

**RCW 70.44.056 Increase in number of commissioners—Appointments—Election—Terms.** In all existing public hospital districts in which an increase in the number of district commissioners is proposed, the additional commissioner positions shall be deemed to be vacant and the board of commissioners of the public hospital district shall appoint qualified persons to fill those vacancies in accordance with RCW 42.12.080.

Each person who is appointed shall serve until a qualified person is elected at the next general election of the district occurring one hundred twenty days or more after the date of the election at which the voters of the district approved the ballot proposition authorizing the increase in the number of commissioners. If needed, special filing periods shall be authorized as provided in RCW 29A.24.171 and 29A.24.181 for qualified persons to file for the vacant office. A primary shall be held to nominate candidates if sufficient time exists to hold a primary and more than two candidates file for the vacant office. Otherwise, no primary shall be held and the candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for each position shall be elected. Except for the initial terms of office, persons elected to each of these additional commissioner positions shall be elected to a six-year term. The newly elected commissioners shall assume office as provided in RCW 29A.60.280.

The initial terms of the new commissioners shall be staggered as follows: (1) When the number of commissioners is increased from three to five, the person elected receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected to a six-year term of office, and the other person shall be elected to a four-year term; (2) when the number of commissioners is increased from three or five to seven, the terms of the new commissioners shall be staggered over the next three district general elections so that two commissioners will be elected at the first district general election following the election where the additional commissioners are elected, two commissioners will be at the second district general election after the election of the additional commissioners, and three commissioners will be elected at the third district general election following the election of the additional commissioners, with the persons elected receiving the greatest number of votes elected to serve the longest terms. [2023 c 369 s 4; 2015 c 53 s 94; 1997 c 99 s 5.]

**Effective date—1997 c 99:** See note following RCW 70.44.040.