

Electing Our Presidents:

How Do We Vote?

Election Administration at the Local Level

Elections are usually administered at the county level, though in some New England and Midwestern states it falls to cities or townships to run elections. In all, this means that there are more than 10,000 election administration jurisdictions in the U.S. The size of these jurisdictions varies dramatically, with the smallest towns having only a few hundred registered voters and the largest jurisdiction in the country, Los Angeles County, with more than 4.7 million.

At the local level, elections can be run by a single individual, a board or commission of elections, or a combination of two or more entities (more details found in Table 2).

- 22 states have a single individual who administers elections at the local level.
 - The election official is usually elected, but this can vary within the state. In Nebraska, for example, counties with fewer than 20,000 people have an elected individual. Counties with 20,000 to 100,000 people have an election official appointed by the county board. And counties with more than 100,000 have an election official appointed by the governor.
 - Some states have an individual who administers elections in the majority of jurisdictions, but an election board that administers elections in the larger cities.
 - In larger jurisdictions there may be an election administrator or supervisor whose sole responsibility is the administration of elections, whereas in most smaller and medium counties the county clerk, recorder, registrar, assessor, auditor or controller may serve as the election official in addition to conducting other county duties.
- 10 states use a board of elections for the primary responsibilities of local election administration.



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Election Administration at the State Level

Each state has a chief election official who has ultimate authority over elections in the state.

- 24 states have an elected secretary of state as the chief election official—Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.
- Two states—Alaska and Utah—have an elected lieutenant governor as the chief election official.
- Three states—Maine, New Hampshire and Tennessee—have a chief election official selected by the legislature.
- Five states—Delaware, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Texas—have a chief election official appointed by the governor. In all but Delaware, the chief election official is called the secretary of state; in Delaware the position is Commissioner of Elections.
- Nine states—Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin—have a board or a commission that oversees elections. Appointments to these commissions are usually made by the governor, and confirmed by the Senate. They are most often structured so as to be bipartisan, with a certain number of members from each of the major political parties.
- Seven states—Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Rhode Island and West Virginia—use a combination of a chief election official and a board or commission.

Reforms

1800 Reforms

- Voter registration
- Voter list

maintenance

- Australian, or secret ballot, introduced
- Voting machines introduced

12th and 20th Amendments

12th Amendment

“Passed by Congress December 9, 1803, and ratified June 15, 1804, the 12th Amendment provided for separate Electoral College votes for President and Vice President, correcting weaknesses in the earlier electoral system which were responsible for the controversial Presidential Election of 1800.”

20th Amendment

“The terms of the President and the Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day

of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.”

<https://hoover.blogs.archives.gov/2021/02/24/the-20th-amendment-the-obscure-amendment-that-changed-inauguration-day/>



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