

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Elections Guide

For Jurisdictions



Contents

Election Calendar

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Election dates | 3 |
| Submission deadlines | 3 |
| Offices in the general election | 3 |

Jurisdiction Survey

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Purpose of the Jurisdiction Survey | 4 |
| Completing the Jurisdiction Survey | 4 |
| Frequently asked questions | 4 |

Office Holders

| | |
|--|-----|
| Importance of keeping elections informed | 5 |
| Resignations | 5 |
| New appointments | 5 |
| Oaths of Office | 5-6 |
| Candidate filing - voids and lapses | 8 |
| Candidate filing - vacancies | 8 |

Candidate Filing

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Candidate filing | 9 |
| Withdrawal of candidacy | 9 |
| Write-in candidates | 10 |
| Residency requirements | 10 |
| No double filings | 10 |
| Shared districts | 10 |

Resolution Filing

| | |
|--|----|
| Deadlines for requesting to place a measure on the ballot | 11 |
| Filing a resolution | 11 |
| Ballot titles | 11 |
| Appealing a ballot title | 11 |

Ballot Order

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Ballot order | 12 |
| Order of offices | 12 |
| Order of measures | 13 |
| Order of candidates | 13 |

Local Voters Pamphlet

| | |
|--|----|
| Jurisdictions responsibility - preparing an explanatory statement | 14 |
| Jurisdictions responsibility - appointing committee members | 15 |
| “For & “Against” committee responsibilities | 15 |
| “For & “Against” Statements | 16 |
| “For & “Against” Rebuttal | 16 |
| Rejection of Arguments, Statements, or Rebuttals | 16 |

Election Costs

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Cost of participating in an election | 17 |
| Local voters’ pamphlet cost | 17 |

2026 Election Calendar

Important election dates and deadlines

Election dates

- February Special Election 2/10/2026
- April Special Election 4/28/2026
- August Primary Election 8/4/2026
- November General Election 11/3/2026

Submission deadlines

| Resolution and Statement Dates | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Election Dates | February Special Feb. 10, 2026 | April Special April 28, 2026 | August Primary August 4, 2026 | November General Nov. 3, 2026 |
| Jurisdiction's Responsibility and Deadlines | | | | |
| Resolution | Dec. 12, 2025 | Feb. 27, 2026 | May 1, 2026 | August 4, 2026 |
| Mandatory Resolution Cover Sheet | | | | |
| Explanatory Statement | | | | |
| Committee Member Appointment Form | | | | |
| Committee's Responsibility and Deadlines | | | | |
| Statement For and Against | Dec. 18, 2025 | March 5, 2026 | May 7, 2026 | Aug. 11, 2026 |
| Rebuttal Statements | Dec. 23, 2025 | March 10, 2026 | May 12, 2026 | Aug. 14, 2026 |

Jurisdiction Survey

Confirming office holder information for candidate filing

Purpose of the Jurisdiction Survey

The Jurisdiction Survey is sent to all jurisdiction administrators each year to confirm office holder information which Douglas County Elections must use to properly conduct candidate filings for each office.

Completing the Jurisdiction Survey

Prior to February 1st of each year, Douglas County Elections will mail a letter with instructions regarding the Jurisdiction Survey. Administrators must provide the following information when completing the survey:

- Current contact information for the jurisdiction administrator
- Information about the current elected officials (office title, position number, office holder's name, annual salary at the time of candidate filing, term expiration)

Jurisdiction administrators must complete the survey prior to March 1st so that the filing information can be compiled and disseminated to the public at least 30 days prior to the candidate filing period.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if an office becomes vacant or there is a new appointment after I have submitted the Jurisdiction Survey?

Please notify Douglas County Elections in writing (or email) once an office becomes vacant.

To inquire for help verifying a potential appointee's qualifications; please contact Douglas County Elections. Our staff will verify whether or not they are qualified registered voters for that office.

Once a new official is appointed to that office, please notify our office in writing or email of the new appointment.

Where do I get the Oath of Office for a new appointee?

Douglas County Elections will provide jurisdictions with an oath and certificate for each elected office. After completing the oaths, please return them to Douglas County Elections and they will be recorded with the Douglas County Recorders Office.

Office Holders

Information about your current office holders, resignations, appointments and Oaths of Office.

Importance of keeping Douglas County Elections informed

It is extremely important that Douglas County Elections has accurate, up-to-date information regarding current office holders, as this information is used to determine which offices are subject to election. Our office must be notified immediately of all vacancies and appointments that occur throughout the year.

Resignations

Once an office becomes vacant, notify our office immediately with the minutes from the meeting with the resignation included. Please include the name of the office holder, the position number and effective date of the resignation. Additional information can be found about vacancies in *RCW 42.12*.

New appointments

Once an individual has been appointed, notify our office of the appointment. The notification must be in writing and an email is sufficient. Please include the name of the appointed person, contact information for that person and the effective date of the appointment.

Oaths of Office

Every person elected to an office in the State of Washington is required by state and federal constitutions to take an oath prior to serving in office. Information on when regular terms begin for elected officials, how oaths must be administered and how oaths must be retained can be found in the chart on the next page. After completing the Oath of Office please return to the Douglas County Election's office.

Contact Information:

Douglas County Elections
213 S. Rainier St
PO Box 853
Waterville WA 98858
509-888-6407
elections@co.douglas.wa.us



| Office | Regular term begins | Administration and repository of oath | Citations |
|--|--|--|---|
| Court of Appeals Judge Superior Court Judge | Second Monday in January | Oath retained by Secretary of State | Washington State Constitution Article IV, Section 5, 28 RCW 2.03.070,085 |
| County Commissioners | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Oath retained by County Auditor | RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 36.16.040, 060 |
| District Court Judges | Second Monday in January | Prior to entering the duties of office | RCW 3.34.070 RCW 3.34.080 |
| City and Town Officials | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Oath filed with the County Auditor. | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 35.27.120 RCW 35. 23.081 RCW 35A.12.040, 080 RCW 35A.13.160 |
| Municipal Court Judges | Second Monday in January | Prior to entering the duties of office | RCW 35.20.150 |
| Port District Commissioners | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Oath filed with the County Auditor. | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 54.12.100 |
| Public Utility District Commissioners | January 1 | Administered by an officer of the county in which the district is situated. No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Oath retained by County Auditor. | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 54.12.100 |
| School Directors | Begins at first official meeting following certification of election | School officials are authorized to administer all oaths or affirmations. Retained by County Auditor. | RCW 28A.343.360 |

| Office | Regular term begins | Administration and repository of oath | Citations |
|--|---------------------|---|---|
| Fire District Commissioners | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Retained by County Auditor. | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 52.14.070, 080 |
| Sewer, Water and Hospital District Commissioners | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or last regularly scheduled meeting. | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 57.12.030 RCW 70.44.040 |
| Cemetery Districts | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Retained by County Auditor | RCW 29A.60.270, 280 RCW 68.52.260 |
| Park and Recreation District Commissioners | January 1 | No earlier than 10 days prior to assuming office, or at last regularly scheduled meeting. Retained by County Auditor. | RCW 35.61.050 |

Candidate filing - voids and lapses

A void in candidacy occurs when no valid declarations of candidacy have been filed for a position, or all candidates that did file a valid declaration of candidacy have withdrawn, died or been disqualified.

If a void in candidacy occurs after the regular candidate filing period, but before the primary election day, a special three day candidate filing period will be held. The date of the special filing period will be determined by Douglas County Elections. Notice of the void in candidacy will be given and include the time and place for individuals to file a declaration of candidacy.

All candidates that file a valid declaration of candidacy during the special candidate filing period will appear on the general election ballot. A primary election will not be held for that office. The candidate receiving the most votes for that office in the general election is deemed elected.

If after the regular and special candidate filing periods have passed no candidate has filed a valid declaration of candidacy, the election for that office is deemed lapsed and the office will not appear on the ballot.

If a lapse of election occurs, the current office holder will remain in office and continue to serve until the next succeeding general election that the office is allowed by law to have an election.

Candidate filing - vacancies

If, prior to the first day of the regular candidate filing period, a vacancy occurs in an office that is not scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, valid declarations of candidacy for that office will be accepted during the regular candidate filing period. Douglas County Elections will give notice of the vacancy, and the notice will include the date, time and place for filing declarations of candidacy.

If, on the first day of the regular candidate filing period or later, a vacancy occurs in an office that is not scheduled to appear on the general election ballot, then declarations of candidacy will not be accepted for that office during the regular candidate filing period. That office will instead occur at the next succeeding general election that the office is allowed by law to have an election.

Examples

*John Smith, a school board commissioner, resigns on April 1, 2021. His position was not scheduled for election until 2023, leaving an unexpired 2-year term. Since the vacancy occurred before the first day of the regular candidate filing period, declarations of candidacy will be accepted for that office and it will appear on the general election ballot.

*Jane Jones, a city council member, resigns on July 31, 2021. Her position was not scheduled for election until 2023. Since the regular candidate filing period has passed, this office will not appear on the general election ballot. This office will appear on the 2023 general election ballot as a short and full term. Declarations of candidacy will be accepted during the regular candidate filing period in 2023.

Candidate Filing

Information about your role during candidate filing and general filing guidelines.

Candidate filing

All persons wishing to have his or her name printed on the ballot, must file a valid declaration of candidacy. Any person filing a declaration of candidacy must meet the qualifications specified by law for that office at the time of filing.

The candidate must be a registered voter of the jurisdiction for which they are filing, which is verified by Douglas County Elections. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that he or she meets any and all other requirements for the office.

For offices with an annual salary greater than \$1,000, a filing fee equal to 1% of the annual salary must accompany the Declaration of Candidacy at the time of filing. A filing fee is not charged for any office that is compensated on a per diem or per meeting basis.

Filing fees are not refundable. If a candidate withdraws their declaration of candidacy, he or she forfeits the filing fee.

Filing fees are not transferable. If a candidate withdraws their declaration of candidacy and re-files for a different office, a second filing fee must be paid for the new position.

The candidate filing period opens the first Monday in May. Services will be open between 8 am and 5 pm Monday through Friday.

Withdrawal of candidacy

Candidates may withdraw their declaration of candidacy prior to the deadline to withdraw.

There is no withdrawal period for declarations of candidacy filed during special candidate filing periods.

No filing fees will be refunded to any candidate that withdraws.

Write-in candidates

If an individual wishes to file for an office after the candidate filing period has passed, he or she must file a declaration of write-in candidacy and pay the filing fee, if any. Declarations of write-in candidacy must be received by 8 p.m. on the Primary or General election day. Declarations of write-in candidacy received after this date, regardless of the postmark, cannot be accepted. Candidates that file 19 days prior to election day or earlier do not have to pay a filing fee.

Residency requirements

All candidates must be a registered voter of the jurisdiction for which they have filed a declaration of candidacy. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure he or she meets any and all other requirements.

No double filings

A candidate cannot file for more than one office appearing on the ballot, with the exception of filing as a Precinct Committee Officer.

Shared districts

Below are the districts that are shared by Douglas County and another county. The lead county issues certificates of election and accepts declarations of candidacy for that jurisdiction.

| Cities | County |
|---|-----------|
| Coulee Dam | Okanogan* |
| School Districts | County |
| Brewster School District #111-203J | Okanogan* |
| Bridgeport School District 75-75J | Okanogan |
| Coulee-Hartline School District 151-204J | Grant* |
| Ephrata School District 165-55J | Grant* |
| Grand Coulee Dam School District 301-304J | Grant* |
| Quincy School District 172 | Grant* |
| Lake Chelan School District 12J | Chelan* |
| Special Purpose District | County |
| Hospital District #1 | Okanogan* |
| Hospital District #6 | Grant* |
| Fire District #15 | Okanogan* |
| Coulee Area Park and Rec | Okanogan* |

* Lead County

Resolution Filing

Information about filing a resolution to place a measure on the ballot and ballot titles.

Deadlines for requesting to place a measure on the ballot

Upon receipt of a resolution from the governing body of a jurisdiction, Douglas County Elections may hold a special election. The jurisdiction can request the special election be held on one of the scheduled elections during February, April, August or November. (Refer to page 3 for exact dates)

The resolution requesting the special election must be presented to Douglas County Elections according to the set dates listed on page 3. All resolutions must be received by Douglas County Elections no later than 4:30 pm on the day of the deadline.

Filing a resolution

To have a measure appear on a ballot, a jurisdiction must submit a resolution or ordinance requesting an election. Resolutions can be submitted by email, mail, fax or in-person. Each measure being submitted must have:

- Ballot Measure Cover Sheet
- Resolution
- Explanatory Statement
- For/Against Committee Appointment Form

For more information and some printable forms, see www.douglascountywa.net.

Ballot titles

Jurisdiction will give proposed wording of ballot titles to elections department. The official ballot title is prepared by the Prosecuting Attorney's office and they will send the official ballot title to the jurisdiction.

Appealing a ballot title

Within ten business days of a ballot title being filed, any persons dissatisfied with the ballot title may file a petition with the superior court to appeal the ballot title. The date the ballot title is filed is the date that the ballot title was first filed with Douglas County Elections. The decision of the superior court is final. More information about appealing a ballot title can be found in *RCW 29A.36.090*.

Ballot Order

Information about the order in which candidates and measures appear on the ballot.

Ballot order

State law determines the order of offices and measures on the ballot at the federal or state level. For local offices and measures, the order they appear on the ballot is established by the county.

Order of offices

The offices will appear in the following order:

- Federal Offices
 - President and Vice-President of the United States
 - United States Senator
 - United States Representative
- State Offices
 - Governor
 - Lieutenant Governor
 - Secretary of State
 - State Treasurer
 - State Auditor
 - Attorney General
 - Commissioner of Public Lands
 - Superintendent of Public Instruction
 - Insurance Commissioner
 - State Senator
 - State Representative
- County Offices
 - County Assessor
 - County Auditor
 - County Clerk
 - County Commissioner (Numerical order by district)
 - County Coroner
 - Prosecuting Attorney
 - Sheriff
 - County Treasurer
 - Public Utility District (PUD) Commissioner
- State and County Judicial Offices. These appear on the ballot sequentially by district and/or position within each category.
 - Justices of the Supreme Court
 - Judges of the Court of Appeals
 - Judges of the Superior Court
 - Judges of the District Court
- Junior Taxing and Municipal Offices
 - Douglas County Port District
 - Parks and Recreation District
 - Water District
 - Hospital District
 - School District
 - Cities and Towns
 - Mayor
 - Council Position
 - Fire Protection District (Numerical order by position)
 - Cemetery District
 - Sewer District
 - Precinct Committee Officer

Order of measures

The measures will appear on the ballot in the following order:

- Initiatives to the people
- Referendum measures
- Referendum bills
- Initiatives to the legislature and alternate proposals, if any
- Advisory votes
- Proposed constitutional amendments
 - Senate Joint Resolutions
 - House Joint Resolutions

Countywide ballot measures

All other local measures, if any, appear in the area dedicated to that jurisdiction and follow the offices. For example, a ballot measure for a city would appear on the ballot after the city council races. Local measures would appear in the following order:

- Initiatives
- Referendum measures
- All other propositions

Measures are numbered sequentially within each of the above categories in the order they are received by Douglas County Elections, unless otherwise indicated by the jurisdiction proposing the measures.

Order of candidates

After the close of the regular candidate filing period, Douglas County Elections will conduct a lot draw to determine the order in which candidate names will appear on the primary election ballot.

For the general election ballot, the candidate receiving the most votes in the primary election will appear first and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes will appear second. If a primary election is not required for an office, the candidate names will appear on the general election ballot in the order determined by the lot draw.



Local Voters' Pamphlet

Information on how to publish a local voters' pamphlet, explanatory statements and for/against committees.

Local voters' pamphlet

The County shall prepare a local voters' pamphlet for all elections. The County shall notify all jurisdictions within the county of its intent to publish a pamphlet for each election at least 90 calendar days before the publication and distribution of the pamphlet. Notification will be made via email or standard mail to the jurisdiction's contact on file with the Douglas County Elections Department.

All jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot in an election in which a pamphlet is produced, will participate in the pamphlet. In the case of a city or town, the city or town may opt to produce its own local voters' pamphlet.

The cost to produce, print and mail a local voters' pamphlet is an election cost that is included when jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot are billed for their portion of the cost of the election.

The Douglas County Commissioners have the authority to waive financial responsibility of any jurisdiction where participation in the pamphlet would create undue financial hardship. A petition from a jurisdiction must be submitted to the County Commissioners no later than 60 days before the publication of the pamphlet. A jurisdiction receiving a waiver for pamphlet costs will continue to be responsible for their remaining portion of the cost of the election.

The elections department will notify jurisdictions of the pamphlet publication date as well as deadlines for submission of materials to be included in the pamphlet. Candidates will be notified of all deadlines and requirements when they file for office.

Jurisdictions responsibility - preparing an explanatory statement

An explanatory statement addresses the anticipated effect of a measure if passed into law.

The statement may be no more than 200 words* and must be prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the proposition or measure. A letter from the jurisdiction's attorney confirming they prepared and approved the explanatory statement is required.

If there is no letter from the jurisdiction's attorney or if a jurisdiction does not retain legal counsel for the review, the statement will be submitted to the Douglas County Prosecuting Attorney.

Space is limited, so formatting is important. Format your statement as an essay; text must be written in paragraphs. Tables, lists and bullets are not allowed, and will be changed to a block paragraph with a semicolon to separate each item.

Here are a few tips:

Edit carefully, avoid technical terms that may not be generally understood, avoid criticism of opponents. Proofread carefully. All statements are published as submitted. Submissions are final. There will be no opportunity for changes for the General Election. Douglas County is not responsible for the validity or accuracy of the statements.

**For districts that cross county lines, Douglas County will follow the formatting and word count of the county where the ballot measure is required to be filed.*

Jurisdictions responsibility- appointing committee members

The jurisdiction is responsible for appointing “for” and “against” committees to prepare statements, “for” and “against” committees consist of members of the public who commit to write a statement whether in favor of or in opposition to a ballot measure. Each committee is limited to three members, but the committee can have an unlimited number of persons assist them to prepare the statements. Each committee must designate a spokesperson with whom Douglas County Elections will communicate all matters related to the local voter’s pamphlet.

Once the committee members have been chosen, the jurisdiction must complete the committee appointment form which is included on our website (www.douglascountywa.net) and submit it to Douglas County Elections.

In the event that a jurisdiction is unable to appoint committee members by the deadlines, Douglas County Elections is required to advertisement for committee members.

“For” and “against” committee responsibilities

All “for” and “against” committee appointments must be submitted by the deadline to submit measures and resolutions.

The names of the committee members and one phone number, email or website are published in the voters’ pamphlet. This information is not included in the statement word limit. No titles will be included with the committee members’ names. Government website and email addresses, such as those ended in .gov, may not be used for committee contact information.

“For” and “against” statements

The “for” and “against” committees submit statements in favor of and in opposition to the ballot measure for the local voters’ pamphlet.

Each argument “for” or “against” a measure can be no more than 150 words* and must be prepared by the committee formed pursuant to *RCW 29A.32.280*. The Election’s Office will not edit or advise committees on statements.

“For” and “against” statements are to be submitted directly to Douglas County Elections by the committee spokesperson, no later than 4:30 p.m. on the day of the deadline, regardless of postmark. (Deadlines on page 3)

“For” and “against” rebuttal

After the deadline to submit “for” and “against” statements, Douglas County Elections will email the opposing committee’s statement to all committee members. Each committee will then have the opportunity to write a rebuttal statement of no more than 75 words. However, a rebuttal statement is not required. Rebuttal statements must be submitted to Douglas County Elections by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the deadline, regardless of postmark. (Deadlines on page 3) Rebuttal statements are not exchanged.

Rejection of arguments, and statements

The Auditor’s Office reserves the right to reject any argument or statement if it does not meet requirements.

Material submitted for publication in the pamphlet may be rejected if:

- It’s obscene.
- It’s libelous.
- Contains a commercial advertisement.
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail.
- Contains matter not relevant to the measure.
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or does not comply with applicable law.
- Was received after the submittal deadline.

If a “for” or “against” statement or rebuttal statement is rejected by the Elections Supervisor, a written notice of rejection shall be sent to the committee chair or candidate by email within two business days after receipt thereof and shall explain specific grounds for rejection.

The committee or candidate will have 24 hours from the time of notification to submit an adjusted statement or contact information.

Candidates or committee chairs may appeal the rejection of the statement by emailing an appeal to the Douglas County Auditor within two business days of notification. The Auditor’s decision on the appeal will be final.

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

**For districts that cross county lines, Douglas County will follow the formatting and word count of the county where the ballot measure is required to be filed.*

Election Cost

Information about calculating the cost of participating in an election and the cost of publishing a local voters' pamphlet.

Cost of participating in an election

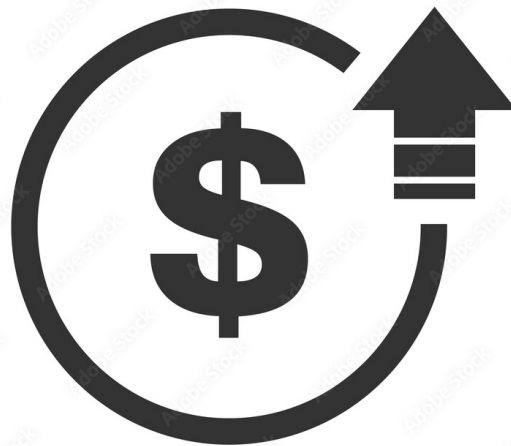
Election costs are based upon a jurisdiction's proportionate share. Each jurisdiction's cost is determined by taking the total number of registered voters in the jurisdiction and dividing it by the total number of all registered voters in all participating jurisdictions in the election.

Election costs vary from one election to the next, depending on a variety of factors. For instance, whether or not the election is held in an odd or even-numbered year is a significant factor for determining costs in a primary or general election; but less of a factor for a special election held in February or April. This is primarily due to the number of participating jurisdictions in an odd-numbered year as opposed to an even-numbered year. Although the overall cost of a primary or general election from one year to the next is somewhat comparable, a general election shared by ten jurisdictions is going to cost more per voter for each jurisdiction than an election shared by 135 jurisdictions.

Special elections in February and April are often shared by a smaller number of jurisdictions, thus the proportional share is often greater. In the case of a single jurisdiction election, the cost would be 100%.

Douglas County Elections will prepare and send billing notifications to the jurisdictions.

Prior to deciding what election to place a measure on the ballot, jurisdictions may contact Douglas County Elections to request an estimated election cost. Estimates will be based on a reasonable range, taking historical information into account, as well as specific known information about a particular election date. A specific cost or quote cannot be provided, as there are unknown factors such as the number of jurisdictions participating in an election.



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