



BENTON COUNTY WA
Auditor | ELECTIONS

Guide to Elections & Candidate Filing



Benton County Elections Division
7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg F.
Kennewick, WA 99336
www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor
elections@co.benton.wa.us

2025 Edition

Table of Contents

Local Voters' Pamphlets.....	Pgs. 3-4
Administrative Rules for Voters' Pamphlets.....	Pg. 5
Filing a Resolution FAQs.....	Pgs. 6-8
Rescinding a Resolution	Pg. 9
Offices Up for Election.....	Pgs. 10-11
Filing for Office.....	Pg. 12
Candidate Filing Information.....	Pg. 13
Candidate Statement Guidelines.....	Pgs. 14-17
Pro & Con Committee Guidelines.....	Pgs. 18-20
Election Costs.....	Pg. 21
Bond & Levy Validation.....	Pg. 22
Data Requests.....	Pg. 23
Election Observing.....	Pg. 24
Ballot Drop Box Locations.....	Pg. 25
Election Day FAQs.....	Pg. 26
Voting By Mail.....	Pg. 27
Political Sign Regulations.....	Pgs. 28-32
Recounts.....	Pg. 33
Voter Turnout Statistics	Pg. 34

This guide to elections and candidate filing has been assembled to assist jurisdictions in preparing for the upcoming elections, as well as provide reference materials to be used by the news media and other interested parties.

Benton County will be providing a voters' pamphlet for all elections. A printed version will be mailed to each household involved in the election, and a digital version will be available online at www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor

Please keep in mind this guide is for general information only and does not carry the force and effect of law, regulation, or rule. In case of any conflict, the law, regulation, or rule will be the definitive answer. Jurisdictions and others using this guide bear full responsibility to make their own determinations as to all legal standards and duties.

The Benton County Elections Division is dedicated to assisting all candidates and jurisdictions with the election process while ensuring elections are conducted fairly and accurately in compliance with the laws of the State of Washington.

I hope you find this guide useful, and, of course, do not hesitate to contact my staff or me with any questions.



Amanda Hatfield
Benton County Elections Manager

A printed voters' pamphlet will be produced for all elections in Benton County. Online versions of the voters' pamphlet will also be available. These printed pamphlets will be mailed to all households participating in the election. The pamphlets may be mailed out in one of the following ways depending on the size of the election.

- By mail to all registered voter households (one per household)
- By mail, included in the ballot packet materials

For general elections, the Elections Division partners with the Office of the Secretary of State in publishing of the State Voters' Pamphlet. This pamphlet includes statewide measures and state and federal offices. Pursuant to RCW 29A.32.210, jurisdictions or special districts with measures on the ballot are automatically included in the voters' pamphlet.

The preparation of the local voters' pamphlet for each election is an election cost. It is prorated, charged and billed to local jurisdictions in the same manner as other election costs.

There are exclusions for districts from being included in the local voters' pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.220). If a district believes that the cost of inclusion in the voters' pamphlet would create an undue financial hardship, the district may petition the Board of County Commissioners to exclude the district's measures and candidates from the pamphlet. The petition must be submitted to the Board with a copy sent to the Benton County Elections Division at least 90 days prior to the submission deadlines of the next pamphlet and will include all elections for the following two years. A district receiving a waiver for local voters' pamphlet costs will continue to be responsible for their remaining portion of the cost of the election. If a district has been granted a waiver, the Elections Division will note the pamphlet cost is not included at their request. The district must reapply to the Board of County Commissioners every two years.

Deadlines for committee rosters for the Primary and General Election of 2025 are:

- ***Primary Election—Friday, May 2nd at 4:30 pm***
- ***General Election—Friday, August 8th at 4:30 pm***

For each ballot measure, the pamphlet includes:

- Official Ballot title and Explanatory Statement (can be dropped off the same time as the Resolution)
- “Pro” and “Con” committee statements, if submitted
If there is no committee created the Elections Division will reach out in the community in an attempt to establish a committee.
- Rebuttal Statements, if submitted
- Committee contact information
Committee spokesperson contact information will be published in the voters' pamphlet.

Keep in mind that the printed voters' pamphlet is a requirement for every election, so be sure to submit your materials. The more information voters have about a ballot measure or candidate the better informed they are. Anyone interested in being a part of a district's pro/con committee must be a registered voter of Benton County and live within the district of the committee being established.

The contents of the voters' pamphlet will include:

1. The printed version of the voters' pamphlet will include the title "Benton County Official Local Voters' Pamphlet" along with the date of the election. It will also say "Published by the Benton County Elections Division."
2. A list of jurisdictions participating in the election will be printed if space allows.
3. An introductory letter from the Benton County Elections Division will appear for all elections.
4. A table of contents will be included for all elections in the voters' pamphlet.
5. A link to the Benton County Elections Division sample ballot. If space allows the sample ballot will be printed in the voters' pamphlet.
6. A required Public Disclosure Commission statement that declares, "For a list of the people and organizations that donated to state and local candidates and ballot measure campaigns, visit www.pdc.wa.gov." (Included on sample ballot)
7. A list of all ballot drop box locations will be listed in the voters' pamphlet.
8. The address, operating hours, and services provided at the Student Engagement Center (HUB) located at WSU Tri-Cities at 2770 Crimson Way, Richland that is required to be open for every General Election.
9. Explanatory Statements for any ballot measures for the election (250 word limit).
10. The headings "pro committee" and "con committee" will be included with each ballot measure and will be accompanied with any rebuttals, if submitted.
11. Statements and photographs of the candidate for elective office will be included, if submitted. If no statement is submitted the wording "No Statement Provided" will be printed and a photo placeholder stating "No Photo Provided".
12. Information about registering to vote.
13. A disclaimer will be included that states that the Elections Division does not make corrections of any kind or verify statements for truth, fact, or spelling mistakes. Jurisdictions and/or candidates are responsible for proofreading statements before submitting them to the Elections Division.
14. Such other information as the Elections Division deems helpful to voters, if space allows.

The contents of the voters' pamphlet will not include candidate statements or photos for Precinct Committee Officers.

Resolutions calling for an election by a jurisdiction shall be submitted on or before the resolution deadline established by state law. Resolutions calling for a special election in February or April must be submitted to the Elections Division at least 60 calendar days prior to the election date. Resolutions calling for an election in conjunction with the primary or general election must be submitted no later than 4:30 pm on the date of the resolution deadline. See below for 2025 Primary and General Election deadlines.

August 2025 Primary Election

May 2	Resolution Deadline—August Primary
May 5-9	Candidate Filing Week
May 13	Lot Drawing
May 20	Candidate Statements/Photos Due
June 18	Military/Overseas ballots are mailed
July 16	Ballots mailed
July 28	Mail in/Online registration deadline
August 5	In-Person registration deadline
August 5	Election Day
August 19	Certification of August Primary Results

November 2025 General Election

August 5	Resolution Deadline—November General
September 17	Military/Overseas ballots are mailed
October 15	Ballots mailed
October 27	Mail in/Online registration deadline
November 4	In-Person registration deadline
November 4	Election Day
November 25	Certification of November General Results

To place a measure on the ballot, the following must be received by the deadline:

- A signed copy of the resolution
- A completed Resolution Cover Sheet containing important contact information required by the Elections Division (example on next page and available through www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor). Be sure to include your ballot measures passage requirements.
- Explanatory Statement (250 word limit)
- Committee Roster for both “pro” and “con” committees (example on page 7 and available through www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor)
- The following information will be published in the voters’ pamphlet but does not count toward word limits.
 - Committee name
 - Contact person telephone number
 - Committee or contact person e-mail address
 - Committee website

The resolution packet may be delivered in person, mailed, or e-mailed to the Elections Division by the resolution deadline.

Physical Locations:

Benton County Courthouse
620 Market St.
Prosser, WA 99350

Benton County Elections Center
7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg. F
Kennewick, WA 99336

Mailing Address: PO Box 1000

Richland, WA 99352

E-mail address: elections@co.benton.wa.us

*Upon receipt of the resolution, cover sheet, explanatory statement, and committee member names, the Elections Division will e-mail a notice of acknowledgment to the jurisdiction’s

This policy sets the limits and standards for when a district can withdraw a ballot issue that has been previously filed by the statutory deadline for a ballot measure.

Definition: This policy applies only to ballot measures. Statutes governing ballot measures are not clear concerning withdrawals. This does not apply to candidate filings, since candidate withdrawals are clearly specified in statute.

The allowance to withdraw is based on the timeline necessary to design, print and distribute the ballots. There is a point in the timeline when changes can no longer be made to the ballot without jeopardizing the deadlines needed in order to have ballot materials out by the statutory deadline. This allowance and date varies based on the filing timelines of each election.

Authority: Only the governing body that originally authorized the filing resolution can withdraw the ballot measure. The rescission must be done in the same format as the filing – by resolution approved in an open public meeting. The rescission resolution must be delivered to the Elections Division by 4:00 pm of the specified due date listed below.

Spring Elections (February & April):

No withdrawal is allowed. Ballots are designed the next business day. Any delay would cause failure to meet the statutory deadline for distributing military ballots.

Primary Election:

The last day to receive a rescission resolution is the last day for candidates to withdraw, as specified in RCW. This is usually the Monday after filing week for candidate ends.

General Election:

The last day to rescind a resolution is the Thursday after certification by the County Canvassing Board of the Primary Election.

Offices up for Election

Jurisdiction	Office	Term	Incumbent	Filing Fee
Port of Benton	Commissioner District 1	6	Roy Keck	\$180.00
Port of Kennewick	Commissioner District 2	6	Thomas Moak	\$360.68
Kennewick Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 1	6SF	Shannon Phipps	\$0.00
Kennewick Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 4	2U	Spencer Harris	\$0.00
Kennewick Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 5	6	Wanda Briggs	\$0.00
Kennewick Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 6	6	Rick Reil	\$0.00
Prosser Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 1	4U	Samantha Markus	\$0.00
Prosser Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 4	6	Brandon Bowden	\$0.00
Prosser Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 5	6	Glenn M. Bestebreur	\$0.00
Prosser Public Hospital Dist.	Commissioner Pos. 6	6	Stephen Kenny	\$0.00
City of West Richland	Council Pos. 1	4	John E. Smart	\$84.00
City of West Richland	Council Pos. 2	4	Ken Stoker	\$84.00
City of West Richland	Council Pos. 3	4	May Hays	\$84.00
City of West Richland	Council Pos. 4	4	Richard Bloom	\$84.00
City of West Richland	Mayor	4	Brent Gerry	\$840.00
City of Prosser	Council Pos. 1	4	Don Aubrey	\$43.08
City of Prosser	Council Pos. 2	4	Morgan Everett	\$43.08
City of Prosser	Council Pos. 3	4	Felix Cortes	\$43.08
City of Kennewick	Council Pos. 1 Ward 1	4	Gretl Crawford	\$171.00
City of Kennewick	Council Pos. 2 Ward 2	4	Loren Anderson	\$171.00
City of Kennewick	Council Pos. 3 Ward 3	4	John H. Trumbo	\$171.00
City of Kennewick	Council Pos. 4 At Large	4U	Jason McShane	\$171.00
City of Benton City	Council Pos. 1	4	Jessica Bosse Wadsworth	\$0.00
City of Benton City	Council Pos. 2	4	Bill Reed	\$0.00

Offices up for Election

Jurisdiction	Office	Term	Incumbent	Filing Fee
City of Richland	Council Pos. 3	4	Sandra Kent	\$152.28
City of Richland	Council Pos. 4	4	Ryan Lukson	\$152.28
City of Richland	Council Pos. 6	2	Kurt H. Maier	\$152.28
City of Richland	Council Pos. 7	2	Ryan Whitten	\$152.28
Kennewick School Dist. #17	Director No. 1	4	Micah Valentine	\$0.00
Kennewick School Dist. #17	Director No. 2	4	Gabe Galbraith	\$0.00
Paterson School Dist. #50	Director No. 1	4	Lindsay Joshlin	\$0.00
Paterson School Dist. #50	Director No. 2	4	Shane L. Munn	\$0.00
Kiona-Benton City School Dist. #52	Director District 2	4	Joshua Skipper	\$0.00
Kiona-Benton City School Dist. #52	Director District 3	4	Teddy Bryan	\$0.00
Kiona-Benton City School Dist. #52	Director District 5	4	Vacant	\$0.00
Finley School Dist. #53	Director District 2	4	Tom LaFortune	\$0.00
Finley School Dist. #53	Director At-Large	4	Cathy Krug	\$0.00
Prosser School District #116	Director District 3	4	Elisa V. Riley	\$0.00
Prosser School District #116	Director District 4	4	Jason Rainer	\$0.00
Grandview School District #200	Director, District 1	2U	Vacant	\$0.00
Grandview School District #200	Director, District 2	4	Heather Garcia Mendoza	\$0.00
Grandview School District #200	Director, District 5	4	Scott McKinney	\$0.00
Richland School District #400	Director No. 1	4	Bonnie Mitchell	\$0.00
Richland School District #400	Director No. 2	4	Rick Jansons	\$0.00
Fire District #1	Commissioner Pos. 3	6	David Jenkins	\$0.00
Fire District #2	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Steve Rouse	\$0.00
Fire District #4	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Garrett Goodwin	\$0.00
Fire District #5 Revised	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Kody Hartley	\$0.00
Fire District #6	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Robert Crow	\$0.00
West Benton Regional Fire Authority	Commissioner Pos. 1 At Large	6	Randy Cobble	\$0.00
County Well Water District	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Randy Mercer	\$0.00
Plymouth Water District	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Austin Wyatt	\$0.00
Tri-City Estates Water District	Commissioner Pos. 2	6	Rick Jansons	\$0.00

Candidate Filing Updates

When a candidate files for office, if they provide their email address, they will receive an automatic update when another candidate files for the same position. Candidate filing information will be updated as soon as any filing is accepted or withdrawn. The e-mail will also provide information on how to submit candidate statements and photos. You can also e-mail candidate submissions directly to candidateinfo@co.benton.wa.us

No Filings for an Office

If there are no filings in a partisan, judicial, or non-partisan office, a special three (3) day filing period will be called by the Secretary of State or County Auditor. If there are no filings after the special filing period, the office will be void and not appear on the ballot.

Primary Elections

All cities, towns, and districts shall be subject to a Primary. All filing dates are the same.

For partisan offices, primaries are required. If more than two (2) candidates file for the same position, only the two candidates with the most votes will advance to the General Election. If a candidate does not receive at least one percent of the votes cast, they do not advance to the General Election.

For nonpartisan offices, primaries will be required if more than two (2) candidates file for the same position. Only those positions having more than two (2) candidates filing will be on the Primary ballot. The top two candidates with the most votes will advance to the General Election.

Write-In Candidates

A write-in candidate may file a Declaration of Candidacy and pay the filing fee. Write-in declarations must be filed no later than 8:00 pm on the day of the Primary or General Election.

Per RCW 29A.24.311 no write-in candidate will be included in any voters' pamphlet unless that candidate has moved on to appear on the General Election ballot.

Where do I go to file?

Candidate filing begins Monday, May 5 at 8:00 a.m. and ends Friday, May 9 at 5:00 p.m. Candidate filing will only be available online and at our locations below.

Benton County Courthouse
620 Market St.
Prosser, WA 99350

Benton County Voting Center
7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg. F
Kennewick, WA 99336

Filing for office online can be done at: www.VoteWa.gov

To be eligible for a position you must be a registered voter within the District for which you are filing. If you are unsure, visit: www.VoteWa.gov Some jurisdictions have residency requirements. Please check with the jurisdiction you are filing for requirements.

For a list of all offices up for election this year, visit: www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor and click on the Filing Information box.

Please note: A candidate's name cannot appear more than once, except for precinct committee officer.

Lot Drawing

Lot drawing will be conducted Tuesday, May 13 at 9:30 a.m. This determines the order of the candidates on the ballot. The drawing is open to the public and the results will be published online after the drawing is complete.

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

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

Withdrawal of Filing

A candidate may withdraw their Declaration of Candidacy in writing through Monday, May 12 at 5:00 p.m. All filing fees are non-refundable.

Withdrawal forms can be downloaded at: www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor and click on the Filing

Candidate Statement Guidelines

The deadline to submit candidate statements for the Voters' Pamphlet is no later than 4:30 pm on May 20th. Submissions can be e-mailed to:

candidateinfo@co.benton.wa.us

Biography and Statement

In *addition* to your 200 word statement, you may provide a short 100 word limit biography. The following headings will be provided in your biography and will not count as part of your 100 word biography limit:

Elected Experience

Education

Community Service

Other Professional Experience

Please use these headings for your Biography and Statement.

If you choose not to submit information for one of the following headings, the words "No information submitted" will appear next to the heading. Hyphenated words count as two words unless the hyphenation is listed as one word by dictionary.com.

Statements exceeding word limits are shortened by deleting full sentences from the end until the limit is reached. The Benton County Auditor reserves the right to eliminate excessive paragraph returns if your statement doesn't fit in the space provided. If you provide the "For more information" piece like in the example, this does count towards your 200 word limit.

Statement Type	Word Limit	Formatting
Biography	100	Allowed: Italics Not Allowed: Bold font , <u>underlined font</u> , ALL CAPS, lists, bullets
Candidate Statement for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• County offices• All other local offices	200 Headings are not included in word limit (see above for exempt headings)	Allowed: Italics, up to four headings (each starting a paragraph: limit 4) Not Allowed: Bold font , <u>underlined font</u> , ALL CAPS, lists, bullets

Materials submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet may be rejected by the Elections Division if:

- It is obscene;
- It is libelous;
- Contains a commercial advertisement;
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail;
- Contains matter not limited to the candidate himself or herself or to the measure or political office;
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or that does not comply with applicable law;
- Photo does not meet statutory or administrative criteria; or
- Was received after the submittal deadline

****Please note the Benton County Elections Division does not accept candidate photos or statements for candidates filing for Precinct Committee Officers.**

How should I add emphasis?

Use italics only to emphasize specific words or statements. Bolding, underlining, and all caps are not allowed.

May I use bullets?

No. Text must be written in paragraphs. Tables, lists, and bullets are not allowed.

Correct

I approve of justice for all,
fairness of the law, and
rehabilitation.

Incorrect

I approve of
• Justice for all
• Fairness of the law
• Rehabilitation

Lists submitted in the incorrect format will be converted to the correct format by replacing bullets with commas.

What words may I use?

Obscene, profane, libelous, and defamatory language will be rejected.

May I name other people in my statement?

Mentioning others by name in the candidate statement may result in a legal appeal, required changes to your statement, and a delay in posting the statement online.

Does someone edit the information I submit?

No. Proofread your statement, biography, and contact information carefully. Once the deadline for statements has passed, changes will not be allowed to any content other than contact information unless otherwise requested by the Elections Division or court order.

Is my campaign contact information published?

Your campaign telephone number, email, and website are published only if provided in the lower section of your candidate information form. Be sure your campaign contact telephone, email, and website are functional when you submit your statement.

Can I submit a new statement for the General Election?

No. The statement you submit after filing for office will be used for the Primary Election. If you are on the General Election ballot, your statement will continue to be used for the General Election and will be published in the state Voters' Pamphlet.

Each candidate may submit one self-portrait. Limit photo to the head and shoulders. Use a light-colored background (not white). Photos must be no more than five years old.

Color or black & white?

Color photos are required; black & white will be rejected.

Uniforms

Do not show the uniform or insignia of any organization that advocates or teaches racial or religious intolerance, or suggests the wearer has held public office. (RCW 29A.32.110)

Digital photos

Must be a minimum resolution of 300 dpi and no smaller than 4x5 inches. Photos may not be digitally altered.

Print photos

Submit a smooth, no gloss, lab-processed print. Photos printed on a home computer are unacceptable. Photos should be no smaller than 4x5 inches and no larger than 8x10 inches.

Professional photo or snapshot?

Professional photographs reproduce the best. If you have an amateur take your photo, here are some tips.

- A light-colored background is best (not white).
- Take numerous shots. Area should be softly lit to avoid facial and background shadows.
- If digital, make sure the resolution is 300 dpi or higher.
- Print the photos to choose the best one.

Can I submit a photo printed at home?

No. A photo printed at home will not reproduce well. If you have a photo on your home computer, submit the file online or burn a CD and drop it off at the Elections Center or mail it in.

If you have a candidate video recorded, please feel free to include in your candidate statement a link of where the video is located (ie: YouTube). Please note this will count as one word from your statement.

Pro/Con Committee Members Form Benton County

This form is to be completed by the jurisdiction administrator. The completed form must be submitted to Benton County Elections by 4:30 pm on the day of the deadline.

If you have any question on how to complete this form please contact Benton County Elections at 509-736-3085.

Name of jurisdiction/district

District contact person

Phone number

Email

We were unable to find any participants for;

Pro committee

Con committee

- The information listed in the Committee Spokesperson's place will be included in the voters' pamphlet.
- Committee member names will be listed in the pamphlet in the order they are listed on this form.
- Committee member contacts must remain available throughout the submittal process.
- Committee email and website address must be functional when submitting this form.

The Committee Spokesperson is responsible for contact with the Elections Manager on behalf of the committee. Committee Spokesperson contact information will be published in the online and printed voters pamphlets.

Pro Committee

Committee Spokesperson

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Committee Name:

Committee Member

Name:

Committee Member

Name:

Con Committee

Committee Spokesperson

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Committee Name:

Committee Member

Name:

Committee Member

Name:

Explanatory Statement Guidelines

Each ballot measure for the voters’ pamphlets must be accompanied by an explanatory statement. The explanatory statement is prepared by the Prosecuting Attorney for county measures. If the measure is not a county measure, the explanatory statement is prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the measure. Explanatory statements submitted for the voters’ pamphlet shall contain the name, address and phone number of the person submitting the statement.

The purpose of the explanatory statement is to state the effect of the proposed measure if it is approved by the voters. It must be impartial, written in clear and concise language, avoid the use of legal and technical terms whenever possible, and conform to the formatting requirements discussed below. If prepared by the jurisdiction, proof of approval by the jurisdiction’s attorney must be submitted at the same time as the resolution.

Statement Type	Word Limit	Formatting
Explanatory Statement *To be turned in at time of Resolution filing	250	Allowed: Italics Not Allowed: Bold font , <u>underlined font</u> , ALL CAPS, lists, bullets
“Pro” and “Con” Statements *Due 10 days after Resolution deadline	250 Headings are included in word limit	Allowed: Italics, up to four headings (each starting a paragraph) Not Allowed: Bold font , <u>underlined font</u> , ALL CAPS, lists, bullets
Rebuttal Statement *Due within 5 days of receiving committee statements	75	Allowed: Italics Not Allowed: Headings, Bold Font , <u>underlined font</u> , ALL CAPS, lists, bullets
Contact Information	Does not count as part of word limit	Allowed: Committee member names; phone number; email address; website; committee name At least one method of contact must be provided

Committee statements consist of up to 250 words, including no more than four headings. Headings may not exceed 15 words each and will be printed in bold type. Headings are calculated in your total word count.

Hyphenated words count as two words unless the hyphenation is listed as one word by dictionary.com.

Bullet lists are not permitted.

The body of your argument may not include bold, underlining, or all caps. Italics are permitted for emphasis. Bold, underlining, or all caps will be removed and replaced with italics. See page 8 for more regulations

No more than five paragraphs are allowed for arguments. Excessive paragraph returns will be removed.

Committee statements must be submitted to the Elections Division no later than 10 days after the resolution deadline for that election. The exchange of committee statements to the opposing committee (if there is one) will happen at the end of the 10 day deadline, not before.

Every candidate or committee appearing in the state or local voters' pamphlet shall designate a contact person with whom the Elections Division shall communicate all matters related to the pamphlet. Within five business days of the appointment of the initial members, the committee shall provide a name, mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and email address as applicable. In the case of candidates the Elections Division shall use the information on the declaration of candidacy unless the candidate provides different information pursuant to this section. This information will be published in the voters' pamphlet.

Once submitted, statements cannot be changed by the committee unless requested by the Elections Division or court order.

Rebuttals

Rebuttal statements are not required, but they are a way for a committee to provide a response to the opposing committee's statement. Rebuttal statements must be 75 words or less and in one block paragraph. If the rebuttal statement exceeds the word limit, full sentences will be removed until the word limit has been reached.

Each jurisdiction is responsible for paying its proportionate share of election costs. The Elections Division will bill the jurisdiction directly for these costs.

The State Auditor's Office has established uniform procedures for allocating election costs to each jurisdiction. The cost is based upon the percentage each jurisdiction's registered voter population comprises of the registered voters in all jurisdictions participating in that election.

Election costs vary from one election to the next depending on a variety of factors. However, the primary variable is the number of participating jurisdictions and their respective sizes. For example, an election shared by five jurisdictions will likely cost less per voter than an election with one or two jurisdictions.

Special elections are held in February and April and are often shared by a smaller number of jurisdictions. This makes the proportionate share of the cost often greater, and in some cases can result in a jurisdiction being responsible for 100% of the cost.

A specific cost or quote cannot be provided in advance of an election. The cost allocation is dependent on several factors such as cost of materials, number of jurisdictions, and registered voters participating in the election. While we do our best to provide estimates upon request, please keep in mind that these will be based upon a reasonable range, taking into account historical information and specifics based on a particular election date.

If a mandatory recount is required for a candidate in a specific jurisdiction, the cost of the recount is billed to that jurisdiction.

Bond Validation

Bond issues must meet two separate criteria to pass.

First, they must validate. The voter turnout must equal 40% of the voters who cast a ballot in the last General Election.

Second, the issue must receive a 60% favorable majority, or 60% of the ballots cast are “Yes” votes. So, a bond measure could get the required percentage of “Yes” votes, but could still fail if not enough people voted in the election.

Example-Bond Validation

If there were 10,000 votes cast in the last General Election for the district: To pass the bond issue:

The district must have a minimum turnout of at least 4,000 **TOTAL voters** ($10,000 \times 40\% = 4,000$)

AND...

At least 60% of the voters must vote **YES**.

Example-Levy Validation

If there were 10,000 votes cast in the last General Election for the district:

To pass the levy issue:-The district must have a minimum turnout of at least 2,400 **YES** Votes

($10,000 \times 40\% = 4,000$)
($4,000 \times 60\% = 2,400$)

AND

At least 60% of the voters must vote **YES**

Levy Validation (excluding school levies)

Levy issues must meet two separate criteria to pass.

First, they must validate. The number of “Yes” votes must equal 24% (60% of the 40%) of the voters who cast a ballot in the last General Election.

Second, the issue must receive a 60% favorable majority, or 60% of the ballots cast are “Yes” votes.

So, a levy measure could get the required percentage of “Yes” votes, but could still fail if not enough people vote in the election.

**A school district levy requires a simple majority to pass. School bond issues still must validate and require a 60% majority to pass. This changed in 2007 with the passage of Engrossed House Joint Resolution 4204 that changed the constitutional requirements regarding school district levy elections.

Often times, campaigns will try to time their mailings to the voters to be the same day as the ballots are mailed (see dates on Election Timeline). You or your print vendor can access the list of voters online and matchback requests (daily ballot returns) through the Secretary of State's office at: https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections#data_research

Prior Election results are also available through this link.

Map Requests

Map requests are now done directly through our GIS Department.

Visit <https://benton-county-gis-bentonco.hub.arcgis.com/> to request your map order through the GIS website.

The Benton County Auditor's Office welcomes anyone wishing to observe election processes.

Can I come observe?

The entire election process is open to the public and candidates. You can come observe the Election Staff receive, open, and prepare the ballots to be scanned, scanning, tabulation of the ballots, and certification of the election results by the Canvassing Board

We have two locations where voter services are provided:

Benton County Auditor's Office, Courthouse, 620 Market St., Prosser (first floor)

Benton County Election Center, 7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg. F., Kennewick

All ballot processing will be done from the Kennewick location.

We encourage observers to contact our office directly to schedule a time to visit. It is best to determine which processes are being conducted on a given day, as daily election processing schedules may change.

Visitors will be required to sign into the facility and will be issued an "Observer" badge.

During ballot processing, no persons except those employed and authorized by the Auditor may touch any ballot, ballot container, or vote tallying system.

Any questions observers may have should be directed to the Auditor/Election Manager or Site Supervisor of the location.

For more information on being an observer please refer to our website at: www.bentoncountywa.gov/auditor and click under the current election menu.

Accessible Voting

Accessible Voting Units (AVU) are available beginning 20 days before every election.

Our AVU units have been designed specially to assist voters with disabilities. Each unit has optional headphones. However, these units are available for any voter to use.

Accessible Voting Center Locations:

Prosser - 620 Market St.

Kennewick - 7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg E and F

WSU Tri-Cities - 2770 Crimson Way— *Student Engagement HUB open only for General Elections (Check with Elections Division for available dates and times)*

Drop Box Locations

Secure ballot drop box locations:

Ballot drop boxes are a convenient way for you to return your ballot on or before Election Day. These secure ballot drop boxes can be found at 11 locations throughout Benton County. Boxes are open 20 days prior to Election Day and remain open until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Ballot drop boxes do not require any postage.

Prosser: Courthouse—620 Market St.

Benton City: City Hall—1009 Dale Ave., Ste. A

West Richland:

- Library—3803 W. Van Giesen St. (Drive up)
- City Hall—3100 Belmont Blvd. (Drive up)

Kennewick:

- City Hall—210 W. 6th Ave. (Drive Up)
- Benton County Campus—7122 W. Okanogan Pl., Bldg E (Drive up)
- Elections Center - 7122 W, Okanogan Pl., Bldg F
- Finley Middle School—37208 S. Finley Rd. (Drive up)

Richland:

- Badger Mountain Community Park—Keene Rd. (Drive up)
- Jefferson Park—Symons St. (Drive up)
- WSU Tri-Cities—2770 Crimson Way (Drive up)



Where can I find Election Results?

Initial ballot tabulation commences at 8:00 p.m. on Election Night, with results being released on the Auditor's website soon thereafter. The tabulation process only takes a couple of minutes but the election staff always takes a moment to verify the results have printed or uploaded correctly. Results will be released to the Auditor's website following verification.

When will the results be updated again?

The Elections Division will continue to process returned ballots and update the results periodically following Election Day. You can see when the next update is scheduled by viewing the Election Results online. At the top of the Election Results you will see "Next Update" information.

My ballot has been challenged and I received a form in the mail....what do I do now?

Cure forms are sent out to all voters who have not signed their ballot return envelope or the signature on the return envelope did not match what the Elections Division has on file. Not to worry, the form you received is your opportunity to fix this problem. Sign the cure form you received with your official signature (most likely what is on your driver license), and send it back to our office in the yellow postage paid envelope. Voters have up until the day before certification of all elections to have these cure forms returned to our office.

After Election Day

It's the day after Election Day, who was elected?

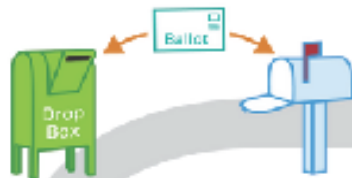
No one yet. Results are not final until the Canvassing Board certifies the election results. Special elections are certified 10 days after Election Day, primary elections are certified 14 days after Election Day, and general elections are certified 21 days after Election Day. This time allows for Military and Overseas ballots to arrive. Voters also have the opportunity to cure any challenged ballots prior to certification day.

Who certifies the results?

The Canvassing Board certifies all election results. The Board is made up of the County Auditor, the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, and a representative from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. The Board reviews all ballots challenged for no signature, signature discrepancy, postmarked too late, and any other reason.

Vote by Mail in Benton County

All eligible voters are sent a ballot at least 18 days prior to the Election Day.



All ballots have pre-paid postage and can be returned by U.S. mail or placed in one of the 12 convenient drop boxes. Drop boxes are open until 8 p.m. on Election Day.



The security sleeve is put in a return envelope and the return envelope is signed (or can be marked and accompanied with two witness signatures). Voters can also update their contact information on this envelope.



Voter places their marked ballot into a provided security sleeve.



During the 18-day voting period, mail and drop boxes are checked frequently by election staff. Ballots taken to the Election Center and are scanned to show as "Received".



At the County Voting Center, ballots are sorted into batches and prepared for signature verification.



The signature on the outer envelope will be compared to the signature on file for the voter. If the signature is missing or does not match, the voter will be contacted.



The return envelope (also called the signature envelope) will be opened and the security sleeve with ballot will be removed.



At any point once we get your ballot, you can check the progress online at www.VoteWA.com.
*Please allow 2-3 days for the system to update.



If the signature is verified, the ballot will now be marked as "Accepted". You will be credited for participating in this election in the VoteWA system.



The ballot is removed from the security sleeve. This ensures in secrecy of the vote.



The ballot will be reviewed for potential scanning issues. If there are none, the ballot will be scanned.



All scanned ballots will be moved to a secure location inside the Voting Center.

The election is complete, and preparations for the next election cycle begin.



The County Canvassing Board meets and certifies the election.



At 8 p.m. on Election Night, ballots that have already been scanned are tabulated and results will be reported.

Benton County

Resolution 72-219; Section II; Paragraph 4

Signs and Billboards: No signs or billboards other than standard traffic control, destination and warning signs shall be placed on County Road rights of way, except that directory type signs of approved design and location may be permitted on access roads, and, institutional facility type directional signs of approved design and location may be permitted on County Roads.

For more information, contact the Benton County Commissioner's Office.

City of Richland

Citizens are responsible for knowing the local ordinances that apply to placement of campaign signs. The following is for information only, and does not relieve any candidate or sign owner from knowing and understanding the rights and obligations provided under Title 27 RMC Signs.

27.02.010 Legislative statement.

Richland's sign code provides standards specifying the type, number, size, location, and lighting of signs in the various zones of the city. The intent of the standards in this title is:

- A. To encourage the design of signs that attract and invite rather than demand the public's attention, and to curb the proliferation of signs;
- B. To encourage the use of signs that enhance the visual environment of the city;
- C. To promote the enhancement of business and residential properties and neighborhoods by fostering the erection of signs complementary to the buildings and uses to which they relate and which are harmonious with their surroundings;
- D. To protect the public interest and safety;
- E. To protect the right of a business to identify its premises and advertise its projects through the use of signs without undue hindrance or obstruction;
- F. To encourage streetscapes that are more pleasant and interesting; and
- G. To reduce the distractions, obstructions and hazards to pedestrians and automobile traffic caused by an excessive number, excessive size or height, inappropriate means of illumination or movement, indiscriminate placement, overconcentration, or unsafe construction of signs.

27.08.020 Standards specific to temporary signs.

- A. Purpose. The city finds that the proliferation of temporary signs is a distraction to the traveling public and creates aesthetic blight and litter that threaten the public's health, safety, and welfare. The purpose of these regulations is to limit distractions to the traveling public and minimize aesthetic blight and litter caused by temporary signs by allowing temporary signs only in the time, place and manner specified in this section.
- B. General Requirements of Temporary Signs. Temporary signs are allowed only in compliance with the provisions of this section.
1. Except as otherwise permitted herein, a temporary sign may be displayed for no more than 180 days per calendar year; temporary signs related to an event may be displayed for no longer than 180 consecutive days per calendar year and must be removed no later than 14 days after the event.
 2. The following elements are prohibited on temporary signs:
 - a. Any form of illumination, including flashing, blinking, or rotating lights;
 - b. Animation;
 - c. Reflective materials; and
 - d. Attachments, including, but not limited to, balloons, ribbons, speakers, etc.
 3. Temporary signs may be placed in the right-of-way if they meet all of the following standards:
 - a. The sign must be placed entirely outside of the roadway;
 - b. The sign must not be placed in medians, traffic islands, roundabouts, or other areas within the roadway;
 - c. The sign must not obstruct pedestrian or wheelchair access to the sidewalk;
 - d. The sign must not be placed in parking spaces, pedestrian pathways, or bicycle paths;
 - e. The sign must remain portable and may not be attached or anchored in any way to trees or to public property including, but not limited to, utility or light poles, parking meters, fences, or pavement.
 4. Public Spaces. Temporary signs shall not be placed in any public park, trail, open space, or other public space, except for those signs placed by the city.
 5. Chapter 27.12 RMC notwithstanding, the City may promptly remove or cause to be removed any temporary signs that do not comply with any requirement of this title.
- C. Residential Zoning Districts and Uses. Temporary signs on property or on the exterior of a structure located within a residential zoning district or dedicated to a residential use are allowed in compliance with the following:

1. Single-Family and Medium Density Zoning Districts. Temporary signs are allowed in single-family (R-1-12, R-1-10) and medium density (R-2, R-2S) zoning districts in compliance with the following:
 - a. The sign is for a noncommercial purpose;
 - b. The sign is constructed of durable material;
 - c. The sign must be a freestanding sign;
 - d. Only one sign is allowed per street frontage; and
 - e. A sign may not exceed six square feet in size. If the sign is post-mounted on the ground, it shall not exceed five feet in height. If the sign is stake-mounted or portable, it shall not exceed three feet in height.

2. Temporary Signs in Multifamily Residential Zoning Districts and Approved Manufactured Home Parks. Temporary signs on property or on the exterior of a structure located within a multifamily residential (R-3) zoning district and manufactured home parks are allowed in compliance with the following:

- a. The sign is for a noncommercial purpose;
- b. The sign is constructed of durable material;
- c. The sign must be a freestanding sign;
- d. Only one sign is allowed per street frontage; and
- e. A sign may not exceed six square feet in size. If the sign is post-mounted on the ground, it shall not exceed five feet in height. If the sign is stake-mounted or portable, it shall not exceed three feet in height.

3. Notwithstanding anything in this title to the contrary, the standards of this subsection apply to residential uses located in nonresidential zoning districts.

D. Temporary Signs in Nonresidential Zoning Districts.

1. Temporary signs on property or on the exterior of a structure located within a nonresidential zoning district or dedicated to a nonresidential use are allowed in compliance with the following:

- a. One wall sign is allowed per building, not to exceed 16 square feet in size;
- b. The sign is constructed of durable material;
- c. The sign is not illuminated;
- d. One freestanding sign is allowed per street frontage;
- e. A freestanding sign may not exceed 16 square feet in size. If the sign is post mounted on the ground, it shall not exceed five feet in height. If the sign is stake-mounted or portable, it shall not exceed three feet in height.

2. Notwithstanding anything in this title to the contrary, the standards of this subsection apply to nonresidential uses located in residential zoning districts.

27.04.030 Permits required – Exemptions.

A. Omitted.

B. Temporary Signs. . . . The following temporary signs shall not require a permit:

1 – 6. Omitted.

7. Noncommercial signs that are made of paper, vinyl, plastic or other nondurable material and which are designed and intended to be displayed for a short period of time; provided, that they conform with the sight obstruction requirements of Chapter 12.11 RMC, do not interfere with or obstruct any traffic control device or in any other manner interfere with the control of traffic on the streets of the city, and are not larger than 32 square feet in area.

C. Number of Signs. Except as provided at RMC 27.08.020, signs not requiring a permit and temporary signs shall not be included as part of the maximum number of signs permitted by this code.

27.12.030 Enforcement.

A. Code Violations and Enforcement. The remedies provided in this section for violations of or failure to comply with provisions of this code shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to any other remedy provided by law. Any sign that is not in compliance with all the provisions of this code is an unlawful sign and declared to be a public nuisance.

B. Penalties – Order to Remove. The violation of or failure to comply with any of the provisions of this code, or the construction, use, or display or the allowing of the construction, use, or display of any sign not in compliance with all the provisions of this code, is a civil infraction subject to a civil penalty as set forth in RMC 10.02.050(E); and shall be required to remove such sign or take such other action as shall be determined by the court to be necessary to bring such sign into full compliance with the provisions of this code. Each day or portion thereof upon which a violation occurs constitutes a separate offense.

Provided, if the same violator has been found to have committed an infraction violation for the same or similar conduct two separate times, with the violations occurring at the same location and involving the same or similar sections of the Richland Municipal Code or other similar codes, the third or subsequent violation shall constitute a misdemeanor, punishable as provided in RMC 1.30.010 for criminal offenses.

C. Removal of Unlawful Sign – Summary Abatement.

1. Any sign that has not been removed or otherwise brought into full compliance with all the provisions of this code within the time specified and in accordance with the order of the court may be removed by the city and the costs of such removal charged to the violator. Upon such removal, the city may sell or otherwise dispose of the sign and apply the proceeds toward the costs of removal. Any proceeds in excess of costs of removal shall be paid to the owner of the sign.

2. Signs which the sign code administrator finds upon public streets, sidewalks, rights-of-way, or other public property or which, wheresoever located, present an immediate and serious danger to the public because of their unsafe condition or location may be immediately removed by the sign code administrator without prior notice. Neither the city nor any of its agents shall be liable for any damage to the sign when removed under this section.

City of West Richland

Municipal Code Section 19.12.090 Political Signs

Political Signs, on-premises and off-premises, are permitted as follows:

- A. Political signs are permitted if they are stationary, unlighted, and temporary.
- B. Political signs are allowed up to a maximum of sixteen (16) square feet in area without a sign permit when located according to WRMC 19.04.020. Political signs greater than sixteen (16) square feet in area shall require a sign permit for each individual sign.
- C. Permitted political signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area and ten (10) feet in height.
- D. Political signs may be displayed on private property with the consent of the property owner. Property owners shall be responsible for the removal of political signs when the campaign is over.
- E. Political signs may be placed in the City street right-of-way; however, political signs in a right-of-way shall not impede vehicular or pedestrian movement or pose a safety hazard, as determined by the Community Development/Planning Director. Political signs are not allowed in the median of major streets. Political signs shall not be allowed in the planting areas of traffic islands.
- F. Political signs shall be removed within ten (10) days after a voting day, except that signs promoting successful candidates in a primary election may remain displayed until ten (10) days following the immediately subsequent general election. Failure to remove signs may result in an assessment in the cost of their removal.

(16-00, Added, 07/17/2000)

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 a 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 the 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 than the deposit.

Voter Turnout Primary Elections

Year	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Turnout
2012	93,389	33,119	35.46%
2013	86,914	28,578	32.88%
2014	98,612	37,693	38.22%
2015	91,792	15,470	16.85%
2016	102,501	34,331	33.49%
2017	107,872	26,541	24.60%
2018	108,592	40,394	37.20%
2019	109,348	24,161	22.10%
2020	117,986	63,400	53.74%
2021	126,436	44,440	35.15%
2022	125,051	49,434	39.33%
2023	59,468	21,982	36.96%
2024	128,708	51,037	39.65%

Voter Turnout General Elections

Year	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Turnout
2012	97,849	80,880	82.66%
2013	97,652	42,902	43.93%
2014	98,992	54,530	55.09%
2015	99,539	32,616	32.77%
2016	110,281	76,082	68.99%
2017	106,921	40,541	37.92%
2018	110,281	76,082	68.99%
2019	114,859	45,475	36.59%
2020	126,264	103,736	82.16%
2021	125,458	48,678	38.8%
2022	125,699	76,339	60.73%
2023	126,513	45,051	35.61%
2024	132,022	101,652	77.00%

I won the election and have been elected to office. What do I do next?

Oath 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.

Who can administer my oath of office?

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:

Judge and Notary Publics	RCW 5.28.010
Clerks of the Court	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

Filing your oath of office

Once you have taken your oath of office for a local or county office, the original must be filed with the Benton County 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 Office of the Secretary of State.