

# Be a VOTER

## Here's When To Expect a Ballot To Arrive if You're a Washington Voter

Registered voters in Washington are mailed ballots whenever there's an election in the community where they live.

That will happen at least once a year, but could happen up to four times.

Dates of elections are set by Washington law. They are:

- The second Tuesday of February.
- The fourth Tuesday in April.
- The first Tuesday in August.
- The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

The February and April elections are considered “special elections” and are used by local governments, including school boards, fire districts, city councils and county commissions, seeking voter permission to raise taxes or asking voters if they want to approve a certain law. Local governments can also choose to use the August or November elections to pose these questions to voters.

If a voter lives in a location where no local government has opted to seek voter approval for a tax or other proposal, voters there will not be mailed special election ballots.

Candidates for public office are selected only in the August and November elections.

The August election, called a primary, is used to eliminate all but the two most popular candidates when more than two candidates are vying for an office. In Washington, for all public offices except United States president, the two candidates who receive the most votes – regardless of party – advance to the November election. That means two Republicans or two Democrats could advance.

The November election is called the general election. This is the election that selects the final winners for political offices.

In even number years, voters select candidates for county offices, state Legislature and Congress. Every four years coinciding with the presidential election, executive state offices, including governor, attorney general and secretary of state are chosen.

In odd number years, voters select candidates for city and town offices and other local governments, including school boards and fire district boards.

In odd number years, a race that includes two or fewer candidates will not appear on the primary ballot. In those circumstances, the candidates move directly to the general election ballot.

In even number years, races with two or fewer candidates will appear on the primary ballot even though both candidates are almost certain to advance to the November election.

Rules require that ballots be mailed to voters at least 18 days prior to an election.