

San Juan County 2026 Jurisdiction Handbook

A reference manual for junior taxing districts and a valuable resource for information about the election process.



SAN JUAN
COUNTY
WASHINGTON

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This manual is for informational purposes only and does not take the place of local, state or federal laws.

2026 Election Dates

Special Election Dates

The second Tuesday in February
The fourth Tuesday in April

Primary

The first Tuesday of August

General Election

The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November

Upon receipt of a resolution from the governing body of jurisdiction, San Juan County Elections may hold a special election. The jurisdiction can request the special election be on one of the following dates:

- February 10, 2026
- April 28, 2026
- August 4, 2026
- November 3, 2026

Resolutions calling for a special election in February or April must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the election date. Resolutions calling for an election in conjunction with the August Primary must be submitted by the Friday immediately before the first day of regular candidate filing. Resolution calling for an election in conjunction with the General Election must be submitted no later than the day of the Primary.

Submission deadlines

The resolution requesting the special election must be presented to San Juan County Elections as follows:

- February Election: December 12, 2025
- April Election: February 27, 2026
- Primary Election: May 1, 2026
- General Election: August 4, 2026

All resolutions must be received by San Juan County Elections no later than 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.

Jurisdiction Question

Purpose of the Jurisdiction Questionnaire

The Jurisdiction Questionnaire is sent to all jurisdictions each year to confirm current office holder salary and term information. This information is used to properly conduct candidate filing for each office and jurisdiction in San Juan County.

Prior to February 1 of each year, San Juan County Elections mails a Jurisdiction Questionnaire to each jurisdiction asking for confirmation of information. Per WAC 434-215-005, Jurisdictions must respond and provide the following information:

- Current contact information for the jurisdiction administrator.
- Information about current elected officials such as office title, position number, office holder's name, annual salary at the time of candidate filing, and term expiration.

Questionnaires must be completed prior to March 1 so that candidate filing information can be compiled and distributed to the public in advance of the candidate filing period.

(WAC 434-215-005)

Common questions

What if an office becomes vacant or there is a new appointment after I have submitted the Jurisdiction Questionnaire?

- You need to notify San Juan County Elections once an office becomes vacant.
- Prior to appointing a new person, contact Elections to verify that they are a qualified registered voter for that office.
- Once someone is appointed to that office, notify Elections in writing.

What do I do with completed oaths?

- Send completed oaths of office to San Juan County Elections. The oath will be recorded free of charge and retained.

Office Holders

Keeping San Juan County Elections Informed

It is extremely important that San Juan County Elections has accurate, up-to-date information regarding current office holders, as this information is used to determine which offices are subject to election. Our office must be notified of all vacancies and appointments that occur throughout the year.

Resignations

Once an office becomes vacant, notify our office. Notification must be in writing; an email is sufficient. Please include the name of the office holder, the position number and effective date of the resignation. Additional information can be found about vacancies in RCW 42.12.

New Appointments

Prior to appointing an individual to fill a vacancy, verify with Elections that the potential appointee is a registered voter of the jurisdiction. Once the registration status has been confirmed and an individual has been appointed, notify our office of the appointment. Again, the notification must be in writing; an email is sufficient. Please include the name of the appointed person, residential address for that person, and the effective date of the appointment.

Oaths of Office

Every person elected to an office in Washington state, including jurisdictions within counties, cities, and towns, is required by the United States and/or Washington state Constitutions to take an oath of office after the election results have been certified and prior to serving in office. Once the oath of office has been taken, mail the original to the San Juan County Elections office to be recorded and held with the District's file.

The oath of office shall be administered and certified by any officer or notary public authorized to administer oaths, without charge. Judges, County Commissioners, County Auditors or Deputies, Clerks of the Courts, Town Clerks and School Officials are specifically qualified by statute to administer oaths.

County, city, and town officials may take an oath between the date the election is certified and the day before the term of office begins. January 1 is the beginning of terms for county officials, except for charter counties that specify otherwise.

School district directors' terms of office begin at the first official meeting of the board of directors after certification of the election results. (RCW 28A.343.360)

Officials elected to short and full terms must be administered an oath before assuming the duties of the office and again where the full term begins. (RCW 29A.24.020)

Vacancy and Appointments

If an elected official resigns, is removed from office, dies, or in some cases, changes their voter registration status, it causes a vacancy of office.

The officer who wishes to resign should submit his or her resignation to the board of the junior taxing district.

When a position is vacant, the remaining members of the board will appoint a qualified person to fill the vacant position. If two or more positions are vacant and two or more members of the board remain in office, the remaining members will appoint a qualified person to fill one of the vacant positions. The remaining members of the board and the newly appointed person will appoint another qualified person to fill another vacant position, and so on until each of the vacant positions is filled, with each of the new appointees participating in each appointment that is made after their appointment.

If the board does not appoint a qualified person to fill a vacancy within ninety days of the

occurrence of the vacancy, the county legislative authority will appoint a qualified person.

The newly appointed officer will serve until the next election at which a candidate for that jurisdiction is elected.

At the next election, an officer will be elected for an unexpired term ending at the remainder of the original term.

When a vacancy occurs and an officer is appointed to fill the vacancy, the district will need to supply the Elections Office with a copy of the board meeting minutes that accepts the resignation and a copy of the board meeting minutes that appoints the new officer.

The board will sign the *Certificate of Appointment* and the newly appointed officer will sign an *Oath of Office*. Both documents will be filed at the Elections Office.

Certificate of Appointment

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SAN JUAN)

The undersigned officers of _____ do hereby
Commission, Council, or Board Making Appointment)

Appoint _____ of _____
(Person Appointed) (Address)

to the office of _____. The term for this
(Office and Position)

Position will expire on _____.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____

(Signature) (Printed Name, Title)

(Signature) (Printed Name, Title)

(Signature) (Printed Name, Title)

OATH OF OFFICE

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SAN JUAN)

I, _____, do solemnly swear or affirm that I am citizen of the United States and State of Washington; that I am legally qualified to assume the office of _____; that I will support the Constitution and laws of the United States and the State of Washington; and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of this office to the best of my ability.

Signature X _____ Printed Name _____

Subscribed and sworn before me this _____ day of _____, 20____

(Signature)

(Printed Name, Title of Swearing Officer)

Filing for Nonpartisan Office

The elections of officers for junior taxing districts are conducted in odd-numbered years. Because the terms of office for the commissioners are staggered, normally not all officers are elected in the same year. It is important that the districts are aware of which offices are up for election on any given odd-numbered year.

To file a *Declaration of Candidacy*, a candidate must be qualified. A qualified candidate is one who is a registered voter in the jurisdiction and in some cases, a registered voter within the commissioner district for which they file.

It is important the districts notify the Elections Office of any vacancies or appointments. Depending on when the vacancy happens, it could trigger a special three-day filing period.

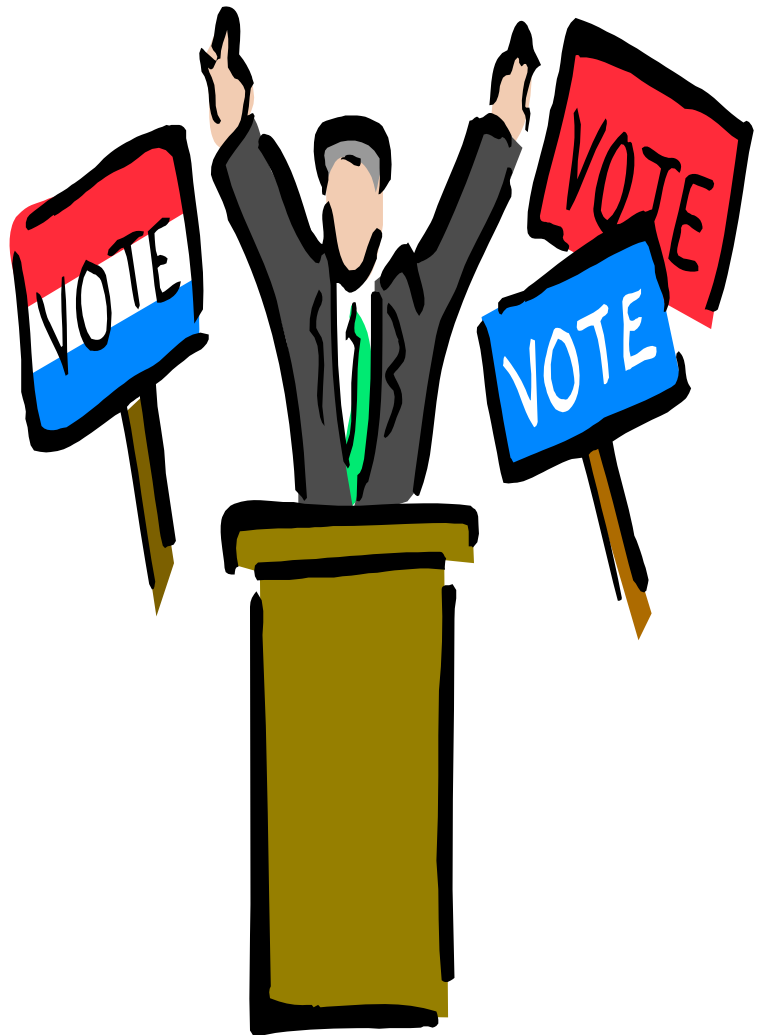
Junior taxing district offices are nonpartisan offices. Officers are elected in the general election. If more than two candidates file for any given office, a primary for that office will be held. The top two vote getters in the primary will continue on to the general election.

The date of the primary is the first Tuesday of August. The general election is the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Candidates are encouraged to file for office online. Candidates who file online will receive

email updates when another candidate files for their office. Candidates who file online will also be able to submit their voters' pamphlet statements and photos online. Candidates can also file in-person or by mail.

Candidates can request additional candidate filing information at the Elections Office or candidate filing information can be found on the Elections web page at:

www.sanjuancountywa.gov/elections



Passage of Bonds and Levies

Passing a levy or bond issue is not always a simple matter of majority rules. State law makes bond issues and some types of levies tougher to pass by requiring a “super majority” (60)%. Other levies, such as levy lid lifts and levies for schools, only require a “simple majority” (50)%.

For excess levy passage, there are two requirements. The first is to meet or exceed the minimum “yes” votes requirement and the second is the “yes” votes must win by a “super majority” of the total votes that is at least 60%. For a bond to pass, there is an additional validation requirement. The turnout must meet or exceed the turnout validation requirement.

Levies Requiring a Super Majority

For levies, the State Constitution states, *...the number of persons voting ‘yes’ on the proposition shall constitute three-fifths of a number equal to forty per centum of the total votes cast in such taxing district at the last preceding general election ...*

For example, if 10,000 voters cast a ballot in the jurisdiction in the last general election:

Levy validation (not school) example:

If there were 10,000 votes cast in the last general election for the district:

$$10,000 \times 40\% = 4,000$$

$$4,000 \times 60\% = 2,400$$

To pass the levy, the district must have at least 2,400 yes votes, even if only a total of 2,500 people voted on the levy.

Bonds

Bond issues must validate two ways. They must pass with 60% “yes” votes of ballots cast. In addition, they have a voter turnout requirement that levies do not. The turnout must equal 40% of the voters who cast ballots in the last general election. A bond measure could get the required number of “yes” voters, but could still fail if not enough people vote in the election.

For example, if 10,000 voters cast a ballot in the jurisdiction in the last general election:

$$10,000$$

$$\underline{\times 40\%}$$

$$4,000 = \text{minimum turnout to validate}$$

$$\underline{\times 60\%}$$

$$2,400 = \text{minimum “yes” votes required to pass}$$



Types of Local Measures

Bonds - A district may ask for authorization of bonds, usually to build and/or equip a structure. New schools, fire stations, and libraries are examples for bond construction money.

Levies - A district may ask for authorization to cover their maintenance and operation cost.

Levy Lid Increases - A district may ask for authorization to increase its regular property tax levy rate. By law, districts have to follow a tax allocation distribution formula. If a district determines the allocation is not enough, the district has the option of requesting a levy lid increase.

Annexations - A district may ask for authorization to be placed within another taxing district or change its boundary lines.

Other - Advisory Ballots, Sales and Use Tax, Change of Form of Government, other.
A district may ask voters' approval or opinion to change an existing situation or create something new. For example, creation of a new



Filing a Resolution

Resolution Submittal Process

Resolutions calling for a special election by a district shall be submitted on or before the resolution deadline as established by state law. Resolution calling for a special election in February or April must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the election date. Resolutions calling for a special election in conjunction with the primary must be submitted by the Friday before the first day of candidate filing. Resolutions calling for a special election in conjunction with the general election must be submitted by the day of the primary. (RCW 29A.04.330, 29A.36.071, 29A.36.080)

In order to place a measure on the ballot, a copy of the signed resolution must be submitted by the applicable deadline. Submissions may be made electronically or by postal mail.

Ballot Titles

Ballot titles for local measures will be prepared and managed in accordance with RCW 29A.36.071, 29A.36.080 and 29A.36.090.

Resolutions submitted by districts which need a ballot title prepared by the San Juan County Prosecuting Attorney will be forwarded to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Upon receipt of the final official ballot title from the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Elections Office will send to the district's contact person a copy of the ballot title via email.

Please contact the Elections Office with any questions.

Local Voters' Pamphlet

Publishing Pamphlets

San Juan County publishes a Local Voters' Pamphlet in conjunction with the Washington State Voters' Pamphlet. The Local Voters' Pamphlet is printed for every special election, primary, and general election.

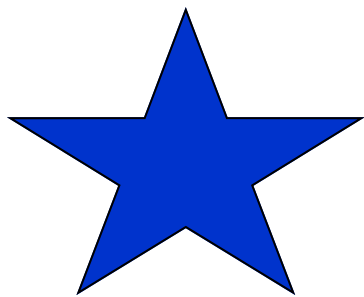
An Online Voters' Guide is published for every special election, primary, and general election.

Ballot titles, explanatory statements, advocacy statements for measures, as well as candidate statements and photos will be published in the Online Voters' Guide and Local Voters' Pamphlet.

Candidate Statements & Photos

Candidates submit their statements and photographs electronically (online or email). Submissions by electronic media should be composed in Microsoft Word or in the body of an email.

Candidates submit photographs in electronic form. Color digital photographs should be .JPG format and may be submitted online or by email.



Explanatory Statements

The attorney for the district submitting the ballot measure shall prepare and submit to the Elections Office a statement for inclusion in the Online Voters' Guide and Local Voters' Pamphlet. The statement shall consist of the following three parts:

- The official ballot title of the measure;
- A neutrally-worded statement explaining the law regarding the ballot measure as it currently exists; and
- A neutrally-worded statement describing the fiscal effect that the ballot measure will have if it passes.

The explanatory statement shall be prepared in clear and concise language and avoid the use of legal and other technical terms. The deadline for submission of the district attorney's statement shall be the same as the deadline for submission of advocacy committee statements.

Advocacy Statements

By the deadline to submit a resolution, the jurisdiction will need to appoint a committee of no more than three members to prepare arguments advocating voters' approval of the measure and appoint a committee to prepare arguments advocating voters' rejection of the measure. If the jurisdiction fails to make such appointments, the County Auditor will, whenever possible, make the appointments.

More information concerning the voters' pamphlet can be found in the "Administrative Rules for Ballot Measures Statements". You may request a copy at the Elections Office or find a copy on the Elections web page at www.sanjuancountywa.gov/elections

Ballot Order

State law determines the order of offices and measures on the ballot at the federal or state level. For local offices and measures, the order they appear on the ballot is established by the county.

Order of offices

The offices will appear in the following order:

Order of Measures

- Advisory votes
- Initiatives to the people
- Referendum measures
- Referendum bills
- Initiatives to the Legislature and alternate proposals
- Proposed Constitutional amendments
- Senate Joint Resolutions
- House Joint Resolutions
- Countywide ballot measures

Federal Offices

- President and Vice-President of the United States
- United States Senator
- United States Representative

State Offices

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of State
- State Treasurer
- State Auditor
- Attorney General
- Commissioner of Public Lands
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Insurance Commissioner
- State Senator
- State Representative

County Offices

- Assessor
- Auditor
- Clerk
- Council Member
- Prosecutor
- Sheriff
- Treasurer

Town of Friday Harbor

- Mayor
- Council

Town of Friday Harbor Measures

- Proposed Charter Amendments
- Annexation Measures
- General Obligation Bonds
- Tax Levies

State and County Judicial Offices

- Justices of the Supreme Court
- Judges of the Court of Appeals
- Judges of the Superior Court
- Judges of the District Court

Junior Taxing Districts

- School Districts
- Fire Protection Districts
- Port Districts
- Park & Recreation Districts
- Cemetery Districts
- Public Hospital Districts
- Sewer/Water Districts
- Library Districts
- Solid Waste District

Junior Taxing Jurisdiction ballot measures shall be listed following the offices for the same district in the following order:

- Formation or Dissolution of District
- Annexation Measures
- General Obligation Bonds
- Tax Levies

Order of Candidates

After the close of the regular candidate filing period, San Juan County Elections will conduct a lot draw to determine the order in which candidate names will appear on the primary election ballot.

For the general election ballot, the candidate receiving the most votes in the primary election will appear first and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes will appear second. If a primary election is not required for an office, the candidate names will appear on the general election ballot in the order determined by the lot draw.

Election Costs

Cost of Participating in an Election

RCW 29A.04.410 states that every city, town and taxing district is liable for its proportionate share of election costs and that special election costs must be borne by the city, town or district concerned. It provides for San Juan County to bill the districts to recover the costs of an Election.

The State Auditor's Office has established uniform procedures for allocating election costs. Election costs are allocated to each jurisdiction based upon its registered voter population as a percentage of the total registered voter population of all participating jurisdictions in that election.

Election costs vary from one election to the next depending on a variety of factors. However, the number of participating jurisdictions and their respective size is the primary variable impacting what the costs will be for the individual jurisdictions. For example, elections shared by four jurisdictions are going to cost more per voter for each jurisdiction than an election with 25 jurisdictions.

In deciding when to place a measure on the ballot, cost is a significant factor, but it is not the only factor that contributes to the decision. Since the cost allocation is dependent on how many jurisdictions participate and how many registered voters they represent, and because these are typically unknown when preparing the estimate, a specific cost or quote cannot be provided. Estimates will be based on a reasonable range, taking into account historical information and specific known information about a particular election date.

Voters' Pamphlet Cost

RCW 29A.32.270 states that the cost of a local voters' pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet and shall be prorated in the same manner as election costs.

Voters' Pamphlet costs are captured separately and are allocated to participating jurisdictions based on the number of registered voters.



Sample
allocated cost
from a past election

County name San Juan County

2009 General									
TOTAL ALLOCATED COST \$45,955.13									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Jurisdiction	Registered Voters	Issues & Office #	Issue and Office Factor	Weighted Registration Factor	Percentage Cost Factor	Allocation of Election Costs	Total Min. Fee	Direct Costs	Adjusted TOTAL COST
State	11,542	2	1.2	13,850	0.140953	\$ 6,477.52	\$ 50		\$ 6,527.52
County	11,542	2	1.2	13,850	0.140953	\$ 6,477.52	\$ 50		\$ 6,527.52
Town of FH	1,321	4	1.6	2,114	0.021510	\$ 988.48	\$ 50		\$ 1,038.48
SJ School 149	5,695	2	1.2	6,834	0.069548	\$ 3,196.11	\$ 50		\$ 3,246.11
Orcas School 137	3,711	3	1.4	5,195	0.052873	\$ 2,429.77	\$ 50		\$ 2,479.77
Lopez School 144	1,938	3	1.4	2,713	0.027612	\$ 1,268.90	\$ 50		\$ 1,318.90
Shaw School 10	198	1	1	198	0.002015	\$ 92.60	\$ 50		\$ 142.60
SJ Fire 3	4,318	1	1	4,318	0.043944	\$ 2,019.43	\$ 50		\$ 2,069.43
Orcas Fire 2	3,582	2	1.2	4,298	0.043744	\$ 2,010.27	\$ 50		\$ 2,060.27
Lopez Fire 4	1,853	1	1	1,853	0.018858	\$ 866.61	\$ 50		\$ 916.61
Shaw Fire 5	198	1	1	198	0.002015	\$ 92.60	\$ 50		\$ 142.60
Port FH	5,617	1	1	5,617	0.057163	\$ 2,626.95	\$ 50		\$ 2,676.95
Port Orcas	1,591	2	1.2	1,909	0.019430	\$ 892.89	\$ 50		\$ 942.89
Port Lopez	1,853	1	1	1,853	0.018858	\$ 866.61	\$ 50		\$ 916.61
SJ Park & Rec	5,617	4	1.6	8,987	0.091461	\$ 4,203.11	\$ 50		\$ 4,253.11
Ol Park & Rec	3,582	6	2	7,164	0.072907	\$ 3,350.44	\$ 50		\$ 3,400.44
SJ Cemetery 1	5,617	1	1	5,617	0.057163	\$ 2,626.95	\$ 50		\$ 2,676.95
Orcas Cemetery 3	2,771	1	1	2,771	0.028200	\$ 1,295.93	\$ 50		\$ 1,345.93
Stuart Cemetery 2	42	3	1.4	59	0.000598	\$ 27.50	\$ 50		\$ 77.50
SJ Hospital 1	5,695	2	1.2	6,834	0.069548	\$ 3,196.11	\$ 50		\$ 3,246.11
Cattle Point Water	52	3	1.4	73	0.000741	\$ 34.05	\$ 50		\$ 84.05
Eastsound S&W	1,491	2	1.2	1,789	0.018208	\$ 836.77	\$ 50		\$ 886.77
Fish Bay Sewer	139	2	1.2	167	0.001697	\$ 78.01	\$ 50		\$ 128.01
TOTALS		50		98,262	1.000000	\$ 45,955.13	\$ 1,150	\$ -	\$ 47,105.13

Revised Code of Washington

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is the compilation of all permanent laws now in force. It is a collection of Session Laws (enacted by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor, or enacted via the initiative process), arranged by topic, with amendments added and repealed laws removed. It does not include temporary laws such as appropriations acts. The table below shows the applicable chapters for jurisdictions. A view of the laws can be found at:

<https://www.leg.wa.gov/state-laws-and-rules/>

Further information on ballot measure requirements can be found at:

<https://dor.wa.gov/education/industry-guides/ballot-measure-requirements>

Cities & Towns	35.02	Water & Sewer Districts	57.02
	35.17		57.04
	35.18		57.12
	35.22		57.24
	35.27	Cemetery Districts	68.52
Code Cities: Charter & Noncharter	35A.01 - 35A.13		68.54
	35A.29	Port Districts	53.04
Annexations & Reductions	35.10		53.12
	35.13		53.16
	35.16		53.36
	35A.14		53.49
	35A.15		53.47
School Districts	28A.315		53.48
	28A.320	Hospital Districts	70.44
	28A.323	Library Districts	27.12
	28A.343	Park & Recreation Districts	35.61
Fire Districts	52.02 through 52.10		35.69
	52.14		
	52.16		
	52.26		