

Island County Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules

Purpose

The purpose of these Administrative Rules is to establish the rules and requirements for participation, production and distribution of the local voters' pamphlet.

Rules

Notice of Intent to Publish a Local Voters' Pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.210)

The Auditor's Office shall print and distribute a local voters' pamphlet for all elections. It is available in printed form and in electronic form on the Elections Division website. RCW 29A.32 sets deadlines and rules regarding participation. Candidate statements from Precinct Committee Officers will not be included in the local voters' pamphlet.

Distribution of the Local Voters' Pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.260)

The local voters' pamphlets will be distributed to the households in each jurisdiction that has information included in the pamphlet. The Auditor may choose to mail the pamphlet to each registered voter in each jurisdiction that has included information in the pamphlet if that is more economical.

The Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for accepting and approving voters' pamphlet materials for federal, state and certain judicial offices. The requirements and rules for these statements may differ from the laws and administrative rules for the Island County local voters' pamphlet.

Costs associated with the Local Voters' Pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.220, RCW 29A.32.270)

The cost to produce, print and mail a local voters' pamphlet is an election cost that is included when jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot are billed for their portion of the cost of the election.

If the required appearance in the local voters' pamphlet would create undue financial hardship for a unit of government, the legislative authority of the unit may petition the Board of Island County Commissioners to waive this requirement. The Board of Island County Commissioners may provide such a waiver if it does so no later than sixty days before the publication of the pamphlet and it finds that the requirement would create such hardship.

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 is granted a waiver, the Auditor's Office will note in the pamphlet that the district is not included at their request.

General Provisions Applicable to All Submissions

The contents of biographical information, candidate statements, photos and contact information are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Submissions do not represent the position of the Auditor’s Department or Island County and neither is responsible for the validity or accuracy of the submissions.

Statement content will be printed exactly as received if it complies with format specifications and content rules. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors will not be corrected.

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

Once submitted, all biographical information, statements, and photos are final. They cannot be amended by anyone other than the Auditor’s Office.

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. No exceptions are allowed.

If a local office or ballot measure crosses the county line, the voter pamphlet statement submittal shall be as required by the lead county (the county where you file). Only one version of voter pamphlet information need be submitted. The information submitted to the lead county will be acquired by Island County and included in the Island County pamphlet.

Candidate Statements

Submission Deadlines (RCW 29A.32.230)

The deadline for candidates to submit local voter pamphlet information is 4:30 p.m. on the Friday following the close of Candidate Filing Week.

Basis for Rejection (RCW 29A.32.230)

All or any part of a candidate’s statement may be rejected by the Auditor if it includes biographical information, statements, photos or contact information that:

- Is obscene;
- Is libelous;
- Contains a commercial advertisement;
- Contains a solicitation of funds;
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail;
- Contains matter that is otherwise not germane to the candidate’s qualifications nor to the office that is the subject of election;
- Contains matter that otherwise does not comply with applicable law;
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or that does not comply with applicable law; or
- Was received after the submittal deadline.

Photos will be rejected that do not meet the statutory and administrative criteria outline in these administrative rules.

Word Limits (RCW 29A.32.230)

Candidate entries are limited to 100 words for biographical information and 200 words for candidate statements. Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word (i.e., “around-the-corner” = 3 words).

Biographical information should be organized in accordance with four subsection headings as follows:

- Elected Experience (Judges use Legal/Judicial Experience)
- Other Professional Experience
- Education
- Community Service

The information contained in the biographical section is for the described content only. Use of the biographical information section for other purposes is not permitted and information not pertaining to the designated areas will be omitted.

Headings are not included in the word count.

When a candidate does not submit information for a section, “No information submitted” will appear in the section area.

Shortening Biographical Information and Candidate Statements

Biographical information and candidate statements exceeding the word limits will be shortened by the Auditor’s Office without notice and without consulting the candidate. Submissions are shortened by deleting full sentences, starting from the end of the biographical information or candidate statement until the word limit for that section is reached. Candidates are not given an opportunity to correct submissions.

Biographical information and candidate statement format

Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or sentences. Any other formatting, such as all caps, bold or underlining is not allowed. Caps, bold and underlines will be converted to italics.

Lists and bullets are not allowed. Lists and bullets will be converted to a block paragraph format.

Up to four paragraphs may be used in the candidate statement.

Candidate statements must consist of text only. No graphics, charts, photos, etc. may be used as part of the statement.

Photographs

Candidates are permitted to submit one photograph. Other types of graphics are not permitted.

Photographs may be in color or black and white. Color may be used in the online guide. All photographs will be converted to black and white for the printed local voters’ pamphlet.

Candidate photos from previous pamphlets are not available for reuse. Candidate must submit a new photograph.

Photos must be of the candidate only and not include clothing or insignia that suggest holding a public office (i.e., uniform, judicial robes) or clothing, hats, buttons, etc. showing words, insignia or symbols

Statement submittals

Once submitted, statements are final and may not be modified by the candidate.

You may NOT submit a new statement for the General Election. The same local voters' pamphlet information submitted will be used for both the Primary Election and General Election.

Ballot Measure Statements (RCW 29A.32.230, RCW 29A.32.241)

For each measure, the pamphlet includes:

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

Official Ballot Title

When the Auditor's Office receives the resolution from a district, the Island County Prosecuting Attorney will review and provide the final ballot title. The full text of the resolution calling for an election is not printed in the local voter's pamphlet. Copies are available from the Auditor's Office, upon request.

Explanatory Statement

The 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, and avoid the use of legal and technical terms whenever possible.

The explanatory statement may be no more than 200 words and must be prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the proposition or measure.

Ballot Measure Argument (Pro/Con) Committees (RCW 29A.32.280)

The legislative authority of a jurisdiction submitting a measure has the responsibility of appointing members to a committee that will write the statement for the measure and to a committee that will write the statement against the measure. 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. Each committee is allowed up to 3 members but can ask the advice of any number of individuals.

The pro/con committee appointments must be submitted no later than the deadline to submit measures and resolutions.

Each committee shall identify a chair who will serve as the primary contact for the County Auditor's Office.

In the event a jurisdiction does not submit a pro and/or a con committee for a ballot measure, the County Auditor's Office will make a good faith effort to identify interested individuals and appoint them to a committee.

The Auditor's Office, in its sole discretion, may seek to fill vacant committee appointments through press releases, notices on the Election Division's website and any other means necessary. The following criteria will be used for appointing members:

- Must be a registered voter in the district proposing the measure
- Have an email address and the demonstrated ability to communicate rapidly by email
- Agree to work collaboratively with other committee members
- Agree to abide by specified election timelines

For jurisdictions where committee members were not obtained, the local voters' pamphlet will contain a statement that reads, "No committee was appointed to prepare a statement".

Ballot Measure Statements

Each statement in support of (Pro) or against (Con) a measure can be no more than 200 words and must be prepared by the committee formed pursuant to RCW 29A.32.080.

Italics may be used in statements. Any other formatting, such as all caps, bold or underlining is not allowed. Caps, bold and underlines will be converted to italics by the Auditor's Office.

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

Once submitted, argument statements cannot be withdrawn or changed.

The deadline for each committee to submit their argument is 4:30 p.m. on the Friday following the deadline to file the resolution calling for the election.

Rejection of Arguments or Statements (RCW 29A.32.230)

The County Auditor's Office reserves the right to reject any argument or statement if it does not meet requirements or if a statement or argument is deemed to be libelous or otherwise inappropriate. If a statement is rejected, the candidate or committee chair will be notified by email and given 48 hours from the time of notification to submit an adjusted statement. The time of notification will be the time the email was sent to the candidate or committee.

If the adjusted statement does not meet requirements, a "no statement submitted" notation will be printed for the measure statement.