

# Wisconsin Elections Commission

## State of Wisconsin

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## Post-Election Update

Madison, WI – According to unofficial results, more than 2.67 million Wisconsinites – 59.38 percent of the voting age population – voted in Tuesday’s General Election, a record turnout for a midterm election, said Meagan Wolfe, Wisconsin’s chief elections official.

“Tuesday was a relatively trouble-free election,” said Wolfe, interim administrator of the Wisconsin Elections Commission. “There is no evidence of hacking, or of voter fraud or suppression. Given the unprecedented voter turnout for a midterm election, the relatively small number of issues reported today should give Wisconsinites confidence and pride in our system of clean and transparent elections.”

“Voters can rely on the honesty, accuracy and security of this election,” said Commission Chair Dean Knudson. “Local election officials have smoothly handled a very large voter turnout with few problems. The unofficial results will be verified and confirmed in the coming days. Wisconsin will engage in the most thorough post-election audits and double-checks in state history.”

More information about historical turnout numbers is available on the Commission’s website: <https://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/statistics>.

## Counting, Reporting and Certifying the Vote

Wisconsin does not have a statewide system for reporting unofficial results on Election Night, and there is not a central website where results are reported. Unofficial numbers have been reported from the 72 county clerk websites (<http://elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory/county-websites>), and from news organizations such as the Associated Press, which tabulate unofficial statewide results.

Municipalities are required to post the number of provisional ballots on the internet on Election Night. Provisional ballots are issued to voters who do not have an acceptable ID on Election Day or were unable to provide their driver license or state ID card number when registering to vote at the polls. Voters have until 4 p.m. on Friday, November 9 to bring an acceptable photo ID or their Wisconsin driver license or state ID card number to the municipal clerk’s office to have their vote counted.

Counties must convene their boards of canvassers by 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 13 to begin certifying official results. While we expect official results to come in relatively quickly the week after the election, the deadline for counties to provide certified results to the Wisconsin Elections Commission is Tuesday, November 20. The deadline for the Commission to certify statewide results is the earlier of December 3 or 10 days after the last county canvass report is submitted.

## **Recount Rules**

Wisconsin does not have automatic recounts, even if the unofficial results are extremely close. A losing candidate who wants to ask for a recount must wait until the last day a participating county board of canvassers meets, which is typically in the week after the election. The deadline for requesting a recount is three business days after the Elections Commission receives the last statement from a county board of canvassers.

The law for who may request a recount have changed since 2016, when Wisconsin was the only state to conduct a presidential recount. Only an aggrieved candidate, defined as a candidate for an office whose total votes were within 1 percent of the winner's vote total when at least 4,000 votes were cast or within 40 votes of the winner's total if fewer than 4,000 votes were cast, may request a recount of results for an office.

There is no cost to the losing candidate if the difference between the leading candidate is 0.25 percent or less. If the difference is more than 0.25 percent, the WEC will estimate the cost, which must be paid before the recount begins. In 2016, the statewide recount for President cost just over \$2 million.

Much more information about recounts is available here: <http://elections.wi.gov/elections-voting/recount>.

## **Post-Election Audits**

Today, Elections Commission staff randomly selected 194 reporting units for mandatory voting equipment audits, representing more than 5 percent of reporting units across the state.

Wisconsin has several different makes and models of voting equipment in use, and each type will be audited at least five times, except where it is used in fewer than five locations.. At least one ward in each of the 72 counties will be selected, but no municipality will be selected for more than two audits. Audits must be completed by November 28, several days before the deadline for the WEC to certify results on Monday, December 3.

During the voting equipment audits, results from the randomly-selected ward will be hand counted twice to determine the error rate of the electronic voting equipment. The minimum federal standard is one error in 500,000 ballots. Because the audits will be completed before certification, any errors discovered will give county boards of canvassers the opportunity to more closely examine the election results.

## **Cyber Security**

Wolfe said the Wisconsin National Guard's cyber security response teams that were ready to deploy in the event of a cyber attack have not been called into action, but will continue to stand ready.

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The Wisconsin Elections Commission is responsible for administration and enforcement of election laws in Wisconsin. The Commission is made up of six Commissioners – four appointed directly by the State Senate Majority Leader, Speaker of the Assembly and the Minority Leaders in the State Senate and Assembly. The remaining two Commissioners are by the Governor with confirmation by the State Senate from lists of former municipal and county clerks submitted by the legislative leadership in each party.