

Checks and Balances in Florida: Important Dates for the November 2026 Election

Florida'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 levels go through a meticulous list of steps to verify the count, check for accuracy, and ensure all rules are followed.

Below, we detail the dates for each step to provide greater transparency into the rigorous efforts underway to deliver a free and fair election in Florida. 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

- [**Saturday, Sept. 19**](#) - Deadline for counties to send mail ballots to military and overseas (UOCAVA) voters with accepted applications.¹
- [**Thursday, Sept. 24 - Thursday, Oct. 1**](#) - Counties must begin sending mail ballots to voters (other than military and overseas voters) with accepted applications. After this period, counties must send a ballot to each voter with an accepted application within two business days of the receipt of the application.
- [**Thursday, Oct. 22**](#) - Deadline for voters to request a mail ballot to be mailed to them. Applications must be *received* by the appropriate supervisor of elections by 5 p.m. to be accepted.
- [**Tuesday, Nov. 3 \(Election Day\)**](#) - Mail ballots must be *received* by the appropriate supervisor of elections (via mail/delivery service or in-person return to the supervisor's office or secure ballot intake station) by 7 p.m. to be eligible for counting.
- [**Thursday, Nov. 5**](#) - Voters must file a cure affidavit to correct issues with their mail ballots by 5 p.m.²

¹ Counties may begin verifying mail ballots upon receipt of the voted ballot from the voter.

² "Curing" is the process by which a voter: 1) receives notice from election officials of a discrepancy on the mail ballot certificate; and 2) has an opportunity to correct the issue and have the ballot counted.

In-Person Voting (Early & Election Day)

- [Monday, Oct. 5](#) - Voter registration deadline. All in-person applications must be completed, and all mail applications must be *postmarked* by this date.
- [Monday, Oct. 19](#) - First day that counties may begin offering in-person early voting in elections that include state or federal offices.
- [Saturday, Oct. 24 - Saturday, Oct. 31](#) - All counties must offer in-person early voting in elections that include state or federal offices on each day in this period. Voting must be available for at least 8 hours each day, but not more than 12 hours each day.
- [Saturday, Oct. 31](#) - Last day that counties may offer in-person early voting in elections that include state or federal elections.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **7 a.m.** - Polling locations open.
 - **7 p.m.** - Polling locations close. All voters still in line must be allowed to vote. Voters returning mail ballots to their supervisor's office or a secure ballot intake station must do so by this time.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- [Thursday, Sept. 24](#) - Counties may begin tabulating verified mail ballots at any time after completion of public testing of automatic tabulation equipment.³ Counties must conduct the public testing of tabulation equipment no earlier than 25 days before the beginning of early voting. No results may not be released until after the closing of polls on Election Day.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day**
 - **After polls close** - After polls close, the precinct election board will verify the number of voted ballots, unused ballots, provisional ballots, and spoiled ballots to ensure they match the number issued by the supervisor. The election board must make a written report of any discrepancies and report them to the county canvassing board. After results are tabulated at the precinct, they may be transmitted to the main computer system for compilation of complete returns.
 - [30 minutes after polls close](#) - The canvassing board must report all early voting and tabulated vote-by-mail results to the Department of State within 30 minutes after polls close. The board will then update the report at least once every 45 minutes until all results are completely reported.
- [Wednesday, Nov. 4](#) - **Day After Election**

³ [Fla. Stat. §101.5612](#)

- All precinct returns (except for uncounted vote by mail and provisional ballots) must be delivered to the county canvassing board by 2 a.m.
- **Noon** - Counties must begin tabulating verified mail ballots no later than this time.
- **Saturday, Nov. 7** - County canvassing boards must submit unofficial returns to the Department of State by noon on the fourth day after Election Day.⁴
- **Monday, Nov. 16** - The county canvass for general elections must be completed by noon on the 13th day after Election Day.⁵
- **Tuesday, Nov. 17** - The Elections Canvassing Commission (the governor and two members of the cabinet) meets at 8 a.m. on the 14th day after Election Day to certify the returns for federal, state, and multicounty races and constitutional amendments based on the results of the canvass.
- **Monday, Nov. 23** - County canvassing boards must complete the post-election voting system audit of randomly selected precincts and report results publicly no later than 11:59 p.m. on the 7th day after the certification of elections. Florida law permits the audit to be manual or automated.

Recounts & Election Contests

- **Saturday, Nov. 7** - If unofficial returns show a race is separated by .5% of all votes cast or less, an automatic recount of the race will be ordered.⁶ The secretary of state is responsible for ordering recounts in federal, state, and multicounty races. The county canvassing board is responsible for ordering recounts in all other races.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12** - Canvassing boards conducting automatic recounts must submit a second set of unofficial returns reflecting the results of the recount by 3 p.m. on the 9th day following a general election.

⁴ In Florida, a voter is contacted by the supervisor of elections if their ballot certificate is missing their signature or the signature is deemed to not match the voter's signature on file. The voter then has the opportunity to complete and return a cure affidavit providing sufficient information to have their vote counted.

⁵ "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 Florida, the county canvass is conducted by the county canvassing board, which consists of a county court judge, the supervisor of elections, and the chair of the board of county commissioners. The state canvass is conducted by the Elections Canvassing Commission, which consists of the governor and two members of the cabinet.

³ "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 be determined by the state canvass, certification will generally occur immediately following the completion of the state canvass. In Florida, the bodies responsible for the canvass at the county and state level also certify the results.

⁶ Florida law does not contain a process for losing candidates to petition for a recount. If the margin in a race falls outside the automatic recount threshold, it will not be subject to recount.

- [Within 10 days after midnight of the date the last board responsible for certifying the results officially certifies the results](#) - Deadline for a candidate or other authorized contestant to file a complaint in circuit court contesting the certified results of an election.⁷

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⁷ Election contests for state legislative offices are resolved by the chamber of the legislature in which the contested seat lies, which has exclusive jurisdiction over the eligibility and qualification of its members. Fla. Stat. § 102.171; Fla. Const. art. III § 2.