



# Results Verification: The Anatomy of a Post-Election Review

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## What Does “Results Verification” Mean?

Post-election results verification is an independent tabulation and comparison of an election's results that is performed after the election has concluded in order to verify the accuracy of the reported results.

Following an election, all jurisdictions take their unofficial results and conduct a full canvass and certification of results to ensure that any data or human errors are found, detailed, and corrected before official results are certified and reported as final. This process can take anywhere from days to weeks depending on the size of a jurisdiction and is a built-in safeguard to ensure accuracy. While election officials know that minor differences in unofficial and official results are typically not signs of any tampering, whenever there is an update between unofficial election night results and official certified results, they often hear from voters who may be confused by or distrustful of the differences.

That's one of the reasons why routine audits are conducted following every election in many states and counties to further establish trust in the results. With the increase of election security awareness and security concerns in recent years, post-election reviews are becoming a fundamental part of the election process for many jurisdictions. Results verification offers election officials an opportunity to offer voters another layer of transparency by going beyond their audit requirement and doing an independent retabulation. Additionally, in the case of a close race or unanticipated recount, this extra step can often help to instill confidence in the electoral process.

## The Anatomy of a Post-Election Review

### A Retabulation - Not A Recount

To understand results verification in this context, it's helpful to think of it as an independent review. Third-party results verification is performed independently from the primary tabulation system and can provide a more detailed analysis of the election. Often referred to as the gold standard for its speed and transparency, this style of results verification is becoming increasingly popular. At Clear Ballot, we offer third-party results verification using a system called VerifyNow.

To compare their reported results to a new, independent tabulation, jurisdictions can choose to either import previously captured ballot images or rescan their physical ballots post-election. Most jurisdictions choose to perform a 100% analysis or review of every ballot cast during the election to perform a true side-by-side comparison of results against the primary tabulation system. We



currently conduct statewide post-election third-party audits for the states of Maryland and Vermont and for counties in several states.

The backbone of our VerifyNow system is our innovative software that allows election officials to view digital images of every vote cast by ballot and contest. This gives officials the ability to view undervotes and overvotes and digitally adjudicate votes that may have been missed or incorrectly recorded during the original tabulation for any number of common reasons such as stray marks, not fully filled-in ovals, or creases in the paper. As many states are “voter intent” states, there are clearly established processes for recognizing voter intent and adjudicating a ballot. Typically, this is done by bipartisan teams within set guidelines to ensure transparency and eliminate bias, but every state has their own defined process that election officials must follow.

After the ballots are retabulated, election officials can produce detailed reports that can be compared to initial tabulation results for verification that the reported results are accurate. Often, states have set thresholds for these comparisons, with any differences above a set percentage (for example 0.5%) triggering additional review. If the results are below this threshold and there was no change in the reported winner in any contest, then the county or state can feel confident that their initial reported results were accurate and prepare for their next election.

### To Import or to Rescan?

At Clear Ballot, we offer two products for results verification: VerifyNow and VerifyNow Pro. These identifiers refer to whether the retabulation is done with imported ballot images (VerifyNow) or through a manual rescanning of ballots (VerifyNow Pro).

With VerifyNow, the county or state is responsible for providing and digital ballot images once the election has concluded. They are also responsible for providing their original results for a baseline comparison of both tabulations. Once the ballot images are imported, either a team from the jurisdiction seeking to review their results or trained experts from Clear Ballot will view the ballots and retabulate the results. VerifyNow will then create a summary report of its tabulation and a comparison to the initial results that includes any differences and what percentage of the vote these differences constitute.

With VerifyNow Pro, jurisdictions will manually rescan their ballots into tabulators post-election to conduct their independent review. Once the ballots are rescanned, election officials will follow the same process, viewing images of the ballot within the VerifyNow software and retabulating the ballots. Election officials will then print the same summary report with comparisons between the two tabulations for their review. For jurisdictions who choose to conduct direct results verification, they maintain ownership of the tabulators and the ability to conduct results verification for any future election.



## Why is Independent Verification so Important to Voters?

We know that election integrity is top of mind right now for so many voters. With articles coming out daily about audits, accusations of fraud, new voting legislation, and changes to upcoming elections, it can be difficult for anyone unfamiliar with election laws and processes to understand and keep up with this new information. In many cases, voters and election officials are looking for ways to cut through that confusion and boost confidence in the steps they're already taking to conduct efficient, safe elections. With results verification, officials are able to work within their normal processes to add an extra layer of transparency that voters can easily read and interpret. This instills confidence in the reported results and helps to avoid lengthy (and often costly) recounts or reviews down the road.

If the past few years are any indication, audits and post-election reviews will continue to become a more regular part of the election process, helping to build voter confidence with an independent verification that their vote was counted and their voice was heard. To learn more about results verification or VerifyNow, you can read more at [www.ClearBallot.com](http://www.ClearBallot.com) or reach out to us any time at [info@clearballot.com](mailto:info@clearballot.com).

## ABOUT CLEAR BALLOT

As the leader in election innovation, Clear Ballot has introduced a new class of tools and a modern approach to voting, enabling unprecedented speed, accuracy, and transparency that officials and the voting public have sought for decades. Clear Ballot entered the election industry with its first product in 2012, disrupting the industry with the nation's first independent, automated audit, and four years later developed a complete voting system which is now the fastest growing voting system in the industry. Clear Ballot's commitment to ease of use and modern technology means that its browser-based software runs on the most modern operating systems in the industry and will always be up to date.