

The Arc of King County's Guide to Voting

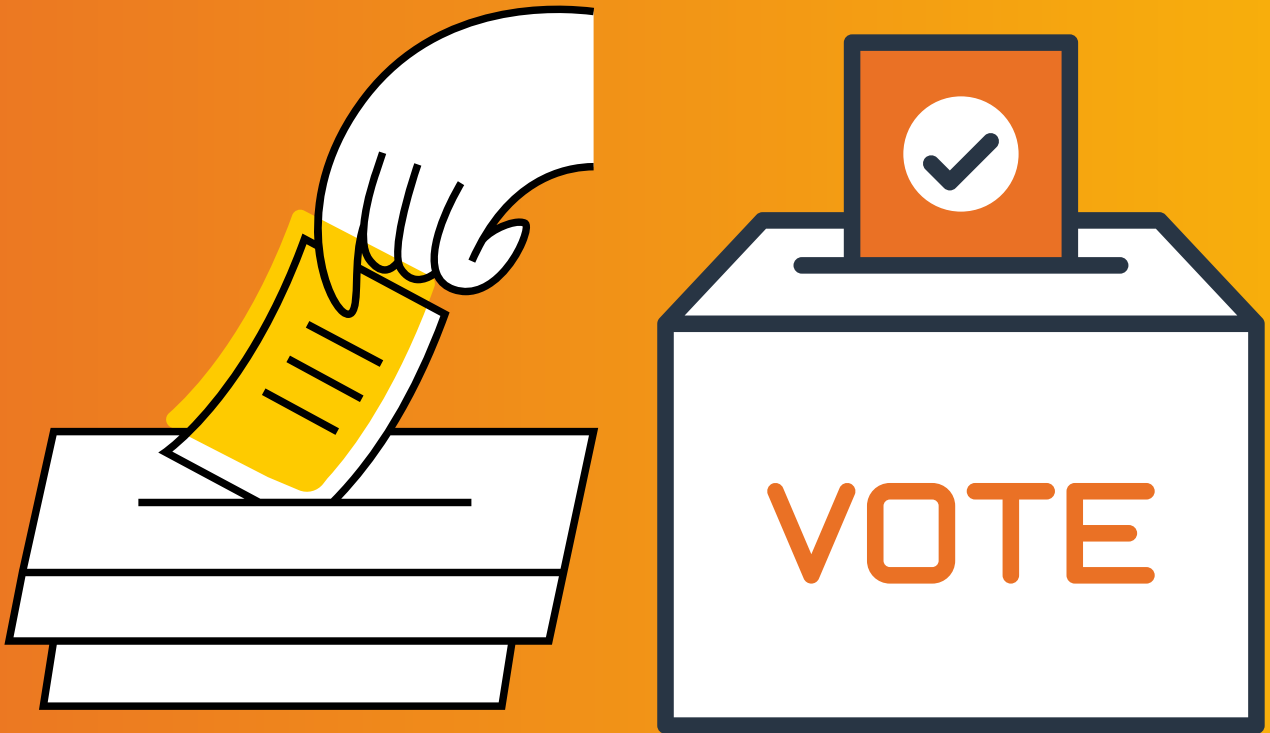


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Words to Know

Accessible
voting unit

A voting machine that is easier for some people with disabilities to use.

Automatic
registration

Registering to vote before you turn 18.

Ballot curing

A process that fixes small mistakes on a ballot. This helps make sure your vote is counted.

Ballot drop
boxes

A secure place to drop off your ballot.

Citizen

A person born in the United States of America or who went through a naturalization process.

Initiatives and referendums

Changes to law that citizens vote on directly.

Voter suppression

People stopping some people from voting.

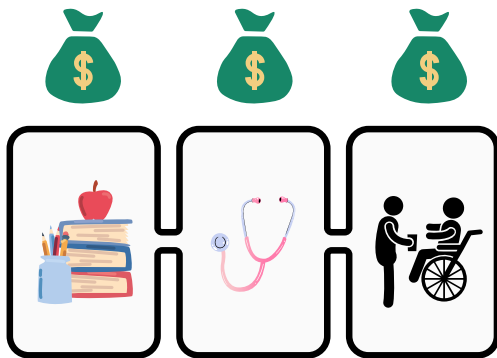
Voter intimidation

People trying to scare you into not voting or changing your vote.

Why Vote?



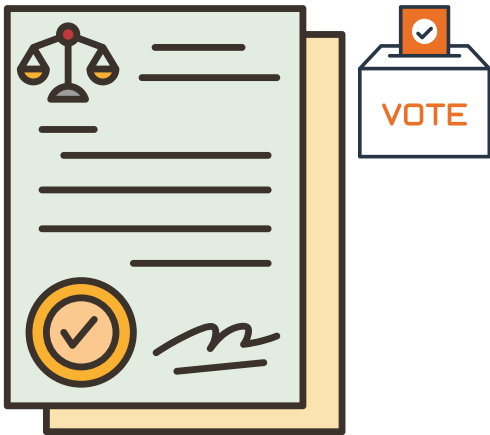
You vote for your government



Your government decides how tax money is spent



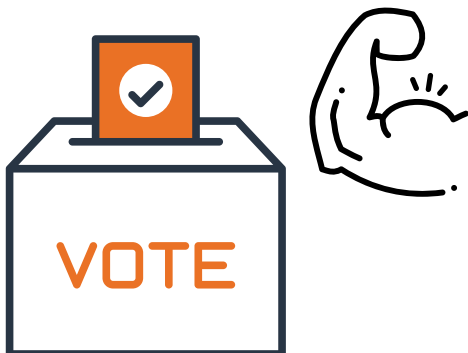
Your government makes laws



You can vote for new laws and new taxes

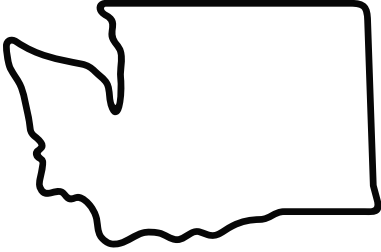


You can vote to get rid of laws and taxes.



Your vote is powerful!

Who Can Vote?



Citizens who have lived in Washington for more than 30 days, and are age 18 or older can vote in this state.



Homeless people can vote, too!



If you are 16 or 17, you can sign up for automatic registration when you turn 18.

What if I am under guardianship?



Most people under guardianship can vote!



Unless a court specifically says you can't vote, you have the right to vote



If a court did say this, you can ask the court to give back your right to vote.

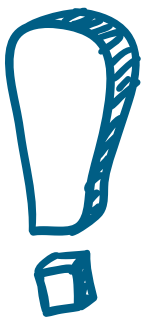
What if I Have Been to Prison?



Most people can vote after they leave prison. Prison is where you go if you have been convicted of a felony.



A law passed in 2022 means your right to vote is automatically restored.



But, you have to register to vote again.

Can I vote from jail or a facility?



Yes. You can vote from jail. They are different than prisons.

You do not lose your vote if you are in a care facility.



Some elections officials bring ballots to jails, nursing homes, and institutions. They might also bring an accessible voting unit (AVU).



Disability Rights
WASHINGTON

disabilityrightswa.org/contact-us/

If a jail or facility tries to stop you from voting, contact Disability Rights Washington.

Who Can't Vote?



People who are not citizens.



That includes:
green card holders
(also called permanent
legal residents), and
undocumented people.



People who are younger
than 18 on election day.

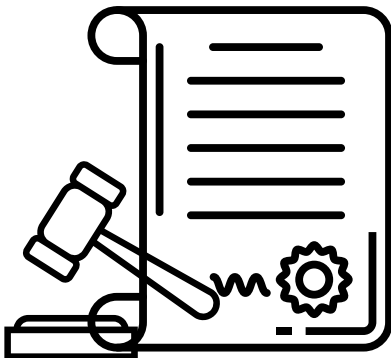


People in prison.

If you are convicted of a felony you go to prison. They are different than jails.

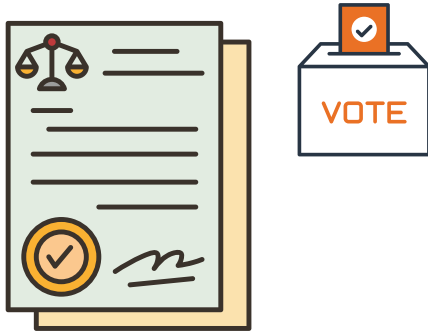


People with disabilities who had their right to vote taken away by a court.



This happens to some people under guardianship.

Referendums and Initiatives



Sometimes your ballot has initiatives or referendums



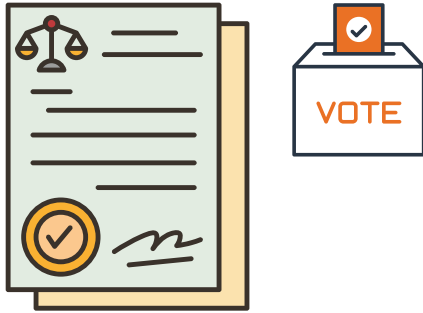
A referendum asks if you want to keep a law or get rid of a law.



If you want to keep a law you vote “approved.”



If you want to get rid of a law you vote “rejected.”



An initiative asks if you want to make a new law.



If you want the new law you vote “yes.”

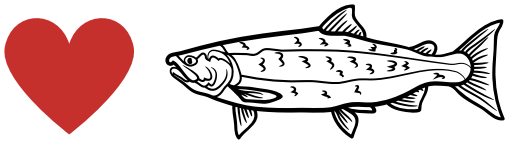


If you don't want the new law you vote “no.”

Story: Jessica Votes



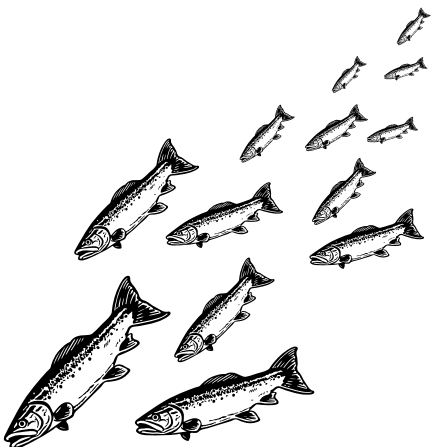
This is Jessica.



Jessica loves salmon.



Jessica wants to make sure salmon have clean streams and rivers.



She wants to make sure salmon enjoy Washington streams and rivers forever.



Jessica advocates for salmon before the:

- City council
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Fish and Wildlife
- County council



She knows that who she chooses to vote for impacts her salmon advocacy.

Jessica decides to learn more about the candidates.



BALLOTPEDIA
The Encyclopedia of American Politics

Jessica starts by looking at endorsements from Salmon United.

Next, Jessica looked up the candidates in Ballotpedia.



Jessica saw that one of her city council candidates answered a Ballotpedia survey about salmon rights. That candidate's name was Kentigern



Jessica liked that Kentigern loves salmon. She thinks she will vote for Kentigern.



But, Jessica wants to make sure that this candidate really does love salmon like she does.



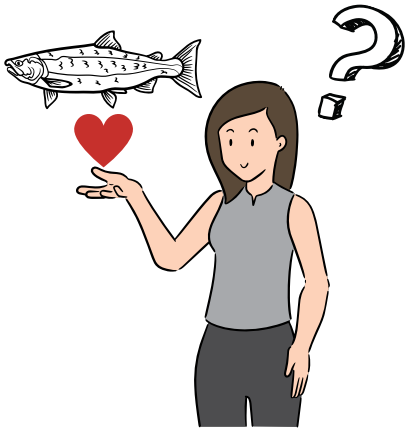
Jessica meets Kentigern at a campaign rally.



She asks him what his plan to protect salmon is.



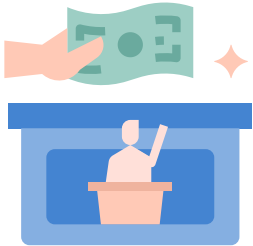
He tells her about his plan to protect salmon.



Another candidate told Jessica that she likes salmon, too, but doesn't know a lot about protecting salmon.



Jessica wants to vote for the candidate who knows salmon the best.



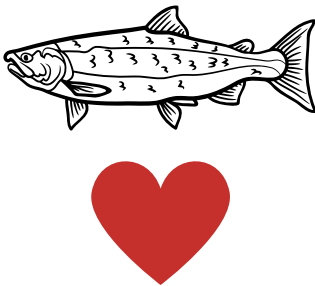
Jessica wanted to see who donated to each candidate.



So, Jessica checks the Public Disclosure Commission website. She searched each of the candidate's names in the PDC website.



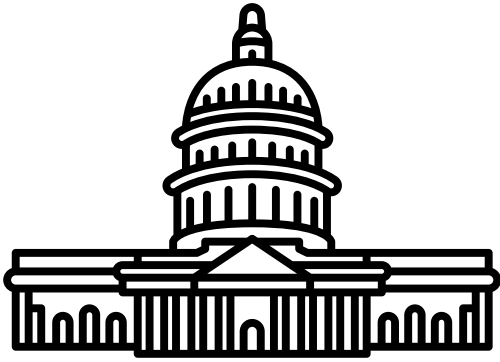
She found out that Kentigern got money from the salmon fishers.



She feels even more comfortable knowing that other people who like salmon also like Kentigern.



Jessica decides to vote for Kentigern for city council.



Jessica is really enthusiastic about salmon. She does the same thing for the congressional race.



She asked both candidates for her congressional district about salmon.



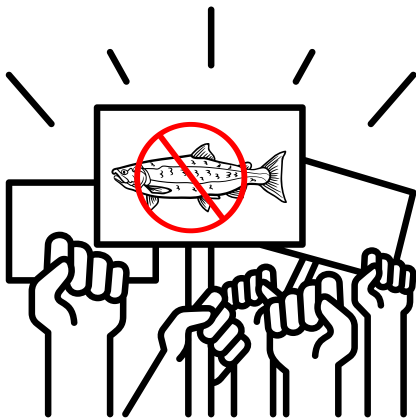
None of them gave her a good answer about salmon.



Jessica checks the Federal Elections Commission website. The FEC site is like the PDC except that it is for federal races.



She found out that one candidate got a lot of money from salmon fishers.



She also found out that the other candidate got a lot of money from the We Hate Salmon Coalition.



Jessica decides to vote for the candidate supported by salmon fishers.

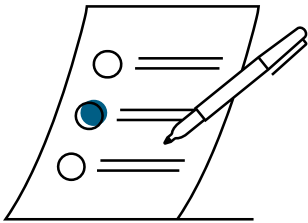
Where to Learn About Candidates

- **Candidate websites** will list who supports them
- **Local news** will write about candidates and may endorse
 - Seattle Times, <https://www.seattletimes.com/>
 - The Stranger, <https://www.thestranger.com/>
 - KUOW, <https://www.kuow.org/>
 - The Urbanist, <https://www.theurbanist.org/>
 - The Washington State Standard offers a voting guide for state races, <https://washingtonstatestandard.com/voter-guide/2024-general-election/>
- **Ballotpedia** is a site where you can look up information about candidates, https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page
- **Federal Elections Commission** shows who contributes to federal candidates (Congress, president), <https://www.fec.gov/>
- **WA Public Disclosure Commission** shows who contributes to state and local candidates, <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/political-disclosure-reporting-data/browse-search-data/candidates>
- **The King County Bar Association** sends out questionnaires and rates candidates running for judge, <https://www.kcba.org/?pg=Judicial-Candidate-Evaluation-Ratings>

Story: Jessica Votes By Mail



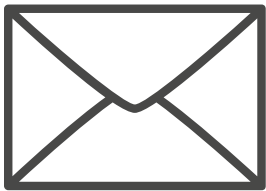
Jessica knows who she wants to vote for.



She gets her ballot and a blue or black pen.



Then she puts her ballot in the security envelope.



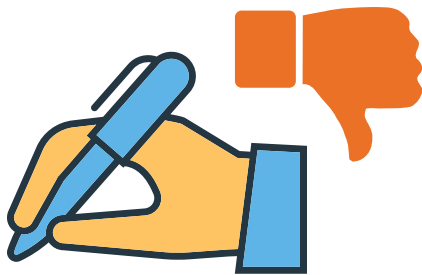
Then she puts the security envelope in the envelope.

Jessica

Jessica signs the envelope.



Then she writes in her email address and phone number.



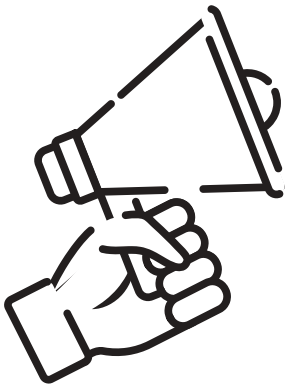
Jessica knows she has bad handwriting.



She wants to make sure someone can tell her if she needs to verify the signature on her ballot.



Verifying your signature after your ballot is sent is called ballot curing.



Most people do not have to do this, but sometimes ballot curing makes a big difference in who gets elected.



Jessica wants to put her ballot in an official ballot drop off box.



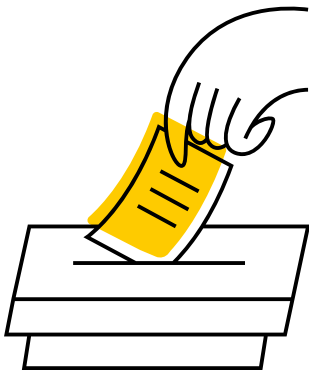
She checks the King County Elections website to learn where the closest one is.



The closest drop off box for her is at the Angle Lake Transit Center.



Jessica takes the bus to the transit center.

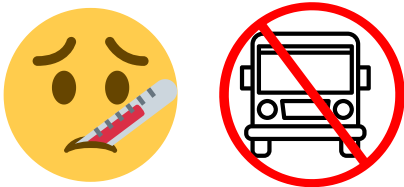


Then she finds the box and puts her ballot in.

Story: Jessica Experiences Voter Intimidation



Jessica's roommate asked her to put her ballot in the ballot box.



This is because Jessica's roommate is too sick to take the bus there.



Jessica's roommate knows her rights and lets Jessica know that it is okay to help her turn in her ballot.



Jessica can't vote for her roommate, but she can help her!



When Jessica tries to put in her roommate's ballot, a group of people start yelling at her.



They say she is breaking the law by putting in more than one ballot.

They demand to know who paid her.



The people yelling at Jessica believe a conspiracy theory about voting.



Jessica tells them that her roommate has a right to vote and she is just making sure her vote is counted.



After putting both ballots in the drop box, Jessica leaves.



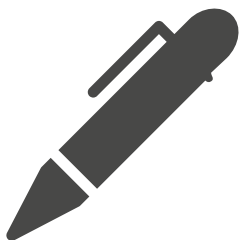
Jessica knows it is important to not stay there.



Jessica calls her support worker to let her know where she is and what is happening.



Her support worker makes sure she gets a ride home.



On the ride home, Jessica writes down what happened.



Next, Jessica calls King County Elections to tell them what happened.



What the people harassing Jessica were doing is called voter intimidation.



Voter intimidation is illegal.

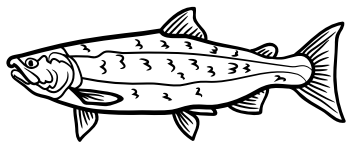
Voter Intimidation and Suppression Resources

- **NAACP Legal Defense Fund:** voting.naacpldf.org/voting-rights/voting-rights-defender/report-potential-voter-suppression/
- **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**, voter protection hotlines:
 - English: 866-OUR-VOTE
 - Spanish/English: 888-VE-Y-VOTA
 - Arabic/English: 844-YALLA-US
 - Asian Languages/English: 888-API-VOTE
- **ACLU, Know Your Voting Rights:** aclu.org/know-your-rights/voting-rights#someone-is-interfering-with-my-right-to-vote

Story: Jessica Tracks and Cures Her Ballot



Jessica was so excited
to vote!



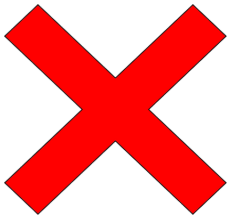
She loves salmon so
much.



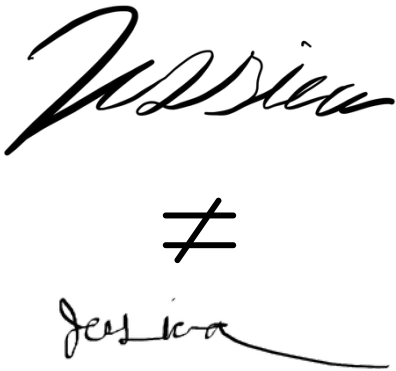
She knows her vote will
help salmon have clean
streams and rivers.



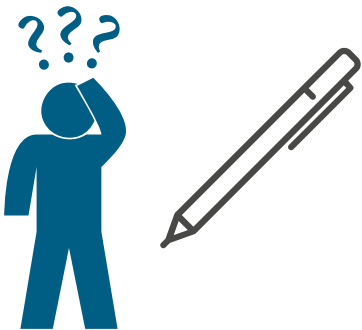
Jessica wants to make
sure her vote is counted.



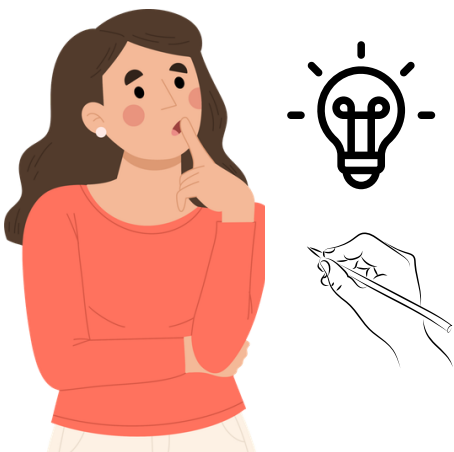
Sometimes county elections departments reject ballots.



This happens when someone's signature on their ballot does not match the signature they made when registering to vote.



This can also happen if you forget to sign your ballot.



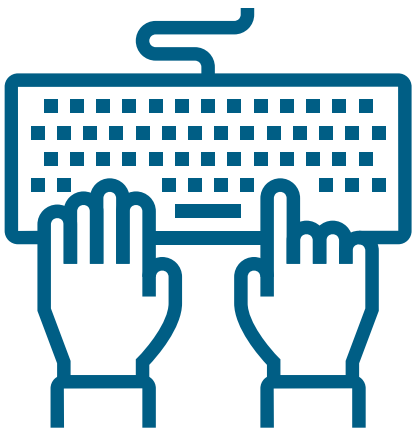
Jessica knows she signed her ballot. But, she has bad handwriting, so her signature might not match.



But, Jessica does not want to wait to be told her ballot had a problem.



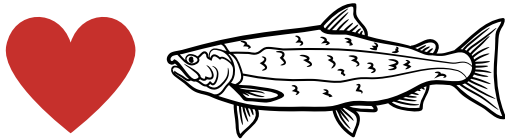
Jessica visits the King County Elections website. She goes to the “track your ballot” page.



She types in her information and the website said her ballot was received. That means her ballot got to the people who count the ballots. But, it does not mean her ballot was counted yet.



The next day, Jessica checks her ballot again. This time, the ballot tracker said there was a problem with her ballot. It said she needed to verify her signature.



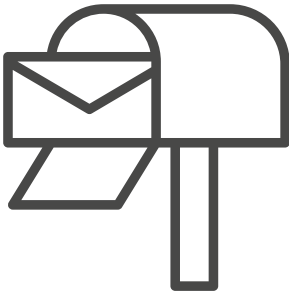
Jessica loves salmon. She knows her vote is important for the salmon.



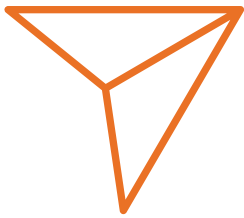
Jessica calls King County Elections about her ballot. The person from King County Elections says Jessica needs to fill out a signature challenge form.



Jessica could go in-person to fill out the form.



King County Elections can also send Jessica the form in the mail.



King County Elections sends signature challenge forms to everyone who has their signature challenged.



Jessica decides to go in-person. She takes public transit to the King County Elections office in Renton.



Jessica talks to a person from King County Elections about her situation.



They hand Jessica the signature challenge form.



Jessica fills out the form and hands it back.

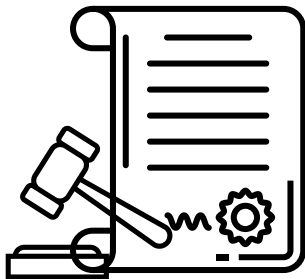


The next day, Jessica tracked her ballot again. This time the site said her ballot was counted!

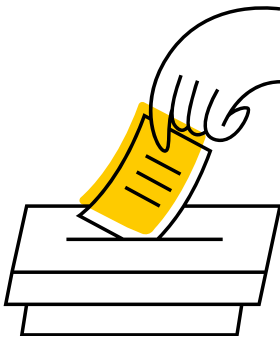
Story: Rosa wants support to vote



Rosa is a young woman with IDD.



She is under guardianship.



Rosa wants to vote.



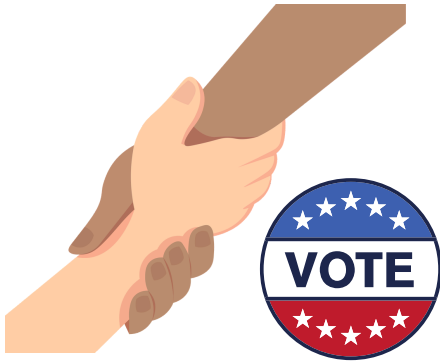
Rosa's right to vote was not taken away by her guardianship.



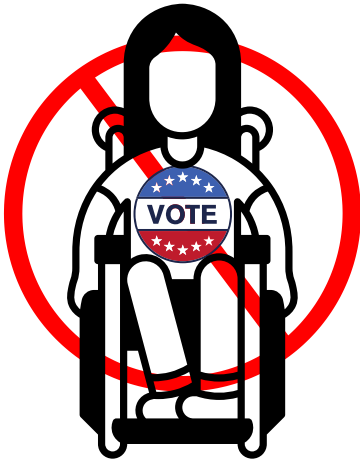
Rosa asks her support worker to help her go to King County Elections.



Rosa already knows who she wants to vote for.



She just wants help registering to vote and help with voting.



Rosa's support worker does not think Rosland should vote. She thinks Rosa's disability means she should not vote. Rosa's support worker is being ableist.



Your right to vote does not go away if you have a disability.



Rosa asks a friend of hers in People First to drive her to King County Elections.



Rosa's friend takes her to King County Elections.



Rosa talks to the poll worker. She says she has never voted before and she wants help registering.



The poll worker gets Rosa registered.



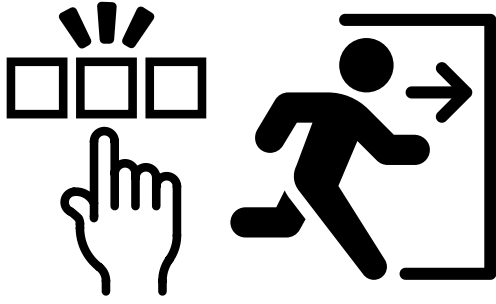
The poll worker asks if Rosa would like some assistance or to use an accessible voting unit (AVU).



Rosa says she wants to use an AVU but does not know how to use it.



The poll worker sets up Rosa at the AVU and tells her how to make her choice.



Rosa makes her choices and leaves.



Rosa voted.

Voting Resources

- **King County Elections:** kingcounty.gov/depts/elections.aspx
 - **Accessible voting options:** <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/accessible-voting-options>
 - **Register to vote:** <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/how-to-vote/register-to-vote>
 - **Update my address:** <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/how-to-vote/register-to-vote/change-my-address>
 - **Find a ballot drop box:** <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/return-my-ballot/ballot-drop-boxes>
 - **Find a vote center:** <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/return-my-ballot/vote-centers>
- **Washington Secretary of State, Elections:** <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections>
- **The Arc, Voting:** <https://thearc.org/policy-advocacy/grassroots/vote/>
- **National Disability Rights Network:** ndrn.org/voting/
- **Assisting Voters with Disabilities**, Disability Rights Washington: disabilityrightswa.org/publications/assisting-voters-disabilities/
- **Your Vote Counts:** A Self-Advocates Guide to Voting in the US: <https://autisticadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/ER-Your-Vote-Counts-main-content1.pdf>