



Election Timeline

Now – November 3, 2020 | Pre-Election

Voting is happening *right now*, with many states offering early voting.

November 3, 2020 | Election Day

This is the last day for people to cast a vote. Once the polls close the final counting can begin. Due to COVID many more people are sending in mail-in or absentee ballots which take longer to count. Determining the final tally may take a while, and likely a definitive winner won't be declared that evening.

November 4, 2020 – December 8, 2020 | Preparation for the Electoral College Vote

The ballot that you cast is actually for a statewide tally to determine your state's electoral college votes. The person who wins the Presidency must win at least 270 electoral votes, with 538 total electoral votes available. Every state but Maine and Nebraska use a winner-take-all approach, which means whoever wins the most votes in the state gets all of the electoral college votes. The other two states have a district-based system that allows for split votes. It is possible for someone to win the popular vote, but not win the electoral college. Some states require that electors to vote for the candidate who won in their state, it is unusual for an elector to not follow the popular will, but it has happened before.

December 14, 2020 | Electoral College Vote

Electors of the Electoral College vote and those votes are certified by their legislatures/governor. It is likely that potential legal disputes would need to be resolved by this point to proceed with the statutorily required deadlines. This happened in Bush v. Gore in 2000, the Supreme Court said that the time had run out and the electoral college voters need to cast their votes.

December 23, 2020 – January 3, 2021 | Electoral college votes (certificates) are transferred to Congress

January 6, 2021 | Congress counts the Electoral College votes

If no candidate has won, the needed majority of 270 votes under the 12th Amendment Congress decides the election by majority vote. The vote is taken by state, with each state having 1 vote. The same process exists for the Vice-President, except it would take place in the Senate and not the house. Each Senator has 1 vote. The Congress tasked with this work would be the NEW Congress just elected, so in this case the 117th Congress.

January 20, 2021 | Noon | Inauguration Day

The President Elect and Vice President elect take the oath of office (Should there not be an elected President or Vice President, at that time the 20th Amendment indicates that the Presidential Succession Act would then apply. Which means the speaker of the House, the president pro-tempore of the Senate, then Cabinet Secretaries)