

# Election Guide

## FOR CANDIDATES

Includes Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules  
Updated February 1, 2021

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## About This Guide

Use this guide in conjunction with state and local laws, not in place of them. The Revised Code of Washington ("RCW"), Washington Administrative Code ("WAC") and other notations are offered as references for additional research. The material contained herein may change due to new legislation, judicial determinations, or rule changes.

The requirements described in this guide serve as the Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules for Pierce County as authorized by RCW 29A.32.230.

## 2021 Key Election Dates

5/3/2021	First day to file for office by mail (RCW 29A.24.081)
5/17/2021	First day to file for office (RCW 29A.24.050)
5/21/2021	Last day to file for office (RCW 29A.24.050)
5/24/2021	Last day to withdraw (RCW 29A.24.131)
5/28/2021	Last day to submit local voters' pamphlet information and photo.
6/19/2021	Overseas and military ballots mailed for Primary Election (RCW 29A.40.070)
7/16/2021	Local ballots mailed. Accessible voting units available at Pierce County Election Center for Primary Election (RCW 29A.40.070)
7/26/2021	Deadline to receive new registrations online and by mail for the Primary Election (RCW 29A.08.140)
8/3/2021	Deadline for in person registration and voter updates for Primary Election (RCW 29A.08.140)
8/3/2021	<b>PRIMARY ELECTION</b> (RCW 29A.04.311)
8/17/2021	County certification of Primary Election (RCW 29A.60.190)
8/20/2021	State certification of Primary Election (RCW 29A.60.240)
9/18/2021	Overseas and military ballots mailed for General Election (RCW 29A.40.070)
10/15/2021	Local ballots mailed. Accessible voting units available at Pierce County Election Center for General Election (RCW 29A.40.070)
10/25/2021	Deadline to receive new registrations online and by mail for the General Election (RCW 29A.08.140)
11/2/2021	Deadline for in person registration and voter updates for General Election (RCW 29A.08.140)
11/2/2021	<b>GENERAL ELECTION</b> (RCW 29A.04.321)
11/23/2021	County certification of General Election (RCW 29A.60.190)
12/2/2021	State certification of General Election (RCW 29A.60.250)

## Where to file

### Pierce County Elections

Candidates file online with the Pierce County Elections Division for the following offices:

- Port of Tacoma Commissioners
- City and Town Mayors and Council Members  
*- except City of Auburn and City of Pacific see below.*
- School District Directors  
*- except Yelm Community Schools District No. 2 and Auburn School District No. 408 see below.*
- Fire Protection District Commissioners
- Park and Recreation District Commissioners
- Water District Commissioners
- Sewer District Commissioners

### King County Elections

- *City of Auburn*
- *City of Pacific*
- *Auburn School District No. 408*

For filing information:

Visit [www.kingcounty.gov/elections](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elections) or call (206) 296-VOTE (8683)

### Thurston County Elections

- *Yelm Community Schools No. 2*

For filing information:

Visit [www.thurstonvotes.org](http://www.thurstonvotes.org) or call (360) 786-5408

## How to file in Pierce County

Candidates are required to file online at  
[PierceCountyElections.org](http://PierceCountyElections.org)

### Requirements

- Be a registered voter of the district and meet the residency requirements for the office for which you are filing. (see pages 16 - 17)
- Pay filing fee online with credit card. Or pay by cash or check in-person. Your name will not appear on any official lists as a candidate for office until your Declaration of Candidacy is approved and your filing fee is paid.
- Provide a valid email address.

The online filing tool will give you step by step instructions, email you a confirmation notice, alert you when other candidates file in your race, and provide an opportunity to submit your local voters' pamphlet information.

## When to file

### File online

Monday, May 17 at 9:00 a.m. - Friday, May 21 at 4:00 p.m.

### File in person, using computer kiosk

Pierce County Election Center  
2501 S 35th Street, Suite C  
Tacoma, WA 98409  
(253) 798-VOTE (8683)  
May 17 - 21, 2021, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Pierce County candidate filing closes Friday, May 21, 2021  
at 4:30 p.m.**

## Campaign Information

It is highly recommended that when filing for office, you provide a campaign mailing address, telephone number, and website.

If you do not provide a campaign mailing address, your voter registration mailing address will be published online in the list of candidates who have filed.

## **Withdrawal of Filing RCW 29A.24.131**

A candidate may withdraw a Declaration of Candidacy in writing through Monday, May 24, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. There shall be no withdrawal period for Declarations of Candidacy filed during special filing periods. Filing fees are not refundable.

## **Order of Appearance on Ballots and in Voters' Pamphlet**

The order of candidates' names on the Primary Election ballot and in the Primary Election Local Voters' Pamphlet is determined by lot drawing. The lot drawing occurs after the close of filing on Friday, May 21, 2021. The process is open to the public and begins after the candidate filings have been proofed for accuracy. (RCW 29A.36.131)

In the General Election, the candidate with the most votes in the Primary Election will be listed first on the ballot, as well as in the General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet.

If no Primary Election is held for an office, candidates will appear in lot draw order on the General Election ballot.

# Local Voters' Pamphlet

## The Administrative Rules -- What the law says

RCW 29A.32.230 requires the Auditor to adopt and publish administrative rules governing the format and content of the local voters' pamphlet. These rules must include: (a) Limits on the length and deadlines for submission of candidates' statements; (b) the basis for rejecting all or any part of a candidates' statement; and (c) an administrative appeal process in the case of such rejection.

## Submission Deadlines

The deadline to submit your local voters' pamphlet information online is **Friday, May 28, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**

## Basis for Rejection

All or any part of a candidates' statement may be rejected by the Elections Division if it includes biographical information, statements, photos, or contact information that:

- Is obscene;
- Is libelous;
- Contains a commercial advertisement;
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail;
- Contains matter that is otherwise not germane to the candidate's qualifications nor to the office that is the subject of election;
- Contains matter that otherwise does not comply with applicable law;
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or that does not comply with applicable law; or
- Was received after the submittal deadline.

Photos will be rejected that do not meet the statutory and administrative criteria outlined on page 12.



## Helpful Tips

The candidates' statement portion of the local voters' pamphlet is your opportunity to introduce yourself to the voters. It can be thought of as your resume to the voters.

### Do:

- Offer your vision to the voters. Be positive.
- Describe what you want to accomplish, if elected.
- Describe what makes you an excellent candidate.

### Don't:

- Criticize your opponent or other individuals.
- Name people specifically or make references to "my opponent" or "the incumbent."
- Make false or misleading statements.

As part of your statement you may wish to explain:

- Who – Who **you** are.
- What – What **you** will do if elected.
- When – The timeframe for **your** goals or accomplishments.
- Where – **You** will make changes.
- Why – Are **you** the best candidate for the office?
- How – **You** will make changes or accomplish your goals for the office.

<b>GOOD!</b>	<b>Not Allowed!</b>
I do not support nor will I vote for tax increases.	(Opponent's Name) voted to increase taxes.
Using my financial background, I will make sure your money is spent wisely under my guidance.	The incumbent has wasted taxpayer's money. The incumbent has cost you millions and millions of dollars on poorly run projects.
If elected, I will ensure all laws are followed and applied fairly.	My opponent ignores the law. He regularly breaks the rules.
I do not support the following projects...	My opponent supports many risky projects and boondoggles.
Using my skills and abilities. I will bring improved decision making to the council.	The current council is made up of tax-loving bureaucrats.
I will bring new ideas and integrity to the city council.	The mayor and the entire city council are unimaginative and have offered no new ideas.

<b>GOOD!</b>	<b>Not Allowed!</b>
List your educational background in biography section	Go Seahawks! Go Huskies! Go Cougs!

## **Submit your Local Voters' Pamphlet information online**

The deadline to submit your local voters' pamphlet information online is **Friday, May 28, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**

The local voters' pamphlet provides an opportunity for every candidate to publish biographical information, photo, candidate statement, and contact information.

You may submit your Voters' Pamphlet information when you file for office or you may submit later. If you choose to submit your Voters' Pamphlet information later, you will receive an email after your filing has been approved with a link to submit your statement and photo.

To meet the deadline, candidates should begin the upload process as early as possible after they file for office. There is no benefit to delaying. Local voters' pamphlet submissions are kept confidential. A candidate's submission will not be released until the deadline for submission of all statements has passed and the submissions have been approved by the Election's Division.

Any candidate who experiences technical problems should call the Elections Division immediately. Technical difficulties will not excuse candidates from meeting the deadline.

You may **NOT** submit a new statement for the General Election. The same local voters' pamphlet information submitted will be used for both the Primary Election and General Election.

## **Local Voters' Pamphlet Publication**

Pierce County publishes an official local voters' pamphlet for all elections. It is available in both printed and electronic form on the Elections Division website. RCW 29A.32.220 sets deadlines and rules regarding participation.

The Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for accepting and approving voters' pamphlet information for state offices, congressional offices, legislative offices and certain judicial offices. The requirements and rules for these

statements may differ from the laws and local rules for Pierce County candidates.

## **Candidate Biographical Information and Statement**

### **Biographical Information**

#### **Length**

The biographical information must be **100** words or less allocated between four section headings.

Biographical information should be organized in accordance with the four subsection headings listed below. Subsection headings are not included in the word count.

Elected Experience. (Judges use Legal/Judicial Experience)

Other Professional Experience.

Education.

Community Service.

When a candidate doesn't submit information for a subsection heading, "No information submitted" will appear in that subsection area.

### **Candidate Statement**

#### **Length (RCW 29A.32.121)**

The word limit for candidate statements is as follows:

State Senator – 200 words

State Representative – 100 words

County offices – 200 words

Judicial offices – 200 words

All other local offices – 200 words

Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word. (Example - "Around-the-corner" = 3 words)

### **Shortening Biographical Information and Candidate Statements**

Biographical information and candidate statements exceeding the word limits will be shortened by the Elections Division without notice and without consulting the candidate. Submissions are shortened by deleting full sentences, starting from the end of the biographical information or

candidate statement until the word limit for that section is reached.

Stay within the word limit. Candidates are not given an opportunity to correct submissions.

**Biographical information and candidate statement format**

Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or sentences. Any other formatting, such as all caps, bold, or underlining, is not allowed. Caps, bold, and underlines will be converted to italics by the Elections Division.

Up to four paragraphs may be used in the candidate statement.

Lists and bullets are not allowed. Lists and bullets will be converted by the Elections Division to a block paragraph, with a semicolon to separate each item.

**Candidate Photo Rules  
RCW 29A.32.110,  
WAC 434-381-140**

**Photographs**

You may upload one portrait photo. (Head and shoulders) Photos should be less than 1 MB in size. (If larger, photo will take too long to load for the online guide.) Image size correction will not be made by Pierce County.

Clothing or insignia that suggest holding a public office are not allowed (e.g., judicial robes, law enforcement or military uniforms).

Color or black and white photo. (Color will be used in the online guide and converted to black and white for the printed local voters' pamphlet.)

Candidate photos from previous local voters' pamphlets are not available for reuse. Candidate must submit a new photo online.

## Candidates' Statements – At a Glance

Statement Type	Word Limit	Formatting
Biographical Information Section	100 <i>Subsection headings aren't included in word count.</i>	Not Allowed: <b>Bold</b> , ALL CAPS, <u>underlining</u> , lists, bullets
Candidate Statements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County offices</li> <li>All other local offices</li> </ul>	200	Allowed: <i>Italics</i> Up to <b>four</b> (4) paragraphs.  Not Allowed: <b>Bold</b> , ALL CAPS, <u>underlining</u> , lists, or bullets.
Contact Information	Contact information isn't included in the word count.	Allowed: Campaign phone number; Campaign email address; Campaign website address.  At least one method of contact (phone, email, website address) must be provided.  Not Allowed: Titles (Dr., President, PhD.)  Email and website addresses may not be obscene, libelous or a commercial advertisement.
<p>Material submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet may be rejected by the Elections Division if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is obscene;</li> <li>It is libelous;</li> <li>Contains a commercial advertisement;</li> <li>Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail;</li> <li>Contains matter not limited to the candidate himself or herself or to the measure or political office;</li> <li>Contains matter that is otherwise not germane to the candidate's qualifications nor to the office that is the subject of election;</li> <li>Contains matter that otherwise does not comply with applicable law;</li> <li>Photo does not meet statutory or administrative criteria; or</li> <li>Was received after the submittal deadline.</li> </ul>		

## **Candidate Contact Information**

If provided, a candidate's campaign email address, website address and phone number will be printed in the local voters' pamphlet. Mailing addresses will not be printed.

## **General Provisions Applicable to All Submissions**

The contents of biographical information, candidate statements, photos and contact information are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Submissions don't represent the position of the Elections Division or Pierce County and neither is responsible for the validity or accuracy of the submissions.

Submissions should be edited and prepared as carefully as one would edit and prepare a resume. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors will not be corrected. Statement content will be printed exactly as received, if it complies with format specifications and content rules.

Be certain that email, web addresses, and phone numbers are accurate, functional, and not confidential or private.

Once submitted, all biographical information, statements, and photos are final. They can't be amended by the candidate.

All submissions for inclusion in the local voters' pamphlet are due by Friday, May 28, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

No exceptions are allowed. If a submission is not received by the deadline, the text "No photo submitted", "No information submitted", and/or "No statement submitted" will appear in the applicable sections.

If a local office crosses the county line, the voter pamphlet statement submittal for Pierce County shall be as required by the lead county (the county where you file). Only one version of voter pamphlet information need be submitted. We will obtain the information that was submitted to the lead county and include it in the Pierce County pamphlet.

## **Viewing Biographical Information and Candidate Statements**

After all biographical information and candidate statements have been approved, candidates will receive a link to view the statements. Candidates will not be permitted to make changes or correct the information submitted.

**Appeal**  
**RCW 29A.32.230**

If all or any part of the biographical information, candidate statement, photo, or contact information is rejected by the Elections Division manager, a written notice of rejection will be sent to the proponent by email not more than five business days after the deadline for the local voters' pamphlet submittal and shall set forth specific grounds for the rejection.

Any candidate whose submission is rejected may appeal the Elections Division manager's decision to the Auditor. A written notice of appeal shall be submitted to the Auditor by email ([voterpamphlet@piercecounitywa.gov](mailto:voterpamphlet@piercecounitywa.gov)) not more than 48 hours after the notice of rejection was sent and shall set forth the specific grounds for appeal. The Auditor shall issue a written decision granting or denying the appeal by email not more than 48 hours after receiving the notice of appeal. The decision of the Auditor to grant or deny an appeal shall be final.

If material is rejected, the local voters' pamphlet will be printed with the rejected material omitted and the appropriate space left blank.

# Public Disclosure Commission

## Washington State Public Disclosure Commission

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) provides public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates. The commission ensures compliance and enforcement of Washington's disclosure and campaign finance laws.

Note: The information contained in this section is for informational purposes only. Candidates are advised to verify that they are following all state, county, and local laws. Candidates must contact the PDC directly with any questions or concerns.

## Forms, Instruction Manuals and Brochures Available Online

Visit the PDC website [pdc.wa.gov](http://pdc.wa.gov) for public disclosure information and forms. Call PDC at (360) 753-1111 or 1-877-601-2828. Paper forms and instruction manuals are not available at the Pierce County Election Center.

## Where to File PDC Reports

File forms electronically on the PDC website: [pdc.wa.gov](http://pdc.wa.gov)



# Candidate Filing Guidelines

## Residency Requirements

**US Senate:** Candidates must be at least 30 years of age, US citizens and residents of the state for which they shall be chosen. (Reference US Constitution, Article 1, Section 3)

**US Representative:** Candidates must be at least 25 years of age, US citizens and residents of the state for which they shall be chosen. (Reference US Constitution, Article 1, Sec. 2)

**State Legislature:** Candidates must be a citizen of the US and a qualified voter in the district. (Reference State Constitution, Article II, Section 7)

**State Offices:** Candidates must be a citizen of the US and a qualified elector of the State of Washington. (Reference State Constitution, Article III, Section 25)

**Supreme and District Court Judges:** Candidates must be resident electors of their district and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. (Reference State Constitution, Article IV, Section 17)

**Superior Court Judges:** Candidates must be resident electors of the State of Washington and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. (Reference State Constitution, Article IV, Section 17)

**Court of Appeals Judges:** Candidates must be residents of the district for not less than one year and admitted to practice law in the courts of the State of Washington for not less than five years prior to taking office. (Reference RCW 2.06.050)

**Tacoma Municipal Court Judges:** Candidates must be qualified resident electors of Pierce County and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. (Reference Tacoma City Charter Article 5, State Constitution, Article IV, Section 17, RCW 3.50.057, 35.20.170)

**County Offices:** Candidates must be US citizens, residents and registered voters of Pierce County. County Council candidates must be residents and registered voters of their district for one year prior to filing. No County Council District boundary change shall disqualify the council member from

holding office during the remainder of the term. (Reference Pierce County Charter 4.30, RCW 29A.24.075)

**Port Districts:** Candidates must be registered voters of Pierce County. (Reference RCW 53.12, 29A.24.075)

**City of Tacoma:** Candidates for Council shall be qualified electors (registered voters) and residents of the City for two years immediately preceding the time of filing, and residents of their district for one year immediately preceding the time of filing. No person shall be eligible for the office of council person while holding any other elective public office. (Reference Tacoma City Charter Section 2.2, RCW 29A.24.075)

**Non-Charter Code Cities:** Candidates must be registered voters at the time of filing and residents for a year on election day. (Reference RCW 35A.12.030, 35A.13.020, 29A.24.075)

**4th Class Cities and Towns:** Candidates must be resident electors (registered voters). (Reference RCW 35.27.080, 29A.24.075)

**School Districts:** Candidates must be registered voters of district or director district. (Reference RCW 28A.343.350, 29A.24.075)

**Fire, Water and Sewer Districts:** Candidates must be qualified electors (registered voters) of district. (Reference RCW 52.14.010)

**Park and Recreation Districts:** Candidates must be resident electors (registered voters) of district. (Reference RCW 36.69, 29A.24.075)

**Water and Sewer Districts:** Candidates must be qualified electors (registered voters) of district. (Reference RCW 57.12)

**Drainage Districts:** Candidates must be both property owners in the district and registered voters in the State of Washington for thirty days. Note: Drainage District Elections are held in February in even years. (Reference RCW 85.38)

**Precinct Committee Officer:** Be a registered voter in the precinct where you live.

## **Term Limits**

### **Pierce County Offices**

- Councilmember or Executive - Two consecutive four-year terms in the same position.
- Sheriff, Assessor-Treasurer and Auditor - Three consecutive four-year terms in the same position.
- Prosecuting Attorney - The Prosecuting Attorney is not subject to term limits.

For all positions, the establishment of residency in an alternate district will not circumvent this restriction. (Reference Pierce County Charter 4.90)

### **City of Edgewood**

No person may serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. (City of Edgewood Municipal Code Ord. 2.10.010)

### **City of Tacoma**

No person shall be allowed to serve on the Council for more than ten consecutive years as a Council person, Mayor, or combination thereof. (Tacoma City Charter Article II, Sec. 2.35)

## **No Double Filings RCW 29A.36.201**

Excluding the office of Precinct Committee Officer, Freeholder, or Charter Review Commissioner, a candidate's name shall not appear for more than one office on the ballot.

## **Candidates Who Lack Funds to Pay the Filing Fee RCW 29A.24.091, 101, 111, 29A.84.261**

Candidates or candidate committees lacking sufficient income or assets to pay the filing fee may submit a filing fee petition. The petition must be presented with the Declaration of Candidacy. The form is available on the Elections Division website or at the Election Center. It must contain one valid (registered voter) signature for each dollar of the filing fee. For example, if the filing fee for the office you are seeking is \$200.00, the petition must contain 200 valid signatures of registered voters who reside in the district/jurisdiction of the office you are seeking. You should gather extra signatures to allow for invalid signers. No signatures may be submitted after Friday, May 21, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Candidates must submit all signatures upon initial submission and may not supplement the signatures later. Petitions cannot be combined with money for the filing fee.

## **Write-in Candidates RCW 29A.24.311, 320, 29A.60.021**

Any person who desires to be a write-in candidate must file a declaration of candidacy not later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of the primary or election. A write-in declaration of candidacy is timely if filed by this deadline.

Write-in candidates that file more than 18 days before an election do not pay a filing fee.

Write-in votes will only be tallied when they impact the outcome of the election.

Votes cast for write-in candidates who have filed declarations need only specify the name of the candidate in the appropriate location on the ballot and fill in the oval to be counted.

### **No person may file a write-in declaration:**

- For the General Election, if the candidate lost the Primary Election, either as a candidate or a write-in candidate.
- A valid write-in declaration has already been filed for another office.
- The candidate already appears on the ballot for another office.

No write-in candidate filing under RCW 29A.24.311 will be included in any voters' pamphlet unless that candidate qualifies to have his or her name printed on the General Election ballot.

## **Voids in Candidacy RCW 29A.24.181**

A void in candidacy occurs if, after the regular filing week but prior to the day of the primary:

- No candidate has filed for office.
- All candidates who filed have withdrawn, or
- All candidates who have filed died or have been disqualified.

There is no void in candidacy if there is at least one viable candidate.

If a void in candidacy exists, a special three-day filing period will be opened. Notice of the special three day filing period will be given by notifying the media.

**Vacancy in Office  
RCW 29A.24.171**

If a void in candidacy is filled by special filing period, no primary will be held. All candidates who file during the special filing period appear on the General Election ballot.

When an incumbent resigns, dies, or is disqualified mid-term, and candidate filings have not been held for the office, one of the following occurs:

- If the Elections Division is notified of a vacancy before regular candidate filing, the office will be included in regular filing.
- If the vacancy in office occurs on or after regular candidate filing has begun, no election is held for that office. The jurisdiction will fill the vacant position with an appointment until the next election for that office.

If no candidate files during the regular filing period and subsequent special filing period, an election for that office will not be held until the next applicable election for the office.

**No one file non-partisan office  
(Lapsed Elections)  
RCW 29A.24.191, 201**

If, after the special three-day filing period has passed and no candidate has filed for any city, town, or district position, the incumbent continues to serve until a successor is elected at the next election when such positions are voted upon.

# Primary Election Guidelines

## **Partisan Offices RCW 29A.52, 29A.36, WAC 434-230-015 and 045**

A partisan office is an office for which a candidate may choose to indicate a political party preference on his or her Declaration of Candidacy. Federal, statewide, legislative and some county positions are partisan offices.

A Primary Election will be held for each partisan office open for election, regardless of the number of candidates filing.

Candidates for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not indicate endorsement by the party. No changes to party preference will be accepted after the deadline for withdrawal of candidacy.

It is the voter's option to vote for partisan candidates of their choice and/or vote for any or all nonpartisan races and issues.

On the Primary Election ballot, candidates shall be listed in the order determined by lot drawing.

The names of candidates for County Council will appear only on ballots within their Council, district.

The two candidates who receive the greatest number of votes cast will advance to the General Election ballot regardless of party preferences. The name of the top vote getter will appear first on the ballot.

## **Precinct Committee Officer (PCO) (Even years only)**

Anyone who is a registered voter and a member of a major political party may become a candidate for Precinct Committee Officer. A candidate must file an online Declaration of Candidacy form. Since voters do not register by political party in Washington, a candidate declares himself/herself to be a member of a political party at the time of filing.

Precinct Committee Officers will be elected at the Primary Election.

Only contested PCO races will appear on the ballot, and write-in candidates are not allowed. If only one person files for office, he or she is deemed elected. If no one files for

office, the position is filled by the county chair of the county central committee of the appropriate political party.

**No local voters' pamphlet information required. (This office is not included in the local voters' pamphlet.)**

**Term of Office and Vacancies**

The term of office is two years. Should a vacancy occur in the office (caused by death, disqualification, resignation, or failure to elect), the chairperson of the County Central Committee fills the vacancy by appointment.

**Duties of a Precinct Committee Officer**

Each officer is a member of the County Central Committee. The committee has the authority to nominate persons to fill vacancies for a state, legislative or county office. Also, they may elect members to the State Central Committee. They participate in party activities and represent the party.

**Nonpartisan Offices  
RCW 29A.52.220,  
35.61.050, 36.69.090**

A nonpartisan office is an office for which candidates do not indicate a party preference. All judicial and most local offices (odd year) are nonpartisan offices. No party preference appears on the ballot for these races.

A Primary Election will be held if three or more candidates file in any nonpartisan office, of a city, town, school, special purpose district or district court office. The two candidates with the most votes continue to the General Election. The name of the top vote getter will appear first on the ballot.

A Primary Election will not be held for park and recreation district positions. (Excludes metropolitan park districts). All candidates will advance directly to the General Election ballot in lot draw order.

Candidates for metropolitan park district positions will appear on the Primary Election ballot if three or more candidates file for the position. The two candidates who receive the most votes will advance to the General Election ballot with the top vote getter appearing first on the ballot.

**Judicial Offices State  
Constitution Art IV  
Sec 29**

Judicial candidates will only appear on the Primary Election ballot when three or more candidates file for the office. The candidates' names will appear in lot draw order.

See the chart below for more judicial office ballot information.

**Judicial Elections in Washington State**

Candidates	Municipal Court District Court Court of Appeals Supreme Court		Superior Court	
	Primary	General	Primary	General
1	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	County population less than 100,000: No <sup>1</sup>  County population 100,000 or more: No because certificate of election is issued after candidate filing <sup>3</sup>	County population less than 100,000: Yes <sup>2</sup>  County population 100,000 or more: No because certificate of election was issued after candidate filing <sup>3</sup>
2	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	No <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>
3 or more	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>RCW 29A.52.220

<sup>2</sup>RCW 29A.36.170

<sup>3</sup>Article IV, Section 29

An election to fill a vacancy in District Court may not occur in an odd-numbered year, per ALGO 1973 No. 76 and RCW 29A.04.321(1).



# General Election Guidelines

## **Partisan Offices**

On General Election ballots, the name of the top vote getter in the Primary Election shall be listed first, followed by the name of the next highest vote getter.

## **Nonpartisan/Judicial Offices RCW 29A.36.170**

On General Election ballots, the name of the candidate who receives the greatest number of votes for the position in the Primary Election shall be listed first, followed by the name of the candidate who receives the next greatest number of votes.

If a Primary Election was not required for a nonpartisan office, the candidates' names will appear in lot draw order.

# Political Signs

## Pierce County Sign Regulations

### Pierce County Code 18B.10.040

#### F. Regulations – Political Signs.

1. Political signs shall not be erected upon any private property without permission of the resident or owner thereof;
2. Political signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and shall not obstruct safe visibility of any mobile or pedestrian traffic; and
3. Political signs shall not be displayed more than 10 days after the date of the election for which intended. In cases where a general election follows a primary election, those signs for candidates whose names will appear on the ballot in the general election may be displayed during the interim period and up to 10 days after the general election.

Visit [piercecountywa.org/signs](http://piercecountywa.org/signs) for detailed sign regulations.

## State Sign Regulations

View the complete Highway Advertising Control Act through a link provided at the Department of Transportation's website - [wsdot.wa.gov/operations/traffic/signs](http://wsdot.wa.gov/operations/traffic/signs)

## Complaints

If you have questions about the placement of campaign signs along state highways, call WSDOT (360) 705-7282.

Sign violation complaints do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Pierce County Elections Division.

### **To report illegal roadside signs or potential sign violations on private property in unincorporated Pierce County**

- Visit Pierce County Public Works' website at [piercecountywa.org/signs](http://piercecountywa.org/signs)
- Call (253) 798-6000.

### **To report potential sign violations in a city or town**

- Contact the local jurisdiction regarding regulations and requirements.

# Observing the Election Process

## Public Access at the Election Center

Citizens may view ballot processing anytime during the workday at the Pierce County Election Center, located at 2501 S. 35th Street, Suite C, Tacoma. A public viewing area is provided. Visitors may be required to sign an oath of non-divulgence when observing ballot processing at the Election Center.

## Acts Prohibited in the Vicinity of a Voting Center or Ballot Deposit Site WAC 434-250-100, RCW 29A.84.510, 540

During the voting period, no person may, within a voting center, ballot deposit site or student engagement hub:

- Suggest, persuade or attempt to suggest or persuade any voter to vote for or against any candidate or ballot measure;
- Circulate cards or handbills of any kind;
- Solicit signatures to any kind of petition;
- Engage in any practice which interferes with the freedom of voters to exercise their franchise or disrupts administration of the voting center.

No person may:

- Interfere with a voter attempting to vote at a voting center or ballot drop box.
- Without lawful authority, remove any ballot from a voting center or ballot deposit site.
- Within 25 feet of a ballot drop box not located within a voting center, no person may electioneer, circulate campaign material, solicit petition signatures or interfere or impede the voting process.

## Election Results

Election results are available at approximately 8:15 p.m. on election night at the Pierce County Election Center, 2501 S. 35th Street, Suite C, Tacoma.

Election results are available online at [PierceCountyElections.org](http://PierceCountyElections.org).

### After Election Day

Elections Division staff will continue to verify, open, count, and update results until certification.

# Recounts

## **Mandatory/Automatic Recounts RCW 29A.64**

An automatic recount applies to candidates and statewide measures and will occur if less than 2,000 votes and also less than 1/2 of 1% of the votes cast for that race separate candidates or issues. The recount is applicable only to candidates apparently nominated or elected and the closest defeated opponent. The automatic recount will tally only votes for the position or measure in question and will be conducted without charge to any candidate.

For statewide elections, if the difference in the number of votes cast for the apparent winner and the closest apparently defeated opponent is less than 1,000 votes and also less than 1/4 of 1% of the total number of votes cast for both candidates, the votes shall be recounted manually.

For all other elections, if the difference in the number of votes cast for the apparent winner and the closest apparently defeated opponent is less than 150 votes and also less than 1/4 of 1% of total number of votes cast for both candidates, the votes shall be recounted manually. An alternative counting method may be used if both candidates agree in writing and the procedure is suited to the ballot system that was used for casting the votes for the office.

If a mandatory recount is required for a candidate in a jurisdiction, the costs of the recount are billed as a direct cost to the jurisdiction.

### **Local Measure, Question, or Issue**

Automatic recounts do not apply to non-statewide ballot measures, such as levy, bond and other questions or issues.

### **Requested Recounts**

All requested recounts must be submitted no later than two business days after the certification of the election. A deposit equal to \$.15 (machine recount) or \$.25 (manual recount) per ballot by certified check or cash is required. Final cost of the recount will be determined by the canvassing board and may be less or more than the deposit.

# Voter Turnout Statistics

<b>Voter Turnout (Primary Elections):</b>			
Year	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Turnout
2010	405,075	145,451	35.9%
2011	367,597	99,850	27.1%
2012	419,234	151,542	36.2%
2013	445,539	88,638	19.8%
2014	441,987	121,295	27.3%
2015	454,124	93,291	20.5%
2016	465,435	147,515	31.7%
2017	499,152	93,346	18.7%
2018	492,036	169,178	34.4%
2019	517,411	106,467	20.6%
2020	529,289	274,690	51.9%

<b>Voter Turnout (General Elections):</b>			
Year	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Turnout
2010	410,081	272,587	66.4%
2011	414,360	204,895	49.5%
2012	442,985	349,476	78.9%
2013	439,532	182,051	41.2%
2014	441,987	220,827	49.9%
2015	450,941	153,368	34.0%
2016	490,666	365,318	74.5%
2017	493,740	141,033	28.6%
2018	499,164	331,335	66.4%
2019	519,308	207,241	39.9%
2020	567,803	467,072	82.2%

# Resources for Newly Elected Officials

## **I won the election and have been certified the winner. What do I need to do next? RCW 29A.04.133**

### **Oath or Affirmation of Office**

After the election results have been certified, every person elected to an office in the State of Washington, including jurisdictions within counties, cities, and towns, is required by the Washington constitution and/or statutes to take an oath or affirmation of office prior to serving. The oath or affirmation of office must comply with the appropriate statute or, if none is specified for that office, in accordance with the oath or affirmation set forth in RCW 29A.04.133. Depending on the office and tradition, the oath or affirmation of office may be taken or attested either verbally or in writing.

### **How should the oath or affirmation of office be administered to a candidate?**

RCW 29A.04.133 requires that the oath or affirmation of office be administered and certified by any officer or notary public authorized to administer oaths, without charge. Six positions are specifically qualified by statute to administer oaths:

Judges and Notary Publics	RCW 5.28.010
Clerk of the Courts	RCW 2.32.050
County Commissioners	RCW 36.32.120
County Auditors or Deputies	RCW 36.22.030
Town Clerks	RCW 35.27.220
School Officials	RCW 28A.343.360

### **Where to obtain a blank oath or affirmation of office**

- Pierce County Elections (web and office).
- Cities, Towns, School Districts and Special Purpose Districts Clerks.
- Pierce County Council (for County Offices)  
Note: this oath is unique to County positions.

### **Filing your oath or affirmation of office**

Once the oath or affirmation of office has been taken for a local or county office, the original must be filed with the Elections Division. Elected officials may wish to complete a second original oath for retention or display purposes.

Oaths of office for supreme court justice, court of appeals, and superior court judge are filed with the Secretary of State.

**Bond**

A qualified candidate may also be required to post a bond. If so, it is not the responsibility of the County Auditor to verify that such bond has been posted.

**To learn more about public office**

Newly elected officials may wish to contact their local city or town clerk, school superintendent as well as fellow council members and commissioners to learn more about their jurisdiction and the duties required. See the tables below for more information regarding oaths and the timelines for assuming office.

<b>Oaths/Affirmations of Office</b>	<b>Where Original Oaths/Affirmations are Filed</b>
President/Vice President	Verbal
US Senator	Verbal
US Representative	Verbal Oath on convening of Congress
State Legislators/State Wide Offices	Verbal Oath on convening of Legislature (Reference State Constitution, Article III, Section 4)
Supreme Court Justice	Secretary of State (Reference State Constitution, Article IV, Section 28)
Court of Appeals and Superior Court Judges	Secretary of State (Reference RCW 2.06.085)
District Court and Tacoma Municipal Court Judges	County Auditor (Reference RCW 36.16.060)
County Offices, City, Town, Special Purpose and School Districts	County Auditor (Reference RCW 36.16.060)

<b>Timelines for Assuming Office</b>	
President/Vice President	12 noon, January 20 <sup>th</sup> (Reference US Constitution, Amendment XX, Section 1)
US Senator	12 noon, January 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Reference US Constitution, Amendment XX, Section 1)
US Representative	12 noon, January 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Reference US Constitution, Amendment XX, Section 1)
State Legislators/State Offices	2nd Monday in January (Reference RCW 44.04.021)
Supreme Court Justice	2nd Monday in January (Reference RCW 2.04.071)
Court of Appeals Judge	2nd Monday in January (Reference RCW 2.06.070)
Superior Court Judge	2nd Monday in January (Reference RCW 2.08.070)

District Court and Municipal Court Judge	2nd Monday in January (Reference RCW 3.34.070)
County Offices	January 1st, after elected and qualified (Reference RCW 29A.04.133, 29A.60.280; County Charter 4.80)
City Offices	January 1st, after elected and qualified (Reference RCW 29A.04.133, 29A.60.280)
Special Purpose Districts, Fire Protection, Park & Rec, Water, Sewer Districts	January 1st, after elected and qualified (Reference RCW 29A.04.133, 29A.60.280)
School Districts	At the first meeting after Certification of General Election (Reference RCW 28A.343.360)

## Data and Maps

**Voter Data** - The Secretary of State's Office maintains one statewide list of voters that serves as the official list of registered voters for Washington. Get and request data at [sos.wa.gov/elections/research/](http://sos.wa.gov/elections/research/)

**District Boundaries and Maps** - Interactive Public GIS - Explore a vast array of GIS information compiled by Pierce County. [PierceCountyElections.org](http://PierceCountyElections.org) (click on Maps under Resources)

## Additional Resources

Federal Voting Assistance Program	(800) 438-8683	<a href="http://fvap.gov">fvap.gov</a>
Municipal Research and Services Center	(206) 625-1300 (800) 933-6772	<a href="http://mrsc.org">mrsc.org</a>
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction	(360) 725-6000	<a href="http://k12.wa.us">k12.wa.us</a>
Pierce County Council	(253) 798-7777	<a href="http://piercecountywawa.org/Council">piercecountywawa.org/Council</a>
Pierce County Elections	(253) 798-VOTE (8683) (800) 446-4979	<a href="http://PierceCountyElections.org">PierceCountyElections.org</a>
Public Disclosure Commission	(360) 753-1111 (877) 601-2828	<a href="http://pdc.wa.gov">pdc.wa.gov</a>
Puget Sound Educational Service District No. 121	(425) 917-7600	<a href="http://psed.org">psed.org</a>
Secretary of State	(800) 448-4881	<a href="http://sos.wa.gov">sos.wa.gov</a>
Washington State Association of Counties	(360) 753-1886	<a href="http://wsac.org">wsac.org</a>
Washington State Auditor's Office	(360) 902-0370	<a href="http://sao.wa.gov">sao.wa.gov</a>
Washington State School Directors Association	(360) 493-9231	<a href="http://wssda.org">wssda.org</a>



## 2021 Election Dates

Date of Election

February 9, 2021\*

April 27, 2021\*

August 3, 2021

November 2, 2021

Resolution Cutoff

December 11, 2020

February 26, 2021

May 14, 2021

August 3, 2021

\*Possible Special Election Date

<b>Pierce County Candidate Checklist</b>	<b>Done</b>
Verify that your voter registration information is correct and up-to-date. Visit <a href="http://VoteWA.gov">VoteWA.gov</a>	
Confirm the office and position for which you are filing.	
Make sure you meet the qualifications for that office (see pages 18 - 19)	
Decide how you want your name to appear on the ballot. Last name must match your name as registered.	
Arrange for campaign contact information to use during the entire election cycle (possibly through the end of December 2021) including phone number, email address, and a website address.	
File for office online during filing week (see pages 5 - 7)	
Submit biographical information, statement, and photo online (see pages 8 - 15)	
Any Public Disclosure requirements? (see page 16)	

