



# Western Elk Hunt Application Guide

Universal Nonresident Workbook — Any Western State | Any Season

Use this workbook to plan your elk hunt application in any western state. It walks you through the universal steps every nonresident hunter must take — from choosing a state to selecting units, managing points, tracking costs, and preparing your application. Pair this with the state-specific guide for your target state.

## HUNTER INFORMATION

Hunter Name \_\_\_\_\_

Application Year \_\_\_\_\_ Primary Target State \_\_\_\_\_

Backup State #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Backup State #2 \_\_\_\_\_

## WESTERN ELK STATE QUICK REFERENCE (2026)

| STATE      | POINT SYSTEM  | OTC?              | APP DEADLINE | DRAW RESULTS | TAG COST (NR)  | WEBSITE                    |
|------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Wyoming    | Preference    | No                | Feb 1        | May 21       | ~\$700+        | wgfd.wyo.gov               |
| Colorado   | Preference    | Limited           | Apr 7        | May 26–29    | ~\$911         | cpw.state.co.us            |
| Montana    | Pref + Bonus  | No                | Apr 1        | April 14+    | ~\$1,100       | fwp.mt.gov                 |
| Idaho      | None (Random) | Draw (new 2026)   | Feb 15       | Spring       | ~\$492         | idfg.idaho.gov             |
| Utah       | Bonus + Pref  | Yes (OTC archery) | Apr 23       | May 31       | ~\$660–\$1,950 | wildlife.utah.gov          |
| New Mexico | None (Random) | No                | Mar 18       | Late April   | Varies         | onlinesales.wildlife.nm.us |
| Arizona    | Bonus         | No                | Feb 3        | Late Feb     | Varies         | azgfd.com                  |
| Oregon     | Preference    | Limited           | May 15       | June 12      | Varies         | myodfw.com                 |
| Nevada     | Bonus         | No                | Varies       | Varies       | Varies         | ndow.org                   |

Note: All dates and costs are approximate for 2026 and subject to change. Always confirm current information at the official state agency website.

## POINT SYSTEM COMPARISON

| SYSTEM TYPE       | STATES          | HOW IT WORKS   | STRATEGY  |
|-------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Preference Points | WY, CO, OR      | Most points draws first — predictable and linear. Top point holders get first access to tags.        | Apply every year. Mid-tier units draw at accessible point levels. Know exactly how many points you need for your target unit. |
| Bonus Points      | AZ, UT (LE), NV | Points increase your odds via squared weight system. More points = more entries, but not guaranteed. | Start early — compound effect is powerful over time. Even 0-point hunters can draw via random portion.                        |



| SYSTEM TYPE        | STATES             | HOW IT WORKS  | STRATEGY   |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Hybrid Bonus       | MT (Limited Entry) | Montana uses preference for general tag, bonus for LE permits. Two separate currencies in one state.      | Focus on drawing the general combo first. Build bonus points for LE permits simultaneously.                            |
| No Points (Random) | ID, NM             | Pure lottery — every applicant has equal odds regardless of history. Points do not exist in these states. | Apply every year without exception. Use all choice options available. New Mexico: consider guide draw for better odds. |

## UNIVERSAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

### 1. Research Your Target State

Use GoHunt draw odds to compare states and units. Know your point level, draw odds, and realistic timeline before applying. Use OnX Hunt to e-scout unit boundaries, public land access, and terrain before committing.

### 2. Purchase Required License

Nearly every western state requires you to purchase a valid hunting license BEFORE you can apply for a draw. This is the #1 mistake nonresidents make. License cost is typically non-refundable. License cost: \_\_\_\_\_ License purchased: Y / N

### 3. Set Application Deadline on Calendar

Miss the deadline = wait a full year. Set multiple reminders — 30 days out, 1 week out, and day-of. Deadline for this state: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Select Your Unit and Hunt Choices

Research 3–5 units before finalizing your choices. Consider draw odds, public land access, elk density, terrain, and trophy potential. 1st choice unit: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd choice: \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd choice: \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Choose Weapon / Season Type

Archery, muzzleloader, or rifle? Early (rut) or late season? Each has different odds and experiences. Archery September hunts overlap peak rut — the most exciting elk hunting available. Weapon type chosen: \_\_\_\_\_ Season dates: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Understand the Point System for This State

Reference the state-specific guide for your target state. Know what happens to your points if you draw, if you do not apply, and when they expire. Points do not transfer between states or species.

### 7. Purchase Archery Permit or Additional Stamps (if required)

Wyoming requires a separate archery permit (~\$72). Some states require conservation stamps. Additional permits required: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

### 8. Submit Application and Confirm Payment

Review every selection before submitting. Verify your payment method is valid through draw results. Screenshot or print your confirmation immediately after submitting.

### 9. Watch for Draw Results

Check email and state portal on draw results day. If you draw — pay promptly. If you don't draw — note your new point total and plan for next year. Watch for secondary draws and leftover tag sales — significant tags are often available.



### 10. Begin Pre-Season Preparation Immediately

E-scouting, physical conditioning, archery practice, and gear prep should start the day you draw. Most hunters who draw a great tag and fail do so because they did not prepare.

### MULTI-STATE POINT TRACKER

Track your points across all states you are actively applying in. Update after each draw season.

| STATE      | SPECIES | POINTS HELD | YEAR UPDATED | TARGET POINTS | EST. DRAW YEAR | NOTES |
|------------|---------|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------|
| Wyoming    | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Colorado   | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Montana    | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Idaho      | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Utah       | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| New Mexico | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Arizona    | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Oregon     | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |
| Nevada     | Elk     |             |              |               |                |       |

### ANNUAL COST PLANNER

Budgeting your applications across multiple states is critical. Plan your annual investment before the first deadline hits.

| STATE         | LICENSE COST | APP FEE | PT FEE | TAG COST (IF DRAWN) | TOTAL ANNUAL | PAID? |
|---------------|--------------|---------|--------|---------------------|--------------|-------|
| Wyoming       |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| Colorado      |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| Montana       |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| Idaho         |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| Utah          |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| New Mexico    |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| Arizona       |              |         |        |                     |              |       |
| <b>TOTALS</b> |              |         |        |                     |              |       |

### APPLICATION HISTORY LOG

Keep a record of every application you submit. This is your evidence and your planning tool.



| YEAR | STATE | SPECIES | UNIT CHOICE | WEAPON | RESULT | POINTS NOW | NOTES |
|------|-------|---------|-------------|--------|--------|------------|-------|
|      |       |         |             |        |        |            |       |
|      |       |         |             |        |        |            |       |
|      |       |         |             |        |        |            |       |
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|      |       |         |             |        |        |            |       |
|      |       |         |             |        |        |            |       |

## RESEARCH TOOLS

### GoHunt

gohunt.com — Best draw odds, harvest stats, and unit research tool in the West. Essential for comparing states and understanding realistic timelines for each point level.

### OnX Hunt

onxmaps.com/hunt — Best mapping platform for elk hunting. Shows land ownership, public/private boundaries, topo, and custom waypoints. Download offline maps for your unit before leaving cell service.

### HuntReminder

huntreminder.com — Free deadline reminders for every western state. Set up alerts so you never miss an application window.

### State Agency Websites

See state table above — Always confirm final regulations, season dates, and fees at the official state agency website. GoHunt and others are reference tools — the state website is the authoritative source.

*"The hunters who plan the most thoroughly hunt the hardest. Treat your application as the first phase of the hunt."*

— HuntingGrowth | huntinggrowth.com