



VOTING WITH A FELONY CONVICTION

Yes, you get back your right to vote!

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

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 serving a sentence of total confinement under the authority of the Department of Corrections (DOC). This means that once you have completed any required prison sentence, your right to vote has been restored upon release from prison and you will be eligible to register immediately at that time if you are a U.S. citizen, Washington resident, and at least 18 years old by election day.

If you were convicted of a felony as an adult in another state or federal court, your right to vote is **automatically restored** once you are no longer in jail or prison. You will be eligible to register immediately upon release if you are a U.S. citizen and Washington resident.

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 cannot be taken away for failure to pay LFOs. You do not lose the right to vote for failure to pay LFOs.

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 certificate of discharge did this). There is also no list of persons whose right to vote has been restored. If you are no longer incarcerated in prison, your voting rights are restored, and you are eligible to register to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, Washington resident, and at least 18 years old by election day. **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.

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 register online at www.votewa.gov. Online registration is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

You can also register by mail. Registration by mail is available in 25 languages. The mail-in form for English can be found online at: <https://bit.ly/3JjAWy7>.

NOTE: There are deadlines for registration. You should contact the Secretary of State, your county elections office or auditor, or a voting rights organization for official deadlines. You can register to vote in person until 8pm on Election Day. Online and mail registrations must be received 8 days before Election Day.

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 license or Washington state ID.

To register by **mail** you should also use a Washington state driver license or state ID. If you do not have these forms of ID, you can provide the last four digits of your social security number.

If you do not have a driver license, state ID, or social security number, other forms of ID may be accepted. Contact the Secretary of State for guidance – see end of document for contact information. (Details on the law, RCW 29A.08.107, at <https://bit.ly/3oEiBDN>).

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 your voting precinct and the races that you will vote on.

If you have a nontraditional address on tribal land, you may list a building designated by the tribe as your residential address.

AND

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!

Washington is a vote-by-mail state. Each county has ballot drop-off boxes where you can turn in your ballot. You can also mail your ballot without paying postage. Each county also offers accessible voting locations for individuals with disabilities. Check with your county auditor or elections office for more information.

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

Yes. If you are convicted of another felony offense, you will lose the right to vote again if you are sentenced to a term of incarceration in prison. You would not be eligible to vote while serving a DOC sentence in total confinement.

What if I'm still confused about whether or not I can vote?

If you have a record and are unsure whether you can vote, **contact the ACLU.** Call 206.624.2180 or visit www.aclu-wa.org/help.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S ELECTIONS DIVISION

www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters

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.

You can register to vote online at www.votewa.gov.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN

VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

www.lwwwa.org

206.622.8961

Toll Free: 800.419.2596

ACLU OF WASHINGTON

www.aclu-wa.org

206.624.2180

ACLU

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
FOUNDATION

Washington