



# OVERVIEW OF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION POST-ELECTION PROCESS



This infographic provides an approximate timeline of post-election processes for the 2024 Presidential Election from the close of polls on Election Day, November 5, 2024, to Inauguration Day on January 20, 2025.

## 1. ELECTION DAY



Close of In-Person Voting



Inbound Mail Processing



Ballots Returned by Drop Box



Tabulation



Unofficial Results Reporting (Election Night Reporting)

## 2. CANVASS PROCESS



Ballot Adjudication  
Date is State-Dependent



Cure Processes  
Date is State-Dependent



Post-Election Audits  
Date is State-Dependent

## 3. CERTIFICATION



Certification of Results  
Date is State-Dependent



Recount  
Date is State-Dependent

## 4. ELECTORAL COLLEGE



Ascertainment of Electors  
Date is State-Dependent



Determination of Controversy  
December 11, 2024



Meeting and Vote of the Electoral College  
December 17, 2024



Certification of Vote  
December 25, 2024

## 5. SWEARING IN OF CONGRESS



Swearing In of Congress  
January 3, 2025

## 6. JOINT MEETING OF CONGRESS



Joint Meeting of Congress  
January 6, 2025

## 7. INAUGURATION DAY



Inauguration Day  
January 20, 2025

DETAILS

ELECTION DAY



November 5,  
2024



**Close of In-Person Voting**

In-person voting ends at a certain time (unless extended by a court order), which varies by state and locality. Individuals in line at the close of polls are permitted to remain in line and vote. The last polls close in Hawaii at 7:00 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time on November 5, 2024 (1:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on November 6, 2024).<sup>1</sup>



**Inbound Mail Processing**

Mail ballots must be returned using certain methods (i.e., by mail or dropped off at an approved location) and by a certain deadline, which vary by state and locality. Some states require ballots be in the physical possession of election officials by the return deadline, which is typically Election Day, whereas others permit later receipt if mail ballots are postmarked by Election Day or meet other specified criteria. In 2024, mail-in ballot receipt deadlines range from 4:30 p.m. the day before Election Day in Louisiana to 20 days after Election Day in Washington.<sup>2</sup>

Military and overseas voters must also return Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) ballots using certain methods and deadlines, which can differ from those for mail ballot return.



**Ballots Returned by Drop Box**

Ballots returned by drop box must adhere to jurisdiction-specific guidelines and deadlines, dictating when they must be deposited to be considered valid, which vary by state or locality. Not all states or jurisdictions use drop boxes. Similar to mail-in ballots, some jurisdictions require ballots to be in the physical possession of election officials by a specified time, on or before Election Day, whereas others permit later receipt if ballots are deposited by a certain deadline on Election Day. Drop box ballot return deadlines vary from the day before Election Day in certain states to when polls close on Election Day in others.



**Tabulation**









Tabulation is the process of counting votes. Tabulation practices and timelines vary greatly by state and locality. Tabulation can take place in multiple locations (e.g., at individual polling locations and/or central locations), often depending on the types of ballots being tabulated. Some jurisdictions tabulate at voting locations using scanners or direct recording electronic voting equipment. Tabulation reports from a specific voting location or machine can be made available when polls close. Other jurisdictions use secure ballot boxes in precincts and tabulate ballots at a central location. Provisional ballots are tabulated centrally during the canvass period (detailed below) in most jurisdictions.















**Unofficial Results Reporting (Election Night Reporting)**

Many state and local election officials begin reporting unofficial or preliminary election results at the close of polls on election night, known as Election Night Reporting (ENR). In most states and localities, these unofficial results are updated periodically as more ballots are tabulated in the days or weeks after Election Day. Media outlets, along with news organizations and research groups, may rely on unofficial results to report preliminary totals and project election outcomes.

Some states release most of the ENR results early in the evening of election night, while other states release them over a longer period. All states will have updates throughout election night. Late into the night, and in the following days, some states will continue to report unofficial results with minimal changes, while others will report significant updates over time as they continue to process ballots and follow canvass procedures. In all states, results are unofficial, or not finalized, until certification.

CANVASS	
 <p>STATE DEPENDENT</p>	 <p><b>Canvass Process</b> The canvass enables election officials to validate vote counts and conduct audits to ensure completeness and accuracy before certification of election results. The canvass process allows election officials to validate and count ballots that were not able to be counted on Election Day, either because they were received after Election Day, were cast provisionally, or otherwise needed additional adjudication. For each state, there are typically separate state and local deadlines by which a canvass must conclude, and election results are certified.</p>
	 <p><b>Ballot Adjudication</b> Nearly all states offer provisional ballots to individuals who claim registration or eligibility to vote but whose status cannot be confirmed at the time of voting. Provisional ballots are kept separate from other ballots until after the election when a determination can be made as to whether the ballot is counted (or partially counted). The timeline for adjudicating provisional ballots varies by state and locality, but generally takes place during the canvass period.</p>
	 <p><b>Cure Processes</b> Some states allow voters to correct, or “cure” deficiencies related to their submission of mail or provisional ballot packages, such as missing or mismatched signature, lack of required ID, or inability to prove residency at the polling location. Some jurisdictions proactively notify voters of the need to cure a discrepancy. The ability to cure and the cure deadlines vary by state and locality and can continue into the canvass period. In the 2024 election, the latest possible cure deadline is December 3, 2024, in California.<sup>3</sup></p>
	 <p><b>Post-Election Audits</b> Some states require post-election audits as part of their canvass process. Such audits might include ballot reconciliation audits to account for ballots issued and cast, procedural audits to verify chain of custody or other procedures, and tabulation audits that validate the vote tallying equipment. Tabulation audits can vary from a traditional audit that examines how the voting equipment tallied a fixed percentage of ballots cast to a risk-limiting audit which provides human examination of a random sample of all voted ballots to statistically affirm election results.</p>
CERTIFICATION	
 <p>STATE DEPENDENT</p>	 <p><b>Certification of Results</b> Certification is the act of confirming the official election results. This event occurs first at the local level, after officials tally results from all valid ballots and validate results. Local certifications are then submitted to the state chief election official to aggregate all certified local election results into a statewide set of results. The final statewide results are typically certified by the state chief election official, governor, or a board of canvassers. For the presidential election, each state certifies the election of presidential and vice-presidential candidates’ electors to the Electoral College.<sup>4</sup>  Certification deadlines vary by state, ranging from a few days to several weeks after Election Day. The latest state certification deadline for presidential electors is December 11, 2024, in Oregon.<sup>5</sup> In some states, there will be a second or later certification for other contests.</p>
	 <p><b>Recount</b> A recount is a process to determine the accuracy of an initial count. This can include a replication of the tabulation and/or a re-canvass of the election. Not all states offer a recount process. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia provide for automatic recounts if the margin between the top two candidates is within a certain range. In 41 states and the District of Columbia, legally specified people (e.g., candidates or voters) may request a recount.<sup>6</sup></p>

ELECTORAL COLLEGE		
 <p><b>STATE DEPENDENT</b></p>		<p><b>Ascertainment of Electors</b>                      Per Federal law, each state’s chief executive creates and submits a Certificate of Ascertainment listing the persons appointed as presidential and vice-presidential electors to the Archivist of the United States (and others). This certificate must be submitted “as soon as practicable” after the “final ascertainment” of the appointment of the electors, or “as soon as practicable” after the “final determination of any controversy or contest” concerning such election under its statutory procedure for election contests. The certificate must be issued no later than December 11, 2024.</p>
 <p><b>DEC. 11, 2024</b></p>		<p><b>Determination of Controversy</b>                      Candidates or electors who seek to challenge election results must follow state laws and meet the specific state deadlines for such actions within that jurisdiction. Per Federal law, each state makes its final determination of any controversy or contest concerning the appointment of its electors “at least six days before the time fixed for the meeting of the electors.”<sup>7</sup></p>
 <p><b>DEC. 17, 2024</b></p>		<p><b>Meeting and Vote of the Electoral College</b>                      Per the Constitution and Federal law, each state’s appointed electors are required to meet at a place designated by that state on the “first Tuesday after the second Wednesday in December next following their appointment” and cast their votes for president and vice president.<sup>8</sup></p>
 <p><b>DEC. 25, 2024</b></p>		<p><b>Certificate of Vote</b>                      Per Federal law, each state’s electors, after voting, create Certificates of Vote, listing the electors’ votes for president and vice president. This is then submitted to the President of the Senate, the Archivist of United States, the state’s chief election officer, and the federal judge in the district where the electors have assembled.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>If no Certificates of Vote have been received by the President of the Senate or the Archivist from a state’s electors by December 25, 2024 (“the fourth Wednesday in December”), Federal law requires the President of the Senate to request immediate submission of the certificates lodged with the chief election officer of the State and federal district judge.<sup>10</sup></p>
SWEARING IN OF CONGRESS		
 <p><b>JAN. 3, 2025</b></p>		<p><b>Swearing in of Congress</b>                      Per the Constitution and Federal law, the new congress is sworn in on January 3, 2025. Prior to any other business, any Member of the House of Representatives administers the oath of office to the Speaker, after which the Speaker administers the oath of office to all the Members and Delegates present, and to the Clerk; and to any Members and Delegates who afterward appear, prior to taking their seats.<sup>11</sup></p>
JOINT MEETING OF CONGRESS		
 <p><b>JAN. 6, 2025</b></p>		<p><b>Joint Meeting of Congress</b>                      Per the Constitution and Federal law, the U.S. Congress meets in joint session on “the sixth day of January succeeding every meeting of the electors” to count the electoral votes submitted by each state’s electors and declare the winners of the presidential and vice-presidential election.<sup>12</sup> Procedures for how Congress counts votes and addresses objections to state vote counts are detailed in the Constitution and Federal law.</p>

## INAUGURATION DAY



JAN. 20, 2025

**Inauguration Day**

The President and Vice President's terms in office end at noon on January 20, 2025, as required by the Constitution.<sup>13</sup> The new terms of the successor or re-elected president and vice president begin at the same time.

<sup>1</sup> [State of Hawaii Office of Elections](#)

<sup>2</sup> [LA. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 18:1311, RCW 29A.60.190: Certification of election results. \(wa.gov\).](#)

<sup>3</sup> [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) – Table 15: States With Signature Cure Processes](#)

<sup>4</sup> [3 U.S.C. §1: Time of appointing electors](#)

<sup>5</sup> [United States Election Assistance Commission; Oregon State Statute HB 4019](#)

<sup>6</sup> [NCSL - Election Recounts](#)

<sup>7</sup> [3 U.S.C. §5: Certificate of ascertainment of appointment of electors](#)

<sup>8</sup> [3 U.S.C. §7: Meeting and vote of electors](#)

<sup>9</sup> [3 U.S.C. §11: Transmission of certificates by electors](#)

<sup>10</sup> [3 U.S.C. §12: Failure of certificates of electors to reach President of the Senate or Archivist of the United States; demand on State of certificate. 3 USC §13: Same; demand on district judge for certificate.](#)

<sup>11</sup> [U.S. Constitution, amend. 20, sec 1. 2 U.S.C. §25: Oath of Speaker, Members, and Delegates.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [3 USC §15: Counting electoral votes in Congress](#)

<sup>13</sup> [U.S. Constitution, amend. 20, sec 1](#)