



What is the Board of Elections?

The Board of Elections (BOE) in Ohio is a local office found in each of the state's 88 counties. It is responsible for administering local elections, including managing petitions for local, legislative, and congressional district offices, as well as local issues and options. Additionally, the BOE handles campaign finance reports for local candidates, political parties, and political action committees.

How does the Board of Elections interact with the Secretary of State?

The Secretary of State's Office provides legal guidance, election procedures and campaign finance information to Boards of Elections; and provides training for Board of Elections members and staff.

Who sits on the Board of Elections?

- **The Board of Elections is a four-person board; with two members from each major political party. Board of Elections Office Staff include a director and a deputy director.**
- **Director:** 1) Appointed by the Secretary of State; 2) Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the office.
- **Deputy Director:** 1) Appointed by the Secretary of State; 2) Reports to the Director of the Board of Elections and assists with board of elections operations.

How long are the terms? Are there term limits?

Four years for Board Members, and two years for Directors and Deputy Directors. There are no term limits.

What are the responsibilities of the Board of Elections?

- **Election Administration:** 1) Establish precincts; 2) Fix registration and polling places; 3) Provide and deliver election materials.
- **Personnel Management:** 1) Appoint and remove staff: manage directors, deputies, employees and election officers; 2) Administer oaths for election law.
- **Oversight and Compliance:** 1) Investigate election irregularities; 2) Certify and validate petitions; 3) Resolve voting ties.
- **Reporting and Communication:** 1) Issue rules and instructions; 2) Advertise elections; 3) Provide election notices and publication.
- **Voter Registration and Support:** 1) Maintain voter database and update records; 2) Assist with voter registration; 3) Designate polling sites.
- **Financial and Budget Management**

What is the role of the Board of Elections in the voting process?

- **Election Petition:** The Board of Elections’ verifies the qualifications of signers, validates petition signatures, and ensures compliance with all legal requirements. Upon receiving the petition, the BOE has 10 days to validate local petitions or 15 days to complete the validation process for statewide issue petitions.
 - **Contested Elections:** The “contest of election” is a court action to challenge the nomination or election of any public office or the results of any ballot question or issue. It is filed when one or more election irregularities are alleged to have occurred and are alleged to have affected the result of the election. The board of elections has no authority or control over a contest of election.
 - **Recount:** Recounts must be conducted by teams of election officials from both major political parties. They compare the number of votes cast in the contests being recounted with the number of voters listed in the poll books. If discrepancies are found, such as more votes than voters listed, these must be documented. For the recount, the board of elections randomly selects precincts whose total votes for the contested election or issue amount to at least 5% of the total votes cast. This selection must be done during a public meeting, and candidates or issue representatives must be notified in advance to observe. If the number of precincts named in the recount request exceeds 5% of the total vote, the definition of “randomly select” applies.
 - **Election Tie:** If an official canvass (the process of reviewing and verifying election results) ends with a tie in a candidate contest, and the recount also results in a tie, the candidate who was initially declared the winner by drawing lots at the end of the canvass remains the winner after the recount. The board should not conduct another draw to resolve the tie; the original decision stands. However, if the official canvass did not result in a tie, but the recount ended in a tie, the board must resolve the tie by drawing lots during the recount. The board should then indicate how the tie was resolved when submitting the results.
 - **Certification of Official Vote Counts:** Election certification refers to the process of election officials attesting that the election results are true and accurate through post-election audits. During this time teams of election officials from both major political parties compare the total number of votes cast to the number of voters listed in the poll books and check ballots to ensure all contests are correctly marked and discrepancies must be documented. After the audit, the board calculates the accuracy rate of the results. If this rate is below certain thresholds, the board must conduct additional audits on new random samples. If the accuracy rate is still insufficient, a full hand-count may be required. Once the accuracy rate exceeds the desired threshold, the board updates the official results and reports them to the Secretary of State within five days.
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