



Candidate Filing Guide

Helpful information for people interested in
running for office in Whatcom County.

Whatcom County Auditor's Office

Election Division

311 Grand Avenue, Suite 103

Bellingham, WA 98226

360-778-5102

www.whatcomcounty.us/elections

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Before you file

- Verify that your voter registration information is correct. You can verify and update your voter registration online at **VoteWA.gov**.
- Confirm the office and position for which you are filing.
- Make sure you meet the qualifications for that office.
- Decide how you want your name to appear on the ballot.
- **Have your campaign contact information ready. If you do not provide a campaign mailing address, your address as a registered voter will be used. This information is public and will be published in the voters' pamphlet.**
- File for one office only. A candidate's name shall not appear for more than one office on the ballot. The only exceptions are the offices of Precinct Committee Officer and Charter Review Commissioner.
RCW 29A.36.201
- Check requirements to obtain an Internal Revenue Service number assigned for your campaign. Visit **pdc.wa.gov** for more information.

For a list of offices up for election visit
www.whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
and select "Offices Up for Election"

Filing for office

Qualifications

RCW 29A.24.075
RCW 29A.80.041
WAC 434-215-070 (2)
WAC 434-215-170

You must be a registered voter and possess the qualifications specified by law. If a candidate must be selected by voters from a geographic subdivision of a jurisdiction in the Primary, the candidate must be registered to vote within that subdivision (for example, you must live in Ward 1 of the City of Bellingham to file for a position in Ward 1). **See pages 18 - 20 for specific residency requirements.**

Confirm your registration information
online at **VoteWa.gov**

Filing a Declaration of Candidacy

RCW 29A.24.031
RCW 29A.24.040
RCW 29A.24.050
RCW 29A.24.060
RCW 29A.24.070
RCW 29A.24.075
RCW 29A.24.081
RCW 29A.24.131

Declarations of candidacy are processed during Filing Week, which begins **Monday May 15, and ends on Friday, May 19**. Once filed, a declaration of candidacy may not be altered except to update your contact information. Declarations received after 4:30 pm on Friday May 19 will be returned to the submitter. Candidates may file:

- **Online** at whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
Monday at 9:00 am through Friday at 4:00 pm
- **In-Person** at the Whatcom County Auditor's Office
311 Grand Ave Suite 103
Bellingham WA 98225
Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
- **By eMail or Fax**
eMail: elections@co.whatcom.wa.us
Fax: 360-778-5101
Monday at 9:00 am through Friday at 4:00 pm
- **By Mail***
Whatcom County Auditor
311 Grand Ave Suite 103
Bellingham WA 98225

*Declarations of candidacy may be received by mail on or after **May 1**. Any declarations received before then will be returned to the submitter.

View and download a declaration of candidacy form at
www.whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
Select "File for office"
(only needed if filing by mail, email, or fax)

Filing for office

Filing Fees

RCW 29A.24.091

Filing fees (if applicable) are due at the time of filing. For a list of offices and their filing fees visit www.co.whatcom.wa.us/candidateresources and select “offices up for election.”

Filing fees are non-refundable.

Annual Salary

No Salary
\$1,000 or less
More than \$1,000

Filing Fee

\$0.00
\$10.00
1% of annual salary

Accepted forms of payment:

- Cash
- Check (payable to Whatcom County Auditor)
- Credit Card (required when filing online)
- Money Order

Approval of Filing

Once your filing has been approved, you will receive a confirmation email with instructions on submitting your voters’ pamphlet content. Read the requirements on pages 5 - 7 before submitting your voters’ pamphlet content.

Withdrawal of Candidacy

RCW 29A.24.131

A candidate may withdraw their declaration of candidacy by submitting a withdrawal form to the Auditor’s Office by 4:30 pm on Monday **May 22**. You may **not** withdraw your candidacy after that time.

Filing fees are non-refundable.

A withdrawal form is available online at
www.whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
Select “Withdraw my candidacy”

Voters' pamphlet

Voters' Pamphlet

Submission

RCW 29A.32.110

RCW 29A.32.121

RCW 29A.32.230

Whatcom County Local Voters'
Pamphlet Administrative Rules

Candidate biographies, statements, and photos are due by 4:30 pm on Friday **May 26**. You may submit your information online or via email. Once submitted, you may **not** make changes. Candidates will be notified if there is a problem with their submission.

Those named in your statement, such as an opponent or endorsement, will receive notice from our office that they were mentioned. This may result in court-ordered changes to your statement.

Local candidates appearing on the August Primary and advancing to the November General election will no longer be allowed to update their candidate statement.

Photo

RCW 29A.32.110

You may submit one self-portrait of your head and shoulders. Photos must be high resolution and may not be digitally altered. Photos may not be smaller than 4x5 inches.

Clothing or insignias that suggest holding a public office are not allowed. For example: judicial robes, law enforcement or military uniforms. A color photo is highly preferred. For best results, use a light-colored background, but not white. Photos must be no more than 5 years old.

Photo submissions are accepted for all candidates except for the position of Precinct Committee Officer.



Voters' pamphlet

Biography & Statement

RCW 29A.32.230(3)

Keep your submission only about you. Do not include references to your opponent(s). Profane, libelous, or defamatory language is not permitted.

Candidates are allowed:

- 100 words for the biography portion
- 200 words for the statement portion

Rules for Biography & Statement:

- Submissions exceeding the word limit will be shortened by deleting full sentences starting from the end
- **Allowed:** *italics*
- **Not Allowed:** **Bold**, underline, and ALL CAPS
- **Not Allowed:** tables, lists, and bullets
- Statement portion must be written in 4 paragraphs or less; paragraphs exceeding the limit will be combined from the end
- Hyphenated words count as 2 words
- Your statement will not be checked for spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors

Your biography and statement are a blank slate.
Headings are required and do not count toward word limit.

100 Words
in 4 headings



Elected Experience:
Other Professional Experience:
Education:
Community Service:

200 Words



Statement:

Voters' pamphlet

Contact Information

Campaign contact information is included in the local voters' pamphlet. Phone number, email address, and website will be printed. Addresses are not printed.

Sample of a voters' pamphlet submission



Whatcom County - *County Council At-Large Position A* - Nonpartisan Office - 4 year term



Warren G. Magnuson

Elected Experience: Washington House of Representatives, Legislative District 37.

Other Professional Experience: Farmer/Rancher, Owner of Hai-ley Company, Inc. our 4th generation family farm. Public service volunteer, Registrar and Attendance Specialist

for North Franklin School District, Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch Foundation Board, Di-rector, Past Director of Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch Board, former 4-H leader, PTA President, continuing classroom volunteer. Served as Regional Director for a US Senator.

Education: Graduate Paschal High School, Ft. Worth, TX. Graduate of Eastern Washington University, 1980. Law degree from Gonzaga University, 1956.

Community Service: Inland Northwest Humane Society; Walk for Life participant, 11 years; neighborhood watch participant; long time recycler.

Statement: Senator Magnuson has always given the highest pri-ory to advocating for children and families, including veterans, the elderly and disabled.

District growth has been more than 30% over the past two years, creating a strain on schools and other services. He helped make dif-ficult choices to balance needs and restrain the budget, working to secure funding for the Pierce County Skills Center in Frederickson, the Yelm Loop, the Cross Base Highway, the Orting Bridge for kids, the Nisqually-Mashel State Park, an upgraded early warning sys-tem and work to keep transportation dollars here at home.

Warren advocated for in-home intervention, home health care, support and chore services for children with developmental or behavioral disabilities, seniors and the disabled. He worked to ex-ten-d the property tax deferral program – helping people whose homes have increased in value, but have not had an increase in income.

He believes the WASL should only be one of several tools used to measure academic success. Warren is honored to represent you and he is and always will be, there for you.

For More Information:

(509) 123-4567
warren@magnuson.net
www.magnuson.com

After LVP Submission

The information you submit will be published 45 days before the Primary and General elections. Your submission will appear online and in our printed Local Voters' Pamphlet.

Election

Primary
General

LVP Content Published

June 17
September 23

After the election

Election Results

RCW 29A.60.160

Results will be available after 8:00 pm on Election night online or in the Auditor's office. Whatcom County Elections staff will continue to process ballots until certification. Results will be updated accordingly.

View election results online at
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1732/Current-Election>
Select "View Results"

Elected Officials and Oaths

RCW 29A.04.133

Candidates are considered elected when the election results have been certified. Winning candidates must take an oath of office **before** assuming the duties of that office. Statute requires that the oath of office be administered and certified by any officer or notary public authorized to administer oaths, without charge. The following positions are specifically qualified by statute to administer oaths:

Clerks of the Courts	RCW 2.32.050
Judges and Notary Publics	RCW 5.28.010
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

Contact the city or district to which you were elected regarding the procedure for taking your oath of office. The table on page 8 provides information about regular terms, where oaths are filed, and citations for each office.

After the election

County Special Purpose Districts	Regular Term Begins	Where Oath is Filed	Citations
County Officials Executive Officers	2nd Monday in January	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 36.16.040 RCW 36.16.060 Whatcom County Charter
District Court Judges	2nd Monday in January	County Auditor	RCW 3.34.070 RCW 3.34.080
City and Town Officials Executive Officers Municipal Court Judges	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 35.27.120 RCW 35.23.081 RCW 35A.12.040 RCW 35A.12.080 RCW 35A.13.160
Municipal Court Judges	Cities over 400,000 - 2nd Monday in January For all others, January 1	County Auditor	RCW 3.50.050 RCW 3.50.097 RCW 35.20.140
Port District Commissioners	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 53.12.172
Public Utility District Commissioners	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 54.12.100
School Directors	Begins at 1st official meeting following certification of election	County Auditor	RCW 28A.343.360
Fire Protection District Commissioners District Secretary	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 52.14.070 RCW 52.14.080
Sewer, Water, Hospital Districts Commissioners	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 57.12.030 RCW 70.44.040
Cemetery Districts	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 68.52.260
Park and Recreation District Commissioners	January 1	County Auditor	RCW 35.61.050
Jurisdictions requiring land ownership (e.g. diking / flood control districts)	Upon certification of election	County Auditor	RCW 85.24.070 RCW 85.38.070 RCW 86.09.301

Candidate Resources

Public Disclosure Commission (PDC)

The PDC ensures that candidates and campaigns comply with campaign finance laws. Information regarding reporting requirements must be obtained from the PDC. The Auditor's Office does not provide or accept PDC forms.

Public Disclosure Commission

Web: www.pdc.wa.gov

Phone: 360-753-1111

Toll Free: 877-601-2828

We recommend that you contact the PDC once you have decided to run for office. PDC filing requirements may occur prior to filing for office. Precinct Committee Officers are not subject to PDC requirements.

Voter Information Lists

RCW 29A.08.710

RCW 29A.08.720

RCW 29A.08.740

Voter information lists are available for purchase and are sent via email. Prepayment is required. Voter information may not be used for commercial or non-political purposes. See pages 20 - 21 for the full RCWs.

- **Voter List: \$10.00**
Includes name, date of birth, residential and mailing addresses, political jurisdiction, gender, date of registration, and registrant ID
- **Matchbacks (ballot return status): \$3.00/day or \$60.00/election**
Includes name, date of birth, address, registrant ID, and ballot return status
- **Voting History (available as a consolidated matchback): \$3.00/election**
Includes name, registrant ID, residential and mailing addresses, and ballot return status

View and download a Voter Information Request form at
www.whatcomcounty.us/1736/Frequently-Asked-Questions
"How do I request a registered voter list?"

Candidate Resources

Acts Prohibited in a Voting Center or Ballot Deposit Site

RCW 29A.84.510
RCW 29A.84.520
RCW 29A.84.540
WAC 434.250.100

During the 18-day voting period, no person may, within **100 feet** of a voting center or within **25 feet** of a ballot deposit site:

- 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 the administration of the voting center
- Interfere with a voter attempting to vote
- Remove any ballot from a voting center or ballot deposit site without lawful authority

Observing the Election Process

Anyone may observe the election process. Call the Election Division at 360-778-5102 prior to arriving to confirm ballot processing and counting times.

For More Information on the Election Process

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 29A
www.app.leg.wa.gov/RCW

Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Title 434
www.apps.leg.wa.gov/wac

Washington State Constitution
www.eg.wa.gov/LawsAndAgencyRules/Pages/constitution.aspx

Washington State Secretary of State's Office - Elections Division
www.sos.wa.gov/elections

United States Elections Assistance Commission
www.eac.gov

Whatcom County Legislation
www.whatcomcounty.us/1414/Legislation

Whatcom County Elections
www.whatcomcounty.us/1574/Elections

Candidate Resources

Political Sign Regulations

Complaints

The Whatcom County Auditor's Office does not regulate campaign signs. For violations on state highways, see the contact information for WSDOT below. For violations in Whatcom County, see the contact information for Whatcom County Public Works below. For violations within a city, contact the city clerk.

Washington State

RCW 47.42
WAC 468-66-050

For information regarding the placement of campaign signs along state highways, contact the Washington State Department of Transportation. Political campaign signs must be removed within **10** days after an election.

Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Web: www.wsdot.wa.gov Phone: 360-705-7282
email: mccaint@wsdot.wa.gov

Whatcom County

Executive Order 89-8

Whatcom County Executive Order 89-8 Placement of Signs on County Road Rights of Way dated November 21, 1989 states:

Areas where temporary signs on road rights of way will be removed:

- On county-owned traffic control or information signs
- Along or within roadway shoulders that might be used by vehicles
- Within 75 feet of any "Stop", "Yield", or "Railroad Crossing" signs
- Any intersections where signs might obstruct a person's ability to observe other vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, etc. at intersections

Signs that are not in compliance will be removed and delivered to Public Works. Unclaimed signs may be discarded after 30 days without compensation to the owner.

Whatcom County Public Works

901 W Smith Rd, Bellingham WA 98226
Phone: 360-778-6200

City of Bellingham

BMC 20.12.040

City of Bellingham Memorandum dated July 25, 2019 states:

Complaints about signs on public property or the planting strip adjacent to public property should be directed to the City agency responsible for that property, e.g. the Parks & Recreation Department or other appropriate agency. Complaints about signs in a public right-of-way (median strips and roundabouts) should be directed to the Public Works Department.

Bellingham Public Works

104 W Magnolia St, Ste 109 Bellingham 98225
Phone: 360-778-7900

Prior to placing signs, it is recommended that you check with the property owner for approval and to determine property line locations.

Other Information

Ballot Order

RCW 29A.36.131

Candidates appear on the ballot in lot draw order. The lot draw will occur after business hours on Friday **May 19**. If no Primary is held for an office, candidates will appear in lot draw order on the General Election ballot. In the General Election, the candidate that receives the most votes in the Primary Election will be listed first on the ballot.

Write-In Candidates

RCW 29A.24.091

RCW 29A.24.311

Write-in candidates must file a declaration of candidacy and possess the qualifications required for that office. You cannot file as a write-in candidate if you are already on the ballot (except for precinct committee officer).

A declaration of write-in candidacy must be received by 8:00 pm on the day of the Primary or General election. Write-in candidates who file more than 18 days prior to an election do not pay a filing fee. Write-in candidates who file 18 days or less before an election must pay a filing fee (if applicable to the office).

Write-in candidates do not appear on the ballot and are not included in the voters' pamphlet. Votes are not tabulated for write-in candidates unless there is a declared write-in candidate for that race and enough write-in votes are cast to meet the threshold required for tallying those votes.

View and download a declaration of write-in candidacy at
www.whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
Select "File for office"

Filing Fee Petitions

RCW 29A.24.091

RCW 29A.24.101

RCW 29A.24.111

WAC 434-215-025

Candidates unable to pay the filing fee may submit a filing fee petition. Candidates submitting petition signatures may not file electronically. Only signatures of registered voters in the same jurisdiction as the office are valid.

Petitions must include a total number of valid signatures equal to the dollar amount of the filing fee. Without enough valid signatures, the petition is insufficient and your declaration of candidacy is invalid. Petition signatures and currency may not be combined to pay the fee. Additional signatures are not accepted after the petition is submitted.

View and download a filing fee petition form online at
www.whatcomcounty.us/candidateresources
Select "filing fee petition example"

Other Information

Vacancies in Office

RCW 29A.24.171
Article IV Section 29

If, prior to the first day of the regular filing period, a vacancy occurs in office, filings for that office shall be accepted during the regular filing period. The position will appear on the Primary and General election ballots unless no Primary is required or unless a candidate for superior court judge is entitled to a certificate of election pursuant to Article 4 [IV], section 29 of the state Constitution.

If, on the first day of the regular filing period or later a vacancy occurs in office, no election is held for that office. The jurisdiction will fill the vacant position with an appointment until the next election for that office.

Void in Candidacy

RCW 29A.24.141
RCW 29A.24.181

A void in candidacy occurs when an election has been scheduled and no valid declaration of candidacy has been filed for the position or all persons filing such valid declarations of candidacy have withdrawn, died, or been disqualified.

If there is a void in candidacy, a special 3-day filing period will be opened. Notice of the special 3-day filing period will be given to the media and will be posted on the Auditor's website.

If a void in candidacy is filled during the special 3-day filing period, no Primary will be held. All candidates who file during the special filing period will appear on the General election ballot.

Lapsed Elections

RCW 29A.24.191
RCW 29A.24.201

If no candidate files for a position during the regular filing period and the special 3-day filing period, that position will not appear on the ballot. The incumbent will continue to serve until a successor is elected at the next election when that position is voted on.

Other Information

Precinct Committee Officers

RCW 29A.24.075
RCW 29A.52.171

Precinct Committee Officers (PCOs) are on the Primary election ballot in even years. They are elected to a 2-year term which commences the 1st day of December following the Primary election. Candidates must affiliate with a major political party at the time of filing and be a registered voter in the precinct for which they are filing. There is no filing fee. Write-in candidates are not allowed.

No Local Voters' Pamphlet information is required - this office is not included in the LVP.

2 PCOs are elected in each precinct; 1 Democrat and 1 Republican. If only 1 candidate files for a PCO position, they are considered elected and the position does not appear on the Primary election ballot. If 2 or more candidates file, the race will appear on the Primary election ballot in lot draw order. PCOs do not appear on the General election ballot.

If a PCO position is void after the close of Filing Week, the political party will fill the position by appointment.

The Auditor's Office does not maintain a comprehensive list of elected and appointed PCOs. That information can be obtained directly from the parties.

Partisan Offices

RCW 29A.04.110
RCW 29A.52
RCW 29A.36
WAC 434-230-015
WAC 434-230-045

For a partisan office, you may choose to state a political party that you prefer. A candidate's preference does not indicate endorsement by the party. A Primary election will be held for each partisan office open for election regardless of the number of candidates who filed.

Nonpartisan Offices

RCW 29A.52.220

Candidates do not indicate a political party preference when filing for a nonpartisan office. Judicial and most local offices are nonpartisan.

A Primary election will be held if 3 or more candidates file in a nonpartisan office. The 2 candidates with the most votes continue on to the General election. Exceptions are:

- **Park and recreation districts**
- **Cemetery districts**

Positions for these 2 districts will advance directly to the General election.

Other Information

Judicial Elections

¹ RCW 29A.52.220

² RCW 29A.36.170

³ Article IV Section 29

AGLO 1973 No. 76

RCW 29A.04.321

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

³ Article IV Section 29: When applied to multi-county jurisdictions, all counties in the jurisdiction must meet the population threshold.

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

General Elections

The candidate who received the most votes in the Primary election will appear first on the General election ballot. Candidates for nonpartisan offices that did not appear on the Primary ballot will be listed in lot draw order on the General election ballot.

Washington's Top 2 Primary RCW 29A.52.112

Washington State's Top 2 Primary is a process of winnowing a field of candidates. The 2 candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast in a Primary race will advance to the General election ballot. Party preference plays no role in determining how candidates are elected to public office.

Other Information

Mandatory Recounts

RCW 29A.64.021
RCW 29A.64.070

Mandatory recounts occur when the votes for offices or statewide measures fall within the statutory range. State law does not provide for a mandatory recount of a local issue. 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. By law, you cannot recount a race or issue more than twice.

Jurisdiction	Mandatory Recount	Hand Recount
Statewide Race or Measure	Less than 2000 votes AND Less than 1/2 of 1% difference	Less than 1000 votes AND Less than 1/4 of 1% difference
Congressional, Legislative, Judicial, or Local Race	Less than 2000 votes AND Less than 1/2 of 1% difference	Less than 150 votes AND Less than 1/4 of 1% difference
Local Measure	No mandatory recount	No mandatory recount

Requested Recounts

RCW 29A.64.011
RCW 29A.64.030

Requested recounts must be submitted in writing no later than 2 business days after certification. The requestor is responsible for the entire cost of the recount and will receive a bill or refund for the difference. Written requests must include:

- **The office or issue for which the recount is requested**
- **Whether the recount is done by machine or manually**
- **If all or only a portion of the precincts are to be recounted**
- **A deposit depending on how the recount is conducted:**
 - ⇒ **Machine recount \$0.15 per ballot**
 - ⇒ **Manual recount \$0.25 per ballot**

Jurisdiction	Requested Recount
Statewide Race	Written request within 2 business days of state certification by candidate or political party
Statewide Measure	Written request within 2 business days of state certification by 5 or more registered voters
Congressional, Legislative, Judicial, or Local Race	Written request by candidate or political party within 2 business days of state or county certification, depending on the office
Local Measure	Written request within 2 business days of county certification by 5 or more registered voters

Other Information

Residency Requirements

US Senate	Candidates must be at least 30 years of age, 9 years as US citizens, and residents of the state for which they shall be chosen. United States Constitution Article 1 Section 3
US Representative	Candidates must be at least 25 years of age, 7 years as US citizens, and residents of the state for which they shall be chosen. United States Constitution Article 1 Section 2
State Legislature	Candidates must be citizens of the US and qualified voters in the district at the time of filing. State Constitution Article II Section 7 RCW 29A.24.075
State Officers	Candidates must be citizens of the US and qualified voters in the district at the time of filing. State Constitution Article III Section 25 RCW 29A.24.075
Supreme and Superior Court Judges	Candidates must be admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. State Constitution Article IV Section 17 Parker v. Wyman 176 Wn.2d 212 (2012)
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. RCW 2.06.050
District Court Judges	Candidates must be registered voters of their district and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. RCW 3.34.060
Bellingham Municipal Court Judge	Candidates must be registered voters of Whatcom County and an attorney admitted to practice law before the courts of record of the State of Washington. RCW 3.50.057 RCW 35.20.170



Other Information

Residency Requirements

County Offices

Candidates must be registered voters of Whatcom County at the time of filing. Council members shall also be residents of the district which they represent.

Whatcom County Home Rule Charter 4.20
RCW 29A.24.075

Port Districts

Candidates must be registered voters of Whatcom County at the time of filing and must live in the district which they represent.

RCW 53.12.010
RCW 29A.24.075

Public Utility District

Candidates must be registered voters of Whatcom County at the time of filing and must live in the district which they represent.

RCW 54.12.010
RCW 29A.24.075

City of Bellingham

Candidates must be registered voters and residents of the City for 1 year immediately preceding the election. Residence and voting within the limits of any territory which has been included in, annexed to or consolidated with the City is construed to have been residence within the City.

Candidates running for City Council must be a resident of the ward for which they seek election.

No City elected officer shall hold any other office or employment within the City government.
City Charter Article II Section 2.05

Non-Charter Code Cities

Blaine, Everson, Ferndale,
Lynden, Nooksack, Sumas

Candidates must be registered voters of the city at the time of filing and must have been a resident of the city for a period of at least one year preceding the election.

Candidates running for Blaine City Council must be a resident of the ward for which they seek election.

RCW 35A.12.030
RCW 35A.13.020
RCW 29A.24.075



Other Information

Residency Requirements

School Districts	Candidates must be registered voters of the district or director district at the time of filing. All school districts have director districts except Lynden and Bellingham. RCW 28A.343.350 RCW 29A.24.075
Special Purpose Districts Fire, Water, Water & Sewer, Cemetery, Park & Recreation, Metropolitan Park, Hospital	Candidates must be registered voters of the district at the time of filing. South Whatcom Fire Authority and Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer have director districts and candidates must be a resident of the director district for which they seek election. RCW 29A.24.075
Charter Review Commission	Candidates must be registered voters of Whatcom County and must live in the commissioner district which they will represent. Whatcom County Charter Article 8 Section 8.11 RCW 29A.24.075
Drainage Districts	Candidates must be both property owners in the district and registered voters in the State of Washington for 30 days prior to the time of filing. Drainage District Elections are held in February in even years. RCW 85.38

Other Districts

The following districts conduct their own elections and the Whatcom County Auditor is not responsible for their operations:

Irrigation Districts	RCW 87.03.030
Whatcom Conservation District	RCW 89.08.110
Lummi Sewer Board	www.ltswd.com

Other Information

RCW 29A.08.710

Originals and automated files—Public disclosure.

- (1) The county auditor shall have custody of the original voter registration records for each county. The original voter registration form must be filed without regard to precinct and is considered confidential and unavailable for public inspection and copying. An automated file of all registered voters must be maintained pursuant to RCW 29A.08.125. An auditor may maintain the automated file in lieu of filing or maintaining the original voter registration forms if the automated file includes all of the information from the original voter registration forms including, but not limited to, a retrievable facsimile of each voter's signature.
- (2) The following information contained in voter registration records or files regarding a voter or a group of voters is available for public inspection and copying, except as provided in RCW 40.24.060: The voter's name, address, political jurisdiction, gender, date of birth, voting record, date of registration, and registration number. No other information from voter registration records or files is available for public inspection or copying.

RCW 29A.08.720

Registration, voting records—As public records—Information furnished—Restrictions, confidentiality.

- (1) In the case of voter registration records received through the health benefit exchange, the department of licensing, or an agency designated under RCW 29A.08.310, the identity of the office or agency at which any particular individual registered to vote must be used only for voter registration purposes, is not available for public inspection, and shall not be disclosed to the public. Any record of a particular individual's choice not to register to vote at an office of the department of licensing or a state agency designated under RCW 29A.08.310 is not available for public inspection and any information regarding such a choice by a particular individual shall not be disclosed to the public.
- (2) Subject to the restrictions of RCW 29A.08.710 and 40.24.060, precinct lists and current lists of registered voters are public records and must be made available for public inspection and copying under such reasonable rules and regulations as the county auditor or secretary of state may prescribe. The county auditor or secretary of state shall promptly furnish current lists of registered voters in his or her possession, at actual reproduction cost, to any person requesting such information. The lists shall not be used for the purpose of mailing or delivering any advertisement or offer for any property, establishment, organization, product, or service or for the purpose of mailing or delivering any solicitation for money, services, or anything of value. However, the lists and labels may be used for any political purpose. The county auditor or secretary of state must provide a copy of RCW 29A.08.740 to the person requesting the material that is released under this section.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, "political purpose" means a purpose concerned with the support of or opposition to any candidate for any partisan or nonpartisan office or concerned with the support of or opposition to any ballot proposition or issue. "Political purpose" includes, but is not limited to, such activities as the advertising for or against any candidate or ballot measure or the solicitation of financial support.

Other Information

RCW 29A.08.740

Violations of restricted use of registered voter data—Penalties—Liabilities.

- (1) Any person who uses registered voter data furnished under RCW 29A.08.720 for the purpose of mailing or delivering any advertisement or offer for any property, establishment, organization, product, or service or for the purpose of mailing or delivering any solicitation for money, services, or anything of value is guilty of a class C felony punishable by imprisonment in a state correctional facility for a period of not more than five years or a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars or both such fine and imprisonment, and is liable to each person provided such advertisement or solicitation, without the person's consent, for the nuisance value of such person having to dispose of it, which value is herein established at five dollars for each item mailed or delivered to the person's residence. However, a person who mails or delivers any advertisement, offer, or solicitation for a political purpose is not liable under this section unless the person is liable under subsection (2) of this section. For purposes of this subsection, two or more attached papers or sheets or two or more papers that are enclosed in the same envelope or container or are folded together are one item. Merely having a mailbox or other receptacle for mail on or near the person's residence is not an indication that the person consented to receive the advertisement or solicitation. A class action may be brought to recover damages under this section, and the court may award a reasonable attorney's fee to any party recovering damages under this section.

- (2) Each person furnished data under RCW 29A.08.720 shall take reasonable precautions designed to assure that the data is not used for the purpose of mailing or delivering any advertisement or offer for any property, establishment, organization, product, or service or for the purpose of mailing or delivering any solicitation for money, services, or anything of value. However, the data may be used for any political purpose. Where failure to exercise due care in carrying out this responsibility results in the data being used for such purposes, then such person is jointly and severally liable for damages under subsection (1) of this section along with any other person liable under subsection (1) of this section for the misuse of such data.

2023 Important dates

Filing Week

May 1	First day to file by mail RCW 29A.24.081
May 15	Candidate filing begins RCW 29A.24.050
May 19	Candidate filing ends RCW 29A.24.050
May 19	Lot Draw for ballot order RCW 29A.36.131
May 22	Deadline to withdraw candidacy RCW 29A.24.131
May 26	Last day to submit voters' pamphlet content

Primary Election

June 16	Ballots mailed to Military & overseas voters RCW 29A.40.070
July 12	Ballots mailed RCW 29A.40.070
July 24	Last day for new registrations & updates (mail & online) RCW 29A.08.140
August 1	Last day for new registrations & updates (in-person <i>only</i> by 8:00 pm) RCW 29A.08.140
August 1	Primary Election RCW 29A.04.311
August 15	Certification of Primary Election RCW 29A.60.190

General Election

September 22	Ballots mailed to Military & overseas voters RCW 29A.40.070
October 18	Ballots mailed RCW 29A.40.070
October 30	Last day for new registrations & updates (mail & online) RCW 29A.08.140
November 7	Last day for new registrations & updates (in-person <i>only</i> by 8:00 pm) RCW 29A.08.140
November 7	General Election RCW 29A.04.321
November 28	Certification of General Election RCW 29A.60.190



Whatcom County Auditor's Office
Election Division