Kitsap County Auditor's Office

Kitsap County Auditor – Elections Division
2021 Voter Access Plan

Plan Overview

The Washington State Constitution specifies that "all persons" qualified to vote "shall be entitled to vote at all elections."

"All persons."

The fundamental philosophy and commitment at Kitsap County Elections remains the same every year, even during a pandemic; every voter deserves the opportunity to vote independently and in private.

To advance this goal each year the Elections Division holds an annual meeting with members of the Kitsap County Voter Access Advisory Committee to review and revise the county's voter access plan. This also serves to ensure compliance with RCW 29A.04.223.

The Special Circumstances of 2020/21

No conversation about 2020 and 2021 can begin without acknowledging the pandemic. In our last Access meeting, we met pre-lockdown, in person. Much of the discussion was about the viability of continuing the mobile voting program. For years Elections Division staff went to different locations, mostly library branches and nursing homes, in the two weeks leading up to the election. It was a big effort that in the past few years netted few results. In 2020 this committee decided to forego the mobile voting program for the Primary and revisit the General Election question later.

By the time the Primary began, rules in place because of the pandemic would have prohibited Elections Staff from being inside nursing homes or library branches anyway. Kitsap County Elections conducted the Primary and General Election as planned, opening the vote centers for three days each and serving any voter desiring to vote in person or receive some other elections service. While other parts of the state and country experienced Covid outbreaks at voting centers and in processing operations, Kitsap County finished both elections without any known outbreaks. This could not have happened without extensive efforts to create clean spaces as well as the cooperation of staff and voters.

Accessible Voting Program 2020/21 Accomplishments

The pandemic affected some of our goals for the accessible voting program in the county. But there were noteworthy accomplishments, not just for voters with disabilities, but for every Kitsap resident.

- The county employed new Accessible Voting Units that print ballots, which voters insert into the standard lavender envelopes.

- Kitsap County Elections began using the Marvin Williams Recreation Center as a vote center in February of 2020, offering voting assistance around election day in a critical part of our county.

- Kitsap County Elections added ballot drop boxes at the Marvin Williams Recreation Center, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal Center and on the Naval Base in Bremerton.

- In April 2020 Kitsap County Elections livestreamed our logic and accuracy test. Livestreaming was sparked by the stay-at-home order but has now become a regular expectation we will continue to do long after the pandemic. Voters can watch from home as we test our ballot tabulation system, conduct the post-election audits, and canvass the results.

- Kitsap County Elections improved the quality of the 24-hour live feed showing elections work in the ballot processing room.

2021 Priorities

- Continue efforts in voter outreach to increase awareness of options for voters with disabilities, particularly online ballot access and mobile vote centers.

- Design and distribute pamphlets for voters needing assistance and those assisting them.

- Investigate other ways Kitsap County Elections might serve voters with disabilities.

- Prepare for Access meetings happening earlier in the year.

- Improve consistency in communication with different communities.

Plan Description

Voter Access Advisory Committee

The Voter Access Advisory Committee includes a cross-section of Kitsap County residents, advocates from and for residents with disabilities, Kitsap County staff and the Kitsap County Auditor. This committee's core functions are:

- Meet at least annually to review and revise the Voter Access Plan;
- Provide input on accessible voting programs and proposals;
- Distribute outreach and education materials to the community.

Voter Access Plan

This plan describes the county's accessible voting program and is updated each year by the Auditor's Office and reviewed by the committee. The plan is designed to increase participation for voters with disabilities and includes recommendations for:

- Online ballot delivery access
- Changes to the location of vote centers
- Ballot drop box locations
- Outreach to voters with disabilities
- Accessible Voting Units and other equipment
- Continued implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Online Ballot Access

Accessing a ballot online allows for more flexibility for voters who use (audio) screen readers and magnifiers. Ballots can be marked online, then printed for the voter's signature and mailing or returning via ballot drop box.

24-Hour Ballot Drop Boxes

Kitsap County's 24-hour ballot drop boxes offer a secure and accessible way for voters to deposit ballots without postage. Every drop box in use during an election is opened at least 18 days before Election Day.

All drop boxes include Braille signage.

To better serve voters, Kitsap County Elections will evaluate drop box usage and voter feedback to ensure ballot drop boxes are placed in a manner that is convenient and accessible.

Accessible Voting Units (AVU)

Accessible Voting Units are portable voting booths that provide audio, touch screens and selection wheels to assist voters. Each AVU creates a paper ballot. Anyone can use an AVU, but they are specifically designed to assist voters with disabilities. All AVUs are tested for accuracy at federal, state and county levels and Elections Division staff members are trained in their set-up and use. AVUs are at each vote center and are available in the Elections Office beginning 18 days before the election.

Use of AVUs has decreased dramatically in the last few years. In the 2012 General Election 893 voters used an AVU to cast a ballot. In 2018 there were 18 who used it in the Primary and 13 in the General Election. In the 2020 Presidential Primary two people used it. In the regular Primary there was one and in the General Election there were three. In the three elections in 2021 no one used an AVU.

Voter Outreach and Education

The Elections Division continues to adjust the timing of our outreach and use of social media.

- The Local Voters' Pamphlet is mailed out about a week before ballots are mailed to give voters time to research candidates and measures before ballots arrive.

- The Elections Division will use social media (Facebook and Twitter) more to publicize vote centers and ballot drop boxes, with targeted emphasis on online ballot access.

- The Elections Division will work with local care facilities and other organizations to distribute information designed to assist voters with disabilities.

Plan Objectives

The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 requires all jurisdictions to ensure voting devices are available and accessible to blind or visually impaired voters – and that voters with disabilities are provided options for voting independently (HAVA Section 301(a)(3) and RCW 29A.04.223). As a vote-by-mail jurisdiction, the minimum requirements under federal and state laws requires the Elections Division to provide at least one AVU at the county administrative office beginning 18 days before an election.

This Committee and Elections Division staff have recommended and implemented services beyond the minimal requirements including:

- Establishing vote centers in Poulsbo and Bremerton for Election Day, with additional AVUs to serve the central and northern areas of the county.
- Promoting Online Ballot Access for voters with disabilities.
- Installing accessible ballot drop boxes with Braille signage in locations throughout the county.

In addition to complying with federal and state accessible voting requirements, the Elections Division is committed to the following overall Plan objectives by:

- Increasing accessibility and election participation among voters with disabilities.
- Engaging the disability community by increasing voter education and outreach.
- Providing comprehensive accessibility training to Elections Division staff.
- Offering AVUs or precinct-specific printed ballots at our vote centers.
- Ensuring AVUs are available no later than 18 days prior to each Primary and General Election.
- Utilizing consistent statistical reporting methods for yearly comparisons.

Facts Relevant to the Plan

- State law requires that all voting machines and systems be federally qualified and state certified.
- State law prohibits Washington jurisdictions from purchasing or making changes to voting systems without state certification.
- State laws require electronic voting equipment to be equipped with a machine-readable Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).
- Kitsap County can provide accessible voting to areas throughout the county.

Measurements of Success

The Elections Division will conduct required testing of software and hardware to ensure performance is acceptable. Specific success indicators include:

- Installation of new ballot drop boxes, if a need is identified.
- Successful acceptance testing of software and hardware.
- Election Division staff training and voter education.
- Implementation of Voter Access Committee recommendations.
- Measurable data indicating usage of Online Ballot Access

Plan Risks

- Lack of public/political confidence in voting systems
- Lack of user acceptance and utilization of online system features and functionality
- Voter dissatisfaction and confusion about Online Ballot Delivery

Plan Schedule

Fall 2021

- Convene the Voter Access Advisory Committee.
- Distribute voter education and outreach materials for the November General Election
- Conduct accessible voting at the designated locations
- Promote accessible voting using social media and news releases

Winter 2021-22

- Coordinate accessible voting locations, logistics and voter outreach
- Develop accessible voting schedule for the August and November elections
- Hire, schedule and train bipartisan board workers to perform all Voting Center functions for each of the designated locations

Spring 2022

- Reconvene the Voter Access Advisory Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities

Name	Function	Roles and Responsibilities
Paul Andrews Daryl Daugs	Executive Sponsors	• Policy oversight and direction
David Frisk	Plan Manager	• Maintain implementation schedule with regard to election deadlines • Monitor security and adherence to state and federal laws • Facilitate communication • Planning and testing
Steve Gardner	Plan Coordinator	• Media and community relations • Develop and assist with voter education, training and outreach efforts • Project documentation • Coordination with Advisory Committee and Elections Staff
Advisory Committee	Guidance and expertise	• Advise solutions to reduce barriers to voting • Assist with communication and training • Provide outreach contacts

Advisory Committee Members

The Plan Coordinator will recruit members from the community to serve on the advisory committee. Members should have experience and/or interest in disability access and accessible voting. Committee members are asked to perform the following duties:

- Review the Plan
- Participate in the annual Committee meeting in person, by phone or email
- Correspond with the Committee as needed
- Distribute accessible voting information and materials
- Provide input on Kitsap County accessible voting programs and proposals

Committee members serve on a voluntary basis. The Auditor's Office is not funded to compensate members for mileage or per diem. Committee members are asked to serve for a minimum of one year and should contact the Plan Coordinator if they intend to leave the Committee.

Communications

The Elections Division will communicate with all committee members on continued outreach efforts and will seek input on strategies.

Advisory Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are convened annually and as needed to review the Plan. Email and online meetings are conducted as needed.

Information Resources

Meeting minutes, agendas, statistics, survey results and related information are stored in the Auditor's Document Center. Elections data will be presented to the Committee at the annual meeting and upon request. Additionally, the Plan Coordinator will produce and maintain the [Accessible Voting](#) website and update an Accessible Voting brochure for distribution.

Issues and Action Item Management

Elections Division staff will discuss and document issues that arise at Committee meetings. The Plan Coordinator will work with the Plan Manager to prioritize action items for follow up and resolution. Elections staff will report back to the Committee on the status of action items at subsequent meetings, conference calls and emails.

Voter Education and Outreach

The Elections Division will work with the Committee to develop materials promoting Online Ballot Access, 24-Hour Ballot Drop Boxes, mobile voting and AVUs as accessible and secure voting options for voters with disabilities. The Elections Division will conduct the following education and outreach activities:

- Update Accessible Voting website with accessible voting information
- Update accessible voting materials for 2022
- Promote the Accessible Voting Program using social media
- Promote Online Ballot Access and provide demonstrations upon request
- Collect statistics on accessible voting and Online Ballot Access usage

Internet Information

Information will be posted on the Kitsap County Auditor's website with locations, dates and times that accessible voting is available.

The use of Online Ballot Access may be promoted as an effective accessible voting alternative:

- Compatible with screen reader software for text to speech and Braille output devices
- On-screen tool tips are compatible with audio screen readers
- Compatible with screen magnifier software
- Closed captioning on all candidate and ballot measure videos
- Audio available for all measure and candidate information (for discussion)
- Uses secure website technology

AVU Equipment Demonstrations

The Elections Division will provide information and demonstrations on the use of AVUs upon request and will:

- Educate facility staff and potential voters at mobile voting sites about the secure electronic voting process.
- Provide electronic voting demonstrations upon request to help voters feel more confident using the equipment when actual voting takes place.
- Provide information about accessible voting in the printed Local Voters' Pamphlet and online.
    - Online Ballot Access allows candidates and committees to submit a statement in video format with closed captioning.

Statistics and Comments

The Elections Division will conduct the following activities to measure satisfaction with accessible voting options:

- Collect data on the use of AVUs and Online Ballot Access
- Convene the Advisory Committee to solicit feedback and suggestions on the accessible voting plan

Quality Management

Quality management addresses product and equipment functionality. Product acceptance on all equipment and activities will be maintained through the following procedures:

- Testing, analysis and process improvement
- Evaluation, follow-up and review of all training to ensure appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding of how to operate the equipment is developed among the required staff

Quality Control Process

Quality will be controlled using the following procedures and processes:

- Logic and accuracy testing of the equipment and system upgrades with detailed check-off lists, review by team members, final acceptance by the county Auditor
- Follow-up and evaluation of training for Election Division Staff
- Proofreading of all Online Ballot Access and AVU information to ensure consistency with printed materials

Technical Operations and Maintenance

Technical operations and maintenance of the accessible voting equipment will be completed in accordance with state law and vendor software/hardware specifications.

Training

Training is mandatory for all Election Division staff prior to each Election. Training is also available for observers from the major political parties and the general public. The 2021 General Election Local Voters' Pamphlet included an invite to the general public for an observer training on Oct. 18.

Staff Training Content

- Respectful communication and sensitivity toward voters with disabilities and special needs
- Technical knowledge in the operation, security, and set-up of AVUs
- Knowledge of state and federal requirements
- Voter registration and training demonstrations for the use of AVU equipment

Election Worker Recruitment

Election workers were recruited beginning in January. They must complete training before working in an election. Each Vote Center will be comprised of the following minimum staff:

- Two workers who have subscribed to the oath of duties
- Workers will be Elections Division staff and/or represent one of the two major political parties whenever possible

Ballot Drop Boxes (As of Oct. 1, 2021)

Bainbridge Island School District
8489 Madison Avenue NE
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Bremerton - Downtown
Norm Dicks Government Center
345 6th Street
Bremerton, WA 98337

Bremerton - East
Kitsap Regional Library, Sylvan Way
1301 Sylvan Way
Bremerton, WA 98310

Bremerton - Marvin Williams Recreation Center
725 Park Avenue
Bremerton, WA 98337

Burley Store
14972 Bethel-Burley Road SE
Port Orchard, WA 98367

Hansville - Norwegian Point Park
38950 Hansville Road NE
Hansville, WA 98340

Indianola Tennis Courts
20761 Greenwood Street NE
Indianola, WA 98342

Keyport - Central Park
15378 Washington Avenue NE
Keyport, WA 98345

Kingston - North Kitsap Fire & Rescue
26642 Miller Bay Road NE
Kingston, WA 98346

Kingston - Village Green Park
10810 NE West Kingston Road
Kingston, WA 98346

Manchester Stormwater Park
2399 Colchester Drive E
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Naval Base Kitsap - Bangor
2500 Ohio Street
NSB Silverdale, WA 98315

Naval Base Kitsap - Bremerton
886 Barclay Street
Bremerton, WA 98314

Navy Yard City
West Side Improvement Club
4109 West E Street
Bremerton, WA 98312

Port Gamble - S'Klallam Tribal Center
31912 Little Boston Road NE
Kingston, WA 98346

Port Orchard
Kitsap County Auditor's Office
619 Division Street
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Port Orchard (East) - SKFR Station 8
1974 Fircrest Drive SE
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Port Orchard (Glenwood) - SKFR Station 17
7990 McCormick Woods Drive SW
Port Orchard, WA 98367

Poulsbo Fire Station
911 NE Liberty Road
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Poulsbo - Olympic College
1000 Olympic College Way NW
Poulsbo, WA 98370

Seabeck - Green Mountain Elementary School
3860 Boundary Trail NW
Bremerton, WA 98312

Silverdale - CK School District
(Jenne-Wright Building)
9210 Silverdale Way NW
Silverdale, WA 98383

Southworth WSF Terminal
11677 SE Southworth Ferry Drive
Port Orchard, WA 98366
(Near ferry terminal entrance.)

Suquamish Tribal Council Bldg.
18490 Suquamish Way NE
Suquamish, WA 98392

Tracyton - Bremerton Elks, Lodge 1181
4131 Pine Road NE
Bremerton, WA 98310