORUS THAT FORMS OPINIONS AND THE BASIS FOR ACTIONS. - JENS STOLTENBERG

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN 18 LANGUAGES

English
Chinese / 中文
Spanish / Español
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt
Amharic / አማርኛ
Arabic / العربية
Bengali / বাংলা
Burmese / မွန်မာစာ
Cambodian / ภาษาขุมแร
Hindi / हिन्दी
Japanese / 日本人
Korean / 한국어
Laotian / ພາສາລາວ
Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Russian / Русский
Somali / Soomaali
Tagalog
Ukrainian / Український

Forms available at vote.wa.gov

Washington State Voter Registration Form

Register online at www.myvote.wa.gov

1 Personal information

last name | first | middle

date of birth (mm / dd / yyyy) ○ male ○ female

residential address (in Washington) | apt #

city | ZIP

mailing address (if different than residential address)

city | state / ZIP

phone number (optional) | email address (optional)

2 Qualifications

If you mark no to either of these questions, do not complete this form

○ yes ○ no I am a citizen of the United States of America.

○ yes ○ no I will be at least 18 years old by the next election.

3 Military / overseas status

○ I am in the Armed Forces (includes National Guard and Reserves; and military spouses or dependents away from home because of service).

○ I live outside the U.S.

4 Identification — Washington driver license / ID number

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

If you do not have a Washington driver license or ID, provide the last four digits of your Social Security number x x x - x x - ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5 Former registration

If you are already registered and are changing your name or address, fill out this section (this information will be used to update your registration)

former last name | first | middle

former residential address | city | state / ZIP

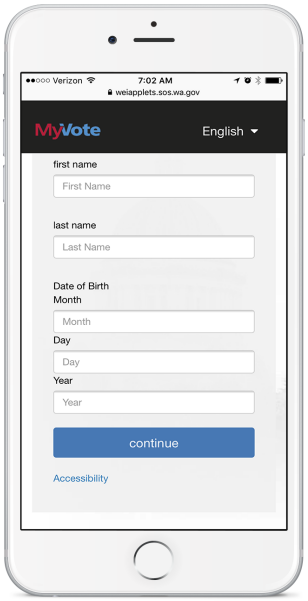
6 Declaration

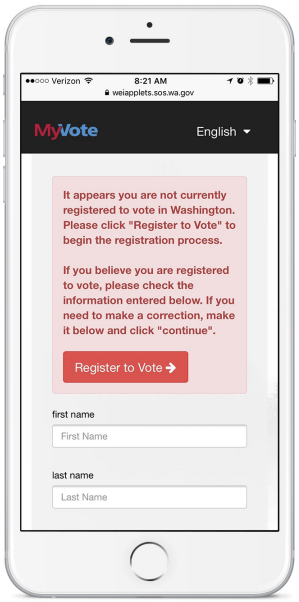
I declare that the facts on this voter registration form are true. I am a citizen of the United States, I will have lived at this address in Washington for at least thirty days immediately before the next election at which I vote, I will be at least 18 years old when I vote, I am not disqualified from voting due to a court order, and I am not under Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction.

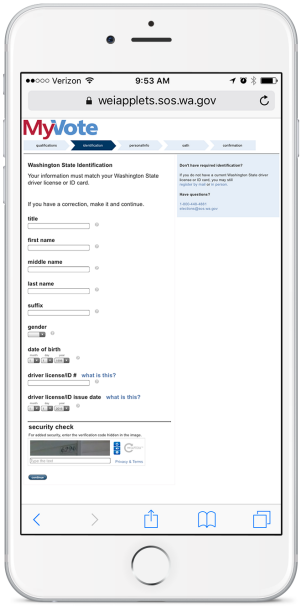
sign here [ ] date here [ ]

MyVote

MyVote is an easy-to-use online voter portal where you can register to vote, update your address, get up-to-date voting information, including elected officials, voters' guide, ballot drop box locations, voting center locations, online ballot and ballot status. Using MyVote to submit a new registration or voter information update requires a valid Washington State driver license or state ID.







01

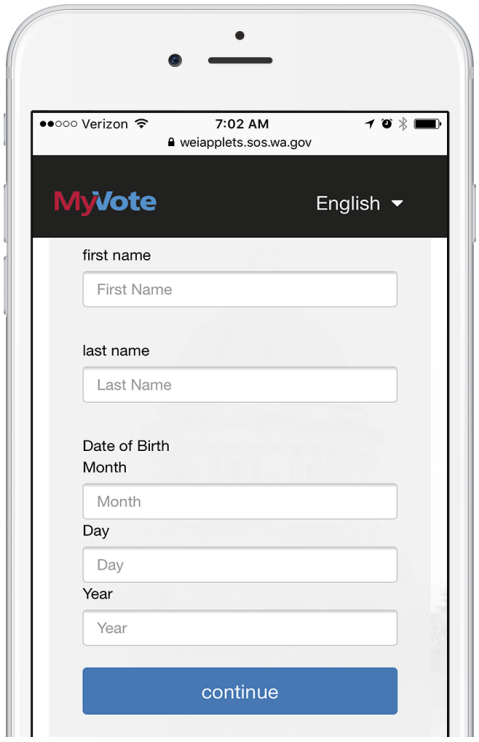
Go to myvote.wa.gov and log in. New users will be given the option to "Register to Vote" by leaving the fields blank and clicking on "Continue" at the bottom.

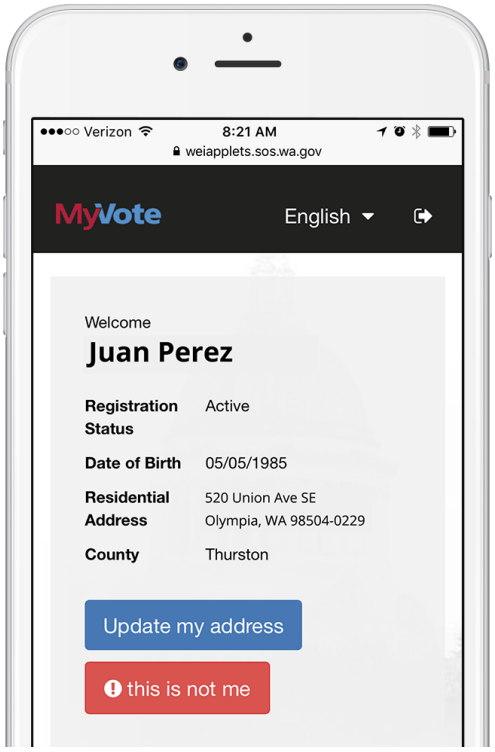
02

Complete the Washington State Identification page, and make sure the name, date of birth and driver license or state ID number match the information exactly as it appears.

03

If the security check words are not legible, you can press the circular arrow button on the right to get a new word, or click on the audio symbol to get an audio version.





01

Log in to myvote.wa.gov with first and last name, and date of birth exactly as it appears in the voter registration records. If MyVote is unable to find the person in the system, ask if they registered using a name variation, such as Bill or Will.

02

Make sure their residential and mailing addresses are current and their registration status is active. If the residential and mailing addresses are not current, click on “Update my address”. If registration status says inactive, the person should update their address (even if their address hasn’t changed), to change their voter registration status to active.

Registration FAQs

For a complete list of FAQs, please visit our website at 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 an address. The Secretary of State's Office has a new online portal called MyVote that allows voters to confirm whether they are already registered. MyVote 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 2004;
- Become inactive when the voter moves in February 2005 and fails to notify the County Auditor;
- Become active again when the voter updates his or her registration in July 2005;
- Become inactive when the voter moves again in March 2006; and
- Be cancelled in 2009 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 his or her 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?

No. If the voter remains at the same address and chooses not to vote, the registration cannot be cancelled. If the voter moves, however, and election-related mail is returned to the county elections office as undeliverable, the registration will be placed on inactive status. An inactive registration can be cancelled if the voter does not vote in two federal general elections.

Can a registration be "removed" or "purged" for no reason?

No. The voter can only be cancelled for 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 general elections;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to mental incompetence;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to a felony conviction; or the voter dies

What if a voter wants to know why the status of a particular registration 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.

Meet Our Team

The Office of Secretary of State's Elections team is always looking for opportunities to collaborate with organizations and institutions around the state to educate voters about the election process. Contact us for outreach materials, workshops, and educational opportunities.

MARLENE WHITE

Voter Education & Outreach

Language Communities, Military and Overseas Voters, Voters with Disabilities
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JACKIE WHEELER

Voter Education & Outreach

Mock Elections, College Civics, K-12 Civics Education, Voters' Pamphlet
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(360) 902-4180

> HELP US MAXIMIZE THE INFORMED PARTICIPATION OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS IN ACCESSIBLE, FAIR, AND ACCURATE ELECTIONS ACROSS WASHINGTON STATE

County Elections Departments

Adams County
210 W Broadway Ave, Ste 200
Ritzville, WA 99169-1897
Phone: (509) 659-3249
TDD/TTY: (509) 659-1122

Asotin County
PO Box 129
Asotin, WA 99402-0129
Phone: (509) 243-2084
TDD/TTY: (800) 855-1155

Benton County
PO Box 470
Prosser, WA 99350-0470
Phone: (509) 736-3085
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Chelan County
PO Box 4760
Wenatchee, WA 98807-4760
Phone: (509) 667-6808
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Clallam County
223 E 4th St, Ste 1
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Phone: (360) 417-2221
Toll-free: (866) 433-8683
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Clark County
PO Box 8815
Vancouver, WA 98666-8815
Phone: (360) 397-2345
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Columbia County
341 E Main St, Ste 3
Dayton, WA 99328-1361
Phone: (509) 382-4541
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Cowlitz County
207 4th Ave N, Rm 107
Kelso, WA 98626-4124
Phone: (360) 577-3005
TDD/TTY: (360) 577-3061

Douglas County
PO Box 456
Waterville, WA 98858
Phone: (509) 745-8527 ext 6407
TDD/TTY: (888) 578-7707

Ferry County
350 E Delaware Ave, #2
Republic, WA 99166
Phone: (509) 775-5225 ext 1139
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Franklin County
PO Box 1451
Pasco, WA 99301
Phone: (509) 545-3538
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Garfield County
PO Box 278
Pomeroy, WA 99347
Phone: (509) 843-1411
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Grant County
PO Box 37
Ephrata, WA 98823
Phone: (509) 754-2011 ext 343
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Grays Harbor County
100 W Broadway, Ste 2
Montesano, WA 98563
Phone: (360) 964-1556
TDD/TTY: (360) 249-6575

Island County
PO Box 1410
Coupeville, WA 98239
Phone: (360) 679-7366
TDD/TTY: (360) 679-7305

Jefferson County
PO Box 563
Port Townsend, WA 98368
Phone: (360) 385-9119
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

King County
919 SW Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057-2906
Phone: (206) 296-8683
TDD/TTY: 711

Kitsap County
619 Division St
Port Orchard, WA 98366
Phone: (360) 337-7128
TDD/TTY: (360) 337-7275

Kittitas County
205 W 5th Ave, Ste 105
Ellensburg, WA 98926
Phone: (509) 962-7503
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Klickitat County
205 S Columbus Ave, Room203
Goldendale, WA 98620
Phone: (509) 773-4001
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Lewis County
PO Box 29
Chehalis, WA 98532-0029
Phone: (360) 740-1278
TDD/TTY: (360) 740-1480

Lincoln County
PO Box 28
Davenport, WA 99122
Phone: (509) 725-4971
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Mason County
PO Box 400
Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: (360) 427-9670 ext 470
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Okanogan County
PO Box 1010
Okanogan, WA 98840
Phone: (509) 422-7240
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Pacific County
PO Box 97
South Bend, WA 98586-0097
Phone: (360) 875-9317
TDD/TTY: (360) 875-9400

Pend Oreille County
PO Box 5015
Newport, WA 99156
Phone: (509) 447-6472
TDD/TTY: (509) 447-3186

Pierce County
2501 S 35th St, Ste C
Tacoma, WA 98409
Phone: (253) 798-7430
TDD/TTY: 711

San Juan County
PO Box 638
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
Phone: (360) 378-3357
TDD/TTY: (360) 378-4151

Skagit County
PO Box 1306
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone: (360) 416-1702
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Skamania County
Elections Dept, PO Box 790
Stevenson, WA 98648
Phone: (509) 427-3730
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Snohomish County
3000 Rockefeller Ave, MS 505
Everett, WA 98201
Phone: (425) 388-3444
TDD/TTY: (425) 388-3700

Spokane County
1033 W Gardner Ave
Spokane, WA 99260
Phone: (509) 477-2320
TDD/TTY: (509) 477-2333

Stevens County
215 S Oak St, Rm 106
Colville, WA 99114
Phone: (509) 684-7514
Toll-free: (866) 307-9060
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Thurston County
2000 Lakeridge Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98502-6090
Phone: (360) 786-5408
TDD/TTY: (360) 754-2933

Wahkiakum County
PO Box 543
Cathlamet, WA 98612
Phone: (360) 795-3219
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Walla Walla County
PO Box 2176
Walla Walla, WA 99362
Phone: (509) 524-2530
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Whatcom County
311 Grand Ave, Ste 103
Bellingham, WA 98227
Phone: (360) 778-5102
TDD/TTY: (360) 738-4555

Whitman County
PO Box 191
Colfax, WA 99111
Phone: (509) 397-5284
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Yakima County
128 N 2nd St, Rm 117
Yakima, WA 98901
Phone: (509) 574-1340
TDD/TTY: (800) 833-6388

Thank You!

Keep in touch