

## **Secretary of State**

The office of the Secretary of State was established with the adoption of the State Constitution in 1889.

The Secretary of State is the state's chief elections officer, and as such, is responsible for supervising all state and local elections. The Elections Division produces and distributes the state's voters' pamphlet, verifies petition signatures on initiatives and referendums, accepts declarations of candidacy for federal and state offices, administers voter registration programs, canvasses state election returns, and tests and certifies electronic voting equipment.

All corporations doing business in Washington must register with the Secretary of State through the agency's Corporations Division. These registrations provide information about a corporation's officers, and other related data for use by financial and legal services, law enforcement agencies, the IRS, and the general public.

The Secretary of State is responsible for collecting and preserving the historical records of the state, and making those records available for research. Records dating back to 1854 are held by the agency's Archives Division at the state capital and at five regional repositories across the state.

The Washington State Library became a part of the Secretary of State's Office in 2002. The State Library opened in 1853. Since 1889, the date of the first legislative session, the library has recorded every bill introduced in the Legislature. Its collections include the Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the papers of renowned activists like Emma Smith Devoe, details of Pacific Northwest science explorations of the 19th century, and medical books dating back to the 1600's.

Other functions of the Secretary of State include: registering all organizations involved in soliciting the public for charitable donations; administering the state's Productivity Board encouraging state employees to create solutions to make the state more efficient and effective; managing the Address Confidentiality Program for victims of domestic violence; affixing the State Seal and attesting to certain documents issued by the Governor; and certifying certain matters to the Legislature.

In addition to these constitutional and statutory duties, the Secretary of State is frequently called upon to greet and confer with dignitaries and delegations visiting the state of Washington from other countries.





















