

**Chapter 36.62 RCW**  
**HOSPITALS**

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**RCW 36.62.010 Authority to establish.** The legislative authority of any county may establish, provide, and maintain hospitals for the care and treatment of the indigent, sick, injured, or infirm, and for this purpose the county legislative authority may:

(1) Purchase or lease real property or use lands already owned by the county;

(2) Erect all necessary buildings, make all necessary improvements and repairs and alter any existing building for the use of said hospitals;

(3) Use county moneys, levy taxes, and issue bonds as authorized by law, to raise a sufficient amount of money to pay, finance, or refinance the cost of procuring the site, constructing and operating hospitals, and for the maintenance and capital expenses thereof and all other necessary and proper expenses; and

(4) Accept and hold in trust for the county any grant of land, gift or bequest of money, or any donation for the benefit of the purposes of this chapter, and apply the same in accordance with the terms of the gift. [2024 c 361 s 1; 1984 c 26 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.010. Prior: 1947 c 228 s 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 1, part; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6090-1, part.]

**RCW 36.62.030 Hospital may be jointly owned and operated.** Any number of counties or any county and any city in which the county seat of the county is situated may contract one with the other for the joint purchase, acquisition, ownership, control, and disposition of land and other property suitable as a site for a county hospital. [1963 c 4 s 36.62.030. Prior: 1947 c 228 s 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 1, part; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6090-1, part.]

**RCW 36.62.040 Contract for joint hospital.** All contracts made in pursuance hereof shall be for such period of time and upon such terms and conditions as shall be agreed upon. The contract shall fully set forth the amount of money to be contributed by the county and city towards the acquisition of such site and the improvement thereof and the manner in which the property shall be improved and the character of the building or buildings to be erected thereon. It may provide for the amount of money to be contributed annually by the county and city for the upkeep and maintenance of the property and the building or buildings thereon, or it may provide for the relative proportion of such expense, which the county and city shall annually pay. The contract may specify the parts of such building or buildings which shall be set apart for the exclusive use and occupation of the county and city. The money to be contributed by the county or city may be raised by a sale of bonds of such county or city or by general taxation. Any such county or city now possessing funds or having funds available for a county or city hospital from a sale of bonds or otherwise may contract for the expenditure of such funds, as herein provided. Such contract shall be made only after a proper resolution or ordinance of the county legislative authority and ordinance of the city have been passed specifically authorizing it. The contract when made shall be binding upon the county and city during its existence or until it is modified or abrogated by mutual consent evidenced by appropriate legislation. A site with or without buildings may be contributed in lieu of money at a valuation to be agreed upon. [1984 c 26 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.040. Prior: (i) 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 2; RRS s 6090-2. (ii) 1947 c 228 s 1, part; 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 1, part; Rem. Supp. 1947 s 6090-1, part.]

**RCW 36.62.050 Petition to establish—Beds limited.** When it is proposed to establish such hospital, a petition shall be presented to the county legislative authority, signed by three hundred or more resident taxpayers of the county, requesting the county legislative authority to submit to the electors the proposition to issue bonds for the purpose of procuring a site, and erecting, equipping, and maintaining such hospital, and specifying the amount of bonds proposed to be issued for that purpose and the number of hospital beds. [1984 c 26 s 3; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.050. Prior: 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 3; RRS s 6090-3.]

**RCW 36.62.060 Bond election.** Upon presentation of the petition, the county legislative authority may submit to the voters of the county at the next general election the question of issuing bonds and levying a tax for such hospital. [1984 c 26 s 4; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.060. Prior: 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 4; RRS s 6090-4.]

**RCW 36.62.070 Issuance of bonds—Terms.** The bonds issued for such hospital shall not have maturities in excess of twenty years. Such bonds shall be issued and sold in accordance with chapter 39.46 RCW. [1984 c 186 s 26; 1984 c 26 s 5; 1983 c 167 s 72; 1970 ex.s. c 56 s 49; 1969 ex.s. c 232 s 26; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.070. Prior: 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 5; RRS s 6090-5.]

**Purpose—1984 c 186:** See note following RCW 39.46.110.

**Liberal construction—Severability—1983 c 167:** See RCW 39.46.010 and note following.

**Purpose—1970 ex.s. c 56:** See note following RCW 39.52.020.

**Validation—Saving—Severability—1969 ex.s. c 232:** See notes following RCW 39.52.020.

**RCW 36.62.090 Tax levy by counties with a population exceeding 2,000,000.** (1) If the hospital is established, the county legislative authority, at the time of levying general taxes, may levy an additional regular property tax, not to exceed 20 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value in any one year, for the operation, maintenance, and capital expenses of the hospital, and any outpatient clinics operated by the hospital, and for the payment of principal and interest on bonds issued for such purposes. The limitations in RCW 84.52.043 do not apply to the tax levy authorized in this section and the limitation in RCW 84.55.010 does not apply to the first year that the tax levy is imposed under this section.

(2) Only a county with a population exceeding 2,000,000 may impose the additional regular property tax authorized under this section. [2024 c 361 s 2; 1984 c 26 s 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 195 s 37; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.090. Prior: 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 6; RRS s 6090-6.]

**Severability—Effective dates—Construction—1973 1st ex.s. c 195:** See notes following RCW 84.52.043.

**RCW 36.62.100 Admission of patients—Liability for support.**

Patients shall be admitted to such hospitals in accordance with policies to be proposed by the board of trustees and approved by the county legislative authority. The policies shall provide, within the resources available to the hospital, that admission of patients shall not be dependent upon their ability to pay. Whenever a patient has been admitted to the hospital and in accordance with rules established by the board of trustees, the hospital may determine the person's ability to pay for the care provided by the hospital, render billings for the care, and take necessary steps to obtain payment for the costs of the care from the person, from the person's estate, or from any persons or organizations legally liable for the person's support. [1984 c 26 s 7; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.100. Prior: 1945 c 62 s 1; 1925 ex.s. c 174 s 8; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 6090-8.]

**RCW 36.62.110 Board of trustees—Membership.** Whenever any county, or any county and city jointly, or two or more counties jointly, establish a hospital for the care and treatment of the indigent, sick, injured, or infirm, under the provisions of this chapter, and such hospital is completed and ready for operation, the county legislative authority of the county in which the institution is located shall appoint thirteen persons as trustees for the institution. The thirteen trustees, together with the additional trustees required by RCW 36.62.130, if any, shall constitute a board of trustees for such hospital. [1984 c 26 s 8; 1967 ex.s. c 36 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.110. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 1, part; RRS s 6090-9, part.]

**Effective date—1967 ex.s. c 36:** See note following RCW 36.62.290.

**RCW 36.62.120 Board of trustees—Initial appointment—Terms of office.** The first members of the board of trustees of such institution shall be appointed by the county legislative authority within thirty days after the institution has been completed and is ready for operation. The county legislative authority appointing the initial members shall appoint three members for one-year terms, three members for two-year terms, three members for three-year terms, and four members for four-year terms, and until their successors are appointed and qualified, and thereafter their successors shall be appointed for terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified: PROVIDED, That the continuation of a member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial trustees shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August following the appointment but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August following the appointment.

For an institution which is already in existence on June 7, 1984, the county legislative authority shall appoint within thirty days of June 7, 1984, three additional members for one-year terms, two additional members for two-year terms, and two additional members for three-year terms, and until their successors are appointed and qualified, and thereafter their successors shall be appointed for

terms of four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified: PROVIDED FURTHER, That the continuation of an additional member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial additional members shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August of the year of appointment but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August of the year of the appointment.

Upon expiration of the terms of current members, the successors to current members shall be appointed for four-year terms and until their successors are appointed and qualified: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That the continuation of a successor to a current member past the expiration date of the term shall not change the commencement date of the term of the succeeding member. Each term of the initial successors to current members shall be deemed to commence on the first day of August following the expiration of a current term but shall also include the period intervening between the appointment and the first day of August of the year of the appointment. [1984 c 26 s 9; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.120. Prior: (i) 1931 c 139 s 1, part; RRS s 6090-9, part. (ii) 1931 c 139 s 4, part; RRS s 6090-12, part.]

**RCW 36.62.130 Board of trustees—Additional trustees for joint hospital.** In case two or more counties establish a hospital jointly, the thirteen members of the board of trustees shall be chosen as provided from the county in which the institution is located and each county legislative authority of the other county or counties which contributed to the establishment of the hospital shall appoint two additional members of the board of trustees. The regular term of each of the two additional members shall be four years and until their successors are appointed and qualified. Such additional members shall be residents of the respective counties from which they are appointed and shall otherwise possess the same qualifications as other trustees. The first term of office of the persons first appointed as additional members shall be fixed by the county legislative authority of the county in which said hospital or institution is located, but shall not be for more than four years. [1984 c 26 s 10; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.130. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 1, part; RRS s 6090-9, part.]

**RCW 36.62.140 Board of trustees—Qualifications of trustees.** No person shall be eligible for appointment as a trustee who holds or has held during the period of two years immediately prior to appointment any salaried office or position in any office, department, or branch of the government which established or maintained the hospital. [1984 c 26 s 11; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.140. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 2; RRS s 6090-10.]

**RCW 36.62.150 Board of trustees—Removal of trustee—Procedure.** The county legislative authority which appointed a member of the board of trustees may remove the member for cause and in the manner provided in this section. Notice shall be provided by the county appointing authority to the trustee and the board of trustees generally. The notice shall set forth reasons which justify removal. The trustee shall be provided opportunity for a hearing before the county

appointing authority: PROVIDED, That three consecutive unexcused absences from regular meetings of the board of trustees shall be deemed cause for removal of a trustee without hearing. Any trustee removed for a cause other than three consecutive unexcused absences may appeal the removal within twenty days of the order of removal by seeking a writ of review before the superior court pursuant to chapter 7.16 RCW. Removal shall disqualify the trustee from subsequent reappointment. [1984 c 26 s 12; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.150. Prior: 1933 c 174 s 1, part; 1931 c 139 s 3, part; RRS s 6090-11, part.]

**RCW 36.62.160 Board of trustees—Vacancies.** Any vacancy in the board of trustees shall be filled by appointment by the county legislative authority making the original appointment, and such appointee shall hold office for the remainder of the term of the trustee replaced. [1984 c 26 s 13; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.160. Prior: 1933 c 174 s 1, part; 1931 c 139 s 3, part; RRS s 6090-11, part.]

**RCW 36.62.170 Board of trustees—Quorum.** A majority of the trustees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. [1984 c 26 s 14; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.170. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 4, part; RRS s 6090-12, part.]

**RCW 36.62.180 Board of trustees—Powers and duties.** The board of trustees shall:

(1) Have general supervision and care of such hospitals and institutions and the buildings and grounds thereof and power to do everything necessary to the proper maintenance and operation thereof within the limits of approved budgets and the appropriations authorized;

(2) Elect from among its members a president and vice president;

(3) Adopt bylaws and rules for its own guidance and for the government of the hospital;

(4) Prepare annually a budget covering both hospital operations and capital projects, in accordance with the provisions of applicable law, and file such budgets with the county treasurer or if the hospital has been established by more than one county, with the county treasurer of each county, and if a city has contributed to the establishment of the hospital, with the official of the city charged by law with the preparation of the city budget; and

(5) File with the legislative authority of each county and city contributing to the establishment of such hospital, at a time to be determined by the county legislative authority of the county in which the hospital is located, a report covering the proceedings of the board with reference to the hospital during the preceding twelve months and an annual financial report and statement. [1984 c 26 s 15; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.180. Prior: 1945 c 118 s 1, part; 1931 c 139 s 7, part; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 6090-15, part.]

**RCW 36.62.190 Board of trustees—Authority to accept gifts and bequests.** The board of trustees may accept property by gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise for the use of such institution, except that acceptance of any interest in real property shall be by prior

authorization by the county. [1984 c 26 s 16; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.190. Prior: (i) 1945 c 118 s 1, part; 1931 c 139 s 7, part; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 6090-15, part. (ii) 1931 c 139 s 8; RRS s 6090-16.]

**RCW 36.62.200 Board of trustees—Trustees not compensated—Contract interest barred—Reimbursement for travel expenses.** No trustee shall receive any compensation or emolument whatever for services as trustee; nor shall any trustee have or acquire any personal interest in any lease or contract whatsoever, made by the county or board of trustees with respect to such hospital or institution: PROVIDED, That each member of a board of trustees of a county hospital may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended: PROVIDED FURTHER, That, in addition, trustees of a county hospital shall be reimbursed for travel expenses for traveling from their home to a trustee meeting at a rate provided for in RCW 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended. [1984 c 26 s 17; 1979 ex.s. c 17 s 1; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.200. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 5; RRS s 6090-13.]

**RCW 36.62.210 Superintendent—Appointment—Salary.** The board of trustees shall appoint a superintendent who shall be appointed for an indefinite time and be removable at the will of the board of trustees. Appointments and removals shall be by resolution, introduced at a regular meeting and adopted at a subsequent regular meeting by a majority vote. The superintendent shall receive such salary as the board of trustees shall fix by resolution. [1984 c 26 s 18; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.210. Prior: 1945 c 118 s 1, part; 1931 c 139 s 7, part; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 6090-15, part.]

**RCW 36.62.230 Superintendent—Duties.** The superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the hospital or institution and shall perform all administrative services necessary to the efficient and economical conduct of the hospital or institution and the admission and proper care of persons properly entitled to the services thereof as provided by law or by the rules and regulations of the board of trustees. [1984 c 26 s 19; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.230. Prior: 1931 c 139 s 9; RRS s 6090-17.]

**RCW 36.62.252 County hospital fund—Established—Purpose—Monthly report.** Every county which maintains a county hospital or infirmary shall establish a "county hospital fund" into which fund shall be deposited all unrestricted moneys received from any source for hospital or infirmary services including money received for services to recipients of public assistance and other persons without income and resources sufficient to secure such services. The county may maintain other funds for restricted moneys. Obligations incurred by the hospital shall be paid from such funds by the county treasurer in the same manner as general county obligations are paid, except that in counties where a contract has been executed in accordance with RCW 36.62.290, warrants may be issued by the hospital administrator for the hospital, if authorized by the county legislative authority and the county treasurer. The county treasurer shall furnish to the county

legislative authority a monthly report of receipts and disbursements in the county hospital funds which report shall also show the balance of cash on hand. [2016 c 95 s 7; 1984 c 26 s 20; 1971 ex.s. c 277 s 1; 1967 ex.s. c 36 s 3; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.252. Prior: 1961 c 144 s 1; 1951 c 256 s 1.]

**Intent—2016 c 95:** "Local governments must be efficient and prudent stewards of our residents' tax resources. To best serve our communities, certain local government statutes must be amended to reflect technological and organizational change. It is the intent of the legislature to clarify current authorities so that local government can better serve their residents, and it is the intent of the legislature that the following sections allow local government to pursue modern methods of serving their residents while preserving the public's right to access public records, and judiciously using scarce county resources to achieve maximum benefit." [2016 c 95 s 1.]

**Effective date—1967 ex.s. c 36:** See note following RCW 36.62.290.

**RCW 36.62.270 Supplementary budget.** In the event that additional funds are needed for the operation of a county hospital or infirmary, the county legislative authority shall have authority to adopt a supplemental budget. Such supplemental budget shall set forth the amount and sources of funds and the items of expenditure involved. [1984 c 26 s 21; 1971 ex.s. c 277 s 2; 1963 c 4 s 36.62.270. Prior: 1951 c 256 s 3.]

**RCW 36.62.290 Contracts between board of regents of state universities and hospital board of trustees for medical services and teaching and research activities.** Whenever any county, or any county and city jointly, or two or more counties jointly, establish a hospital under the provisions of this chapter, the board of trustees of the hospital is empowered, with the approval of the county legislative authority, to enter into a contract with the board of regents of a state university to provide hospital services, including management under the direction of a hospital administrator for the hospital, to provide for the rendering of medical services in connection with the hospital and to provide for the conduct of teaching and research activities by the university in connection with the hospital. Any such board of regents is empowered to enter into such a contract, to provide such hospital services, and to provide for the rendition of such medical services and for the carrying on of teaching and research in connection with such a hospital. If such a contract is entered into, the provisions of RCW 36.62.210 and 36.62.230 shall not be applicable during the term of the contract and all of the powers, duties and functions vested in the superintendent in this chapter shall be vested in the board of trustees. The board of trustees shall provide for such conditions and controls in the contract as it shall deem to be in the community interest. [1984 c 26 s 22; 1967 ex.s. c 36 s 1.]

**Effective date—1967 ex.s. c 36:** "This act shall take effect on July 1, 1967." [1967 ex.s. c 36 s 4.]



**RCW 36.62.300 Work ordered and materials purchased.** All work ordered and materials purchased by a hospital shall be subject to the requirements established in RCW 70.44.140 for public hospital districts. [1991 c 363 s 76.]

**Purpose—Captions not law—1991 c 363:** See notes following RCW 2.32.180.