

# County Canvass And Certification In Michigan

---



## **What happens when the polls close on Election Day?**

When polls close on Election Day, election inspectors get to work completing each precinct's poll book and statement of votes and sealing all ballots and election materials in secure containers. Two election inspectors, one Democrat and one Republican, deliver all the records and materials to the city or township's receiving board, which is then tasked with ensuring all materials are properly sealed and the number of voters recorded matches the number of ballots cast in the precinct. The statement of votes from each precinct must then be delivered to the Board of County Canvassers before the canvass begins.

## **What is a Board of County Canvassers?**

Each of Michigan's 83 counties has a Board of County Canvassers. Each of these boards is bipartisan, with two Republican canvassers and two Democratic canvassers. Each board is tasked with completing their county's canvass and certification process.

## **What is the county canvass and certification process?**

The canvassing process involves reviewing each precinct's poll book and statement of votes for completeness and accuracy, correcting any obvious mathematical errors, and tabulating write-in votes in each precinct. The Board of County Canvassers records the votes cast for each candidate and for or against each ballot proposal, and then declares the winning candidate and the outcome of the ballot questions for the offices and ballot questions for which they're responsible for determining the result. They then transmit the canvassed vote totals to the Board of State Canvassers, which completes its canvass process and certifies statewide and federal election results. By law, the duty to certify is clerical, ministerial, and nondiscretionary.

## **When do county canvasses happen?**

County canvasses must start no later than two days after Election Day. The canvass must be completed and the results must be certified within 14 days of Election Day.

## **What happens if the Board of County Canvassers fails to certify an election?**

If a Board of County Canvassers fails to certify an election or to begin their duties by the statutory deadline, they must deliver all records and other relevant information to the Board of State Canvassers, who will then complete the canvass. The county will then bear the costs of the Board of State Canvassers completing the canvass. County canvassers who fail to certify an election may also be subject to criminal and civil penalties for failure to perform their legal obligation.

---

Questions? Need more information?

Please contact: [questions@michiganvoting.org](mailto:questions@michiganvoting.org)

**MichiganVoting.org** 