

The Path to Becoming a Certified Elections Administrator



Introduction

As an Elections Administrator serving Washington State, you have the opportunity to take a professional path towards certification through the Office of the Secretary of State.

Two Paths

If this is your **Initial Certification**, there are several things required of you to become certified for the first time. We will show you how to get through all the steps and join the elite group of Certified Election Administrators!

If you're maintaining **Renewal Certification**, it's important to understand only certain types of training apply. All training must be preapproved by the Office of the Secretary of State. A list of approved trainings is available on the Secretary of State Website. All requests for approval of other training opportunities must be approved prior to attending the training.

Requirements

Each county is required to have at least two Certified Election Administrators on staff. In order to be initially certified, staff must attend a two-day orientation class and pass a written exam. Election Administrators must have 40 hours of additional education and two years of service in an elections office during the three-year period immediately prior to the request for certification.

WAC 434-260 requires you to:

- Attend a two-day orientation class
- Pass the Administrator Certification exam
- Receive an additional 40 hours of education
- Have two years of service in elections during the three-year period before you apply
- Have a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Submit a completed application for Initial Certification

Once certified, Elections Administrators must maintain their certification with 40 hours of continuing education every two years.

Policies about the certification of Election Administrators are also made by the Election Administration and Certification Board (EACB).

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Mandatory certification course

The Secretary of State’s office administers a mandatory certification course called Elections 101. The course is offered annually and covers the basic information all Election Administrators should know.

This is a **mandatory** course. It is a separate requirement and does not apply towards your required training hours. Once fully certified, you may receive credit hours for taking E101 if it’s been more than five years since taking the course.

You will receive training on:

- Voter Registration
- Candidate Filing
- Ballot Format
- Security
- Ballot Processing
- Canvassing Boards
- Certification
- Recounts
- VoteWA

After taking the class, you must finish the rest of your certification requirements within five years.



Take an **additional** 40 hours of training



Exam

Pass the Administrator Certification Exam

The exam will cover the applicable laws that govern elections (RCWs & WACs). It's important to learn how to read, research, and cite current election law. While the E101 notebook is a useful resource, election laws change frequently and the notebook is updated annually.

The exam has three sections: Multiple Choice, Fill in the Blank and Essay.

If you're not a fan of taking tests, don't worry. This exam is open book and you will have as much time as you need to research and complete the test. You are also allowed to work with others for the first two sections.

You will be asked to cite the applicable laws that helped you answer the questions, so be sure to read them all.

You must pass this test with 80 percent or better. Study hard!



Learn how
to research
election laws on
the Washington
State Legislature's
website

www.leg.wa.gov

Training

Acquire 40 hours of additional education

This is where all those classes and trainings come in. Attend as many as you can as you prepare for your initial certification. It's also important to track dates, course titles, and descriptions.

All 40 hours must be preapproved by the Secretary of State. At least 30 of the total 40 hours must be election-specific. At least 20 hours must specifically address Washington state elections, and must include hours from attending the annual Washington elections conference.

Training may be obtained from the Secretary of State, Secretary of State sponsored training, the state Elections Conference, and through WSACA. These training hours may also include observing election procedures in other counties (up to four hours) and participating in panels or committees (up to two hours). You may also use an E101 class every three years. Vendor training, such as tabulator training is applicable. However, vendor meetings and demonstrations are not training and do not apply.

You may also use up to 10 hours for professional development courses. The County Auditor determines which courses are best for your position. You may substitute election specific training for these hours.

If you're unsure if a training will apply to your required 40 hours, we recommend contacting our office before taking the class: ctsupport@sos.wa.gov.

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Certification must include hours from the annual Elections Conference.





Two years of service

If you are a temporary or seasonal employee, you will not be able to meet this requirement. However, if you're hired as temporary or seasonal employee and shift to regular employment, two years of service can occur over a three-year period.

You are also required to have a high school diploma or its equivalent.



Learn from your peers and visit other county election offices for up to four training hours.



Submit your Application for Initial Certification

You did it!!

You have:

- Attended E101
- Passed your exam with 80% or better
- Acquired 40 hours of preapproved training
 - At least 30 of the required 40 hours must be election-specific.
 - At least 20 of the 30 election-specific hours must be also be specific to the state of Washington election administration
 - Includes hours from a state elections conference
- Worked in your elections department for at least two of the last three years
- A high school diploma or equivalent

You are ready to register online and submit your application for Initial Certification.

The application is available on the tab for Administrators on the OSOS website. (www.sos.wa.gov) It's very easy to complete! Once submitted, your application is forwarded to your county auditor for approval. Once approved, the application is forwarded to the Certification and Training Program for further processing.

You will receive an official Certified Election Administrator certificate in the mail once your application is approved. If you attend the annual Elections Conference, you may receive your certificate at the Secretary of State's recognition ceremony.



If you wish to be recognized at the Elections Conference, submit your **application** early and allow time for processing.





Renewal of Certification

After attaining initial certification, you are responsible for maintaining your certification every two years. For reference, see WAC 434-260-300.

You will not be required to attend E101 or take the exam again, however you still need to attend sponsored trainings and apply for certification.

You are always welcome to attend E101 as a refresher! However, the hours will only count when it's been more than three years since you last took the class.

Service



Continuous service during the two years for which renewal is required

Training



Minimum 40 hours

At least 30 hours election-specific, preapproved content

At least 20 hours are specific to Washington state elections

Hours include training from annual elections conference

Apply



December 31 deadline

Training completed in the two years for which renewal is required



Applicable Training

Preapproved | Election-specific
WAC 434-260-220 | WAC 434-260-300

Not all trainings and sponsors qualify for state certification. Remember to track your training hours, including dates, course titles and descriptions. On our website, we maintain a current list of approved trainings.

Approved Training

- Any training on the list of preapproved trainings.
- Election-specific training **co-sponsored** with the Secretary of State's Office (e.g., USPS or State Patrol).
- E101 hours count toward **renewal** certification (only 5 years after the initial course).
- Visitations to other county election departments (up to 4 hours).
- Serving on elections-related committees with OSOS or WSACA (2 hours for renewal certification **only**).

Not Approved Training

- Training which is not preapproved by the Office of the Secretary of State.
- On-the-job training through your county elections department.
- Product information, sales meetings and vendor demonstrations **do not** qualify as continuing education.
- E101 is **mandatory** for initial certification. It does **not** count towards the required 40 training hours.



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