



Washington Secretary of State

CLEARINGHOUSE

ELECTIONS NOTICE

Issue #12-06
August 17, 2012

Voter Registration Transfers

A registered voter may transfer his or her registration to another county by submitting a new voter registration application or by entering an electronic update through MyVote or Motor Voter.

Newly adopted rules in WAC 434-324-036 and 087 also allow the voter to transfer by returning a signed confirmation notice that provides a new address.

All transfer requests must be received no later than 29 days prior to an election in order to be processed for that election. Transfers received after the deadline must be held for processing until after certification of the election.

What are the procedures for transferring a voter into a new county?

In order for a registered voter to transfer his or her registration to another county within Washington, the voter must essentially re-register in the new county. The VRDB identifies potential transfers entered into the system and the new county confirms the transfer. The VRDB then sends an electronic cancellation notice to the former county.

New: Management of transfers has been changed to allow confirmation notices to serve as voter registration applications. If the response to a signed confirmation notice indicates that the voter moved to another Washington county, the former county of registration will keep the voter on *inactive status* and immediately forward the confirmation notice response to the voter's new county. The former county does not cancel the registration.

The County Auditor in the voter's new county of residence must register the inactive voter using information provided on the confirmation notice. The new county confirms the transfer through the VRDB and sends the voter an acknowledgment notice (voter ID card).

Requirements for the date of receipt of registration applications will apply to forwarded confirmation notices. For example, if the former county receives a notice without a

postal cancellation, the county must date stamp the notice then forward it to the new county immediately. Depending upon the date of receipt in the former county, the requirements for processing the transfer in 29A.08.020 still apply.

What is the minimum information needed to complete any county-to-county transfer?

- Name
- New residential address
- Signature on the oath in RCW 29A.08.230
- Either date of birth, county voter ID number, or state voter ID number

These minimum requirements apply to voter registration forms as well as confirmation notices. The new county may request additional information to confirm that the application is a transfer.

Confirmation notices will not contain all the data that the new county's voter registration system may need in order to complete the transfer. Pre-processing will be necessary; a VRDB look-up will provide the state voter ID number, DOB, gender, military status, and identification. Contact information may also be available in the VRDB, but may no longer be current. Please code the method of registration for these transfers as mailed registrations.

What are the new required elements of a Confirmation Notice?

- Must be sent to inactive voters by first-class forwardable mail
- The response form must be preaddressed and postage prepaid
- Includes either the voter's date of birth, county voter ID number, or state voter ID number
- Asks voter to verify his or her current address
- Asks voter to sign the oath in RCW 29A.08.230

Counties using revised confirmation notices will forward returned, signed notices immediately. The new procedures will be phased in statewide as counties revise their notices. County Auditors may use an existing stock of confirmation notices until December 31, 2012.

If a notice is missing one of the required elements, can it still be forwarded?

No. Only confirmation notices that meet the requirements above may serve as registration applications. For example, if the oath is not printed on the confirmation notice, then the notice is not valid for transferring the registration.

What if the voter's response is not signed?

If the response indicates a new address in another Washington county, but the response is not signed, the voter remains on *inactive status* and the County Auditor sends a voter registration application to the voter. The confirmation notice may not be used for transfer and is not forwarded to the new county.

What if the response indicates the voter has moved out of state?

If the response indicates an out of state address and the notice is signed, the county cancels the voter. However, if the response is not signed, the county keeps the voter on inactive status.

In the event of a late transfer, how should the former county process a voted ballot when the voter has been canceled and is now registered in another county?

Voted ballots received from canceled voters are considered provisional ballots for the voter's new county. Send such voted ballots as provisional ballots to the new county in a timely manner. Rules for this procedure are located in WAC 434-324-076.

Valid transfers may be received by counties after ballot mailing information is extracted. When a voter is canceled in the former county and transferred into the new county, the voter may receive two ballots – one from the former county of registration and one from the new. The voter, confused and uncertain as to which ballot should be voted, may vote and return one or both ballots. The new county of registration will canvass the ballot(s). A provisional ballot from the former county may be counted if the new county's ballot is not returned by the voter.

Must a voter provide a signature and date of birth when updating an address within the same county?

No. The only information required is the voter's name and current address. A registered voter who changes his or her residence from one address to another *within* the same county may update in the following ways.

- Request in person, by telephone, email, or in writing
- Submit an application or electronic update

For further information, please contact the Certification and Training Program at ctsupport@sos.wa.gov or (360) 902-4165.