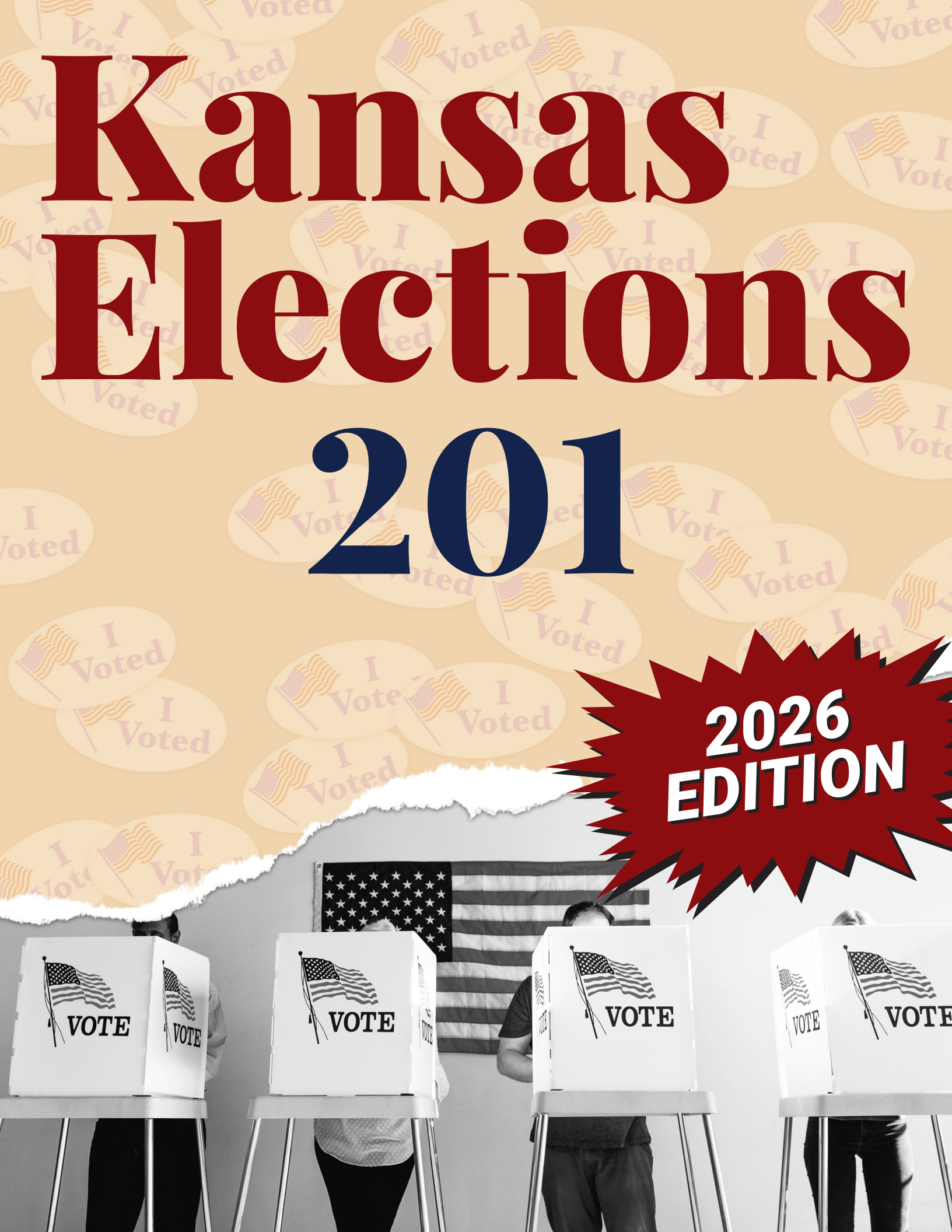
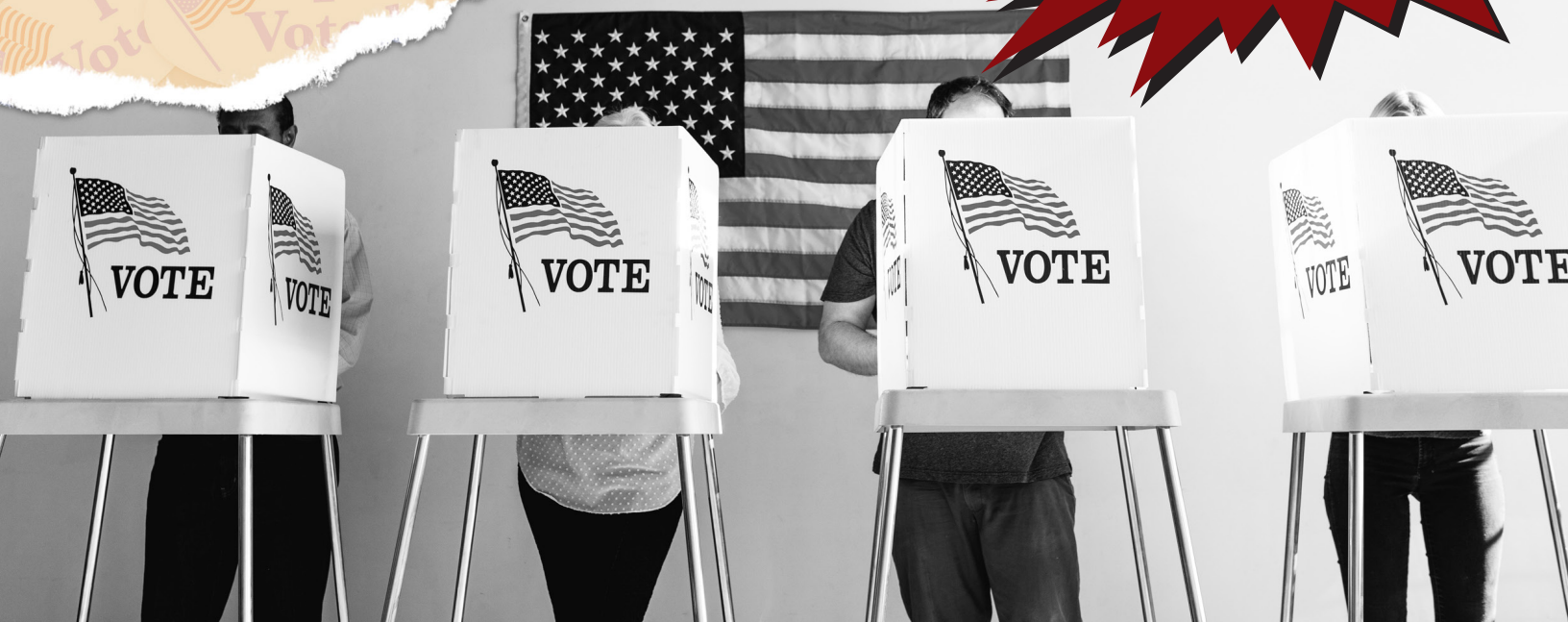




Kansas Elections 201

**2026
EDITION**





Dear Kansan,

As Kansas Secretary of State, it is my honor to serve as the Chief Election Officer for our great state. Through our Elections Division, the Secretary of State's Office administers all national and state elections. This includes overseeing candidate filings for federal, state, and judicial positions, maintaining the statewide voter registration database, and serving as the repository for campaign finance reports from state candidates.

Election administration involves far more than meets the eye. Federal and state laws govern the process to ensure integrity and security in Kansas elections. In keeping with our values, Kansas is proud to uphold the principle of local control, empowering counties to play an essential role in election management.

Kansans can take a deeper dive into election administration through this publication. As a continuation of *Kansas Elections 101*, this resource, *Kansas Elections 201 - 2026 Edition*, was developed to provide detailed information and insights into our state's election system, statutes, and processes. I hope you find it both educational and insightful.

It is an honor to serve as your Kansas Secretary of State. If my office can be of any service to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at scott.schwab@ks.gov or contact the Elections Division at 800-262-VOTE (8683).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Schwab". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Scott Schwab
Kansas Secretary of State



FEDERAL ELECTION LAWS

1965

Voting Rights Act

Protects voting rights, particularly of racial minorities, such as banning literacy tests and other devices to restrict voting.

1993

National Voter Registration Act

Also called the “Motor Voter Act,” it expands voter registration access by requiring states to offer registration at DMVs, by mail, and at public offices. Establishes voter list maintenance procedures.

1986

Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act

Allows U.S. military members, their families, and citizens living abroad to register and request absentee ballots with a single application.

2002

Help America Vote Act

Modernized voting systems and improved voter access. It requires states to implement provisional voting, use upgraded voting equipment, maintain statewide voter databases, establish voter ID procedures, and create administrative complaint processes.

We the People

U.S. Constitutional Provisions

Article I, Section 4: Establishes times, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives.

12th Amendment: Provides for the election of President and Vice-President.

15th Amendment: Prohibits denial of vote on account of race.

17th Amendment: Provides for the election of Senators.

19th Amendment: Establishes women’s right to vote.

23rd Amendment: Grants Washington, D.C. electors in presidential elections.

24th Amendment: Abolishes poll taxes in federal elections.

26th Amendment: Lowers voting age to 18 for federal/state elections.



Kansas Ele

1861

Kansas' First Election Laws Enacted

One theme: administrative errors happen in every election and those can never be the basis to overturn an election.

1864

Voting by Mail Adopted

Kansas became one of the earliest states to adopt voting by mail, allowing eligible voters to cast ballots without appearing in person on Election day.

1893

Ballot Secrecy Mandated

The state made ballot secrecy mandatory, ensuring that voters could cast ballots privately and free from intimidation or coercion.

1908

Primary Elections and Code Rewrite

Kansas rewrote much of its election code and adopted primary elections for political party candidates, standardizing how nominees were selected.

1978

Drop Boxes and Recount Procedures

The legislature clarified that counties could use drop boxes and established detailed procedures for conducting election recounts.

1982

Tabulators Adopted

Kansas began using electronic tabulators to improve the speed and accuracy of vote counting.

1995

No-Excuse Mail Voting

Kansas adopted "no-excuse" mail voting, allowing any registered voter to request a ballot by mail without providing a specific reason.



ction Laws

Centralized Voter Database Implemented

A statewide, centralized voter registration database was established to maintain accurate and uniform voter records. This was a federal requirement.

2006

Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) Act

The SAFE Act introduced voter ID requirements and strengthened mail ballot security provisions to enhance election integrity.

2011

Local Election Schedule Changes

Local elections were moved to August and November of odd-numbered years to promote increased voter participation and administrative efficiency.

2015

Voter-Verified Paper Trail Requirement

All ballot-marking devices in Kansas elections were required to produce a voter-verified paper record, ensuring an auditable voting process.

2016

Election Security Enhancements

A major election security update adding ballot watermarks, strengthening chain-of-custody procedures, expanding audits, and improving voter database maintenance.

2022

Election Modernization and Clean-Up

This comprehensive reform modernized Kansas election law by aligning election timelines, removing outdated statutes, and streamlining election administration.

2023

End of Three-Day Grace Period

Mandated that all ballots must be received by county election offices by close of polls on Election Day.

2025

CANDIDATE ELECTIONS



LOCAL/MUNICIPAL

Local races are nonpartisan and take place in **odd-numbered years**.

Examples include:

- Mayor
- City Council
- Community College Board
- School Board

These races are voted on only by residents within the relevant district, city, or jurisdiction.

How Do I Become a Candidate?

To run for a local office, you must:

- File your candidacy with your county election office by the official filing deadline for that election year.



COUNTY

County races are partisan and take place in **even-numbered years**.

**Some counties have nonpartisan offices.*

Examples include:

- County Commission
- Sheriff
- County Treasurer
- Register of Deeds
- County Clerk

County Attorney (although seven counties have a district attorney instead).

These races are voted on only by residents within the county.

Special Note: *The precinct committee person election is a partisan local race that takes place only during the primary election in even-numbered years.*

How Do I Become a Candidate?

To run for a county office, you must:

- File your candidacy with your county election office by the official filing deadline for that election year.



FEDERAL & STATE

State and federal offices are partisan and take place in **even-numbered years**.

Examples include:

- U.S. Senate
- U.S. House of Representatives
- Governor/Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- State Treasurer
- Insurance Commissioner
- Kansas House of Representatives
- Kansas Senate
- State Board of Education
- District Court Judge
- District Magistrate Judge

2026

While not every office is up for re-election every cycle due to term lengths, elections for these offices always occur in even-numbered years.

How Do I Become a Candidate?

To run for a state, statewide, or federal office in Kansas, you must:

- File your candidacy with the Kansas Secretary of State.
- Pay the required filing fee or petition.
- File by the official filing deadline for that election year.

JUDICIAL SELECTIONS



SUPREME COURT (7 Justices)

Type:
Appellate/Highest Court

Function:
Reviews decisions from lower courts and interprets state law and the state constitution.

Selection:
Appointed by the governor from a nominating commission list.

Retention:
Must be retained (not contested) to remain in office.

Retention elections occur during the general election in even-numbered years.

2026



COURT OF APPEALS (14 Judges)

Type:
Appellate

Function:
Hears appeals from district courts.

Selection:
Appointed by the governor from a nominating commission list.

Retention:
Must be retained (not contested) to remain in office.

Retention elections occur during the general election in even-numbered years.

2026



DISTRICT COURT

Type:
Trial courts of general jurisdiction.

Function:
Handle criminal, civil, probate, family, and juvenile cases.

Selection:
There are 31 judicial districts, each one picks a system. Some are elected and some are appointed.

Retention:
Must be retained (not contested) to remain in office.

**Elected positions are held in the same manner as state offices.*

Retention elections occur during the general election in even-numbered years.

2026



MAGISTRATE

Type:
Limited jurisdiction/lower court trials.

Function:
Handle small claims, traffic violations, and minor criminal cases.

Retention elections are conducted in the same manner as district court judges.

**Elected positions are held in the same manner as state offices.*

Becoming a Candidate

(Declaration of Intent vs. Petition)

1. Candidate Filing by Declaration of Intent

When filing by Declaration of Intent, the most common method, the candidate must pay a filing fee and small administrative fee before their name can appear on the ballot.

 Federal and Statewide Offices	 Kansas Senate
Filing Fee: 1% of the salary of the office.	Filing Fee: \$145
 Kansas House of Representatives	 State Board of Education
Filing Fee: \$120	Filing Fee: \$95
 District Court Judge & District Attorney	 District Magistrate Judge
Filing Fee: 1% of the salary of the office.	Filing Fee: \$170

2. Candidate Filing by Petition

When filing by petition, the candidate must submit a petition with the required number of signatures. There is no filing fee, but candidates are assessed a small administrative fee.



Major Party Candidates

All Republican and Democratic candidates have the option to file for the primary election by petition which is due by the June 1 filing deadline. The number of signatures needed varies by the office sought.



Independent Candidates

Independent candidates may only file by petition. Because they do not appear on a primary election ballot, their filing deadline is always the day before the primary election.



After the Petition is Filed

1. The Secretary of State begins the initial review.
2. The Secretary of State then forwards the petition to county election offices for signature verification.
3. This process triggers a 20-day period for completing the petition review.

Objections to Filings

Once a candidate's Declaration of Intent or petition is accepted, within three days, objections may be filed with the Secretary of State and heard by the State Objections Board (composed of the Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Lieutenant Governor).

VOTER INFO

Registering to Vote

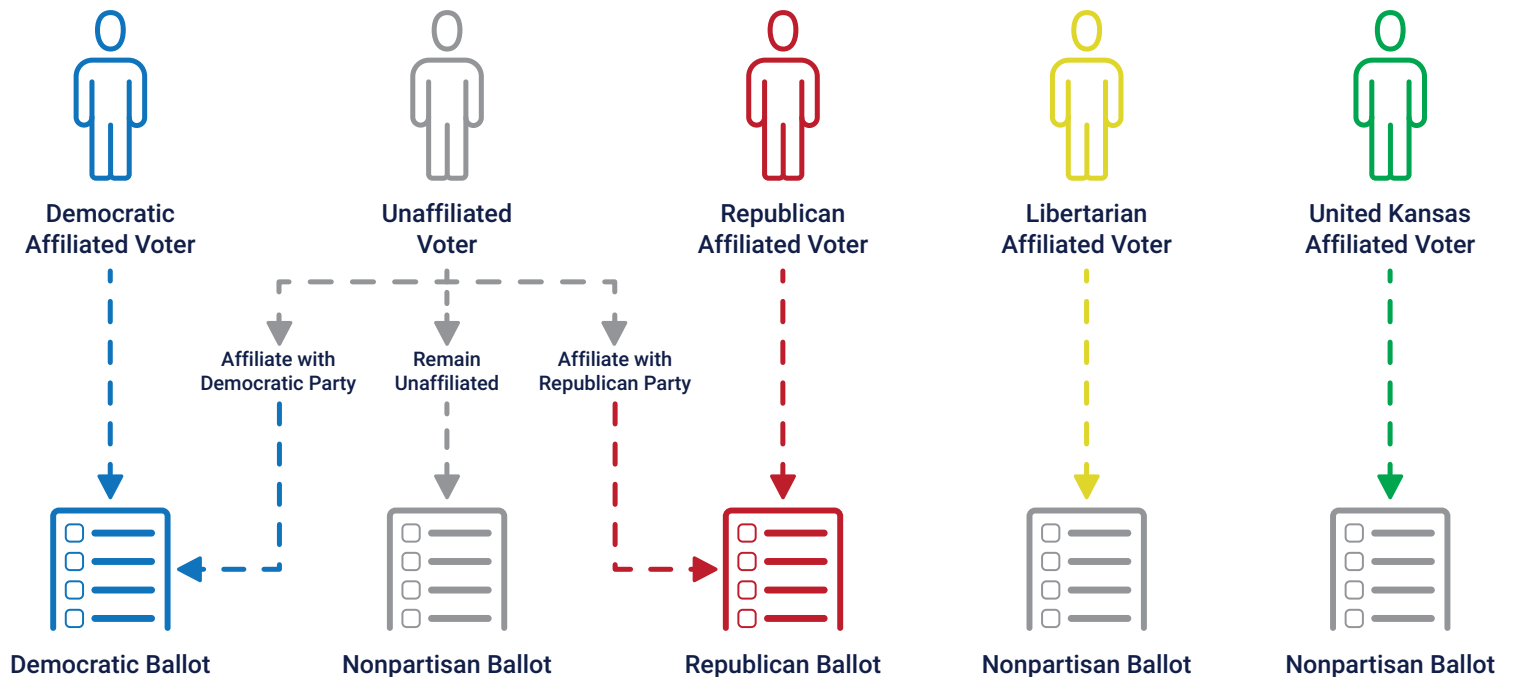
- Online at **VoteKansas.gov**.
- Via paper application mailed to your county election office or the Kansas Secretary of State's Office.



VoterView

Kansans may view their voter registration information and voter history at **votekansas.gov** under VoterView. County election officials are responsible for updating voter credit and begin doing so after the election results have been canvassed and certified. However, if the voter chooses to vote by mail, VoterView does promptly track your ballot.

Voting in a Primary Election*



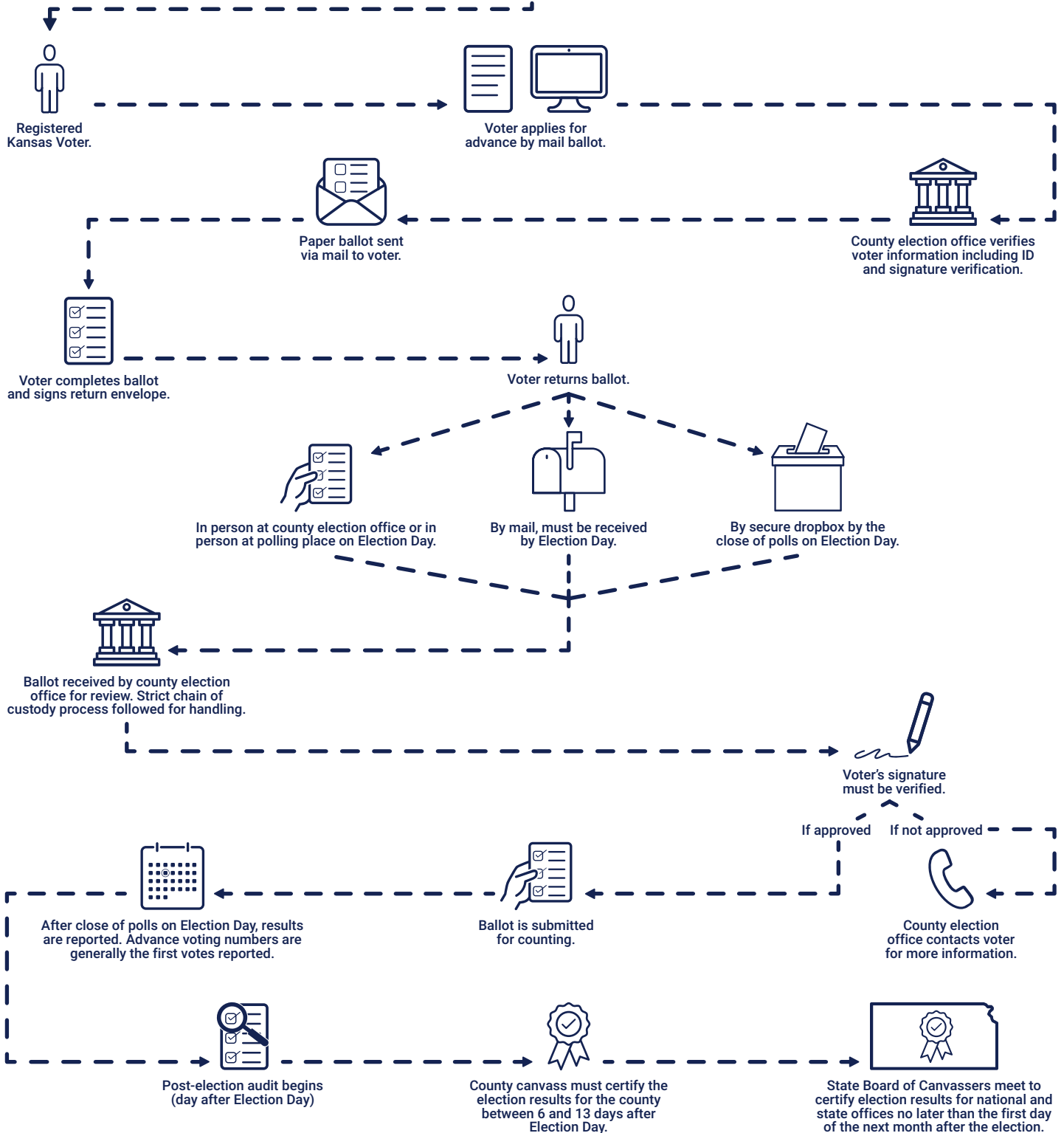
**Voting rules are set by the political parties.*

Voting in a General Election

All voters, regardless of political party or being unaffiliated, will vote the same ballot.

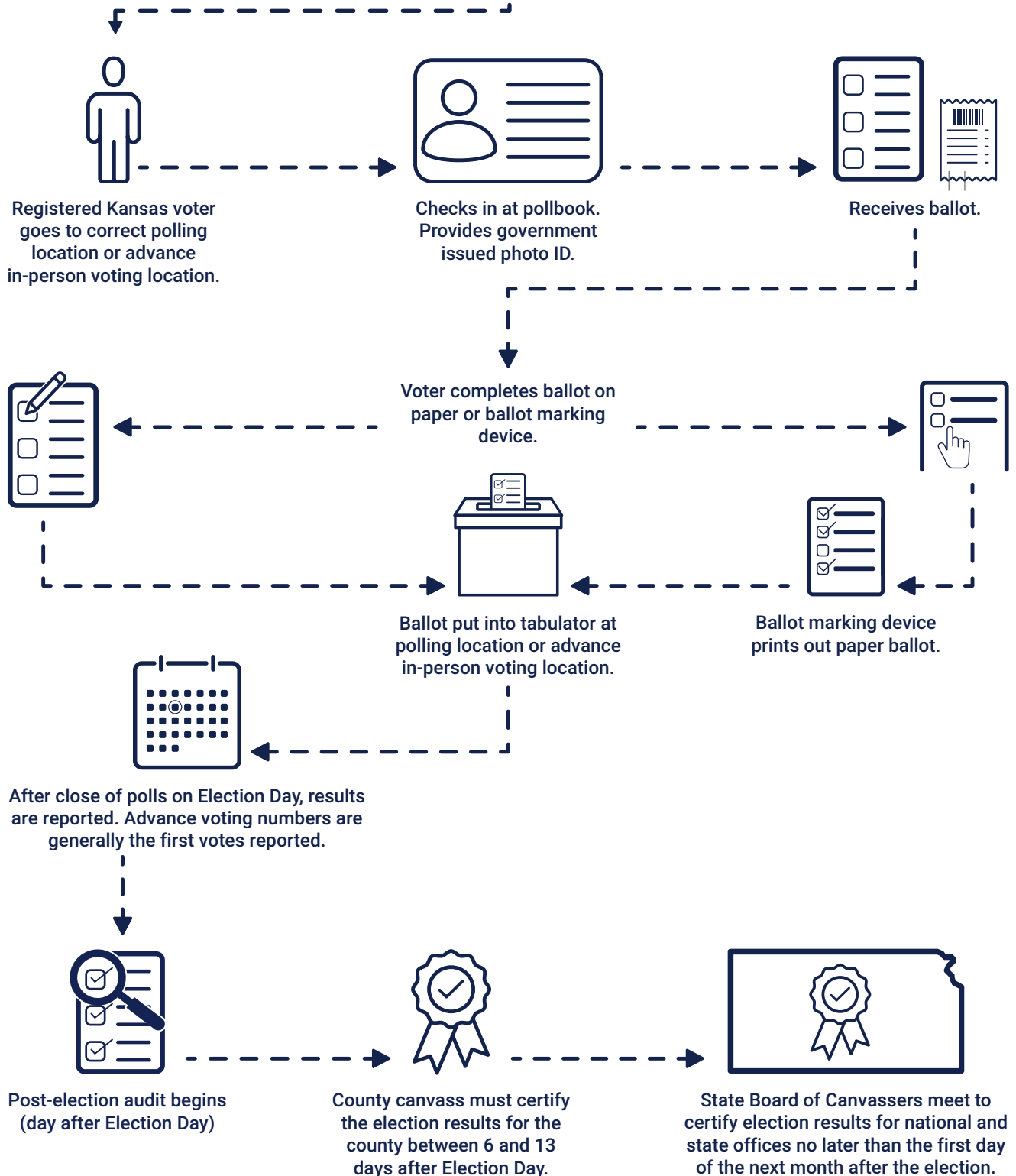
CASTING A

By Mail Before Election Day



BALLOT

In-Person Voting



BECOME A POLL WORKER



2026 is a Midterm Election Year

Poll workers are essential when it comes to democracy and the integrity of our elections. It provides the opportunity for civic engagement and a chance to learn more about our election system.

In Kansas, county clerks manage elections across the state. Help your county election office by signing up to be a poll worker for the 2026 primary and general elections.

Requirements

- U.S. Citizen
- 16 Years of Age or Older
- Registered to Vote if 18 (Exception: Active duty military & their dependents temporarily living in Kansas can serve as poll workers.)
- Take an Oath of Office
- Complete Training

Duties

- Open and Close Polling Locations
- Verify Voter Information
- Provide Proper Ballots
- Provide General Assistance to Voters
- Assist with the use of ballot marking device

Sign Up

If you would like to sign up to be a poll worker, please go to:



ELECTION SECURITY



VOTER ID

Whether voting by mail or in person, voter ID is required by law. It verifies each voter's identity and helps ensure that one person casts only one vote.

SIGNATURE VERIFICATION

To apply for an advance mail ballot, a voter must provide ID with a signature that matches the signature on file with the county election office. After receiving the ballot, the voter must sign the ballot envelope. If the signature does not match, the ballot is marked provisional and the county election office must contact the voter for verification.

LOGIC AND ACCURACY TESTING

Kansas law requires tabulating equipment to be tested before and after elections through logic and accuracy testing. The public may observe this test.

ELECTION EQUIPMENT SECURITY AND CERTIFICATION

Kansas law prohibits voting equipment from connecting to the Internet. All systems are certified by the federal Election Assistance Commission and the Kansas Secretary of State.

VOTER ROLL MAINTENANCE

State and federal law set the requirements for when a voter may be removed from the voter rolls. Voter roll maintenance occurs daily. Multiple procedures are used to ensure accurate voter rolls.

BALLOT WATERMARK

All Kansas ballots must have a unique mark or stamp to verify they are official and allow counting by the tabulating machine. To further enhance security, ballots also include a watermark.

BALLOT HARVESTING IS ILLEGAL

In Kansas, delivering more than 10 advance mail ballots for others is a crime. Anyone carrying a voter's ballot must complete an affidavit on the envelope, and violating this law can result in a felony.

BALLOT CHAIN OF CUSTODY

There is a statewide standard for chain of custody procedures when transferring ballots. This standard ensures that all ballots are accounted for.

AUDITS

Kansas law requires several types of election audits to ensure every vote is counted correctly:

1. **Post-Election Audit:** Verifies vote counts, conducted by a sworn bipartisan board, and open to the public. First done in 2019.
2. **Close-Race Audit:** Triggered when a race is within 1% of the vote on election night. First used in 2022.
3. **Procedural Audit:** Conducted in randomly selected counties in odd-numbered years to ensure proper procedures and transparency.

ELECTION DAY IS ELECTION DAY

Advance mail ballots must now be received by the close of polls on election day. There is no longer a three-day grace period—all ballots are due on election day to be counted.

Voter Roll Maintenance

History

Kansas voter registration lists were originally maintained separately by each county. This changed with the Help America Vote Act of 2002, which mandated the use of centralized voter registration by each state. Today, the Secretary of State's office hosts the centralized voter roll, but changes may only be made by the 105 county election officers.

Kansas Voter Rolls are Public

Kansas voter rolls may be obtained by anyone who completes a statewide Voter Registration Data Request form on the Kansas Secretary of State's website. The cost varies depending on the amount of information requested and any filters applied to the data. This data is often purchased by political parties, candidates, or outside entities to reach active voters, voters affiliated with a specific party, or voters living within a particular district.

Publicly available information includes a voter's name, date of birth, gender, residential address, mailing address, district, precinct, participation in the last ten elections, email address, and phone number. The only information not publicly available is a Kansas driver's license number and any part of a Social Security number.

How are Voter Rolls Maintained?

Federal law largely governs how states conduct voter roll maintenance, including the limits on when and how voters may be removed. Only a county election official may remove a voter. Throughout his tenure, Secretary Schwab has advanced proposals to the Kansas Legislature aimed at improving the accuracy of voter rolls while remaining compliant with federal law.

The following is an overview of how the Kansas Secretary of State's office manages daily voter roll updates, along with recent initiatives to improve accuracy under Secretary Schwab.



Deaths

Deceased individuals are regularly removed from the voter rolls. The Secretary of State's office receives updates and distributes to counties:

- A weekly update of in-state death certificates from the Kansas Office of Vital Statistics
- The national death index from the Social Security Administration for out-of-state deaths
- Counties must also search local obituaries

Once a death is confirmed, the individual is promptly removed from the rolls.



Felony Convictions

When a voter is convicted of a felony, the Secretary of State's office is notified by the Kansas Department of Corrections and federal courts. These individuals are then removed from the voter rolls in accordance with state law.



Changing Residence

A voter can request to be removed from the rolls by reaching out to their county election office. If election officers receive an indication that a voter likely no longer lives at their address, a confirmation notice is sent. If it is returned as undeliverable, the voter is flagged as "inactive." If there is no voter activity for two federal election cycles, the voter may be removed from the rolls. Permissible indications include not voting for four or more years, name appearing on the National Change of Address database, returned official election mail.



Cross-State Agreements

Secretary Schwab has signed Memorandums of Understanding with Missouri and Texas to compare voter rolls. This helps identify duplicate registrations for voters who have moved across state lines and improves the accuracy of Kansas voter rolls.



KS DMV Involvement

It is now law that the Secretary of State's office can use Kansas DMV records to check for non-citizens on the voter rolls, ensuring only eligible voters are registered.

Any removal from the voter rolls occurs only after due process and confirmation.



SAVE Program

Secretary Schwab joined the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program, allowing Kansas to:

- Use federal databases to remove non-citizens after review and verification by county election offices.
- Cross-check the death index to remove ineligible voters.





Election Night

Election night results are unofficial results and do not and will not include county canvass certified results or provisional ballots. Final official results will be posted after the State Board of Canvass on the Secretary of State's website.



Post-Election Audit

The Secretary of State randomly selects races to be audited in each county. The county election office will randomly select the precincts to be audited for each race. The audit shall then be performed manually by the counties and shall review all paper ballots selected to ensure the hand vote count is identical to the vote count from the tabulators. Audits must be completed before the county canvass.



County Canvass

The responsibility of the County Board of Canvassers is to review all provisional ballots and certify the election results within the county. The canvassing takes place publicly and must be completed between six and 13 days following the election. Certification of election results by the County Board of Canvassers is required for all elections.



Recount (Optional)

A recount must be requested by 5:00 p.m. no later than 10 days following the election and can occur in a candidate and/or non-candidate race. The person requesting the recount must specify the area and manner of recount and must post a bond (by 5:00 p.m. the following Monday) covering the cost of the recount before the recount may begin.



State Board of Canvass

The State Board of Canvassers consists of the Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General. The State Board of Canvassers meet following the certification by the County Boards of Canvassers of the election results in each county, and is responsible for certifying the election results for all national and state offices. The meeting takes place publicly and must be completed no later than the first business day of the month following the election. Certification of election results by the State Board of Canvassers is required for all primary and general races for national and state offices.

ELECTION RESULTS ARE NOW OFFICIAL



AUDITS

VS.

Post-Election Audits



What is it and when does it occur?

A post-election audit is conducted by the counties and takes place following every candidate or constitutional amendment election. The audit must be completed prior to county canvass. The purpose of the audit is to verify voting machines are accurately tabulating election results.



Who initiates the process? (Even Years)

In even number years, the morning following election day, the Kansas Secretary of State's office initiates the first step in the post-election audit process. The office randomly draws the races to be audited in each county, notifies the counties of the races to audit, then the county election office randomly picks the precincts to be audited.



Who initiates the process? (Odd Years)

In odd number years, the counties pick two races to audit.



How is the audit conducted?

The audit is performed manually by the counties to ensure the hand vote count is identical to the vote count from the tabulators. A bi-partisan board of election workers is appointed to conduct the audit.

Close-Race Audits



What is it and when does it occur?

In addition to the post-election audit, during even-numbered election years, any federal, statewide, or state legislative race that is within 1% of the total number of votes cast tallied on election night shall be audited.



When is a close-race audit triggered?

If the election is within 1% of the election night vote total, then a close-race audit is triggered in addition to a post-election audit. The county election officer shall conduct the audit in an additional 10% of all precincts in the specified race, with a minimum of one precinct.



Which races qualify for a close-race audit?

Federal, statewide, and state legislative races.

RECOUNTS



Recounts



What's the difference between an audit and a recount?

Audits are mandatory and must be conducted before the county canvass certifies the county results. Recounts are optional, at the candidate's discretion, and are conducted after the County Board of Canvassers certifies the county results.



Who can request a recount?

Any candidate may request a recount in one or more counties. Also, any qualified elector may request a recount for a constitutional amendment.



When is the deadline to request a recount?

A recount shall be requested in writing and filed with the Secretary of State for national and state office not later than 5:00 p.m. on the day following the last meeting of the County Board of Canvassers canvassing votes in the election for which the recount is requested.



What is the method of the recount?

The request shall specify which counties or precincts are to be recounted. The method of conducting the recount shall be at the discretion of the person requesting the recount.



Who pays for the recount in a primary election?

The person requesting the recount shall file, contemporaneously with a request for a recount, a bond with the Secretary of State, with security to be approved by the Secretary of State, conditioned to pay all costs incurred by the counties and the Secretary of State in making the recount. The amount of the bond shall be determined by the Secretary of State. If the candidate requesting the recount is declared the winner of the election as a result of the recount, no action shall be taken on the candidate's bond and the counties shall bear the costs incurred for the recount.

The requestor of the recount **must** post the bond with the Secretary of State's office before the counties are instructed to start the recount. The state will only cover the costs of a recount in the same manner in a general election if the two candidates are within 1/2% of the total votes cast. Unlike general elections, there is no provision for the state paying for a recount in a primary election if the outcome is within 1/2% of the total votes cast.

Advance Mail Ballot

Kansas doesn't use the term "absentee." Any registered voter may vote by mail without an excuse but must apply for an advance mail ballot for each election.

Ballot Harvesting

Delivering or mailing advance ballot envelopes for others. It's illegal for one person to deliver more than 10 ballots. Violators can be charged with a felony.

Ballot Disposal

State and national ballots must be destroyed after 22 months. Local ballots must be destroyed after 6 months. Destruction must be witnessed by bipartisan electors chosen by the county commission.

Kansas Election Lingo

Ballot Marking Device (BMD)

Displays the ballot electronically and prints a voter-verified paper ballot. These are not capable of being connected to the Internet. Some counties use only hand-marked paper ballots instead of electronic voting machines. Every polling place must have one BMD for ADA compliance.

County Canvass

The county commission serves as the Board of Canvassers. They review provisional ballots and certify county results publicly between 6-13 days after the election.

County Election Officer

In 101 counties, the elected county clerk serves as the election officer. In four counties, a county election commissioner is appointed by the Secretary of State.

County Election Commissioner

In Johnson, Sedgwick, Shawnee, and Wyandotte counties, an appointed election commissioner (appointed by the Secretary of State) administers elections.

Close Race Audit

Automatically triggered when certain races are within 1% of the election-night total. This is an addition to the regular post-election audit.

Electronic Poll Book (E-pollbook)

Used at check-in to verify voter registration and prevent duplicate voting. E-pollbooks connect to the Internet but do not count votes. These must be certified by the Secretary of State.

Government Issued Voter ID

Required for both in-person and mail voting. Ensures each voter's identity is verified before a ballot is cast.

Logic and Accuracy Testing

Required before and after every election. Test ballots are run through tabulators to ensure accurate counting. Testing is open to the public.

Poll Worker

Local community members who staff polling places. Requirements: 16+ years old, registered Kansas voter if 18 or older, and not a candidate on the ballot.

Post-Election Audit

Confirms the accuracy of vote counts. Conducted by a trained bipartisan board and open to the public.

Procedural Audit

Conducted in odd-numbered years to review election procedures, records, and transparency in randomly selected counties.

Provisional Ballot

Used when a voter's eligibility is in question. Each provisional ballot is reviewed during the county canvass.

Recount

A re-tabulation of votes done in the manner requested by the person seeking the recount.

Signature Verification

A voter's signature is checked when applying for an advance mail ballot and again when returning the ballot. Both signatures must match what is on file.

State Board of Canvassers

The Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General certify statewide and national race results after county canvasses are complete.

Tabulators

Machines that count votes. Kansas law prohibits the use of voting equipment that can connect to the Internet. All equipment is tested before and after elections and must be certified by the federal EAC and the Secretary of State.



2026 PRIMARY ELECTION

JUNE
1

Deadline for Kansans to change party affiliation.
Deadline to file as a candidate. (12:00 p.m.)

JUNE
20

Deadline to transmit UOCAVA ballots.

JULY
14

Deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration to change address or name to participate in the 2026 primary election.

JULY
15

First day of advance voting. Advance ballots by mail are transmitted. In-person advance voting may begin. Check with your county election office for specific times and locations or visit our website - VoterView.

JULY
28

Advance in-person voting must begin for all counties.

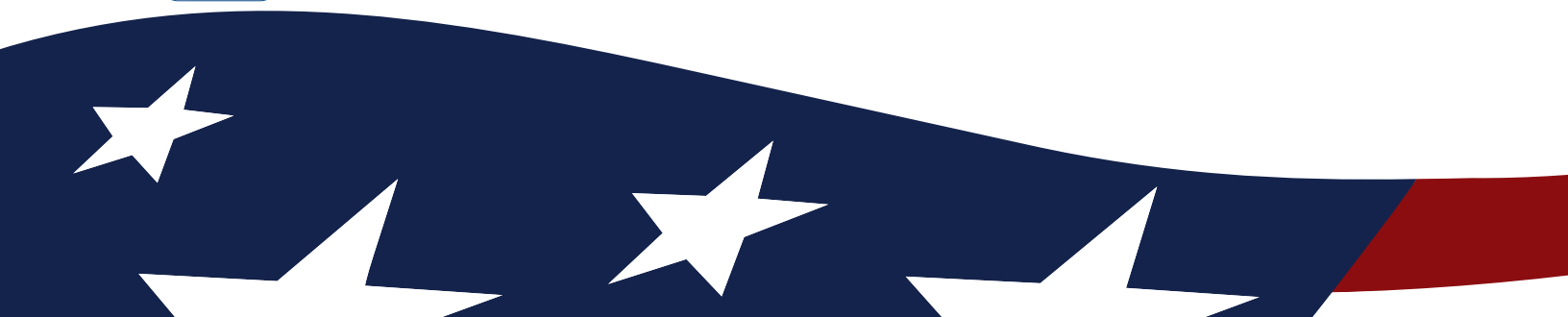
AUG
4

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

(All ballots must be received by close of polls on Election Day.)

SEPT
1

Last day for state board of canvassers to certify official results.



2026 GENERAL ELECTION

SEPT
19

Deadline to transmit UOCAVA ballots.

OCT
13

Deadline to register to vote or update your voter registration to change address or name to participate in the 2026 general election.

OCT
14

First day of advance voting. Advance ballots by mail are transmitted. In-person advance voting may begin. Check with your county election office for specific times and locations or visit our website - VoterView.

OCT
27

Advance in-person voting must begin for all counties.

NOV
3

GENERAL ELECTION DAY

(All ballots must be received by close of polls on Election Day.)

DEC
1

Last day for state board of canvassers to certify official results.



V**OTEKANSAS.GOV**

Three blue stars are centered below the horizontal line.

Provided by
Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab
Docking State Office Building
915 SW Harrison Street
Topeka, KS 66612
800-262-VOTE (8683)
sos.ks.gov

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