



Administrative Rules for Candidates

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY

Wahkiakum County Elections | 64 Main Street / P.O. Box 543

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Updated for 2026

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About this Guide

Use this guide in conjunction with state and local laws, not in place of them. The Revised Code of Washington ("RCW"), Washington Administrative Code ("WAC") and other notations are offered as references for additional research. The material contained herein may change due to new legislation, judicial determinations, or rule changes. The requirements described in this guide serve as the Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules for Wahkiakum County as authorized by RCW 29A.32.230

Candidate Filing Week

May 4-8, 2026

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

2026 Key Election Dates

May 4, 2026	First Day to file for candidacy
May 8, 2026	Last Day to file for candidacy
May 11, 2026	Last day to withdraw from the ballot
May 15, 2026	Candidate profiles and photos due for the local voters' pamphlet
July 17, 2026	Ballots sent out for August Primary Election
August 4, 2026	Primary Election
August 18, 2026	Primary Election results certified
October 16, 2026	Ballots sent out for November General Election
November 3, 2026	General Election
November 24, 2026	General Election results certified

A change of position or office must be completed prior to 5:00 p.m. Friday May 11, 2026. You must withdraw in writing and file a new Declaration of Candidacy as well as pay the filing fee for the new position or office if applicable. Filing Fees are not refundable or transferable to a new position

Lot Draw to determine placement on the ballot will be 5:00 pm, Friday, May 11, 2026; everyone is invited to witness this procedure.

All information included on the Declaration of Candidacy is public information and will be available to the public and press as well as possibly posted on our website.

*For joint county filings, you must file your candidacy with the lead county

Candidate Appearance on Ballots

- **Partisan Office Candidates** will appear on the Primary Election ballot no matter how many candidates file for the same office. The top 2 candidates will be on the General Election ballot.
- **Non-Partisan Office Candidates** will appear on the Primary Election ballot only if 3 or more candidates file for the same office. The top 2 candidates will be on the General Election ballot.
- **PCO Candidates** are elected in the Primary Election. Only contested PCO races appear on the Primary ballot.

- The candidate with the most votes is elected. PCO Candidates in uncontested races are deemed elected.
- **Local Voters' Pamphlet & Online Voters' Guide:** You may submit a statement and photograph for our Local Voters' Pamphlet and Online Voters' Guide. Statements and photographs are submitted electronically through a website link sent to you by the Secretary of State's Office after your declaration of candidacy has been approved or via email (elections@co.wahkiakum.wa.us). Paper copies of statements and photos will not be accepted. The deadline to submit a statement and photograph is May 16, 2026, by 4:00 pm.

The last day a candidate may withdraw their candidacy is Monday, May 11, 2026 (by 4:00 p.m.). A signed request for withdrawal must be submitted in writing to this office. Once submitted, withdrawals from office may not be revoked. Filing fees are not refundable.

General Information for Candidate Filing

Candidate filing: Jurisdiction administrators are not active participants in candidate filing. All candidates are responsible for submitting their own Declaration of Candidacy. Jurisdiction resources should not be used to assist an elected official or candidate to file for office. Any person filing a Declaration of Candidacy must meet the qualifications specified by law for that office at the time of filing. Candidates must be registered voters of the jurisdiction for which they are filing, which is verified by Wahkiakum County Elections. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that they meet all other requirements for that office.

Filing Fee (RCW 29A.24.091): For offices with an annual salary greater than \$1,000 the filing fee is 1% of the annual salary. For offices with an annual salary of \$1,000 or less the filing fee is \$10. There is no annual filing fee for offices that do not have a salary. Candidates without sufficient assets or income to pay the filing fee may submit a filing fee petition in lieu of filing fee (RCW 29A.24.101). Each whole dollar of the filing fee requires one signature. Only complete petitions are acceptable. You may not pay partial cash to make up the difference.

Filing fees are non-transferrable and non-refundable

Withdrawal of Candidacy: A candidate may withdraw the candidate's declaration of candidacy at any time before 5:00 p.m. on the Monday following the last day for candidates to file. There is no withdrawal period for declarations of candidacy filed during special filing periods. **(RCW 29A.24.131)**

Write-in Candidates: If an individual wants to file for an office after the candidate filing period has passed, they must file a Declaration of Write-in Candidacy. Write-in candidates may file a Declaration of Candidacy form up until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Write-in candidates do not appear on the ballot, website or in printed Voters' Pamphlet. **(RCW 29A.24.311)**

No Double Filings: A candidate cannot file for more than one office appearing on the ballot, except for filing as a Precinct Committee Officer. For example, a filed candidate may also file as Precinct Committee Officer but not an additional commissioner position on the same ballot.

Local Voters' Pamphlet Candidate Submission Guidelines

General Provisions Applicable to All Submissions

Statement Length:

- Each statement shall be limited to *200 words* for local candidates. State candidates will utilize the State Online Voters' Pamphlet submission tools where word counts are specified in **RCW 29A.32.121**.
- Microsoft Word will be used to verify word counts.
- Hyphenated words will be reviewed and counted as multiple words.
- Words such as "Mytop4priorities" will be counted as multiple words.
- **No changes will be allowed after the deadline.**
- The same statement will be used in both the Primary and General Election Pamphlets.

If your submission exceeds the word count and it is past the deadline, excess words will be removed from the end of your submission until it meets the word count.

Biography

The biographical information must be 100 words or less allocated between the following four subsection headings. Biographical information should be organized in accordance with the four subsection headings listed below. Subsection headings are not included in the word count.

Elected Experience

Other Experience

Education

Community Service

When a candidate does not submit information for a particular subsection heading, "No information submitted" will appear in that subsection area.

Statement Format

Up to four paragraphs may be used for local races. Candidates for state and federal offices must use the number of paragraphs specified in the State Candidate Guide. Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or sentences. Other formatting such as all caps, bolding, underlining, lists, and bullets are not allowed and will be printed as italics.

You may not submit a new statement for the General Election. The same Local Voters' Pamphlet information submitted during filing week will be used for both the Primary and General Elections.

Submissions should be edited and prepared as carefully as one would edit and prepare a resume. Spelling, grammar and punctuation errors **will not** be corrected. Statement content will be printed exactly as received, if it complies with format and content rules.

Public Inspection of Statements (RCW 29A.32.100)

Statements submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet shall not be available for release to the public until all statements pertaining to the race have been received and signed off by the candidate/campaign. Requests for public inspection of statements shall be made in the same manner as requests for public records.

Candidate Contact Information

A candidate's campaign name, address, email address, website and phone number may be printed in the local voters' pamphlet. If the candidate does not submit campaign information with their statement, the information on their Declaration of Candidacy form will be used as contact information. Contact information is not part of the 200-word count for local candidate statements.

Be certain that mail, email, web addresses and phone numbers are accurate, functional and not confidential or private.

Changes to contact information are subject to the discretion of the Auditor. How and when to submit statements, photos and contact information:

Statements, photos, and campaign contact information **must** be submitted electronically using one of the following:

- State provided link after your candidate filing has been approved.
- E-mail to: elections@co.wahkiakum.wa.us
- Electronic storage device to:

Wahkiakum County Auditor's Office
Elections Department
64 Main St (*In Person*) or
P.O. Box 543 (*Mail*) Cathlamet, WA 98612

The contents of candidate statements, photo, and contact information are the sole responsibility of the authors. Candidates are responsible for ensuring their statements and photos are received in the Auditor's Office by the deadline.

- Submissions for inclusion in the Primary and General Local Voters' Pamphlets are due on the Friday following filing week at 4:00 p.m.

The Auditor's Office will confirm receipt of voter pamphlet materials by email.

If a submission is not received by the deadline, the text "No photo submitted", "No information submitted", and/or "No statement submitted" will appear in the applicable sections.

Review Proofs

A proof copy of the statement as it will appear in the local voters' pamphlet will be sent to each candidate for review and approval via email. Only errors made by the Wahkiakum County Auditor's Office may be corrected.

* **Disclaimer:** Submissions do not represent the position of the Wahkiakum County Auditor or Wahkiakum County. Neither the Wahkiakum County Auditor nor Wahkiakum County are responsible for the validity or accuracy of any submissions.

Candidate Photo Submission Guidelines (RCW 29A.32.110)

- Digital (.JPEG or .TIFF format, scanned images will not be accepted)
- 300 dpi or larger resolution
- No smaller than 4 x 5 inches (1200 x 1500 pixels)
- Submitted electronically
- Current (taken within 5 years)
- A head and shoulders portrait
- Plain, light colored background

Photos may not:

- Include scenery, flags, or other background settings.
- Show judicial robes, law enforcement uniforms, fire or military uniforms.
- Show clothing or insignia suggesting that you hold a public office.
- Be an informal candid photo, cartoon, caricature of any other image that does not accurately portray the candidate.
- Be a group photo.
- Candidate may not wear any head coverings

Photos may be rejected that do not meet the specified criteria. The Auditor's Office has authority to accept updated photos, crop or adjust photos.

The Auditor's Office will not be responsible if a candidate photo appears in publications other than the local voters' pamphlet.

Content Rejection and Appeal (RCW 29A.32.230)

Rejection

The Auditor's Office reserves the right to reject any submission to the local voters' pamphlet, if it does not meet submission requirements, or is deemed to be libelous or otherwise inappropriate.

Material submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet may be rejected if it:

- **Is obscene.**
- **Is libelous.**
- **Contains information about other candidates.**
- **Contains a commercial advertisement.**
- **Contains material prohibited by law from distribution through the mail.**
- **Contains material not limited to the candidate or the political office for which the candidate is filing.**

- **Contains material that is otherwise inappropriate or does not comply with applicable law.**
- **Includes a photograph that does not meet statutory or administrative criteria.**
- **Is received after the submission deadline.**

If a statement, photo or contact information is rejected by the Elections Department, a written notice of rejection shall be sent to the candidate by email within 48 hours after receipt thereof and shall explain specific grounds for rejection.

The candidate will have 24 hours from the time of the notification to submit an adjusted statement, photo or contact information if their rejected material is submitted on time.

Any candidate whose submission is rejected may appeal the Elections Department’s decision to the Wahkiakum County Auditor. A written notice of appeal shall be submitted to the Auditor by email (bergsengn@co.wahkiakum.wa.us) not more than 48 hours after notice of rejection was sent and shall set forth the specific grounds for appeal. The Auditor shall issue a written decision granting or denying the appeal by email not more than 48 hours after receiving the notice of appeal. 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.

Office Holders

Current office holders, resignations, appointments and oaths of office

Wahkiakum County Elections strives to keep our records accurate and current regarding all office holders, but we need your help to keep our records straight. Please promptly notify our office of all vacancies and appointments that occur throughout the year.

Resignations:

Once an office becomes vacant, please notify Wahkiakum County Elections in writing immediately. Please include the office holder’s name, position and date of resignation.

New Appointments:

Once an individual has been appointed, please notify Wahkiakum County Elections in writing immediately.

Oaths of Office:

All officials must take an oath of office prior to commencing the duties of office. See the chart below to determine when to take your oath.

Winning candidates, or their district, will be given an oath of office form from Wahkiakum County Elections. This form will either be mailed or made available for pick up in person.

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.

The positions authorized to administer oaths are as follows:

- Judges 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)

County, city and town officials may take an oath at either the last regular meeting of the governing body for which they were elected or within 10 days before the term of office begins. January 1st is the beginning of term for county officials. January 1st is also the beginning of terms for special purpose districts.

Office Term Lengths and Types

It is important to understand the different term lengths and types (see RCW 29A.24.020) for positions that will be on the ballot for each election:

- "Regular" or "full" term: This is a regularly scheduled election and the normal length of time an elected official serves in the office. For city and county positions, this is typically four years. However, there are a few positions with shorter terms – for instance, some elected positions in certain first class cities (according to city charter) and council position seven in second-class cities (see RCW 35.23.051). For special purpose districts, the regular term length is typically four or six years depending on the agency type and applicable state laws.
- "Unexpired" term: This means the office was *not* originally scheduled to be on the ballot this year, but the person who was elected to the position left before the end of their regular term, creating a vacancy. While the position may have been temporarily filled by appointment, it must appear again on the general election ballot and the winner will serve the remainder of the original full term. As a result, this "unexpired" term will be shorter than the regular/full term.
- "Short and full" term: This means that the office *was* originally scheduled to be on the ballot this year, but the person who was elected to the position left before the end of their regular term, creating a vacancy. While the position may have been temporarily filled by appointment, it will appear on the general election ballot as originally scheduled. The winner will technically serve two terms – a "short" term that starts immediately after the election certification and ends December 31, and then the subsequent "full" term starting on January 1. See RCW 29A.04.169.

Term limits: There are no term limits in state law for local elected officials, and many local governments lack the legal authority to impose term limits. However, some charter cities, charter counties, or optional municipal code cities do have the authority to voluntarily adopt term limits (see AGO 1991 No. 22), so elected officials within such jurisdictions should consult their local rules.

Registering and Reporting to the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC)

All candidates and committees subject to the public disclosure law must report to the PDC, regardless of the amount of money they will receive from contributors or spend on their campaigns. The key to complying with both the regulatory and the reporting provisions of the law is to keep detailed records of each contribution and expenditure and file reports on time.

For more information and to file, please refer to the PDC flyer included in your filing packet and visit www.pdc.wa.gov.

Washington State Highway Advertising

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has very specific laws and regulations around campaign signage and Washington State Highways. For more information, please refer to the flyer included in your filing packet.

Contact Information:

Wahkiakum County Auditor's Office

Physical Address:

64 Main Street
Cathlamet, WA 98612

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 543
Cathlamet, WA 98612

Website: <https://co.wahkiakum.wa.us/auditor/elections.htm>

Election Email: elections@co.wahkiakum.wa.us

Voter Portal: voter.votewa.gov/candidatefiling/candidatelogin

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