How to Get Involved in the Presidential Primary
Reprint of an article in the February 2020 issue of the LWV of Seattle-King County Voter

The League recently reached out to the Republican and Democratic parties in Washington State to ask how voters can participate in the upcoming presidential primaries. The email responses from their representatives have been reprinted here, edited for space.

Kyle Fischer, Communications Director, Washington State Republican Party

*What is your party’s process for candidates to place their names on the primary ballot? What are the deadlines?*

Each major political party decides which candidates are printed on their side of the ballot. On January 7, each major party submitted its final list of names to the Secretary of State’s Office for ballot materials.

*What are your plans for voter outreach about the primary, and are you looking for volunteer support?*

We will be contacting voters throughout 2020 on the importance of voting in the presidential primary as well as the state primary in August and the November general election. We always welcome volunteers to join those efforts.

*How will people designate their party affiliation?*

They check a box on the ballot that says “I declare that I am a Republican and I have not participated and will not participate in the 2020 precinct caucus or convention system of any other party.”

*What is the process for delegate consideration and selection? For people interested in being delegates, what is their application and engagement process?*

Provided this is for national delegates—they are elected at the State Convention. They must file their candidacy with the Washington State Republican Party prior to the convention. There shall be no nominations from the floor. All candidates must provide first name, last name, address, phone number, email, congressional district, and must agree with the following declaration: “I declare that I am a Republican, I am a duly registered voter and legal resident of the
Congressional District listed above, and I have not participated and will not participate in the 2020 precinct caucus or convention system of any other political party.”

**For your national convention, what opportunities for participation exist outside of being a delegate and how would someone engage with those?**

If people are interested in volunteering for the national convention they can contact the Washington State Republican Party at (425) 460-0570.

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**Drew Estep, Party Affairs Director, Washington State Democrats**

**What is your party’s process for candidates to place their names on the primary ballot? What are the deadlines?**

Candidates should have submitted a petition with 1,000 Washington State voters’ names to the State Party by January 3, as well as a statement of candidacy, and a $2,500 filing fee, which offsets the costs of verifying the signatures on our end. That will get them onto the list that the State Party submits to the Secretary of State’s office on January 6.

**What are your plans for voter outreach about the primary, and are you looking for volunteer support?**

Currently the plan covers a number of different axes—digital media and print outreach, a number of informational one-pagers, FAQs and informational videos on our website outlining the process, as well as a dedicated staff member who is currently already in the field to help potential delegates and local parties prepare their logistics. We will also likely be maintaining a hotline to address questions and concerns regarding the process.

**How will people designate their party affiliation?**

The ballot voters receive will be divided by party. One side will be Democratic, and the other Republican. Voters can only vote in one, and we’re working with the Secretary of State as well as internally to find the best language and outreach mechanism to make sure this is communicated clearly to every individual voting in the primary.

**What is the process for delegate consideration and selection? For people interested in being delegates, what is their application and engagement process?**

The Legislative District Democratic Parties will be hosting Caucuses on April 26 to select 1,400 state-level delegates. These caucuses will be divided by presidential preference, and each candidate will receive a percent of delegates proportional to their vote total by Congressional
District, not statewide. Candidates must receive more than 15% of the vote per Congressional District to receive any delegates.

To actually go to Convention in Milwaukee, those 1,400 delegates run in a Congressional District Caucus on May 30; of the 1,400 total, 58 are selected to go to the national convention. The process for the CD Caucus will be the same as the LD Caucus, in terms of breaking out by candidate affiliation and allocation of percentage of delegates. The remaining 1,342 state-level delegates will have a second opportunity to run for national delegate as an At-Large Delegate, at the WSDCC State Convention on June 14. There are 19 of these slots available.

For your national convention, what opportunities for participation exist outside of being a delegate and how would someone engage with those?
Currently we haven’t finalized plans well enough to discuss what this will ultimately look like. The opportunities will likely be few as the Convention is an incredible logistical and financial burden, but we will have more information available at a later time.