



Vast Majority of NC Votes to Be Tallied and Reported on Election Night; then the Post-Election Processes

The N.C. State Board of Elections anticipates that the results reported by the end of election night will include 97 percent or more of all ballots cast in North Carolina in the general election.

As always, the remaining ballots, including provisional ballots and absentee by-mail ballots that arrive after Election Day, will be counted and added to the totals during the post-election canvass period.

As they become available after all polls close Tuesday night, unofficial election results will be posted here: [Election Results Dashboard](#).

“Please remember that all results reported on election night are unofficial. We will post results as quickly as possible, but our primary objective will be accuracy more than speed,” said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections. **“State and county elections officials take many steps after every election to ensure all eligible votes are counted and the results are audited and accurate.”**

Please see below for details on how votes are counted, how and when results are reported on election night and information about post-election audits, recounts and canvass.

What votes will be counted and reported on election night?

The vast majority of all votes cast in the general election in North Carolina will be reported as unofficial results on election night. All results are unofficial until the statewide certification, or canvass, scheduled for Tuesday three weeks after election day during a meeting of the State Board. (See “What happens after election night?” below.)

If all goes as expected, the following unofficial results will be reported to the public on election night through the [Election Results Dashboard](#):

- All in-person one-stop early votes
- All by-mail absentee votes received by the county boards of elections by 5 p.m. Monday before election on Tuesday.
- All Election Day votes, excluding provisional ballots, which must be researched post-election to determine voter eligibility

When will results be reported to the public?

The State Board will begin posting results publicly after polls close statewide at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday. However, the State Board may extend voting hours at a polling place if polls are delayed in opening for more than 15

minutes or are interrupted for more than 15 minutes after opening. Any polling extension may not be longer than the delay in voting. No results will be posted until all polls are closed.

The State Board will issue a notice if the State Board meets on Election Day to consider polling hours extensions. The public will be able to listen to the meeting remotely.

Below is an *estimated* timeline of the expected reporting of *unofficial* results to the [Election Results Dashboard](#). Reporting times will vary by county. Results are updated every few minutes as they come in from the counties.

- 7:30 p.m.: Polls close.
- 7:30 p.m.–9 p.m.: Counties report results of in-person, one-stop early voting and absentee by-mail ballots received by 5 p.m. Monday before election on Tuesday.
- 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m.: Precinct officials hand-deliver Election Day results to county boards of elections offices.
- 8:30 p.m.–midnight: Election Day precinct results are reported; reporting continues until all Election Day results are posted.

Various factors can affect the timing of results.

What happens after election night?

Elections are far from over on election night. This has always been the case. In the days that follow, the county boards of elections count the remaining ballots, research the eligibility of each provisional ballot, conduct a series of post-election audits, and conduct any necessary recounts. The State Board conducts additional audits to ensure a fair and accurate count.

These post-election processes culminate in the final certification of results, also called canvass. County boards of elections will hold their canvass meeting 10 days after election at 11 a.m. The State Board will meet at 11:00am on the Tuesday three weeks after election day.

Absentee ballots. Mail-in absentee ballots postmarked on or before Election Day will be accepted by county boards of elections until 5 p.m. on election day. Overseas and military absentee ballots also are accepted by 5:00 p.m. on the business day before county canvass. These ballots will be added to the unofficial results during the canvass process.

Provisional ballot meetings. Provisional ballots are cast when an individual's name does not appear on the poll book or other questions arise about that person's eligibility to vote or to vote a particular ballot.

Each county board of elections meets before certifying the results to make decisions on provisional applications submitted by voters. If the board determines that the voter is eligible, the provisional ballot is counted. If the voter is eligible for some contests on the ballot but not others, the eligible contests will be counted. These ballots will be added to the unofficial results during the canvass process.

Sample Audit. Every county conducts a sample hand-to-eye count of ballots in randomly selected precincts and one-stop locations to confirm results tabulated by machine. Counties must conduct their hand-to-eye counts in public.