



GOLD STANDARD ELECTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION WORKBOOK

HOW TO IMPLEMENT TRANSPARENT, SECURE ELECTIONS IN YOUR COUNTY

In a July 2024 Rasmussen Reports/Heartland Institute poll, 62% of likely voters expressed concern about cheating affecting the 2024 election, with 37% “very concerned.” A November 2024 Rasmussen Reports poll found 65% of voters support full investigations, including forensic ballot audits, and 59% favor requiring paper ballots under federal law.

Electronic Voting Systems, often using foreign-manufactured hardware and software, pose risks amplified by advances in quantum computing and AI, which can break cryptographic protections. Infiltration of these systems threatens the will of the people and national security, prompting a national emergency directive to eliminate electronics from federal elections. This guide provides counties with a clear, cost-effective roadmap to transition to secure, transparent, paper-based elections under local, decentralized control.

1. VOTER REGISTRATION: REBUILDING A SECURE SYSTEM

Objective: Establish a verified, transparent voter registration process with minimal risk of electronic vulnerabilities.

Steps

- **In-Person Re-Registration:** Require all voters to re-register in person with:
 - Proof of citizenship (e.g., passport, birth certificate).
 - Official photo ID (e.g., driver’s license, state ID).
 - Proof of residence; electors cannot be registered at PO boxes and non-residential properties. Must be registered at the elector’s “domicile.”
- **Accessibility:** Allow registration at county, city, or township election offices. Homeless individuals may use the county election office address as their domicile if a homeless shelter is not available to them. If a person has an issue physically getting to a registration office, the county can come to their home. Mobile resources will be available in these rare instances. Protected individuals such as police, judges, legislators, government officials, and abuse victims. These individuals may have a police station or courthouse address as their domicile.
- **Nullify Existing Registrations:** Invalidate all prior registrations to start fresh. Issue each voter a Unique National Voter ID number, portable across states.
- **Verification Process:**
 - Cross-check eligibility using federal and state databases (e.g., Homeland Security for Real ID and U.S. Citizenship status, Social Security Administration for living and their death records, USPS CASS/NCOA/DPV (Delivery point Notification) for address verification).

- Run monthly Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS) and National Change of Address (NCOA) checks at the state level to flag issues for county review. The CASS certification check helps verify the residence is legitimate.
- The court clerk of each state and federal level court shall present a monthly list of unqualified jurors to each county election official, who shall flag the voter as inactive or remove the voter from the registration list.
- **Public Transparency:** Voter rolls shall be available for free on the State Election Commission or Secretary of State's website, excluding sensitive data (e.g., Social Security or driver's license numbers), but including the year of birth to facilitate duplicate identification. This should be updated daily. Note that the National Unique Voter ID will serve as the unique identifier once fully implemented.
- **Secure Database Management:**
 - State-hosted master voter registration Read-Only database. The state receives information from federal databases for recommended revisions or deletions, which are then passed on to the county.
 - Counties receive lists from the state regarding potential removal from active registration lists. Use two-factor authentication for county officials accessing the database (no third-party vendors). Counties make the necessary adjustments as needed. A tracking system is used to log user and activity. The system should comply with NIST 800-53 and ISO 27001 Standards, and an outside contracted auditor should evaluate compliance at least quarterly.
 - Hardware and software designed, developed, and sourced and maintained exclusively by U.S. (American-owned) companies with publicly disclosed ownership and in compliance with protocols outlined in the Defense Production Act.
- **Removal Process:** Immediately remove voters upon confirmed death, move to another state (via NCOA or new registration), or other ineligibility, using information from state intra-agency, state, and federal records. These electors would be archived in a separate secure database that uses the above (NIST) standards.

Key Considerations

- **Funding Needs:** Allocate budgets for additional staffing and verification processes to support ongoing operations—estimate costs based on county size and voter population.
- **Timeline:** Set a 6–12-month re-registration period, staggering by precinct or last name to manage volume.
- **Optimization:** Consult the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) for process streamlining without adding tech complexity.
- **Legal Updates:** Rewrite federal and state laws to incorporate the above changes, standardize database fields, ensure public access, and establish immediate removal protocols.

2. VOTER VALIDATION: ENSURING ONLY ELIGIBLE VOTERS CAST BALLOTS

Objective: Verify voter identity and eligibility at polling places with transparent, auditable processes.

Steps

- **Freeze Registration:** Lock voter rolls 30 days before Election Day to prevent last-minute changes, late registrations, and ensure accuracy of the registration lists.
- **Prepare Poll Books:**
 - Print precinct-specific voter lists (paper poll book) with unique voter ID numbers, names, precinct name, ballot style, DOB, and addresses. This is what will be referenced when the voter is checking in. Include a field for the type of vote (Absentee/UOCAVA, in-person, etc) and if an absentee ballot has been returned.
 - Include a separate, alphabetized voter roster listing signatures, noting the precinct and ballot style.
- **Check-In Process:**
 - Voters must present a photo ID or voter registration card (with a Unique National Voter ID number or address).
 - Verify the ID against the poll book by comparing the physical appearance and signature.
 - Use an Omissions List Form for eligible voters missing from the poll book. Confirm eligibility via phone with the county or state election office. If a voter is ineligible, they must re-register.
- **Provisional Ballots:** Allow ineligible or unregistered voters to cast provisional ballots, which are tracked on a separate roster and verified after the election. If someone has moved more than 30 days out of their precinct and has not registered in their new precinct/county, they cannot vote. No registration will be accepted for that election after the 30-day registration freeze period.
- **Line Management:** Split check-in lines by last name (e.g., A–M, N–Z) to reduce wait times.
- **Public Access:** Make scanned poll books and voter rosters publicly available within 48 hours at no cost. (These files can be uploaded into a OneDrive, SharePoint, or Google Docs folder at little to no cost, and then shared on the county website.)

Key Considerations

- **First-Time Freeze:** For initial implementation, allow a grace period for re-registration issues, using provisional ballots to avoid disenfranchisement. These should be counted at the county immediately following the provisional hearing, using the same methods as on Election Day.
- **Sample Forms:** *Templates provided for voter rosters, poll books, and Omissions List Forms to standardize processes.*

- **Staff Training:** Train poll workers on verification protocols and operating procedures to ensure consistency and accuracy in the voting process.

3. MARKING AND COUNTING BALLOTS: TRANSPARENT, SECURE, AND VERIFIABLE

Objective: Implement a paper-based voting system with robust safeguards to ensure accuracy and public trust.

Steps

- **Single Voting Day:** Limit voting to one day (ideally a federal holiday) to minimize risks associated with the chain of custody. States ideally should designate primaries as state holidays.
- **Ballot Printing:**
 - Print ballots internally (no third parties) with anti-counterfeit features (e.g., watermarks, micro-letters, UV ink, security holograms).
 - Use sequential numeric serial numbers (no alpha-numeric characters) to track ballots, including precinct and ballot style numbers.
 - Randomize ballot distribution to protect voter privacy.
- **In-Person Voting:**
 - Provide pens for marking ballots.
 - Voters mark ballots in private booths, fold them, and place them in secure lockboxes (with a minimum of one per 500 voters, sized to hold 1,000 ballots).
- **Counting Process:**
 - Begin counting only after the polls close, using bipartisan teams of at least two counters and two talliers per table. (With most state statutes requiring the count shall be public, it is essential to make sure that no side knows a vote trajectory before the polls close.)
 - Sort ballots into batches (e.g., 25 or 50 per batch) by precinct and ballot style.
 - If the Gold Standard (GS) tally method is used, call all candidates' names for multi-candidate races (e.g., school board "pick 3").
 - Record tallies on standardized forms, with public observers and video recording (via mounted cameras, tablets, or cell phones using Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Zoom, or other live streams that can also save the video for public posting and later review). Scan ballots for redundancy and confirmation of the count. Scans can be used as an alternative to video recording to keep costs low.
 - Post precinct results on the polling place door immediately after counting.
- **Staffing and Logistics:**

- Hire separate teams for voter check-in during the day and ballot counting after the polls close to maintain efficiency and reduce team burnout.
- Estimate 1 counting team (4 people) per 300 ballots to complete counting within 4 hours. Use the formula: *Number of teams = (Total ballots / 300) + 10% buffer*.
- Provide two 1-hour training sessions for counters using sample ballots and forms.
- Ensure comfortable chairs, tables, and refreshments (kept away from voting/counting areas). Schedule breaks every 60–90 minutes.
- Keep tally sheets organized in binders and print them on legal-size paper for improved readability.
- Replace or reassign counters making consistent errors with substitutes or move to observer or administrative roles.
- **Public Oversight:**
 - Allow public observers to be within view of the counting process (without interference).
 - Provide live video feeds (where feasible, cameras, cell phones, or tablets can be mounted above ballots and streamed to a computer) and make recordings/scans available post-election.

Key Considerations

- **Budget Estimation:** Calculate costs for printing, staffing, and equipment (e.g., cameras, lockboxes). See the sample budget table below.
- **Error Management:** Use runners or clerks to transfer and seal batches, monitor counting, and resolve discrepancies (adjudicate) in real time.
- **Disabled/Elderly Voters:** Offer human assistance (voter's choice) and curbside voting for accessibility for those unable to walk or stand for an extended period of time or who have a declared disability.
- **Recruitment:** Consider using a jury system or paying workers up to \$30/hr. Look into local colleges and high schools for recruitment. Note that if early voting is abandoned, counties need only recruit for one day, making it more manageable.

ABSENTEE VOTING: STRICT CONTROLS FOR LIMITED USE

Objective: Restrict absentee voting to essential cases with rigorous verification to prevent fraud.

Steps

- **Eligibility:** Limit absentee/mail-in voting to voters with verified disabilities, travel, or military service overseas, all confirmed via affidavit.
- **Request Process:**

- Require individual requests per election (no automatic mailings).
- Verify voter identity before sending ballots by using a photo ID and the voter's ID number.
- Notarize requests with a valid excuse.
- **Ballot Tracking:**
 - Assign sequential serial numbers to absentee ballots, logged by precinct and ballot style.
 - Post "sent" ballots' serial numbers and precincts on the county website.
 - Mark ballots as received on the website upon return.
- **Security and Counting:**
 - Store returned ballots in a secure, locked location with double-sealed, double-locked containers at the County Board of Election Office until Election Day.
 - Reconcile serial numbers with envelopes before opening.
 - Verify the completeness of the required information again before unsealing the envelopes.
 - Sort by precinct and ballot style and deliver absentee ballots to precincts for counting under a strict chain of custody.
 - Use a separate team to remove ballots from envelopes and sort them into batches (this can be done prior to polls closing). Then, pass them to the tabulation team for counting in the same manner as in-person ballots.
 - UOCAVA should be mailed with expedited processing subsidized by the government.
- **Deadlines:** Require absentee ballots to be received by the close of business the day before Election Day. Ban drop boxes and "universal" mail-in balloting, and prohibit electronic voting for overseas citizens.

Key Considerations

- **Transparency:** Allow poll watchers/observers to observe the absentee ballot verification and counting process; this entire process should also be videotaped.
- **Chain of Custody:** Use double-lock/double-seal systems with sheriff deputy or other authorized escorts for ballot transfers to the precinct.

CHAIN OF CUSTODY: UNBREAKABLE ACCOUNTABILITY

Objective: Maintain a secure, documented trail for all ballots from printing to counting, reconciling at every phase.

Steps

- **Authorized Personnel:** Only trained election officials or sheriff deputies transfer ballots.

- **Documentation:**
 - Use ballot reconciliation/inventory forms at every transfer stage.
 - Record seal numbers for double-lock/double-seal containers.
 - Log all personnel involved in transfers, with signatures for senders and receivers.
 - Consider fines for not completing forms thoroughly.
- **Security Measures:**
 - Store ballots in locked, tamper-evident containers during transport and storage.
 - Conduct transfers under public observation and video surveillance where possible.
- **Adjudication:** Resolve unclear ballots (e.g., overvotes, stray marks) under camera with public oversight, performed by designated election officials. Consider videotaping the provisional hearings.

Key Considerations

- **Audit Trail:** Maintain detailed logs for public review after the election.

4. REPORTING RESULTS: TRANSPARENT AND TIMELY

Objective: Ensure accurate, publicly accessible election results with clear documentation.

Steps

- **Precinct-Level Reporting:**
 - Complete the sum of all tally sheets for each race on two summary sheets. These must be reviewed, confirmed, and signed off by the judges/poll clerks.
 - Post one of the sheets with the hand-counted results on precinct doors immediately after counting.
 - Include details for all races, including total ballots cast, spoiled, provisional, votes per candidate, and any discrepancies noted.
- **County Aggregation:**
 - Use the second precinct summary sheet to transfer precinct results to the county election office via secure, logged transport. Scan this summary as well for further redundancy.
 - Consider using a secure aggregation system to speed the reporting process for the counties to add precinct totals.
 - Precincts input the totals into the system over the phone or tablet, and hard copies of the results are also couriered to ensure redundancy and verifiability of the results.
 - Audit the chain of results to ensure that there is no deviation from the originally-reported precinct results.
- **Public Access:**
 - Publish county results on the county website within 24 hours, including scanned tally sheets. Video footage and scans of all ballots will be available within one week of Election Day.
 - Allow public inspection of all records (poll books, tally sheets, ballot scans, videos) at no cost.
- **State Reporting:**
 - Submit the county results, after posting them to their website, to the state election office. This can be entered into a state database.
 - States post final results publicly, including breakdowns by county and precinct.

Key Considerations

- **Audit Readiness:** Ensure all documentation is organized for potential forensic audits, as supported by 65% of voters in the November 2024 Rasmussen poll.

- **Transparency:** Make all records publicly available to build trust, addressing the concerns of 62% of voters about election integrity.

PRECINCT OPTIMIZATION: LOCAL CONTROL AND EFFICIENCY

Objective: Redraw precincts to ensure manageable voter numbers and local oversight.

Steps

- **Size Limits:** Cap precincts at 1,500 qualified electors, using GIS mapping to redraw boundaries.
- **Public Notification:**
 - Launch a mass mailing and PR campaign and consider an email campaign to inform voters of new precinct assignments and re-registration requirements.
 - Provide clear instructions and deadlines for compliance.
 - Make provisions for homebound or infirm.
- **State Law Updates:** Amend state laws to enforce precinct size limits and standardize processes. Add accountability measures to these laws (fines for non-compliance). Provide several hand-count methods for reference to be considered and test them to optimize them for productivity.

Key Considerations

- **Community Engagement:** Host town halls and podcasts to explain changes and build trust.
- **Gold Standard Elections website:** A federal website that contains several forms, training videos demonstrating various hand-count methods, online quizzes, and certification documents.
- **Cost Estimates:** Budget for mapping software and public outreach campaigns.

SAMPLE BUDGET AND STAFFING COST ESTIMATES

Item	Estimated Cost	Notes
Ballot Printing	\$0.50–\$1/ballot	Includes anti-counterfeit features; scale by voter count. High Security Paper
Staffing (Poll Workers)	\$20–\$30/hr.	4 counters per 300 ballots, plus admin staff; 8–12 hr. shifts. 2 unique shifts: one for day, one for counting.
Lockboxes	\$100–\$200 each	1 per 500 voters; durable, tamper-evident.
Video Equipment	\$500–\$1,000	Cameras, cell phones, or tablets for recording; 1 per counting table. Apple iPhone 13, 128GB, \$250 + 1 mo. service.
Training Materials	\$200	For two 1-hour sessions per county; reusable across elections.
Refreshments/Breaks	\$200–\$300	Snacks and drinks for workers, kept away from voting/counting areas.
Sheriff Transport	Price by county	For secure ballot transfers, it varies by county size.
Seals/Pouches	\$100	Totes for secure storage. Large Tote Container
Scanners	\$400	Epson WorkForce ES-580W scanner for direct scanning to a thumb drive, eliminating the need for a laptop/PC. Scans pollbooks and ballots. Epson or Office Depot
Pens/Tally/Summary Sheet Printing	\$100	For tally sheets and writing materials.

Staffing Formula: Number of counting teams = (Total ballots / 300) + 10% buffer.

Example: For 1,000 ballots, hire four teams (12 counters plus manager(s)).

- Ballot Printing: <https://chicagowatermark.com/high-security-paper-dup/>
- Video Equipment: <https://www.walmart.com/ip/Apple-iPhone-13-Red-128GB-Locked-AT-T-Grade-B/2390201523?classType=REGULAR>
- Seals/Pouches: <https://electionsource.com/collections/plastic-tote-containers/products/large-tote-container>
- Scanners: <https://epson.com/For-Home/Scanners/Document-Scanners/WorkForce-ES-580W-Wireless-Duplex-Touchscreen-Desktop-Document-Scanner/p/B11B258201> and <https://www.officedepot.com/a/products/3024979/Epson-WorkForce-ES-580W-Wireless-Duplex/#MoreInfo>

Final Notes: This workbook offers a practical and transparent framework for restoring public control over elections, addressing the concerns of 62% of voters who worry about cheating and 59% who demand paper ballots. By eliminating electronic systems,

simplifying processes, and prioritizing local oversight, counties can save costs and rebuild trust. Start planning now to meet the 2026 midterm deadlines. Your community's voice depends on it.

HOW TO PERFORM HAND-COUNTING WITH THE GS TALLY METHOD

The GS Tally Method is a simple, inexpensive, and efficient process for hand-counting ballots, optimized for productivity through testing variables like pen color and tally sheet layout. Below are clear, step-by-step instructions for implementing this method.

What You Need

- **Team:** 4-person bipartisan team, two counters + two callers, (one calls with one reviewing) per table, with tables slightly separated. Each precinct should also include a manager to review totals, sort, and transfer batches.
- **Materials:**
 - Good lighting
 - Comfortable chairs and tables
 - Legal-sized 1" binders
 - Red and blue ballpoint pens
 - Rubber fingertips for handling ballots, or SORTKWIK Fingertip Moisteners
 - Blank tally sheets printed in color, preferably legal size
 - Pre-sorted ballots in batches of 25 or 50
- **Optional Equipment:**
 - Traditional scanners to scan the ballots, or cell phones mounted above ballots for video recording (for redundancy of the count)
 - Cell phones or tablets could live-stream or record counting. Tripod to mount over ballots.
- **Tally Sheets:** Designed with narrow columns (not long rows) for easier eye and hand movement, improving productivity.
- **Batch Size:** 25 or 50 ballots per batch, counted by race (not by ballot).

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. **Set Up the Counting Area**
 - Arrange tables with slight separation to avoid interference between teams.
 - Ensure good lighting and comfortable seating for all team members.
 - Provide each team with legal-sized binders, red and blue pens, rubber fingertips, and tally sheets with columns.
 - Optionally, set up scanners or mount cell phones above the counting area to record ballots for redundancy.
2. **Organize Ballots into Batches**
 - Pre-sort ballots into batches of 25 or 50 for manageable counting. Separate absentee from in-person.
 - Count one race at a time (e.g., a single contest or question on the ballot).
3. **Begin Counting**
 - The caller announces each vote (name or question option) clearly, with another person reviewing the ballot to confirm that the call is correct.

- Tip: Agree in advance on how names will be called (e.g., use abbreviated first or last names).
 - Use a distinct tone or slight pause when switching names/options to avoid confusion.
 - Note that there is a column for write-ins as well as undervotes (didn't vote for that race) and overvotes (checked more than the appropriate number of boxes). Counters use a blue pen for the first batch. Make a diagonal slash (bottom left to top right) in the appropriate column on the tally sheet for each vote called. Moving left to right in order of the numbers on the tally sheet.
 - Note: Some states only have designated write-ins; names of the write-ins are rarely used for counting unless they are large in number. We recommend that the tally be placed in the box without recognizing the name if the write-in is not designated.
- 4. Reconcile Each Batch (of 25/50 ballots)**
- After completing a batch, verify the counts to ensure they reconcile (match expected totals).
 - If the batch reconciles, switch to a red pen for the next batch.
 - If the batch does not reconcile:
 - Create an opposite slash (top left to bottom right) to form an X in the same color.
 - Recount the batch. If it still doesn't reconcile, fill in the box completely with the same color pen.
 - Persistent errors are rare; consider replacing the tallier or reassigning roles if issues continue.
- 5. Manage Multiple Tables**
- To avoid confusion between tables, consider:
 - Counting different races at neighboring tables.
 - Using callers with distinct voices (e.g., male at one table, female at another).
 - Find a pace that works for the team, adjusting it based on feedback to ensure accuracy and comfort.
- 6. Switch Pens and Continue**
- The caller should remind counters to switch pen colors (blue to red, or vice versa) at the start of each new batch.
 - Complete one tally sheet for a race, then move to a new sheet until all ballots for that race are counted.
- 7. Summarize Results**
- Total the counts from all tally sheets for a given race.
 - Record the totals on the Official Election Results Summary sheet for that race.
 - All people at the table should sign the tally sheets that they worked on.
 - The administrator (clerk or judge) for that precinct should sign the summary sheets for each table for all races, the sealed box with the ballots, tally sheets, and thumb drives from the optional scanner, and the chain of custody paperwork for the seals and boxes.
- 8. Optional Redundancy**
- Before counting, scan batches
 - During the counting process, record it with a mounted camera, phone, or tablet for verification.

PRODUCTIVITY INSIGHTS

- **Tested Efficiency:**
 - 50 ballots for 1 race: ~2 minutes.
 - 250 ballots for 11 races: ~2.5 hours.
 - For a turnout of ~1,000 ballots, use three teams of four (counters, runners/admins) for efficient processing.

- **Overall productivity is about 100 ballots an hour for about 10 races.**

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Use column-based tally sheets to reduce eye and hand strain, boosting productivity.
- Ensure clear communication among team members, especially for calling votes.
- Regularly check team comfort and adjust pace or roles as needed.
- Screen volunteers to ensure they can read the tally sheets and ballots easily, have adequate hearing, and are willing to sit for a few hours.
- Maintain bipartisan oversight to ensure fairness and accuracy.
- Provide breaks every hour and refreshments.