

**Douglas County**

# *Candidate Filing Guide*



# Candidate Filing Guide

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# 2026 Important Election Dates

## Candidate Filing Dates

Candidate Filing week:.....May 4, 2026- May 8, 2026  
Office hours during filing week are 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- Mail In: Must be received between Monday, April 20 and Friday, May 8

Withdrawal Deadline .....May 11, 2026 @ 5 p.m.

Local Voters' Pamphlet Deadline.....Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Candidate Statements

Primary Election .....Tuesday, August 4, 2026

General Election .....Tuesday, November 3, 2026

## Logic and Accuracy (L&A)

Prior to processing ballots and tabulating, the elections department conducts a Logic and Accuracy Test of election software to ensure tabulators are reading and tabulating response positions on ballots correctly. L&A Test, processing ballots, ballot tabulation and Canvassing Board meetings are open to the public for observation.

The dates for the canvassing meeting and the L&A are advertised prior to each election in the newspaper and our website.

# Filing to be a Candidate

## **Becoming a candidate**

To become a candidate, a voter must complete and file a Declaration of Candidacy. Voters must, at the time of filing, possess the qualifications specified by law required for the office and must be properly registered to vote in the district represented by the office at the time of filing. Information about residency requirements can be found on page 8.

To find out which offices you can file for this year, view the [Offices Open for Election](#) link on our website. This list includes the offices up for election, the current incumbent, where to file your Declaration of Candidacy and the filing fee information.

## **When to file**

Online filing begins at 8:00 a.m. on the first Monday in May and continues until 5:00 p.m. the following Friday.

All Declarations of Candidacy must be received before the close of business on the last day of the filing period. Declarations of Candidacy received after this date, regardless of the postmark, are invalid.

Candidates may file online starting at 8 a.m. on the first day of filing, until 5 p.m. on the last day of filing. Submissions must be complete before 5 p.m. Candidates who file online will receive a confirmation email when their filing has been received and again when their filing has been approved.

*Mailed* Declarations of Candidacy may be submitted in advance up to ten business days before the filing period begins. Filing received prior to this date will be returned to the candidate.

Once filed, a Declaration of Candidacy may not be altered. If you decide during the filing period to change the Declaration of Candidacy, you must first withdraw and then re-file.

## **Where to file**

The following offices must file with the *Office of the Secretary of State*:

- President and Vice President
- US Senators
- US Representatives
- State Offices
- State Senators and Representatives
- State Supreme Court
- Douglas County Superior Court Judge

Candidates who must file with the Secretary of State may file online or in-person. Contact the Secretary of State's Office for more information about filing with their office.

The following offices must file with *Douglas County Elections*:

- Douglas County Offices
  - District Court Judge
  - Cities and Towns (Exception: City of Coulee Dam with Okanogan County)
- Schools (Exception: Brewster School District with Okanogan County, Coulee-Hartline School District, Grand Coulee School District and Ephrata School District with Grant County, Lake Chelan School District with Chelan County)
- Special Purpose Districts (Exception: Coulee Area Park and Rec, Douglas-Okanogan Fire District 15, and Hospital District #1 with Okanogan County, Hospital District #6 with Grant County)

## **Cost to File**

Filing fees or filing fee petitions must accompany the Declaration of Candidacy at the time of filing. The filing fee is based on the salary in effect at the time of filing. Candidates can pay the filing fee online using a credit card, debit card or an electronic check. When paying online, a small convenience fee is charged. Candidates filing in person can pay with cash or check only. Candidates may also file online from the Elections office and pay with a credit or debit card.

Filing fees are not refundable, even in the event of a withdrawal. If a candidate withdraws and refiles for a different position, a second filing fee must be paid for the new position.

A candidate who lacks sufficient assets or income at the time of filing to pay the filing fee shall submit with their Declaration of Candidacy a filing fee petition. A candidate submitting a filing fee petition must submit all signatures when filing the Declaration of Candidacy. The Candidate must pay the full filing fee OR submit the petition with the required signatures. No combination of money and signatures is allowed.

To view filing fee information for offices subject to election this year, view the [Offices Open for Election](#) on our website. This list includes the offices up for the current election, the current incumbent, where to file your Declaration of Candidacy, and filing fee information.

## **Filing Fee Petitions**

If you choose to submit a filing fee petition in lieu of a filing fee, you must submit all signatures at the time you file your Declaration of Candidacy. Candidates cannot supplement the signatures at a later date.

The petition must contain not less than the number of signatures of registered voters equal to the number of dollars of the filing fee. For example, if the filing fee is \$461.08, the candidate must submit no less than 461 signatures of registered voters. The signatures must be of voters registered to vote within the jurisdiction for which the candidate is filing.

As a best practice, Douglas County Elections recommends that candidates, who plan to submit a filing fee petition, do so as early as possible during the week of candidate filing. Our office also recommends that you submit at least 25% more signatures than required.

The filing fee petition form can be found on our website.

## **Getting Ready to File**

Before you file for office, you will need to:

- Verify that your voter registration information is current. You can verify your voter registration information online at [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov).
- Verify the office and position for which you are filing. The responsibility for filing for the correct office is yours. Remember, filing fees are not refundable. If you withdraw and refile for a different position, you must pay a second filing fee for the new position.
- Make sure you meet the qualifications for that office. You are responsible for ensuring that you meet all qualifications of the office.
- Decide how you want your name to appear on the ballot.
- If filing for a partisan office, know how you want your party preference information to appear on the ballot.
- Have your campaign contact information ready.
- Prepare Voters' Pamphlet information.

## **Your Name on the Ballot**

When filing for office, input your name exactly as you wish it to appear on the ballot. You may use a nickname by which you are commonly known as your first name, but your last name must be the name under which you are registered to vote. For example, if you are registered to vote as William Smith but are commonly known as Bill, you may use Bill Smith for your ballot name.

You may not use a nickname that denotes present or past occupation or military rank, use a nickname that denotes your position on issues or political affiliation or use a nickname designed to intentionally mislead voters.

## **Partisan Offices – Party Preferences**

For a partisan office, you may choose to state a political party that you personally prefer. A preference does not imply that you have been nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with you.

If you choose to state a party preference, enter the name of the party (must be 16 characters or less.) The first letter of the party preference will be capitalized (i.e. Republican.) If you use an acronym or initials, each letter will be capitalized whether or not you use periods, (i.e. GOP or G.O.P.) Your party preference will appear below your name as (“Prefers \_\_\_\_\_ Party”.)

If you choose not to state a party preference, (“States No Party Preference”) will appear on the ballot.

Make sure you input your party preference exactly as you wish it to appear on the ballot; you cannot make any changes once you submit your Declaration of Candidacy.

No changes to party preference will be accepted between the Primary and General Election.

## No Double Filings

A candidate's name cannot appear on the ballot more than once, excluding Precinct Committee Officer.

## Office Requirements

All candidates must be resident electors of their district. A resident elector is a citizen residing at his/her voter registration address.

<b>Office</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
County Offices	Candidates must be 21 years of age, residents and registered voters of Douglas County.
Fire, Water, Hospital and Sewer Districts	Candidates must be qualified electors of district. (RCW 42.04)
Municipal Court Judges	Candidates must be qualified resident electors of Douglas County and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington. (RCW 3.05)
Park and Recreation Districts	Candidates must be resident electors of the district. (RCW 36.69,54,12)
Port Districts	Candidates must be registered voters of Douglas County. (RCW 53.12)
School Districts	Candidates must be registered voters of the district or director district. (RCW 29A.315, 29A.24)
State Legislature	Candidates must be qualified voters in the district. (State Constitution, Article II, Section 7)
State Offices	Candidates must be qualified electors of the State of Washington. (State Constitution, Article III, Section 7)
Supreme, Superior, District Judges	Candidates must be resident electors of their district and admitted to practice law in the courts of record of the State of Washington (State Constitution, Article IV, Section 17, Article III, Section 25; RCW 3.34,35.20)

# Voters' Pamphlet Information

## Filing Voters' Pamphlet Information

The *Secretary of State's Office* accepts voters' pamphlet submissions for Federal, Statewide, Legislative, Court of Appeals and Superior Court offices. All other offices shall file information for a printed and online voters' pamphlet with *Douglas County Elections*.

The candidate profile information shall be limited to 100 words or less and will be allocated between 4 section headings (Elected Experience, Other Professional Experience, Education, and Community Service). Subsection headings are not included in the word count. When a candidate doesn't submit information for a subsection heading, "No information submitted" will appear in that subsection area.

Candidate statements shall be limited to 200 words. Candidate statements should only address campaign issues, plans, and ideas of the candidate. Statements shall not contain obscene, inappropriate or libelous language. Candidates statements shall not comment on or make any judgments about opponents or incumbents. The County Auditor has the authority to reject statements that are deemed inappropriate per (RCW 29A.32.230).

Only italics will be used to emphasize words or phrases. Bold, underline, and all caps are not allowed. Tables, lists and bullets are not allowed.

The County Auditor's Office will not correct errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation. Candidate contact information (name, campaign address, phone number, email, and website) provided by the candidate during candidate filing, will be listed separately from the candidate statement and will not count in word count. If the candidate campaign information is included within the statement submission, it will count towards the word count and will also be in the contact area. Contact information is published even if no statement is submitted.

Candidates not submitting a statement will have "No statement submitted" printed in the local voters' pamphlet.

## **How to Submit your Voters' Pamphlet Information**

Your voter's pamphlet submission is important and as a best practice, Douglas County Elections recommends that you submit your information as early as possible. Our office will not accept late submissions.

After filing for office you will receive an email with instructions on your Voters' Pamphlet filing. Our office must receive your voter's pamphlet submission for the Primary AND General Election no later than 11 days after the last day of candidate filing week, regardless of postmark. Submissions after the deadline will not be accepted. No exceptions. (Refer to page 3)

Online filing is quick and easy! Here are some benefits to filing your voters' pamphlet information online:

- You can spell check your statement.
- You can verify your word count.
- You can verify or change your campaign contact information.
- You will receive a confirmation email when your submission has been received.

Candidates also have the option of submitting their voters' pamphlet information in-person or by mail.

## **Your Photo**

- You may submit one self-portrait of your head and shoulders. Use a light-colored background, but white is not recommended.
- Photo may not be a cartoon, caricature or any other image that does not accurately portray the candidate.
- Hats and clothing or insignia that suggest a public office (i.e., judicial robes, law enforcement or military uniforms) will not be accepted. Sunglasses or other items obscuring the candidates face in the photo will not be accepted.
- The photo must include only the candidate.
- The Auditor's Office will adjust and/or crop photos as necessary. Photos should reflect the candidate in a professional and tasteful manner.
- Candidates not submitting a photo will have a "No photo submitted" statement printed in the pamphlet.

## **Rejections and Appeals**

The Auditor's Office reserves the right to reject any statement or contact information if it does not meet requirements or is deemed inappropriate.

If the statement is rejected a written notice with explanation will be emailed within 2 business days after receipt. Then there will be 24 hours from the time of notification to submit an adjusted statement or contact information as long as the original submission was on time.

An appeal of the rejection may be submitted by email to the Douglas County Auditor within 2 business days. The Auditor's decision will be final.

For full details on rejections and appeals please contact the Elections Department at 509-888-6403.

# Campaign Contributions

## Where to File

Within two weeks of filing that declaration, most candidates must register their campaigns (C-1 report) and disclose personal financial affairs (F-1 report).

All candidates need to contact the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) directly with any questions regarding the filing of public disclosure documents. We strongly encourage candidates to access all PDC information on their website, [www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov).

“The public’s right to know of the financing of political campaigns and lobbying and the financial affairs of elected officials and candidates far outweighs any right that these matters remain secret and private.”

RCW 42.17A.001 (10)

### Who donates to campaigns?

View contributors and measures

Public Disclosure Commission

[www.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.pdc.wa.gov)

877-601-2828



# Ballot Order

## 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

- Assessor
- Auditor
- County Clerk
- County Commissioner
- Prosecuting Attorney & Coroner
- Sheriff
- Treasurer
- Public Utility District Commissioner

### State and County Judicial Offices

- 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

- Port
- Park and Recreation District
- Water District
- Hospital District
- School District
- Cities & Towns
  - Mayor
  - Councilperson
- Fire District
- Cemetery District
- Library
- Link Transit
- 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 bill
- Initiatives to the legislature and alternate proposals
- Proposed Constitutional Amendments
  - Senate Joint Resolutions
  - House Joint Resolutions
  - Advisory Votes
- Countywide Ballot 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. The lot draw is open to the public, call for information.

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.

# Voter Statistics and Data

## Requests for Election and Voter Registration Information

Requests for elections-related data (voter registration lists, daily ballot returns and challenge reports, etc.) must be submitted to the Secretary of State Elections Division. This information is no longer available from the Douglas County Elections Office. This is the result of law (RCW 29A.08.105(3)).

SB 5459 added paragraph (3) under Section 2 to RCW 29A.08.105 with the following language:

**(3) Requests for records from, or any existing standard reports generated by, the statewide voter registration database must be submitted to and fulfilled by the secretary of state per Title 42 RCW. If a county elections office receives a request for records from, or any existing standard reports generated by, the statewide voter registration database, the county elections office is not required to produce any records in response to the request, but shall, by the deadline set forth in RCW 42.56.520, direct the requestor to submit the request to the secretary of state.**

The Secretary of State's Data and Statistics page provides many standard reports already available. You may also reach out to the Public Records Office which would be a valuable resource for obtaining those records.

[sos.wa.gov/elections/data-research/election-data-and-maps/data-and-statistics](https://sos.wa.gov/elections/data-research/election-data-and-maps/data-and-statistics)

For all future requests for data, please contact the Office of the Secretary of State.

### **Washington Secretary of State Elections Division Public Records Office**

PublicRecords@sos.wa.gov

PO Box 40224

Olympia, WA 98504-0224

Phone: (360) 704-5220

Election and voter registration data provided by the Secretary of State Elections Division is either statewide or county wide. In order to divide the data into the jurisdictions you are interested in, you need to know the precincts associated with each jurisdiction.

# Campaign Sign Regulations

## The Role of Douglas County Elections

Douglas County Elections has no role in the regulation of campaign signs.

## State and Local Sign Regulations

To learn more about campaign sign regulations please refer to:

[www.wsdot.wa.gov](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov)

[www.douglascountywa.net](http://www.douglascountywa.net)