Kitsap County Auditor – Elections Division
2023 Voter Access Plan

Plan Overview

Each year the Kitsap County Voter Access Advisory Committee meets to check in on how Kitsap County Elections is doing in its effort to meet the Washington State Constitution mandate that "all persons" qualified to vote "shall be entitled to vote at all elections."

Out of these meetings with several Kitsap stakeholders comes feedback and suggestions for further improvement.

This plan is part of that effort and is completed in compliance with RCW 29A.04.223.

Where We Are

Since we met in 2022, we can again demonstrate incremental improvements.

Accessible Voting Program 2022 Accomplishments

- The Elections Division printed a Braille Voters' pamphlet following the February Special Election in 2022 and for each election afterward. We place them at the vote centers and have two available at our office.

- Plan coordinator met with Peninsula Council of the Blind Group twice. The first meeting resulted in the creation of a Braille Voters' Pamphlet. The other meeting was to demonstrate the Accessible Voting Unit.

- In our crafted videos we began employing open captioning, instead of relying on YouTube to provide captioning. This means all users see captioning as a matter of course. As pointed out in our last meeting, everyone benefits from open captioning. For example, a video can be played without sound. We have also learned since our meeting that Teams and Zoom will caption a live meeting. The quality is pretty good.

- We changed the format of the voters' pamphlet from tabloid (11"x17") to standard letter size (8.5"x11"). We made this move because of the printer we had been using moved its press and wasn't available to us. No other in-state printer could produce the tabloid for us. We may have hesitated in the past to make the switch, because we didn't know how voters would respond to the change. This time we guessed they wouldn't mind and that they might prefer it. Based on the feedback we received, that's exactly what happened. Everyone found it easier to work with.

2023 Priorities

- Reach out to different communities to understand how people vote so we better understand how to assist.

- Increase contact with senior living centers to learn of specific ways we can serve those communities.

- Improve open captioning for live meetings, candidate and measure statements and other videos.

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

- 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 voter access plans;
- 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 be prepared to increase participation for voters with disabilities and includes recommendations for:

- Online ballot delivery access
- Any changes to the location of vote centers
- Ballot drop box locations
- Outreach to voters with disabilities
- Location of 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. The online ballot through the Secretary of State's Office also contains accessible statements provided by candidates and measure committees.

24-Hour Ballot Drop Boxes

Kitsap County's 24-hour ballot drop boxes offer a secure and accessible way for voters to deposit ballots. Every drop box in use during an election is opened at least 18 days before Election Day. All drop boxes include Braille signage. Kitsap County Elections will continue to evaluate drop box usage to ensure ballot drop boxes are placed where they are convenient to all voters.

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 is decreasing. In the 2012 General Election, 893 voters used an AVU to cast a ballot. In the four elections in 2022 no one used an AVU. We demonstrated the unit at the Peninsula Council of the Blind. It may be that voting at home and the ability to access a ballot online makes the AVU a desired option for fewer people. We will continue investigating. More importantly we will continue to have an AVUs available the 18 days before an election and at our vote centers. This committee may be interested to know that the AVUs serve a second purpose at vote centers. If we run out of ballots from a particular precinct, the AVU can print one.

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 uses social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and just recently Instagram) more to publicize elections issues.

- 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, the Elections Division staff and the State of Washington have recommended and implemented services beyond the minimal requirements, including:

- Establishing vote centers in Poulsbo and Bremerton with AVUs for Election Day to serve the central and northern areas of the county.
- Providing Online Ballot Access, which can provide particular benefit to 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 accessibility training to Elections Division staff.
- ☐ 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 when needed.
- 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 use of online system features and functionality
- Voter dissatisfaction and confusion about Online Ballot Delivery

Plan Schedule

Winter 2023

- Convene the Voter Access Advisory Committee.
- Convene the Voter Access Advisory Committee.
- Coordinate accessible voting locations, logistics and voter outreach
- Assess accessible voting options for all elections
- Hire, schedule and train bipartisan board workers to perform all Voting Center

Spring 2023

- Develop brochure for those assisting residents in senior living facilities.

Summer 2023

- Distribute voter education and outreach materials for the August Primary
- Promote accessible voting using social media and news releases

Fall 2022

- Distribute voter education and outreach materials for the November General Election
- Promote accessible voting using social media and news releases

Roles and Responsibilities

Name	Function	Roles and Responsibilities
Paul Andrews Daryl Daugs	Executive Sponsors	• Policy oversight and direction
Regina McRay	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. Election 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 re-create 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
- Promote the Accessible Voting Program using social media and providing demonstrations
- 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 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
- Uses secure website technology

AVU Equipment Demonstrations

The Elections Division can provide 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 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.

Staff Training Content

- Respectful communication and sensitivity toward voters with disabilities and special needs, including specific training on how to assist
- 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

Accessible Voting Statistics Overview 2022

Category	Feb. 8, 2022 Special (Jan. 7 –Feb. 18)	April 26, 2022 Special (Mar. 25 –May 6)	Aug. 2 Primary (June 17 – Aug 16)	Nov. 8 General (Sept. 23-Nov. 29)
Elections Page Views	5,746	7,420	13,486	32,643
Candidates and Committees Videos	0	0	5	5
Online Ballots Returned	236	112	385	661
Voted Using AVU	0	0	0	0
Overall Election turnout	33.22%	35.66%	43.98%	66.39%

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