

While Washington is an “all-mail” voting state, each county has ballot drop-off locations where you can turn in your ballot without postage. Each county also offers accessible voting locations for individuals with disabilities. Check with your county auditor or elections office for more information.

**If I have my voting rights, should I still try to get a certificate of discharge (COD)**

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You do not need a certificate of discharge to register to vote. However, the restoration of voting rights does not mean that a COD has been entered in your case. Additionally, obtaining a COD has important benefits beyond restoring your right to vote. For example, if you want to vacate your felony criminal record for background check purposes, getting a COD “starts the clock” on a waiting period that must occur before you ask the court to vacate your records. **If you have questions about vacating your conviction, please feel free to call the ACLU at 206.624.2180**

**Can I lose the right to vote after it has been restored**

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**Yes.** If you are convicted of another felony offense, you will lose the right to vote again until you have completed the new term of incarceration and any new required period of community custody. A court or prosecutor may threaten to revoke your right to vote for failure to pay LFOs. **If you receive a notice that a court or prosecutor intends to revoke your right to vote for failure to pay your LFOs, please contact the ACLU Help Line at 206.624.2180 or submit a complaint through our website at [www.aclu-wa.org/gethelp](http://www.aclu-wa.org/gethelp)**

**What if I experience misunderstandings about the law?**

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**Contact the ACLU.** Call 206.624.2180 or email us from our website: [www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org).

If you have a record and are unsure whether you can vote, you can also use the ACLU’s easy-to-use online guide at [www.canivote.aclu-wa.org](http://www.canivote.aclu-wa.org).

**SECRETARY OF STATE’S ELECTIONS DIVISION:**

[www.secstate.wa.gov/elections](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections)  
1.800.448.4881

**You can also find the contact information for your county elections office at:**

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/viewauditors.aspx>  
or by calling the Secretary of State.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

[www.lwwa.org](http://www.lwwa.org)  
206.622.8961  
Toll Free: 800.419.2596

**ACLU OF WASHINGTON**

[www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org)  
206.624.2180

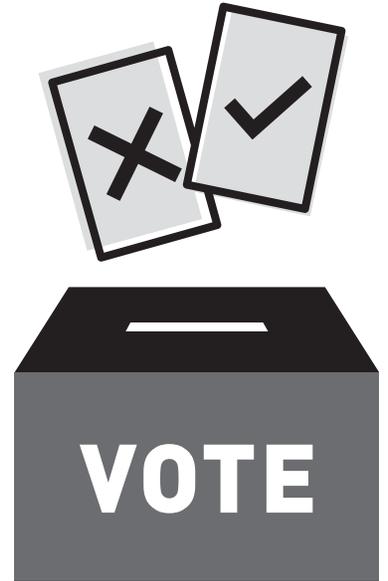
**ACLU**

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION

Washington

# VOTING WITH A FELONY CONVICTION

Yes, you get your  
right to vote back!



A guide to voting after a felony conviction in **Washington**

**ACLU**

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION  
FOUNDATION

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**Our vote is our voice.** The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. Our country's history is marked by successful struggles and legal battles to ensure that the right to vote is not a privilege reserved for the wealthy few, but a right guaranteed to all, regardless of race, class, or gender.

**What type of convictions could affect my voting rights?**

A person may lose the right to vote when convicted of a felony in adult court. You do not lose your right to vote in Washington for a misdemeanor or juvenile conviction.

**Can individuals convicted of felonies vote in Washington?**

**Yes!** If you were convicted of a felony in a Washington State adult court, your right to vote is **automatically restored** as soon as you are no longer under the authority of the Department of Corrections (DOC). This means that once you have completed any required incarceration and/or DOC community custody, your right to vote has been restored.

If you were convicted of a felony in another state or federal court, your right to vote is **automatically restored** once you are no longer in jail or prison.

**The right to vote is restored even if you still owe court fines, restitution, or other legal financial obligations (LFOs).**

You do not need to pay off your LFOs to vote. You are still legally obligated to pay all of your LFOs and to comply with the payment schedule. However, your right to vote is not automatically lost for failure to pay LFOs. You do not lose the right to vote for failure to pay LFOs unless a court determines that you have intentionally failed to pay your LFOs and the court issues an order revoking your right to vote.

**If you are notified that a court or prosecutor intends to revoke your right to vote for failure to pay your LFOs, please contact the ACLU Help Line at 206.624.2180 or submit a complaint through our website at [www.aclu-wa.org/gethelp](http://www.aclu-wa.org/gethelp).**

**How do I find out if I am on or off DOC community custody?**

The best way to know for certain if you are on community custody is to call the DOC. You can reach the DOC at 1.800.430.9674 on Monday through Friday, 8 am–5 pm. Ask if DOC has an “open” or “active” file on you. If they say No, you are eligible to register to vote. If they say Yes, ask for the name and phone number of your Community Corrections Officer’s (CCO) supervisor, and call the supervisor. Ask the supervisor if you are currently on community custody. If they say Yes, your right to vote is not restored until you are done with community custody.

**Is there a document or place I need to check to confirm that my right to vote is restored?**

No. There is no longer a document confirming restoration of the right to vote (in the past, a COD did this). There is also no list of persons whose right to vote has been restored. This is why it is important to double-check whether you are on DOC community custody or not. If you are no longer incarcerated and are not on DOC community custody, your voting rights are restored, and you are eligible to register to vote. **You also do not need paperwork to prove that your right to vote has been restored.**

**Do I still need to register to vote?**

Yes. While voting rights restoration is automatic, **eligible individuals still need to register.** Even if you registered to vote or voted before your felony conviction, you will likely need to re-register to vote. In 2018 a law was enacted making voting registration “automatic.” However, that law will not take effect until July 1, 2019.

**There are many ways to register to vote.**

There are many ways to register, including in person at county auditor or elections offices and in many other locations, government offices such as the Department of Licensing (DOL), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and often local schools, libraries, and firehouses. You can also register online at [www.secstate.wa.gov](http://www.secstate.wa.gov), by mail, or with organizations like the League of Women Voters.

**NOTE:** There are deadlines for registration. You should contact the Secretary of State, your county elections office, or a voting rights organization for official deadlines. Generally you can register by mail until 29 days before an election, and in person until 8 days before the election.

**What documents do I need to register to vote?**

It depends how you register to vote:

**To register online** you need a valid Washington state driver’s license or Washington state ID.

**To register by mail** you may also use a Washington driver’s license or state ID. Alternately, if you have a valid social security number you can provide the last four digits of the SSN.

If you do not have (or do not wish to provide) a driver’s license, state ID, or social security number, alternative procedures for provisional registration and verification are provided in RCW 29A.08.107.

**You do not need a home or stable address to vote:**

When you register to vote, you will be required to provide two addresses:

**1. A residential address**

This can be the name or address of a shelter, park, motor home, intersection, or some other identifiable location. This location will be used to determine which precinct you will vote in.

**2. A mailing address**

You can receive your elections mail at any valid mailing location you choose. A mailing address can include a post office box, address of a friend or relative, shelter, or general delivery at a local post office. The mailing address is where all election-related material, including your ballot, will be sent. If your mailing address changes and you don’t update it before the registration deadline, you can contact your local elections office for a ballot!