



GOLD STANDARD ELECTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION WORKBOOK

HAND-COUNT TRAINING

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.