

**Chapter 36.12 RCW  
REMOVAL OF COUNTY SEATS**

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*County seats*

*location and removal: State Constitution Art. 11 s 2.  
not to be changed by special act: State Constitution Art. 2  
s 28(18).*

**RCW 36.12.010 Petition for removal—Financial impact statement.**

Whenever the inhabitants of any county desire to remove the county seat of the county from the place where it is fixed by law or otherwise, they shall present a petition to the board of county commissioners of their county praying such removal, and that an election be held to determine to what place such removal must be made. The petition shall set forth the names of the towns or cities to which the county seat is proposed to be removed and shall be filed at least six months before the election. The county shall issue a statement analyzing the financial impact of the proposed removal at least sixty days before the election. The financial impact statement shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of the: (1) Probable costs to the county government involved in relocating the county seat; (2) probable costs to county employees as a result of relocating the county seat; and (3) probable impact on the city or town from which the county seat is proposed to be removed, and on the city or town where the county seat is proposed to be relocated. [1985 c 145 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.12.010. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 1; RRS s 3998.]

**RCW 36.12.020 Requisites of petition—Submission to electors.**

If the petition is signed by qualified voters of the county equal in number to at least one-third of all the votes cast in the county at the last preceding general election the board must, at the next general election of county officers, submit the question of removal to the electors of the county. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.020. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 2; RRS s 3999.]

**RCW 36.12.030 Notice of election—Election, how held.** Notice of the election, clearly stating the object, shall be given, and the election must be held and conducted, and the returns made, in all respects in the manner prescribed by law in regard to elections for

county officers. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.030. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 3; RRS s 4000.]

**RCW 36.12.040 Manner of voting.** In voting on the question, each voter must vote for or against the place named in the petition. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.040. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 4; RRS s 4001.]

**RCW 36.12.050 Vote required—Notice of result.** When the returns have been received and compared, and the results ascertained by the board, if three-fifths of the legal votes cast by those voting on the proposition are in favor of any particular place the proposition has been adopted. The board of county commissioners must give notice of the result by posting notices thereof in all the election precincts in the county. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.050. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 5; RRS s 4002.]

**RCW 36.12.060 Time of removal.** In the notice provided for in RCW 36.12.050, the place selected to be the county seat of the county must be so declared upon a day not more than ninety days after the election. After the day named the place chosen is the seat of the county; and the several county officers, whose offices are required by law to be kept at the county seat, shall remove their respective offices, files, records, office fixtures, furniture, and all public property pertaining to their respective offices to the new county seat. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.060. Prior: 1890 p 318 s 6; RRS s 4003.]

**RCW 36.12.070 Notice to county clerk and secretary of state.** Whenever any election has been held for change of county seat, the notice given by the board of county commissioners showing the result thereof must be deposited in the office of the county clerk, and a certified copy thereof transmitted to the secretary of state. [1963 c 4 s 36.12.070. Prior: 1890 p 319 s 7; RRS s 4004.]

**RCW 36.12.080 Failure of election—Limitation on subsequent removal election.** When an election has been held and no one place receives three-fifths of all the votes cast, the former county seat shall remain the county seat, and no second election may be held within eight years thereafter. [1985 c 145 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.12.080. Prior: 1890 p 319 s 8; RRS s 4005.]

**RCW 36.12.090 Limitation on successive removal elections.** When the county seat of a county has been removed by a popular vote of the people of the county, it may be again removed, from time to time, in the manner provided by this chapter, but no two elections to effect such removal may be held within eight years. [1985 c 145 s 3; 1963 c 4 s 36.12.090. Prior: 1890 p 319 s 9; RRS s 4006.]