Observing the Election

If you're interested in observing post-election processing, contact your local board of elections for more information.

To be a poll watcher:

- You must have a signed certificate if appointed by a political party or organization.
- You must be a qualified voter in this county.

If you are observing processing, you may not:

- Distribute, wear, or carry campaign material
- Tamper with election materials
- Interfere with election workers or election processes

NEW YORK STATE

Pocket Guide to Election Processing

In New York, bipartisan teams of election workers oversee every stage of the election process — from registration to ballot storage.

Have questions?
Ask the Election Officer in charge or learn more on the State Board of Elections website: www.elections.ny.gov
Step 5. Ballot Collection
We collect all absentee ballots at a central location for ballot tabulation. Ballots cast in person are tabulated at the polling place where they were cast.
Election Law §§ 9-102, 9-209.

Step 6. Process and Prepare Ballots
We process absentee and overseas ballots to prepare them for scanning and tabulation. If a ballot is damaged or has machine-unreadable marks, we review it manually or have a bipartisan team copy the marks to a new ballot for scanning. We count all eligible ballots as voters intend.

Step 7. Ballot Tabulation
We scan and count all the valid votes to determine the results of each contest in the election. In-person ballots are tabulated at the poll sites where the vote was cast.
Election Law § 9-102.

Step 8. Unofficial Results
We begin publishing unofficial results after the polls close on Election Day. Unofficial results are published publicly as the results become known. Results are unofficial until all ballot return deadlines have passed and we have counted every valid ballot we received. It can take several weeks after Election Day to finish counting every ballot.
Election Law § 9-126.
Find unofficial results on your county board of elections website.

Step 9. Audit
Audits are a normal check and balance that is part of every election. We use audits to confirm that election equipment accurately interpreted and tallied voters’ ballots, that the outcome of the election reflects how voters voted, and that election workers followed procedures.
Election Law §§ 9-211, 6210.18.

Step 10. Canvass of Results
After all valid ballots have been counted, the local Board of Elections reviews the election, resolves discrepancies, and verifies the outcome of the election.

Step 11. Certification of Official Results
The local Board of Elections sends the results to the State Board of Elections, which conducts another review of reported vote counts and certifies official election results.
Election Law § 9-216.
Official election results are published on ELECTIONS.NY.GOV

Step 12. Ballot Storage
We securely store all paper ballots and other records as part of the official record for 2 years following the election. We aren’t allowed to open the boxes during this time.
Election Law § 3-222.