

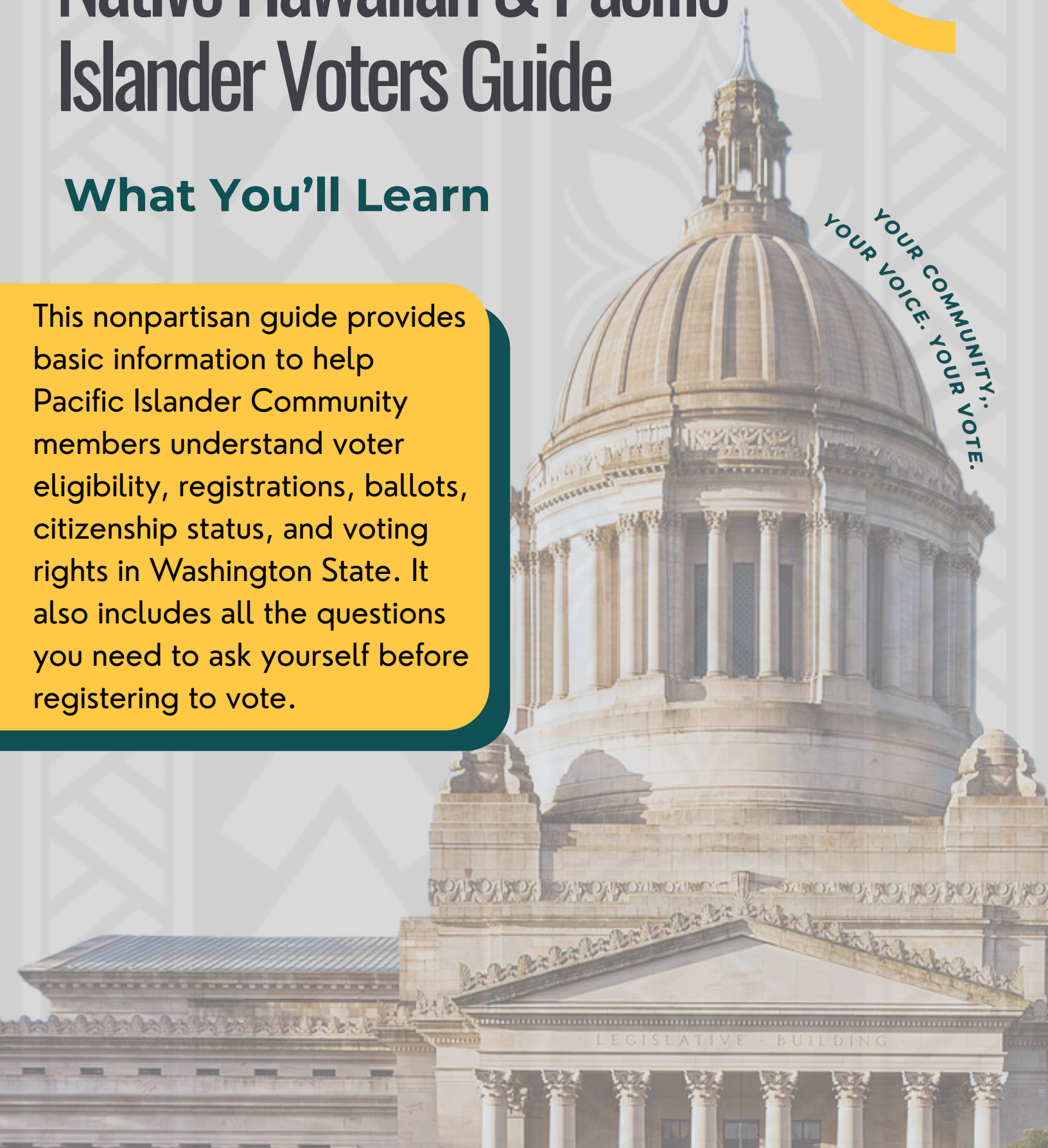
UTOPIA Washington's Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Voters Guide



What You'll Learn

This nonpartisan guide provides basic information to help Pacific Islander Community members understand voter eligibility, registrations, ballots, citizenship status, and voting rights in Washington State. It also includes all the questions you need to ask yourself before registering to vote.

YOUR COMMUNITY.
YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.



Who Can Vote in Washington?

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You may register and vote if you:

Are a US citizen

Are a Washington State resident

Are at least 18 years old by Election Day

Are not disqualified from voting by a court order

Are not currently serving a sentence of total confinement for certain felony convictions.

Young people who are 16 and 17 may register as Future Voters and will become eligible when they turn 18.

Understanding Citizenship Status

This generally includes people born in:

Hawai'i or another US state

Guam

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Puerto Rico

The U.S. Virgin Islands

Let's talk about U.S. Nationals

It also includes people who become U.S. citizens through the Naturalization process.

Most people born in American Samoa or Swains Island are U.S. nationals but are **not** automatically U.S. citizens.

U.S. nationals may generally live and work in the United States, but Washington requires voters to be U.S. citizens.



Can U.S. Nationals vote in Washington?

The simple answer is:

No! Unless they have become Naturalized U.S. citizens by applying to become a naturalized U.S. citizen.

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COFA Migrant

COFA refers to the COMPACT of FREE ASSOCIATION

COFA Migrants are citizens of:

- The Republic of the Marshall Islands
- The Federated States of Micronesia
- The Republic of Palau

COFA citizens may live and work in the United States under the Compact, but COFA state does **not** automatically provide U.S. citizenship.

Can COFA citizens vote in Washington?

Like American Samoa and Swains Islands, unless they have separately become U.S. citizens, they cannot Vote in Washington.

Permanent Resident

A permanent resident is sometimes called a:

- Green Card holder
- Lawful permanent resident
- LPR
- Permanent residents may legally live and work in the United States, but they are not U.S. citizens.

Can Permanent Residents vote in Washington?

No! Unless they later become naturalized U.S. citizens.

Quick Citizenship Guide

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Immigration of Citizenship States	Can vote in Washington?
U.S. Citizen	YES
Naturalized U.S. Citizen	YES
U.S. national who is not a citizen	NO
COFA migrant who is not a U.S. citizen	NO
Permanent resident/ Green Card holder	NO
Visa holder	NO
Undocumented immigrant	NO

Important

Do not register or vote until you are certain that you are a U.S. citizen. Being allowed to live, study, or work in the United States does not always mean that you are eligible to vote.

Understanding Citizenship Status

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Knowing your citizenship status can help you understand whether you are eligible to vote in Washington State.

U.S Citizen

Who they are: People born in the 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as people who became U.S. citizens through naturalization.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if English is not my first language?

You do not have to speak, read, or write fluent English to be eligible to vote.

- Ask your county elections office about translated materials
- Contact a community organization for nonpartisan help
- Ask a trusted person to explain voting instructions (organizations)
- Receive assistance completing you ballot
- Use an accessible voting unit at a voting center

Federal law protects eligible voters from discrimination based on race, color, or membership in certain language- minority groups.

I was born in Hawai'i. Can I vote?

Yes. Hawai'i is a U.S. state. You may vote if you meet Washington's eligibility requirements.

I was born in Guam. Can I vote?

People born in Guam are generally U.S. citizens. You may vote after establishing Washington residency and meeting the other requirements.

I was born in the Northern Mariana Islands. Can I vote?

People born in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are generally U.S. citizens. You may vote if you meet Washington's other requirements.

I was born in American Samoa? Can I vote?

People born in American Samoa are U.S. nationals, not automatically U.S. citizens. You cannot vote in Washington unless you have also become U.S. citizen.

I am Marshallese, Micronesian, or Palauan and live in Washington under COFA. Can I vote?

COFA status alone does not provide voting eligibility. You may vote only if you have separately become a U.S. citizen and meet Washington's other requirements.

I am from Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Nauru, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, or another independent Pacific Nation. Can I vote?

You may vote only if you are now a U.S. citizen and meet Washington's other eligibility requirements.

I have a Green Card. Can I vote?

No. A Green Card does not provide voting eligibility in Washington. You must first become a U.S. citizen through the naturalization process and follow the eligibility requirements prior to getting naturalized.

I recently became a naturalized citizen. Can I vote?

Yes. Once you have completed naturalization, you may register if you meet Washington's other requirements.

What happens if a U.S. National accidentally registers to vote?

Registering or voting when you are not legally eligible can have serious legal consequences. You have to be a U.S. citizen to vote. U.S. nationals like American Samoa citizens are legally eligible to vote in state elections.

Community Reminder

Being Pacific Islander does not automatically determine whether someone can vote.

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Pacific Islander communities include:

- U.S. Citizens
- U.S. Nationals
- COFA migrants
- Permanent residents
- Naturalized citizens
- Visa holders
- People with other immigration statuses

**Always confirm citizenship
and voter eligibility before
registering.**

Immigration/ Citizenship Status	Can Register to Vote in Washington?	Can Vote in Washington Elections?	Notes
U.S. Citizen	Yes	Yes	Must meet all Washington Voter eligibility
Naturalized U.S. Citizen	Yes	Yes	Has the same voting rights as any other U.S. citizen.
U.S. National (American Samoa or Swains Island only)	No	No	Non-citizen U.S. national must first become U.S. citizens
COFA citizen (Federated States of Micronesia)	No	No	Same as above
COFA Citizen (Republic of Palau)	No	No	Same as above
Lawful Permanent Resident (Green Card Holder)	No	No	Must become a naturalized U.S. citizen before
Temporary Visa Holder	No	No	Includes work, student, and visitor visas
Refugee or Asylee	No	No	May become eligible after naturalization

Pacific Island Communities and Citizenship Overview

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Community	Typical Citizenship Status	Eligible to Vote?
Native Hawaiians	U.S. Citizens	Yes
Guamanians	U.S. Citizens	Yes
Northern Mariana Islanders	U.S. Citizens	Yes
American Samoans	U.S. Nationals	Not unless naturalized
Republic of the Marshall Islands	COFA Citizen	No
Federated States of Micronesia	COFA Citizen	No
Republic of Palau	COFA Citizen	No
Fiji	Foreign National	No (Unless naturalized)
Samoa (Independent State of Samoa)	Foreign National	No (unless naturalized)
Tonga	Foreign National	No (unless naturalized)
Tokelau	New Zealand Citizen/ National (varies)	Depends on U.S. citizenship status
Cook Islands	New Zealand Citizen	Depends on U.S. citizenship status
Niue	New Zealand Citizen	Depends on U.S. citizenship status.