

2026 GENERAL ELECTION

Key Information for Media

Media Representatives are encouraged to contact the county auditor prior to visiting a polling location, when possible, to minimize disruption. Upon arriving at a polling location, Media Representatives should:

- Check in with election officials.
- Election workers may direct the placement of equipment and media personnel to ensure voter safety and privacy.
- Recognize that filming and photography in a polling location may be intimidating to voters who are voting.
- All subjects in close-ups must agree before being filmed or photographed.

For additional election-related media guidance, refer to the [Election Resources](#) page on the North Dakota Secretary of State website.

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ELECTION DAY (TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026)

- Poll Hours are determined by county commissions and vary by county:
 - **IMPORTANT** – When reporting the times that polls open and close, please be specific about times by county, as they may vary within your viewership. Reporting correct times for each county reduces voter confusion as voting may start at 7 am in one county, but 9 am in another county. Listings of polling location times by county to aid in reporting can be found at vote.nd.gov/myvotinginfo.
 - Open between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. (local time)
 - Close between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. (local time)
- Voters must bring a [valid form of ID](#).
- If people are in line when the polls close, they will still be allowed to vote and have 30 minutes to cast their ballot after check-in.
- Voters can find polling location information based on their address at vote.nd.gov/myvotinginfo.
- When a voter checks in at a polling location, the voter's record is updated at all polling locations statewide using a secure, encrypted, private network to show that they have already voted in that election, which ensures each person can only vote once.

EARLY VOTING

- Each county commission decides whether to conduct in-person early voting in their county.
- A county can choose to offer early voting up to 15 days prior to Election Day.
- Early voting is available in the following counties for the 2026 General Election: Burleigh, Cass, Grand Forks, Morton, Stark, Stutsman, Ward
- Early voting dates, locations, and times can be found by clicking the *Early Voting Available Counties* link at the top of the [Precincts](#) page.
- Voters can find early voting information based on their address at vote.nd.gov/myvotinginfo.
- Voters must bring a [valid form of ID](#).
- When a voter checks in at a polling location, the voter's record is updated at all polling locations statewide using a secure, encrypted, private network to show that they have already voted in that election, which ensures each person can only vote once.

ABSENTEE (VOTE BY MAIL) VOTING

- Qualified voters are never mailed a ballot unless they request one.
- Voters do not need an excuse to vote by mail.
- County commissions determine if the county will be a vote by mail county. In vote by mail counties, all qualified electors are mailed an absentee ballot application. Voters must submit the completed application (which includes voter ID information) and signature to their county auditor before a ballot is mailed. Every county must have one physical polling location open on election day for in-person voting.
- Voters who are not in vote by mail counties may request an absentee ballot at any time by filling out a [ballot application](#), printing it, and submitting it to their county auditor. Voters must allow enough time to submit their application, receive their ballot, and return their ballot.
- Voter ID laws apply to absentee voting. Voters must complete ID information on an absentee ballot application and provide their signature for comparison. This information is again verified when a voter returns their requested absentee ballot. If any issues are found, such as a missing signature or signatures on the application and ballot affidavit not matching, the voter is contacted to cure their information prior to the meeting of the county canvassing board. To cure the issue the voter needs to go to the county auditor's office and show proper identification to cure a signature issue or sign their ballot affidavit. Alternatively, the voter can provide written communication via letter or email to the county auditor and include a copy of their identification to cure a signature issue.
- When a county receives an absentee ballot, the voter's record is updated to show that they have already voted in that election, and they will not be able to cast another absentee ballot or vote at a polling location.

RETURNING ABSENTEE BALLOTS

- Absentee ballots must be RECEIVED by the county auditor by close of polls on Election Day.
- Voters must allow enough time to submit their application, receive their ballot, and return their ballot by the close of polls on Election Day.
- Ways to return an absentee ballot:
 - Mail via USPS (postage is paid by the voter)

- Placed in a secure county dropbox
- Hand-delivered to the county auditor
- Absentee ballots will not be accepted at polling locations.
- People may vote at a polling location if they requested and received an absentee ballot but have not returned it (received by county). However, if they have returned their absentee ballot, the voter record will show that they have already voted, and they will not be able to cast another ballot at a polling location.

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 18 years of age
- United States citizen
- Resident of North Dakota

Voters must reside in their precinct for at least 30 days prior to the election. If they have moved within 30 days of election day, they must vote in the precinct where they lived previously.

VOTER IDENTIFICATION

- North Dakota does not have voter registration.
- [North Dakota Voter ID Requirements](#)
- Voter ID requirements apply to all methods of voting – absentee, in-person early voting, in-person voting on Election Day.
- Regular and Real ID versions of identification issued by NDDOT are accepted for voting. Digital IDs available through NDDOT are not accepted for voting.
- North Dakota driver's licenses and North Dakota non-driver ID cards have "Temporary" or "Permanent" on them if a resident is not a U.S. citizen, which indicates to the election workers that they are not eligible to vote. If someone becomes a naturalized citizen, they must show proof of citizenship to the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) to have this indicator removed from their identification.
- Voters are encouraged to make sure their address on their ID is up to date before voting. If not updated, then voters can provide their non-updated identification along with supplemental information that includes their updated address.
- Voters who do not have a valid ID, who have not updated their citizenship status on their ID, or who do not bring their ID with them can vote by set-aside ballot during early vote or on Election Day.
 - The voter casts a ballot and it is placed in an envelope and set-aside. It is not placed in the ballot tabulator.
 - Within 13 days after the election, the voter must present their updated driver's license, non-driver ID, Tribal ID or documentation, or Long Term Care Certificate to the county auditor in person or electronically before the County Canvassing Board meets.
 - If the voter provides valid identification, the set-aside ballot is tabulated when the County Canvassing Board meets.

SAMPLE BALLOTS AND BALLOT MEASURES GUIDE

- Voters can view a sample ballot based on their address at vote.nd.gov/myvotinginfo.
- Statewide Ballot Measures Guide
 - Before absentee ballots are mailed to voters, the Office of the Secretary of State will mail a ballot measures guide, which has objective information about statewide ballot measures that will appear on the ballot.
 - It will be mailed to households of active North Dakota voters. An active voter is a person who has voted in a North Dakota election in the last four years.
 - This information is provided to voters under NDCC §16.1-01-18, authorized by the passage of Senate Bill 2230 in the 2025 North Dakota Legislative Assembly.
 - The statewide ballot measures guide can be viewed from the [Measures on Ballot](#) page when available, and will also be posted at all voting locations.

PROHIBITED ELECTION CONDUCT

- Individuals may not attempt to persuade any voter for or against a candidate, political party, or ballot issue within 100 feet of a polling place while open for voting.
- Political badges, buttons, insignias, or other items may not be worn within 100 feet from the entrance of a polling place or in the polling place while it is open for voting.
- Prohibited campaign practices can be found in [North Dakota Century Code ch. 16.1-10](#)
- Voter-prohibited conduct can be found on the [Election Resources](#) page.

ABSENTEE AND EARLY VOTING NUMBERS

[Absentee and early voting numbers](#)

- Absentee ballots are absentee ballots sent/received in counties that are not designated by their county commissions as vote by mail counties.
- Vote by mail ballots are absentee ballots sent/returned in vote by mail counties.

RESULTS REPORTING

- The State of North Dakota has a centralized Election Night Reporting portal which will be able to be accessed from the Office of the Secretary of State website's [Election Results page](#).
- All results on election night are **UNOFFICIAL** until the appropriate canvassing board meets.
 - County canvassing boards meets 13 days after election day – November 16, 2026.
 - State canvassing board meets within 17 days after election day – November 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. CST in the Secretary of State's office in the North Dakota State Capitol.
 - **UNOFFICIAL** results will start to be available in the Election Night Reporting portal beginning at 8 p.m. CST on Election Day – November 3, 2026.
- Officials may begin processing absentee/mail ballots 3 business days prior to Election Day, but results are not generated until polls close on Election Day. All ballots that have been received by Election Day are included in election night reporting results.
- Results will show 100% of precincts reporting after all unofficial results from all counties have been reported. Information about how many ballots are left to count will not be available.

RECOUNTS

Recount thresholds vary by election and type of race. Contests that result in automatic or demand recounts, will be reflected in the Election Night Reporting portal.

Recount availability is determined by the canvassing boards at each level for elections.

State canvassing board members include Secretary of State Michael Howe, State Treasurer Thomas Beadle, clerk of the North Dakota Supreme Court Petra Mandigo Hulm, and the state committee chair of the Republican party and Democratic-NPL party.

County canvassing board members include the county auditor, county recorder, chair of the board of county commissioners, and district party chair from each district and party in the county.

- ND Secretary of State – determines recounts for federal, state, judicial, multi-county races, and statewide measures – notifies counties within 4 days after the state canvassing board and sets a date for recount within 7 days for legislative contests and 14 days for statewide contests.
- County – determines recounts for county and city office, schools (when in conjunction with the county) – within 4 days of county canvassing board and sets a date for recount within 8 days.
- City – city measures, special elections - within 4 days of city canvassing board and sets a date for recount within 8 days.
- Schools – schools (when held separate from county/city) within 4 days of school canvassing board and sets a date for recount within 8 days.

North Dakota Century Code that directs processes for recounts:

- 16.1-16-01 Election Recounts
- 16.1-07-09 Canvassing of mailed absent voters' ballots received late
- 16.1-07-11 Submitting ballot to inspector of elections
- 16.1-07-12 Opening ballot – voting or rejecting – depositing in ballot box – preserving
- 16.1-16-19 County canvassing board to disregard technicalities, misspellings, and abbreviations – write in votes canvassed – votes from unestablished polling places disregarded.

[Recount Guidelines](#) - Guidance for election officials on conducting election recounts.