



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Washington – General Election 2022

*Last Updated: September 15, 2022*

**Disclaimer:** This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision-making.

**Note:** This FAQ is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, contact your hotline captain or command center for assistance. Please make sure to record all of the voter's contact information should follow-up be necessary.

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# REGISTERING TO VOTE

### 1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Can I register to vote?

Visit the [VoteWA](#) website or call 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

**Registration Eligibility:** To register to vote, a voter MUST be:

- A United States citizen;
- A legal resident of Washington for at least 30 days prior to election day;
- 18 years of age or older on election day;
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court order; and
- Not under Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. **PRIMARY ELECTION:** Can I vote in the primary election? Do I have to be a member of a party to vote in its primary?

No. Registered voters do not have to declare a party affiliation to vote in the primary.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. **STATUS:** Am I registered to vote?

A Washington resident can check their registration status on Washington's Election Website logging into [VoteWa](#).

### 4. **HOW:** How do I register to vote? Can I register online? Do I need a printer? Can I register to vote in person?<sup>3</sup>

#### **Online**

Individuals may [register to vote online](#) in Washington. The Online Voter Registration Form asks for the voter's Washington State driver's license or a current Washington State identification card. personal

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<sup>1</sup> Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 29A.08.107

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* § 29A.52

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* § § 29A.08.115; 29A.08.120; 29A.08.123

***In Person***

The voter may find a voter registration application at any [county elections office](#) or DMV office and other state agencies, such as the health benefit exchange. If the voter registers at the DMV or other location, the voter should retain proof of their voter registration application in case the application is not properly transmitted to the Secretary of State.

***By Mail***

Voter registration forms are also available by mail. Applicants may visit the [Washington Secretary of State website](#) to receive a voter registration form. Applicants may also contact their [county elections office](#) to receive a voter registration form.

**5. IDENTIFICATION: What ID is required to register to vote?<sup>4</sup>**

If a voter votes in person, they will need to sign a ballot declaration and their signature will be compared to their registration signature. Otherwise, they will need to provide a valid photo ID. Valid forms include:

- Washington driver's license,
- State identification card,
- Student identification card,
- Tribal identification card, or

If they do not have one of these forms of identification, then their vote will be by provisional ballot.

**6. DEADLINES: When is/was the voter registration deadline? Are there different deadlines whether I register by mail, in-person, online or on Election Day?<sup>5</sup>**

The deadline to register to vote by mail or online is 8 days before the date of election, i.e. April 18, 2022 for the April 26, 2022 special election. If the voter is filing a new registration, they may do so after the mail/online deadline, in person at any time before 8:00 p.m. on the election day.

Military (including military spouses and dependents away from home because of military service) and overseas voters are exempt from the voter registration deadline, but they must provide their last Washington State residential address, or the address of a family member, when they request a ballot. The last day to register and request a ballot for military and overseas voters is Election Day. Even if they are not registered, they may still vote and send in a ballot because their signature on the declaration attests to your eligibility and constitutes registration.

**7. SAME DAY: Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?<sup>6</sup>**

Washington state has same day voter registration in-person. In-person registration may be done during business hours and any time before 8:00 PM on election day at a voting center or county elections department.

**8. PERMANENT MOVE: I have moved permanently, and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?<sup>7</sup>**

***Moving Within the Same County***

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.107

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.140

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.410

A registered voter can update their address by appearing in person before the county auditor, or at a voting center or other location designated by the county auditor, no later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election. The voter may also update their address by submitting a voter registration form or by submitting information to the department of licensing, the health benefit exchange, or an agency that has implemented automatic voter registration, to their new county auditor no later than 8 days before the election day.

If the voter has missed the deadline, the voter may contact the county auditor, and vote according to his or her previous address.

***Moving Between Counties***

A voter should update his or her address 8 days before election day, or earlier with the Secretary of State or the county auditor. The voter must update his or her address by submitting an updated voter registration application.

If the voter has missed the deadline, the voter may contact the county auditor, and vote according to his or her previous address.

**9. TEMPORARY MOVE: I have moved temporarily. How can I vote?<sup>8</sup>**

A voter must establish a voting residency address at least 30 days before the election day. The voter may specify a mailing address that is different from your residential address and following the steps under Question #8.

**10. STUDENT: I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school? What if I am taking classes remotely? Where can I vote?**

A voter's residential address determines which candidates and measures will be on their ballot. This must be a Washington State address that the voter considers home.

If the voter lives on campus and provides a campus address as their residential address, they must list their dormitory and room number; a PO Box is not a residential address.

An out-of-state student may register to vote in Washington if they have lived in the state for at least 30 days and have established a residential address in the state. Please note that Washington State residency requirements for voting is not the same as residency for in-state tuition purposes. The out-of-state student may vote in only one state. If the student was previously registered in another state, they must cancel their registration in that state when they register in Washington.

For more information on voting residency, visit [Residency Requirements](#).

**11. LIVING ABROAD: I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?<sup>9</sup>**

***Registering and Requesting an Absentee Ballot***

Military and overseas citizens can register to vote by fax or mail or can register to vote online by logging onto the Washington Secretary of State's My Vote tool. Military and overseas citizens can use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), also known as Standard Form 76, to register to vote and to request a

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<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* § 434-235

special absentee ballot. Visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) Washington-specific FPCA page for details on using the FPCA.

Military and overseas voters are exempt from the regular voter registration deadlines. The last day to register and request a ballot is Election Day. Even if you are not registered, you may still vote and send in a ballot because your signature on the declaration attests to your eligibility and constitutes registration.

### ***Receiving an Absentee Ballot***

Military and overseas citizens can receive voting materials by fax, email, or postal service. Military and overseas voters may qualify to receive a ballot as early as 90 days before the election. Voters should contact their county elections department to:

- Request a ballot or a replacement ballot;
- Change how they receive their ballot (for example, by email instead of postal mail); or
- Update their voter registration record (for example, update their mailing address).

If their wish is to use the fax or email options, they must indicate this on their FPCA. Instructions for doing so are found on the FVAP's Washington-specific FPCA page.

### ***Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot***

Military and overseas citizens can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) if they are concerned with receiving their printed ballot and returning it by the 8:00 p.m. Election Day deadline. Ballots must be returned by the 8 p.m. Election Day deadline if sent by fax, or if sent by mail, postmarked by Election Day and received by the county election office by the 20th day after the General Election. The FWAB can be used to register to vote. If you are using the FWAB to register to vote, it must be received by the registration deadline listed in the "Federal Election Deadlines" chart.

A military and overseas voter can use the FWAB to vote in federal, state, and local elections, including ballot measures. For specific instructions, visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Washington-specific FWAB page.

## **12. CRIMINAL CONVICTION: I have a criminal conviction. Can I register to vote?<sup>10</sup>**

If a voter is convicted of a felony in Washington State, their right to vote is provisionally restored as long as they are not under the authority (in prison or in community custody) of the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). Once their right is restored, they must re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot.

If they have questions about their status with Washington State DOC, they can call (800) 430-9674. For more information about voting with a felony conviction, please visit here.

## **13. INCARCERATED: I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote?**

No.

# **HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY**

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<sup>10</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.520

**14. HOURS: When do the polls open/close on Election Day?<sup>11</sup>**

Poll opening hours vary by county. Polls close at 8:00 P.M.

**15. POLLING LOCATION: Where do I vote on Election Day?**

Details on a voter's county locations contact the voter's local elections office, or for a personalized list sign in to [VoteWA.gov](#).

**16. CLOSING: What if the polls close when I am already in line?**

Any voter who is inside or in line at the voting center at 8:00 P.M. on the day of the primary, special election, or general election must be allowed to vote.<sup>12</sup>

**17. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required to vote?**

If a voter votes in person, they will need to sign a ballot declaration and their signature will be compared to their registration signature. Otherwise, they will need to provide a valid photo ID. Valid forms include:

- Washington driver's license,
- State identification card,
- Student identification card,
- Tribal identification card,
- Employer identification card, or
- US Passport.

**18. NO IDENTIFICATION: Can I vote without providing identification?<sup>13</sup>**

If they do not have one of these forms of identification, then they will vote by provisional ballot.

**19. NOT ON ROLLS AT MY POLLING PLACE: I am at my polling place but am not showing up on the voter registration roll. Can I vote where I am?<sup>14</sup>**

If voters are shown as not registered or their right to vote is otherwise challenged, they may still vote by provisional ballot.

**20. PROVISIONAL BALLOT: If I don't have an ID, can I request a provisional ballot? My name is not on the rolls at my polling place, can I request a provisional ballot?<sup>15</sup>**

Yes. However, the ballot of a provisionally registered voter may not be counted until the voter provides a driver's license number, a state identification card number, or the last four digits of a social security number that matches the information maintained by the Washington department of licensing or the social security administration, or until the voter provides alternate identification. The identification must be provided no later than the day before certification of the primary or election. If the voter provides

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<sup>11</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.160

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.107

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

one of the forms of identification (noted above), the voter's registration status must be changed from provisionally registered to registered.

## **HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING**

**(in some states called “in-person absentee”)**

**21. AVAILABILITY: Is there early voting in my state (whether called early voting or in person absentee voting)?<sup>16</sup>**

All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot, but may, alternatively, vote in person at an early voting center starting 18 days before election day. If the voter wishes to cast a ballot at an early vote center, but their election records indicate that they already voted the vote-by-mail ballot, the voter will be given a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will only be counted if the vote-by-mail regular ballot is not received.

**22. ELIGIBILITY: Do I have to have a reason to vote early?**

No.

**23. WHEN: When does early voting begin/end?<sup>17</sup>**

Mail-in voting begins 18 days before election day and ends on election day.

**24. WHERE: Where do I vote during early voting?<sup>18</sup>**

An early voting center.

**25. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required for early voting? What if I don't have an ID?**

If a voter votes in person, they will need to sign a ballot declaration and their signature will be compared to their registration signature. Otherwise, they will need to provide a valid photo ID. Valid forms include:

- Washington driver's license,
- State identification card,
- Student identification card,
- Tribal identification card,
- Employer identification card,
- US Passport.

## **HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL**

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<sup>16</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.010

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.160

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

**26. AUTOMATIC MAIL BALLOT: Will I automatically be sent a ballot in the mail?**<sup>19</sup>

Yes.

**27. ELIGIBILITY: Do I need a specific reason to vote by mail?**

No.

**28. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting an mail-in ballot?**<sup>20</sup>

All registered Washington voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. The ballot will be mailed to the mailing address indicated on the voter's voter registration form.

**29. APPLICATION RETURN: How do I submit my mail-in ballot application? Can someone return it for me? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date?**<sup>21</sup>

The vote-by-mail ballot must be postmarked no later than election day or returned to a designated ballot drop box by 8:00 P.M. on election day. Return envelopes for all election ballots must include prepaid postage

**30. IDENTIFICATION: Are there identification requirements when I return my absentee ballot application and/or ballot?**<sup>22</sup>

No. Voter must only sign the ballot declaration.

**31. RECEIVING MAIL BALLOT: Does the ballot have to be sent to my home, or can I have it sent somewhere else? What if I don't have a home address or my address is a PO Box?**

Mail-in ballots are sent to a voter's mailing address. A P.O. Box can be considered a mailing address. A request for a ballot from an overseas voter or service voter must include the address of the last residence in the state of Washington.

**32. MISSED THE APPLICATION DEADLINE: What if I have not requested a mail-in ballot by the deadline?**

No need to request. All registered voters will receive a vote-by mail ballot.

**33. STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT: How can I check the status of my application and/or mail-in ballot?**

A voter can [check the status of your ballot](#) by logging into [VoteWA](#) and clicking on "Ballot Status".

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<sup>19</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.010

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.070

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* § 29A.40.091

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

**34. APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?**

Voters are notified by mail of rejected ballots due to missing/mismatching signature statements. Three days before certification, county auditors must attempt to contact by phone any voters with outstanding ballots to be cured.<sup>23</sup>

**35. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the mail-in ballot?**

Follow the instructions on the ballot for how to complete.

**36. ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT: Can someone assist me in filling out my ballot?<sup>24</sup>**

Yes; however, the voter must sign the declaration. If a voter is unable to sign the declaration, the voter can make a mark in front of two witnesses and have them sign in the designated spaces.

**37. DEADLINE TO RETURN BALLOT: What is the deadline for the ballot to be received? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date? Can I drop it off in person?**

Mail-in ballot must be postmarked no later than election day or returned to a designated ballot drop box by 8 p.m. on election day.

**38. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: What are the locations for dropping off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?**

Details on a voter's county locations contact the voter's local elections office, or for a personalized list sign in to [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov).

**39. ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF BALLOT: Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?<sup>25</sup>**

Yes.

**40. LOST OR SPOILED BALLOT: What if I lost my mail-in ballot, made a mistake on it (spoiled it), or I received an incorrect ballot?<sup>26</sup>**

A registered voter may obtain a replacement ballot if the ballot is destroyed, spoiled, lost, or not received by the voter. The voter may obtain the ballot by telephone request, by mail, electronically, or in person. The county auditor shall keep a record of each request for a replacement ballot.

Request a replacement ballot at [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov).

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<sup>23</sup> Wash. Admin. Code §434-261-050

<sup>24</sup> Wash. Admin. Code § 434-250-105

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 29A.40.070

**41. NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT: What if I requested a mail-in ballot but have not received it? What are my options for voting?**

Request a replacement ballot at [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov).

**42. IN PERSON OPTION: What if I requested or received a mail-in ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?**

All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot, but may, alternatively, vote in person.

## **HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE**

**43. ELIGIBILITY: Am I eligible to request an absentee ballot?**

Washington makes no distinction between absentee voting and early voting. All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot (also known as an absentee ballot). Add answer here

**44. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?**

Absentee ballots must be postmarked no later than election day or returned to a designated ballot drop box by 8 p.m. on election day.

**45. IDENTIFICATION: Are there any identification requirements?**

No.

**46. EMERGENCY: Is there an emergency absentee ballot? If so, am I eligible?**

There are no emergency absentee ballots in Washington.

**47. APPLICATION RETURN: Where and how can I return my absentee ballot application? Can someone return it for me?**

U.S. mail or returned to a designated drop box by 8 p.m. on election day.

**48. STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT: How can I check the status of my absentee ballot application and/or absentee ballot return?**

A voter can check the status of your ballot by logging into VoteWA and clicking on "Ballot Status".

**49. APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my absentee ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. How can I confirm this and what can I do to fix any errors or get another one?**

A voter can check the status of your ballot by logging into VoteWA and clicking on "Ballot Status".

**50. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the absentee ballot?**

Follow the instructions on the ballot for how to complete.

**51. ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT: Can someone assist me filling out the ballot?**

Yes.

**52. BALLOT DEADLINES: What is the deadline for the ballot to be postmarked and/or received by, including dropping it off in person?**

Absentee ballots must be postmarked no later than election day or returned to a designated ballot drop box by 8 p.m. on election day.

**53. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: Where can I drop off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?**

Details on a voter's county locations contact the voter's local elections office, or for a personalized list sign in to [VoteWA.gov](#)

**54. ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF: Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?**

Yes.

**55. LOST OR SPOILED: What if I lost my absentee ballot or it is spoiled or I received an incorrect one?**

Request a replacement ballot at [VoteWA.gov](#).

**56. NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT: What if I requested an absentee ballot but have not received it? Can I do anything?**

Request a replacement ballot at [VoteWA.gov](#).

**57. IN PERSON OPTION: What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?**

All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot, but may, alternatively, vote in person.

**58. IN PERSON ABSENTEE: Where do I vote in-person absentee? When can I do this?**

All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot, but may, alternatively, vote in person.

## POLLING PLACE ISSUES

**59. POLLING PLACE NOT OPEN:** The polling place is not open. What should I do?

For other locations, go here: [Drop Box and Voting Center Locations - Elections & Voting - WA Secretary of State](#). Violations can be reported to the [Washington Secretary of State here](#).

60. **LONG LINES:** There are long lines at the polling place. What should I do? What if the polls are closing while I'm in line?

Don't leave. Any voter who is inside or in line at the voting center at 8:00 P.M. on the day of the primary, special election, or general election must be allowed to vote.<sup>27</sup>

61. **EQUIPMENT FAILURE:** What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?

Tell a poll worker. If the voting equipment does not work, request a paper or provisional ballot. Report any issues to the Secretary of State using the attached [form](#).

62. **EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE:** I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?<sup>28</sup>

Tell a poll worker. A voter can request reasonable accommodations or assistance to vote.

Voting centers must meet all of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. View additional information [here](#).

63. **PHYSICAL DISABILITY:** I have a physical disability and need assistance. Is my polling place ADA compliant? Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?<sup>29</sup>

As a voter with a disability, a voter can request a reasonable accommodation or assistance to vote.

Voting centers must meet all of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. View additional information [here](#).

64. **READING/LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE:** I am blind, have a physical disability, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?

To request a reasonable accommodation or assistance, the voter should contact the county elections department.

65. **CAMPAIGNING:** What rules apply to people campaigning or "hanging around" my polling place? Can people approach me?<sup>30</sup>

Within a voting center, it is prohibited to suggest or persuade any voter, circulate cards or handbills, solicit petition signatures, engage in any practice which interferes with the freedom of voters to exercise their franchise or disrupts the administration of the voting center, obstruct doors or entries or prevent free access.

66. **CHALLENGE:** Someone is formally challenging my vote. What should I do?<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> Wash. Admin. Code § 434-250-105

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 29A.84.520

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* § 29A.08.820

Submit a completed challenge form, and supporting documentation, to the county elections department where the challenged voter is registered. Determination of the challenge is based entirely on evidence provided.

67. **POLICE/MILITARY PRESENCE:** There are police/members of the military at the polling place. Is this okay? What should I do?

This is not prohibited under Washington law. Voters should proceed with the voting process, and report any issues to the Secretary of State using the attached [form](#).

68. **THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED:** My name isn't on the voter registration roll but I thought I was registered. What should I do?

If voters are shown as not registered or their right to vote is otherwise challenged, they may still vote by provisional ballot.

69. **PROVISIONAL BALLOT:** I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?

Vote with a provisional ballot. All provisional ballots will be researched to ensure voter eligibility before the ballot is counted.

## ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

70. **LANGUAGE ACCESS:** I am not an English speaker. What language resources are available? Can I bring someone in the booth to help me understand the ballot?

Counties with minority groups meeting certain conditions outlined by the Voting Rights Act are required to provide voting materials in the language of those minority groups. To view the counties with additional language resources, visit [here](#).

71. **CURBSIDE VOTING:** Is curbside voting available? How do I request it?

There is no applicable law on curbside voting in Washington. To request a reasonable accommodation or assistance, contact your county elections department.

72. **VOTER GUIDE:** Can I bring a voting guide or reference notes with me into the voting booth?

Yes.

## QUESTIONS

73. **QUESTIONS:** Who should I contact if I have questions about any of the above?

The Secretary of State can be contacted [here](#).