

Ballot Requirements

Presidential Primary 2024 Advisory #02

September 6, 2023

Ballots and materials for the Presidential Primary differ from all other elections we conduct.

For ballot requirements, refer to [RCW 29A.56.040](#), [WAC 434-219](#) and the [2024 Presidential Primary Ballot Checklist](#).

Removing instructions not related to this election is important. Presidential Primary ballots are exempt from Top 2 Primary rules adopted in WAC 434-230-015. For example, notices from the Top 2 Primary must be eliminated.

Issue a Consolidated Ballot

County Auditors must issue a “consolidated” ballot to every active registered voter. In addition to [WAC 434-230-015](#), ballots must meet the following requirements of [WAC 434-219-155](#).

- Specify the election as a “Presidential Primary.” ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(b\)](#))
- Remove language related to partisan offices and the Top 2 Primary.
- Do not use a pick-a-party checkbox. Political party boxes on ballots are not permitted. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(c\)](#))
- Explain in simple language that votes for more than one candidate will void the ballot. ([RCW 29A.56.040\(5\)](#)). This instruction is in addition to the “vote for one” requirement.
- Substitute a Federal Election Commission (FEC) statement for the standard Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) statement. Print the statement (or graphic) on the ballot face. For suggested language, see the [2024 Presidential Primary Ballot Checklist](#).
- Print both major political party ballots on one side of a single sheet of paper. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(a\)](#))
- List the Democratic Party’s candidates first, and the Republican Party’s candidates second. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(e\)](#))
- Follow formatting rules for blue and red shaded text boxes or bars. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(d\)](#))
- List candidates in alphabetical order within each party. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(f\)](#))
- If applicable, provide a response position for an uncommitted party delegate. At the request of the political party, the Secretary of State will include that option on their certified list of candidates. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(g\)](#))
- Provide a response position for a write-in candidate following each list of candidates and any response position for uncommitted. ([WAC 434-219-155\(2\)\(h\)](#))
- Provide replacement ballots without color if your “ballot on demand” system cannot print in color. All other requirements apply.

Ballot Packet Materials

Requirements for the Presidential Primary affect other ballot packet materials.

- Print the return envelope and ballot declaration as designed by OSOS. See [Return Envelope Declaration | Template Advisory #01](#).
- Provide the informational insert as designed by OSOS (to be issued in January 2024). ([WAC 434-219-155\(3\)](#))
- Do not include information related to partisan offices and the Top 2 Primary. ([WAC 434-219-155\(5\)](#))
- If the FEC statement is not printed on the ballot, it must be printed twice elsewhere in the ballot packet materials. For example, it could be printed on the back side of the insert and on a sleeve or envelope. ([RCW 29A.36.161\(1\)\(b\)](#); [PDC Info and Ballot Materials Clearinghouse](#))
- Ensure unique voters receive required materials. See “Alternate Ballot Types | Unique Voters” section below.

Alternate Ballot Types | Unique Voters

All voters wishing to participate in the Presidential Primary must mark and sign the voter’s standard ballot declaration and political party declaration. Voters casting a Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) are the only exception to this rule. ([WAC 434-219-230\(3\)](#))

Provisional, service, overseas, special absentee, and electronically delivered ballot materials must include political party declarations. Party declarations may be printed on return envelopes, or a separate sheet of paper. Instructions must be included explaining how to return the signed declarations, the ballot, and the privacy sheet. ([WAC 434-219-155\(4\)](#))

FWAB. Service and overseas citizens who use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) do not have the opportunity to select and sign a political party declaration. However, the FWAB allows the voter to simply write in and specify a single political party (Box 5C). This instruction expresses the voter’s intent and should be interpreted as an acceptable party declaration for the Presidential Primary. If the voter does not specify either the Democratic or Republican Party anywhere on the FWAB, treat the ballot as if a political box was not marked. ([WAC 434-219-230\(3\)](#))

Provisional. A new provisional ballot envelope is not required. Instead, provide a separate sheet containing both the standard declaration, the political party declarations, and a signature line. Instruct the voter to place the sheet inside a regular provisional ballot envelope, but outside the security envelope. ([WAC 434-219-155\(4\)](#))

When processing, verify the declarations and signature on the separate sheet, instead of the one printed on the outside of the provisional envelope.

Service and Overseas (UOCAVA). A new return envelope for UOCAVA voters is not required. Instead, provide a separate sheet containing both the standard declaration, the political party declarations, and a signature line. Instruct the voter to include the signed sheet in the return envelope, but outside of the security envelope. Use this sheet to verify the voter's signature and declarations. All other required materials for service and overseas ballots must be provided, including a privacy sheet. Please note the declaration sheet must be separate from the privacy sheet. The privacy sheet must not contain declarations or any information that could identify the voter. ([WAC 434-235-030](#))

Special Absentee. If the return envelope for the Presidential Primary is not available, provide the requestor a separate sheet with all required declarations. (See procedures for provisional and UOCAVA ballots.)

Electronically Delivered Ballots Issued Outside of VoteWA. County Auditors not utilizing VoteWA to issue an electronic ballot for the Presidential Primary will need to ensure the ballot packet contains instructions on how to return the ballot. Similar to UOCAVA ballot materials, replace your current declaration sheet with a new one pertaining to the Presidential Primary including the political party declarations. When applying color to electronically delivered ballots, it may be best to differentiate the political parties with a bar above the political party heading instead of a shaded text box containing the party name. Many voters are unable to print in color, and text boxes with shaded backgrounds could become difficult to read. Again, ballots must be in the consolidated format.

Electronically delivered ballots issued from VoteWA will contain the requisite Presidential Primary ballot materials and formatting.

Presidential Primary Ballot Checklist

The [Presidential Primary Ballot Format and Packet Materials Checklist](#) is arranged by section according to the item. Refer to the citations at each section as a starting guide to ensure correct formatting of packet materials.

For questions about administering Washington State's 2024 Presidential Primary Election, please contact the Certification and Training Program at (360) 902-4180 or CTsupport@sos.wa.gov.

An information publication of the Certification and Training Program, Elections Division, Office of the Secretary of State.