Auditor’s Office | Overview

The Auditor’s Office is responsible for elections, licensing services, and a variety of public records. The Auditor is term-limited to three 4-year terms per County Charter. The 58-staff office is comprised of union and career service employees. The Auditor’s Office accepts summon, complaints, and other legal documents on behalf of Pierce County. The three major systems used are VoteWA, GRM, and Department of Licensing (DRIVES).

The **Elections Division** maintains the state voter registration database and conducts elections for all districts in Pierce County. The Division also performs signature verification checks on initiatives, referendums, and petitions. Every ten years the Division redraws precinct lines based on updated redistricting plans. There were 554,363 active registered voters for the 2021 General Election.

We currently employ a hybrid telework schedule for staff outside of active elections.

The **Recording and Licensing Division** has cross-trained Recording and Licensing Techs, as well as the Accounting Assistant 3s, to optimize work completion.

The **Recording Unit** receives, indexes, and records public documents in a retrievable method, and preserves them for permanent retention and public inspection. We record ~ 250,000 documents each year. We collect excise tax payments on the sale of real property.

Excise tax affidavits, typically processed through the Assessor-Treasurer’s Office, is processed in the Auditor’s Office.

Our recording staff enjoy a hybrid telework schedule due to increased usage of eRecording and eConvey.

The **Licensing Unit** is an agent for the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) and provides vehicle and vessel title transactions, tab renewals, trip permits, plate replacement and more. We serve nearly 300,000 customers per year (38% internet; 35% counter; 27% mail).

The Licensing Unit also provides a variety of “other” licensing functions: Business licenses, marriage licenses, passport applications, and pet licensing. These services are provided to ~ 45,000 customers each year.

Due to the customer-facing requirements for licensing services, staff report to the office daily.
COMMUNICATIONS
Budgeted .05 FTE
dedicated support for elections, recording, and licensing.

IT SYSTEMS
ENGINEER LEAD
Mike Fitza
Outsourced from IT
dedicated support for elections, recording, and licensing.

AUDITORS OFFICE
ORG CHART

AUDITOR
Julie Anderson 00367

DEPUTY AUDITOR
Cindy Hartman 00352

ASSISTANT TO THE AUDITOR
Whitney Stevens 00339

FISCAL SERVICES
MANAGER
Mary Schmidtke 00338

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Georgia Cookson 102994

IT Systems
Engineer Lead
Mike Fitta
Outsourced from IT
dedicated support for elections, recording, and licensing.

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Stacy MacFarlane 07087

AUDITORS OFFICE
Org Chart

FISCAL SERVICES
MANAGER
Mary Schmidtke 00338

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Georgia Cookson 102994

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Stacy MacFarlane 07087

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Mary McKenzie 07412

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Ryan Bowen 102987

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Kim Burgess 04566

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Brandon Pogue 04522

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Cathy Natividad 05308

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Diane Pasquale 00375

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Donna Stath 05904

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Frances Russell 00373

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Heidi Trueblood 04530

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Jody Anderson 100885

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Liu Kalepo-Sio 101487

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Melissa King 03519

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Paul Kelsay 00374

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Royann Smith 05618

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Sabrina Tausee 07095

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Sharin Denny-Jenkins 07097

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Tawny Bye 05866

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Arislea Poole 04524

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Liz Oliver Tyson 00355

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Magdel Jon Corpuz 101868

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Mark Carey 101944

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Arlisea Poole 04524

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Liz Oliver Tyson 00355

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Magdel Jon Corpuz 101868

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Mark Carey 101944

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Andrea Dietz 04442

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Ann Clark 03794 (.75 O&M)

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Chireen Pennypacker 03941 (.35 O&M)

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Chris Comitale 00358

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Lora Macumber 00356

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Lori Patterson 00379

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Pam Price 03793

ACCOUNTING ASST 4
Rosemary Johnson 00354 (.75 O&M)
Summary: The Auditor’s Office is responsible for elections, licensing services, and a variety of public records.

The Elections Division maintains the voter registration database and conducts elections for all districts in Pierce County. The Division also performs signature verification checks on initiatives, referendums, and petitions. Every ten years the Division redraws precinct lines based on updated redistricting plans.

The Recording Division maintains the public record by recording, scanning, and indexing documents. Recorded documents include deeds, mortgage documents, easements, powers of attorney, liens, military discharge papers, and land records. In addition, the Division collects or exempts taxes due on the sale or transfer of properties and stationary mobile homes.

The Licensing Division renews vehicle and vessel license tabs, processes title transfers, issues license plates and various permits for vehicles and vessels, and oversees 10 Vehicle/Vessel Licensing subagents. In addition, the Division issues Marriage, Business, and Pet Licenses and processes Passport Applications, including photos.

The Auditor’s Office accepts summons, complaints, and other legal documents on behalf of Pierce County.

Budget Highlights: The 2022-23 biennial budget for the Auditor’s Office is 45.2%, or $10.5 million, above the prior biennium. The budget reflects the relocation of the Elections Center that will address the need to improve operations, create space for ballot processing and storage, and accommodate increased in-person visits. The budget also includes two new Accounting Assistant positions and one new Elections Specialist to support essential administrative activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNDING SOURCES</th>
<th>2018-19 Actual</th>
<th>2020-21 Budget</th>
<th>2022-23 Budget</th>
<th>Absolute Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund Support</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(5,854,840)</td>
<td>3,742,510</td>
<td>9,597,350</td>
<td>(163.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges for Services Revenue</td>
<td>24,836,989</td>
<td>25,342,730</td>
<td>28,964,290</td>
<td>3,621,560</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Fine &amp; Penalty Revenue</td>
<td>34,424</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Revenue</td>
<td>174,968</td>
<td>908,330</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>(798,330)</td>
<td>(87.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License &amp; Permit Revenue</td>
<td>1,007,449</td>
<td>1,059,060</td>
<td>949,000</td>
<td>(110,060)</td>
<td>(10.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Revenue</td>
<td>54,670</td>
<td>582,410</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>(570,410)</td>
<td>(97.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proceeds from Sale of Assets</td>
<td>(110)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers In</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,229,830</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(1,229,830)</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,108,390</td>
<td>23,268,020</td>
<td>33,778,300</td>
<td>10,510,280</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Pierce County 2022-23 Biennial Budget 111
## EXPENDITURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2018-19 Actual</th>
<th>2020-21 Budget</th>
<th>2022-23 Budget</th>
<th>Absolute Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>7,164,409</td>
<td>8,373,770</td>
<td>9,466,570</td>
<td>1,092,800</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>3,190,151</td>
<td>3,641,550</td>
<td>3,816,020</td>
<td>174,470</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>447,124</td>
<td>547,460</td>
<td>195,410</td>
<td>(352,050)</td>
<td>(64.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services and Charges</td>
<td>9,865,474</td>
<td>9,346,720</td>
<td>9,902,300</td>
<td>555,580</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental Services</td>
<td>1,211,796</td>
<td>205,350</td>
<td>118,000</td>
<td>(87,350)</td>
<td>(42.5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Outlays</td>
<td>34,118</td>
<td>357,480</td>
<td></td>
<td>(357,480)</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfers Out</td>
<td>455,048</td>
<td>795,690</td>
<td>10,280,000</td>
<td>9,484,310</td>
<td>1,192.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,368,121</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,268,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,778,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,510,280</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2021 FTE</th>
<th>2023 FTE</th>
<th>2020-21 Budget</th>
<th>2022-23 Budget</th>
<th>Absolute Change</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Control Services</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>651,340</td>
<td></td>
<td>(651,340)</td>
<td>(100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditor Cost Pools</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>246,980</td>
<td>239,180</td>
<td>3,065.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election Services</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td>12,727,610</td>
<td>22,750,570</td>
<td>10,022,960</td>
<td>78.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Document Services</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>52,840</td>
<td>53,680</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing Services</td>
<td>21.50</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>6,688,420</td>
<td>6,908,380</td>
<td>239,960</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording Services</td>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>11.60</td>
<td>3,160,010</td>
<td>3,818,690</td>
<td>658,680</td>
<td>20.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,268,020</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,778,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,510,280</strong></td>
<td><strong>45.2</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## STAFFING SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2018 FTE</th>
<th>2019 FTE</th>
<th>2020 FTE</th>
<th>2021 FTE</th>
<th>2022 FTE</th>
<th>2023 FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auditor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Auditor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Assistant</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst to the Auditor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Sys Business Analyst</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections Clerk</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections Specialist</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections Supervisor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Services Manager</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing Compliance Officer</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Manager</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording/Licensing Supervisor</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording/Licensing Tech</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td>26.05</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>27.55</td>
<td>27.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Control Support Technician</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Assistant</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>49.30</strong></td>
<td><strong>50.55</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.05</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.05</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Mission: Conduct honest and accurate elections; maintain the integrity and accessibility of the public record; and provide efficient licensing services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Government</td>
<td>1. Accountability for Results</td>
<td>a. Voter registration marketing campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Government</td>
<td>2. Customer-focused Services</td>
<td>b. Effective Capacity monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Government</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Online services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Government</td>
<td>3. Talented and Diverse Employees</td>
<td>d. Workforce race/ethnicity diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2019 Actual</th>
<th>2020 Actual</th>
<th>2021 Estimate</th>
<th>2022 Target</th>
<th>2023 Target</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of ballots returned as undeliverable</td>
<td>1.54%</td>
<td>.62%</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective capacity of operations (no in-person services 2020-2021)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of backfile images available online for staff access</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of backfile images available online for public access</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of applicants interviewed who self-identify as a person of color (target reflects County population parity)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INPUT/OUTPUT MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents Recorded</td>
<td>Each 199,712</td>
<td>211,089</td>
<td>276,527</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>243,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excise Tax Affidavits Processed</td>
<td>Each 33,135</td>
<td>31,797</td>
<td>32,150</td>
<td>33,600</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps Recorded</td>
<td>Each 1,189</td>
<td>1,305</td>
<td>1,158</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Applications/Certificates</td>
<td>Each 12,807</td>
<td>12,140</td>
<td>11,269</td>
<td>11,300</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Licenses Issued</td>
<td>Each 652</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passport Applications Processed</td>
<td>Each 12,988</td>
<td>15,414</td>
<td>3,844</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet Licenses</td>
<td>Each 18,532</td>
<td>14,776</td>
<td>13,269</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Transactions, Countywide</td>
<td>Each 1,128,862</td>
<td>1,120,191</td>
<td>1,119,244</td>
<td>1,160,000</td>
<td>1,155,000</td>
<td>1,150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Transactions, Auditor Staff</td>
<td>Each 193,470</td>
<td>171,623</td>
<td>87,931</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Voters</td>
<td>Voter 564,542</td>
<td>570,536</td>
<td>619,701</td>
<td>623,000</td>
<td>672,700</td>
<td>699,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections Conducted</td>
<td>Each 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts Participating in Elections</td>
<td>Each 31</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>91</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Records Requests</td>
<td>Each 354</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 County Pet Licenses sold only. Excludes Pet Agents 2019 forward.
2 Registered Voters include active and inactive.
Administration

We receive 6% of the **public records requests** across the County, representing over 200 requests annually, as well as 150-250 **legal docs**.

The fiscal unit's **cash management** activities are complex with 48 cash drawers/vault cash across two closed cashiering systems, multiple processors, locations, banks, tender types, and data systems. Everything is reconciled daily including multiple funds and roughly 75 local, state, and federal accounts which we collect for and distribute to on a daily and monthly basis.

**2006 – Pet Licensing and Animal Control** were moved to the Auditor's Office with the consolidation of Recording and Licensing Divisions.

**2014** - Began accepting **credit card payments**.

**2016** – Thirty percent **turnover** due to unscheduled retirements, terminations, and promotions.

**2018** – Partners with Tacoma Pierce County Health Department with satellite offices.

**2020** - **Animal Control was moved** to the Sheriff's Department.

**2021** – Maximized online customer service, offering nine out of 19 business services online. Remaining services cannot be offered online due to legal limitations or regulations.

**2022** - Began processing **money orders** for passport transactions.

**2022** - The Auditor's Office was one of the first departments to turn on the seven-year **Outlook retention rule**, a countywide initiative to save emails automatically to comply with retention laws. Over 3.2 million emails were reviewed for retention and potential transfer to State Archives.
Public Records Requests - Dept Breakout

- Sheriff: 44%
- Planning and Public Works: 18%
- Assessor Treasurer: 9%
- Auditor: 6%
- Prosecuting Attorney: 6%
- Remaining 21 Departments: 17%
Elections Division

Legislative/State Directives

The Washington State Association of County Auditors (WSACA) is active during legislative sessions providing testimony and fiscal notes to proposed legislation. Many of our service lines are impacted by legislation. Some of these take the form of unfunded mandates. Recent legislation with fiscal impacts includes: drop box legislation, pre-paid postage return on ballots, and Ranked Choice Voting.

Below is a chronologic listing of major legislative directives.

2004 - **Top 2 Primary** passed by the people as an initiative by almost 60%. In 2005, before the new law was implemented, the Washington state Democratic, Republican, and Libertarian Parties sued in federal court. The lower courts imposed an injunction prohibiting the state from implementing the new Primary.

March 2008 - the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the new law. Washington state used the new **Top 2 Primary** for the first time in the 2008 Primary and General Elections.


2011 - Legislation required **vote-by-mail** (VBM) statewide. Polls went away. **Voting centers** were required.

2017 - **Ballot Drop box** This law requires a drop box for every fifteen thousand registered voters in the county and a minimum of one ballot drop box in each city, town, and census designated place in the county with a post office.5472-S.SL.pdf (wa.gov)

2018 - **Postage paid return ballots**

2019 - **Future voter** - July 1st legislation allows 16- and 17-year-olds to sign up as future voters and be automatically registered to vote when they turn 18. New in 2022. A voter who turns 18 between the August Primary and the November General Election can vote in the Primary.

2019 Primary – **Same Day Registration** 6021-S.SL.pdf (wa.gov)

2019 Primary - State voter database (VoteWA). Previous system was county by county.

2020 - Legislation passed to ensure the **State will pay for their share** of all elections, generating new revenue in even years beginning with 2022.

2022 – **Re-districting**, aligning new county council, legislative, and congressional boundaries based on the 2020 Census, increased precincts from 610 to 730, about 20%. The 2022 process led to the elimination of precinct splits.
Benefits

- Fewer pollworkers/sites to coordinate
- Auditable paper trail
- Every eligible registered voter receives a ballot
- Ample time to research and vote
- Higher turnout

Challenges

- Material prep time for printing and mailing
- Requires high levels of staff expertise
- Vendor and equipment coordination (e.g., mailing houses, sorters, scanners, etc.)
- Length of time to report final results

How does VBM work?

All eligible voters are sent a ballot at least 18 days before election, military and overseas up to 90 days. Mailing address can be anywhere in the world.

Marked ballot is put in a security envelope/sleeve.

The security envelope/sleeve is put in a return envelope, which the voter signs.

Ballots have pre-paid postage and are returned through the mail or at ballot drop boxes.

If mailed, must be postmarked by election day. Drop boxes open until 8 p.m. on election day.

Voters can check ballot status online. Updates may take 3–4 days.

New ballots can be requested or printed, but will suspend any previously issued ballot and still need to be signature verified.

How does a VBM ballot get processed?

Envelope is scanned and marked as “Received” in the VoteWA system, then sorted into batches.

Signature is checked against voter registration records. Voter is contacted before processing if signature is missing or doesn’t match voter registration record.

Return envelope is opened and security envelope/sleeve is removed.

Security envelope/sleeve is opened and ballot is removed for processing, resulting in secrecy of the vote.

Ballot is reviewed for potential scanning issues like torn corners, then scanned and securely stored.

Scanners are not connected to any form of network or internet.

Ballots continue to be processed, cured, and tabulated until certification.

Timeline

Pre-1983: Washington Legislature authorized “permanent absentee” ballots for voters with disabilities and those age 65+, other voters to request absentee ballot for each election in writing.

1983: Special elections allowed to be conducted by mail ballot.

1991: Permanent absentee law expanded to allow any voter to join the list by request; once on the list they receive ballots for every election.

1993: Small precinct VBM law expanded to precincts with under 200 voters, some counties begin splitting precincts and moving to all VBM elections.

2005: Washington Legislature establishes VBM as a permanent option of the election process for all elections, allowing counties to choose.


Contact Washington Office of the Secretary of State Elections Division

elections@sos.wa.gov
1 (800) 448-4881
sos.wa.gov/elections
Find a Ballot Drop Box near you at www.PierceCountyElections.org
Innovation and Policy Decisions

2009 Drop boxes – Eight boxes began this program through a HAVA and Education grant award to the Pierce County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (PCVAAC).

2011 – Retired 16 staffed Express Booths that were set up 18 days prior to each election.

2011 – Candidate Filing is 100% online.

2014 – Video Voter’s Guide premiered that used Q codes to link to candidate forums or YouTube video.

2015 – Flap covering signature is removed from return envelope.

2017 – Clear Ballot tabulation system is implemented. The Clear Ballot system is a digital tabulation system that captures images of each ballot. This allows for the on-screen resolution of voter intent questions and allows for oval visualization of least confident votes.

2018 – ballot insertion outsourced, no longer a mail house.

2018 Primary - Agilis Sorter purchased and installed.

2019 – Points of Assistance (POA) programs – although not a voting center, library staff were trained to assist voters across the County that lacked the time, transportation, or information to register and vote on Election Day at the Election Center.

2020 – Purchased a second sorter with HAVA CARES monies and implemented Automatic Signature Recognition (ASR)

2020 Presidential General Election – Offered three-day drive-thru option for 17,085 voters on Annex campus, with over 3,600 receiving in-person services.

2022 – 50 drop boxes across the county.
History of Pierce County Drop Boxes (2007 to 2022)

- **FEDERAL HAVA GRANT** - $1,179,192 committed to accessibility - statewide
- Formed Pierce County Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Final polling place election
- 7 drop boxes and 1 express booth retired
- State law mandates vote-by-mail and drop boxes increase to 25
- Added Anderson Island and Key Center, totaling 27
- Added Roy City Hall, totaling 30
- Added another 9 drop boxes
- Bought 5 more drop boxes
- Added large boxes, rebranded all
- Grand total of 50 boxes

**Drop Box Totals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Drop Boxes</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Looking ahead
The Dawn of VBM

General Election

- Legislature permits all Vote by Mail for:
  - Special District elections.
  - Yes/No questions and levies.
  - Precincts with fewer than 100 voters.

VBM Becomes Part of Election Process

- Legislature makes Vote by Mail a permanent part of election system, allowing counties to use VBM for any election.
- Legislature and election officials strengthen over 500 election laws in the wake of 2004 Gregoire v. Rossi.

2008

General Election

- Voted at the poll: 16%
- Voted Absentee: 84%

Voted at the poll: 76%
- Voted Absentee: 24%
- Ballots cast: 243,492

2012

- Pierce County adopts digital scan technology, eliminates voting machines, and becomes 100% paper-based.

2009

- Washington Becomes Entirely VBM
  - After 38 of 39 counties adopt Vote by Mail, the legislature mandates Pierce County to adopt VBM to transition to VBM.
  - Pierce County operates 25 ballot drop boxes.

2018

- 58 Drop Box Locations
- 95% of Pierce County voters reside within a 2-mile radius of a ballot drop box.

2017

- No Postage Required on Ballots
  - Pierce County starts paying for return postage on ballots.
  - A total of 44 drop boxes are available in Pierce County.

2011

- General Election
  - Voted by Mail: 52%
  - Voted by Drop Box: 48%
  - Ballots cast: 349,476
  - 27 drop box locations.

2005

- Innovations Continue
  - Secretary of State offers online voter registration.
  - Pierce County implements Ranked Choice Voting for county offices.

2008

- Ballot Drop Boxes Introduced
  - Pierce County introduces ballot drop boxes, which are located in the county and designed to decrease their impact on VBM.

2011

- Secretary of State offers online voter registration.
- Pierce County implements Ranked Choice Voting for county offices.
- Pierce County Auditor becomes non-partisan position, term limits extended to three 4-year terms.

2017

- No Postage Required on Ballots
  - Pierce County starts paying for return postage on ballots.
  - A total of 44 drop boxes are available in Pierce County.

2012

- Pierce County adopts digital scan technology, eliminates voting machines, and becomes 100% paper-based.

2018

- 58 Drop Box Locations
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2022

- 95% of Pierce County voters reside within a 2-mile radius of a ballot drop box.
Voters Ask for Assistance

Library staff asks if registered

- **Registered**
  - Direct voter to myvote.wa.gov
    - Voter enters name & DOB
    - Voter selects the online ballot
      - Voter prints, signs & completes ballot

- **Not Registered**
  - Provide a Voter Registration Form
    - Is it completely filled out?
      - **Yes**
        - Call Elections Center 253.798.3699
          - Elections emails ballot packet to Library staff
            - Library staff prints packet & gives to voter
              - Voter completes packet, returns to Library staff

      - **No**
        - Return to voter to Finish

- Library staff receives a complete form
  - Library staff staples registration form to ballot packet and places in ballot box to be sent to Central Routing
Licensing Unit

Legislative/State Directives

Licensing fees are regulated by legislation and annual increases are not uncommon. Our staff are the messengers to citizens of these increases.

2012 - Implemented same sex marriage in Washington State.

2016 – Implementation of Department of Licensing legacy system update to DRIVES.

Innovation and Policy Decisions

The Auditor's Office has maximized customer self-service, offering nine out of 19 business services online. Remaining services cannot be offered on-line due to legal limitations or regulation.

2000 – Became a Passport Agent.

2006 – Began using QMatic as a customer management system.

2006-2011 – Conducted 18 passport fairs, issuing a total of 3,244 passports, the majority between 2006-2009.

2010 – Pet Agents across the county could sell pet tags, upload tag data into our database, and refer all renewal/replacement tags to our office.

2010 – We were one of only eight counties to offer quick titles, which allowed customers same day receipt of their title instead of 6-8 weeks.

2011 - Instituted licensing compliance for subagents.

2012 – Partnered Goodwill of the Olympics and Rainier Regions and Community Connection for our Supported Employment program, which allows for improved service times for our licensing customers.

2012 – Eliminated unnecessary business licenses and regulations, created a national background check for business applicants, and streamlined the appeal process for license denials.

2012 – Launched a joint web portal with pet licensing jurisdictions that offered GIS address look-up.

2013 – Updated County Code for business licenses and reduced background check timeline for businesses from eight weeks to under five days.

2014 – Contracted with City of Tacoma for our taxicab licensing, Uber, and Lyft drivers. This alleviated a major safety concern.

2020 – We partnered with sheriff staff to ensure proper reporting of goods for our licensed businesses.

2021 - An online scheduling system (QMatic) was implemented successfully, enabling us to lower the average wait time from 13 minutes pre-COVID to three minutes. But, while lowering our wait times, average transaction times have increased from 10 minutes to 13 minutes. This uptick in transaction time is due to customer volumes now serviced at subagencies, leaving more complex transactions for the county office.

2021 - A significant system enhancement was implemented to allow customers to order certified copies of marriage certificates online.
2022 – Contracted with third-party vendor to perform animal-related business inspections.

With DOL approval, Pierce County has ten licensing subagencies. We've been successfully diverting licensing transactions to these contracted licensing agencies since 2016, as evidenced by the graph below. As licensing offices increase number of transactions, our supervision and oversight increases.
Recording Unit

Legislative Directives

Between 1989 – 2021, recording fees were increased 16 times through legislative actions, from $5 per recording to $203.50. The majority of these fees ($185.50) supports housing, with ($18.00) for historical preservation and Auditor's O&M.

2020 - graduated Real Estate Excise Tax was implemented, increasing rate complexity and adding exemptions for special use properties.

2021 - SB 5019 created the Recording Standards Commission charged with the review and recommendation of recorded document standards. Our Licensing/Recording Manager has been appointed to the commission.

Innovation and Policy Decisions

2002 – Web access was available to view recorded documents online.

2008 – eRecording was implemented.

2010 - After five years of planning, eConvey was implemented to allow recording of excise affidavits online.

2011 – The GRM recording system update involved a process change on all lines of business.

2015 – Provided a GIS link to search for recorded documents.

2015 – Begins our attendance at Department of Natural Resources Survey Advisory Board meetings to represent all 39 counties.

2016 – Introduced biometric time clock for extra hires with integration into Workday financial system.

2017 - eConvey allows online recording of excise documents.

2017 – Property Records Education Partners (PREP) was established in Washington State.

2018 – Instant Return was implemented. Customer documents were scanned, recorded, and returned to them at time of service.

2019 – Online certified copies can be ordered, along with the ability to submit all conveyance documents electronically.

2020 – Automated redaction was implemented on recorded documents.

2022 – eSubmit (government to government) allows government agencies to record online. It does not include REET affidavits.
Recording, Excise, and Map Fees
References RCW 36, RCW 58.08, Pierce County Code 4.58.020, and WAC 332-150

Recording Fees
Standard fee:
First page...................................................... $203.50
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
Exceptions: Assignment of Deed of Trust, Resignation or Appointment of Trustee and Substitution of Trustee, Water/Sewer District Liens, and satisfaction of liens - First page........................................ $18.00
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
IRS liens and satisfaction of liens................................ $16.00
Government Liens/Satisfaction of Liens (State, County, City offices only)
- First page...................................................... $39.00
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
Deed of Trust - First page........................................ $204.50
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
Death/Birth Certificates/Marriage Dissolution Decree........................................ $38.00
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
Recording multiple title documents; for each title/transaction after the first: $18.00, $30.00, $203.50 or $204.50 (depending upon document title and fee listed above)
Non-standard documents, in addition to recording fee $5.00
“Request for Exemption from Public Disclosure of Military Discharge Papers” No fee

Excise Fees
Credit/Debit card payments for Excise Tax include 1.5% merchant fee

Map Recording Fees
Boundary Line Adjustment, Resolution, or Revision........................................ $287.50
Surveys, Site Plans, Short Plats or Large Lots........................................ $287.50
- Each additional page........................................ $5.00
Plats and Condos, up to 40 lots and 5 seals........................................ $287.50
- Add $50.00 per additional lot and $1.00 per additional seal
Cemetery Plats, up to 40 lots and 5 seals........................................ $287.50
- Add $25.00 per additional lot and $1.00 per additional seal
Lot Combination........................................ $267.00
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00

Miscellaneous Recording Fees
Certified photographs, legal size or less, 1st page........................................ $3.00
- Each additional page........................................ $1.00
Uncertified photographs, legal size or less, per page........................................ $1.00
Searching records, including UCC searches, per hour (copies require additional fee)........................................ $8.00
Map copies, 18” x 24”, per page: Mylar - $7.00; Bond - $3.00; additional page $1.00
Public Access Online Fee........................................ up to $5.00
File Transfer Protocol (FTP) per image........................................ $0.015

Passport Fees
References U.S. Department of State and Pierce County Code 4.58.020
- Passport Book (16 yrs and older) paid to Dept. of State........................................ $130.00
- Passport Book (15 yrs and younger) paid to Dept. of State........................................ $100.00
- Passport Card (16 yrs and older) paid to Dept. of State........................................ $30.00
- Passport Card (15 yrs and younger) paid to Dept. of State........................................ $15.00
- Expediting Fee (3 week delivery) paid to Dept. of State........................................ $60.00
- Expedite Mail Fee - paid to Dept. of State........................................ $17.56
Agent fee (per application)........................................ $35.00
Color Photos (set)........................................ $12.00
(However, no money order only)

Pet License Fees
References - Pierce County Code, Title 6, RCW 46.40.380 and RCW Title 15
- Altered Cat........................................ $12.00
- Altered Dog........................................ $20.00
- Unaltered Dog or Cat........................................ $55.00
- Senior/Disabled Owner Altered Cat (62 and older)........................................ $5.00
- Senior/Disabled Owner Altered Dog (62 and older)........................................ $10.00
- Senior Unaltered Dog or Cat (62 and older, disabled)........................................ $30.00
- Replacement Pet Tag........................................ $5.00
- Potentially Dangerous Animal Permit........................................ $250.00
- Dangerous Animal Permit........................................ $500.00
- Commercial Kennel or Cattery License........................................ $260.00
- Boarding Kennel or Cattery License........................................ $200.00
- Foster Shelter/Kennel/Cattery License (if spayed/neutered)........................................ $75.00
- Foster Shelter/Kennel/Cattery License (if spayed/neutered)........................................ $150.00
- Bobby Kennel or Cattery License (6 - 20 dogs and/or cats)........................................ $150.00
- Grooming Pastor License........................................ $100.00
- Pet Shop License........................................ $35.00
- Private Kennel or Cattery License........................................ $150.00

Public Records Request Fees
CD containing public documents or data........................................ $5.00
Paper copies- black & white (per page)........................................ $1.50
Postage cost (if required)........................................ Actual cost

Marriage License Fees
References - RCW Title 26.04 and Pierce County Code 4.52.010
- Marriage License........................................ $72.00
- Certified copies........................................ $3.00
- Printed copies........................................ $1.00
- Plain copy of Marriage Certificate........................................ $1.00
- Duplicate packet........................................ $6.00
- 5 year Record Search fee (for marriages prior to 1984)........................................ $8.00

Vehicle and Vessel Licensing Fees
References RCW 46.12, RCW 46.16, RCW 46.70, and WAC 308-93
Registration Fees - Passenger car/trailer renewal currently licensed in WA:
- Filing Fee........................................ $4.50
- License Service Fee........................................ $0.50
- State License Fee........................................ $30.00
- Vehicle weight fee based on scale weight:
  - 0 - 4,000 pounds........................................ $25.00
  - 4,001 - 6,000 pounds........................................ $45.00
  - 6,001 - 8,000 pounds........................................ $65.00
- Ferry Replacement Fund Service Fee........................................ $8.00
- Electric Car Fee........................................ $150.00
- Plus RTA/ Sound Transit tax of 1.1% of market value if you live within the RTA boundaries. TBD fees of $10.00-$100.00 may apply depending on the jurisdiction.
- Pick-up truck renewal currently licensed in WA:
  - Gross weight fee:
    - 4,000 lbs........................................ $53.00
    - 6,000 lbs........................................ $73.00
    - 8,000 lbs........................................ $93.00
    - 10,000 lbs........................................ $93.00
  - 12,000 lbs........................................ $81.00
- Plus:
- Filing Fee........................................ $4.50
- Ferry Replacement Fund Service Fee........................................ $8.00
- Plus RTA/ Sound Transit tax of 1.1% of market value if you live within the RTA boundaries. Applies to trucks with a scale weight of 6,000 lbs or less. TBD fees of $10.00-$100.00 may apply depending on the jurisdiction.
- Vehicles with a declared Gross Weight of 10,000 or more will pay freight project fee equal to 15% of the license fee.

Other Fees:
Transfer of Washington title - plus the applicable sales/use tax........................................ $42.00
Non-powered transfer fee........................................ $35.00
Add/Delete/Change Legal Owner........................................ $35.00
Vehicle Duplicate Washington Title........................................ $35.00
Vessel Duplicate Title........................................ $26.75
Quick Title........................................ $50.00 (plus transfer fees)
Passenger plate........................................ $37.25
Truck Replacement Plate........................................ $36.50
Cycle Replacement Plate........................................ $19.25
Trailer Replacement Plate........................................ $25.25
Replacement Tab........................................ $13.75
Truck Replacement Tab........................................ $13.00
Replacement Registration........................................ $14.50
Truck Replacement Registration........................................ $13.75
Sellers Report of Sale........................................ $13.25
Temporary Trip Permits (3 day)........................................ $33.00
Discover Pass........................................ $32.00
The Vehicle and Vessel fees listed are the most common fees. At other vehicle/vessel fees should be acquired from a License Technician in our office or one of the subagencies.

Last updated December 2021

Any payment returned by the bank will be assessed a $25.00 service fee.
Where Does the $203.50 Recording Fee Go?

By state law, the standard recording fee is distributed to the following funds:

**Archives and Preservation**

Commissioner’s Preservation Fund  $1.00
Used at the discretion of the County Commissioners for historical programs and preserving historical documents.

State Archives Fund  $2.00
Used by the State for archives and records management training, funding grant programs, and constructing a new regional archives facility.

Preservation Fund  $2.00
Collected by the State and redistributed to county governments for preservation of historical documents.

State Library–Archives Fund  $6.00
Used by the State to operate and maintain the state archives, state library, and capital museum.

**Affordable Housing**

Homeless Housing Assistance Fund  $47.58
Used by the County and municipalities to fund local homeless housing services, programs, and grants.

State Home Security Fund  $97.18
Used by the State to maintain the statewide homeless housing strategic plan and provide grants for partial rental assistance, homeless shelters, youth shelters, and transitional housing.

State Affordable Housing Fund  $28.94
Used by the State to fund low-income housing subsidy programs.

Low-Income Housing Assistance Fund  $7.41
Used by the County to provide affordable housing for very low-income households and emergency shelters.

Growth Management Planning Fund  $2.50
Used by the State to manage high density residential growth and environmental impacts.

**Administration**

General Fund  $5.65
Used by the County for administration and operations.

Recording Operations and Maintenance  $3.24
Used by the Recording Division for modernizing and improving the recording and indexing system.
Pierce County Auditor's Office
2019
Revenues - Where Did They Go?

- Auditor's Office (What We Keep) 3.10%
- Other County Departments 9.10%
- Cities and Towns 8.19%
- Washington State 79.23%
- Federal Government 0.38%

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<tr>
<th>Revenue Category</th>
<th>Auditor's Office</th>
<th>Other County Departments</th>
<th>Cities and Towns</th>
<th>Washington State</th>
<th>Federal Government</th>
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<td>$252,821</td>
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Pierce County Auditor's Office
2019 Revenues - Where Did They Go?

- Auditor's Office (What We Keep) 3.10%
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Brief History of the Pierce County Auditor’s Office

Each County in Washington State has a directly elected County Auditor. This is established in state statute. Auditors are “statutory officers, elected at the county level.”

Pierce County became a county in 1852 and has been electing County Auditors since 1858.

Over the years the duties and the responsibilities of the Auditor's office have shifted and evolved.

Early on, the Auditor's office was responsible for budget submission and preparation "on or before the first Tuesday of September of each year." (From a 1938 publication entitled City Government of Tacoma, Washington, by the Pierce County Taxation Bureau)

Then the council would make any changes necessary, and the budget would be adopted for the next year. Any disbursements by the Treasurer would be examined by the Auditor.

Even as recent as 1974 the Auditor's office was performing audits, in addition to many other duties.

1852 – “Franklin Pierce” County established
County-designation made our community a legal subdivision of the state. County Commissioners were elected.

1853
First Plat filed. Chapman’s Part of the Town of Steilacoom, John M. Chapman, September 14, 1853.

1859
Books furnished to the Auditor’s office $26.25.

Auditor’s office burns. The office was located on Balch Street in Steilacoom and the origin of the fire is not known. The Auditor states that there had not been a fire in his office for a week previously. He had the sum of $400.00 in his office, which no trace has been found. This leads to the impression, in the mind of the Auditor, that the fire was the work of an incendiary, after having plundered the office. The building was owned by Henry Murray, who loss by destruction is $600. The office is moved two blocks to the second floor of the new brick jail.

First deed is recorded April 21, 1859. The conveyance is written in longhand and is from Samuel Bills to Mary Ann Harn for property near Steilacoom.

1880
The County seat and the Auditor’s office moves to Tacoma to 1107 D St. (Market Street)

1883
“Old County Court House” opens at South 11th & G St and the Auditor’s office moves again.
1906
The County Assessor established tax rates. The Auditor levied the rates, managed the assessment roles, and administered contract bonds.

1936
A Photostat machine is purchased to photograph real estate records. The exposed paper is taken from the back of the machine in a specially equipped dark room, developed, dried and later bound in permanent record books. This will eliminate the necessity of the laborious work of copying instruments on typewriters and do away with the possibility of errors.

1938
The City of Tacoma’s annual report documents an Auditor in the City. Duties included budget preparation. This position was “established under the Division of Municipal Corporations of the State Auditor’s Office.”

1957
County Auditor:

- Prepares county budget and presents to the Board of Commissioners.
- Makes monthly budget reports for the Commissioners.
- Has budget control.
- Approves tax roles.
- Issues licenses (business, automobile, hunting / fishing, marriage).
- Records public documents.

1959
Auditor’s office moves to the new County City Building on South 9th and Tacoma Ave.

1960
County Auditor with an appointed Superintendent of Elections and an appointed Clerk of Commissioners. Duties include:

- Inspects all county books and submits them to the State Auditor.
- Approves tax roles.
-Writes warrants for all bills presented to the county.
- Checks the fee books of each county official, every month.
- Maintains all records of property ownership.
- Licensing (business, automobile, marriage).
- Elections (although it appears that cities and towns maintained their own election officers for registration).
- Budget control.
- County Payroll.
1972
Auditor’s office gets its first printer and copier; the copier had three buttons, on, off and print. This eliminated the use of carbon paper in some areas of the office.

1974
First short plat recorded 8/12/74. Owners Donald H. and Marguerite L. Riley, William G. Thornton, surveyor, recording fee is $10.00. Property is located on 62nd Ave E, the old Garden Valley Road.

1976
First computer. The main frame was on the sixth floor of the County City Building, office employee’s soldered wires down to the first floor Auditor’s office. There were two “dumb” terminals to index only. Nothing could be looked up. The recording number was stamped on the document, then “clocked” with the time, then handwritten in the fee book. The document next moved to the line table, was indexed by grantor and grantee, then stamped with the book and page number, moved on to be filmed on 35mm film. That night, Commonwealth Title picked up all of the day’s documents, they filmed the documents on 16mm film, made four or five copies for the other title companies and then the film was put on aperture cards. This process took one and a half minutes per document. Marriage documents were handled the same way. The following day, a printout from the “dumb” terminals was used to verify all of the index information.

The sheriff’s office provided the marriage department a list of wanted felons. Felons got arrested right in the office.
A Judge could waive the three-day waiting period on marriage applications.

1980
CAAP County Auditors Automated Processing. Prior to this, auto registrations were done on a three-part carbon form. One part was filed by owner’s name in the office, one part was sent to Olympia and the car owner was required to keep his registration copy on the steering wheel column of the vehicle. Police officers couldn’t call in license plate numbers, if you were pulled over, the officer could look at the steering column to see the name of the registered owner. All auto license renewals were due at the first of the year.

First time use of micro fiche to look up registered voters.
Recording numbers change from sequential numbers to Year/Month/Day/sequential format. Transition to IBM terminal and micro fiche begin.

1981 – Home Rule Charter
Adopting a “Home Rule” Charter made Pierce County its own government (as opposed to simply a subdivision of the state).

County Executive and County Council.

This changed the form of county government, making the executive branch an elected County Executive, with three other elected officials—the Auditor, the Assessor-Treasurer, and the Prosecuting Attorney, in addition of course to the elected council members.
The major change to the duties and responsibilities of the office seems to have come after the Home Rule Charter went into effect in 1981.

At this time much of the budgeting and financial oversight seemed to have shifted to the Executive’s responsibility (although no documentation was located where the responsibilities are clearly spelled out.)

- Approves tax roles.
- Issues licenses (business, automobile, hunting / fishing, marriage).
- Records public documents.

1982
Home Rule Charter combined the Assessor’s office with the Treasurer’s office and moved the Treasurer’s office to the Annex Building where the Assessor’s office was located. The County Council moved Excise tax collection from the Treasurer’s office to the Auditor’s office for better customer service as the offices were now in two different buildings.

1984
Auditor’s office moves from the County City building to the Annex building at 2401 S. 35th Street, the old ValuMart store location which was built in 1960. Pierce County purchased the building in 1976 for the County shop and equipment storage. Voting machines were also stored in the building. ValuMart store moved to 38th & Pine Street and went out of business the following year.

1987
Auditor’s office phone lines doubled from 2 to 4 and will soon increase to 8 lines. The office is receiving 500 phone calls a day.

2000
Office begins offering Passport Services

2003
Office begins again scanning documents after it had been handled by an outside vendor since 1984.

2006 – Animal Control
Animal Control was added to the Auditor’s duties in 2006.

2019 – Animal Control
Animal Control was transferred back to the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department in 2019, effective January 1, 2020.
Elected Auditors

1853 – 1858  Henry E. Bradley
1859 - 1862  George Gallagher
1862 - 1864  James M. Bachelder
1864 - 1865  John Latham
1866 - 1867  G.W. Sloan
1867 - 1873  John Latham
1873 - 1881  George B. Kandle
1881 - 1887  William B. Kelley
1887-1891  Edward Huggins.

Edward Huggins, the last agent of the Hudson’s Bay Company at Nisqually, became a U.S. Citizen. He was elected Auditor in the election of November 2, 1886.

1891-1893  William H. Hollis
1893 -1895  Richard A. Ketner
1895 - 1897  Frank H. Gloyd
1897-1901  William D.C. Spike
1901 - 1905  James H. Davis
1905 – 1908  Ithamar M. Howell (Deputies - William A. Stewart, John H. Chandler, and A. J. Weisbach)
1912  JL Wadsworth
1914  Thomas N Morris
1918 - 1922  CA Campbell

Resigned 1/23/22 to become Governor’s assistant director for the department of Business Control.

1922  Freemont C. Campbell Jr., appointed.

Freemont was the Deputy Auditor, as well as CA Campbell’s brother.
1926 - 1930  Freemont C. Campbell Jr.

Ran unopposed.

1931 -1934  C. H. Renschler

1935 -1942  Clifford Davis

Mr. Davis was elected Auditor in the November 6, 1934, election. Elected County Commissioner in 1942 election; served from January 1943 until death September 26, 1943. Joseph E. Ford, Chief Deputy Auditor, elected Auditor in 1942 election.

1943-1948  Joseph E. Ford

Re-elected in 1946 election. Charged with larceny on July 23, 1948. He pled guilty on September 24, 1948, and leaves office for term at the State Penitentiary.


Appointed Auditor by Board of County Commissioners in September, 1948. Elected to that office on November 2, 1948. Elected overwhelmingly in 1950 election; unopposed in election. Died October 4, 1969, of a heart attack, while attending an event at Husky Stadium in Seattle.

1969  Morris Reed

Mr. Reed, chief deputy auditor, was temporarily appointed auditor on October 6, 1969, by county commissioners.

1969 - 1984  Richard (Dick) Greco

Richard Greco was formally appointed auditor in 1969 after the death of Jack Sonntag. He was subsequently elected to that office.

There was an unsuccessful recall attempt in 1985. Greco was suspended from office in August of 1986 over charges of bribery.

In 1986 Ken Brewer stepped in for Greco. He was also the assessor & went back and forth between the offices.

1986  Ken Brewer

Ken Brewer was appointed Acting Auditor in August of 1986 and served until after the November election when Brian Sonntag the winner of the election was appointed Acting Auditor until his regular term began.

1986  Brian Sonntag

Brian Sonntag was appointed Acting Auditor December 1, 1986 and was elected Auditor on November 4, 1986.
1991  
Brian Sonntag

*Mr. Sonntag was elected Washington State Auditor at the November, 1992 election. He took office as State Auditor on January 13, 1993.*

*At this time (1991), the Auditor’s assumed the duties of the Elections Department.*

1993 - 2001  
Cathy Pearsall-Stipek (Deputy, Pat McCarthy)

*Mrs. Pearsall-Stipek was appointed County Auditor in January of 1993 and assumed office on January 13, 1993. She was elected County Auditor in the November election of 1993.*

2002 – 2008  
Pat McCarthy (Deputy, Keri Rooney)

*Ms. McCarthy, formerly the Chief Deputy Auditor under Cathy Pearsall-Stipek, was elected in the November election of 2001 and took office in January, 2002.*

*In November 2008, she was elected as Pierce County Executive and took office in January 2009.*

*During this period (November 2007), Charter Amendment 3 (County Council Ordinance No. 2007-51) was approved by voters. Passage of this Charter Amendment made the Pierce County Auditor a nonpartisan position and increased the term limit from two to three consecutive 4-year terms.*

2009  
Jan Shabro (Deputy, Deryl McCarty)

*Ms. Shabro was appointed County Auditor in February 2009 by the County Council. Nine months later, she stood for election in November 2009 (special election to fill an unexpired term). She lost the election to Julie Anderson.*

2009 – 2022  
Julie Anderson (Deputy, Lori Augino and Deputy Cindy Hartman)

Caption: Pierce County employees posed in the Auditor's office within the County Courthouse in March of 1898. The Auditor at that time was F.H. Gloyd, possibly the man seated behind the desk. W.D.C. Spike, sporting a large handlebar mustache, is seated near the center of the group. Mr. Spike would go on to defeat Republican A.P. Peterson on November 8, 1898, for the Auditor's position, 4,209 votes to 3,617. W.D.C. Spike was a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and came to Tacoma about 1890. He was a widely known businessman involved in the Pacific Coast Gypsum Co. and the American Coal Co. Mr. Spike would go on to serve two terms as County Auditor. He passed away on July 2, 1915, at home. (TDL 7-3-15, p. 11-obit.; Bonney, W.P., History of Pierce County Washington, p. 539-voting statistics)

Photo from the Tacoma Public Library, (Arthur French Collection TPL-1106)
Caption: Long lines of Pierce County residents filled the second floor hallway of the old Pierce County Courthouse on January 2, 1948 outside the Auditor's office. Motorists had until January 10th to register their vehicles, or a $3 penalty would be attached to their registration fees. Anyone choosing to drive without a 1948 license sticker could be arrested and heavily fined. (T. Times, 1/3/48, p. 7).

Image from Tacoma Public Library, (Richards Studio D31218-3)
On December 30, 1924, a crowd of last minute "shoppers" filled the office of Pierce County Auditor Freemont Campbell Jr. in a last minute attempt to get their 1925 automobile license applications filed before the January 1 deadline. By the 30th, scarcely half of the county's automobile owners had applied for their new licenses. Tacoma and Pierce County drivers who belonged to the Automobile Club of Western Washington could avoid the lines at the auditor's office in the Pierce County courthouse, 1012 South G Street, by going to the automobile club's Tacoma office at 119 South 9th Street. (TNT 1/1/1925, pg. 11) (WSHS- negative A644-0)

Image from Tacoma Public Library, (Richards Studio A-644)
Harry P. Cain came to the Pierce County Auditor’s office in the early hours of November 6, 1946 to check the first, unofficial returns for the U.S. Senate race. Mr. Cain, a former mayor of Tacoma, beat Democratic candidate Hugh Mitchell to become Washington state’s junior senator. He had been defeated by Warren G. Magnuson in 1944. Although Mr. Cain did not carry Pierce County, he gathered enough votes in the other counties to join the first Republican congress in 16 years. (T.Times 11/6/1946 p.1)
Caption: On September 30, 1942, under the watchful eye of Deputy Auditor Mary Nuzman, (left), Mrs. Clara Doan filled in the blanks on the Declaration of Candidacy for Constable. Mrs. Doan was the Republican candidate and the first woman to run for the office. Her candidacy was being presented by Dr. Hinton D. Jonez, center, Republican County Chairman. If elected, she would be one of 3 Constables, along with Robert Dykeman and "Connie" Ireland. Most of the Constable's work load was paperwork. (T. Times 10/2/1945, pg. 5)

Image from Tacoma Public Library, (Richards Studio D13489-5)
On November 12th, 1940, Auditor S. Clifford Davis, right, and Deputy Auditor Arthur W. Schlegel examined the railroad car seal and padlock on the last of three ballot boxes filled with absentee ballots. These ballots were particularly important because the election of Washington’s Governor was hanging in the balance. Guarded from the public by a rail fence but visible to all interested parties, Pierce County Election Board members counted the absentee votes. On November 14th, the last remaining gubernatorial contest in the nation was finally decided when the absentee ballots assured Seattle Mayor Arthur Langlie’s election as Governor. He defeated Democrat and former U.S. Senator C.C. Dill of Spokane. Langlie was the only Republican to win a major office in the state that year. The two candidates were separated by roughly 3,000 votes. It was several days before Dill conceded the election. (T. Times 11/12/1940, pg. 1; 11/14/1940, pg. 1-article)

Image from Tacoma Public Library, (Richards Studio D10438-1)