

Washington Abortion Laws
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This week's feature is in response to Texas's new six-week abortion ban. We support our friends in Texas and their fight for reproductive rights.

In November of 1970, Washington was the first state to make abortion legal by referendum. Before 1970, it was illegal to give or receive an abortion unless in the rare circumstances of an extreme risk of the person, not including rape or incest.

In 1991, Initiative 120 was sent to voters to codify Roe V Wade in the WA State RCW. It passed by 50.04% to 49.96% What a tight vote!

It involved a very large and coordinated campaign to pass. A coalition of feminist organizations, called Pro-Choice Washington, came together to work towards influencing public opinion and getting it passed. Among the organizations were Seattle NOW, Planned Parenthood, NARAL, The Northwest Women's Law Center (now called Legal Voice), and the ACLU.

As of 2017, Washington was one of the first 8 states to allow abortions to be carried out by non-physicians, but in 2019 the state prohibited abortions after the pregnancy period of 24-28 weeks, or an "elective abortion"--one that is voluntary without need because of medical causes. There is no waiting period required like some states that require 24 to 72 hours between consultations and appointments. If medical causes arise, specific situations do call for legal late-term abortions. Currently, Washington gives people access to 19 abortion clinics across the state.

Beware of "pregnancy crisis center" if you are pregnant and looking for information, you deserve honest information about all your options. You can get that information and the medical care you need at a real clinic, but you will not get it at a crisis pregnancy center. Their mission is to discourage people from seeking abortions and access to birth control. These "centers" or "clinics" are often funded by churches and religious organizations. Crisis pregnancy centers may look like medical clinics; they may even use the word "clinic" in their names. Many are located close to real abortion clinics. They advertise that they provide pregnancy counseling and information about abortion and pregnancy, and they usually offer free pregnancy testing. Look for the words "pregnancy options," "pregnancy resource center," or "pregnancy care center" in your internet search results, on advertisements, and on their signs. There are thought to be over fifty fake clinics in Washington alone, mainly in Seattle, Bellingham, Yakima, Spokane, Redmond, Walla Walla, Oak Harbor and Bremerton.

With countless bills and laws being introduced to state legislations to criminalize abortions, such as in Arkansas, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Kansas, and in particular, Texas, it is vital to understand the laws that Washington currently holds towards legal abortions.

In Washington state:

- It is legal to obtain an abortion in Washington state before 22-28 weeks (unless other medical issues cause the need for an abortion)
- It is legal to receive an abortion under 18, without parental consent or knowledge. [RCWs 9.02.100](#) and [48.43.073](#) and State v. Koome, 84 Wn.2d 901, 1975 make it legal for anyone of any age to “independently consent for their own abortion care”. Moreover, RCW [48.43.505](#), makes it so, “Health carriers. . . protected individual's right to privacy or right to confidential health care services granted under state or federal laws”

Concerning paying for abortion costs, there are multiple plans to follow if financial help is needed:

- Check with your insurance provider. Many insurance plans cover the costs of abortion services if they also cover maternity services
- [Apple Health Managed Care](#) plan or [Apple Health for Pregnant Individuals](#) both help with coverage for people needing access to abortion. You can also receive birth control and other reproductive healthcare from Apple Health
- [Northwest Abortion Access](#) fund is another resource if you do not meet the requirements of the previous two plans.

More information:

[Planned Parenthood of Washington](#)

[Washington Department of Health](#)

[Cedar River Clinics](#)

Sources:

[“Abortion in Washington.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Apr. 2021](#)

[“Doh.wa.gov.” Abortion](#)

[1991 NYTimes](#)

[AKA Jane Roe Documentary on Hulu](#)

[Teen Vogue, Jan 2020](#)

[HBO Last Week Tonight with John Oliver clip about Texas Abortion Law, May 23, 2021](#)