

Spokane County Local Voters' Pamphlet

Administrative Rules for Jurisdictions

Updated October 2023

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Spokane County
ELECTIONS

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Establishing A Local Voters’ Pamphlet

Purpose

This guide establishes the uniform requirements and procedures for local jurisdictions within Spokane County with races or issues included in the local voters’ pamphlet for Primary, General, and Special Elections.

Notice of Intent to Publish a Local Voters’ Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.32.220)

The Auditor’s Office is required to print and distribute a local voters’ pamphlet for every election. Annually, Spokane County will notify all jurisdictions within the county of its intent to publish a local voters’ pamphlet for each election. Notification will be sent at least 90 calendar days before the printing date of the local voters’ pamphlet. Notification will be made by email or standard mail to the jurisdiction’s contact person on file with the Elections Division of the Auditor’s Office.

Content

(RCW 29A.32.241)

The local voters’ pamphlet will include, at a minimum:

1. Appearing on the cover, the words “Official Local Voters’ Pamphlet,” “Spokane County,” and the date of the 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 and an explanatory statement prepared by the Prosecuting Attorney for any county measure or by the jurisdiction’s attorney submitting the measure for any non-county measure.
5. Arguments for and against each measure if submitted by committees.
6. Statements and photos submitted by Spokane County candidates with races on the ballot.
7. A list of all student engagement hubs in the county.

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

Local Jurisdictions are Included in the Local Voters' Pamphlet

Inclusion in the Local Voters' Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.32.220)

All jurisdictions with a race or measure on the ballot in an election in which a local voters' pamphlet is produced will participate in the local voters' pamphlet.

For each local ballot measure, the local jurisdiction must provide information that will be included in the pamphlet. The information, as explained below, includes the ballot title and an explanatory statement. The local jurisdiction is also responsible for appointing committees to develop "For" and "Against" statements for each ballot measure.

Each local jurisdiction is required to provide a list of all offices up for election to the Auditor's Office, in accordance with WAC 434-215-005. The list must be received by the Auditor no later than March 1 of each year in which a race will be on the ballot.

Costs Associated with the Local Voters' Pamphlet

(RCW 29A.04.410, RCW 29A.32.270)

The cost of preparing a local voters' pamphlet is billed to local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet. It is prorated and charged in the same manner as other election costs. Each jurisdiction is responsible for paying its proportionate share of costs.

Financial Hardship

(RCW 29A.32.220)

The Spokane County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) has the authority to waive financial responsibility of any jurisdiction where participation in the local voters' pamphlet would create undue financial hardship. A petition from a jurisdiction must be submitted to the BoCC and County Auditor no later than 70 days before the publication of the local voters' pamphlet. The BoCC must give its decision on the waiver to the County Auditor no later than 60 days before the publication of the local voters' pamphlet. A jurisdiction receiving a waiver for local voters' pamphlet costs will continue to be responsible for their remaining portion of the election costs. 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.

Submitting Ballot Measures by Local Jurisdictions

Submittal Process for Resolutions

(RCW 29A.04.330)

Ballot measures by local jurisdictions must be passed by resolution of the legislative authority before submitting to the County Auditor.

Resolutions calling for an election by a jurisdiction must 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. Resolutions calling for an election in conjunction with the Primary or General election must be submitted by the established deadlines for each election. See page 13 for resolution deadlines.

How to Submit a Resolution

To place a measure on the ballot, a resolution must be submitted to the Elections Division by the deadline. The packet can be delivered in person, by courier (Ex. USPS, UPS, FedEx), by email or by fax. The packet must be received by the Elections Division by the close of business on the deadline date; postmarks are not accepted.

The delivery information is:

Spokane County Elections
1033 W Gardner Ave
Spokane, WA 99260

Email: elections@spokanecounty.org
Fax: 509.477.6607

A **Resolution Cover Sheet** is required and must accompany each resolution. This cover sheet contains important contact information required by the Elections Department. See page 15 for Resolution Cover Sheet. Upon receiving the cover sheet and resolution, the Elections Department will send an acknowledgment notice to the jurisdiction's contact person.

Ballot Titles for Local Measures

(RCW 29A.36.071)

The official ballot title for measures submitted to the voters of a city or town shall be prepared by the city or town attorney. Provide documentation of official ballot title from the city or town attorney. The official ballot title for measures submitted to the voters of a local government other than a city or town (e.g., a county, fire district or school district) shall be prepared by the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney.

The format and content requirements for local measure ballot titles are very specific and must conform to state law (RCW 29A.36.071). Each ballot title must contain the following elements:

- identification of the enacting legislative body
- a statement of the subject matter not exceeding 10 words in length
- a concise description of the measure not exceeding 75 words in length
- a question

Resolutions submitted by jurisdictions that need a ballot title prepared by the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney will be forwarded to that office by the Elections Division.

Upon receipt of the final official ballot title from the Prosecuting Attorney, city attorney or town attorney, the Elections Department will notify the jurisdiction contact person and anyone else who requests a copy via letter or email. The ballot heading statement must be approved by the Auditor's Office.

Ballot Title Appeal

(RCW 29A.36.090)

Persons dissatisfied with the ballot title for a local measure written by the city attorney, town attorney, or Prosecuting Attorney may appeal to the Spokane County Superior Court, pursuant to RCW 29A.36.090.

If a ballot title appeal is successful under RCW 29A.36.090, the appointed "For" and "Against" committees will be given the opportunity to replace statements already submitted. The Election Division will notify each committee that the ballot title has been successfully appealed and will provide each committee with the new ballot title. Once the ballot title is provided, each committee will have until 2:00 pm the following business day to provide a replacement statement. The existing standards for "For" and "Against" Statements will apply.

The Election Division will email the revised statement to the spokesperson for the opposing committee for a rebuttal statement. The existing standards for Rebuttal Statements will apply. The rebuttal statements will be due the following business day at 4:00 pm.

Explanatory Statement for Local Measure

(RCW 29A.32.241)

Each ballot title must be accompanied by an explanatory statement. The explanatory statement is prepared by the attorney for the jurisdiction submitting the ballot measure. If a jurisdiction does not have an approval letter or email from its attorney concerning the explanatory statement, or if a jurisdiction does not retain legal counsel, the statement shall be submitted to the Prosecuting Attorney for approval.

The explanatory statement explains in common and neutral language the measure's purpose, the financial impact, and the laws/statutes that will be affected by the measure's passage. Explanatory statements must be 175 words or less and no more than 3 paragraphs in block paragraph form.

“For” and “Against” Statements for Each Local Ballot Measure

Jurisdictions Will Appoint Committees “For” and “Against” a Local Measure

(RCW 29A.32.280)

For each jurisdiction measure that is included in the local voters' pamphlet, the legislative authority of that jurisdiction will formally appoint, not later than the resolution deadline, committees “For” and “Against” the measure. The “For” and “Against” Committee Member Appointment Form (found on page 16) must be submitted by the deadline to appoint committees.

The jurisdiction will appoint persons known to favor the measure to serve on the “For” committee and persons known to oppose the measure to serve on the “Against” committee. Each committee shall consist of not more than three members; however, a committee may seek the advice of other people.

If such persons are not immediately known, the jurisdiction is encouraged to formally notify the public that it is in search of members for the “For” and “Against” committees.

The jurisdiction is responsible for providing committee members with copies of instructions, specifications, and deadlines for all statements.

The committees are solely responsible for submitting their statements to the Elections Division in accordance with the specified timeline for that election (see page 13 for deadlines).

Committee Appointments by the Auditor

(RCW 29A.32.280)

If a jurisdiction fails to appoint “For” and “Against” committees by the deadline, the Auditor’s Office will seek out and, whenever possible, appoint up to three members to each committee.

The Auditor’s Office may, in its sole discretion, seek committee appointments through press releases, notices on the Elections Division’s website, social media pages and any other means necessary.

The Auditor’s Office will use the following criteria when making appointments:

- must be a registered voter in the district proposing the measure
- have an email address and the demonstrated ability to communicate rapidly by email
- shall agree to work collaboratively with co-committee members

The deadline for anyone seeking committee appointment is 12:00 pm (noon) on the original “For” and “Against” statement deadline, had the jurisdiction appointed a committee. Requests must be emailed to pamphlet@spokanecounty.org.

Appointments will be made in the order requests from qualified applicants are received by email. Appointed committee members will be notified by email. The appointed committee must abide by the specified timelines for submitting statements for that election.

It is not the responsibility of the Auditor’s Office to coordinate communications between committee members or to arbitrate disagreements among them.

The first person appointed by the Auditor’s Office will be designated the “1st Committee Member” and spokesperson for the committee. If the committee is unable to agree or if multiple statements are submitted, the statement submitted by the “1st Committee Member” will be the statement printed in the local voters’ pamphlet.

If a committee member wishes to withdraw, he or she must notify the Auditor’s Office by email at least 24 hours prior to the submittal deadline for the statement.

General Provisions Applicable to All Statements

- Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word.
Examples: “Around-the-corner” = 3 words; “and/or” = 2 words
- After submittal, all statements are final and may not be amended.

Format

Italics may be used to emphasize specific words or statements. Any other formatting, such as bold, underline, or all caps, will be changed to italics.

The use of lists or bullets is not allowed. Lists or bullets will be converted to block paragraph with a semicolon to separate each item.

Standards for “For” and “Against” Statements

Length

“For” and “Against” statements must be **250** words or less and no more than 4 paragraphs in block paragraph form.

If a “For” or “Against” statement is received before the deadline and exceeds the applicable word limit, the committee will be notified by email and asked to make deletions. 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 the 250 words limit, it will be shortened by full sentences, beginning with the last sentence, to be within the word limit.

Format

Up to four headings may be used to summarize and identify major arguments or paragraphs of the statement for the convenience of the reader. Headings may not exceed **15** words each and **are** included in the 250 words limit.

Committee Member Information Published

Committee member names and contact information will be printed in the local voters’ pamphlet. At least one method of contact (phone, email, website address) must be provided for print in the local voters’ pamphlet. This information is **not** included in the 250 words limit. Titles of committee members will not be published in the local voters’ pamphlet.

Rebuttal Statements

Standards for Rebuttal Statements

If both “For” and “Against” statements are submitted and approved, the Election Division will email the text of the approved statement to the spokesperson for the opposing committee listed on the committee appointment form after the statement deadline.

Once submitted, the argument and rebuttal statements may not be withdrawn or changed.

The failure of a committee to submit a “For” or “Against” statement will disqualify both committees from submitting a rebuttal statement.

Rebuttal statements are not required; however, it gives each committee an opportunity to provide a response to the opposing statement.

Length

Rebuttal statements must be **75** words or less and no more than 2 paragraphs, in block paragraph form. If the rebuttal statement exceeds the applicable word limit, it will be shortened by full sentences, beginning with the last sentence, to be within the word limit.

Format

No heading may be used in rebuttal statements.

Content

Rebuttal statements may not interject new issues or arguments and are limited to addressing issues and arguments raised in the opposing statement.

Content Rejection and Appeal Process

Rejection

The Auditor's Office reserves the right to reject any submission to the local voters' pamphlet if it does not meet submission requirements or is deemed to be libelous or otherwise inappropriate.

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 the mail;
- contains matter not relevant to the measure;
- contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or does not comply with applicable law; or
- was received after the submittal deadline.

If an explanatory statement, "For" or "Against" statement, rebuttal statement, or contact information is rejected by the Elections Manager, a written notice of rejection shall be sent to the committee spokesperson by email within two business days after receipt thereof and shall explain specific grounds for rejection. The committee will have 24 hours from the time of notification to submit an adjusted statement or contact information as long as their rejected material was submitted on time.

Appeal

The spokesperson of a rejected explanatory statement, "For" or "Against" statement, rebuttal statement, or contact information may appeal the Elections Manager's decision. A written notice of appeal shall be submitted by email (pamphlet@spokanecounty.org) no more than 48 hours after the notice of rejection was sent and shall explain the specific grounds for appeal. A written decision shall be issued granting or denying the appeal by email no more than two business days after receiving the notice of appeal. The decision to grant or deny an appeal shall be final.

If material is rejected, the local voters' pamphlet will be printed with the rejected material omitted and the appropriate space left blank.

Statement Submission & Review

How to Submit Statements

Statements must be submitted electronically in .doc, .docx, or .txt and are due on the prescribed deadline. See page 13 for deadlines.

- email to: pamphlet@spokanecounty.org

Review proofs

A proof copy of the statement as it will appear in the local voters' pamphlet will be sent to each jurisdiction and committee for review. Only errors made by the Spokane County Auditor's Office may be corrected.

Public Inspection of Statements

(RCW 29A.32.100)

Statements submitted for publication in the local voters' pamphlet shall not be available for release to the public until all statements pertaining to the specified ballot measure have been received, unless a committee was not appointed for one side, or the deadline for submission has elapsed. Requests for public inspection of arguments or statements shall be made in the same manner as requests for public records.

Contents Sole Responsibility of Authors

The contents of explanatory statements, "For" and "Against" statements, and rebuttal statements are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not represent the position of the Auditor or Spokane County regarding the measure or of any material contained therein; neither the Auditor nor Spokane County is responsible for the validity or accuracy of the statements.

Statements 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 specifications.

Emergency Procedures

Only information required by law (RCW 29A.32.241) will be included in the local voters' pamphlet in the case of an emergency:

- 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
- a list of jurisdictions that have measures or candidates in the pamphlet
- information on how a person may register to vote and obtain a ballot
- ballot titles and explanatory statements
- the arguments for and against each measure
- 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 ballot

2024 Deadlines

Election Date:	February 13 2024	April 23, 2024	August 6, 2024	November 5, 2024
Jurisdiction Responsibility and Deadlines				
1. Resolution 2. Resolution Cover Sheet 3. Explanatory Statement 4. For and Against Committee Appointment For and Against Committee Form must be completed and emailed by this date.	December 15, 2023 (same deadline for all four items)	February 23, 2024 (same deadline for all four items)	May 3, 2024 (same deadline for all four items)	August 6, 2024 (same deadline for all four items)
Committee's Responsibility and Deadlines				
1. Statement "For" and "Against" Written by the committees for or against a measure	December 22, 2023 – 1:00 PM Deadline	March 1, 2024 – 1:00 PM Deadline	May 10, 2024 – 1:00 PM Deadline	August 13, 2024 – 1:00 PM Deadline
2. Rebuttal Statement	December 27, 2023	March 6, 2024	May 15, 2024	August 16, 2024

Deadlines are close of business on each designated day unless otherwise noted.

Statements – At a Glance

Statement Type	Word Limit	Formatting
Explanatory Statement	175	Allowed: <i>Italics</i> Not Allowed: Bold , ALL CAPS, <u>underlining</u> , lists, bullets
“For” and “Against” Statement	250	Allowed: <i>Italics</i> Up to four headings (up to 15 words each). Heading included in word count. Four paragraphs. Not Allowed: Bold , ALL CAPS, <u>underlining</u> , lists, bullets
Rebuttal Statement	75	Allowed: <i>Italics</i> Two paragraphs Not Allowed: Bold , ALL CAPS, <u>underlining</u> , lists, bullets, headings
Contact Information	Does not count toward word limit	Allowed: Committee members names; A contact phone number; An email address; A website. At least one method of contact (phone, email, website address) must be provided. Not Allowed: Titles of committee members (Dr., President, Ph.D.)

All Statements

- Each part of a hyphenated or slashed word will be counted as a separate word.
 Examples: “Around-the-corner” = 3 words; “and/or” = 2 words

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 the mail;
- contains matter not limited to the measure;
- contains matter that is otherwise inappropriate or that does not comply with applicable law; or
- was received after the submittal deadline.

Spokane County Resolution Cover Sheet

This form must accompany each resolution filed with Spokane County Elections. The contact person or persons should have the authority to do so and be available to answer questions.

Name of District: _____
District Address: _____
Date of Election: _____
Contact Person: _____ Title: _____
Contact Phone: _____ Fax: _____
Contact Email: _____
2nd Contact Person: _____ Title: _____
2nd Contact Phone: _____
2nd Contact Email: _____

Attorney for District: _____

Attorney Approved Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement for District Yes ____ No ____

Please provide documentation of Attorney Approval.

Attorney Phone: _____ Attorney Fax: _____

Attorney Email Address: _____

Type of Election (levy, bond, lid lift, etc.): _____

Please state the pass/fail requirement for this measure (i.e. simple majority, 60%, etc.) as determined by your legal counsel, together with applicable statutory references: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____
of person filing this form

This form may be filled out and printed.

This mandatory resolution cover sheet must accompany any resolution.

For/Against Committee Member Appointment Form

Name of District: _____
District Contact Name: _____
Email Address: _____ Phone: _____

Jurisdiction's responsibility:

1. Email completed form to pamphlet@spokanecounty.org by the resolution submittal deadline.
2. Provide committee members with statement submission requirements and deadlines. Committees are solely responsible for submitting voters' pamphlet statements to the Elections Division.

Deadlines are on page 13 of these administrative rules. Questions? Contact the Elections Office at pamphlet@spokanecounty.org or call 509.477.2320.

"For" Committee (1-3 members):

Committee Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____ Web: _____
Committee Member #1: _____ Email: _____
Committee Member #2: _____ Email: _____
Committee Member #3: _____ Email: _____

"Against" Committee (1-3 members):

Committee Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____ Web: _____
Committee Member #1: _____ Email: _____
Committee Member #2: _____ Email: _____
Committee Member #3: _____ Email: _____