

# "How it Works" Series

# **Results Reporting**

The tabulation and reporting of election results is a complex process with many elements and quality controls. Here is a guide to understanding that process and how election results become official.

# **ELECTION NIGHT REPORTING**

Results reported on election night are not official and must be verified.

# **MAIL VOTING**

All mail ballots returned are scanned in the weeks leading up to and including Election Day. A report is produced tabulating these results and is reported after the polls close.

#### **PRECINCT RESULTS**

Precinct-level results are reported by the election officers. After they print result tapes from ballot scanners, they report the totals. These results are reviewed and uploaded or entered to the state website. Results from polling places arrive continuously for several hours after the polls close.

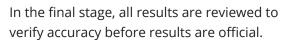
## **EARLY VOTING**

At 7:00 pm on Election
Day, the scanners from
early voting are closed
to produce results tapes.
The digital drives from
these scanners are
uploaded to a tabulator
that combines
the results for
reporting.

#### **UNOFFICIAL RESULTS**

All of these sources are reported on Election night as <u>unofficial</u> results. There are still steps to complete. The media often predicts winners, but some ballots and verificiation remain.

# **VERIFICATION PROCESS**





#### **CANVASS**

Election officers review official results tapes to ensure results are accurate.



# **RESULTS VALIDATION**

Staff verifies results, turnout, and precinct detail against state validation tools.



## **RISK-LIMITING AUDIT**

*In general elections*, the state conducts an audit to verify the accuracy of the results.



# **CERTIFICATION**

The Electoral Board reviews the results a final time and certifies the local election.



## **VOTES STILL BEING COUNTED**

#### MAIL BALLOTS STILL ARRIVING

Mail ballots postmarked on Election Day can arrive until Friday after the election. These ballots are reviewed and tabulated.

#### **PROVISIONAL BALLOTS**

Ballots where the registration or voting status are unclear are reviewed by the Electoral Board. Accepted ballots are counted.

# STATE CERTIFICATION

All state and federal results are reviewed and certified by the Virginia State Board of Elections.



