



Washington Secretary of State

CLEARINGHOUSE

ELECTIONS NOTICE

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Voter Registration and Redistricting Costs

At least every ten years, certain districts are required to adjust internal district boundaries to comply with US Census numbers. However, the changing of internal districts lines is not limited to this ten-year event. For example, county commissioner districts may be changed as often as every four years. (RCW 36.32.020)

The County Auditor has the responsibility to maintain voter registration records, which includes adjusting precinct lines, creating new maps, updating voter registration records, and notifying voters of their new districts and precincts. These procedures take place every year in some form and are accounted for as voter registration costs. Even though the cost of these procedures may increase due to census redistricting, the additional expenses are still attributable to voter registration maintenance.

According to the State Auditor's Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS) manual, voter registration costs are coded as BARS 511.80. For example, time spent updating voters and precincts in the voter registration system are accounted for in BARS 511.80 as Object 10 – Wages and Salaries. Costs for county GIS department services to redraw maps and define precinct boundaries and populations are accounted for in BARS Object 90 – Interfund Charges.

At the end of each year, voter registration costs are totaled and distributed between cities/towns and the county based on population. (RCW 29A.08.150) Other districts are not billed for voter registration costs.

All expenses directly related to voter registration such as salaries and wages, benefits, supplies, communication, postage, transportation, advertising, printing and binding, repairs/maintenance, rentals, training, equipment, interfund charges, and overhead, are included in the total cost for the year.

While costs specifically related to redistricting could be tracked separately, the Secretary of State's Office recommends these expenses not be separated from other voter registration costs for two reasons:

1. The County Auditor may not be able to code redistricting costs separately within BARS 511.80.
2. Voter registration costs generated by the redistricting process are directly attributable to voter registration services provided.

For more information, please contact the Certification and Training Program at (360) 902-4180.