

Voter Registration Information

Voter Rights and Responsibilities

To be eligible to register to vote in Washington, you must be:

- A United States Citizen
- A resident of Washington State
- 18 years of age on or before the next election

If you are registering for the first time in Washington State or have moved to a new county, you must complete a voter registration application.

To register to vote, the following information should be included on the form.

- Full Name
- Date of Birth
- Address of your residence for voting purposes
- Address of your former registration
- Mailing Address
- Gender
- Signature on the oath

If you moved, but still live in the same county, you may transfer your registration. To do so, complete a registration form, send a letter or an email, or call your County Auditor. (In King County, contact the Records, Elections and Licensing Division.)

Registration deadlines

In general, you must register at least 30 days in advance of an election to be eligible to vote in that election. It is especially important to remember this deadline if you are registering by mail by using the downloadable form above your application must be postmarked by the 30-day cutoff or it will not become effective until after the election.

If you miss the 30-day deadline, you can still sign up in time for the election, but you must register in person at your county elections department no later than 15 days before the election. Contact your [county auditor or elections department](#) for assistance and information.

Voting by Absentee Ballot

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. You do not need to be ill or "absent" to be an absentee voter. You may request an absentee ballot as early as 90 days before an election. (No absentee ballots are issued on election day except to a voter who is a resident of a health care facility). The request for an absentee ballot must be made to your county auditor or elections department (not to the Secretary of State).

NOTE: Absentee ballots must be signed and postmarked or delivered to the county election officer on or before election day.

Requesting an Absentee Ballot

One-time absentee ballot requests may be made either in person, by phone, fax, electronically or by mail. Contact your [County Auditor](#) to request an absentee ballot. Please keep in mind that absentee ballots must be signed and postmarked or delivered to the county election officer on or before election day.

Register to vote at:

<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/votingsystems.aspx#>

Voter Information Q & A

Where can I register to vote?

Registration applications may be obtained from the local election official in your county. In addition, you can also register to vote when applying for a license or identity card at State DMV or driver's licensing offices, state offices providing public assistance, state offices providing state-funded programs for the disabled. Registration forms are available at public libraries, post offices, unemployment offices, and at public high schools and universities.

When is the last day that I may register in order to be eligible to vote in the next election?

30 days before an election; or delivered in-person up to 15 days before an election at a location designated by the county elections division (usually the county courthouse).

How do I obtain an absentee ballot?

You may request an absentee ballot by contacting your local county election division. The phone number for the Auditor's office is listed in the blue government pages of your phone book. In King County, contact the Records, Elections and Licensing Services Division.

I'm a member of the armed forces stationed overseas. How can I vote by absentee ballot?

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense is responsible for administering the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. This law provides that members of the U.S. Uniformed Services and Merchant Marines and their family members may vote absentee while away from their place of voting residence, wherever stationed, within or outside the United States. For detailed information on registering and obtaining an absentee ballot, please visit the FVAP web site at <http://www.fvap.ncr.gov>, or call 1-800-438-VOTE

Who can register to vote?

In order to register to vote, a person must: 1) Be a citizen of the United States; 2) Be a resident of Washington; 3) Be at least 18 years of age as of the day of the next election; 4) Not be in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony.

I did not vote in the last election. Do I need to re-register?

In general, you are registered for as long as you remain at the same address, and you should continue to receive election materials in the mail. However, if you have not voted in the last several elections, you may be sent a request to confirm that you have not moved, and your registration may be eventually canceled.

I sent in my voter registration form a month ago and I still don't know where to vote. Did you receive my registration card?

To inquire about your voter registration status, you must contact your county elections office.

Can the Secretary of State's Office provide race, age and gender statistics for the voting population?

No. While the Secretary of State's office compiles voter statistics, we do not compile it by race, age or gender.

I know that I'm registered to vote, but I can't find my voter registration card. Can I vote without it?

If you are a registered voter and you have lost or misplaced your voter registration card, you may vote without your card by providing some form of identification (such as a driver's license) and signing an affidavit at the polls. This is the procedure to follow if your voter registration is still current and your name appears on the voter rolls in your county of residence.

How do I vote?

Go to your polling place between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. on election day. When you arrive at your polling place, the poll officers will verify that you are a registered voter in that precinct by checking the voters list. If your name is found on the list, you will be issued a ballot or admitted into a voting machine booth to cast your vote.

Who may apply for an absentee ballot?

Any registered voter can vote absentee.

When may I apply for an absentee ballot?

Your county elections division may accept applications for absentee ballots 90 days before an election.

When is my absentee ballot due if I return it by mail?

The county elections division must receive absentee ballots returned by mail by 10 days following the primary and 15 days following the general election.

What must I do if I've changed my address since I registered?

If you have moved within the same county, notify your county elections division of your new address. If you have moved to a new county, you must register again.

What should I do if I registered to vote and I have not heard from my local election official?

If you have NOT received voter registration card within 4 or 6 weeks from the date you registered, contact your county elections office to verify your voting status.

Can I wear a campaign button into the polling place?

No person may campaign; distribute literature of written or printed matter of any kind; wear campaign buttons, signs, pins, stickers, T-shirts, etc.; circulate petitions; or perform similar activities in the polling place.

What happens if I don't have any identification with me at the polling place?

If an elector is unable to produce any of the required identification, the elector shall sign swearing or affirming that he or she is the person identified in the poll book. Such person shall be allowed to vote without undue delay. Falsely swearing or affirming such statement under oath is punishable as a felony.

Why are results “unofficial” election night and not final?

After election day, election officials must process and tabulate absentee ballots that were received on or after election day, process special ballots, and canvass the election. These tasks are completed up to the time of certification of the election. Primary Election results are certified ten days after the election; General Election results are certified fifteen days after the election. ([See RCW 29.62.020](#))

Following election day, how often will ballots be counted and reported?

At least every third day after an election, (excluding Sundays and holidays), County Auditors are required to tabulate absentee ballots if they are in possession of more than 25 ballots. ([See RCW 29.62.020](#))

Why are ballots received and tabulated after election day?

To be valid, absentee ballots must be postmarked by the day of the election. Ballots mailed on election day arrive at county election offices in the days following the election and then must be processed and tabulated prior to certification. ([See RCW 29.62.020](#), [WAC 434-240-240](#))

What are “special” ballots?

Special ballots are issued to voters who appear at the polls and their name does not appear in the poll book, they were issued an absentee ballot, or there is a question regarding the issues or candidates that a voter is eligible to vote on. These ballots are separated from the rest of the ballots and not tabulated on election night. During the certification period following the election, officials research each special ballot to determine the eligibility of the voter. Special ballots are presented to the canvassing board at certification for determination on whether or not the ballot is counted based on the voter's eligibility. ([See RCW 29.01.006](#))

What triggers a recount?

A mandatory recount is triggered if the difference between the top two candidates is fewer than 2000 votes and less than one-half of one percent. If the difference is fewer than 150 votes and less than one quarter of one percent, the ballots must be recounted manually. ([See RCW 29.64.015](#)) When a mandatory recount is not required, a candidate, political party, or any group of five registered voters may request a recount.

What is canvassing the election?

Canvassing an election is examining the ballots, and vote totals in order to determine the official returns for the election. ([See RCW 29.01.008](#)) The county canvassing board consists of the county auditor, prosecutor, and chair of the county legislative authority or their designee. ([See RCW 29.62.015](#))