



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

the Handbook

Chapter 14

Canvass

August 2025

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14. CANVASS

REQUIRED FORMS Abstracts of Votes Submission Form SOR Printed Return Sheet Statement of Results (SOR) Write-Ins Certification	ADDITIONAL RESOURCES 24.2-671.2(D) Request for Risk-Limiting Audit Form Certificate of Election Certificate of Election Appointment Template (SBE 109) Circuit Court Clerks Guidance ELECT-659 Request to Inspect Sealed Election Materials ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation Request to Inspect Sealed Election Materials for a Post-Election Audit ELECT LMS for VEW Canvass Presentation
REFERENCE Canvass Documents Code of Virginia, Title 24.2 Definitions Enhanced Results Training Materials Risk Limiting Audit Manual Same Day Registration Online Training Course VERIS Step-by-Steps (VERIS > Links)	REGULATIONS 1VAC20-20-70 Duty to Request Assistance and to Notify Voters of Denial of Applications for Voter Registration or Absentee Ballots 1VAC20-60-80 Request for risk-limiting audit for a contested race within a jurisdiction

14.1 CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

The process of reviewing, confirming, and recording the official local results of each election is called a “canvass”. The canvass of results, together with the adjudication of provisional voter eligibility, are the main tasks to be completed in the certification period. Local election officials in each locality conduct a canvass to verify and consolidate election results from the individual precincts. The officers of election, local electoral board, and general registrar are all jointly responsible for conducting an accurate and timely canvass. General registrars and office staff are responsible for transmitting the results of the canvass after certification to the Department of Elections (ELECT) through Enhanced Results and the Abstracts of Votes Submission form. The requirements for canvassing and certification are codified in the Code of Virginia §§ 24.2-671 - 24.2-680.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the procedures for conducting the canvass in compliance with Virginia Code and is structured into three parts: Preparing for the Canvass, Conducting the Canvass, and After the Canvass.

§14.2 outlines steps to prepare for the canvass. The canvass occurs during a board meeting; thus, §14.2.1 discusses the basics of conducting a meeting, such as the need to follow requirements set in the Virginia Open Meetings and Freedom of Information Act. §14.2.2 discusses the data needed to conduct canvass and where to pull it all from. It also discusses how to report certified results to ELECT. §14.2.3 lists how election materials are delivered to the clerk of court and general registrar on election night or the day after and at the end of canvass. Information is also provided on how the Juneteenth holiday can affect June primary canvasses.



The canvass is an intensive step-by-step process; general registrars and electoral board members must have a sound understanding of how the materials are to be used prior to beginning the canvass meeting. §14.3 provides a guide to conducting the canvass by focusing on the duties and responsibilities of four entities: the officers of election, the general registrar, the local electoral board members, and ELECT. §14.3.1 discusses the importance of the officers of election. It is very important that general registrars and local electoral board members are familiar with the duties of the officers of election because this position is critical in verifying results. §14.3.2 focuses on the general registrar, whose role for the canvass includes bringing necessary supplies and ensuring that required documents are provided. §14.3.3 examines how the electoral board members fit into canvassing as their presence is important for counting and verification purposes. §14.3.4 discusses ELECT's role in reviewing the election results and other data reported by localities and its responsibility in providing all election results and data to the public.

§14.4 concludes the chapter by giving a brief overview of what should occur after the canvass, which is primarily the responsibility of the general registrar and electoral board members. §14.4.1 discusses campaign finance requirements election winners must comply with before receiving a certificate of election. It further discusses which entity is responsible for issuing which certificates of election: the local electoral board or the State Board of Elections (SBE). §14.4.2 discusses what to do with election records, materials, and ballots once canvass has concluded. §14.4.3 closes the canvass chapter by discussing general registrar VERIS tasks for voters whose provisional and absentee ballots could not be counted.

While conducting a canvass seems complex, the canvass can be completed smoothly if each entity is aware of how their responsibilities fit within the process.

14.2 PREPARING FOR CANVASS

14.2.1 Basics of the Meeting

The canvass is a meeting of the electoral board; thus, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) applies.¹ Refer to [Handbook Chapter 2: Local Electoral Board](#) for additional information on public meeting requirements.

The canvass is open to the public, who may attend all or a portion of the meeting.² It is important to note, though, that the provisional ballot meeting, which is a separate meeting that happens alongside the canvass during the certification period, is a limited-attendance meeting and not open to the public (all other Freedom of Information Act requirements apply).³ The limited attendance at the provisional ballot meeting allows for deliberations and the presentation of evidence by a provisional voter for qualification purposes. For additional information on provisional ballots, please see [Handbook Chapter 13: Provisional Ballots](#).

Notice of the date, time, and location for the provisional ballots meeting and the canvass must be given to the public by the electoral board **at least three business days** prior to the

¹ See [§2.2-3707](#).

² See [§24.2-653\(B\)](#). See also [§2.2-3712](#).

³ See GREB Handbook Chapter 13, Provisional Ballots, for more information on the provisional ballot meeting.



meeting.⁴ This information must also be provided in the provisional voter notices given to the provisional voters at the time of voting.

14.2.1.1 When to Meet

Before the electoral board can meet for canvass, the officers of election must deliver election materials on the night of the election to the clerk of the circuit court's office or the office of the general registrar.⁵ If the officers of election do not deliver the materials before the canvass to the clerk or the office of the general registrar, the clerk of the circuit court must have law enforcement retrieve the materials from the officer of election.⁶ This is discussed in greater detail in 14.2.3.



The electoral board must begin the provisional ballots meeting and the canvass **no later than 5:00 PM on the day after the election**⁷ The provisional ballot meeting is recessed immediately after convening to allow general registrar staff the opportunity to conduct voter research and process same-day registration (SDR) applications (the Department of Elections (ELECT) recommends beginning the provisional ballots meeting by noon on the day after the election for this purpose). The canvass proceeds immediately after recessing the provisional ballot meeting..

The electoral board will most likely hold the canvass over several days due to multiple deadlines occurring on the third day after the election. General registrar offices must process mailed absentee ballots postmarked on or before Election Day that are received by noon on the third day after the election. Approved provisional ballots must also be canvassed, the majority of which will be SDR voters. The statewide deadline for processing all SDR applications is 5:00pm on the third day after the election, with the SDR Duplicate Report being run by ELECT and forwarded to localities the fourth day after the election. Results from the canvass cannot be certified and submitted to ELECT until all ballots have been addressed.

ELECT recommends a consistent schedule each day during the certification period that the board convenes to make it easier for voters and the public to know when they can or cannot attend. For example, hold the provisional ballots meetings each morning then the canvass each afternoon. The board may adjourn as needed, not to exceed six calendar days from the date of the election for June Primaries and ten calendar days from the date of the election for the November General, unless an extension has been granted for a risk-limiting audit (RLA).⁸ For special elections not held in November and where the State Board must certify the results, the State Board must meet as soon as possible to ascertain and certify the results. If results are not received from the locality within seven days of the election, the State Board must meet on a day-to-day basis.⁹ Therefore, local electoral boards should work diligently to have results as soon as possible, but no later than seven days after a special election held at any time other than in November. For special elections not held in November that do not involve

⁴ See [§2.2-3707](#)

⁵ See [§24.2-668](#).

⁶ See [§24.2-670](#).

⁷ See [§24.2-671](#).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ See [§24.2-679\(B\)](#).



State Board certification, the local electoral board must work as quickly as possible to provide results and abstracts for the special election. ELECT will work with localities to ensure compliance on a case-to-case basis.

For June primaries, the State Board of Elections (SBE) must certify results fourteen days after the day of the election.¹⁰ For November elections, SBE must certify results on the first Monday in December. In the interim, ELECT staff will verify the accuracy of the results each local electoral board has certified.¹¹



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. Democratic and Republican data cannot be combined. Ensure that all officers of election, office staff, and EB members are aware of the necessity to keep and record everything accurately and by primary and are provided with the resources and training needed to conduct Early Voting (EV), Election Day (ED), and the Post-Election (PE) process accordingly. **The provisional ballots meeting and canvass procedures should include double and triple checks to ensure the correct data is entered in the correct primary in Enhanced Results. Keeping paperwork and materials separated and clearly marked when storing after canvass is also important for if questions arise that require reviewing again.**

14.2.1.2 Where to Meet

The electoral board must hold the canvass meeting “at the clerk’s or general registrar’s office of the [locality] for which they are appointed” and “may adjourn to another room of sufficient size in a public building.”¹² The board has some discretion in determining where the canvass should take place. Written directions to the location of any room other than the clerk’s or general registrar’s office where the board will meet shall be posted at the doors of the clerk’s and general registrar’s offices prior to the beginning of the meeting.¹³

14.2.1.3 Public Disruptions and Participation

No person, regardless of official function or statutory right to be present, may disrupt the meeting or interfere with the canvass in any way. Inform unruly individuals that interruptions can cause errors and explain that questions concerning each precinct will be taken *after* work concludes but *before* the electoral board reseals the pollbooks, pollbook count forms, and the statement of results (SOR) for the precinct back into Envelope #2.

14.2.1.4 Whose Attendance is Required:

All members of the electoral board *should* be present for the canvass; however, it is only mandatory that two members be present. In the event one member is unable to attend, two members of the electoral board constitute a quorum and may proceed with the canvass.¹⁴ The member of the board that is unable to attend should notify ELECT.

When conducting a canvass, the secretary must be present. If the official secretary is unable to

¹⁰ See [§24.2-534](#)

¹¹ See [§24.2-679](#).

¹² See [§24.2-671](#).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ See [§24.2-107](#).



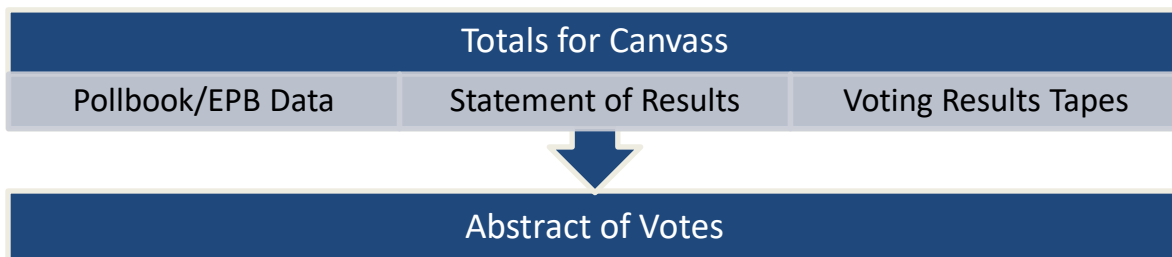
attend the canvass, the board members must elect one of the remaining board members to act as secretary.¹⁵ In acting as secretary, the board member must sign any official documents regarding the canvass as “acting secretary”.

When conducting a canvass, **only those members of the board present during the entire canvass may legally sign any document concerning it.** If you attach a signature of a member that was not present at the canvass or a member that was present does not sign, the electoral board must reconvene.

14.2.1.5 Whose Attendance is Optional:

During a primary election, each candidate is entitled to have as many representatives as there are teams of officials working to ascertain the results. In a general and/or special election, each political party and each independent candidate can have as many representatives as there are teams working to ascertain the results. The electoral board must use a room of sufficient size to accommodate these individuals. These individuals must be allowed an unobstructed view of the proceedings.

14.2.2 Required Totals for Canvass



14.2.2.1 Pollbook and Pollbook Count Sheet

A pollbook is a printed (PPB) or electronic (EPB) list of all the voters in a precinct eligible to vote in an election. Pollbooks list each eligible voter by last name and includes their ID number, full name, year of birth, town code (if applicable), super-district (if applicable), residence address, and mailing address. Additionally, a voter may have a pre-printed code beside their name to indicate one of the following:

- Voter requested an absentee ballot (AB).
- Individual is a temporary or federal overseas voter (T or F).
- Individual is a permanently registered overseas voter (R).
- Voter moved within the jurisdiction or is inactive (?).
- Voter has an assigned number instead of a social security number (A).
- Voter utilized Same Day Registration (SDR)



Note: All precincts must have a paper copy of each pollbook (PPB) available on Election Day

¹⁵ See [§24.2-106\(B\)](#).



(one for each party if having a dual primary), even if you use electronic pollbooks (EPBs).¹⁶ Paper copies are not required for early/absentee voting, but it is encouraged.

The pollbook count sheet is a tally sheet used by officers of election to track the number of voters who checked in on election day. A pollbook count sheet template can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#). If an electronic pollbook (EPB) is used, this count is tracked automatically.



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by *primary* in Enhanced Results. Procedures for checking people in on the pollbook and marking the count sheet, as well as all other Election Day paperwork, should include double and triple checks to ensure the voter is being checked in/accounted for on the correct primary pollbook and count sheet.

14.2.2.2 Statement of Results (SOR)

After polls close, officers of election begin to ascertain the votes by completing the SOR. SOR templates can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Statement of Results and Other Results](#). **Two copies of the SOR must be completed for each precinct.** Officers use materials such as the results tapes to complete the SOR. Officers of election must complete certain fields on the SORs such as: the number of voters checked in at the pollbook, the number of voters that voted outside the polling place (“curbside”), and the number of ballots cast on the voting machine. Officers use the completed SOR to submit the results for each precinct.¹⁷ The electoral board, then, verifies this information during canvass.¹⁸



Dual Primary Reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. Procedures for completing SORs, as well as all other Election Day and Night paperwork, should include double and triple checks to ensure the data is being recorded on the correct primary’s paperwork.

14.2.2.3 Voting System Results Tapes

Optical scanning machines produce tapes prior to an election and once the election is completed. The tapes produced prior to the beginning of the election are known as Zero Tapes while the printouts at the end of the election are the results tapes. Your printouts from the end of the night will have a total number of votes and, if applicable, tapes of any write-in names. Zero tapes and results tapes must be certified by the officials on election night; thus, each officer of election must sign these documents and submit an ELECT-658 Printed Return Sheet for all machines within the polling place. A printed return sheet template can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Statement of Results and Other Results](#). At least two copies of the results tapes should be printed, one that is kept with the statement of results and one for the clerk of court to be available the next day in their office.¹⁹

Optical scanning machines that are used in the Central Absentee Precinct (CAP) will also produce a result tape with office and issue results listed by the Election Day precincts. This result tape should be provided to the General Registrar so that the effort to confirm CAP by

¹⁶ See §§[24.2-610](#) and [24.2-611](#).

¹⁷ See [§24.2-654](#).

¹⁸ See [§24.2-671](#).

¹⁹ See [§24.2-658](#).



Precinct election results may be verified and corrected as needed. The electoral board should focus its attention on cumulative results tapes and write in tapes.

14.2.2.4 Abstracts of Votes Cast

The Enhanced Results “Certification” report (Abstract of Votes) is generated in Enhanced Results after vote totals for each office or issue are entered in Enhanced Results and confirmed correct. Once all data entered in Enhanced Results is confirmed correct, the local electoral board should have the general registrar or staff mark local winners, as determined by the board, and generate and print the Abstract of Votes. Enhanced Results instructions can be found in the Enhanced Results Training Materials course in ELECT’s Learning Management System (LMS).

The Abstract may need to be supplemented with the ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation if a write-in candidate wins **or** the total number of write-in votes cast for the office is 10% or more of the overall votes cast for the office. When you generate the abstract in Enhanced Results, there will be a note on the abstract notifying you that an ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification is required for the office. The Write-Ins Certification can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#))



Note: The ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation is a different document from the SOR Write-Ins Certification.

14.2.3 Election Materials Provided to the Clerk of Court and the General Registrar

Envelope 2 or 2B and Envelope 2A are used to deliver elections materials to the clerk of court or to the general registrar election night or the morning after the election.²⁰ Artwork of these envelopes to provide to your printer can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Print Ready Materials Artwork](#). The Circuit Court Clerks Guidance memo that outlines all envelopes used to store election records and related items can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents.



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. While one envelope may contain election materials for both primaries, securing the materials separately with clear labeling within the envelope is essential to ensuring accuracy in reporting. This separation should be maintained after canvass as well for if questions arise that require reviewing the materials again.

The clerk of court must receive a copy of the return sheets, a copy of the inspection sheet, and a copy of the SOR to comply with Code of Virginia §24.2-658, which requires the return sheets be made available the day after the election and for 60 days thereafter for public inspection and transcription, regardless of the method of delivery chosen from Code of Virginia §24.2-668.²¹

The Code of Virginia §24.2-668 provides 2 methods for delivering the two Envelopes to the clerk of court and the general registrar.

²⁰ See [§24.2-668](#).

²¹ See [§§24.2-658](#) and [24.2-668](#).



1. If the officers of elections are directed to give the clerk of court the election materials outlined in Code of Virginia §24.2-668(A), the officers of elections must deliver the materials no later than noon on the day following the election. The clerk of court is to retain Envelope 2A and provide the electoral board with Envelope 2 or 2B for the canvass.²²
2. If the officers of elections are directed to give the election materials to the general registrar, as provided in Code of Virginia §24.2-668(B), on the night of the election or the morning following the election, the general registrar is to provide Envelope 2 or 2B and the election materials therein to the electoral board and provide the clerk of court Envelope 2A for the required public inspection and preservation of records.²³ All other election materials outlined in Code of Virginia §24.2-668(A) shall be provided by the general registrar to the clerk of court by noon on the day following the ascertainment of the results of the election by the electoral board.

²² See [§24.2-668\(A\)](#).

²³ See [§24.2-668\(B\)](#).





Juneteenth Holiday

Juneteenth is a federal and state holiday that occurs on June 19th every year. As the June primary is set on the third Tuesday of June, Juneteenth may occur in the days following the June primary election, affecting canvass.

If Juneteenth occurs on the day following the primary, when canvass typically begins, the clerk of court's office may be closed that day, and the electoral board will need to choose how election materials will be delivered to the clerk of court's office in this situation.

Electoral boards have 3 options:

1. **Officers of election may deliver materials to the clerk of court on election night.** Please keep in mind that if this option is selected, coordination will have to take place with the clerk of court as this will fall outside of normal business hours.
2. **Officers of election may deliver election materials by noon the day following Juneteenth.** Code of Virginia §1-210 directs that when a deadline falls on a legal holiday or day when the clerk's office is closed, as authorized by an act of the General Assembly, that the act may be performed on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, legal holiday, or day or part of a day on which the clerk's office is closed by an act of the General Assembly. Therefore, localities may adjust their post-election timelines by delaying the delivery of election materials to the next business day.
3. **Officers of election may be directed to convey the elections materials to the principal office of the general registrar on election night or the morning after.** The general registrar will deliver the election results to the clerk by noon on the day following the ascertainment of the results of the election by the electoral board. Pursuant to Code of Virginia §§24.2-668(B) and 24.2-659(G), the general registrar will be responsible for securing and retaining these materials in their office, in addition to delivering the results by noon on the day following the conclusion of the local canvass.

Electoral boards may still choose to begin canvass on Juneteenth. The occurrence of Juneteenth in the days following the June primary, much like Veterans Day in November, **does not extend canvass, the ballot cure deadline as set out in Code of Virginia §24.2-709.1(C), the absentee deadline as set out in Code of Virginia §24.2-709(B), or the provisional deadline as set out in Code of Virginia §24.2-653(B).**

14.3 CONDUCTING THE CANVASS

The purpose of the canvass is to compile and certify vote totals, statistics, and voter turnout for each precinct within your locality, all of which are transmitted by the general registrar or office staff to the Department of Elections (ELECT) via Enhanced Results for publishing on ELECT's website. The canvass requires actions by the officers of elections, general registrar, and the electoral board. The purpose of this section is to understand the responsibilities of each entity within the canvass process.

More information on the steps that need to be taken during canvass can be found in ELECT's Learning Management System (LMS) courses: Enhanced Results Training Materials and Election Night and Post-Election Process. Additionally, ELECT will email Official ELECT



Advisories to localities in the weeks before the election and during canvass with help information reminders. General registrars and locality staff with Okta access can search past advisories in the Advisory Archive, which can be accessed by logging in to Okta and selecting the Elections Secure Access Portal then Advisory Archive.

14.3.1 Duties of the Officers of Election

The officers of election are critical to the canvass process because the officers begin the process by ascertaining, or verifying, vote totals for each machine on election night. Information that is collected and verified by the officers of election will be provided to the general registrar and the local electoral board for certification. For more details, see chapters 11 and 12 of this handbook, as well as the ELECT-103EDG and ELECT-103CAP Election Day Guides found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#).



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. Election night procedures should include double and triple checks to ensure the data is being recorded on the correct primary's paperwork, all materials are being put in envelopes secured separately by primary and clearly labeled, and the data is transmitted to the general registrar and office staff in a way that they are able to record correctly as well.

Officers of election must accurately complete:

- The pollbook count form (except when an electronic pollbook is used),
- Duplicate SORs,²⁴ and
- Produce the voting equipment printouts (e.g., results tapes, precinct consolidation tape or final precinct report).²⁵



Best Practice

In certifying returns provided by officers of election, the general registrar or electoral board may discover discrepancies in the totals provided. To correct any discrepancies, the board must summon the officers of election to the canvass at which point the discrepancy can be amended and signed by the officers (Code of Virginia [§24.2-672](#)). The officers should be required to appear either on the day of the canvass or no later than the following day.

If it is necessary to summon officers to correct errors, the material used must be returned to its original envelope and set aside until they appear. If the officers of election cannot appear on a particular day during the canvass, follow the instructions for packaging and re-open the envelope when the officers appear.

14.3.2 Duties of the General Registrar

The duties performed by the general registrar for the canvass break down into two sections: Before the Election and After the Canvass. The specifics of each section are described below and in Chapter 10 of this Handbook.

²⁴ See [§§24.2-657](#) and [24.2-668](#).

²⁵ See [§24.2-657](#).



14.3.2.1 Before the Election

The general registrar should:

- Review all items found in ELECT's Learning Management System (LMS) course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.
- Review all items found in the LMS course: Election Night and Post-Election Process.
- Review all Official ELECT Advisories emailed to localities to ensure you have the most up to date information and instructions.
- Attend any Enhanced Results online training webinars put on by ELECT.
- Review the election in Enhanced Results for accuracy of precincts, offices, candidates, and issues. Note that **ELECT creates elections in Enhanced**. An advisory will be sent when an election is ready for locality review and testing.
- Ensure all staff that will need access to Enhanced Results have it and are familiar with how to enter data. If a staff member needs access, submit an Enhanced Voting System Support Jira ticket.
- Enter data and test in Enhanced Results (while the election is in testing mode) to ensure familiarity with how to enter data election night and after.
- Practice exporting and importing the fillable excel in Enhanced Results and determine how it can be most useful to your locality.. For more information see the Enhanced Results Training Materials in LMS.
- Talk with your vendor and the Enhanced Voting support team to determine if importing a vendor file is a viable option for your locality.
- Make a plan with office staff and officers of elections for reporting data to the office and entering reported data into Enhanced Results.
- Print the Definitions document found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents for the electoral board to use as a reference.



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. Democratic and Republican data cannot be combined. Ensure that all officers of election, office staff, and EB members are aware of the necessity to keep and record everything accurately and by primary and are provided with the resources and training needed to conduct Early Voting (EV), Election Day (ED), and Post-Election (PE) processes accordingly.





Law Note Regarding 2025 Legislative Change SB1044

Beginning July 1, 2025, general registrars must report provisional election results *by precinct*. As localities were previously only reporting summary provisional results for the locality, general registrars should take time to consider how this change affects **all** their current provisional processes, from envelope handling during early voting through how the envelopes and ballots are stored after canvass. Locality documents should be reviewed to determine if edits should be made to accommodate this new way of reporting or if separate documents should be created. Ensure emphasis is given to these changes in processes when training officers of elections and office staff and when discussing the provisional ballots meeting with your electoral board. When the 2025 November General election is ready for locality testing in Enhanced Results users should conduct testing to familiarize themselves on data entry, validation, and reports changes. When it is available, read the Enhanced Results Use Procedures - Generals and Specials located in LMS Course: November 2025 Enhanced Results Training Materials.

14.3.2.2 After the Canvass

After the canvass is complete, the general registrar should make available for public inspection one copy of each of the following:²⁶

- Enhanced Results exported fillable excel or similarly generated spreadsheet (if applicable).
- SOR for each precinct.
- SOR Write-Ins Certification completed by the officers of election for each precinct (if applicable).

These documents may also be copied by the public with their own device, or they may purchase a copy pursuant to Code of Virginia §17.1-275(A)(8).



Note: The general registrar should retain at least one voided ballot from each precinct, including splits. One is to be kept with the canvass meeting minutes. If the voided ballots cannot be scanned, a second set will need to be retained for mailing to ELECT after abstracts have been accepted.²⁷

14.3.3 Duties of the Electoral Board

The electoral board completes and certifies the abstract of votes. To create the abstract of votes, the officers of election supply the SOR to the electoral board who reviews these documents and certifies them. This process is the ascertainment of results. Much of this process is completed through Enhanced Results by the general registrar or their staff. The general registrar should refer to the Enhanced Results training materials found in LMS course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.



Note: Once all local winners are confirmed and before generating the Abstracts of Votes, the

²⁶ See [§24.2-671](#).

²⁷ See [§24.2-612](#).



general registrar must mark the winners as such in Enhanced Results.

14.3.3.1 Processing the Statements of Results (SORs)



Dual primary reminder: Everything must be reported by primary in Enhanced Results. Democratic and Republican data cannot be combined. Electoral board members should ensure their process for reviewing all materials and then returning them to the appropriate envelope ensures there is no comingling of materials. Everything must be kept separate, even after canvass, to ensure any follow up questions can be answered.

Officers of election must submit two copies of the SOR for each precinct. Each copy should be checked for discrepancies by the electoral board members, a Democratic board member and a Republican board member should each check a copy for matching information. In large localities, it may be necessary to employ teams of two people to perform this function under the direct supervision of board members. In this case, each team should be comprised of one Democrat and one Republican. Each should check one copy of the SOR to ensure matching information, and all required signatures have been entered.

- Electoral board members should ensure that all voting systems in the polling location are properly accounted for in the SOR and that all machine tapes from all voting systems in use are present.
- Compare the number of voters voting with the total number shown as voting on the SOR. This is done by checking either the last page of the pollbook count sheet or the “Checked-In” count from the EPB. If they do not agree and no statement adequately explaining the disagreement has been entered, the officers must be called in to correct the SORs or to enter the missing explanation.²⁸



Law Note

Never open the sealed envelope or receptacle containing voted ballots unless authorized to do so by the Commissioner of the Department of Elections, by order of a Court (*e.g.*, in a recount or contest), or as part of a risk-limiting audit pursuant to Code of Virginia §24.2-671.2. **Opening the sealed counted ballots envelope or receptacle for any other reason could constitute illegal tampering, which is subject to prosecution as a felony per Code of Virginia §24.2-1009.**

- Officers may have to look at counted ballots or examine voting machines to correct discrepancies in the returns. If this is the case, authorization must be granted by ELECT **before** proceeding further with that precinct. The registrar or an electoral board member must complete the [ELECT-659 Request to Inspect Sealed Election Materials form](#).²⁹ Once the request has been approved by the Department you will receive an email confirmation with the completed, signed form.
 - Each political party and each independent candidate on the ballot (in a primary, each candidate) is entitled to have a representative during this process.³⁰ Parties and

²⁸ See [§24.2-672](#).

²⁹ See [§24.2-659](#).

³⁰ See [§24.2-671](#).



candidates must be provided with a reasonable advance notice of the time and place of the inspection. The representatives must have an unobstructed view of the proceedings but cannot interfere in any way.³¹

- The electoral board is required to notify ELECT when changes are made to the SOR, or later, to its certified abstract, and include a reason, which will be posted to ELECT's website.³²
 - Revisions may be made to the data entered in Enhanced Results without notifying the Department up to the point at which abstracts are submitted to the Department via the Abstracts of Votes online submission form.
 - If changes need to be made after the Department has approved the submitted abstracts, notify your ERS Liaison right away of what changes need to be made and why. They will instruct you how to move forward with making the required changes in Enhanced Results and/or submitting the revised abstract.
- Once the results are ascertained, the secretary of the board must return to the clerk:
 - all pollbooks,
 - any printed inspection and return sheets, and
 - one copy of each SOR.³³

14.3.3.2 Write-in Votes

Write-in votes cannot be cast in primary elections.³⁴ For general and special elections localities must always report write-in vote totals for each office 1) locality wide by voting method (early voting, mailed absentee, election day, provisional, post-election) and 2) the precinct breakdown by voting method.

For each office in the election localities should create a list with the following information:

- Write-in name
 - Variations of the same name should be accounted for together.
- The number of votes the name received **by precinct** and **locality total**.
- If the name is valid or invalid.
 - At all elections, except primary elections, it is lawful for any voter to vote for any person *other than the listed candidates* for the office by writing or hand printing the person's name on the official ballot.³⁵
 - No write-in vote shall be counted for an office for any person whose name appears on the ballot as a candidate for that office.³⁶

³¹ See [§24.2-671](#).

³² See [§24.2-671](#).

³³ See [§24.2-671](#).

³⁴ See [§24.2-529](#).

³⁵ See [§24.2-644\(C\)](#).

³⁶ See [§24.2-644\(D\)](#).



- No write-in vote shall be counted when it is apparent that a voter has voted for the same person for the same office more than one time.³⁷
- Consult the Virginia Guide to Hand-Counting Ballots for examples³⁸
- If validity is in question, the electoral board is responsible for making the determination.
- Illegible/no-name written write-in votes must be accounted for in the list as well to ensure an accurate reporting of the total number of write-in votes for the office.



Best Practice

Determining what may be counted as a write-in vote for a particular candidate often requires determining voter intent. Any abbreviation, misspelling, or other minor variation in the form of the name of a write-in candidate or other name provided by a voter should be disregarded in determining the validity of the vote, if the intention of the voter can be ascertained. Write-in candidates should be instructed to educate voters on using the candidate's full name.

Once you have accounted for all write-in votes for the office, the list should be sorted by valid/invalid, then alphabetically. You may choose to create separate precinct lists as well. It is encouraged to create the list(s) electronically for ease of sorting and editing, but the locality may create a physical list if they so choose.

All valid write-in votes for each office must be counted by the Electoral Board. The Electoral Board must record the valid write-in votes in the minutes of the canvass meeting.³⁹



Note: When entering write-in votes in Enhanced Results, each office has **one** write-in “bucket” line, **even if the office is multi-seat (vote for more than one)**. If your results tapes provide write-in votes broken down by write-in line for multi-seat offices, **the votes from all write-in lines must be combined** and totals reported in the **one** write-in “bucket” line.

In an election for a local office in a locality or town with a **population of no more than 4,000 persons**:

- If the person having the **highest** number of votes for the office is elected by write-in votes and is not qualified to hold such office or declines to assume such office, the person having the second highest number of votes shall be deemed to have been elected to such office and shall receive the certificate of election.
- If the person having the **second highest** number of votes is not qualified to hold such office or declines to assume such office, the person having the third highest number of votes shall be deemed to have been elected to such office and shall receive the certificate of election.
- If the person having the **third highest** number of votes is not qualified to hold such office or declines to assume such office, a vacancy shall be declared and filled by special

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ See ELECT, [Virginia's Guide to Hand-Counting Ballots](#).

³⁹ See [§ 24.2-671](#)



election.⁴⁰

In all other cases, if the person having the highest number of votes for the office is elected and is not qualified to hold such office or declines to assume such office, a vacancy shall be declared and filled by special election.

In an election for a local office certified by the electoral board, if, after triple checking, it is determined that two or more people have tied for having the most votes, the electoral board must conduct a public drawing to determine the winner.⁴¹ Additional information can be found in section 14.3.3.5 below.

- FAQ: If the winner is not qualified to hold the office or declines to assume the office, what happens?
 - A vacancy shall be declared and filled by special election.
 - Exception: the winner was a write-in and the locality/town has a population of no more than 4,000 people.
- FAQ: If two people tie for the highest votes and one of them is not qualified, or does not want, to hold the office, does the other person automatically win?
 - No, the drawing still must be done to determine the winner. If the person drawn does not qualify to hold the office or declines to assume the office, a vacancy shall be declared and filled by special election.
 - Exception: the winner was a write-in and the locality/town has a population of no more than 4,000 people.

Once the write-in winner is determined, the general registrar will need to create a candidate line for them in Enhanced Results and move their election results out of the Write-In “bucket” row and into the newly created candidate row on the Summary Entry page and all applicable Detailed Results Entry precinct pages. For more information refer to the Enhanced Results training materials found in the LMS course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.



Note: The criteria for candidacy must be met by write-in winners, including submitting campaign finance reports.

An ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation must be completed by the electoral board when:

- A write-in candidate wins the election.

OR

- The write-in vote total for an office is 10% or more of the total votes cast for the office.⁴²

The Abstract generated in Enhanced Results, will indicate that an ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation is required for the office. The form tallies valid, invalid, and total write-in votes received for the office and provides a list of all valid votes. The form can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents.

⁴⁰ See [§24.2-673\(B\)](#).

⁴¹ See [§ 24.2-674](#)

⁴² See [§§24.2-671](#) and [24.2-675](#).





Note: The ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation is a different document from the SOR Write-Ins Certification.

The Continuation page may be copied as many times as needed to provide the full list of valid write-in votes. Alternatively, if the electoral board develops its own list of valid write-in votes in a similar way as the Continuation page, that list may be used in lieu of the Continuation page. Newer voting systems permit the production of a write-in report from the voting systems themselves. This report is also acceptable and may be used in lieu of the Continuation page.

More information on the ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation can be found in section 14.3.3.6 below.

14.3.3.3 Voter Turnout

Voter turnout is the total number of individuals who attempted to vote in an election. Voter turnout totals must be determined for each precinct, broken down by voting method (early voting, election day, mailed absentee, provisional, post-election). For more information review the Definitions document found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents.

Once voter turnout has been determined for each precinct, the general registrar or staff will need to enter the information into Enhanced Results in the election's Voter Turnout Entry page.

14.3.3.4 Enhanced Results Data Validation, Enhanced Results and VERIS Reports Available to Confirm Accurate Election Results

After entering the election results and voter turnout into Enhanced Results general registrars should analyze and resolve all data validation errors that are flagged in the Data Validation section in Enhanced Results. Any data validation errors that cannot be cleared must be explained. The general registrar must include explanations/supporting documentation with the Abstracts when submitting the [Abstracts of Votes online submission form](#).

There are several reports in Enhanced Results that can be run to help find and resolve validation errors. Additionally, exporting the precinct results excel spreadsheet from Enhanced Results may prove to be helpful in finding errors. For more information refer to the Enhanced Results training materials found in the LMS course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.

After entering/uploading voting credit into VERIS, the Enhanced Results Voter Turnout report should be compared to the VERIS Voting Credit Audit by Locality report (found in VERIS > Reports Library > Election) and any discrepancies should be corrected or explained. If it is determined that the credit was entered/uploaded incorrectly in VERIS, the general registrar should submit a System Support JIRA ticket as soon as possible so ELECT IT staff can research and help resolve any issues found. The general registrar should provide their ERS Liaison with the ticket number so they can help facilitate a timely resolution.

If the general registrar or electoral board needs assistance in interpreting data validation errors or reports, they may contact their ERS Liaison or the ERS Election Administration team.



14.3.3.5 Determination of Tied Results

If the results of an election for a local office certified by the electoral board indicate that two or more candidates received the same (and highest) number of votes, the electoral board must first check and double check again the total votes cast for each candidate. If no error is found, the electoral board must conduct a public drawing to determine the winner.⁴³

Notify the candidates involved so that they or their representatives may be present for the drawing. The board should continue with the drawing even if a candidate's representative fails to show.⁴⁴ In any event, ensure that witnesses are present.

To conduct the drawing, take the following steps:

1. Enter the name of each of the candidates receiving a tie vote on a separate slip of opaque paper.
2. Exhibit the slips, one at a time, to any interested person who is present.
3. Fold each slip and seal it, individually, in an opaque envelope or other small opaque container.
4. Place all envelopes or containers in another opaque container large enough to mix them thoroughly.
5. Shake the container thoroughly and have one of the members of the electoral board draw out one envelope or container to select the winner.

14.3.3.6 Processing the Abstracts of Votes and ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation



Note: If there is a write-in winner, before generating the Abstracts, the general registrar will need to create a candidate line for them in Enhanced Results and move their results out of the Write-In "bucket" line and into the newly created candidate line on the Summary Entry page and all applicable Detailed Results Entry precinct pages. For more information refer to the Enhanced Results training materials found in the LMS course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.

Once all data entered in Enhanced Results is confirmed complete and correct, all validation errors have been cleared or explained, and local winners have been declared, the general registrar must mark the winners and generate the Abstracts in Enhanced Results in the election's Certification page. For more information refer to the Enhanced Results training materials found in the LMS course: Enhanced Results Training Materials.

For each office and referendum, complete two original Abstracts. For offices that require one, complete two ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certifications and Continuations (found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents).

- Each original abstract and ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation (if applicable) must be dated and signed by all members of the electoral board **who participate in the canvass**.

⁴³ See [§24.2-674](#).

⁴⁴ *Id.*



- The secretary will only sign once, on the *Secretary/Acting* line.
- One set of **originals** that are dated and signed are to be:
 - Copied. At least 4 sets of copies should be made.
 - Put in a file to be kept with the meeting's minutes.
- The second set of **originals** that are dated and signed are to:
 - Be attested to as a certified copy by the secretary (secretary signs on the *Secretary (Certified Copy)* line).
 - Have the electoral board seal affixed by the secretary.
 - Be kept with the meeting's minutes.
- One set of **copies** are to be kept with the meeting minutes.
- The second set of **copies** are to be attested to and seal affixed by the secretary and kept with the meeting's minutes.⁴⁵
- What to do with the third and fourth sets of copies is explained below in section 14.3.3.7.



Note: if corrections are required during ELECT's review that result in the electoral board having to certify revised abstracts or ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certifications and Continuations, the general registrar and electoral board must ensure all incorrect originals and copies are replaced with the final accepted versions.

An ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation must be completed by the electoral board when:

- A write-in candidate wins the election.

OR

- The write-in vote total for an office is 10% or more of the total votes cast for the office.⁴⁶

If it is determined that an ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation form is necessary, follow the instructions on the form to ensure it is completed accurately:

- Enter the appropriate numbers in the Write-Ins Summary section (Lines 1, 2, and 3).
- Enter, in alphabetical order, the **valid** names of persons receiving write-in votes and the number of votes received by each in the Valid Write-Ins – Detail section.
 - The Continuation page should be copied as many times as needed for a complete reporting of valid write-in names. Alternatively, if the electoral board develops its own list of valid write-in votes in a similar way as the Continuation page, that list may be used in lieu of the Continuation page.
- To ensure accuracy of reporting on the ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation perform the following checks:
 - Adding Write-Ins – Summary section lines 1 Invalid Write-Ins and 2 Valid Write-Ins

⁴⁵ See [§24.2-675](#).

⁴⁶ See [§§24.2-671](#) and [24.2-675](#).



must equal line 3 Total Write-Ins.

- The total on line 2 Valid Write-Ins in the Write-Ins – Summary section must equal the total of all votes for everyone listed in the Valid Write-Ins – Detail section (including Continuation pages).
- The Write-Ins – Summary section line 3 Total Write-Ins total must equal the total votes on the Abstract for the write-in winner plus the write-in “bucket”.



Note: The criteria for candidacy must be met by write-in winners, including submitting campaign finance reports.

14.3.3.7 Where to Send Abstracts/ Write-Ins Certifications and Continuations

As soon as the canvass is concluded, but no later than the tenth day after the election for the November General, sixth day after for the June Primary, the general registrar must submit the following to ELECT using the [Abstract of Votes online submission form](#). This electronic submission meets the requirements set out in Va. Code §§ [24.2-532](#) and [24.2-678](#).

- A scan of the attested copy of each abstract and ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certification and Continuation (if applicable) with seals affixed.
- If applicable, a document containing explanations for all validation errors that could not be cleared, discrepancies between credit and turnout, and any other explanations or supporting documentation that will help the Department in their review.
- A scan of each precinct’s voided ballot, including all splits.



Note: The general registrar and electoral board must remain available through the State Board of Elections (SBE) certification meeting to respond immediately to any requests from ELECT or SBE for additional information and/or correction of any errors found during their review or meeting.

Only after ELECT authorizes, mail the following to the Department of Elections, Attn: Abstracts:

- The attested copies with seals affixed of the abstracts and ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certifications and Continuations (if applicable) that were submitted electronically to, and accepted by ELECT.
- A completed Election Results Certification Checklist – ELECT-103(A) (found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) > Canvass Documents).
- Only if you were unable to submit electronically, one of each voided ballot.

For **general** elections: forward an attested copy with seals attached of the abstracts and ELECT-675 Write-Ins Certifications and Continuations (if applicable) that were accepted by ELECT to the following entities for recording in the record book of the local governing body:⁴⁷

- To the Clerk of the City Council or Board of Supervisors,
- For town elections, to the Clerk of the Town Council,

⁴⁷ See [§24.2-675](#).



- For local referenda, to the Circuit Court Clerk for the locality.

For **primary** elections: unless directed otherwise by ELECT, forward an attested copy with seals attached of the abstracts that were accepted by ELECT to the following entities:⁴⁸

- For U.S. House of Representatives, to the congressional district party chair.
- For General Assembly, to the Senate or House of Delegates district party chair.
- For all local offices, to the county or city party chair.
 - For constitutional and town offices that are shared by multiple localities, to the party chair of each county or city sharing the office.
- For United States President, United States Senate, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General do **not** send to any political party chair.



Dual primary reminder: Republican primary abstracts are only sent to republican party chairs. Democratic primary abstracts are only sent to Democratic party chairs. Before sending primary abstracts, triple check that the correct primary's abstracts are going to the correct party's chairs.

14.3.3.8 Requesting a Risk-Limiting Audit (RLA) for a Local Contest

The electoral board may request for a local race to be part of the risk-limiting audits (RLA) chosen by the State Board of Elections. The electoral board may hold a vote during the canvass to select a contested race wholly contained within the jurisdiction of the county or city to audit.⁴⁹ The contest must have a margin greater than or equal to 1%.⁵⁰

If the electoral board approves by a majority vote the request for an audit, they must submit an SBE-671.2(D) Request for Risk-Limiting Audit form (found in [FormsWarehouse under Risk Limiting Audit](#)) to ELECT. ELECT will present the request to the State Board of Elections (SBE) for consideration.⁵¹ If the request is granted by SBE, an extension may be granted, up to two weeks, for the electoral board's certification deadline.

More information on the RLA process can be found in the RLA Manual, located in chapter 14 of this handbook and in [FormsWarehouse under Risk Limiting Audit](#).

14.3.3.9 Responsibility for Certification of Results

The State Board of Elections (SBE) is responsible for the final certification of results and declaring winners for most offices and issues that cross locality lines, i.e. federal, statewide, General Assembly, shared constitutional, and Soil and Water Conservation Directors.⁵² Review Code of Virginia [§ 24.2-601](#) for responsibility information on shared towns.⁵³

The local electoral board is responsible for the final certification of results and declaring

⁴⁸ See [§24.2-532](#).

⁴⁹ See [§24.2-671.2\(D\)](#). See also Virginia Admin. Code [1VAC20-60-80](#).

⁵⁰ See Virginia Admin. Code [1VAC20-60-80](#).

⁵¹ *Id.* See also [SBE-671.2\(D\)](#).

⁵² See [§24.2-680](#).

⁵³ See [§24.2-601](#).



winners for all local offices and issues that are wholly contained within the locality.⁵⁴ Review Code of Virginia [§ 24.2-601](#) for responsibility information on shared towns.⁵⁵

14.3.4 Duties of the Department of Elections

To verify the accuracy of the Abstracts of Votes, the Department of Elections' (ELECT) Election and Registration Services (ERS) staff will review and compare the data entered in Enhanced Results by the locality. They will then compare the results totals entered in Enhanced Results to the totals on the attested abstracts submitted by the locality. ERS staff will notify the general registrar of any errors or questions found immediately after their review is complete.

Upon notification by ERS staff that there are errors or questions that need to be resolved, the general registrar or the electoral board, as appropriate, are required to research and correct any errors found and answer questions posed immediately. If the locality is unable to correct an error, they must provide an explanation as to why and any supporting documentation that may exist.⁵⁶

ELECT is required to post all by precinct absentee (early voting, mailed absentee, and post-election) election results to its website by no later than 5:00 pm on the tenth calendar day following an election.⁵⁷ **Beginning July 1, 2025** ELECT must also post all by precinct provisional results to its website by no later than 5:00 pm on the tenth calendar day following an election.⁵⁸ This is accomplished by localities entering all of their election results into Enhanced Results by the deadline.⁵⁹



Best Practice

Localities should enter all election results into Enhanced Results as soon as possible so validation checks can be run, researched, and errors corrected before the deadline for submitting Abstracts to ELECT (ten days after the election for general elections, six days after the election for primaries, as soon as possible after the election for special elections not occurring in November).

ELECT will post to its website comprehensive reports indicating, for each precinct, the actual election results, and other vital information such as voter turnout percentages and percentages of votes cast for each candidate.

14.4 AFTER THE CANVASS

14.4.1 Campaign Finance Reporting and Certificates of Election

A certificate of election can be provided to the candidate with the highest number of votes only after the individual complies with campaign finance reporting requirements.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁴ See [§24.2-671](#).

⁵⁵ See [§24.2-601](#).

⁵⁶ See [§24.2-675](#).

⁵⁷ See [§24.2-667.1](#).

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ See [§24.2-667.1](#).

⁶⁰ See [§24.2-948.2](#).



following conditions must be met:

- The candidate has filed all campaign finance reports required in Code of Virginia.
- A final report has been filed, if required by Code of Virginia §24.2-948.1(C).
- The candidate has responded to and complied with any notice that additional information is needed to complete any required report.⁶¹
- The candidate has paid any civil penalty and returned any contribution required to be returned.⁶²

Notify candidates for any of the offices who fail to file the required reports of campaign contributions and expenditures that, if such reports are not filed, the electoral board will be required to report to the Commonwealth's Attorney that the candidate has failed to comply with reporting requirements and may be subject to prosecution.⁶³ Report to the Commonwealth's Attorney, in writing, any candidate who fails to file any required report by the deadline set in the notification letter.

The certificate of election is made out by the secretary of the electoral board once the board has determined the election results and verified with the general registrar each winning candidate's compliance with Code of Virginia §24.2-948.2.⁶⁴ The secretary must make out a certificate for each person who received the highest number of votes. Two sample certificate templates can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Certificate of Election, Local. The dates entered for the beginning and end of the term of office must be correct for the specific office being certified. If the election was a special to fill a vacated seat, the certificate must indicate this. Your local government attorney can be consulted if needed.

The secretary of the electoral board is responsible for issuing the certificates of election for most offices that are wholly contained within the locality.⁶⁵ Review Code of Virginia § 24.2-680 for responsibility information on Soil and Water Conservation Directors. The secretary or acting secretary must sign each certificate of election. If a certificate of election is withheld through Code of Virginia §24.2-948.2, the secretary must issue the certificate promptly once compliance is met.⁶⁶ While the Code of Virginia only requires the transmittal of certificates of election to the winners, the officer administering the oath of office may request the electoral board provide them with a certificate of election as well.

The State Board of Elections (SBE) is responsible for issuing certificates of election for most offices and issues that cross locality lines, i.e. federal, statewide, General Assembly, shared constitutional and town, and Soil and Water Conservation Directors.⁶⁷



Note: The general registrar and electoral board must remain available through the State Board of Elections (SBE) certification meeting to respond immediately to any requests from ELECT or

⁶¹ See [§24.2-953.3](#).

⁶² See [§24.2-948.2](#).

⁶³ See [§24.2-946.3](#).

⁶⁴ See [§24.2-676](#).

⁶⁵ See [§24.2-680](#).

⁶⁶ See [§24.2-948.2](#).

⁶⁷ See [§24.2-680](#).



SBE for additional information and/or correction of any errors found during their review or meeting.

For June primaries, SBE must certify results fourteen days after the day of the election.⁶⁸ For November elections, SBE must certify results on the first Monday in December. In the interim, Department of Elections (ELECT) staff will verify the accuracy of the results each local electoral board has certified.⁶⁹

A member of the electoral board or the general registrar may deliver a certificate in person or by certified mail.⁷⁰ Upon delivery, inform the person that the certificate should be exhibited to the officer who administers the oath of office as evidence of their election victory. An oath must be administered by a Clerk of Court of record, by any judge, by a Commissioner or Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, or by the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

14.4.2 What to Do with Your Election Records, Materials, and Ballots

The Circuit Court Clerks Guidance memo outlines all envelopes used to store election records and related items. The memo can be found in [FormsWarehouse under Election Management](#) then under Canvass Documents.

After completing canvass and all other duties related to closing the election (for example submitting abstracts to ELECT), you should prepare all records and papers generated in connection with the election for retention. For instance, documents such as voter registration applications submitted during election day, should be entered into VERIS and digitalized or stored.

All election materials outlined in Code of Virginia §24.2-668(A) not already in the possession of the clerk of court, shall be provided by the general registrar to the clerk of court by noon on the day following the ascertainment of the results of the election by the electoral board.

Pursuant to Code of Virginia §24.2-669, ballots, both counted and uncounted, are to be delivered to your Clerk of the Circuit Court for retention purposes. Your Clerk serves as the “owner” of the ballots. The length to which your clerk should keep the ballots is dependent on the type of election in which the ballots were generated.

For non-federal elections, your counted ballots will be retained for one year and then destroyed by the Clerk if no election contest or legal proceeding is pending. Your uncounted ballots may be destroyed after the time to call a recount has expired.

For federal election ballots:

- The Help America Vote Act (HAVA)⁷¹ provides federal requirements and prohibitions related to election administration. One such requirement surrounds “all paper and records” generated in relation to voting or voter registration. HAVA requires your federal ballots be kept with your Clerk for twenty-two (22) months.
- Some voting equipment creates digital images of the ballots when determining the vote

⁶⁸ See [§24.2-534](#).

⁶⁹ See [§24.2-679](#).

⁷⁰ See [§24.2-676](#).

⁷¹ See [HAVA of 2002](#).



count. Per United States Code 52 USC 20701, these digital ballot images originating from a federal election must be retained for twenty-two (22) months.⁷² If your locality's voting system creates digital ballot images, these records must be maintained with the Clerk of the Circuit Court for twenty-two (22) months as mandated by federal law.

- The start time for your ballots' retention period begins on the date of the federal election. These retention requirements are only applicable when a federal office is on the ballot. This requirement is in addition to all other requirements of Title 24.2 of the Code of Virginia to preserve election materials.⁷³

If your locality falls under this requirement as it pertains to digital ballot images, you may choose to transfer the records from the original data storage device to another device to ensure compliance with federal law. If your locality chooses to transfer these records to another device, ensure the transfer was properly executed prior to sealing the records. Work closely with your vendor and IT support in your locality.

14.4.3 Letters to Voters whose Provisional or Absentee Ballots are Rejected

After the canvass, the general registrar must notify, in writing, all persons whose provisional or absentee ballot were not counted because they were determined to be unqualified to have their vote counted in the election.⁷⁴ The reason for this determination must be entered into VERIS; doing so will produce the required correspondence for mailing.⁷⁵ The registrar must search and manually add information regarding the provisional ballots in VERIS for each provisional voter. Refer to VERIS Step-by-Step Voter History for more information on modifying voter history.

A provisional voter may be registered, have an inactive status, cancelled registration, or not be in VERIS at all. For persons already registered, VERIS will automatically generate letters when their record is updated to indicate the provisional ballot was not counted. For persons not registered who have not completed a registration application, the notification letter should include a voter registration application and inform the person that if they wish to be eligible to vote in future elections, they must complete the application and return it in the pre-addressed envelope provided before the close of books for the next election in the county or city.



Enhanced Results/VERIS

Throughout this chapter you can find information related to Enhanced Results and VERIS. However, if you cannot find what you are looking for, please see the Enhanced Results Training Materials Course in LMS or VERIS Step-by-Steps for a walkthrough of all Enhanced Results or VERIS processes.

⁷² See [52 USC §20701](#).

⁷³ See [Title 24.2](#).

⁷⁴ See [§24.2-653.01\(C\)](#).

⁷⁵ See [§24.2-653.01\(C\)](#). See also Virginia Admin. Code [1VAC20-20-70](#).

