King County Elections

2021 Year in Review

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on 2021, one word that keeps coming to mind is gratitude. I'm grateful to live and work in a place that continues to remove barriers to voting. I'm grateful for incredible voters who make their voices heard and get involved. And I'm grateful for a team that never hesitates to put in the hard work it takes to ensure that all voters can meaningfully participate in our elections.

While 2021 was undoubtedly a hard year for all election administrators, my team continued to amaze me with their commitment and dedication to accessible, secure, and accurate elections.

We came together to conduct and fully reconcile five (yes, really FIVE!) elections. We dug in and worked together to define our organizational values and affirm our mission and vision statements. We have found new ways to increase transparency and pushed the envelope on voter education, supported our election colleagues around the state and country, and welcomed more election observers to Elections HQ than ever before.

Our team goes into 2022 ready to face the challenges and opportunities ahead. We will continue to put our shared values of accuracy, integrity, equity, service, teamwork, and transparency into action every single day.

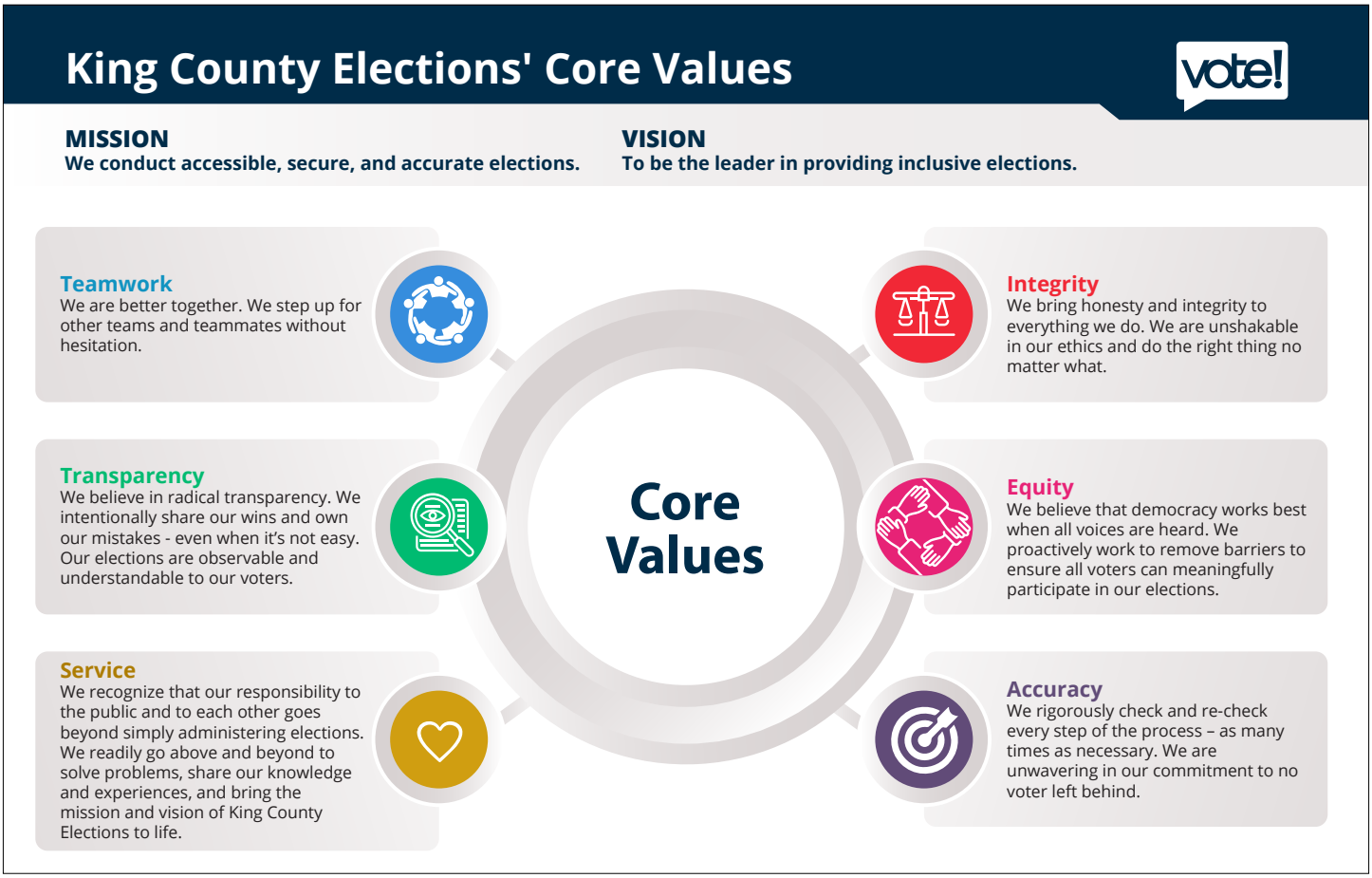
Sincerely,

Julie Wise

Julie Wise
King County Director of Elecitons

Defining Our Core Values

The entire King County Elections (KCE) team engaged in affirming the mission, vision, and values for the organization. We came to those conversations open, honest, and a bit vulnerable, which can be tough to do in a work-setting. Ultimately, it was remarkable how closely aligned in our values we are as a team of seventy people with differing backgrounds, experiences, and jobs within the organization. Integrity, accuracy, equity, teamwork, transparency, and service rose to the top in every small group discussion and were adopted as the organization's core values.



Welcoming Observers & Focusing on Transparency

2021 brought a record number of observers to our facility and a record number of public disclosure requests to our inboxes here at King County Elections. Our team worked collaboratively with both major political parties to increase the access that observers have within our facility, responded to public disclosure requests that have increased in both volume and complexity, and answered thousands of questions about what the law says about accessing and returning a ballot.

Our team also debuted a new data dashboard that features information on ballots returned, broken down in variety of ways from district to ballot status to voter age and more. Publicly available on our website and updated at least twice daily during the voting period, the dashboard provides near real-time data on the ballots our voters have returned, providing a deeper look for those who want to dig into the numbers.

Restoration of Voting Rights for Those on Community Supervision

In the 2021 session, legislators passed a bill that restores voting rights for those formerly incarcerated for a felony conviction. The legislation restores rights immediately upon release, regardless of community supervision status or any outstanding legal fines or fees.

Director Julie Wise testified in support of this legislation many times during its journey through the state legislature. This legislation creates clarity for voters and election administrators alike, while removing barriers for all who have been convicted of a felony.

As of January 1, 2022, it's simple – if you are otherwise eligible and not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, you can register and vote.

Award-Winning Work, Nationally Recognized

This year, KCE was recognized by both the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and the Elections Center for innovation in elections.

We were honored to be awarded the EAC's Clearinghouse Award for Outstanding Innovation (Large Jurisdiction) for our first-of-its-kind Voter Education Fund. This award is designed to recognize programs that creatively improve election administration and advance new and innovative concepts.

KCE was also awarded Elections' Center Eagles Award – Use of Technology for the Esri application suite that powers our impressive ballot collection operation. This custom app suite improves efficiency and communication, as well as provides real-time tracking and data from our ballot collection teams while they're in the field emptying drop boxes and transporting ballots back to the KCE facility.

Demystifying What It Takes to Become a Candidate

Here at KCE, we know that democracy works best when all voices are heard, and that people are more likely to cast their vote when they see candidates on the ballot who look like them or represent their community and values. While KCE works to remove barriers to voting itself, we also work to find ways to make other entry points to democracy a little easier, including running for office.

In the months leading up to May's filing week, our team hosted a series of candidate workshops that trained 155 potential candidates for office. Covered in the workshops were topics such as filing requirements, deadlines, and fees, as well as Voter Pamphlet statement guidelines. The Public Disclosure Commission and Seattle Ethics & Elections Commission also joined us to provide information on campaign finance rules and the City's democracy voucher program.

Kicking Off Fifth Voter Education Fund Cohort with Nearly $1M in Grants

The Voter Education Fund (VEF) kicked off its fifth grant cycle with nearly $1 million in grant dollars to thirty organizations over a two-year period (2021-2022). VEF was created to deliver accurate information about elections to historically excluded communities from a source that they already trust.

VEF community partners receive resources for voter education and monthly trainings from KCE on a variety of topics. In addition, partners are provided with the materials and knowledge they need to reach voters and engage them in the electoral process.

Piloting Risk Limiting Audits

Following the August Primary, the team tested the latest in elections audits, the Risk Limiting Audit (RLA). A Risk Limiting Audit is a post-election audit that checks a random sample of individual ballots to provide strong evidence that the reported outcome is correct. RLAs use a formula to determine how many ballots need to be audited to be statistically confident in the results.
The purpose of the pilot was to see how the RLA process would work for a jurisdiction of our size, as well as to prove that the procedures we've built are efficient and accurate.

In partnership with the Secretary of State's Office, we conducted a pilot that 3,300 test ballots and audited 108 of those. The pilot was successful and confirmed the integrity of our processes and procedures.

Recalling the December Election

It is not often that we see an election in December but 2021 was a year like no other. The City of Seattle saw its first recall election on the ballot since 1975. While the number of voters participating in the election was relatively small (approximately 75,000), interest in the election from both voters and media was enormous.

KCE opened a Vote Center inside the district at the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center to provide in-person service in the final days of the voting period.

Voters in Seattle's City Council District 3 turned out at 54% for this standalone December 7 recall election, just weeks after voting in the November General.

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

Coming off 2020, the team at KCE was ready to assess our operations and dig into the thoughtful work of balancing access, security, and transparency in King County's elections. Our team kicked off work to improve the signature verification process, and how voters are educated about why their signature matters when it comes to voting. We implemented implicit bias training for signature verification staff, increased access to translated information and materials about signatures, emphasized signatures with community partners, and more.

In addition, KCE hosted workshops on ranked choice voting for election administrators across Washington State. Experts from other jurisdictions around the country presented on ballot design, tabulation, and what they learned from implementing ranked choice voting in their jurisdiction. As ranked choice voting and other alternative voting methods remain a topic of interest among lawmakers, it's critical that election administrators be prepared to think through both the big picture and

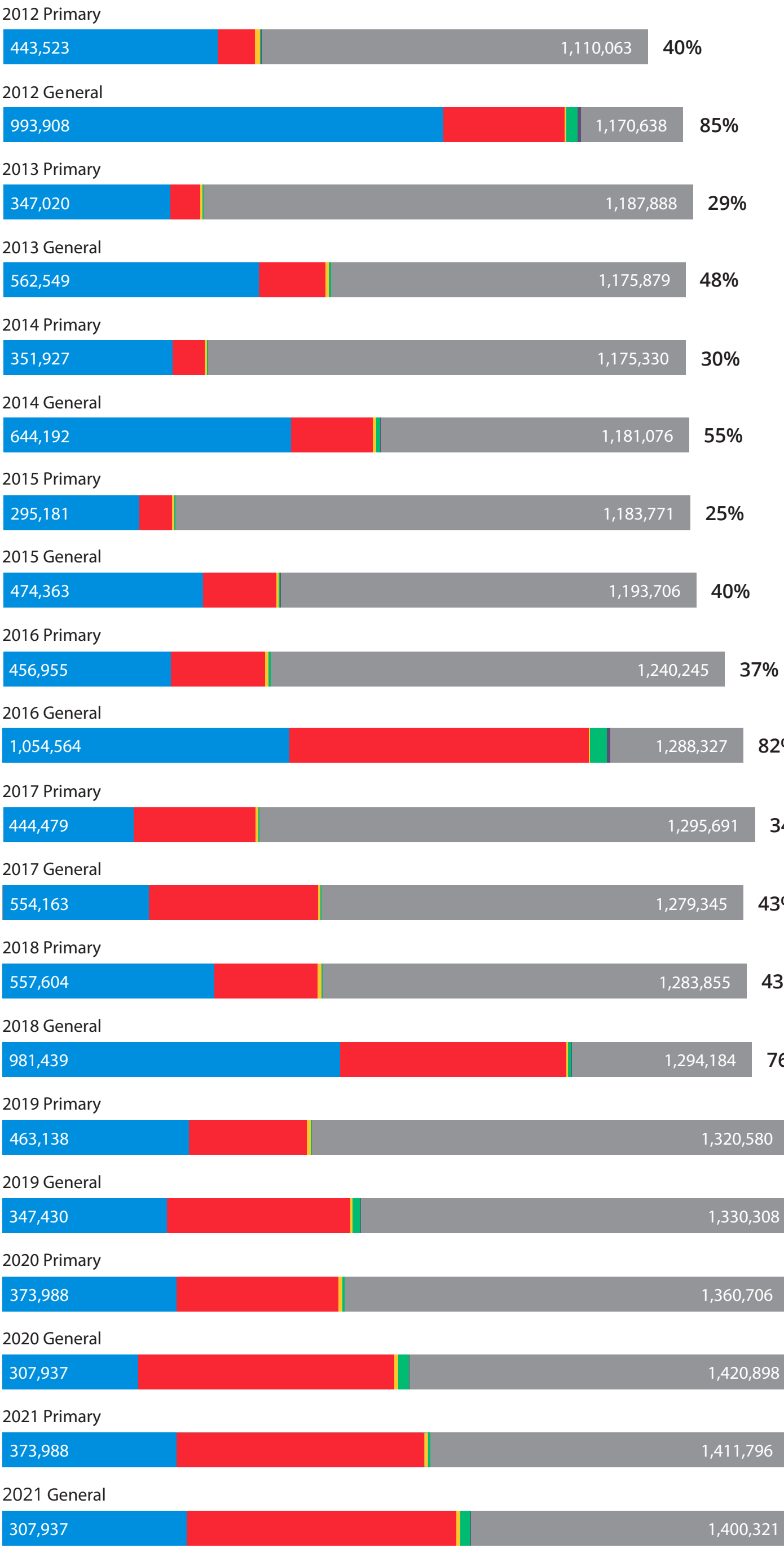
2022 and Beyond

2022 promises to be an exciting year for election administrators everywhere. We will see the General election in November bring out lots of voters, observers, and interest in election administration. And, our team here at KCE is always looking for ways to remove barriers and help our voters make their voices heard.

KCE has asked King County Council to codify the addition of Somali and Russian to our suite of full-service languages, is working to expand capacity to battle misinformation, and continues to be a resource and leader in the world of innovative election administration.

Voter turnout

(total ballots returned / active registered voters)



Active registered voters

Accessible voting centers (includes provisionals)

Alternate format (email, fax, etc.)

Ballot drop box location return

Ballots returned too late

Mail ballots returned

% Turnout

The turnout calculation is based on the number of ballots returned divided by the number of active registered voters.

King County Elections

Appendix B

King County Elections Historical Turnout Information						Included in Total Ballots Counted		
Election	**Active Registered Voters****	**Turnout***	**Total ballots returned**	**Total ballots counted**	**Mail ballots counted on Election Day (first report)**	**Provisional ballots issued (includes those issued by other counties)**	**Provisional ballots counted**	**Ballots cast in Accessible voting units (AVU)**
December Recall 2021	77,579	54%	41,534	41,033	32,129	3	0	0
November General 2021	1,400,321	44%	616,084	607,869	311,424	12	0	7
August Primary 2021	1,411,796	35%	493,554	485,241	242,221	13	0	3
April Special 2021	66,596	37%	24,407	24,126	18,198	0	0	0
November General 2020	1,420,898	87%	1,231,504	1,220,062	1,033,582	73	16	46
August Primary 2020	1,360,706	56%	764,512	764,512	357,582	13	0	1,223
Presidential Primary 2020	1,346,414	56%	752,171	720,404	467,993	43	0	3,955
Feb Special 2020	371,382	33%	122,965	120,895	90,053	0	0	23
General 2019	**1,330,308**	**49%**	**653,645**	**645,685**	**312,930**	**0**	**1**	**0**
Primary 2019	1,320,580	35%	463,144	455,142	279,144	1	0	0
Apr Special 2019	209,898	34%	71,198	69,817	55,537	0	0	0
Feb Special 2019	560,181	32%	178,740	172,153	99,385	0	0	0
General 2018	1,294,184	76%	981,439	968,106	661,655	270	155	0
Primary 2018	1,283,855	43%	557,604	546,550	316,459	29	23	0
Apr Special 2018	112,253	30%	34,143	33,580	25,954	1	0	0
Feb Special 2018	732,461	32%	236,335	233,082	178,001	3	0	0
General 2017	1,279,345	43%	554,163	546,200	292,466	18	15	0
Primary 2017	1,295,691	34%	444,479	437,453	242,057	4	1	0
Apr Special 2017	8,725	53%	4,629	4,567	3,978	0	0	0
Feb Special 2017	63,706	40%	25,366	24,902	18,654	0	0	1
General 2016	1,288,327	82%	1,054,564	1,041,613	615,025	761	428	5,027
Primary 2016	1,240,245	37%	456,955	448,263	232,810	30	22	211
May Presidential Primary 2016	1,233,778	33%	406,298	390,743	317,724	49	31	124
Apr Special 2016	375,199	32%	121,287	119,287	98,091	5	0	14
Feb Special 2016	627,083	29%	179,706	176,617	146,101	2	1	28
General 2015	1,193,706	40%	474,363	467,608	246,090	47	34	274
Primary 2015	1,183,771	25%	295,181	289,596	204,938	12	7	98
Apr Special 2015	1,185,271	25%	299,172	293,372	250,437	1	1	24
Feb Special 2015	86,955	37%	31,755	31,090	26,053	1	0	5
General 2014	1,181,076	55%	644,192	631,020	331,228	130	85	760
Primary 2014	1,175,330	30%	351,927	344,583	266,539	12	5	86
Apr Special 2014	1,174,773	39%	454,197	445,190	363,788	0	0	121
Feb Special 2014	630,721	32%	199,192	195,646	160,447	0	0	9
General 2013	1,175,879	48%	562,549	551,665	262,790	41	35	358
Primary 2013	1,187,888	29%	347,020	340,236	244,529	4	4	106
Apr Special 2013	103,028	29%	29,480	28,974	25,642	0	0	0
Feb Special 2013	414,028	33%	136,706	134,116	108,435	0	0	16
Jun Recall 2013	2,947	50%	1,476	1,453	1,242	0	0	0
General 2012	1,170,638	85%	993,908	978,377	556,083	1,114	573	4,465
Primary 2012	1,110,063	40%	443,523	432,049	223,811	37	27	275
Apr Special 2012	235,040	34%	80,443	78,773	68,037	0	0	7
Feb Special 2012	188,407	32%	60,880	59,257	43,866	0	0	6
General 2011	1,082,929	54%	580,846	564,331	279,744	131	64	542
Primary 2011	1,094,533	32%	349,566	338,255	208,833	5	2	192
April Special 2011	44,422	52%	23,195	22,621	19,889	0	0	6
Feb Special 2011	184,469	39%	72,586	70,757	55,608	0	0	10
General 2010	1,069,791	74%	786,461	766,477	373,941	604	376	2,286
Primary 2010	1,074,731	39%	421,157	406,391	243,755	34	29	274
Apr Special 2010	64,567	31%	19,795	18,628	16,061	0	0	0
Feb Speical 2010	1,029,039	38%	395,624	387,249	291,305	1	0	114
General 2009	1,079,842	53%	587,198	574,298	254,261	102	57	978
Primary 2009	1,090,964	32%	353,239	344,712	182,036	7	2	353
Mar Special 2009	66,886	38%	25,664	24,880	**21,768**	0	0	13
Feb Special 2009	1,117,869	23%	254,852	250,394	**173,607**	1	1	88
					VOTE BY MAIL ELECTIONS	**Included in poll returns ↓**		
General 2008	1,108,128	84%	930,038	911,230	117,500	32,577	27,466	21,166
Primary 2008	1,041,892	36%	370,084	363,197	127,341	3,388	3,061	7,127
Presidential Primary 2008	1,008,189	34%[1]	341,640	No data	No data	No data	1,884	14
General 2007	994,798	47%	Data archived	465,999	144,622	4,979	4,579	10,524
Primary 2007	999,134	25%	Data archived	248,964	120,664	1,218	1,115	3,509
General 2006	974,340	65%	Data archived	635,753	119,240	13,483	11,565	14,800
Primary 2006	955,132	36%	Data archived	342,195	45,521	3,024	2,738	7,576
General 2005	1,017,995	54%	Data archived	547,325	149,601	7,170	6,329	
Primary 2005	1,012,559	30%	Data archived	300,569	90,709	2,353	2,153	
General 2004	1,082,406	83%	Data archived	899,199	233,254	32,996	28,010	
Primary 2004	1,006,839	46%	Data archived	466,732	70,299	5,707	5,165	
General 2003	1,035,764	36%	Data archived	369,779	147,759	1,892	1,793	
Primary 2003	1,029,833	30%	Data archived	304,217	140,875	1,582	1,487	
General 2002	1,031,348	53%	Data archived	548,353	75,053	6,885	6,148	
Primary 2002	1,069,573	26%	Data archived	282,987	62,687	1,294	1,224	
General 2000	1,069,139	75%	Data archived	798,942	152,249	17,082	13,307	
Primary 2000	1,037,394	37%	Data archived	380,126	88,597	2,463	2,296	

Voters verified with voting

Election	Poll/provisional ballots counted	Mail voters verifed as voting	Total voters verified	Active registered voters	% of voters verified
February 19, 2008	35,351	300,358	335,709	1,008,189	33%
March 11, 2008	5,000	49,676	54,676	187,241	29%
May 20, 2008		18,860	18,860	59,998	31%
August 19, 2008	59,057	301,132	360,189	1,041,892	35%
November 4, 2008	282,131	645,572	927,703	1,108,128	84%
February 3, 2009		250,480	250,480	1,117,869	22%
March 10, 2009		24,892	24,892	66,886	37%
August 18, 2009		344,787	344,787	1,090,964	32%
November 3, 2009		574,381	574,381	1,079,842	53%
February 9, 2010		387,287	387,287	1,029,039	38%
April 27, 2010		18,630	18,630	64,567	29%
August 17, 2010		406,428	406,428	1,074,731	38%
November 24, 2010		766,548	766,548	1,069,791	72%
February 8, 2011		70,764	70,764	184,469	38%
April 26, 2011		22,623	22,623	44,422	51%
August 16, 2011		338,278	338,278	1,094,533	31%
November 8, 2011		564,380	564,380	1,082,929	52%
February 14, 2012		59,258	59,258	188,407	31%
April 17, 2012		78,780	78,780	235,040	34%
August 7, 2012		432,061	432,061	1,110,063	39%
November 6, 2012		978,482	978,482	1,170,638	84%
February 12, 2013		134,126	134,126	414,028	32%
April 23, 2013		28,976	28,976	103,028	28%
June 25, 2013		1,453	1,453	3,000	48%
August 6, 2013		340,270	340,270	1,187,888	29%
November 5, 2013		551,712	551,712	1,175,879	47%
February 11, 2014		195,478	195,478	630,721	31%
April 22, 2014		445,224	445,224	1,174,773	38%
August 5, 2014		344,606	344,606	1,175,330	29%
November 4, 2014		631,046	631,046	1,181,076	53%
February 10, 2015		31,091	31,091	86,955	36%
April 28, 2015		293,397	293,397	1,185,271	25%
August 4, 2015		289,620	289,620	1,183,771	24%
November 3, 2015		467,625	467,625	1,193,706	39%
February 9, 2016		176,633	176,633	627,083	28%
April 24, 2016		119,314	119,314	375,199	32%
May 24, 2016		395,389	395,389	1,233,778	32%
August 2, 2016		448,263	448,263	1,240,245	36%
November 8, 2016		1,041,671	1,041,671	1,288,327	81%
February 14, 2017		24,908	24,909	63,706	39%
April 25, 2017		4,567	4,567	8,725	52%
August 1, 2017		437,498	437,499	1,295,691	34%
November 7, 2017		546,219	546,234	1,279,345	43%
February 13, 2018		233,106	233,106	732,461	32%
April 24, 2018		33,585	33,585	112,253	30%
August 7, 2018		546,608	546,608	1,283,855	43%
November 6, 2018		968,206	968,206	1,294,184	75%
February 12, 2019		172,170	172,710	560,739	30.73%
April 23, 2019		69,827	69,827	209,828	33.28%
August 6, 2019		455,183	455,183	1,320,580	34.47%
November 5, 2019		645,730	645,730	1,330,308	48.54%
February 11, 2020		122,965	122,965	371,382	33.00%
March 10, 2020		720,404	720,404	1,346,414	56%
August 4, 2020		764,512	764,512	1,360,706	56%
November 3, 2020		1,220,062	1,220,062	1,420,898	87%
April Special 2021		**24,129**	**24,129**	**66,596**	**37%**
August Primary 2021		**485,302**	**485,302**	**1,411,796**	**35%**
November General 2021		**607,936**	**607,936**	**1,400,321**	**44%**
December Recall 2021		**41,040**	**41,040**	**77,579**	**54%**

**2008 and prior for polls are derived from ballots counted not credited*

Signature challenges 2012 - 2021

Elec□on	Challenged and cured	Challenged and not cured	Total challenged	Total ballots returned	% challenged (total challenged / total ballots returned)	% cured (challenged and cured / total challenged)	% not cured (challenged and not cured / total challenged)	Total not cured (challenged and not cured / total ballots returned)
February 14, 2012	1103	897	2000	60880	3.29%	55.15%	44.85%	1.47%
April 17, 2012	1086	765	1851	80443	2.30%	58.67%	41.33%	0.95%
August 7, 2012	4990	2464	7454	443523	1.68%	66.94%	33.06%	0.56%
November 6, 2012	13238	8925	22163	993908	2.23%	59.73%	40.27%	0.90%
February 12, 2013	1590	942	2532	136706	1.85%	62.80%	37.20%	0.69%
April 23, 2013	340	174	514	29480	1.74%	66.15%	33.85%	0.59%
June 25, 2013	21	13	34	1476	2.30%	61.76%	38.24%	0.88%
August 6, 2013	5187	2550	7737	347020	2.23%	67.04%	32.96%	0.73%
November 5, 2013	7619	4682	12301	562549	2.19%	61.94%	38.06%	0.83%
February 11, 2014	2670	1718	4388	199192	2.20%	60.85%	39.15%	0.86%
April 22, 2014	6050	4683	10733	454197	2.36%	56.37%	43.63%	1.03%
August 5, 2014	4806	2934	7740	351927	2.20%	62.09%	37.91%	0.83%
November 4, 2014	7668	6892	14560	644192	2.26%	52.66%	47.34%	1.07%
February 10, 2015	373	307	680	31755	2.14%	54.85%	45.15%	0.97%
April 28, 2015	2457	1401	3858	299172	1.29%	63.69%	36.31%	0.47%
August 4, 2015	1685	1519	3204	295181	1.09%	52.59%	47.41%	0.51%
November 3, 2015	2803	2108	4911	474363	1.04%	57.08%	42.92%	0.44%
February 9, 2016	874	852	1726	179706	0.96%	50.64%	49.36%	0.47%
April 24, 2016	517	477	994	121287	0.82%	52.01%	47.99%	0.39%
August 2, 2016	1592	1280	2872	456955	0.63%	55.43%	44.57%	0.28%
November 8, 2016	5413	8721	14134	1054564	1.34%	38.30%	61.70%	0.83%
February 14, 2017	209	246	455	25366	1.79%	45.93%	54.07%	0.97%
April 25, 2017	29	31	60	4629	1.30%	48.33%	51.67%	0.67%
August 1, 2017	2107	2479	4586	444479	1.03%	45.94%	54.06%	0.56%
November 7, 2017	2450	3712	6162	554163	1.11%	39.76%	60.24%	0.67%
February 13, 2018	928	1521	2449	236,335	1.04%	37.89%	62.11%	0.64%
April 24, 2018	228	329	557	34,143	1.63%	40.93%	59.07%	0.96%
August 7, 2018	2033	4400	6433	557,604	1.15%	31.60%	68.40%	0.79%
November 6, 2018	4572	9053	13625	981,439	1.39%	33.56%	66.44%	0.92%
February 12, 2019	462	1,046	1,508	178,740	0.84%	30.64%	69.36%	0.59%
April 23, 2019	353	419	772	71,198	1.08%	45.73%	54.27%	0.59%
August 6, 2019	1,863	2,213	4,076	463,144	0.88%	45.71%	54.29%	0.48%
November 5, 2019	2,484	3,067	5,551	653,645	0.85%	44.75%	55.25%	0.47%
February 11, 2020	915	989	1904	122945	1.55%	48.06%	51.94%	0.80%
March 10, 2020	18848	20509	39357	751919	5.23%	47.89%	52.11%	2.73%
August 4, 2020	5376	6870	12246	764288	1.60%	43.90%	56.10%	0.90%
November 3, 2020	10967	10505	21472	1231064	1.74%	51.08%	48.92%	0.85%
April Special 2021	217	130	347	24,407	1.42%	62.54%	37.46%	0.53%
August Primary 2021	3,524	3,606	7,130	493,554	1.44%	49.42%	50.58%	0.73%
November General 2021	3,482	3,870	7,352	616,084	1.19%	47.36%	52.64%	0.63%
December Recall 2021	501	319	820	41,534	1.97%	61.10%	39.90%	0.77%

King County Elections
Historical Election Cost Allocations

Cost Category	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Administration	2,771,388	3,051,229	6,379,953	3,476,526	4,177,756	5,335,486	4,747,858	4,864,309	3,246,677	3,440,937
Advertising	35,903	348,855	284,523	293,634	164,028	129,098	188,304	347,142	53,820	95,767
Central Cost	3,338,669	2,919,686	1,690,888	1,265,295	1,720,616	2,863,684	3,282,084	350,925	3,388,199	3,790,386
Elections Ops./Ballot Processing	1,807,310	744,446	750							
Postage	281,310	350,587	527,280	444,008	600,325	409,329	919,032	600,745	712,452	752,900
Printing and Binding	2,141,998	2,130,565	2,714,159	1,601,188	2,759,974	2,194,503	2,872,808	2,913,160	4,323,613	2,726,330
Supplies, Repairs & Misc.	158,861	182,568	690,578	1,188,514	1,696,522	131,881	479,854	740,846	866,398	760,357
Transportation	8,407	3,785	13,888	22,481	54,546	32,792	15,917	9,180	9,783	8,085
Wages, Temporary Help, Benefits	2,466,275	4,562,024	1,644,397	1,179,404	3,727,119	1,286,906	1,906,644	1,699,938	3,477,430	1,725,284
Capital Cost Recovery	63,309	108,213	83,011	87,089	118,258	93,243	75,974	0	106,547	102,179
County Support	34,467	43,794	86,437	79,619	698,660	633,535	635,834	1,729,897	665,560	643,058
Overhead										
Grand Total	**13,107,900**	**14,445,750**	**14,115,864**	**9,637,759**	**15,717,803**	**13,110,457**	**15,124,309**	**13,256,141**	**16,850,478**	**14,045,283**

Remove building lease payments:	(2,430,000)	(1,430,000)	(2,430,000)	(1,430,000)	(2,430,000)	(1,430,000)	0	0	0	0
Comparative Adjusted Total:	**10,677,900**	**13,015,750**	**11,685,864**	**8,207,759**	**13,287,803**	**11,680,457**	**15,124,309**	**13,256,141**	**16,850,478**	**14,045,283**

Comments:

2016: Includes the Presidential Primary election, which increased total cost.
2017: Building lease payments were absorbed into the department's square footage central cost rates.
2016 to 2018: Cost increases due to State-mandated and Council-sponsored requirements for ballot drop box increases, pre-paid postage for returned ballots, and outreach to community based organizations.
2018: General election experienced voter turnout similar to a presidential election, and therefore increased expense.
2019: Increased temporary labor compared to previous odd-year elections due to implementation of Statewide VoteWA project.
2020: Includes the Presidential Primary election, which increased total cost. No April election.
2021: No February election. Recall election in December (City of Seattle Council District No. 3).