

Voter Participation Community Toolkit

King County Elections & Seattle Foundation

Updated: June 26, 2018





From the Director

Dear Friend,

Thank you for helping get more King County residents registered to vote. Only by working together can we ensure that every eligible voter has the opportunity to participate in important decisions about their community.

We are lucky we have the right to vote. There are many countries around the world where institutionalized democracy is still just an aspiration. And there are numerous times throughout our own history when we've had to fight to expand – or even preserve – access to this fundamental right.

In 1965 the U.S. Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act, prohibiting racial discrimination in voting. Since then, those protections have been extended to other communities, including those who speak a language other than English. Today, it's our responsibility to ensure that every community – no matter where they live or what language they speak – is able to easily and conveniently contribute to the democratic process.

King County is getting more diverse and vibrant every day, which means we have to make an even greater commitment to civic education and outreach. And we can't do that work without our community partners. Whether it's the long-time voter who is just now able to get their ballot in their preferred language or a newly naturalized citizen excited about participating for the first time, I am grateful to you for helping them be able to vote.

Best Regards,

Julie Wise
Julie Wise, Director



Contact us

Phone

206-296-VOTE (8683)

1-800-325-6165

TTY: Relay: 711

Email

elections@kingcounty.gov

Online

kingcounty.gov/elections

By mail or in-person

King County Elections

919 Southwest Grady Way

Renton, WA 98057

Open weekdays

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Elections Annex

King County Administration Building

500 4th Avenue, Room 440

Seattle, WA 98104

Open weekdays

8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Get social with us



kcelections.com



twitter.com/kcelections



facebook.com/kcelections



instagram.com/kcelections



snapchat.com/add/kcelections

We encourage using our official hashtag #kcvotes when promoting King County Elections through social media.

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Introduction

This Voter Participation Community Toolkit is designed to help community-based organizations educate voters, particularly historically underrepresented and limited-English speaking voters on voting in King County. While this toolkit is designed primarily for use by King County Elections and Seattle Foundation community partners – any group or individual may utilize this as a resource to assist King County voters.

Our role as community partners

The role of King County Elections and Seattle Foundation community partners is to make sure that anyone who is qualified to vote in the community can vote by:

- ▶ Assisting people to register to vote in a culturally relevant and respectful way.
- ▶ Offering information about how to get voting materials in other languages
- ▶ Assisting voters with completing their ballot in a non-partisan and non-political manner (e.g., we can instruct voters on how to fill in the ovals on the ballot, but not which ovals to fill).
 - If a community partner has taken a position on a particular issue or candidate and a voter asks for an opinion or advice, please refer voters to the measure contact information section of the voters' pamphlet and avoid telling voters how to vote.
- ▶ Translating and providing technical assistance to review voters' pamphlets when needed. Remember to keep the integrity of the content by translating it at face value to ensure integrity of the election process. Do NOT interpret or explain the meaning. Call King County Elections staff if you need assistance.
- ▶ Encouraging citizens to vote and providing assistance on how to return their ballot.
- ▶ Referring voters to King County Elections if they have further questions.
- ▶ Letting us know how we can support your community to vote, and
- ▶ Letting us know how we can improve our services.

The basics

- ▶ King County has been voting by mail since 2009 and Washington State since 2011. If you are registered to vote in Washington you will receive your ballot and voters' pamphlet through the mail.
- ▶ Ballots are mailed to all registered voters 20 days prior to the election.
- ▶ Voters' pamphlets are mailed to every household in Washington State about 3 weeks before an election.
- ▶ Voters in Washington State do not have to declare party affiliation when registering to vote.

Registering voters

Requirements

To register to vote in Washington, you must be:

- ▶ A citizen of the United States
 - Permanent residency or having a green card is not citizenship.
- ▶ A legal resident of Washington State
 - A person must establish a residential address at least 30 days before Election Day.
- ▶ At least 18 years old by Election Day
 - If a person is currently 17 but will be 18 years old by Election Day, they can register to vote. We cannot process voter registration forms from voters who are less than 17 years old.
- ▶ Not under the authority of the Department of Corrections for a Washington felony conviction
 - A felon's right to vote is restored as long as they are no longer in prison or on community custody (supervision, parole) with the Washington State Department of Corrections. Once their right to vote is restored, a citizen must re-register to vote.
- ▶ 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 due to mental incapacity is ineligible to vote

How to register

- ▶ **Online:** If you have a Washington State driver's license or WA State ID visit www.myvote.wa.gov.
- ▶ **By mail:** Download a registration form from the Secretary of State website (vote.wa.gov) and return it by mail.
- ▶ **In person:** Visit the King County Elections Office or Elections Annex.

Registration deadlines

While you may register to vote at any time, there are registration deadlines prior to each election.

- ▶ **29 days before election day:** Deadline to register to vote **online** or **by mail**, or **update** existing voter registration information.
- ▶ **8 days before election day:** People who are not currently registered in Washington can register **in-person** at the King County Elections office in Renton or at the Elections Annex in Seattle. If an individual is registered, but missed the deadline to update their information, they can still vote based on their old residential address.

Keep your voter registration current

Update your registration if you have moved or changed your name, or if your signature has changed. Simply update your information online or submit a new registration form.

For more information

For more information about current election dates and deadlines, see the Election Calendar handout or visit the King County Elections website.

Overseas and service voters

Regardless of where you are in the world, you have the right to cast a ballot in every election and have it arrive on time to be counted. Overseas and service voters have additional voter registration, ballot delivery, and ballot return options.

Voters who live outside of the U.S. (overseas) or are on active military duty (service) who are not registered to vote in Washington can still register after the 29-day deadline without coming to register in person. They simply need to access the Online Ballot Marking Program (p. 14) and complete and sign their ballot packet. A signed ballot declaration is considered a valid registration form for these voters only.

There are **two** ways that an overseas or service voter can receive a ballot:

1. **Email (electronically):** If you choose to receive your ballot electronically, we will email you a link to our Online Ballot Marking Program (p. 14).
2. **By mail (paper):** If you prefer to receive a paper ballot, we will mail you a paper ballot. Service and overseas ballots are sent 30 days before a special election, and 45 days before a primary or general election.

There are **three** ways that an overseas or service voter can return a ballot:

1. **Electronically:** Washington State law allows overseas and service voters to return their ballot materials by email (return.ballot@kingcounty.gov) or fax (206-296-4499). We must receive your marked, signed and dated ballot materials no later than 8 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Election Day.
2. **Mail:** Return postage is free if the ballot is mailed through the U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Armed Forces Postal Service or the postal service of the U.S. Foreign Embassy. Be sure to sign and date your return envelope. The date on your envelope should be the same as the date you mailed your ballot (no later than Election Day).
3. **In-person:** You can return your ballot to one of our drop-off locations before 8 p.m. on Election Day

Best practices for completing voter registration forms

When using a paper voter registration form, double-check that all the required fields have been completed. Missing information can cause registrations to be delayed or rejected.

1. The residential address must be in Washington State. The residential address determines which candidates and measures will be on a voter's ballot. PO boxes may not be used as a residential address. Include a mailing address if it is different from the residential address. The mailing address is where the ballot will be sent. The mailing address can be anywhere in the world.
2. Verify the person has answered both questions.
3. Complete this section if they are a military or overseas voter.
4. To complete the form, a person will need a Washington State driver license, state ID number or the last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Applicants without one of these standard IDs may leave this blank but will be asked for alternative ID by King County Elections before the registration is approved.
5. If a voter was previously registered under a different name or address, please complete this section.
6. Make sure the voter signs and that the signature is clear.

Voter registration forms

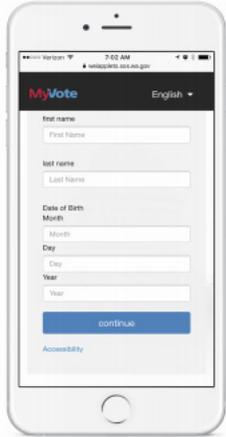
Voter registration forms are currently available in 17 languages, in addition to English, at our main office in Renton, Seattle annex or on our website.

- ▶ English
- ▶ Chinese / 中文
- ▶ Spanish / Español
- ▶ Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt
- ▶ Amharic
- ▶ Arabic / العربية
- ▶ Bengali
- ▶ Burmese
- ▶ Hindi
- ▶ Japanese / 日本人
- ▶ Korean
- ▶ Khmer
- ▶ Laotian
- ▶ Punjabi
- ▶ Russian / Русский
- ▶ Somali / Soomaali
- ▶ Tagalog
- ▶ Ukrainian / Український

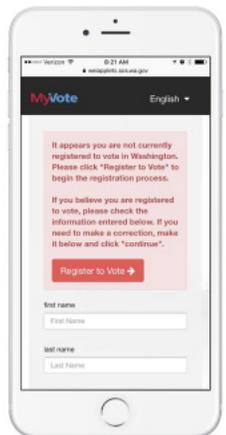
Online registration with MyVote

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

How to register online



1. Go to myvote.wa.gov and log in. News users will be given the option to "Register to Vote" by leaving the fields blank and selecting "Continue".

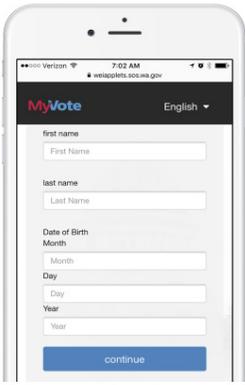


2. Complete the Washington State Identification page, and make sure the name, date of birth and driver license or state ID number match the information exactly as it appears.



3. If the security check words are not legible, you can press the circular arrow button on the right to get a new word, or click on the audio symbol to get an audio version.

How to update your registration online



1. Log in to myvote.wa.gov with first and last name, and date of birth exactly as it appears in the voter registration record. If MyVote is unable to find the person in the system, ask if they are registered using a name variation, such as Mike instead of Michael.



2. Make sure their residential and mailing addresses are current and their registration status is Active. If the residential and mailing addresses are not current, click on "Update my address". If the registration status says Inactive, the voter should update their address (even if their address hasn't changed), to change their voter registration status to Active.

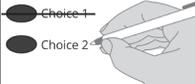
Best practices for completing a ballot

- ▶ Read the ballot, envelope and voters' pamphlet carefully.
- ▶ Use a pen to fill out your ballot. Follow ballot instructions if you need to change your selection.
- ▶ We will count only those races for which you voted, and your ballot will be processed even if you don't vote for every race.
- ▶ Remove and recycle the stub at the top of the ballot.
- ▶ **Sign the declaration on the back of the return envelope. Your signature is very important!** State law requires that we compare the signature on the ballot envelope with the signature on your voter registration before we can count your ballot. If the signatures match, the ballot moves forward in the process. If the signatures do not match or is missing we contact you by mail, email, and phone letting you know how to take care of the issue. You have until the day before the election is certified to respond.
- ▶ Do **not** put multiple ballots in one envelope.

Online ballot marking program

- ▶ Any registered voter can use the online ballot marking program (<https://kingcounty.gov/elections/online-ballot-marking-program>).
- ▶ Voters with disabilities can mark their choices on the ballot online. The online ballot marking program has been designed specifically to enable blind and vision-impaired voters to cast a private ballot.
- ▶ If a voters' ballot is damaged or lost, voters may mark their ballot on a computer, print it out, and return it by fax, standard mail or email before the 8 p.m. Election Day deadline.
- ▶ Overseas and service voters may request to permanently receive their ballot using this program.

Sample ballot

Remove this stub Track your ballot online at www.kingcounty.gov/elections		2017 Primary Election iVoted!	
Count: 1187 PROOF - Fax: 1245.245 Panel 1 - Box 2 1245.245		Count: 1187 PROOF - Fax: 1245.245 Panel 1 - Box 2 1245.245	
PROOF August 1, 2017 Official Primary and Special Election Ballot King County, Washington SEA 34-1245 1245.245 Legislative District No. 34			
Instructions How to vote  Use a black ink pen to completely fill in the oval next to your choice.	County King County Proposition No. 1 Sales Tax for Cultural Access Program The King County Council passed Ordinance No. 18513 to establish and fund a cultural access program. The program would expand access to arts, science, and heritage programming throughout King County. The program would include cultural education in schools and transportation to cultural venues for public school students. The program would also provide funding for cultural organizations to expand programming, including to serve diverse and underserved populations. The cultural access program, including administrative costs, would be funded by a county sales tax increase of one-tenth of one percent for seven years beginning January 1, 2018. Should this proposition be: <input type="radio"/> Approved <input type="radio"/> Rejected	Port of Seattle Commissioner Position No. 1 nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Claudia Kauffman <input type="radio"/> Bea Querido-Rico <input type="radio"/> Ryan Calkins <input type="radio"/> John Creighton <input type="radio"/>	City City of Seattle Mayor nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Cary Moon <input type="radio"/> Harley Lever <input type="radio"/> Michael Harris <input type="radio"/> Keith J. Whiteman <input type="radio"/> Jessyn Farrell <input type="radio"/> Dave Kane <input type="radio"/> Thom Gunn <input type="radio"/> Gary E. Brose <input type="radio"/> Mike McGinn <input type="radio"/> Jenny Durkan <input type="radio"/> Jason Roberts <input type="radio"/> Tiniell Cato <input type="radio"/> Alex Tsimerman <input type="radio"/> James W. Norton, Jr. <input type="radio"/> Larry Oberto <input type="radio"/> Casey Carlisle <input type="radio"/> Lewis A. Jones <input type="radio"/> Nikkita Oliver <input type="radio"/> Mary J. Martin <input type="radio"/> Greg Hamilton <input type="radio"/> Bob Hasegawa <input type="radio"/>
How to correct a mistake Choice 1 Choice 2  To make a correction, draw a line through the entire choice. You then have the option of making a different choice by completely filling in another oval.	County Executive nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Goodspaceguy <input type="radio"/> Dow Constantine <input type="radio"/> Bill Hirt <input type="radio"/> Stan Lippmann <input type="radio"/>	Commissioner Position No. 3 nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Lisa Espinosa <input type="radio"/> Ahmed Abdi <input type="radio"/> Stephanie Bowman <input type="radio"/>	City City of Seattle Council Position No. 9 nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Ty Pethé <input type="radio"/> Pauly Giuglianotti <input type="radio"/> Ian Affleck-Asch <input type="radio"/> David Preston <input type="radio"/> Eric W. Smiley <input type="radio"/> M. Lorena González <input type="radio"/> Pat Murakami <input type="radio"/>
Optional write-in  To add a new candidate, fill in the oval next to the write-in line and print the name on the write-in line.	County Executive nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Goodspaceguy <input type="radio"/> Dow Constantine <input type="radio"/> Bill Hirt <input type="radio"/> Stan Lippmann <input type="radio"/>	Commissioner Position No. 4 nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Preeti Shridhar <input type="radio"/> Richard Pope <input type="radio"/> Brooks Salazar <input type="radio"/> Peter Steinbrueck <input type="radio"/> Ray S. Armitstead <input type="radio"/> John Persak <input type="radio"/> Fernando Martinez <input type="radio"/> Ken Rogers <input type="radio"/>	City City of Seattle Council Position No. 8 nonpartisan office vote for one <input type="radio"/> Charlene D. Strong <input type="radio"/> Rudy Pantoja <input type="radio"/> Sara E. Nelson <input type="radio"/> Sheley Secrest <input type="radio"/> Jon Grant <input type="radio"/> Teresa Mosqueda <input type="radio"/> Hisam Goueli <input type="radio"/> Mac McGregor <input type="radio"/>
Card 61 - SEA 34-1245 (1245.245)		Card 61 - SEA 34-1245 (1245.245)	

How to return a ballot

You can vote and return your ballot as soon as you receive it. Returning your ballot early allows time to correct any issues with your signature so we can count your ballot. You can return your ballot by mail or to a ballot drop-off location.

By mail

No stamp needed to return your ballot! Your ballot must be postmarked by Election Day. Don't wait until the last minute!

Ballot drop boxes

Return your ballot to a ballot drop box, no stamp required. Your ballot must be returned to a ballot drop box by 8 p.m. Election Day. Plan ahead to avoid lines.

Visit our website for a [list of ballot drop box locations](#).

Accessible voting options

Voting by mail is a convenient option for most people. There are other options available:

- ▶ Online ballot marking program
- ▶ Accessible voting centers: Accessible voting centers are open to voters who may have difficulty completing their mail ballot. Each center has voting machines that offer audio ballots, large print ballots, and other assistive devices. Elections staff are available to assist as needed. Mail ballots can also be dropped off at any accessible voting center during business hours, without needing a stamp. Visit our website for a [list of accessible voting centers](#).

Information for felons

Convicted in Washington State Courts

If you were convicted of a felony in a Washington State Court, your right to vote is automatically restored when you are no longer under the authority of the Department of Corrections. This right can be revoked again by the Superior Court if you fail to repay financial obligations in a timely manner.

If you have questions about whether or not you are eligible, contact the Department of Corrections at (800) 430-9674.

Convicted in another State or Federal Court

If you were convicted of a felony in another state or federal court, your right to vote is restored as long as you are not currently incarcerated for that felony.

Registering to vote

Once your right to vote has been restored, you must re-register to vote, which can be done online, by mail or in person.

Information for homeless voters

What if I don't have a residential address?

If you are homeless or don't have a traditional residential address, you can still register to vote.

Put the location where you live, such as a shelter, park, motor home, intersection or other identifiable location you consider your residence on your registration form. This location will be used to register you to vote. (RCW 29A.08.112 effective 2005)

You must also provide a valid mailing address where you can receive ballots and election information on time. A mailing address can be a post office box, address of a friend or relative, shelter, or general delivery at a local post office.

Can I use my mailing address as my residential address?

No, your residential address must be where you live. This determines the issues and candidates that appear on your ballot.

However, you can receive your elections mail at any valid mailing location you choose: a post office box, personal mailbox, college mailbox, or a military or out of state/country address. All elections-related materials, including your ballot, will be sent to the mailing address you provide.