THIS PERSON VOTES

2020 First Time Voter’s Guide

prepared by | The Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

www.UrbanLeague.org
Hi there!

What a year it has been!

From the sudden impact of COVID-19 to a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter Movement, we have had to become innovative on how to come together and demand direct action. We know that one of the most powerful ways to affect change is by voting, especially in local elections. My goal is to ensure that your opinions are reflected on the issues that matter to you most. You are a very important and valued member of our community! I want you to know and believe with conviction -- your voice matters.

The 2020 First Time Voter Guide is designed to help you become the most confident voter you can be. That means: knowing which candidates and issues will be on the ballot and where you can go to find accurate information about them. My hope is that this guide will answer any questions you have and be a useful tool while you navigate your ballot, especially as a first time voter.

My team and I here at the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle thank you for reclaiming your right to vote! Whether it’s your first time casting a ballot or your first time voting in a while, your vote is your voice and soon, we’ll need your input!

Happy 2020 Elections!

Maya Manus
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Civic Engagement Coordinator
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"People shouldn’t be afraid of their government. Governments should be afraid of their people."
- Alan Moore
Questions That Need Answers
FROM FIRST TIME VOTERS

1. Who can register to vote?
In the state of Washington you must be:
- A United States citizen
- A legal resident for at least 30 days prior to Election Day
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court

2. Where can I register to vote?
In WA you can register to vote:
- Online: via votewa.gov
- By Mail: with a WA State Voter Registration Form
- In Person: at the county’s Election’s office or voting center

3. What do I need to bring to vote?
To register by mail or in person, you will need either your driver’s license or last four digits of your social security number. To register online, you will need your driver’s license or state ID.

4. How do I vote?
Option 1: By mail! WA State is a mail-in ballot which means every registered voter will receive a ballot in their mailbox approximately 18 days before the election. The ballot can be mailed back with no stamp required or in a drop box. If you lose it or mess up, you can get a replacement ballot from votewa.gov

Option 2: In person! Each county has voting centers available to vote in person. To find the closest one to you, go to votewa.gov or your county Election’s office website. Voting centers are opened 18 days before election.

5. Can I vote if I have a criminal history?
Convicted felons in WA have their right to vote restored once they complete their sentence and are no longer in prison or community custody with the Department of Corrections (DOC). Once the right to vote is restored, the person must re-register to vote in order to receive a ballot.
(If the felony conviction is from another state or in federal court, the right to vote is restored as long as the person is not currently incarcerated for that felony.)

6. What is the Future Voter program?
16 and 17 year-olds can pre-register to vote and be automatically registered when they turn 18. Pre-registration can either be done online with a state ID or Driver’s License, or by mail if they do not have an ID.
If you do not receive a ballot by **October 19**, please contact your local Elections office as there could be an issue with your registration or current address. Voting centers are operated through the County Elections office and their hours of operation and locations are listed at the end of this voter guide.

**Important Deadlines**

**August 11: Non response follow up for 2020 Census**
Households that have not participated will receive a knock on their door from the Census Bureau.

**October 16: Start of the 18 day voting period**
Voting centers open. Ballots will start to mail out to all registered voters.

**November 3: Election Day!**
Ballots must be postmarked by Nov 3. You can vote until 8:00pm on Election Day, however, try not to wait until the last day to vote!

**September 30: Last day to complete the 2020 Census**
To complete your 2020 Census, you can go to [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov) or call 844-330-2020 to complete the 2020 Census today.

**October 26: Last day to register to vote online or by mail**
Voting centers will still be open and available to register to vote and complete your ballot.

“Elections aren't just about who votes but who doesn't vote.” - Michelle Obama
I registered!
What do I do next?

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CANDIDATE

Once you’ve registered, your next step is to research candidates on the ballot so you can make the best decisions on election day. There are three key ways to find out who is on your ballot, what experiences they have and what policies, programs or community concerns they support:

- **County Voter Guide**

  Each county has an available voter guide in which candidates answer basic questions about themselves and why they are running for office. The voter guide also includes a photo and relevant information about the candidate’s background. In some counties the voter guide is mailed out, so check your mailbox often! If you don’t get a copy in the mail, you can always access your county voter guide online through the county elections website!

- **Candidate’s Website or Social Media**

  Impacts from the pandemic, including a surge of virtual-only engagement, has encouraged many candidates to connect with potential voters by building their own websites and using social media platforms. Following candidates online will give you more insight to their stance on important policies and who they are as people! It also makes it easier to track candidates throughout the election cycle.

- **Third Party Websites and Scorecards**

  Many organizations have scorecards, candidate forums, and websites available to help highlight each candidate and provide their political track records. This is a useful way to find out more about a candidate. Just keep in mind that the websites may be biased depending on who/what party is running it.

"Talk is cheap, voting is free; take it to the polls." - Nanette L. Avery
Voter Checklist

WHAT YOU’LL NEED TO DO

Since Washington State is a mail in ballot and we get our ballot 18 days before election day, we have time to research and vet our candidates. Create a plan to complete your ballot fully and consciously by researching the candidates and making the best decision for you. Look out for your voter guide in the mail and do a google search before committing to a candidate.

- Check your registration status on votewa.gov
- Find out your candidates and what is expected on your ballot
- Make sure you receive your ballot by Oct 19
- Fill out your ballot in blue or black pen
- Sign the envelope outside of your ballot
- Send it in before Nov 2 via postal or drop box by 8pm on Election Day
- Check your ballot status on votewa.gov to ensure it was accepted

“When I liberate myself, I liberate others. If you don’t speak out ain’t nobody going to speak out for you.”
- Fannie Lou Hamer
Glossary

Definitions & Terms

- **Attorney General** | Main legal counsel to the Governor, members of the Legislature, state officials, and more than 230 state agencies, boards, commissions, colleges and universities. The office of the Attorney General enforces consumer protection laws and serves the public directly by providing information on consumer rights and fraudulent business practices.

- **Commission for Public Lands** | Manages 5 million acres of forest, agricultural, range, tidal and shorelands of the state. Responsible for the exercise of all duties and functions of the department.

- **Court of Appeals Judge** | A candidate must be a registered voter for the district. Nonpartisan position. A total of 22 judges serve the court in three, multi-county divisions headquartered in Seattle, Tacoma and Spokane. Each division is broken up into three districts. The judge serves a six year term. The Court of Appeals hears and decides on most of the appeals that come from the superior courts.

- **Governor** | The chief executive officer of the state. Annually reports to the Legislature and submits a budget recommendation. May reject legislation passed by the Legislature. Must be a registered voter and serve a four year term.

- **Insurance Commissioner** | This office regulates insurance companies doing business in the state of Washington, including license agents and brokers. It reviews policies and rates, examines the operation and finances of insurers and handles inquiries and complaints from the public.

- **Lieutenant Governor** | Elected independently and will act as Governor if the Governor is unable to perform and is the first in line of succession if the office becomes vacant. This position is elected independently and is also considered the presiding officer of the state Senate.

- **President / Vice President** | The President is indirectly elected by voters through the Electoral College to a four year term and cannot serve more than two consecutive terms. The duties of the President are to ensure United States laws are faithfully executed. The president must be at least 35 years of age and a natural born U.S. citizen. The Vice President shall become President if the office is vacant and is the presiding officer of the U.S. Senate.

“There’s no such thing as a vote that doesn’t matter.” - Barack Obama
- **Referendum** | The primary purpose of the referendum is to give voters an opportunity to approve or reject laws either proposed or approved by the Legislature.

- **Secretary of State** | Chief elections officer, chief corporations office, and supervisor of the State Archives and State Library. Primary functions include confirming election results, publishing the state’s voter pamphlet, and registering corporations and charitable organizations. This person is also second in line of succession for the Governor.

- **State Auditor** | Working with more than 2,600 state and local governments, the state Auditor conducts independent financial, accountability and performance audits for all Washington state governments. The state Auditor investigates reports of monetary fraud, waste, and abuse received through a citizen hotline.

- **State Representative** | The duties of a representative is to enact or reject legislation affecting public policy in the state, provide for the levy and collection of taxes and other revenue to support state government and appropriate funds for these purposes. Two year term.

- **State Senator** | The State Senate is made up of 49 members (one from each legislative district in the state). The duties of a senator include confirming appointments made by the governor, enact or reject legislation affecting public policy in the state, provide for the levy and collection of state taxes and

- **State Treasurer** | Principal duties are to manage and disperse all funds and accounts, responsible for the safekeeping and interest rates on all state investments, and maintain a statewide revenue collection system.

- **Superintendent of Public Instruction** | Chief executive officer of the state Board of Education and is responsible for the administration of the state kindergarten through twelfth grade education program. The duties of the office include certification of teaching personnel, approval of educational programs and apportionment of state and local funds. Also provides assistance to school district’s school improvement areas. This is the only nonpartisan state executive position and does not declare a political party officer of the U.S. Senate.

"Not voting is not a protest. It is a surrender." - Keith Ellison
• **Superior Court Judge** | The Superior Courts hear felony criminal cases, civil matters, divorces, juvenile cases, and appeals from lower-level courts. The courts are organized by county into 31 judicial districts. Judges serve four-year terms and must be registered voters. This is a nonpartisan position and does not declare a political party.

• **Supreme Court Judge** | The Supreme Court hears appeals and decides on cases from the Court of Appeals and other lower courts. Nine justices sit on the state Supreme Court, each serving six-year terms. To run and serve as a Supreme Court justice, a candidate must be a registered voter. This is a nonpartisan position and does not declare a political party.

• **U.S. Representative** | Each state has a different number of members based on population, and each has a term of 2 years. The duties are making all laws necessary, assessing taxes and regulating commerce. Must be at least 25 years of age, a U.S. citizen for seven years, and a registered voter.

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**Bonus Terms**

• **United States Congress** | The U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives make up the two chambers of Congress. Together they compose the national bicameral legislature of the United States. The composition of the House is established by Article One of the United States Constitution.

• **House of Representatives** | The lower house of the United States Congress. With 435 popularly elected officials, the House (as it is often called) is the most representative body in the federal government. House seats are apportioned relative to each state's population.

• **United States Senate** | The upper chamber of the United States Congress. The Senate is responsible for constituting legislature and includes 100 members -- 2 from each state, who are elected to serve for a term of 6 years.

“Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country and this world.”
- Sharon Salzberg
The 2020 Census

BE COUNTED!

Completing one action today can bring resources and political power into our community for the next 10 years. That action is completing the 2020 census! It will take less than 10 minutes. Census workers are following up with households who have not completed the 2020 census or may not have fully completed it.

Please remember that:

- It is your right to complete the census
- The census does not include a citizenship question
- All answers are kept anonymous and used only to produce statistics
- It is illegal for census information to be shared with your landlord
- It is illegal for census information to be shared with law enforcement or other agencies
- It is illegal for census information to be used for deportation or family separation

You can safely complete the census now online at my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020 until September 30, 2020. Ensure that you get counted and make sure you tell your family and friends to do the same. Together, we make this community what it is!

We need to make sure we count!

“Bad officials are elected by good citizens who don’t vote.” - George Jean Nathan
You can contact your county election office to: (1) request a ballot or other voting materials, (2) file for local office, (3) get assistance after missing a deadline or (4) make a change to your voter registration.

- **State Elections Office**  
  520 Union Ave  
  Olympia, WA 98501  
  1-800-448-4881  
  https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/

- **Adams County**  
  210 West Broadway Ave, Suite 200  
  Ritzville, WA 99169  
  509-659-3249  
  https://www.co.adams.wa.us/

- **Asotin County**  
  135 2nd St.  
  Asotin, WA 99402  
  509-243-2084  
  http://www.co.asotin.wa.us/

- **Benton County**  
  620 Market St in Prosser,  
  5600 W Canal Dr in Kennewick,  
  101 Wellsian Way Ste E in Richland  
  509-736-3085  
  https://bentonauditor.com/Elections-Department

- **Chelan County**  
  350 Orondo Ave, Ste 306  
  Wenatchee, WA 98801  
  509-667-6808  
  https://www.co.chelan.wa.us/

- **Clallam County**  
  223 E 4th Street, Suite #1  
  Port Angeles, WA 98362  
  360-417-2221  
  http://clallam.net/Auditor/Elections.html

- **Clark County**  
  1408 Franklin Street  
  Vancouver, WA 98660  
  564-397-2345  
  https://www.clark.wa.gov/elections

- **Columbia County**  
  341 East Main Street, Suite 3  
  Dayton, WA 99328  
  509-382-4541  
  http://www.columbiaco.com/

- **Cowlitz County**  
  207 4th Avenue N., Rm 107  
  Kelso, WA 98626  
  360-577-3005  
  https://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/

“Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.” - Susan B. Anthony
Douglas County  
213 S Rainier St.  
Watervile, WA 98858  
509-888-6402  
http://www.douglascountywa.net/

Grant County  
35 C. St NW  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
509-754-2011 ext. 2793  
http://www.grantcountywa.gov/

Jefferson County  
1820 Jefferson St.  
Port Townsend, WA 98368  
360-385-9119  
https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/

Kittitas County  
205 W. 5th Ave, Ste 105  
Ellensburg, WA 98926  
509-962-7503  
https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/

Franklin County  
1016 N 4th Avenue, Suite A206  
Pasco, WA 99301  
509-545-2995  
https://www.co.franklin.wa.us/

Grays Harbor County  
100 Broadway Avenue W., Ste 2  
Montesano, WA 98563  
360-964-1556  
http://www.co.grays-harbor.wa.us/

King County  
919 Southwest Grady Way  
Renton, WA 98057  
206-296-8683  
https://www.kingcounty.gov/

Klickitat County  
205 S. Columbus Ave., Rm 203  
Goldendale, WA 98620  
509-773-4001  
https://www.klickitatcounty.org/

Garfield County  
789 Main St  
Pomeroy, WA 99347  
509-843-1411  
https://co.garfield.wa.us/

Island County  
400 N Main St  
Coupeville, WA 98239  
360-679-7366  
https://www.islandcountywa.gov/

Kitsap County  
619 Division Street  
Port Orchard, WA 98366  
360-337-7128  
https://www.kitsapgov.com/

Lewis County  
351 N.W. North Street  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
360-740-1164  
https://elections.lewiscountywa.gov/

“You cannot be afraid to speak up and speak out for what you believe. You have to have courage, raw courage.”  
- John Lewis
- **Lincoln County**  
  450 Logan  
  Davenport, WA 99122  
  509-725-4971  
  [https://www.co.lincoln.wa.us/](https://www.co.lincoln.wa.us/)

- **Pacific County**  
  7013 Sandridge in Long Beach  
  300 Memorial Dr in South Bend  
  360-875-9317  
  [https://co.pacific.wa.us/](https://co.pacific.wa.us/)

- **San Juan County**  
  55 2nd Street, Ste A  
  Friday Harbor, WA 98250  
  360-378-8856  
  [https://www.sanjuanco.com/](https://www.sanjuanco.com/)

- **Snohomish County**  
  3000 Rockefeller Ave, #505  
  Everett, WA 98201  
  425-388-3444  
  [https://snohomishcountywa.gov/](https://snohomishcountywa.gov/)

- **Mason County**  
  411 N. 5th Street  
  Shelton, WA 98584  
  360-427-9670 ext. 469  
  [https://www.masoncountyelections.us/](https://www.masoncountyelections.us/)

- **Okanogan County**  
  149 3rd Avenue N.  
  Rm 104  
  Okanogan, WA 98840  
  509-422-7240  
  [https://www.okanogancounty.org/](https://www.okanogancounty.org/)

- **Pend Oreille County**  
  625 W. 4th  
  Newport, WA 99156  
  509-447-2475  
  [http://pendoreilleco.org/](http://pendoreilleco.org/)

- **Pierce County**  
  2501 S. 35th St. Suite C  
  Tacoma, WA 98409  
  253-798-7430  
  [https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/](https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/)

- **Skagit County**  
  700 S. 2nd Street  
  Mount Vernon, WA 98273  
  360-416-1702  
  [https://www.skagitcounty.net/](https://www.skagitcounty.net/)

- **Skamania County**  
  240 NW Vancouver Ave  
  Stevenson, WA 98648  
  509-427-3730  
  [https://www.skamaniacounty.org/](https://www.skamaniacounty.org/)

- **Spokane County**  
  1033 W. Gardner Ave  
  Spokane, WA 99260  
  509-477-2320  
  [https://www.spokanecounty.org/](https://www.spokanecounty.org/)

- **Stevens County**  
  215 South Oak Street, Rm 106  
  Colville, WA 99114  
  509-684-7514  
  [https://vote.stevenscountywa.gov/](https://vote.stevenscountywa.gov/)

“Resistance isn’t enough. If we want change, we have to get out the vote.” - DaShanne Stokes
• Thurston County  
  2000 Lakeridge Drive SW  
  Olympia, WA 98502  
  360-786-5408  
  https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/  

• Wahkiakum County  
  64 Main Street  
  Cathlamet, WA 98612  
  360-795-3219  
  https://www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/  

• Walla Walla County  
  310 W. Poplar St.  
  Walla Walla, WA 99362  
  509-524-2530  
  https://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/  

• Whatcom County  
  311 Grand Avenue, Ste 103  
  Bellingham, WA 98227  
  360-778-5102  
  http://www.whatcomcounty.us/  

• Whitman County  
  N. 304 Main St  
  Colfax, WA 99111  
  509-553-8025  
  http://www.whitmancounty.org/  

• Yakima County  
  128 N. 2nd Street, Rm 117  
  Yakima, WA 98901  
  509-574-1340  
  https://www.yakimacounty.us/  

“The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men.”  
- Lyndon B. Johnson
Contact Us

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