Democracy Voucher Program (democracyvoucher)

About the Program

What is the Democracy Voucher Program?

The Democracy Voucher Program offers a new way for Seattle residents to participate in local government by supporting campaigns and/or running for office themselves.

How did the Democracy Voucher Program begin?

In November 2015, Seattle voters passed a citizen-led initiative known as **"Honest Elections Seattle" (I-122).** ☑ **(https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code? nodeId=TIT2EL_CH2.04ELCACO_SUBCHAPTER_VIIIHOELSE_2.04.600PUAU)** I-122 enacted **several campaign finance reforms (//www.seattle.gov/democracyvoucher/about-the-program/honest-elections-seattle-initiative)** that changed the way campaigns are typically financed for Seattle candidates.

One major reform allows the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) to distribute "Democracy Vouchers" to **eligible Seattle residents. (http://www.seattle.gov/democracyvoucher/i-am-a-seattle-resident)** Other campaign reforms include campaign contribution limits for lobbyists and contractors.

Seattle is the first city in the nation to try this type of public campaign financing. The SEEC is committed to increasing transparency, accountability, and accessibility for how Seattle elections are financed.

When is the next election I can use Democracy Vouchers?

In early 2023, the SEEC will distribute new Democracy Vouchers to Seattle residents. Seattle residents may use their Democracy Vouchers to support participating candidates running for mayor, city council, or city attorney.

How is the Democracy Voucher Program funded?

Seattle voters approved a property tax of $3 million per year in 2015 to fund the Democracy Voucher Program for 10 years. Properties affected include commercial, businesses, and residential properties. The Democracy Voucher Program costs the average homeowner about $8.00 per year.

How are Democracy Vouchers used by candidates?

Assigning your Democracy Voucher to a candidate is the same as donating to a candidate's campaign. Candidates may use Democracy Vouchers to finance campaign activities and are held to the same City of Seattle campaign spending laws under the **City's election code.** ↗ **(https://www.municode.com/library/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=TIT2EL)** Candidates participating in the Democracy Voucher Program must follow strict reporting guidelines to qualify for the program.

In addition to these laws, participating candidates may not use Democracy Vouchers to:

- Make cash payments;

- Reimburse contributors for their contributions;

- Pay the candidate a salary, or pay the candidate's personal expenses;

- Support the candidate in a campaign for a different office;

- Make contributions to other candidates or political committees; or,

- Make payments to family members.

How does the Democracy Voucher Program work?

1. The SEEC will distribute Democracy Vouchers to eligible Seattle residents.

2. Candidates who may receive vouchers are listed on the **participating candidates' page. (http://www.seattle.gov/democracyvoucher/i-am-a-seattle-resident/2019-participating-candidates)**

3. Residents will assign vouchers by writing in the eligible candidates' name, date the voucher was assigned, and resident's signature on each voucher.

4. Democracy Vouchers may be returned directly to a candidate's campaign or mailed to the SEEC.

5. The SEEC will verify the signature on each voucher before releasing funds to the campaigns.

6. All contributions are public information. Your name and the candidate(s) you give your voucher(s) to are public information and will be published on the **program data page. (//www.seattle.gov/democracyvoucher/program-data)**

The Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) administers the Democracy Voucher Program. As a nonpartisan and independent commission, the SEEC also administers and enforces the following codes for the City of Seattle.

- **Ethics (//www.seattle.gov/ethics/etpub/et_home.htm)**
- **Elections ↗ (http://www2.ci.seattle.wa.us/ethics/elpub/el_home.asp)**
- **Lobbying (http://www2.seattle.gov/ethics/lobbyists/lobbyhome.asp)**
- **Whistleblower (//www.seattle.gov/whistleblower)**

View a translated page in:

- **Amharic / አማርኛ (democracyvoucher/amharic)**
- **Arabic (democracyvoucher/arabic-/-عربى)**
- **Cambodian / Khmer (democracyvoucher/cambodian)**
- **Chinese (Traditional)/ 繁體中文 (democracyvoucher/chinese-traditional)**
- **Chinese (Simplified)/ 简体中文 (democracyvoucher/chinese-simplified)**
- **English (democracyvoucher/english)**
- **Filipino / Tagalog (democracyvoucher/filipino)**
- **Japanese / 日本人 (democracyvoucher/japanese)**
- **Korean / 한국어 (democracyvoucher/korean)**
- **Lao / ພາສາລາວ (democracyvoucher/lao)**
- **Oromo / Oromiffa (democracyvoucher/oromo)**

- Russian / русский язык (democracyvoucher/russian)
- Somali / af Soomaali (democracyvoucher/somali)
- Spanish / Español (democracyvoucher/spanish)
- Thai / ภาษาไทย (democracyvoucher/thai)
- Tigrigna / ትግርኛ (democracyvoucher/tigrigna)
- Ukrainian / Українська (democracyvoucher/ukrainian)
- Vietnamese / Tiếng Việt (democracyvoucher/vietnamese)

Democracy Voucher Program

General Questions and Inquiries

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Follow Us

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(http[s]://www.facebook.com/SEAElections)(https://twitter.com/democracyvoucher)

- **Contact Us (democracyvoucher/about-the-program/contact-us)**

Democracy Voucher Program

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(https://www.facebook.com/SEACElections) (https://twitter.com/SEAElections)

City-Wide Information

Elected Officials (elected-officials)

Open Data Portal (https://data.seattle.gov/)

Public Records (public-records)

City News Feed (//news.seattle.gov)

City Event Calendar (event-calendar)

City Newsletters

(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WASEATTLE/subscriber/topics?qsp=CODE_RED)

Top Requests

1. Learn About Democracy Vouchers (democracyvoucher/about-the-program)

2. View Participatating Candidates for 2019 (democracyvoucher/i-am-a-seattle-resident/participating-candidates)

3. Read an Overview for Candidates to Qualify (democracyvoucher/i-am-a-candidate)

4. View a Timeline for Candidates to Qualify (democracyvoucher/i-am-a-candidate/candidate-timeline)

About Our Digital Properties (digital)

Privacy Policy (tech/initiatives/privacy/privacy-statement)

ADA Notice (americans-with-disabilities-act)