

Snohomish County Local Voters' Pamphlet

Administrative Rules

1. Purpose

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

2. Rules

A. Notice of Intent to Publish a Local Voters' Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.32.220. SCC 2.49.020)

Snohomish County shall prepare a local voters' pamphlet for primary, general, and special elections. Snohomish County Elections shall notify all jurisdictions within the county of a local voters' pamphlet at least 90 calendar days before the publication and distribution of the local voters' pamphlet. Notification will be made via email or standard mail to the jurisdiction's contact on file with the Snohomish County Elections.

B. Inclusion in the Local Voters' Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.32.220)

All jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot will participate in the local voters' pamphlet for every primary, general, and special election, except that a first-class or code city, or any other town or city, when obligated by ordinance or charter, may produce its own local voters' pamphlet.

C. Costs associated with the Local Voters' Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.32.220, RCW 29A.32.270, SCC 2.49.040, SCC 2.49.070)

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.

A legislative authority of a jurisdiction required to appear in the local voters' pamphlet may petition the County Council to waive the appearance requirement. The County Council may waive appearance in the local voters' pamphlet if it finds that participation in the local voters' pamphlet would create undue financial hardship for the jurisdiction, and it is not less than 60 days before the publication of the local voters' pamphlet. A jurisdiction receiving a waiver for local voters' pamphlet appearance will continue to be responsible for their remaining portion of the cost of the election.

D. Notice of Deadlines and Requirements

Snohomish County Elections will notify jurisdictions of the publication date of the local voters' pamphlet as well as the deadlines for submission of materials to be included in the local voters' pamphlet. Candidates will be notified of all deadlines and requirements when they file for public office.

E. Local Voters' Pamphlet Content
(RCW 29A.32.241, SCC 2.49.010)

The local voters' pamphlet shall include at a minimum:

1. A cover page containing the words "Official Local Voters' Pamphlet," "Snohomish County," and the date of the primary, general, or special election.
2. 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.
3. Information on how a person may register to vote and obtain a ballot.
4. The text of each measure is accompanied by an explanatory statement prepared by the prosecuting attorney for any county measure(s) or by the attorney for the local jurisdiction submitting the measure(s).
5. Arguments for and against each measure submitted by committees pursuant to RCW 29A.32.080.
6. Statements and photos submitted by candidates in races on the ballot. Exception, Precinct Committee Officer (PCO) candidates are not included in this publication.
7. A list of all student engagement hubs in the county as designated under RCW 29A.40.180;
8. For partisan primary elections, information on how to vote in the appropriate ballot format and an explanation that minor political party candidates and independent candidates will appear only on the general election ballot.

F. Ballot Measure Explanatory Statements
(RCW 29A.32.230, RCW 29A.32.241, SCC 2.49.060)

An explanatory statement addresses the anticipated effect of a measure if passed into law.

The statement may be no more than 200 words* and must be prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the proposition or measure. A letter from the jurisdiction's attorney confirming they prepared and approved the explanatory statement is required.

If there is no letter from the jurisdiction's attorney or if a jurisdiction does not retain legal counsel for the review, the statement will be submitted to the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office for review and final discretion on language.

Any challenge to an explanatory statement must be filed no later than five business days after the due date for explanatory statement submission. The challenge must be in the form of a petition to the Superior Court of Snohomish County with a copy to the Auditor's Office and the attorney who prepared or reviewed the statement. The Superior Court's decision will be final.

*For districts that cross county lines, Snohomish County will follow the word count of the county where the ballot measure is required to be filed.

G. 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 supporting the measure and to a committee that will write the statement opposing the measure. Persons for the pro/con committees shall be known to favor or oppose respectively the measure for which they are writing a statement. Each committee is allowed up to 3 members but can ask for the advice of any number of individuals.

Snohomish County Elections requests that all pro/con committee appointments be submitted by the deadline to submit measures and resolutions. State law requires that appointments be made no later than 45 calendar days prior to the publication of the local voters' pamphlet.

Each committee shall identify a chair who will serve as the primary contact for Snohomish County Elections.

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

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

H. Ballot Measure Arguments

A ballot measure argument is written to support or oppose a ballot measure. Each argument statement in support (Pro) or against (Con) a measure can be no more than 250 words* and must be prepared by the committee formed pursuant to RCW 29A.32.280. Snohomish County Elections will not fact-check or edit, including correcting spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors, or otherwise advise committees on statements.

Statements should only address issues, plans, and ideas pertaining to the ballot measure. Statements shall not contain libelous or inappropriate language, including obscenity or profanity. The County Auditor may reject statements that include libelous or inappropriate language per RCW 29A.32.230.

Statements are limited to alphanumeric characters and punctuation. The text must be written in paragraph form. Only italics may be used to emphasize words or phrases. Bolding, underlining, and using all capital letters, tables, lists, bullets and emojis are not allowed. If formatting does not adhere to these standards. Snohomish County Elections will adjust formatting as deemed necessary.

Arguments will be shared by Snohomish County Elections with the opposing committee once both arguments have been received. Each committee has an opportunity to formulate a rebuttal statement containing no more than 75 words. * Rebuttal statements may only address the issues raised in the opposing statement without introducing new issues not previously addressed in either statement. Rebuttal statements are not shared with the opposing committee.

Argument and rebuttal statements must be signed or otherwise approved by all members of the committee. It is not the role of Snohomish County Elections to coordinate between committee members. Once submitted, argument and rebuttal statements cannot be withdrawn or changed. If committee members cannot agree on an argument or rebuttal statement, no argument or rebuttal statement will be presented in the local voters' pamphlet. Failure to submit an argument statement will disqualify the committee from submitting a rebuttal statement.

The deadlines for each committee to submit their argument and rebuttal will be established by the Snohomish County Elections at least 30 calendar days in advance of the filing deadlines.

*For districts that cross county lines, Snohomish County will follow the word count of the county where the ballot measure is required to be filed.

I. Candidate Statements (RCW 29A.32.230)

A statement may be submitted by a candidate on the ballot except for candidates that will be included in a state, judicial, city, or other voters' pamphlet or for Precinct Committee Officer candidates. This statement will be used in both the general election and a primary if one is required.

Each candidate statement shall be limited to 200 words and four paragraphs. If Snohomish County Elections utilizes the Secretary of State's online voters' pamphlet submission tools, then the word counts will be calculated pursuant to RCW 29A.32.121.

Candidate statements must be limited to discussion of the candidate him or herself. For example, candidate statements may address campaign issues, plans, and ideas of the candidate. Candidate statements shall not comment on or make any judgments about opponents or incumbents. Statements shall not contain libelous or inappropriate language, including obscenity or profanity. The County Auditor may reject statements that contain libelous or inappropriate language per RCW 29A.32.230.

Statements are limited to alphanumeric characters and punctuation. The text must be written in paragraph form. Only *italics* may be used to emphasize words or phrases. Bolding, underlining, and using all capital letters, tables, lists, bullets and emojis are not allowed. If formatting does not adhere to these standards. Snohomish County Elections will adjust formatting as deemed necessary.

Snohomish County Elections does not fact-check statements nor correct spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors.

Section headers (Education, Previous Experience, etc.) and candidate contact information such as name, campaign address, phone number, email, and website that was provided by the candidate with their statement or taken from filing information will be listed separately from the candidate statement and will not count towards the word count. If this information is also included within the

statement submission, it will be counted towards the word count and repeated in the contact area. Contact information is published even if no statement is submitted.

Contact information (phone, email, website) provided at submission will be published in the local voters' pamphlet. If the campaign-related contact information is not submitted, personal email addresses and phone numbers will be printed in the local voters' pamphlet unless specifically requested to be removed by the candidate.

Snohomish County Elections will provide information on submission requirements and the statement appeals process to candidates at the time of filing for office.

Candidate statement deadlines will be established by Snohomish County Elections at least 30 calendar days before candidate filing.

Candidates not submitting a statement will have "No statement submitted" printed in the local voters' pamphlet.

J. Candidate Photo

A photo may be submitted by a candidate on the ballot for a primary or election, except for candidates that will be included in a state, judicial, city, or other voters' pamphlet.

The photo of the candidate must be current, not more than five years old. The photo should be of the candidate's unobscured face and shoulders.

The photo cannot show the candidate wearing a uniform, judicial robe, hat, anything bearing an insignia, or otherwise suggest holding of a public office. Props, sunglasses, or other items obscuring the candidate's face in the photo will not be accepted. Exceptions may be made in special circumstances with the Auditor's approval.

Snohomish County Elections will adjust and/or crop photos as necessary. Photos are published in a black and white format. 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.

Candidates not submitting a photo will have a "No photo submitted" statement printed in the local voters' pamphlet. Photos are not accepted nor published for Precinct Committee Officer candidates.

Snohomish County Elections will provide additional photo submission requirements to candidates at the time of filing for office.

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

Snohomish County Elections reserves the right to reject any ballot measure argument or candidate statement if it does not conform to the administrative rules or if a statement or argument is 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 candidate or measure.

Candidates or committee chairs may appeal the rejection of the statement by submitting a written appeal to the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney within 48 hours of notification. The Prosecuting Attorney's decision on the appeal will be final.

L. Format and distribution of the Local Voters' Pamphlet
(SCC 2.49.010)

Snohomish County Elections retains complete control over content and format, including limiting the publication to an online electronic version or printed in combination with the Secretary of State Voters' Pamphlet. If Snohomish County produces an online version only or in combination with the state, the requirements of RCW 29A.32 and these rules will be adhered to as much as is practical.

Revision adopted this 8th day of March 2023.



Garth Fell
Snohomish County Auditor

