

Washington

Provisional Ballot Survey

Provisional Ballots Cast: 93,781
Provisional Ballots Counted: 74,100
Percent Counted: 79.0%
Percent of Vote: 2.59%

DESIGN

1. Who designs the provisional ballot, the state or county?

Local jurisdictions design the provisional ballot. There are some design standards required by the state.

2. Is the entity responsible for designing the provisional ballot designated by statute or rule?

State statute designates local jurisdictions as responsible for designing the provisional ballots. State law also requires that provisional ballots be visually distinguishable and uncountable by regular voting machines.

3. Does Washington have a provisional ballot that also serves as a voter registration application?

No, provisional ballots do not also serve as registration applications.

4. Is Washington's provisional ballot visually distinguishable from a regular ballot?

Yes, by state law, provisional ballots must be visually distinguishable, printed on different colored paper, and must not be countable by regular voting machines.

AVAILABILITY AND STANDARDS

1. Are there a required number of provisional ballots at polling places?

The state does not set a required number of provisional ballots for polling places. Counties are responsible for establishing the minimum number of provisional ballots.

2. What do poll workers do if the polling place runs out of provisional ballots?

Precinct workers would contact the County Auditor's Office for instructions.

3. Are provisional ballots tracked through distribution to polling sites through counting?

The number of provisional ballots that are sent to each polling place is tracked on the Poll Site Ballot Accountability Form. This form also tracks the number of provisional ballots that

are issued on Election Day and the number of provisional ballots that are sent back to the County Auditor's Office. At the time of issuance, a unique identifier is assigned to the ballot/envelope and given to the voter so that the voter can follow-up on the disposition of their provisional ballot.

COUNTING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

1. Who determines whether or not a provisional ballot is valid?

The County Auditor is responsible for investigating provisional ballots and determining their validity. Only the County Canvassing Board, made up of the County Auditor, County Prosecuting Attorney, and the Chair of the County Legislative Authority, may reject a ballot. This is specified in both statute and administrative rule.

2. What is the time frame for counting provisional ballots?

The timeframe for determining the eligibility for all provisional voters is the day after the election until the certification of the election. That time period is ten days after a special election or a primary election and twenty-one days after a general election. There is no additional deadline other than the certification of the election.

3. What is the process for determining the eligibility of a provisional ballot?

The process for determining the eligibility of each provisional voter includes:

- Using the voters name, date of birth, signature, and address information to determine whether the voter is registered in the county, another county, or another state;
- Verifying whether the voter was previously registered in the county and canceled in error;
- Verifying that the provisional voter has not already returned a voted absentee ballot;
- Verifying the voter's signature matches the one on file; and
- Verifying which races the voter is eligible to vote.

4. Who can observe the process?

Any member of the public can observe this process. Political party observers are requested to observe all facets of the election process. Observers must be trained by the County Auditor.

5. Is a provisional ballot counted if it is cast in the wrong precinct?

A provisional ballot would be counted if cast in the wrong precinct but in the right city or in the right county for all applicable races. If a provisional ballot was cast in the incorrect county, the ballot would be forwarded to the appropriate county and would be counted for applicable state and federal races.

6. What information must voters provide on the provisional ballot?

The voter must provide their name, registered address of both the present and former registration, if applicable, their date of birth, and a signature on the oath.

7. May a voter remedy a provisional ballot that may be rejected?

When a voter's provisional ballot will not be counted because they forgot to sign the oath or the signature on the envelope does not match the signature on file, the voter will be contacted before the ballot is officially rejected. If the provisional ballot will be rejected for another reason, the voter will not be contacted prior to the rejection of the ballot.

8. If voters remedy a flawed provisional ballot, how are they notified of this opportunity?

The voters which either did not sign their envelope or the signature doesn't match are contacted by phone, if available, and sent a letter in the mail notifying the voter of the pending rejection of the provisional ballot.

9. What can voters do if they failed to bring ID to the polls?

If a voter failed to bring ID, state law instructs a signature match to be used. If the signature does not match, the voter will be contacted and have the opportunity to renew their registration or to provide their signature in person.

NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

1. What is the state's Free Notification System to inform voters whether their provisional ballot was counted?

Each county decides which notification system to use; the most common method is the toll-free number.

2. Who administers the Free Notification System?

Individual counties administer the notification systems.

3. What is the timeline for posting information to the Free Notification System?

The information must be available one week from the certification of the election.