



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

4.4 m

Registered voters in
Washington

39

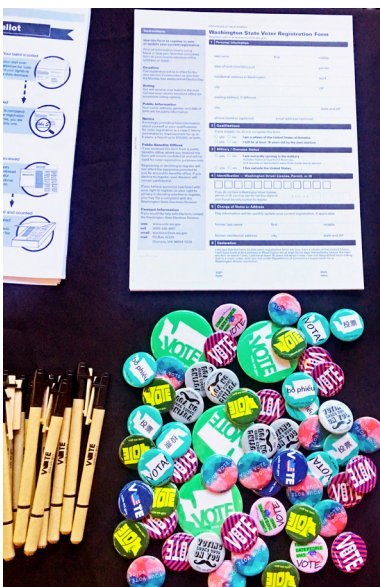
Counties in Washington

82%

Percentage of voting
eligible population (VEP)
registered

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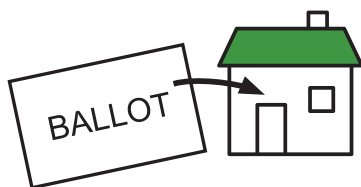
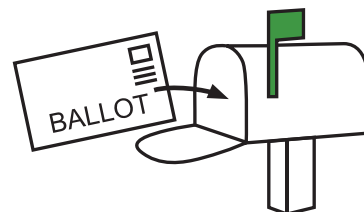
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The Basics

Vote By Mail

Washington voters receive and return their ballots through the US Postal Service.

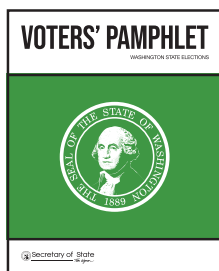


Ballots

Ballots are mailed 18 days prior to an election.

Registration

Registration forms must be received by an elections office no later than 8 days before Election Day. See p. 8 for details.

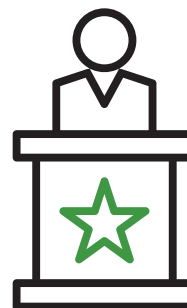


Voter's Pamphlet

Voter's pamphlets are sent to every household in Washington before ballots are issued.

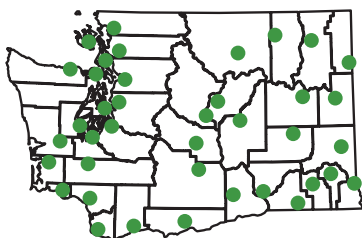
Party Affiliation

Voters in Washington 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**
Having a green card or permanent residency status is not citizenship.
- 2** **Legal resident of Washington State**
A person must establish a residential address in Washington at least 30 days before Election Day.
- 3** **At least 18 years old by Election Day**
To qualify for the Future Voter Program, a US citizen must be at least 16 years old and a Washington resident. Future Voters are automatically registered when they turn 18.
- 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 is ineligible to vote.
- 5** **Not under the Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction**
A person's right to vote is restored once they are no longer in prison or community custody (supervision, parole) with the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). Once the right to vote is restored, a person must re-register to vote.



Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean that 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 or volunteers based on the number of voters they register. However, pay rewards are permitted for time spent registering voters (RCW 29A.84.130)



Rewards, Prizes, or Gifts

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.



Return Completed Forms

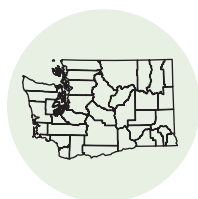
Make sure paper registration forms are physically returned to an elections office at least 8 days prior to Election Day, and no later than 5 days after you receive them. Forms submitted after the 8-day deadline will not take effect until the next election. An organization may make discrete marks on the 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 taken 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

Voters with name changes must complete a new registration if their driver's license or state ID is issued with their new name.



Tracking

If your organization wants to track the number of registrations and updates submitted through VoteWA, the State Elections Division can provide a unique URL.

Paper Registration

When using a paper registration form like the one on the following page, double-check that all the required fields have been completed. Missing information can cause registrations to be delayed or rejected. Register by mail or online no later than 8 days before Election Day. Mailed forms must be physically received, not postmarked, by the deadline. You may always register in person at your county elections department no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

1

The residential address must be in Washington. The residential address determines which races and measures will be on a voter's ballot. The residential address may either be a traditional or non-traditional address. A nontraditional address consists of a narrative description of a voter's residence, and must provide enough detail to assign a precinct and locate the voter to confirm their address. PO boxes may not be used as a residential address. The mailing address is where the ballot will be sent, and can be anywhere in the world.

2

Verify the person has answered both questions regarding qualifications.

3

If the person qualifies as a military or overseas voter, make sure they complete this section.

4

To complete this form, a person will need a Washington driver's license, state ID number, or last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Applicants without one of these standard IDs may leave this section blank but will be asked for alternative ID by their county elections department before the registration can be approved.

5

If a person was previously registered in Washington under a different name or address, they should complete the fifth section of the form.

6

Make sure the person signs the declaration 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
20 different languages.

English
Chinese / 中文
Spanish / Español
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt
Amharic / አማርኛ
Arabic / العربية
Bengali / বাংলা
Burmese / မြန်မာစာ
Haitian Creole/ Créole Haïtien
Farsi / فارسی
French / Français
Hindi / हिन्दी
Khmer / ភាសាខ្មែរ
Japanese / 日本語
Korean / 한국어
Laotian / ພາສາລາວ
Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Portuguese/ Português
Russian / Русский
Somali / Soomaali
Tagalog
Tigrinya / ትግርኛ
Ukrainian / Український

Forms available at
VoteWA.gov

Washington State Voter Registration Form

Register online at www.votewa.gov.

1 Personal Information

last first middle suffix

date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) gender

residential address in Washington apt #

city ZIP

mailing address, if different

city state and ZIP

phone number (optional) email address (optional)

2 Qualifications

If you answer *no*, do not complete this form.

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

☐ yes ☐ no **I am at least eighteen years old, or at least sixteen years old and will vote only after I turn eighteen.**

3 Military / Overseas Status

☐ yes ☐ no **I am currently serving in the military.**
Includes National Guard and Reserves,
and spouses or dependents away from home due to service.

☐ yes ☐ no **I live outside the United States.**

4 Identification — Washington Driver License, Permit, or ID

If you do not have a Washington driver license, permit, or ID, you may use the last four digits of your Social Security number to register.

x x x - x x x -

5 Change of Name or Address

This information will be used to update your current registration, if applicable.

former last name first middle

former residential address city state and ZIP

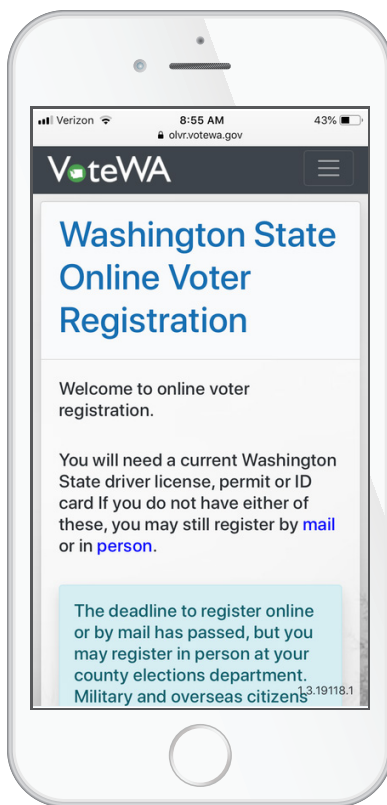
6 Declaration

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 eighteen 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]

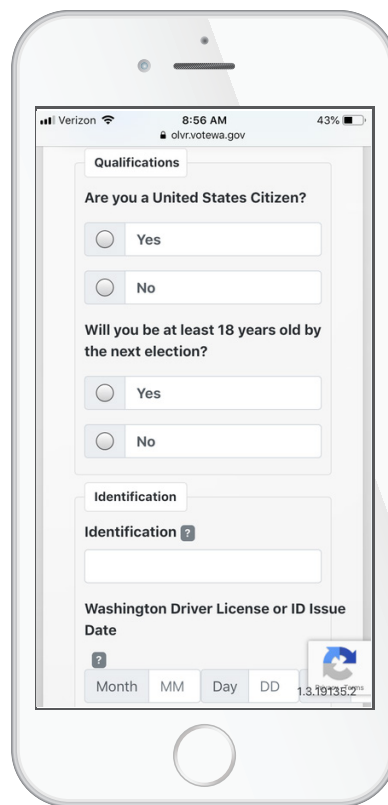
VoteWA

VoteWA offers an easy-to-use online voter portal where you can register to vote, update your address, and get up-to-date voting information on everything from your elected officials, voters' guide, ballot drop box locations, voting center locations, voting history, and current ballot status. Using VoteWA, to submit a new registration or voter information update requires a valid Washington State driver license or State ID. VoteWA is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.



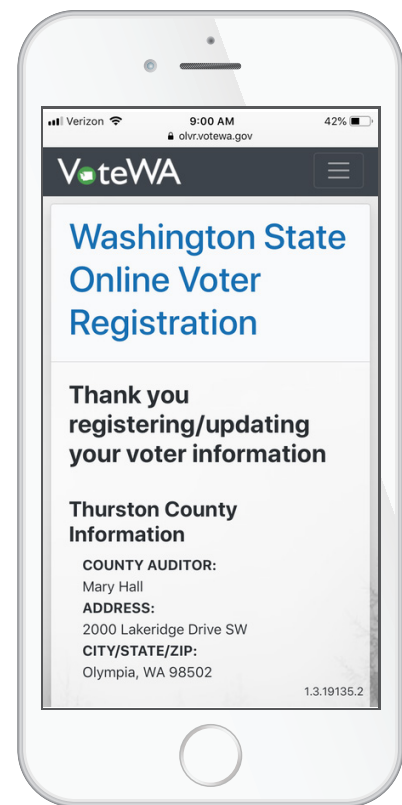
01

To register, go to [OLVR] at votewa.gov. The system will notify users if the deadline has passed to register electronically for an upcoming election, and direct them to in-person voter registration services. To begin an electronic application, click "start" on the home screen.



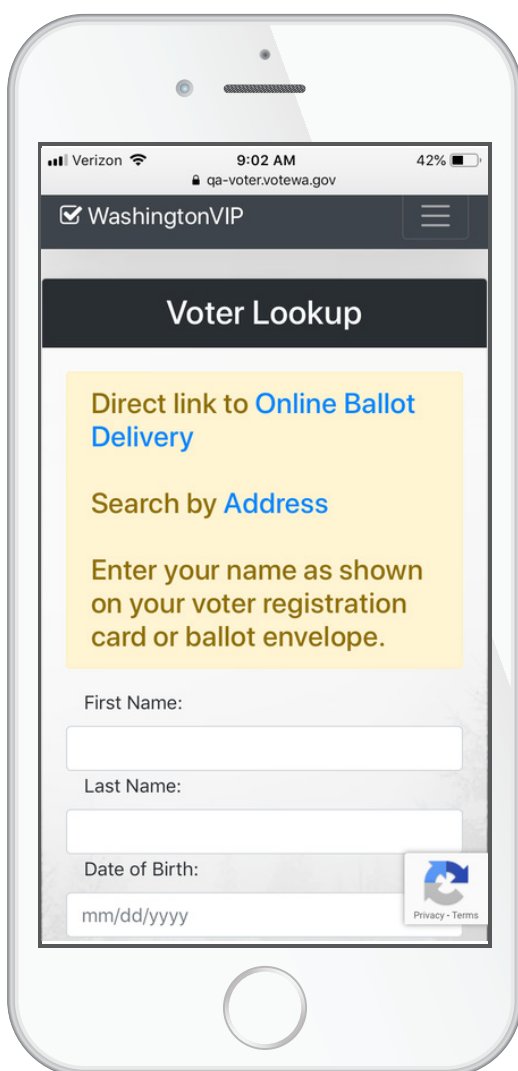
02

Users will then be directed to enter information regarding personal identification, language preference, military service, and their address within Washington. Users will then be asked to affirm the accuracy of the information entered, and to authorize the use of their signature on their driver's license for voter registration purposes.



03

Upon submitting the registration, VoteWA users will be presented with a confirmation of its receipt, as well as information about their county of registration.



01

Voters who are already registered may log in to VoteWA by providing their first name, last name, and date of birth. This information must be entered exactly as it appears in the voter's registration records.



02

Upon logging in, voters can verify their residential and mailing address as well as their voter registration status. If the residential or mailing addresses are not current, or if the registration status is listed as inactive, the voter may click "update my address" to change their registration status to active.

Registration FAQs

For a complete list of FAQs, please visit our website at VoteWA.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 their address. The Office of the Secretary of State offers an online portal called VoteWA that allows voters to confirm whether they are already registered. VoteWA 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 2014;
- Become inactive when the voter moves in February 2015 and fails to notify the County Auditor;
- Become active again when the voter updates his or her registration in July 2015;
- Become inactive when the voter moves again in March 2016; and
- Be cancelled in 2019 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 their 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?

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.

Can a registration be “removed” or “purged” for no reason?

No. A voter may only have their registration cancelled for one or more of 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 elections;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to a court order;
- The voter is ineligible to vote due to incarceration for a felony offense; or
- The voter is deceased.

What if a voter wants to know why their registration status 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.

Elections Office Contacts

Adams County

210 W Broadway Ave, Ste 200
Ritzville, WA 99169-1897
Phone: (509) 659-3249
elections@co.adams.wa.us

Asotin County

PO Box 129
Asotin, WA 99402-0129
Phone: (509) 243-2084
dmckay@co.asotin.wa.us

Benton County

PO Box 1440
Prosser, WA 99350-0470
Phone: (509) 736-3085
elections@co.benton.wa.us

Chelan County

350 Orondo Ave, STE 306
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Phone: (509) 667-6808
elections@co.chelan.wa.us

Clallam County

223 E 4th St, Ste 1
Port Angeles, WA 98362
Phone: (360) 417-2221
elections@co.clallam.wa.us

Clark County

PO Box 8815
Vancouver, WA 98666-8815
Phone: (564) 397-2345
elections@clark.wa.gov

Columbia County

341 E Main St, Ste 3
Dayton, WA 99328-1361
Phone: (509) 382-4541
anne_higgins@co.columbia.wa.us

Cowlitz County

207 4th Ave N, Rm 107
Kelso, WA 98626-4124
Phone: (360) 577-3005
elections@co.cowlitz.wa.us

Douglas County

PO Box 456
Waterville, WA 98858
Phone: (509) 888-6402
elections@co.douglas.wa.us

Ferry County

350 E Delaware Ave, Ste 2
Republic, WA 99166
Phone: (509) 775-5225 ext 1139
elections@co.ferry.wa.us

Franklin County

PO Box 1451
Pasco, WA 99301
Phone: (509) 545-3538
elections@co.franklin.wa.us

Garfield County

PO Box 278
Pomeroy, WA 99347
Phone: (509) 843-1411
ddeal@co.garfield.wa.us

Grant County

PO Box 37
Ephrata, WA 98823
Phone: (509) 754-2011 ext 343
elections@grantcountywa.gov

Grays Harbor County

100 W Broadway, Ste 2
Montesano, WA 98563
Phone: (360) 964-1556
elections@co.grays-harbor.wa.us

Island County

PO Box 1410
Coupeville, WA 98239
Phone: (360) 679-7366
elections@co.island.wa.us

Jefferson County

PO Box 563
Port Townsend, WA 98368
Phone: (360) 385-9119
elections@co.jefferson.wa.us

King County

919 SW Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057-2906
Phone: (206) 296-8683
elections@kingcounty.gov

Kitsap County

614 Division St, MS 31
Port Orchard, WA 98366
Phone: (360) 337-7128
auditor@co.kitsap.wa.us

Kittitas County

205 W 5th Ave, Ste 105
Ellensburg, WA 98926
Phone: (509) 962-7503
elections@co.kittitas.wa.us

Klickitat County

205 S Columbus Ave, Rm 203
Goldendale, WA 98620
Phone: (509) 773-4001
voting@klickitatcounty.org

Lewis County

PO Box 29
Chehalis, WA 98532-0029
Phone: (360) 740-1164
elections@lewiscountywa.gov

Lincoln County

PO Box 28
Davenport, WA 99122
Phone: (509) 725-4971
elections@co.lincoln.wa.us

Mason County

PO Box 400
Shelton, WA 98584
Phone: (360) 427-9670 ext 470
elections@co.mason.wa.us

Okanogan County

PO Box 1010
Okanogan, WA 98840
Phone: (509) 422-7240
elections@co.okanogan.wa.us

Pacific County

PO Box 97
South Bend, WA 98586-0097
Phone: (360) 875-9317
jkidd@co.pacific.wa.us

Pend Oreille County

PO Box 5015
Newport, WA 99156
Phone: (509) 447-6472
elections@pendoreille.org

Pierce County

2501 S 35th St, Ste C
Tacoma, WA 98409
Phone: (253) 798-VOTE (8683)
pcelections@piercecountywa.gov

San Juan County

PO Box 638
Friday Harbor, WA 98250
Phone: (360) 378-3357
elections@sanjuanco.com

Skagit County

PO Box 1306
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
Phone: (360) 416-1702
sselections@co.skagit.wa.us

Skamania County

Elections Dept, PO Box 790
Stevenson, WA 98648
Phone: (509) 427-3730
elections@co.skamania.wa.us

Snohomish County

3000 Rockefeller Ave, MS 505
Everett, WA 98201-4046
Phone: (425) 388-3444
elections@snoco.org

Spokane County

1033 W Gardner Ave
Spokane, WA 99260
Phone: (509) 477-2320
elections@spokanecounty.org

Stevens County

215 S Oak St, Rm 106
Colville, WA 99114
Phone: (509) 684-7514
elections@stevenscountywa.gov

Thurston County

2000 Lakeridge Dr SW
Olympia, WA 98502-6090
Phone: (360) 786-5408
elections@co.thurston.wa.us

Wahkiakum County

PO Box 543
Cathlamet, WA 98612
Phone: (360) 795-3219
bergsengn@co.wahkiakum.wa.us

Walla Walla County

PO Box 2176
Walla Walla, WA 99362
Phone: (509) 524-2530
elections@co.walla-walla.wa.us

Whatcom County

311 Grand Ave, Ste 103
Bellingham, WA 98227
Phone: (360) 778-5102
elections@co.whatcom.wa.us

Whitman County

PO Box 191
Colfax, WA 99111
Phone: (509) 397-5284
elections@co.whitman.wa.us

Yakima County

PO Box 12570
Yakima, WA 98909-2570
Phone: (509) 574-1340
iVote@co.yakima.wa.us

OSOS Elections Division

520 Union Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501
Phone: (360) 902-4180
elections@sos.wa.gov