

Post Election - Canvass and recount guidelines 2025 General Election edition

As always, this summary has been prepared by the Office of the Lt. Governor and is not a substitute for consulting your attorney and Utah Code. Code sections are provided as a courtesy. This document is not a substitute for legal advice.

Relevant code sections

Canvass procedures are governed by [20A-4-Part 3](#)

Recount procedures are governed by [20A-4-Part 4](#)

General overview of canvass procedures

The Board of Canvass is your legislative body (council) and they must certify your election results. This must be done no sooner than 7 calendar days after the election, but no later than 14 calendar days after the election. (November 11 - November 18). For municipalities, a simple majority of council members constitutes a quorum. Code specifies that this is done at the usual place of meeting. For questions about whether the meeting can be virtual, consult your attorney and the open and public meeting act. [UCA 52-4](#)

Special districts: The board of trustees is the board of special district canvassers for the special district. [20A-4-301\(4\)](#). A simple majority of trustees shall meet in the usual place of meeting between 7 and 14 calendar days after the election to canvass the results.

The act of canvassing an election is simply a formal approval of the election results. The board of canvass has the right to review summary reports and other election materials. It is recommended that you let your council know of this in advance of the meeting and arrange for any inspection of materials to be done **PRIOR** to the canvass meeting. Once the canvass meeting begins, law dictates that the meeting is completed before adjourning.

The board may NOT reject any election returns if the board can determine the number of votes cast for each person. The canvass is largely pro forma - absent any evidence that there are any articulable/provable issues with the results, the board must certify the election.

Election official's duty

- Count the ballots
- Prepare a certified summary of
 - Counted ballots
 - Ballots not counted (and an explanation of why)
- Make available any election materials (ballots, registers, book, forms, etc) to the board of canvass

The canvass report shall include a standardized statistics form provided by the county that includes the following items:

- The number of active registered voters in the jurisdiction as of the Friday before election day
- The total number of ballots counted in the jurisdiction
- The number of provisional ballots cast
 - The number of provisional ballots that could not be legally counted and the reasons
- The number of ballots cast using the following methods:
 - By mail
 - In-person at a polling place
 - Voters identifying themselves as disabled
 - Voters who voted electronically or via a federal write in ballot (UOCAVA voter)
 - Voter who voted by an emergency ballot
- A reconciliation of the number of ballots the election officer counted and the number of voters given credit for voting in the election
 - An explanation of any difference between the above numbers
- A disposition of cured ballots and ballots that were not cured, but were eligible to be cured
- The number of uncounted ballots received after the deadline
- The percentage of ballots that were returned as undeliverable ballots

The election officer and the board of canvassers shall

- Review and sign the report
- Record the report with the municipality
- Prepare and transmit a certificate of election for each winning candidate
- Publish a certified copy of the report as a Class A notice within 3 business days after the board of canvass
- Transmit a copy of the certified report to the Lt. Governor (elections@utah.gov)
- Deliver a copy of the certified report to your county clerk within 10 calendar days after the canvass

Recounts

In Utah a recount may only be requested in certain circumstances. Please review [20A-4-401](#). If the difference between the number of votes cast for a winning candidate in the race and a losing candidate is equal or less than .25%, the losing candidate may request a recount. In races where the total of all votes cast in the race is 400 or less, then the recount threshold between the winning and losing candidate is 1 vote.

The recount may only be requested by the losing candidate and they must file the request with the municipal recorder (district clerk) no later than 5 pm on the first business day that is at least three calendar days after the day on which the canvass is held. (The 3 calendar days is for a municipal primary election, only.)

The election officer shall conduct the recount no later than 7 or 10 calendar days after the day that the losing candidate makes the request. (Consult the code for the exact number of days

depending on the situation.) The jurisdiction must pay for the recount. If a county conducts the recount as the election administrator, the jurisdiction (city/district) bears the cost of the recount.

If a race ends in a tie vote, a recount is required. If the recount still results in a tie, then the casting of lots is done to determine the winner.

Immediately after the recount, the election officer shall immediately convene the board of canvassers to canvass the election returns for the race of proposition that was the subject of the recount and prepare and sign the canvass report.