

Walla Walla 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 (LVP).

1. Notice of Intent to Publish a Local Voters' Pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.210, RCW 29A.32.220)

The Auditor's Office shall prepare a local voters' pamphlet (LVP) for all primary, general, and special elections. All jurisdictions within the county will be notified by the Auditor's Office of its intent to publish a LVP at least 90 calendar days before publication and distribution for a primary or general election, or 40 calendar days before publication and distribution for a special election.

Notification will be made via mail or email to the jurisdiction's contact person on file with the Election's Department of the Auditor's Office.

2. Inclusion in the Local Voters' Pamphlet (RCW 29A.32.220)

All districts with a race or measure on the ballot in an election shall participate in the local voters' pamphlet. In the case of a city or town, the city or town as allowed by state law may opt to produce its own local voters' pamphlet.

The Auditor's Office may enter into an agreement with the Columbia County Auditor's Office for submissions regarding the Columbia County Public Hospital District, the Waitsburg and Prescott School Districts, and the Prescott Parks and Recreation District.

3. 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 billed to local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet. It is prorated and charged in the same manner as other elections costs. Each jurisdiction is responsible for paying its proportionate share of costs.

The Board of County Commissioners has the authority to waive the requirement of any jurisdiction to participate in the local voters' pamphlet should participation create undue financial hardship. A petition from the jurisdiction must be submitted and approved by the Board no later than 60 days before the publication of the LVP. Any jurisdiction receiving a waiver for LVP costs is still responsible for their remaining portion of the cost of the election. The Auditor's Office will note in the pamphlet that the jurisdiction is not included at their request.

4. Local Voters' Pamphlet Content (RCW 29A.32.241, RCW 29A.32.250)

The local voters' pamphlet shall include at a minimum:

- a. A cover page containing the words "Official Local Voters' Pamphlet," "Walla Walla County," and the date of the election.
- b. A list of jurisdictions that have measures or candidates in the pamphlet. This may be in the form of a Table of Contents or Index.
- c. Information on how a person may register to vote and obtain a ballot.
- d. A list of ballot drop boxes and where accessible voting devices for persons with disabilities will be available.
- e. The text of each measure accompanied by an explanatory statement prepared by the prosecuting attorney for any county measure(s) or by the attorney for the local district submitting the measure(s).
- f. Arguments for and against each measure submitted by committees pursuant to RCW 29A.32.280. Note that it is the legal responsibility of the district placing a measure on the ballot to prepare the arguments in accordance with the above statute.
- g. A list of all student engagement hubs in the county as designated under RCW 29A.40.180. There are currently no student engagement hubs in Walla Walla County.
- h. For partisan primary elections, information on how to vote the applicable ballot format and an explanation that minor political party candidates and independent candidates will appear only on the general election ballot.
- i. Statements and photos submitted by eligible candidates in races on the ballot.

5. Notice of Deadline and Requirements

The Auditor's Office will notify jurisdictions of the publication date of the local voter's pamphlet as well as the deadlines for submission of materials to be included in the LVP. This information will be included in the notice of intent to publish a local voters' pamphlet.

Candidates will be notified of all deadlines and requirements when they file for office.

6. Formatting Rules

The formatting rules for candidate statements and ballot measures are as follows:

- a. Only *italics* will be used to emphasize words or phrases. Bolding, underlining, and all caps are not allowed.
- b. Tables, lists, and bullets are not allowed.
- c. Graphs, charts, photographs, cartoons or caricatures are not permitted.
- d. Text must be written in paragraphs.
- e. The Auditor's Office will not correct errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation.
- f. The Auditor reserves the right to edit the formatting of any of the submissions.

Statement content will be printed exactly as received, as long as it complies with the above specifications. After submittal, all statements are final and may not be amended.

7. Content Rejection and Appeal Process (RCW 29A.32.230)

The Auditor's Office, in consultation with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, reserves the right to reject any submission to the LVP if the office determines the submission:

- Was received after the submittal deadline
- Does not meet submission requirements or guidelines
- Is obscene
- Is libelous
- Contains a commercial advertisement
- Contains matter prohibited by law from distribution through the mail
- Contains matter not relevant to the measure
- Contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or does not comply with applicable law

The candidate or committee chair of a rejected statement will be notified by email and given 2 business days 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, the candidate or committee shall be notified that the revised statement was rejected. There will be no opportunity to resubmit another statement. A "no statement submitted" notation will be printed in the LVP for the candidate or measure.

The candidate or committee chair may appeal the rejection of the statement by submitting a written appeal to the county Prosecuting Attorney within 2 business days of notification. The Prosecuting Attorney's decision on the appeal will be final.

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

Each ballot measure must be accompanied by an explanatory statement. This statement should be prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the ballot measure.

The explanatory statement should tell what the current law is and what the results of passage of the ballot measure would be. This statement shall not exceed 200 words and no more than 3 paragraphs in block paragraph form. For districts that cross county lines, Walla Walla County will follow the word count of the lead county. The statement may also be accompanied by a letter from the district's attorney if they prepared and approve the explanatory statement.

If there is no letter from the district's attorney approving the statement or if a district does not retain legal counsel, the statement will be submitted to the county Prosecuting Attorney's Office for review and approval. All explanatory statements will be reviewed and approved by the Prosecuting Attorney (or City Attorney, when applicable) before inclusion in the pamphlet.

9. Ballot Measure – “For” and “Against” Committees (RCW 29A.32.280)

- a. **Appointed by District** – It is the responsibility of the legislative authority submitting a measure to appoint members to a committee that will write the statement in support of the measure and to a committee that will write the statement against the measure. Each committee is allowed up to 3 members but can ask the advice of any number of individuals.

All committee appointments shall be submitted to the Auditor’s Office by the measures and resolution deadline for that election.

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

- b. **Appointed by Auditor** - In the event a district does not submit appointments for either committee, the Auditor’s Office will make a good faith effort to identify interested individuals and appoint them to a committee. The auditor shall not make any appointments after the first deadline for ballot measure arguments.

The appointed committee members shall identify a chair who will serve as the primary contact.

If a committee has been appointed by the auditor less than 3 days before the argument deadline, their deadline will be 3 business days after the appointment.

For jurisdictions where committee members were not obtained, the LVP will contain verbiage that no one came forward to prepare a statement and it will provide information on how to get involved in future committees.

10. “For” and “Against” Statements

“For” and “Against” committees will have 5 business days following the resolution deadline to submit their statements. The Auditor’s Office will not edit or advise committees on argument statements. “For” and “Against” statements must be:

- a. 200 words or less – headings are included in the word count
- b. No more than 4 paragraphs in block paragraph form
- c. Prepared by the committee
- d. Written in accordance with the format rules listed on page 2
- e. Signed or otherwise approved by all members of the committee

It is not the responsibility of the Auditor’s Office to coordinate between committee members or to arbitrate disagreements among them. If committee members cannot agree on an argument, no argument will be published in the voters’ pamphlet.

Once submitted, arguments cannot be withdrawn or changed.

However, if a statement is received before the deadline and exceeds the word limit, the committee will be notified by email and asked to delete words, paragraphs, or sentences. Only deletions are allowed; no changes or additions to the statement will be allowed. The shortened statement must be received by the deadline.

If the deadline has passed and the statement exceeds 200 words, it may be rejected.

11. Candidate Statements

A statement, biography, contact information, and photo may be submitted for inclusion in the LVP by a candidate on the ballot in a primary or general election. Candidates can submit the following information at time of filing through the state online candidate filing portal or via email to elections@co.walla-walla.wa.us.

a. Biography - 100 words or less allocated between four subsection headings

- i. Elected Experience
- ii. Other Experience
- iii. Education
- iv. Community Service

If a candidate doesn't submit information for a particular subsection, "No Information submitted" will appear in that subsection in the LVP.

b. Statement - 200 words or less, no more than 4 paragraphs in block paragraph form

- i. Candidate statements should only address campaign issues, plans, and ideas of the candidate. Statements shall not contain obscene, inappropriate, or libelous language. Candidate statements shall not comment on or make any judgments about opponents or incumbents. The Auditor has the authority to reject statements that are deemed inappropriate (*see Content Rejection and Appeal Process, page 3*).
- ii. Statements must follow the format rules listed on page 2 (*Formatting Rules*).
- iii. Candidates for state and federal offices must use the word limit and number of paragraphs specified in the State Candidate Guide.
- iv. Candidates cannot submit a new statement for the General Election. The same information submitted during filing week will be used for both the Primary and General Elections.
- v. Candidates not submitting a statement will have "No statement submitted" printed in the pamphlet.

c. Contact Information

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

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

d. Submission Deadline – 4:00 pm on the Friday following Candidate Filing Week

e. Candidate Photo

A photo may be submitted by an eligible candidate. Photos should reflect the candidate in a professional and tasteful manner. Candid/casual social media style photos are not recommended and may be rejected at the discretion of the Auditor. Photos are published in a black and white format.

Photo recommendations:

- 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 the last 5 years
- A head and shoulders portrait
- Plain, light colored background

Photos may not:

- Include scenery, flags, or other background settings
- Be an informal candid photo, cartoon, caricature, or any other image that does not accurately portray the candidate
- Be a group photo
- Show judicial robes, uniform (i.e. law enforcement, fire, military) or hat
- Show clothing or insignia suggesting the candidate holds a public office

The Auditor's Office will adjust and/or crop photos as necessary.

Candidates not submitting a photo will have a "No photo submitted" statement printed in the pamphlet.

12. Public Inspection of Candidate Submissions (RCW 29A.32.100)

Statements and arguments that have been submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet shall not be available for release to the public until all submissions pertaining to the race or ballot measure have been received. Requests for public inspection shall be made in the same manner as requests for public records.

13. Format and distribution of the Local Voters' Pamphlet

The Auditor's Office retains complete control over content and format of the pamphlet and may print the pamphlet in combination with the Secretary of State Voters' Pamphlet. If the Auditor's Office produces the pamphlet in combination with the state, the requirements of RCW 29A.32 and these rules will be adhered to as much as is practical.

Adopted this 8th day of April, 2021



Karen Martin
Walla Walla County Auditor



Gregory Tompkins
Chair, Walla Walla County Commissioners



James Nagle
Walla Walla County Prosecuting Attorney