

Checks and Balances in North Carolina: Important Dates for the 2024 November Election

North Carolina's elections are governed by a number of laws and regulations that ensure there are checks and balances throughout the process. Bipartisan teams of election workers at the local, county, and state level go through a meticulous list of steps to verify the count and check for accuracy.

Below we detail the dates each of these steps occur to offer greater transparency about the rigorous efforts underway to deliver a free and fair election in North Carolina. For greater detail about verifying absentee ballots as well as the post-election process, [please visit the rest of our series on checks and balances in North Carolina elections.](#)

Importantly, this is nonpartisan educational research intended for 501(c)(3)-compliant purposes only. It is *not* to be used for any partisan, political, or electioneering activities by any organization.

Voting by Mail

- [Friday, September 6](#) - Absentee ballots will be made available to the public.
- [Tuesday, October 1](#) - County boards of election must begin to conduct absentee meetings at 5 p.m. every Tuesday until Election Day.
- [Tuesday, October 29](#) - Deadline for voters to request an absentee ballot. Applications must be received by the appropriate county board of elections by 5 p.m.
- **Monday, November 4**
 - [5 p.m.](#) - Deadline for active military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters to register to vote.
 - [5 p.m.](#) - Deadline for active military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters to request an absentee ballot
- [Tuesday, November 5 - Election Day](#) - All absentee ballots must be received by the county election board by 7:30 p.m. to be eligible to be counted. [Thursday, November 14](#) - Cure certification form to cure deficient absentee ballots must be received by the appropriate county board of elections by 5 p.m.¹

¹“Cure” is the process by which a voter may fix certain deficiencies or issues with their absentee ballot. In North Carolina, a voter may cure their ballot with a cure certificate if the voter did not sign the Voter Certification or signed their absentee ballot in the wrong place.

In-Person Voting (Early & Election Day)

- [Friday, October 11](#) - Voter registration deadline. Extension applies to certain voter registration applications.² Qualified individuals may still be able to register and vote or make changes (except for party affiliation) to their voter registration and vote during [the early voting period](#).
- [Thursday, October 17](#) - In-person early voting begins.
- [Tuesday, October 29](#)
 - Deadline to request an absentee ballot. The appropriate county board of elections must receive the absentee ballot application by 5 p.m.
 - Emergency provision for absence for sickness or physical disability - If a voter expects to be unable to go to the voting place to vote in person on election day because of that voter's sickness or other physical disability, they may make the request for absentee ballots in person to the board of elections after 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election but not later than 5 p.m. on the day before the election.
- [Saturday, November 2](#) - In-person early voting ends at 3 p.m.
- [Tuesday, November 5](#) - **Election Day**
 - **6:30 a.m.** - Polling locations open.
 - **7:30 p.m.** - Polling locations close. All voters still in line after polls close must be allowed to vote.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- [Tuesday, November 5](#) - **Election Day**
 - UOCAVA ballots may be counted starting at 9 a.m.
 - All non-UOCAVA ballots may be counted starting at 5 p.m. Localities may start earlier at 2 p.m. if a resolution was passed previously by the county board.
- [Friday, November 15](#) - County canvass begins at 11 a.m.³
- [Thursday, November 21](#) - County Boards of Elections issue certificates of election, if no election protest is pending.⁴

² If a person becomes qualified to register and vote between the 25th day before a primary or election and primary or election day, then that person may apply to register on primary or election day by submitting a voter registration application.

³ "Canvassing" is the process by which the appropriate authority checks the results from each voting location and ballot counting location for accuracy and compliance with statutory procedures. After these checks, the results from each location are compiled to create results for each race on the ballot. In North Carolina, the county canvass is typically conducted by the county board of elections. The state canvass is conducted by the state board of elections.

⁴ "Certification" is the process by which winners in elections are officially declared following the completion of the canvass. For local races that can be determined following the county canvass, certification will occur after the county canvass. For federal, state, and multicounty races that must

- [Tuesday, November 26](#) - State canvass begins at 11 a.m.
- [Wednesday, December 11](#) - Deadline for the Governor to issue a certification of ascertainment of the state's presidential electors for the certification to be treated as conclusive at the January 6 joint session of Congress to certify the presidential election.
- [Tuesday, December 17](#) - Presidential electors meet at the state capitol to cast their votes.

Recounts

- [Monday, November 18](#) - Local candidates may file a request for a recount to the appropriate county board of elections until 5 p.m.
- [Tuesday, November 19](#) - Candidates may file a request for a recount to the State Board of Elections until 12 p.m.

Election Protests⁵

- [Friday, November 15](#) (BEFORE 11 a.m.) - Deadline to file protests concerning the manner in which votes were counted or results tabulated.
- [Tuesday, November 19](#) - Protests concerning the manner in which votes were counted or results tabulated shall be filed by 5 p.m., if there is good cause shown for delay in filing before the statutory deadline.
- [Tuesday, November 19](#) - Protests concerning an irregularity other than vote counting or result tabulation shall be filed no later than 5 p.m.
- [Monday, November 25](#) - A qualified voter may file an election protest until 5 p.m. with the appropriate county board of election.

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be determined by the state canvass, certification will generally occur immediately following the completion of the state canvass.

⁵ A protest concerning the conduct of an election may be filed with the county board of elections by any registered voter who was eligible to vote in the election or by any person who was a candidate for nomination or election in the election.