

Franklin County Local Voters' Pamphlet / Online Voters Guide Administrative Rules

The Administrative Rules provide information to jurisdictions and candidates that are included in the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

Franklin County Local Voters' Pamphlet Administrative Rules

Revised November 2023

1. Purpose

The purpose of these rules is to establish uniform requirements and procedures for local jurisdictions within Franklin County included in the local voters' pamphlet for Primary, General and Special Elections. In addition, these rules follow laws that are designed to provide voters with informative, non-biased, consistent and readable information. The pamphlet provides candidate and measure statements as well as voter registration and election information.

In addition to the printed voters' pamphlet, Franklin County also produces an online voters' guide.

For General Elections Franklin County publishes a local voters' pamphlet in conjunction with the state voters' pamphlet. Jurisdictions placing measures on the ballot are automatically included in the local voters' pamphlet as well as on our website in the online voter's guide.

2. Authority

These rules are in conformance with the state and local voters' pamphlet election laws in Title 29A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Chapter 434 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Section 203c.

3. Administrative Rules

- A. Content Outline
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- E. Rules for Candidate Statements & Photographs
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Adopted this 16th day of February, 2024



Matt Beaton
Franklin County Auditor

A. Content Outline

Content Requirements

[RCW 29A.32.241](#)

1. Appearing on the cover, the words "official local voters' pamphlet," the name of the jurisdiction producing the pamphlet, and the date of the election or primary;
2. A list of jurisdictions that have measures or candidates in the pamphlet (may be in the form of a table of contents).
3. Information on how a person may register to vote and obtain a ballot.
4. The text of each measure accompanied by an explanatory statement prepared by the prosecuting attorney for any county measure or by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the measure if other than a county measure. All explanatory statements for city, town, or district measures not approved by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the measure shall be reviewed and approved by the county prosecuting attorney or city attorney, when applicable, before inclusion in the pamphlet;
5. The arguments for and against each measure submitted by committees selected pursuant to [RCW 29A.32.280](#).
6. A list of all student engagement hubs in the county as designated under RCW [RCW 29A.40.180](#).
7. 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.
8. The county auditor's name may not appear in the local voters' pamphlet in his or her official capacity if the county auditor is a candidate for office during the same year. His or her name may only be included as part of the information normally included for candidates.
9. A letter of introduction from the Auditor.
10. Statements and photos submitted by candidates in races on the ballot.
11. A list of all ballot deposit locations, if space allows.
12. Contact information for the Franklin County Auditor's Office.

13. The following disclaimer shall be printed at least once where candidate statements appear:
“Candidate statements are printed exactly as submitted. The Elections Department does not make corrections of any kind or verify statements for truth or fact.”
14. The following statement shall be printed at least once where statements “for” or “against” ballot measures appear: “Statements printed are the opinions of the authors and have not been checked for factual or grammatical accuracy by the Elections Department.”
15. Ballot measures and candidate statements shall be printed in the same order and form as they appear on the ballot.

B. Rules for Participation by Local Jurisdictions

Notice of Intent to Publish a Local Voters' Pamphlet [\(RCW 29A.32.220\)](#)

It is the intent of the Auditor's Office to publish a local voters' pamphlet for every election. Franklin County shall notify all jurisdictions within the county of its intent to publish a local voters' pamphlet for a primary or general election at least 90 calendar days before the publication of the local voters' pamphlet. Notification will be made via email or standard mail to the jurisdiction's contact person on file with the Elections Department of the Auditor's Office.

Local Jurisdictions shall provide the Auditor's Office with a list of all offices up for election by March 1 of each year in accordance with WAC 434-215-005.

Inclusion in the Local Voters' Pamphlet [\(RCW 29A.32.220\)](#)

All jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot in a special, primary or general election in which a local voters' pamphlet is produced will participate in the local voters' pamphlet. Local jurisdictions shall include information on all jurisdictional ballot measures scheduled to appear on the ballot.

Responsibility for the Cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet

[RCW 29A.32.270](#) states: "The cost of a local voters' pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those jurisdictions included in the pamphlet and shall be prorated in the manner provided in [RCW 29A.04.410](#)."

[RCW 29A.04.410](#) Costs borne by constituencies states: "The purpose of this section is to clearly establish that the county is not responsible for any costs involved in the holding of any city, town, or district election.

Financial Hardship [\(RCW 29A.32.220\)](#)

The Franklin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) has the authority to waive the requirement of appearing in the local voters' pamphlet if participation would create undue financial hardship. A petition from a jurisdiction must be submitted to the BOCC and County Auditor no later than 60 days before the publication of the local voters' pamphlet.

Publication of the pamphlet is defined as the date on which the County Auditor signs the final pamphlet proof and sends it to the printer.

A jurisdiction receiving a waiver for local voters' pamphlet costs will continue to be responsible for their remaining portion of the election cost.

Bilingual Local Voters' Pamphlet

In compliance with the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Section 203c, Franklin County produces a bilingual (English/Spanish) local voters' pamphlet. The Federal requirements state that those localities where more than 10,000 or over 5 percent of the total voting age citizens who are members of a single minority language group, have depressed literacy rates, and do not speak English very well, shall provide materials in the applicable minority language.

Submittal Process for Resolutions [\(RCW 29A.04.330\)](#)

Resolutions calling for an election by a jurisdiction shall be submitted on or before the resolution deadline established by state law. Resolutions calling for a special election in February or April must be submitted at least 60 calendar days prior to the election date. The resolution cover sheet must also include a request to produce a pamphlet. Resolutions calling for an election in conjunction with the Primary or General election must be submitted by the established deadlines for each election.

How to submit a resolution

To place a measure on the ballot, a resolution must be submitted to the Elections Department by the deadline [\(RCW 29A.04.330\)](#).

Franklin County Auditor
Elections Department
1016 N 4th Avenue
Pasco, WA 99301
Fax: (509) 545-3538
elections@franklincountywa.gov

A **Resolution Cover Sheet** is mandatory and must accompany each resolution. This cover sheet contains important contact information required by the Elections Department.

Upon receipt of the cover sheet and resolution, the Elections Department will send an acknowledgment notice to the jurisdiction's contact person.

C. Rules for Explanatory Statements

Requirements of Law

A ballot measure submitted for inclusion in a local voters' pamphlet must be accompanied by an explanatory statement about the measure [\(RCW 29A.32.241\)](#).

Purpose of the Explanatory Statement

The explanatory statement should explain in common and neutral language the measure's purpose, the financial impact, and which laws/statutes will be affected by passage of the measure.

Explanatory statements which advocate for or against a specific vote are not allowed.

Preparation of Explanatory Statements

The attorney for the city, town, or district submitting the ballot measure should prepare the explanatory statement. All explanatory statements are subject to review by the County Prosecuting Attorney.

Statement Style

The County Auditor finds it is in the public's best interest that all statements published in the Local Voter's Pamphlet are of similar format and style. Statements will be typeset in block paragraph style without tables, lists, bullets, or other material requiring multiple indentations. Words which are underlined, in all upper-case letters, or in bold print will be typeset in italics in a font size matching the rest of the statement. Statements submitted in upper-case letters will be set in normal lower-case, except for the first letter of proper nouns and the first letter of the first word of a sentence. Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or statements. The Auditor's Office will not be responsible for edits required by adhering to these rules.

Deadlines for Required Explanatory Statements

No later than ten (10) business days after district resolutions are submitted to the County Auditor for inclusion on the ballot, an explanatory statement about the ballot measure must be received by the Franklin County Auditor's Office before the end of the business day.

All explanatory statements will be available to the public upon request no more than five (5) business days after receipt by this office.

Deadline Extension

The Franklin County Auditor shall have the authority to grant any deadline extensions which he/she feels are in the best interest of the public. All extensions will be equally granted to opposing candidates or committees. Extensions will not be granted for failure to submit materials by the times and dates established in these specifications.

Restrictions on Explanatory Statements

Explanatory statements shall be submitted by the local jurisdictions attorney and shall not exceed 100 words and three (3) or four (4) small paragraphs.

Submissions Method for Statements

Statements must be in electronic format.

D. Rules for Committee “For”, “Against”, and “Rebuttal” Statements

Appointment of Committees to Write Statements “For” and “Against” Measures [\(RCW 29A.32.280\)](#)

For each ballot measure from a local jurisdiction included in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet, the legislative authority of the local jurisdiction shall, on or before the day resolutions are submitted:

1. Formally appoint a committee of not more than three (3) persons, to prepare a statement advocating voters’ approval of the measure.
2. Formally appoint a committee of not more than three (3) persons, to prepare a statement advocating voters’ rejection of the measure.
3. Submit the names, addresses, email, and phone numbers of the committee members to the Franklin County Auditor’s Office. Only the names of the committee members will be printed in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet, as the authors of the statement. Committee member’s titles shall not be included.

A Committee may seek the advice of any Franklin County registered voter. The committee shall elect from among its members a chairperson to act as the contact person with the Auditor’s Office. The Auditor’s Office will give the chairperson a copy of the Administrative Rules.

If the legislative authority of the jurisdiction fails to make such appointments for either a “for” or “against” committee by the prescribed deadline, it shall notify the County Auditor, in writing, on or before the deadline date.

If either a “for” or “against” group has not been appointed or the jurisdiction has failed to notify the County Auditor by the deadline, the County Auditor will advertise for either “for” or “against” committee members the week after the Pro/Con Committee Appointment deadline. The County Auditor shall notify the jurisdiction of any citizen group willing to write a “for” or “against” statement no later than twenty (20) business days after the resolution submission date. Statements submitted by Auditor-appointed committees will be provided to the jurisdiction and published in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet.

Selection of Advisory Committee Members

Committees may select additional persons to serve as an advisory committee. Only the names of the three (3) appointed “for” and “against” committee members will be published in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet.

Deadline for Submission of “For” and “Against” Statements and Rebuttals

Statements “for” or “against” ballot measures appearing in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet shall be submitted to the County Auditor by the chairperson of the committee appointed to draft the statement. The deadline for submission of statements from district appointed committees will be seven (7) business days after the resolutions are submitted for the primary and general election and five (5) business days after the resolutions are submitted for a special election.

Statements from Auditor-appointed committees are due five (5) business days after the committee is created.

Rebuttal to “for” and “against” statements shall be submitted to the County Auditor by the chairperson of the opposing committee.

Rebuttals must be received within three (3) business days after receipt of the “for” or “against” committee statements.

The County Auditor shall provide all specific calendar dates to the local jurisdictions at the beginning of the year along with the notice of resolution deadline dates for the Primary and General Elections.

Statement Word Count

If any statement exceeds the word and/or paragraph standards, the extra words will be omitted. If such a deletion creates an incomplete sentence, the incomplete sentence will also be omitted. In order to be fair and to give equal treatment to all districts or committees, there will be no exceptions to this word limitation.

Microsoft Word will be used to verify word counts.

The County Auditor will reject statements which contain obscene, vulgar, or profane language, or any language which in any way promotes, or advocates hatred, abuse, violence, and/or hostility toward or which tends to bring ridicule or shame upon a person or group of persons by reason of gender, race, color, sexual orientation, or religion.

Statement Style

The County Auditor finds it is in the public’s interest that all statements published in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet are of similar format and style. Statements will be typeset in block paragraph style without tables, lists, bullets, or other material requiring multiple indentations. Words which are underlined, in all upper-case letters, or in bold print will be typeset in italics in a font size matching the rest of the statement. Statements submitted in upper case letters will be set in normal lower case, except for the first letter of proper nouns and the first letter of the first word in a sentence. The Auditor’s Office will not be held responsible for edits required by adhering to these rules.

Length and Format of “For” and “Against” Statements

Statements “for” and “against” ballot measures appearing in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet shall not exceed 250 words and four (4) paragraphs. Lists or bullets are not permitted due to space limitations in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet. The committee may use up to four (4) brief subject headings to summarize and identify major arguments or portions of the statements for the convenience of the reader, and such headings shall be included in the statement word count. Committee members’ names will not be included in the final word count. Committee members contact information will not be printed in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet.

Length and Format of Rebuttal Statements

Rebuttals to “for” and “against” measure statements appearing in the Local Voters’ Pamphlet shall not exceed (75) words and no more than two (2) Paragraphs. The rebuttal must address issues raised in the opposing committee’s statement. Issues not previously discussed by either the “for” or “against” statement cannot be injected. Headings are not permitted in connection with rebuttal statements.

Editing of Statements for the Local Voters' Pamphlet

The Franklin County Auditor will not make corrections and assumes no responsibility for errors which result from inaccuracies in the original statement.

Deadline Extension

The County Auditor shall have the authority to grant any deadline extension which he or she feels is in the best interest of the public. All extensions shall be granted to both committees.

Submission Method for Statements

Statements must be submitted electronically no later than 4:30pm by the deadline.

Where to submit Statements

Email: elections@franklincountywa.gov

E. Rules for Candidate Statement and Photograph

Purpose

These rules establish submission guidelines for candidates running for local office only. Precinct Committee Officer Candidates do not appear in the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

These rules establish submission guidelines for candidates running for local office to appear in the Local Voters' Pamphlet. Candidates running for federal or state office follow administrative rules established by the Office of the Secretary of State.

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 don't represent the position of the Elections Department or Franklin County and neither is responsible for the validity or accuracy of the submissions.

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 specifications and content rules.

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 can't be amended by the candidate.

All submissions for inclusion in the local voters' pamphlet are due the Friday following filing week at 4:30 p.m.

No exceptions are allowed. 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.

All candidates submit content only once: 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.

To submit online, candidates must provide an email address with their candidate filing. Once the filing has been approved as a candidate for office, a confirmation email will invite you to submit the Voters' Pamphlet content. If you do not provide an email address when filing, you can email your candidate statement and photo to elections@franklincountywa.gov.

Biographical Information

The biographical information must be **100** words or less allocated between 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. (Judges use Legal/Judicial Experience)

Other Professional Experience.

Education.

Community Service.

When a candidate doesn't submit information for a subsection heading, "No information submitted" will appear in that subsection area.

Candidate Statement

Each statement shall be limited to **200** words for local candidates.

Microsoft Word will be used to verify word counts.

Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word. (Example - "Around-the-corner" = 3 words)

No changes will be allowed after submission. Once submitted, all biographical information, statements, and photos are final. They can't be amended by the candidate.

Shortening Biographical Information and Candidate Statements

Biographical information and candidate statements exceeding the word limits will be shortened by the Elections Division 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.

Stay within the word limit. Candidates are not given an opportunity to correct submissions.

Biographical information and candidate statement format

The statement will be set in upper and lower case. 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 by the Elections Department.

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

Lists and bullets are not allowed. Lists and bullets will be converted by the Elections Department to a block paragraph, with a semicolon to separate each item.

Candidate Contact Information

If provided, a candidate's campaign email address, website address and phone number may be printed in the Local Voters' Pamphlet. Mailing addresses will not be printed.

If the candidate does not submit campaign contact information with their statement, "No information submitted" will appear under the Contact section.

Contact information is not part of the 200 word count for local candidate statements.

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

Changes to contact information are subject to review and approval of the Auditor.

Editing Statements for the Local Voters' Pamphlet

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, as long as it complies with format and content rules.

Photographs

Candidates may submit a photograph to go with their statement in the Local Voters' Pamphlet and on the Franklin County Auditor's Office, Elections Department website.

The photographs **must be**:

- Digital (.JPEG or .TIFF format).
- High resolution.
- No smaller than 2.5 x 3 inches (750 x 900 pixels).
- Submitted electronically.
- Current (taken within the last 5 years).
- Of the candidate's face, neck, and shoulders in the manner of a portrait.

The photographs **may not**:

- Include scenery, flags, or other background settings.
- Show judicial robes, law enforcement, 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.
- Be digitally altered

Photos will be rejected that do not meet the administrative criteria outlines in the Administrative Rules above.

Candidate photos from previous local voters' pamphlets are not available for reuse. Candidate must submit a new photo.

Photo Guidelines:

- A color photo is highly preferred.
- For best results, use a plain, light-colored background, but not white

- Photos must be no more than five years old.

The Auditor's Office may adjust or crop photos as necessary.

The Auditor's Office will not be responsible if a candidate photo appears in publications other than the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

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.
- Email to: elections@franklincountywa.gov

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.

- The deadline for submission of candidate statements and photographs must be not sooner than 11 days immediately following the deadline for filing declarations of candidacy.

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.

Disclaimer

Submissions do not represent the position of the Franklin County Auditor or Franklin County. Neither the Franklin County Auditor nor Franklin County is responsible for the validity or accuracy of the submissions.

Public Inspection of Statements ([RCW 29A.32.100](#))

Local voters' pamphlet submissions are not available for public inspection or copying until the deadline for submission has passed.

F. Rules for Rejection and Appeal Process

Rejection

Pursuant to [RCW 29A.32.230](#), the Auditor's Office reserves the right to reject any submission to the Local Voters' Pamphlet that does not meet submission requirements.

Material submitted for publication in the Local Voters' Pamphlet may be rejected if it:

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

If any portion of a submission is rejected, the candidate or committee will be notified by email and given 48 hours from the time of notification to submit adjusted material as long as the original was submitted on time. The time of notification will be the time the email was sent to the candidate or committee. The email shall set forth specific grounds for the rejection.

Appeal

Any candidate whose submission is rejected may appeal the Auditor's decision. A written notice of appeal shall be submitted to the Auditor by email (elections@franklincountywa.gov) not more than 48 hours after the notice of rejection was sent and shall set forth the specific grounds for appeal. The Auditor may submit any rejected statement to the Prosecuting Attorney for review. The Auditor shall issue a written decision granting or denying the appeal by email within two business days after receiving the notice of appeal, and such decision shall be final.

If material is rejected the voter pamphlet will be printed with the rejected material omitted and the appropriate space left blank.