



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Temperance and Good Citizenship Day—Voter Registration 2026

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.230.150](#)

Andra Kelley-Batstone

**Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and
School Improvement**

Prepared by:

- **Katie Taylor**, Director of Secondary Education Content
katie.taylor@k12.wa.us | 360-706-3763
- **Hannah Tofte**, Program Supervisor for Civic Engagement
hannah.tofte@k12.wa.us | 360-764-0343

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Header 3.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Background	4
Update Status	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Conclusion & Next Steps	7
Acknowledgements.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
References.....	8
Appendices	9
Appendix A: Title.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix B: Title.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Legal Notice	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year on January 16, Washington’s public schools participate in Temperance and Good Citizenship Day (TAGCD) in accordance with Revised Code of Washington ([RCW 28A.230.150](#)). On this day, social studies teachers must coordinate a voter registration event in each social studies class attended by high school seniors, providing the necessary materials and instructional time for students to complete the registration process in class. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), prepares and publishes materials for educators to support the teaching of elections and voting in Washington.

The Legislature established an annual goal of 50,000 new voter registrations by 17- and 18-year-olds. Between March 1, 2025, and February 28, 2026, a total of 63,309 17- and 18-year-olds registered to vote.

OSPI makes the following recommendations to continue increasing youth voter registration:

1. Designate funding for development of robust, comprehensive K–12 social studies and civics education, through which programs like Future Voter can thrive.
2. Enact legislation that shifts implementation of the Future Voter program from TAGCD in January to National Voter Registration Day in September, to allow the education community to effectively utilize the resources, opportunities, and enthusiasm that are more prevalent during election season.

BACKGROUND

Young people continue to vote in numbers far lower than their older counterparts. Among Washington registered voters, significantly fewer 18- to 24-year-olds are registered to vote compared to any other age group (Table 1). This means that young voters are significantly underrepresented as a voting bloc. Many of the world’s pressing issues—including those that are environmental and economic—disproportionally affect young people, yet this data suggests a need to engage Washington’s young people more robustly in the development of solutions through our civic systems.

Voting acts as a “civic barometer” and illustrates the work that needs to be completed to prepare the next generation to “become informed, engaged citizens” (Herczog, 2016). However, numerous studies indicate that young people today are less likely than both young people of the past and their older adult counterparts to vote, belong to civic organizations, or engage in political discussions and public issues (Center for Information and Research for Civic Learning and Engagement, 2003).

Adult Washingtonians—particularly those who contribute to Washington’s educational and governmental systems—are uniquely positioned to encourage young people to vote. Recent studies show that allowing young people to pre-register at the age of 16 or 17, making them automatically registered on their 18th birthday, increases youth voter turnout significantly (Fowler, 2017 & Tufts University, 2019). In addition, teaching about elections through experiential means, which focuses on application to relevant contexts, has a positive impact on students’ ability to cast an informed vote, to communicate with others about politics, and to feel that their vote and civic contributions matter (Syvertsen et al. 2009). Finally, it is important that young voters learn that they have a place in civic life and a key role to play in democracy as they bring diverse perspectives and experiences (CIRCLE, 2021).

Funding robust civic education in Washington’s K–12 schools, supporting educators in providing high-quality instruction, affording students meaningful opportunities to practice civic participation, and a widespread commitment by adults within Washington’s government to welcome young voices combine to create the conditions necessary for young voters to thrive.

Table 1: Registered Voters by Age Group, as of March 2, 2026

Gender	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	Total
Female	228,820	401,633	443,647	381,192	389,485	707,646	2,552,423
Male	233,616	400,106	436,270	370,217	372,623	606,185	2,419,017
Unknown	19,677	30,292	23,006	14,190	13,611	18,765	119,541
Total	482,113	832,031	902,923	765,599	775,719	1,332,596	5,090,981

Source: Office of Secretary of State, March 2, 2026.

House Bill 1513

To address low youth voter turnout, the 2018 Legislature passed House Bill 1513 ([HB 1513](#)), which amended a number of existing laws related to voter registration and social studies education. The most direct impacts of HB 1513 for young voters were the creation of the Future Voter program and the opportunity for students to register to vote when they obtain their driver's license. The latter is administered by the Department of Licensing (DOL) and the former administered jointly by the Office of Secretary of State (OSOS) and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The Future Voter program allows eligible 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote through the OSOS online portal or by hardcopy registration form. On their 18th birthday, those who pre-registered successfully are automatically registered to vote in the state of Washington. Additional legislation that took effect January 1, 2022, authorizes 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the November General Election to vote in the August Primary. HB 1513 requires public schools to host annual student voter registration events, which highlight the opportunities afforded to students under the Future Voter program. Social studies teachers offer lessons about elections and provide students an opportunity to register or pre-register to vote in class.

OSPI works with the OSOS to distribute materials to assist districts and educators in carrying out this annual work. These materials are available online for free through Washington State's OER Commons, as well as OSOS and OSPI webpages. OSOS collects data sourced from both electronic and hardcopy registration forms to identify how many new voters aged 17 and 18 have registered each year, and OSPI must report this data to the State Legislature annually.

YEARLY PROGRESS

As of February 28, 2026, there are 482,113 registered voters in the overall 18–24-year-old age group (see Table 1). Contributing to that number are the 63,309 Washingtonians ages 17-18 who pre-registered or registered to vote this year (see Table 2). This data shows an overall continuation of growth established in previous years and exceeds the legislature’s goal of 50,000 new youth voter registrations annually. Appendix A breaks down the total number of new youth voter registrants by county.

Of the 63,309 Washingtonians ages 17-18 who registered or pre-registered to vote this year, 56,550 (89%) did so through the Department of Licensing (DOL), with the remaining 6,759 (11%) through the Future Voter program implemented primarily in schools (See Table 2). This represents a notable increase in DOL registrations in relation to the previous two years: 39,445 DOL registrations (69%) in 2025 and 36,605 (79%) in 2024. The 6,759 registrations through the Future Voter program represent a decrease in relation to the previous two years: 17,708 registrations (31%) in 2025 and 9,939 (21%) in 2024.

Appendix B further isolates the number of registrations submitted within the month of January 2026 – the month during which TAGCD is celebrated through youth voter registration events in schools under [RCW 28A.230.150](#). On TAGCD itself (January 16, 2026), 254 individuals ages 17-18 registered or pre-registered to vote, with OSOS data suggesting that 108 of those registrations took place outside of the school setting at DOL facilities. The remaining 146 youth voter registrations that were submitted on January 16 online, by mail, or through a registration drive – which likely include but are not necessarily limited to school-based voter registration events – represent 0.23% of the 63,309 total registrations submitted by 17 and 18-year-olds this year. Registrations submitted near TAGCD (January 1-15 and 17-31) total 2,589, with data suggesting that 1,818 of those registrations took place outside of the school setting at DOL facilities. The remaining 771 non-TAGCD January registrations submitted online, by mail, or through a registration drive represent 1.22% of the 63,309 total registrations submitted by 17- and 18-year-olds this year.

Table 2: 17- and 18-year-olds pre-registered/registered to vote (3/1/25 – 2/28/26)

Early Voter Registration	17- and 18-year-olds pre-registered/registered
Department of Licensing	56,550
Future Voter Program	6,759
TOTAL	63,309

Source: Office of Secretary of State, March 2026.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Overall, Washington’s youth voter registration efforts continue to facilitate young people registering or pre-registering to vote and OSOS’s Elections Division continues to demonstrate particularly strong statewide leadership and commitment to this work. OSPI will continue to provide expertise on effective integration of Future Voter initiatives within Washington’s public K–12 schools.

While the number of eligible young Washingtonians initiating the voter registration process continues trend upward overall, this year’s data suggests that the work of facilitating youth voter registration opportunities is shifting away from the school setting and away from TAGCD in January – breaking some upward trends that had been established over previous years.

There is currently no data from school districts explaining the decline in school-based registrations during the 2025-2026 reporting year. This decline coincides with the State Legislature’s elimination of the civics education proviso during the 2025 legislative session, which reduced statewide funding for social studies and civics education. Although the combined TAGCD and Future Voter program has not received direct proviso funding, prior legislative investments in social studies and civics education were administered through OSPI and supported district-level capacity for civic education and engagement. When school districts and government agencies collaborate to design comprehensive systems for social studies education, they are positioned to provide greater instructional support to educators and students have increased exposure to opportunities for civic engagement, including voter registration.

Recommendations

OSPI makes the following recommendations to the legislature to continue increasing youth voter registration:

1. Designate funding for robust, comprehensive K–12 social studies and civics education, through which programs like Future Voter can thrive.
2. Enact legislation that shifts implementation of the Future Voter program from TAGCD in January to National Voter Registration Day in September, to allow the education community to effectively utilize the resources, opportunities, and enthusiasm that are more prevalent during election season.

REFERENCES

- CIRCLE. (2021, August). *What Research Says: History and Civics Education*. Center for Information and Research for Civic Learning and Engagement. <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/what-research-says-history-and-civics-education>
- Tufts University (2019). *Growing Voters: Engaging Youth Before They Reach Voting Age to Strengthen Democracy*. Center for Information and Research for Civic Learning and Engagement. <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/growing-voters-engaging-youth-they-reach-voting-age-strengthen-democracy>.
- Fowler, Anthony. (2017). Does Voter Preregistration Increase Youth Participation? *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy*. 16. 485-494. 10.1089/elj.2017.0436.
- Herczog, Michelle. (2016). *The California Democracy School; Civic Learning Initiative: A Blueprint for Institutionalizing Civic Learning to Prepare ALL Students for Civic Life in the 21st Century*. Los Angeles County Office of Education; Los Angeles, CA. Retrieved from: <https://www.lacoe.edu/Portals/0/Curriculum-Instruction/HSS/Blueprint%20FINAL.pdf?ver=2017-06-02-100013-040>
- Syvertsen, A. K., Stout, M. D., Flanagan, C. A., Mitra, D. L., Oliver, M. B., & Sundar, S. S. (2009). Using Elections as Teachable Moments: A Randomized Evaluation of the Student Voices Civic Education Program. *American Journal of Education*, 116(1), 33–67. <https://doi.org/10.1086/605100>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Early Voter Registrations, by County

17- and 18-year-old pre-registrations/registrations by county (3/1/25 – 2/28/26)

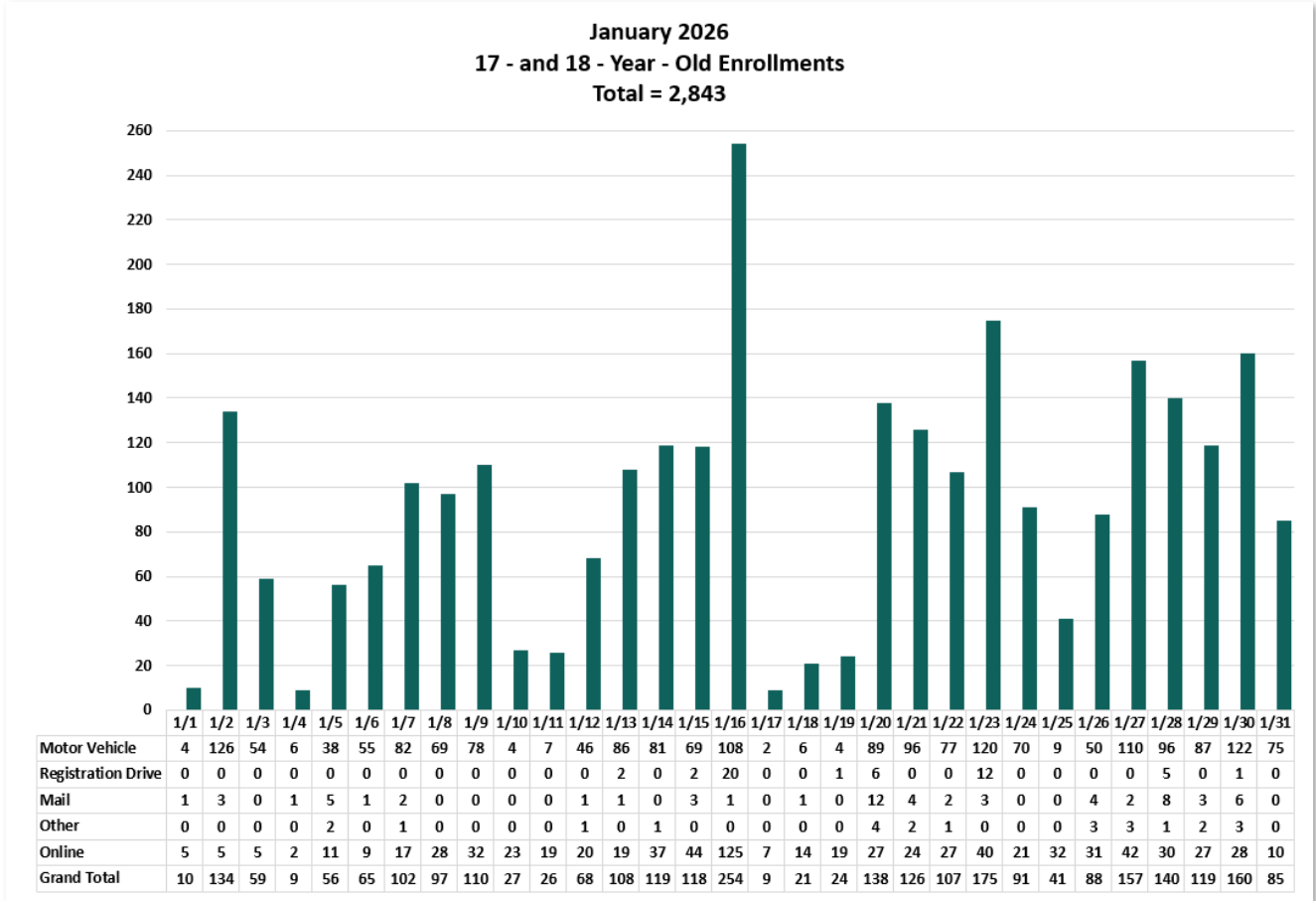
County	DOL	Future Voter
Adams	160	63
Asotin	165	6
Benton	2,005	180
Chelan	590	33
Clallam	451	33
Clark	4,768	422
Columbia	22	0
Cowlitz	992	46
Douglas	379	31
Ferry	66	3
Franklin	962	50
Garfield	9	1
Grant	786	129
Grays Harbor	566	24
Island	628	34
Jefferson	177	22
King	14,567	1,933
Kitsap	1,886	290
Kittitas	292	55
Klickitat	119	41
Lewis	664	129
Lincoln	77	4
Mason	390	42
Okanogan	253	42
Pacific	141	8
Pend Oreille	96	10
Pierce	7,485	941
San Juan	75	19
Skagit	788	158
Skamania	64	15
Snohomish	5,729	703
Spokane	4,160	361

Stevens	415	23
Thurston	2,434	217
Wahkiakum	23	2
Walla Walla	508	22
Whatcom	1,372	232
Whitman	277	18
Yakima	2,009	417
Total	56,550	6,759

Source: Data provided by Office of Secretary of State, March 2026.

Appendix B: Future Voter Registrations

17- and 18-year-old Enrollments in January 2026



Source: Data provided by Office of Secretary of State, March 2026.

LEGAL NOTICE



Except where otherwise noted, this work by the [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution License](#). All logos and trademarks are property of their respective owners. Sections used under fair use doctrine (17 U.S.C. § 107) are marked.

OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200, Olympia, WA 98504-7200.

Download this material in PDF at [OSPI Reports to the Legislature web page](#). This material is available in an alternative format upon request.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Chris Reykdal | State Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building | P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200