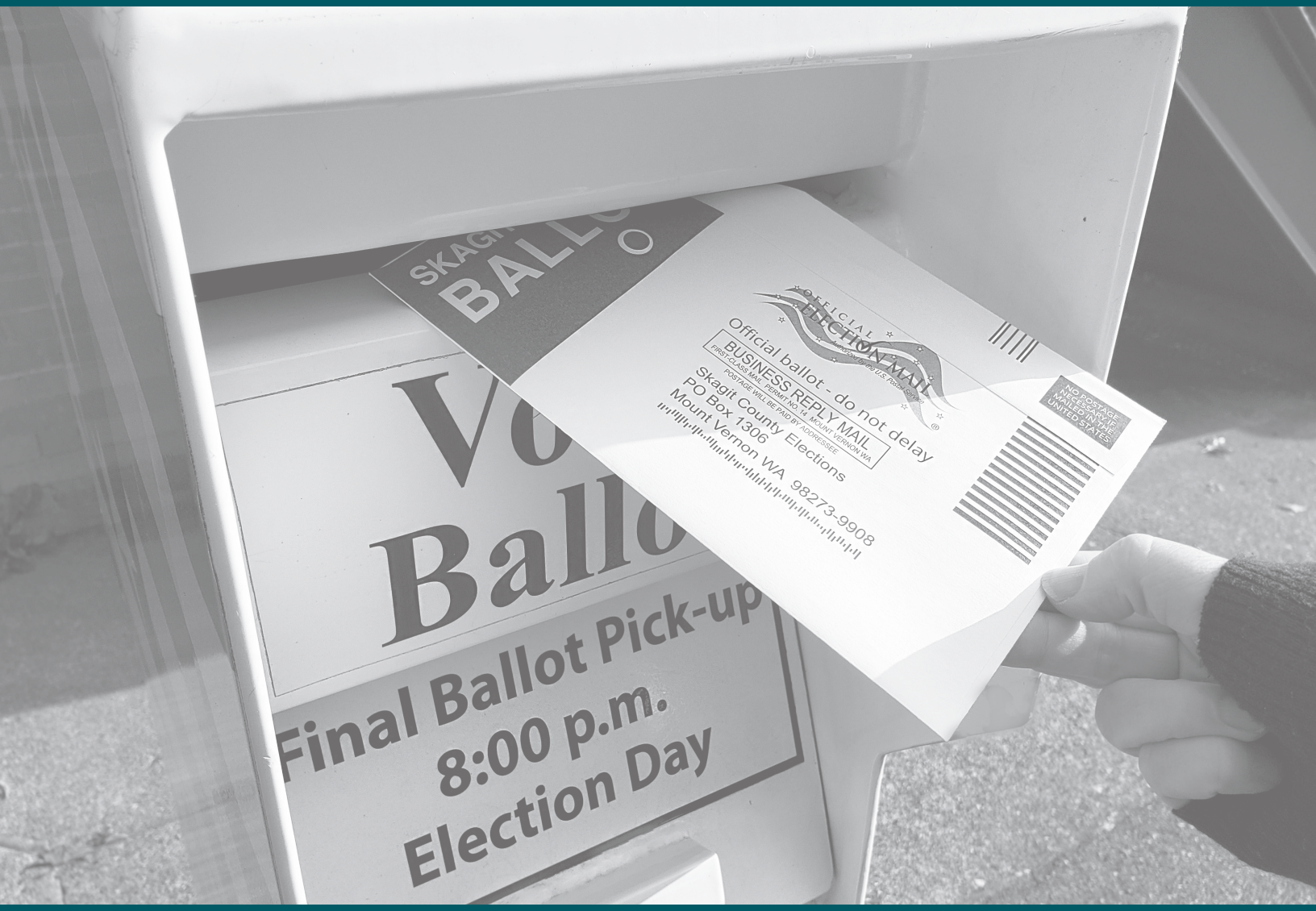
Election Guide for Jurisdictions

Including local voter's pamphlet rules

Updated November 2026



Skagit County Elections
700 S. 2nd St, Room 139
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

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SKAGIT COUNTY AUDITOR
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About this Guide

This guide should be used in conjunction with state and local laws, not in place of them. The Revised Code of Washington, Washington Administrative Code, and other notations are offered as references for additional research. The material contained herein may change due to new legislation, judicial determination, or rule changes.

Local Voters' Pamphlet

Publication of Local Voters' Pamphlet

Skagit County publishes a local voters' pamphlet for each election. Jurisdictions with measures or candidates on the ballot are automatically included. It is available in print and on our website.

For each measure, the pamphlet includes:

- Official ballot title
- Explanatory statement
- "For" and "Against" statements, if submitted
- Rebuttal statements, if submitted
- Committee contact information

The full text of a resolution calling for an election isn't printed in the local voters' pamphlet. Resolutions are posted to skagitcounty.net/elections.

The Elections Department of the Auditor's Office will determine how the local voters' pamphlet will be distributed, based on the size of the election and the number of jurisdictions participating. The local voters' pamphlet may be distributed in any one of the following ways.

- By mail to all households (saturation)
- By mail to all registered voter households
- Included with the ballot and mailed to each registered voter

Cost of Participating in an Election

Each Jurisdiction is responsible for paying its proportionate share of election costs. Skagit County will bill the jurisdiction directly for these costs.

Allocation of election costs is based upon the jurisdiction's registered voter count as a percentage of 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 number of participating jurisdictions and their respective size is the primary variable. For example, an election shared by 5 jurisdictions will likely cost more per voter than an election shared by 15 jurisdictions.

Special elections in February and April are often shared by a smaller number of jurisdictions. Thus, the proportionate share of the cost is often greater and, in some cases, may be 100% of the cost (e.g., a single jurisdiction election).

A specific cost or quote cannot be provided in advance of an election. The cost allocation is dependent upon the number of jurisdictions and registered voters participating in the election. Estimates can be provided and will be based on a reasonable range, taking into account historical information and specific known information about a particular election date.

The preparation of a local voters' pamphlet is an election cost. It is billed to local jurisdictions in the same manner as other election costs.

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

Filing a Resolution and Ballot Title

Submittal Process for Resolutions

Submitting a resolution

Resolutions calling for an election by a jurisdiction shall be submitted on or before the resolution deadline established by state law. See page 11 for resolution deadlines.

Resolutions can be emailed to scelections@skagitcountywa.gov

Withdrawing a resolution

If a jurisdiction wishes to withdraw a submitted resolution, a written request must be submitted to Skagit County Elections no later than 7 business days after the submission deadline. The jurisdiction must inform our office who has the authority to make the request. Alternatively, the jurisdiction could add withdrawal language to the submitted resolution (Example: If Prop 1 passes in the Primary this resolution shall be withdrawn).

A **Resolution Cover Sheet** is mandatory and must accompany each resolution. This cover sheet contains important contact information required by the Elections Department. A Resolution Cover Sheet is available on page 14, on our website, or by request.

Upon receipt of the cover sheet and resolution, the Elections Department will send a receipt of resolution to the person submitting. The resolution will be posted to our website.

Ballot Titles for Local Measures

For measures submitted to the voters of a city or town, the official ballot title is prepared by the city or town attorney. For measures submitted to the voters of a unit of local government other than a city or town (e.g., a county, fire district or school district), the official ballot title is prepared by the Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney.

The format and content requirements for local measure ballot titles are very specific and must conform to state law. Each ballot title must contain the following elements:

- Identification of the enacting legislative body
- A statement of the subject matter not exceeding 10 words in length
- A concise description of the measure not exceeding 75 words in length
- A question

Jurisdictions are responsible for verifying the accuracy of ballot titles as authored. Skagit County Elections does not assume responsibility for ensuring that the ballot title aligns perfectly with the resolution's intent.

Ballot Title Appeal

Any person dissatisfied with the ballot title for a local measure written by a city attorney, town attorney, or Prosecuting Attorney, may appeal to the Skagit County Superior Court pursuant to RCW 29A.36.090.

Voters' Pamphlet Statements

Explanatory Statement for Local Measure

Each ballot title must be accompanied by an explanatory statement.

The purpose of an explanatory statement is to state the effect of the proposed measure if 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 outlined below.

Length
Explanatory statements must be **200** words or less, in block paragraph form.

Format
Up to three paragraphs may be used. The Auditor's Office reserves the right to eliminate excessive paragraph returns if the statement doesn't fit within the space provided.

Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or statements. Any other formatting, such as bold, underline, or all caps, will be changed to appear in italics.

The use of lists or bullets is not allowed. Lists or bullets will be converted to block paragraph, with a semicolon to separate each item.

Explanatory statements shall limit the language to the proposition to which it pertains. It may not endorse, speak about, or advocate for or against another proposition or measure.

Establishing Committees "For" and "Against" a Local Measure

For each measure from a jurisdiction that is included in the local voters' pamphlet, the legislative authority of that jurisdiction shall formally appoint committees "For" and "Against" the measure by the statutory deadline.

Any person appointed to a committee must reside within the jurisdictional boundaries. The jurisdiction shall appoint persons that are known to favor the measure to serve on the "For" committee and shall appoint persons known to oppose the measure to serve on the "Against" committee. An email is required for each committee appointed for correspondence with the Elections Department.

Each committee shall consist of not more than three members; however, a committee may seek the advice of any other person or persons. The Committee Member Appointment Form must be submitted by the deadline to appoint committees. See form on page 15.

If such persons are not immediately known, the jurisdiction is encouraged to employ some formal means of notifying the public that members of the "For" and "Against" committees are being sought.

The jurisdiction is responsible for providing committee members with copies of instructions, specifications, and deadlines for all statements.

The committee spokesperson shall be responsible for submitting the statement and communicating with the Elections Department. The committees are solely responsible for submitting their statements by email to the Elections Department in accordance with the specified timeline for that election. See page 11.

Titles for committee member names will not be published in the local voters' pamphlet.

Appointments by the Auditor

If a jurisdiction fails to appoint "For" and "Against" committees by the deadline established by the jurisdiction or the Auditor's Committee Form submittal deadline (whichever comes first), the Auditor's Office will seek out and, whenever possible, appoint up to three members to each committee.

If the jurisdiction has appointed one, two, or three members to a committee, the Auditor will consider the committee completed and formed. The Auditor won't seek or appoint additional members.

When the Auditor's Office is responsible for appointing committees, it may, in its sole discretion, seek committee appointments through press releases or notices on the Auditor's website.

Appointments will be made in the order the requests from qualified applicants are received by email. The email request must include the applicants' name, voter registration address, phone number, and the district they wish to write a statement for. The Auditor will accept email requests for appointment as soon as the jurisdiction has indicated they will not be appointing a committee or the appointment form submittal deadline has passed.

The Auditor's Office will use the following criteria to determine an applicant's eligibility when making appointments:

- Applicant must reside within the jurisdictional boundaries
- Applicant has demonstrated the ability to communicate rapidly by email
- Applicant agrees to work collaboratively with co-committee members

The deadline for an interested party to request a committee appointment is 12:00 noon on the date that "For" and "Against" statements are due. See page 11.

Appointment requests must be made by email to:
scelections@co.skagit.wa.us

Appointed committee members will be notified by email. The appointed committee must abide by the specified timelines for submitting statements for that election.

It is not the responsibility of the Auditor's Office to coordinate communication between committee members or to arbitrate disagreements among them.

The first person appointed by the Auditor's Office will be designated as the 1st Committee Member and spokesperson for the committee. Should the committee be unable to agree or if multiple statements are submitted, the statement submitted by the 1st Committee Member will be the statement printed in the local voters' pamphlet.

If a committee member wishes to withdraw before a statement has been submitted, they must notify the Auditor's Office by email at least 24 hours prior to the submittal deadline for the statement. Should a committee member wish to withdraw after the statement has been submitted, the withdrawal will be honored provided at least one member remains on the committee and the pamphlet has not gone to print.

Once statements have been submitted by email, statements are considered final and may not be amended.

Committee Statements

"For" and "Against" Statements

Length
"For" and "Against" statements must be **250** words or less, in block paragraph form.

If a "For" or "Against" statement is received before the deadline and exceeds the applicable word limit the committee will be notified by email and asked to delete words, paragraphs or sentences. Changes after the deadline are not allowed unless requested by the Auditor's Office. The shortened statement must be received by the deadline or complete sentences will be removed until the word limit is met.

Format
Up to four paragraphs may be used.

The Auditor's Office reserves the right to eliminate excessive paragraph returns if the statement doesn't fit within the space provided.

Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or statements. Any other formatting, such as bold, underline, or all caps, will be changed to appear in italics.

The use of lists or bullets is not allowed. Lists or bullets will be converted to block paragraph, with a semicolon to separate each item.

Committee member names, a contact phone number, an email address and/or website address will be printed in the local voters' pamphlet but aren't included in the 250-word count. At least one method of contact (phone, email, website address) must be provided for print in the local voters' pamphlet.

No more than **eight** words are allowed for a committee name.

Committee member names and the email contact information for the committee spokesperson will be provided to interested parties upon request. The request can be by email or phone. A formal "Public Records Request" is not required for this information.

Content

All Statements
Committee members shall limit their statement (in support or against) to the proposition to which they were appointed. They may not endorse, speak about, or advocate for or against another proposition, measure, or candidate.

Pursuant to RCW 29A.32.230, the Elections Department may reject certain materials submitted for publication. These materials include, without limitation, explanatory statements, "For" or "Against" statements, rebuttal statements, or contact information that:

- Is obscene
- Is libelous
- Contains a commercial advertisement
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail
- Contains matter not limited to the candidate or to the measure or political office
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or that does not comply with applicable law
- Was received after the submittal deadline

Rebuttal Statements

If both "For" and "Against" statements are submitted, the Elections Department will email the text of the statement to the spokesperson for the opposing committee listed on the committee appointment form. This will be done once the submittal deadline has passed.

Rebuttal statements are not required; however, it gives each committee an opportunity to provide a response to the opposing statement.

The failure of a committee to submit a "For" or "Against" statement will disqualify the committee from submitting a rebuttal statement.

Length
Rebuttal statements must be **75** words or less, in one block paragraph form.

If the rebuttal statement exceeds the applicable word limit, it will be shortened by deleting full sentences from the end until the limit is reached.

Format
Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or statements. Any other formatting, such as bold, underline, or all caps, will be changed to appear in italics.

The use of lists or bullets is not allowed. Lists or bullets will be converted to block paragraph, with a semicolon to separate each item.

Content
Rebuttal statements may not interject new issues or arguments and are limited to addressing issues and arguments raised in the opposing statement.

"For", "Against", and Rebuttal Statements can be email to:
scelections@co.skagit.wa.us

Statements must be submitted by email and are due by the deadline. Submittal deadlines are strictly observed. See page 11.

General Provisions Applicable to All Statements

The contents of candidate statements, explanatory statements, "For" or "Against" statements, and rebuttal statements are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent the position of the Auditor's Office or Skagit County regarding the measure or of any material contained therein; or are the Auditor's Office or Skagit County responsible for the validity or accuracy of the statements.

Statements should be edited and prepared as carefully as one would edit and prepare a resume. Spelling, grammar, and punctation errors will not be corrected. Statement content will be printed as received, as long as

it complies with format specifications. The Elections Department has the right to make formatting adjustments to ensure the information fits properly into the voters' pamphlet.

Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word. (Examples: Around-the-corner=3 words; and/or=2 words) Hyphenated City or Town names will count as 1 word (Example: Sedro-Woolley)

Be sure the campaign contact email, web address, or phone number to be included in the pamphlet is accurate and functional when submitted.

Once statements have been submitted by email, statements are considered final and may not be amended.

If a local measure crosses the county line, the voter pamphlet statement submittal for Skagit County shall be as required by the lead county. Only one version of the voter pamphlet needs to be submitted. We will obtain the information that was submitted to the lead county and include it in the Skagit County pamphlet.

Public Inspection of Statement

Statements submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet are not available for public inspection or copying until the deadline for submission of statements has passed. Requests for public inspection of arguments or statements shall be made in the same manner as requests for public records.

Rejection and Appeal

Rejection

Pursuant to RCW 29A.32.330, the Elections Department may reject certain materials submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet. These materials include, without limitation, candidate statements, explanatory statements, "For" or "Against" statements, rebuttal statements and contact information.

If a candidate statement, explanatory statement, "For" or "Against" statement, rebuttal statement or contact information is rejected by the Election Manager, a written notice of rejection shall be sent to the proponent by email not more than five business days after the deadline for the local voters' pamphlet submittal and shall set forth specific grounds for rejection.

Appeal

The proponent of a candidate statement, explanatory statement, "For" or "Against" statement, rebuttal statement or contact information, may appeal the Election Manager's decision to reject. A written notice of appeal shall be submitted to the Auditor by email not more than 48 hours after the notice of rejection was sent and shell set forth the specific grounds for appeal. The Auditor shall issue a written decision granting or denying the appeal by email not more than five business days after the appeal is submitted. The decision of the Auditor to grant or deny an appeal shall be final.

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

Statements – At a Glance

Statement Type	Word Limit	Formatting	
Explanatory Statement	200	Allowed: Not Allowed:	*Italics* **Bold**, ALL CAPS, underlining, lists, bullets
"For" and "Against" Statement	250	Allowed: Not Allowed:	*Italics* **Bold**, ALL CAPS, underlining, lists, bullets
Rebuttal Statement	75	Allowed: Not Allowed:	*Italics* **Bold**, ALL CAPS, underlining, lists, bullets
Contact Information	Does not count as part of word limit	Allowed: Not Allowed:	Committee member names; Contact phone number; Email address; Website; Committee name (eight words or less) At least one method of contact (phone, email, website address) must be provided. Titles for committee members (Dr., President, PhD., etc)
All Statements A committee shall limit their statement (in support or against) to the proposition to which they were appointed. They may not endorse, speak about, or advocate for or against another proposition, measure, or candidate.		Allowed: Not Allowed:	Vote Yes on Proposition No. 1 Vote Yes on Proposition No. 1 & 2; Vote No on all Propositions; Vote Yes on all school propositions; Vote yes on Proposition No. 1 and we support candidate x for mayor.

2027 Submittal Deadlines

Election Date	Feb. 9, 2027	Apr. 27, 2027	Aug. 3, 2027	Nov. 2, 2027
Jurisdiction's Responsibility and Deadlines				
1. Resolution **2. Resolution Cover Sheet** **3. Explanatory Statement** **4. For and Against Committee Appointment Form**	Dec. 11, 2026	Feb. 26, 2027	April 30, 2027	Aug. 3, 2027
Committee's Responsibilities and Deadlines				
For and Against Statements *(Written by the committees for or against the measure and emailed by this date)*	Dec. 16, 2026	March 5, 2027	May 7, 2027	Aug. 13, 2027
Rebuttal Statements *(Written by the committees for or against the measure and emailed by this date)*	Dec. 18, 2026	March 10, 2027	May 12, 2027	Aug. 18, 2027

Deadlines are 4:30pm on each designated day.

All documents must be emailed to scelections@skagitcountywa.gov

Office Holders

Skagit County Elections strives to keep accurate, up-to-date information regarding current office holders, but we need your help! Please notify our office of all vacancies and appointments that occur throughout the year.

Resignations & Appointments

Once an office becomes vacant, please fill out and return our Resignation and Appointment form as soon as possible.

Once an appointment is made, you can fill out the appointment section of the form and return to our office as well.

You can find the form on page 16, on our website, or by request.

Oath of Office

When should an oath of office be taken?

All officials must take an oath of office prior to commencing the duties of the office.

Where do I obtain my oath of office?

Winning candidates shall be mailed their oath of office by Skagit County Elections. You may also obtain a blank oath of office on our website or by request.

Who can administer oaths?

RCW 29A.04.133 requires that the oath of office be administered and certified by any office or notary public authorized to administer oaths, without charge.

Six positions are specifically qualified by statute to administer oaths:

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

Filing your Oath of office:

Once the oath of office has been taken for a local or county office, the original should be filed with Skagit County Elections.

Oath Deadlines

The following chart provides information about regular terms and specifics regarding administration and retention of oaths for various offices.

County Special Purpose District	Regular Term Begins	Where the Oath is filed	Citations
- County Officials - Executive Officers	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 36.16.040 RCW 36.16.060
District Court Judges	Second Monday in January	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 3.34.070 RCW 3.34.080
- City and Town Officials - Executive Officers	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 35.27.120 RCW 35.23.081 RCW 35A.12.040 RCW 35A.12.080 RCW 35A.13.160
Municipal Court Judges	Cities over 400,000: Second Monday in January For all others, January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 3.50.050 RCW 3.50.097 RCW 35.20.140
Port District Commissioners	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 53.12.172
Public Utility District Commissioners	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 54.12.100
School Directors	Begins at first official meeting following certification of the election	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 28A.343.360
- Fire Protection District Commissioners - District Secretary	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 57.14.070 RCW 52.14.080
- Sewer Commissioners - Water Commissioners - Hospital District Commissioners	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 57.12.030 RCW 70.44.040
Cemetery Districts	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 29A.60.280 RCW 68.52.260
Park and Recreation District Commissioners	January 1	Oath filed with County Auditor.	RCW 35.61.050
Jurisdictions requiring land ownership (e.g. diking / flood control districts)	Upon certification of election	No statutory reference available.	RCW 85.24.070 RCW 85.38.070 RCW 86.09.301