

Advancing your mission through nonpartisan election season activities

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WASHINGTON LOW INCOME
Housing Alliance





Major concepts

1. Nonprofit organizations, advocacy, and elections
2. Partisan and nonpartisan election season activities
3. Best practices for nonpartisan election season activities



Why do elections matter, and why should nonprofits care?

- ✓ Elections shape public policy
- ✓ Public policies define the laws and budget priorities that impact society
- ✓ Nonprofits can advance their work by promoting and being part of policy change

	<p>501(c)(3) Public charity</p>  	<p>501(c)(4) Social welfare group</p>  
Tax status	<p>-Tax exempt -Contributions tax-deductible</p>	<p>-Tax exempt</p>
Lobbying activities	<p>-Limited</p>	<p>-Unlimited</p>
Electoral activities	<p>-Nonpartisan (cannot support/oppose candidates for public office)</p>	<p>-Partisan or nonpartisan -Can't be primary activity -Follow fed, state, and local election laws</p>



League of Women Voters® of Washington

Empowering all Washingtonians to engage in a more responsible & responsive democracy

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EDUCATION FUND

The League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund is dedicated to strengthening knowledge of government in Washington State. The Education Fund sponsors and supports nonpartisan educational projects that help the public better understand major public policy issues and become active and informed participants in their communities and in their government.

- [Learn about our civics textbook, *The State We're In: Washington*](#)
- [Browse Education Funded Studies, Books, Reports](#)

The League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund is a 501(c)3 organization. The Education Fund operates separately from the League of Women Voters of Washington, which is a 501(c)4 organization, with a separate board of directors. Contributions to the Education Fund are tax deductible.



Donate to the Education Fund

**501(c)(3) nonprofits may not
participate in any *partisan*
activities.**

Partisan activities:

Show support or opposition for a candidate for public office, including nonpartisan positions.

- Endorsements
- Campaign contributions (donations, in-kind contributions, volunteer phone-banks/ doorknocking)
- Publicly express approval or disapproval of a candidate's positions/ actions
- Refer to candidates, elections, or voting when promoting an event, idea, or body of work

**501(c)(3) nonprofits can
participate in *nonpartisan
election season activities.***

Nonpartisan election season activities:

Highlight your organization's work or core issues during election season.

1. *Issue advocacy*
2. *Support ballot initiatives*
3. *Voter registration and engagement**

Engaging candidates:

- Candidate forums and debates
- Highlighting an issue publicly (shared w/all candidates, nonpartisan, unbiased)—twitter, org website

Constituent education:

- Legislative score cards
- Candidate questionnaires (shared w/all candidates, nonpartisan, unbiased)

Focus on public policy, not criticism.

Issue advocacy



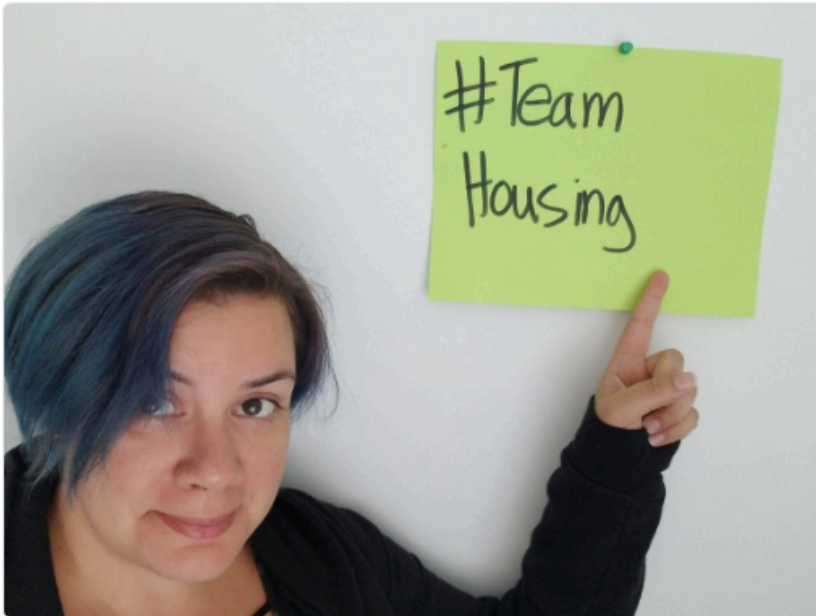
- Lawmaker and constituent education
- Lobbying, i.e. asking for support or opposition on a piece of legislation
- Grassroots lobbying, i.e. asking for constituents to contact their lawmakers
- Sharing legislative performance

**OK to engage incumbents
—don't refer to election or
candidacy**

Ex: OK issue advocacy during election season

WA Housing Alliance @WLIHA · Sep 5

We're on #TeamHousing! Many are testifying at @KCCouncil this morning we join them by asking @KCC_Claudia @JoeMcDermottWA @RDembowski @DaveUpthegrove @KCCCKohIWelles @KathyLambert @KCCReaganDunn to allocate the most \$ possible from the #LodgingTax for #affordablehousing



4 12

NACEDA and 3 others Retweeted



YWCA Seattle | King | Snohomish @YWCAworks · Aug 21

YWCA and @FiresteelWA along with other social organizations are calling for King County's #LodgingTax to be used for housing. Read Firesteel's blog to see how you can join #TeamHousing and YWCA.

ow.ly/kW3h30luYwF

4 5



SKCHomelessCoalition @Homeless2Housed · Sep 5

Yes, we did! #TeamHousing has a lot to be proud of. We thank ALL our partners, and all 9 members of the @KCCouncil for agreeing that it's necessary to do MORE than the minimum, and invest more \$ in homes for working people across King County - though they differed in approach.

Anitra L. Freeman @anitrastreet

seattlepi.com/seattlenews/ar... We won 50% of the Hotel/Motel tax revenue for housing! #TeamHousing

1 5

Promoting ballot initiatives through:

- Get-out-the-Vote
- House parties
- Endorsement
- Education events
- Social media
- Op-Eds



Voter registration and engagement*:

- Talk about the importance of voting—*not who to vote for*
- Cannot refer to party or candidate
- Make opportunity/event available to everyone

Cannot use CSBG funds for voter registration and engagement



Federal Funds and Voter Registration

All 501(c)(3) organizations must follow the same IRS rule barring charities from conducting partisan political activities to support or oppose candidates while allowing nonprofits to conduct voter engagement and election activities on a nonpartisan basis.

In a few special cases Congress has added stipulations on the use of certain federal funds to restrict voter registration activities. In contrast, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) requires state agencies offering federal assistance like Medicaid or WIC to off voter registration to those who sign up.

Federal Funds with Voter Registration Restrictions

Community Service Block Grants (CSBG)

Nonprofits who receive Community Service Block Grant funding, like Community Action Agencies:

CANNOT

- Use CSBG funds to pay for staff or materials to conduct voter registration.
- Use CSBG funds to provide rides to the polls.

CAN

- Use non-CSBG funds to do voter registration such as having staff or others not paid by CSBG funds help register voters, so long as it's not identified as a service of the agency. In this case, voter registration should be done outside of service delivery, for example, at a table or local event.
- Use CSBG or other funds to do any other kinds of nonpartisan voter engagement activities to promote voter education and voter participation such as reminding staff and clients about an

upcoming election. However, it is recommended that CSBG funds used for nonpartisan election activity be limited and not done in a way to give public perception of the agency as being in anyway involved in partisan politics.

Head Start

Head Start has similar restrictions to that of CSBG recipients, except Head Start had language added in 2007 to amend the Head Start Act to affirm a Head Start program's right to have outside groups do nonpartisan voter registration drives at their sites. A Head Start program:

CANNOT

- Use Head Start funds to conduct or have employees conduct voter registration activities.
- Use Head Start funds to provide rides to the polls.

CAN

- Have a nonpartisan organization or non-Head Start personnel do voter registration at Head Start facilities during all hours of operation.
- Do any other type of nonpartisan voter education, such as keeping parents and others informed about how, when, and where to vote.

Do Community Development Block Grant funds have similar restrictions?

No. Unlike with CSBG funds, there are no restrictions on doing voter registration or any type of nonpartisan activity. A nonprofit with CDBG funds should follow the same rules that apply to any 501(c)(3) organization barring partisan, political activity to support or oppose candidates.

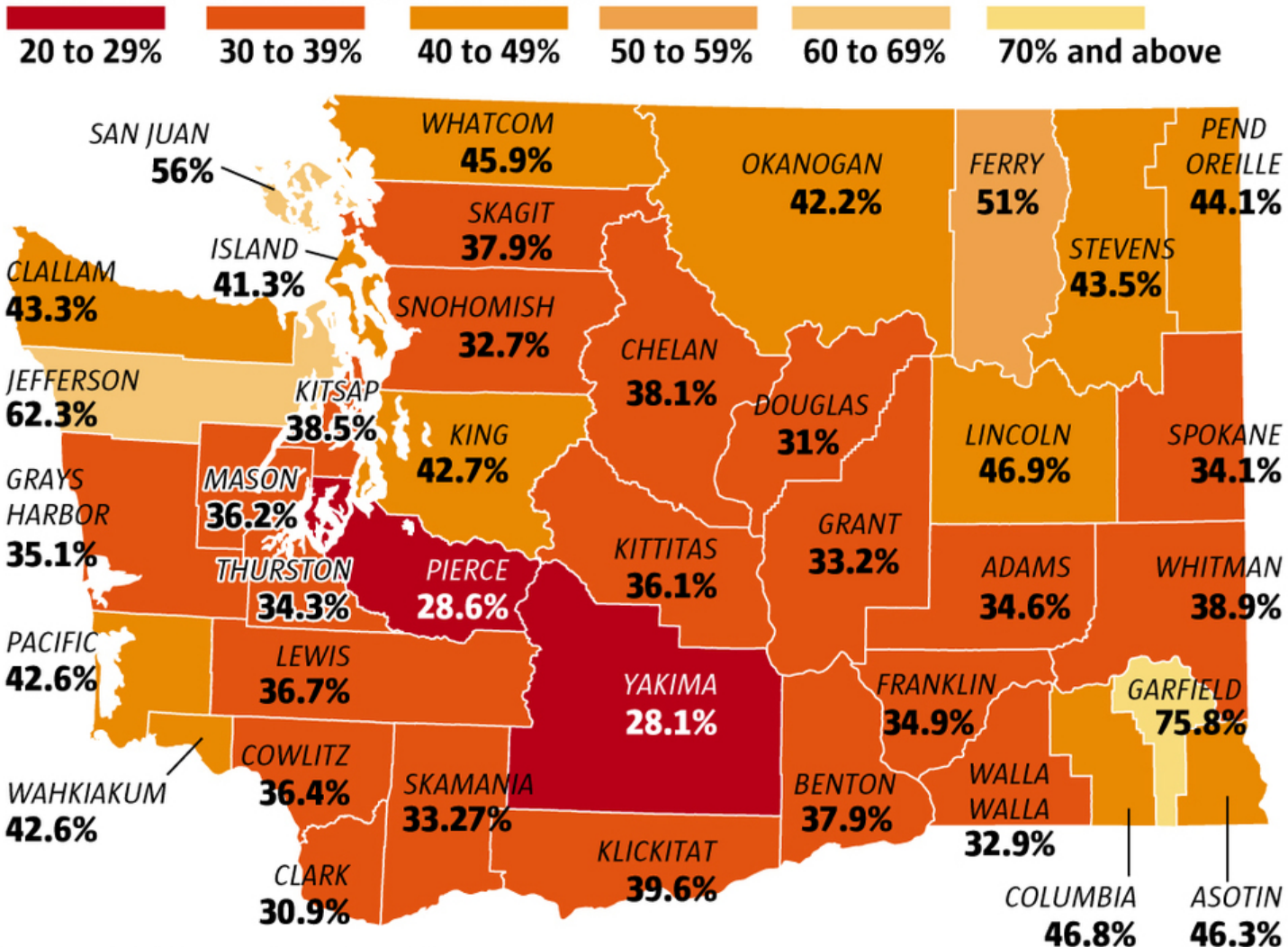


Best nonpartisan election
season activities **for your**
nonprofit.

2017 turnout by county

Statewide voter turnout in the Nov. 7 election was a record low 37.1 percent. But turnout varied widely from 75.8 percent in Garfield County to 28.1 percent in Yakima County.

PERCENT OF VOTER TURNOUT BY COUNTY



Source: Washington Secretary of State

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

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<https://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2013/07/can-nonprofits-increase-voting.pdf/>

Best practices

Share important
information about
elections and
registration

Make it easy for your
service participants
and clients to register
and vote*

Increase access to
voting by addressing
structural barriers

Put your organization
out there as an
important stakeholder
and elevate important
issues

Voter education

- ✓ Voter registration and ballot deadlines
- ✓ Eligibility
- ✓ Vote-by-mail, early voting (free postage-- 2018 King County)

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/dates-and-deadlines.aspx>

General election registration and ballot deadlines

Monday, October 8

Deadline for online & mail-in voter registration

October 6- 13

State Voters' Pamphlets mailed

October 19- 25

Ballots drop; Accessible Voting Units available (through Election Day)

Monday, October 29

Deadline for in-person new WA state registration

Tuesday, November 6

Election Day—ballots postmarked by 8 pm, drop boxes close by 8 pm

OCTOBER

8th Last day for mail and online registration

The deadline for mail-in and online registrations for the General Election is October 8th (29 days prior to Election Day). Also, any address changes or updates must be done before the 8th to be eligible for this election.

19th Ballots mailed for General Election

Ballots for all eligible voters in the General Election, other than military, go in the mail by October 19th. You can view a list of ballots returned on our website at www.Elections.ChelanCountyWA.gov.

And last day to file as a write-in candidate

If you missed filing week back in May, your final opportunity to file as a write-in candidate is October 19th. Write-in candidates will not appear on the ballot.

29th Last day for in-person voter registration

The deadline for in-person registrations is October 29th. Any voters wishing to register in-person must be a brand new Washington voter to be eligible for this election.



Ballot returns

60% to 80% of all ballots returned will be received prior to Election Day. 70% of all ballots are returned by drop box.

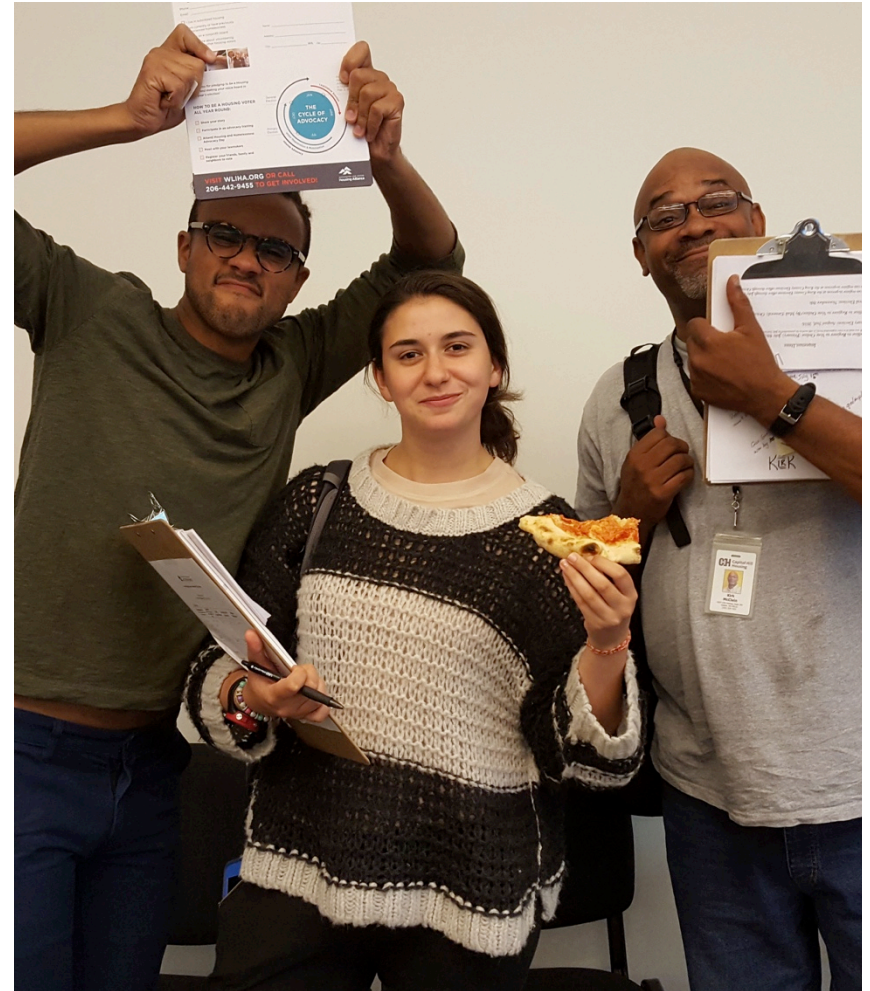
Campaigning - candidate requests

Commonly campaigns will try to time their mailings to be the same day as the ballots are mailed (around October 19th). You can request the list of voters online with a [Voter Data Request Form](#).

Voter eligibility

To register and vote in Washington you must be:

- A citizen of the United States;
- A legal resident of Washington state;
- 18 years old by Election Day;
- Not under the authority of the Department of Corrections; and
- Not disqualified from voting due to a court order.



Voter registration drives



Immediately address:

- Cost barriers to postage
- Limited/restricted internet access
- Name/address change
- Multilingual language needs for registration and ballots

Provide info about:

- Eligibility, what you need
- Accessible Voting Units (AVUs)
- Restoration of voting rights to people convicted of a felony





Agency-based Voter Registration Forms

1. Click/tap on form below to display.
2. You may type your return address on page 2 before printing.

Tip

If you cannot print the forms, you may request forms be mailed to you by contacting [Voter Registration Customer Service](#).

ALTSA (Aging and Long-Term Support Administration)

[Arabic Voter Registration Form](#)[Burmese Voter Registration Form](#)[Cambodian Voter Registration Form](#)[Chinese Voter Registration Form](#)[English Voter Registration Form](#)

State Agencies

[Aging and Long-Term Support Administration](#)[Community Services Division](#)[Developmental Disabilities Administration](#)[Dept of Health](#)[Department of Services for the Blind](#)[Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)[Health Benefits Exchange](#)[Health Care Authority](#)[Other Agency](#)

Return Completed Forms

Send completed forms within three days via campus mail to MS-40229;

or mail to:

Washington State Elections Office
PO Box 40229

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN 18 LANGUAGES

English
Chinese / 中文
Spanish / Español
Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt
Amharic / አማርኛ
Arabic / العربية
Bengali / বাংলা
Burmese / မြန်မာစာ
Cambodian / ភាសាខ្មែរ
Hindi / हिन्दी
Japanese / 日本人
Korean / 한국어
Laotian / ພາສາລາວ
Punjabi / ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Russian / Русский
Somali / Soomaali
Tagalog
Ukrainian / Український

Forms available at
vote.wa.gov

Washington State Voter Registration Form

Register online at www.myvote.wa.gov

1 Personal Information

last name first middle
date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy) ☐ male ☐ female
residential address (in Washington) apt #
city ZIP
mailing address (if different than residential address)
city state / ZIP
phone number (optional) email address (optional)

2 Qualifications

If you mark no to either of these questions, do not complete this form
☐ yes ☐ no I am a citizen of the United States of America.
☐ yes ☐ no I will be at least 18 years old by the next election.

3 Military / overseas status

☐ I am in the Armed Forces (includes National Guard and Reserves; and military spouses or dependents away from home because of service).
☐ I live outside the U.S.

4 Identification — Washington driver license / ID number

If you do not have a Washington driver license or ID, provide the last four digits of your Social Security number x x x - x x -

5 Former registration

If you are already registered and are changing your name or address, fill out this section (this information will be used to update your registration)

former last name first middle
former residential address city state / ZIP

6 Declaration

I declare that the facts on this voter registration form are true. I am a citizen of the United States, I will have lived at this address in Washington for at least thirty days immediately before the next election at which I vote, I will be at least 18 years old when I vote, I am not disqualified from voting due to a court order, and I am not under Department of Corrections supervision for a Washington felony conviction.

sign
here

date
here

Voting district

Ballot will be
mailed

Either
license/ID or
last 4 of SSN

Sign & date!

Candidate questionnaires:

- Shared or made available for all candidates
- No formatting or editing responses
- Provide clear instructions; specify how responses will be used
- Open-ended, non-pointed questions
- Do not ask for candidates to “pledge support”



Washington Housing Alliance ACTION FUND

2018 Endorsement Questionnaire for State Legislative Candidates

Washington Housing Alliance Action Fund supports candidates who champion public policy that prevents and ends homelessness and moves us toward a time when everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home.

We will use responses to this questionnaire to determine endorsements as well as potential contributions and volunteer turnout. Answers may be shared with members and other affiliated parties and may also be used to educate voters.

To be considered for a pre-primary endorsement, please complete and return this questionnaire in Word or PDF format to Teresa Clark at teresac@housingactionfund.org by Monday, June 4.

Please take a moment to tell us a little more about your campaign:

Campaign Contact Information

Candidate Name: Committee Name:
Legislative District: Position:
Campaign Phone: Campaign Website:

Estimated Campaign Budget

Primary:
General:
Raised to Date:

Voter Contact

What efforts will you make to reach out to communities of color, renters, and low-income constituents?

Key Endorsements to date:

Summary Statement

If we endorse your candidacy, we would like to provide a summary statement to our members in your district. Please provide a statement by answering the question below:

If elected, what will you do ensure that everyone in Washington has the opportunity to live in a safe, healthy, affordable home? (Please limit your response to 150 words or less.)

Example candidate question:

The Housing and Essential Needs rental assistance program ensures that extremely low-income, disabled adults at risk of homelessness have modest resources to help pay rent in the private market. The program hasn't been increased since its inception in 2011, yet homelessness has risen across the state.

Would you support an Operating Budget increase to this program?

Comments/How will you take leadership on this?(Please limit your response 150 words or less).

Candidate forums & debates

- Invite all viable candidates (can use objective criteria)
- Open-ended, non-pointed questions; nonpartisan moderator
- Set time-limits for responses
- Cover a broad range of issues
- Audience questions submitted in advance
- Invite the media
- **All candidate materials must be kept out**



Questions?

Thank you!

More resources:

- Bolder Advocacy (AFJ)— bolderadvocacy.org
- Nonprofit VOTE— nonprofitvote.org
- WA Secretary of State— sos.wa.gov
- Win/Win Network— winwinnetwork.org

2018 Candidate Forums: <https://www.wliha.org/be-housing-voter#Forum>

Upcoming Learn at Lunch Webinars

<http://wliha.org/resources/webinars-and-tools>

For more information, contact
dimitrig@wliha.org

