

# Improving the Accessibility of Elections for Voters with Disabilities

APRIL 2023



**Snohomish County Elections**  
*A Division of the Auditor's Office*

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## Introduction

"Improving the Accessibility of Elections for Voters with Disabilities" is a plan developed annually by the Snohomish County Elections Division in partnership with the Snohomish County Accessible Voting Advisory Committee.

Snohomish County Elections takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to vote independently and privately by using accessible buildings and materials in compliance with the provisions of the Help American Vote Act (HAVA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act.

This plan was created with feedback gathered during the annual meeting of the Accessible Voting Advisory Committee held March 30, 2023 in compliance with the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 29A.04.223. Meeting attendees included persons with diverse disabilities and persons with expertise in providing accommodations for persons with disabilities. Snohomish County Elections Division staff then developed this plan, which describes the steps taken by Snohomish County Elections to ensure private and independent access to elections information, and voting for citizens with disabilities.

The plan includes information regarding:

- The number and location of voting centers
- The number and location of ballot drop-off facilities
- Outreach to voters with disabilities

## Accessible Voting Advisory Committee Meeting

The Snohomish County Elections Division held the Accessible Advisory Committee meeting on March 30, 2023, via Zoom. In total Eight (8) individuals participated in the one-hour meeting.

## Accessible Voting Sites

RCW 29A.04.223 (2)(a) and (b) require Snohomish County Elections' accessible voting plan include the number and location of vote centers that will be maintained to ensure and maximize the accessibility of people with disabilities to accessible voting devices.

In Snohomish County vote centers are referred to as "accessible voting sites."

In 2023, Snohomish County Elections will operate four accessible voting sites for all countywide elections. Countywide elections typically include the August Primary and November General.

For non-countywide elections, there will be at least one accessible voting location. This location is the Snohomish County Auditor's Office at 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201.

The number of sites, locations, and days and hours of operation were determined and influenced by several factors including access and convenience for voters with disabilities and historical use of AVUs.

Snohomish County Elections ensures that accessible voting units and other equipment is delivered to the site and is fully operational during the designated hours. Each accessible voting site has a secure mobile ballot drop box that is returned to the county elections office each evening. Snohomish County Elections hires, trains, and supervises the accessible voting site staff.

Site locations, days and hours of operation were discussed and approved by the meeting attendees without objection.

### 2023 General Election Accessible Voting Site Locations and Hours

Location	Dates and Hours of Operation
<b>Snohomish County Auditor's Office</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Admin W 3000 Rockefeller Ave Everett, WA 98201	<b>Monday through Friday</b> 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  <b>Tuesday, Election Day, November 7</b> 8:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
<b>Homage Senior Services</b> 5026 196th St SW, Lynnwood, WA 98036	<b>Saturday, November 4</b> 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
<b>Hotel Arlington</b> 16710 Smokey Point Blvd, Arlington, WA 98223	<b>Monday, November 6</b> 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
<b>Evergreen State Fair Grounds</b> 14405 179th Ave SE, Monroe, WA 98272 (Follow signs to VIP Cabin)	<b>Tuesday, Election Day, November 7</b> 8:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.
<b>Snohomish County Campus</b> Robert J. Drewel Building, Public Meeting Room 3000 Rockefeller Ave, Everett, WA 98201	

## Accessible Voting Units

Accessible Voting Sites are equipped with accessible voting units (AVU) that allow voters with a wide range of physical abilities to cast an independent, private, and secure ballot.

AVUs are touch-screen computers that have enhanced visual features, response controls, and audio capabilities. These features can help people with a wide range of disability such as reduced motor control or low or no vision mark their own ballot. The equipment provides the user the opportunity to review their selections before casting their ballot both through a verifiable paper ballot and an audio review process.

AVUs used by Snohomish County meet the mandatory requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) regarding election technology and administration.

In 2018, Snohomish County Elections implemented a new AVU system called ClearAccess. The AVUs are designed based on the Anywhere ballot developed by the Center for Civic Design. These systems allow users to mark their ballot independently using their own preferred USB compatible devices.

## 24-Hour Ballot Drop Boxes

Snohomish County Elections operates thirty-four (34) 24-hour ballot drop boxes. Voters can return their ballot directly to a drop box without postage at any time beginning no less than 30 days prior to an election through 8pm on Election Day, 45 days for Primary and General Elections.

Snohomish County Elections has developed a Google map layer for the ballot drop locations that is available through the county website. Website visitors can use the navigation/direction tools built into Google Maps to find directions to each location.

Initial sites were identified and chosen after analyzing past ballot return rates through previously staffed community collection centers. In 2017, new legislation required additional drop boxes be added to ensure a drop box in every city, town, and census-designated place with a post office. See map on page 8 for plotted locations of the 24-hour drop boxes.

Additional factors considered in the selection of the sites were:

1. Proximity to population centers, ballot drop-off users, and major traffic corridors;
2. Familiarity of locations for majority of the population;
3. Access to public transportation routes;
4. Accessibility features of the sites for voters with disabilities;
5. Availability of parking;
6. Ability to maintain consistent locations for all countywide elections;
7. Ability to partner with a public organization with stable community ties;
8. Desire to serve voters from all five council districts; and
9. Administrative efficiency in supporting and operating the sites.

Based on these factors, it was determined that utilizing several existing Sno-Isle Library branches to serve as locations for the drop boxes would best meet the selection factors and provide the best service to voters. Branches are located near major population centers and are a familiar location

to county residents. Libraries are situated close to public transportation routes and are designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Libraries are an enduring public facility and are available year-round. The sites result in low operation costs as we do not pay a fee for the use of the facilities.

In addition to our partnership with Sno-Isle Libraries, Snohomish County Elections has worked with local cities and private businesses (Bothell, Gold Bar, Lake Stevens, Lynnwood, Marysville, and Darrington) to identify locations that will best meet local community needs.

In addition to the publicly accessible ballot drop boxes below, Snohomish County Elections maintains a ballot drop box in the County jail, and is working to expand registration opportunities and voting access to inmates.

The number and placement of ballot drop boxes was discussed at the Accessible Voting Advisory Committee meeting. All attendees agree that the number and location of available drop boxes as well as the Elections Division’s continued efforts to identify locations to meet the need of our growing community are sufficient.

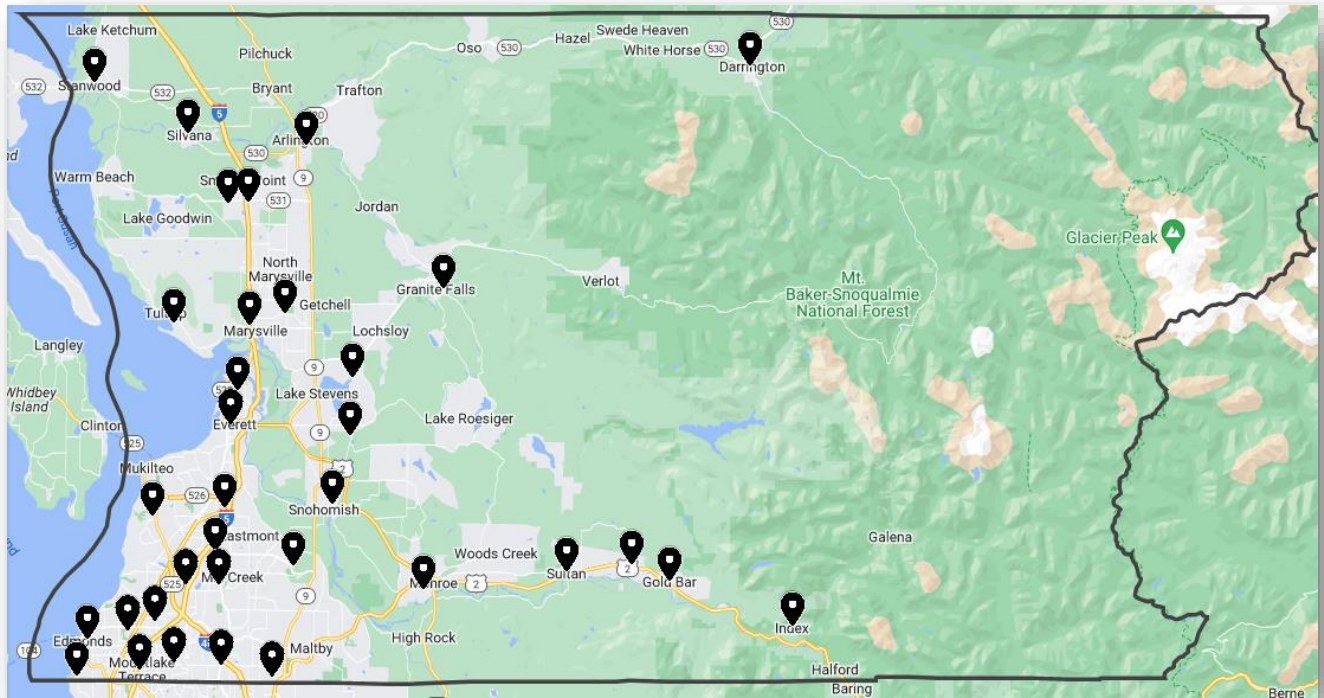
*Table 1: 2023 Snohomish County 24-hour Drop Box Locations*

<b>Location of ballot drop boxes</b>	<b>County Council District</b>	<b>Location of ballot drop boxes</b>	<b>County Council District</b>
<b>Arlington near the Sno-Isle Library</b> 135 N Washington Ave Arlington, WA 98223	#1	<b>Marysville (State Ave)<sup>1</sup></b> 11401 State Avenue NE Marysville, WA 98270	#1
<b>Bothell in the QFC parking lot</b> 22833 Bothell Everett Hwy Bothell, WA 98201	#4	<b>Marysville at Grove Elementary</b> 6510 Grove St Marysville, WA 98270	#1
<b>Brier near City Hall</b> 2901 228 <sup>th</sup> St SW Brier, WA 98036	#4	<b>Mill Creek in turnaround near post office</b> 159 <sup>th</sup> Pl SE and Mill Creek Blvd Mill Creek, WA 98223	#4
<b>Darrington near library/city hall</b> 1005 Cascade St Darrington, WA 98241	#1	<b>Monroe near the Sno-Isle Library</b> 1070 Village Way Monroe, WA 98272	#5
<b>Edmonds near the Sno-Isle Library</b> 650 Main St Edmonds, WA 98020	#3	<b>Mountlake Terrace near the Library</b> 23300 58 <sup>th</sup> Ave W Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043	#4
<b>Everett at the Snohomish County Campus</b> Rockefeller Ave and Wall Street Everett, WA 98201	#2	<b>Mukilteo near the Sno-Isle Library</b> 4675 Harbour Pointe Blvd Mukilteo, WA 98275	#2
<b>Everett at the Everett Mall near Sears</b> 1402 SE Everett Mall Way Everett, WA 98208	#2	<b>Silvana near Peace Lutheran Church</b> 1717 Ole Larson Rd Silvana, WA 98287	#1
<b>Everett (Everett Community College behind the WSU building)</b> 1001 N Broadway Ave Everett, WA 98201	#2	<b>Smokey Point near Lowe’s</b> 3300 169 <sup>th</sup> Pl NE Arlington, WA 98223	#1

<sup>1</sup> Marysville State Ave box has a signed agreement and will be installed summer 2023.

<b>Location of ballot drop boxes</b>	<b>County Council District</b>	<b>Location of ballot drop boxes</b>	<b>County Council District</b>
<b>Everett at McCollum Park</b> (drive up) 600 128 <sup>th</sup> St SE Everett, WA 98208	#2	<b>Snohomish Centennial Middle School</b> 3000 S Machias Rd Snohomish, WA 98290	#5
<b>Gold Bar at Gateway Park</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> and Orchard Gold Bar, WA 98252	#5	<b>Snohomish Glacier Peak High School</b> 7401 144 <sup>th</sup> PL SE Snohomish, WA 98296	#4
<b>Granite Falls at the Library</b> 815 E Galena St Granite Falls, WA 98252	#1	<b>Snohomish near the Sno-Isle Library</b> 311 Maple Ave Snohomish, WA 98290	#5
<b>Index near Town Hall</b> 511 Ave A Index, WA 98256	#5	<b>Stanwood in additional Sno-Isle Library parking area</b> (drive up) 9701 271 <sup>st</sup> St NW Stanwood, WA 98292	#1
<b>Lake Stevens near the boat launch</b> (drive up) 1800 Main St Lake Stevens, WA 98258	#5	<b>Startup near Event Center</b> 14315 366 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Sultan, WA 98294	#5
<b>Lakewood at the parking lot east of the middle school</b> 16800 16 <sup>th</sup> Dr NE Marysville, WA 98271	#1	<b>Sultan near City Hall/Library</b> 319 Main St Sultan, WA 98294	#5
<b>Lynnwood at the Ash Way Park and Ride</b> 16327 Ash Way Lynnwood, WA 98087	#3	<b>Tulalip near the youth center</b> 6722 Totem Beach Rd Tulalip, WA 98271	#2
<b>Lynnwood (City Hall)</b> 19100 44 <sup>th</sup> Ave W Lynnwood, WA 98036	#3	<b>Woodinville Kokanee Elementary</b> 23710 57 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Woodinville, WA 98072	#5
<b>Lynnwood Edmonds College</b> 20000 68 <sup>th</sup> Ave W Lynnwood, WA 98036	#3	<b>Woodway near Town Hall</b> 23920 113 <sup>th</sup> PI W Woodway, WA 98020	#3
<b>Marysville at the Ash Ave Park &amp; Ride</b> 1100 6 <sup>th</sup> St Marysville, WA 98270	#1		

Figure 1: Ballot drop box locations (<https://snohomishcountywa.gov/225/Ballot-Drop-Box-Locations>)



## Outreach to Voters with Disabilities

To ensure that information on voting services is available to voters with disabilities and that those services meet voters' needs, Snohomish County Elections is committed to several outreach activities.

### Information Available through the County Website

Snohomish County Elections maintains accessible voting information on its website including the availability of accessible voting equipment, online markable ballots, and ballot drop box locations. In addition, a link to Disability Rights Washington's Voting Assistance Guide is provided on the website (<https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/publications/assisting-voters-disabilities/>).

All Snohomish County webpages are HAVA compliant and include a Visual Toolkit powered by audioeye. We work to comply with Section 508 as well as WCAG 2.0 A and AA referring to website accessibility standards. For more visit: <https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/accessibility>.

### Accessible Voting Advisory Committee Meetings





Snohomish County holds an annual meeting of its Accessible Voting Advisory Committee. These meetings focus on reviewing the plan for accessible voting services and strategizing outreach activities. These meetings also provide an opportunity to capture feedback and lessons learned from the previous elections.



## Press Releases

Snohomish County Elections prepares press releases for each election that include information on accessible registration and voting processes. Our releases are sent to regional and local media and community groups. Anyone interested in receiving our press releases can be added to our newsflash email list, [click here to sign up](#).

## Social Media

The Elections Division is committed to keeping voters informed and engaged through social media. The Auditor's Office has established a presence on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter. By sharing timely and relevant election-related messages on these platforms, the Division ensures that voters stay informed on important elections information. Follow the Auditor's Office to stay connected!    

## Local Voters' Pamphlet and Ballot Inserts

In compliance with HAVA, Snohomish County advertises the availability, locations, and services provided at Accessible Voting Sites in the local voters' pamphlet and election ballot inserts. Each household is provided a copy of the local voters' pamphlet in the Primary and General Elections. Every voter receives a ballot insert with information on the site locations and hours.

## Community Events

Snohomish County Elections is available to support election information sharing and voter education through local community events. We can attend community events to demonstrate the accessible voting equipment, share voter registration and election information, and generally support existing voter education efforts in the community.

The Accessible Voting Advisory Committee did identify that there are additional opportunities to connect with community organizations to further promote accessible voting information, resources, and options for voters. The Elections Division will explore how we can further our engagement with these groups throughout 2023 and beyond.

To request Snohomish County Elections support at your community event, contact the Snohomish County Elections Division at [425-388-3444](tel:425-388-3444) or [elections@snoco.org](mailto:elections@snoco.org).