



2025

CLEARINGHOUSE “CLEARIE” AWARD SUBMISSION

CATEGORY

HAVA Grants: Outstanding Use of HAVA Grants in Elections Modernization

TITLE

Bringing Transparency to Elections: A Video Series on the Ballot Process

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Pierce County Elections developed seven short videos that give voters a behind-the-scenes look at how ballots are handled, counted and protected every step of the way to reinforce confidence in the integrity of the election system. The video series was produced using Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grant funds.

By visually documenting real election procedures, the project functions as a proactive election security initiative to reduce confusion, counter misinformation, and strengthen public trust. The series was inspired by the [Election Assistance Commission Guidance](#), and serves as an educational resource that can be used on an ongoing basis.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND INNOVATION

The introduction video and six-part series walk viewers through each stage of ballot processing in Pierce County:

- [Ballot Collection](#) – How ballots are securely picked up from drop boxes.
- [Ballot Sorting](#) – How sorting works when ballots arrive at the Elections Center.
- [Signature Check](#) – How staff verify every voter's signature.
- [Ballot Opening](#) – How opening and preparing ballots for tabulation works.
- [Tabulation and Resolution](#) – How votes are counted and issues are resolved.
- [Observers and Public Access](#) – How the public and official observers keep elections transparent.

To optimize reach across platforms, the videos were produced in two formats:

- Standard horizontal format for [YouTube](#), the Elections website, and broadcast media
- Vertical format for [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)

USE OF HAVA FUNDS

Pierce County Elections used HAVA grant funds to produce the video series in partnership with Pierce County Television (PCTV). This leveraged the county's award-winning in-house media team to keep costs down while delivering professional top-quality videos.

The series was filmed during an April special election. The videos stay specific enough to show real workflows yet generic enough for reuse across years and election types.

HAVA support made this possible, as voter education wasn't in our regular budget.

The modular design lets us repurpose segments for future elections and quickly answer voter questions or combat misinformation. This extends the grant's impact far beyond the initial investment.

DISSEMINATION OF TRUSTED INFORMATION

The video series was initially deployed during the August 2025 Primary Election. The videos aim to foster trust by helping voters understand how ballot handling works. Misinformation takes root more easily when people do not understand how something works.

Tactics included:

- Issued a [press release](#).
- Aired on PCTV
- Published on the [Elections website](#), a trusted official .gov platform.
- Released on [YouTube](#) in standard format for long-form viewing and media use.
- Distributed on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) in vertical format.
- Shared with elected officials, the Washington Secretary of State's Office, and political party observers.
- Promoted through QR codes in official voter materials, including the 2025 General Election Voters' Pamphlet and ballot inserts. (See next two pages)
- Shared with media for use as B-roll.
- Shared with officials invited to Election Center tours to enhance their experience.

This approach ensured voters and media could easily access verified information directly from Pierce County Elections on trusted and official platforms.

2025 GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS' PAMPHLET



LETTER FROM **AUDITOR** *Linda Farmer*

Dear Voters,

Shortly after I turned 18, my parents packed me off to the University of Washington. I signed up for an absentee ballot because I wanted to vote in my hometown where I knew the people and the issues.

By the time you read this, my husband and I will have dropped off our daughter, Dylan, for her freshman year at Oregon State University. She will vote by mail just like I did. (Note to self: have Dylan update her address!)

Now that vote-by-mail is firmly established in this state, she does not have to take an extra step to sign up for an absentee ballot. Vote-by-mail is secure and convenient for everyone, not just college students, and has been widely used in Washington for decades.

In case you're wondering: We use rigorous non-partisan anti-fraud measures to ensure our voting system is reliable. We track ballots by GPS from drop box to election center. We verify it was you who signed your ballot. Ballots are always handled by teams of two.

Protecting your vote is the whole point. Before, during and after each election.

We do everything transparently. If you have questions, just ask. Better yet, come watch the process in person or scan this QR code to watch our new video series that covers each step of the election process. Learn more at [piercecountywa.gov/elections](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/elections).

Linda Farmer
Linda Farmer

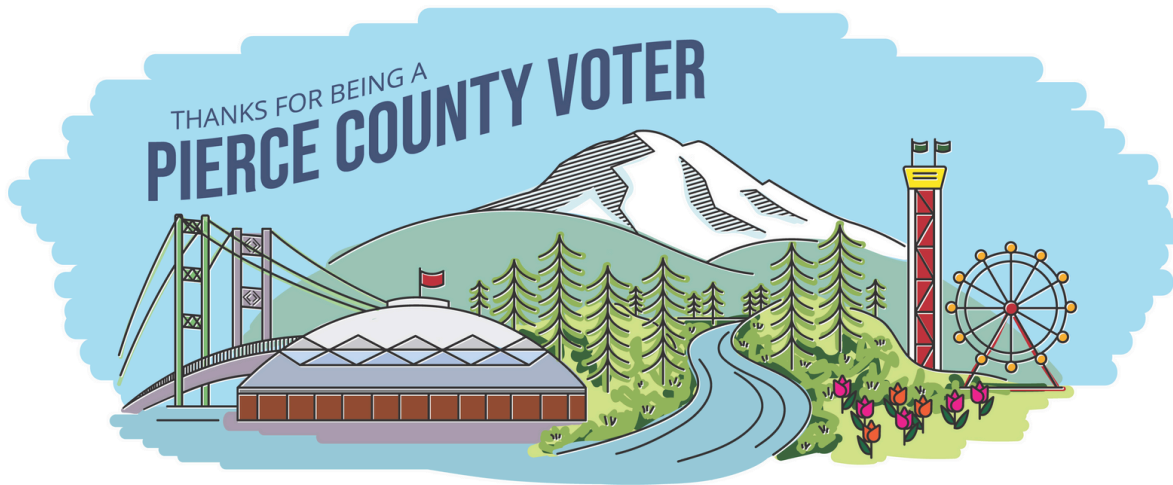


✉ Elections@PierceCountyWa.gov

☎ (253) 798-VOTE (8683)

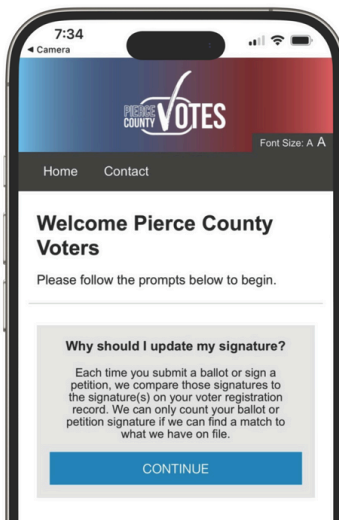
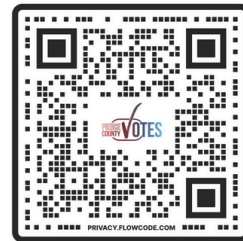
🌐 [PierceCountyWA.gov/Elections](https://www.PierceCountyWA.gov/Elections)

2026 FEBRUARY SPECIAL ELECTION BALLOT INSERT



ELECTIONS OVERVIEW VIDEO SERIES

In this video series, we'll take you through every step of the election process — from the moment we collect your ballot from an official drop box to when it's counted, and everything in between. Scan the QR code and see how your vote stays secure every step of the way.



YOUR SIGNATURE IS YOUR VOTE

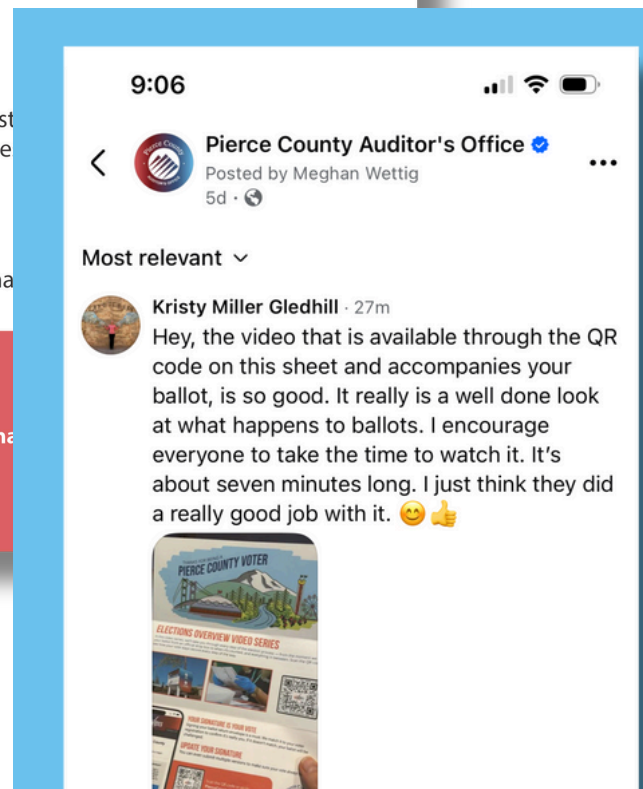
Signing your ballot return envelope is a must registration to confirm it's really you. If it does get challenged.

UPDATE YOUR SIGNATURE

You can even submit multiple versions to make sure you have the most up-to-date one.



Scan the QR code or go to PierceCountyWA.gov/signature to update your signature



Comment from a voter on Facebook



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Each of the six videos was promoted on social media during the August 2025 Primary Election for one day with a budget of \$50 per video (\$300 total), targeting Pierce County voters aged 18 and older and directing viewers to the official Elections website.

Across the campaign there were:



29,484 TOTAL VIEWS



509 LINK CLICKS



151 REACTIONS



38 COMMENTS



19 SHARES

The series produced additional real-world impacts. Members of the public reported visiting the Elections Center to observe ballot processing after learning through the videos that public observation was permitted, reinforcing transparency and public confidence in election administration.

Further, we shared our video scripts and production information with other jurisdictions. This brings the potential to reinforce the messages in the videos through additional trusted voices both validating and amplifying the messages.

CONCLUSION

The election process video series was designed as a permanent educational resource that can be continually promoted with minimal ongoing cost. Because the videos document foundational election procedures, they will remain relevant for years to come and can be re-shared proactively before every election. This type of risk mitigation tool is increasingly necessary in today's world.

The modular format allows Pierce County Elections to update individual segments as procedures evolve or to expand the series to address new processes or technologies.

The project's structure is readily replicable. Multiple counties across Washington State are exploring similar series tailored to their own operations and facilities.

Through strategic use of HAVA funds, Pierce County Elections created a lasting resource that strengthens transparency and public understanding of election safeguards.

SCAN ME
to watch the
video series

