

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

New Mexico'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 New Mexico. 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](#) - Mail-in absentee ballots for qualified overseas and military voters are sent out.
- [Monday, Oct. 12](#) - Deadline for the county clerk to mail out absentee ballots or rejection notices to mail-in ballot applicants.
- [As ballots are received](#) - Received mail-in absentee ballots are checked for completion.
- [Tuesday, Oct. 20](#) - Deadline for voters to request an absentee by mail ballot. Applications must be *received* by the appropriate county clerk by this date to be accepted.
- [Tuesday, Nov. 3](#) - **Election Day.** Mail-in ballots must be received by the appropriate county clerk or the voter's precinct by the close of polls at 7 p.m.
- [Friday, Nov. 6](#) - Deadline for voters to cure missing or deficient information on mail ballot envelopes to have their ballots counted.

In-Person Voting (Early Voting & Election Day)

- [Tuesday, Oct. 6](#) - Early voting begins in all counties
 - [Voter registration deadline](#) - Registration applications may be submitted by hand or mail to the appropriate county clerks through the Friday following the

registration deadline, provided the date and/or postmark is before the deadline.¹

- [Saturday, Oct. 17](#) - Expanded early voting begins in certain counties. State law requires counties to provide additional alternate voting locations based on population.
- [Saturday, Oct. 31](#) - Last day of the early voting period. Polls must close no later than 9 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 3 - Election Day.**
 - [7 a.m.](#) - Polling locations open.
 - [7 p.m.](#) - Polling locations close.

Counting, Canvassing, & Certification

- **Tuesday, Nov. 3 - Election Day.**
- [Thursday, Nov. 5](#) - Deadline for verification of provisional ballots.
- [Friday, Nov. 13](#) - Deadline for the county canvassing board to meet for canvass, declare winners, and issue a certificate of canvass. The county canvass report is immediately sent to the secretary of state.²
- [Monday, Nov. 16](#) - Deadline for the county canvassing board for counties with more than 150,000 voters to meet for canvass, declare winners, and issue a certificate of canvass. The county canvass report is immediately sent to the secretary of state.³
- [Tuesday, Nov. 24](#) - The state canvassing board meets to approve the report of the canvass and declare the winners.

Recounts & Election Contests

- [Monday, Nov. 23](#) - Deadline for a local candidate to file a petition with the secretary of state for a recount.⁴
- [Tuesday, Nov. 24](#) - Deadline for the secretary of state to file notice of an automatic recount with the state canvassing board for an election within one county.
 - The secretary of state is required to file a notice of automatic recount for elections in more than one county upon completion of the state canvass.
- [Monday, Dec. 14](#) - Deadline for local candidates in counties with under 150,000 voters to file a petition with the appropriate court for an election contest.
- [Wednesday, Dec. 16](#) - Deadline for local candidates in counties with over 150,000 voters to file a petition with the appropriate court for an election contest.

¹ New Mexico has same day voter registration and permits a person to register to vote or an existing voter to update their registration during early voting and on Election day.

² NM Stat § 1-13-1 (2025).

³ Id.

⁴ A candidate has six days after completion of the county canvass. The county canvass may occur 6-13 days after the election.

- [Monday, Dec. 28](#) - Deadline for non-local candidates to file a petition with the appropriate court for an election contest.

Secure Democracy Foundation is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization building stronger elections, state by state. Our work is state-focused, informed by election policy insights from a national perspective, and realized by seizing common ground.