

NC Elections Glossary

A

Absentee Ballot	a ballot cast by a registered voter who is unable or unwilling to appear at the polling place on Election Day. A request for an absentee ballot must be completed in writing by the voter or a qualified near relative. Voted absentee ballots must be received by 5 pm the day before an election in order to be considered for counting. GS 163, Articles 20 & 21
Abstract	a document signed by the members of the board of elections showing the votes for each candidate and ballot proposal on the official ballot in the election. Totals shall be shown by precinct and county wide where applicable. GS 163-182 & 300
Accessibility	Measurable characteristics that indicate the degree to which a system is available to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. The most common disabilities include those associated with vision, hearing, and mobility, as well as cognitive disabilities.
ADA	see Americans with Disabilities Act
Administrative Code	a set of rules or polices outlined to give more detailed procedures for enforcing general statutes. NCAC Title 8
Americans with Disabilities Act	enacted in 1984. It promotes the fundamental right to vote by requiring "access for elderly and handicapped individuals to registration facilities and polling places in federal elections. 42 USC 1973ee1-6
ATV	see Authorization to Vote
Audit	systematic independent, documented process for obtaining records, statements of fact or other relevant information and assessing them objectively to determine the extent to which specified requirements are fulfilled.
Authorization to Vote	document acknowledging the voter's eligibility and ballot style for a given election.
AutoMark	a ballot marking device used in NC to mark optical scan ballots and to satisfy ADA requirements for accessible equipment.

B

Ballot	An instrument on which a voter indicates a choice so that it may be recorded as a vote for or against a certain candidate or referendum proposal. The term ballot may include a paper ballot to be counted by hand, a paper ballot to be counted on an electronic scanner, the image on a direct record electronic unit, or a ballot used on any other voting system.
Ballot Counters	any approved method of counting ballots as well as individual voter choices to determine a total count for each ballot item.
Ballot Marking Device	any approved method of marking a ballot to indicate a voter's choice or preference.
Bipartisan	representing, characterized by, or including members from two parties
Board of Elections	a group of citizens appointed to serve a two (county) or four year term (state). This group is charged with enforcing all federal, state, and local election laws. GS 163 Articles 3 & 4
BOE	see Board of Elections.

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Buffer Zone an area of not more than 50 feet or less than 25 feet outside of the polling place in which electioneering is strictly prohibited. GS 163-166.4

Burden of Proof the obligation to establish proof of a claim by providing evidence.

C

Campaign Contributions Donations made in the form of money or services in support of a candidate GS 163-278

Campaign Expenditure Money or services spent to further a campaign. GS 163-278

Campaign Finance the accounting of campaign contributions and expenditures for a know period of time. GS 163-278

Candidate a person running for a particular office or seat.

Candidate Filing a period of time in which candidates may register to have their name placed on the ballot. GS 163 Article 10 & 24

Canvass a meeting held after an election in which the board of elections certifies all results as official. GS 163-182.5

CBE see County Board of Elections.

Certificate of Election means a document prepared by the official or body with the authority to do so, conferring upon a candidate the right to assume an elective office as a result of being elected to it.

Certificate of Nomination written confirmation of a candidates eligibility to run as a party nominee.

Challenge filed with the Board of Elections and serves as means to identify a misuse of election law or to protest the eligibility of a voter to vote in an election or remain registered. GS 163 Article 8

Chief Judge an election official appointed to serve as the main point of contact in the precinct on Election Day. GS 163 Article 5 & NCAC 8 Subchapter 10B

County Board of Elections a three member board appointed every two years. Charged with enforcing all applicable election laws.

Curbside Voting a voting option available to qualified voters who are otherwise unable to physically enter the voting place. Ballots are delivered to the individual usually in their car. Requires the voter to sign an affidavit attesting to their eligibility. GS 163-166.9

D

Delegates individuals appointed by a political party.

Direct Record Electronic Equipment an electronic voting system that utilizes electronic components for the functions of ballot presentation, vote capture, vote recording, and tabulation which are logically and physically integrated into a single unity. A DRE produces a tabulation of the voting data stored in a removable memory component and in printed hardcopy.

Director of Elections an employee hired by the Board of Elections and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the elections office. GS 163-35

Domicile a permanent legal residence.

DRE see Direct Record Electronic Equipment.

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E

EAC	see Election Assistance Commission.
Election	means the event in which voters cast votes in ballot items concerning proposals or candidates for office in this State or the United States. The term includes primaries, general elections, referenda, and special elections.
Election Assistance Commission	a federal commission created by the Help America Vote Act to oversee the implementation of HAVA and develop some uniformity for federal elections.
Election Contest	Decision to be made within an election. A single ballot may contain one or more contests.
Election Day Registration	voter registration conducted on election day. Currently, in NC only certain eligible voters may register on election day.
Election Night Reporting	web based system used by county and state board of elections to display unofficial and official election results.
Election Offense	a violation of election law.
Election Reporting Manager	a module within the Unity suite which is used to tabulate election results for transfer into ENR.
Election Setup	SEIMS module used to create and manage election contests and candidates.
Electioneering	the act of campaigning.
Elector	voter.
ENR	see Election Night Reporting
ERM	see Election Reporting Manager.
Executive Director	Chief Election Official for North Carolina. GS 163-26-27

F

Federal Post Card Application	federal document for use by member of the military, their dependents, or overseas citizens to register and request absentee ballots. GS 163 Article 21
Filing Fees	fees paid by candidates to have their name placed on the ballot.
FPCA	see Federal Post Card Application.

G

General Assembly	the legislative body of North Carolina.
General Election	defined as an election in which federal, state, and local candidates and/or referenda may be present on the ballot.

H

Hardware Programming Manager	Module within Unity software suite. Used to create election media for use in voting equipment.
HAVA	see Help America Vote Act
Help America Vote Act	enacted in 2002. Legislation passed to bring some level of uniformity to elections including the requirement of a statewide voter registration database. 42 USC 15301-15545
HPM	see Hardware Programming Manager

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I

ID Requirement	implemented by HAVA. Requires individuals registering to vote provide some approved form of identification prior to the first opportunity they have to vote. G# 163-166.12
Inactive Voter	a voter who has not made recent contact with the Board of Elections either through voting or through regular list maintenance procedures.
Instant Runoff Voting	a voting system used for single-winner elections, in which voters rank candidates in an order of preference.
IQueue	list of voters who are missing required information in order to become registered.
iVotronic	a DRE unit currently certified for use in NC

J

Judges of Election	Citizens appointed by political parties to work as precinct officials during an election. GS 163 Article 5 & NCAC 8 Subchapter 10B
Jurisdiction	a geographical area of representation.

L

L&A	see Logic & Accuracy Testing
Legislation	laws.
List Maintenance	regular procedures used by the board of elections to ensure the accuracy of the voter registration database. GS 163-82.14
Littering Notification	requirements and guidelines given to candidates at the time of filing regarding the posting of campaign materials. Mandated in GS 163-33.3.
Logic & Accuracy Testing	testing conducted prior to the election in order to verify the accuracy of the ballot, voting equipment, and tabulation software.

M

M100	Device manufactured by ES&S used to count Optical Scan ballots.
M650	Device manufactured by ES&S - Optical Scan Voting equipment used for high speed counting of paper ballots.
Mail Absentees	Ballot cast by a voter unable to vote in person at their polling place on Election Day. GS 163-226 through 163-239.
Mandatory recount	Re-tabulation of the votes cast in an election required by law if candidates are within a certain percentage of each other and losing candidate requests the recount. GS 163-182.7(b)
Manual recount	Re-tabulation of the votes cast in an election and county by hand. 08 NCAC 09.0109
Military Voting	Absentee voting for persons serving in the military. GS 163-245 through 163-257.
Minutes	Record of meeting. Needs to be kept at all state and county board of elections meetings and recorded in a book GS 163-31.
Mock Election	A procedure to test all functions of an election to insure that equipment and software function appropriately.

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Modified full-time office	County Board of Elections offices that have fewer than 6,501 registered voters and are allowed to have a modified full-time office GS 163-36
Multi-seat race	Contest in which multiple candidates can run, up to a specified number of seats. Voters may vote for no more than the specified number of candidates.
Municipal Board of Elections	A few municipalities continue to have a municipal board of elections that conducts elections for the municipality instead of the county board of elections GS 163-280-through 163-280.1.
Municipal Elections	Elections held to elect officials for municipalities (Cities, Town and Villages). Elections are held in odd numbered years GS 163-279 through 163-306.
<u>N</u>	
National Origin	Country in which a person was born.
National Voter Registration Act	see NVRA - also known as Motor Voter Act. Provided for voter registration opportunities at certain public offices Social Services, Employment Security Commissioner, Disability agencies and DMV offices. 42 USC 1973GG
Natural Born Citizen	Term used for a person born in the US or born in another county of American parents.
Naturalization	Acquisition of citizenship or nationality by somebody who was not a citizen or national of that country when he or she was born GS 163-55
NCAC	See North Carolina Administrative Code - Rules and Regulations adopted by the State Board of Elections covering election procedures NC Administrative Code, Title 8.
New Election	A new election can only be ordered by the State Board of Elections GS 163-182.13.
New Political Parties	Party that has gone through a petition process to allow candidates to be placed on the ballot GS 163-96(b).
No Preference	Choice provided in Presidential Preference Primary GS 163-213.7.
Nominate	A process of selecting a candidate for office in a primary GS 163-110, 163-111.
Nomination	A person who has been chosen in a primary to be a candidate in the general election GS 163-110, 163-111.
Nonpartisan Elections	Elected office for which candidates run without political party affiliation.
North Carolina Administrative Code	See NCAC - Rules and Regulations adopted by the State Board of Elections covering election procedures NC Administrative Code, Title 8.
Notice of Candidacy	Paperwork prescribed by law for candidates wanting their name placed on the ballot for election GS 163-106, GS 163-294.2
Notices	Notices of election required by law to notify citizens of elections, absentee meetings, change of precincts and other type of changes GS 163-33(8)
NVRA	See National Voter Registration Act 42 USC 1973GG

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O

Oath	A way of attesting the truth of one's word. Oaths are used for candidates to elective office, board of election members and precinct officials.
Observers	Persons appointed by the political party chair or unaffiliated candidate campaign to attend a voting place during voting hours GS 163-45.
Official Ballot	Ballot that has been certified by the State Board of Elections and produced by or with the approval of the county board of elections GS 163-165.6
One-Stop Voting	A process where voters may vote an absentee ballot by requesting the application, completing the application and voting at the same visit to a voting location during specified days and times GS 163-227.2, 163-82.6A
Optical Scan	System by which votes are recorded by means of marks made in voting response fields designated on one or both sides of a ballot card. Optical scan system reads and tabulates ballots by scanning the ballot. Also know as Mark sense.
Overseas Voter	See UOCAVA. Absentee ballot for person residing overseas GS 163-246

P

PAC	See Political Action Committee - 2 or more people that accept anything of value to make contributions or expenditures for a candidate or political party GS 163-278.6
Paper Ballot	A ballot on paper for voters. Term can be used for optical scan ballots as well as paper ballots.
Partisan Primary	Primary where candidate run for office by political party 163-104 through 163-123.
PCMCIA Card	Short for P ersonal C omputer M emory C ard I nternational A ssociation - Credit card size device that adds memory to a device. Used with the M100 voting machine.
Petitions	Citizen generated documents used for various purposes such as having a candidate placed on the ballot; a political party placed on the ballot and various matters such as ABC elections GS 163-218 through 163-221.
Plurality	Election in which the candidates seeking election to office who receive the highest number of voters shall be elected. Used for some municipal offices, soil and water conservation district and some other local offices.
Political Action Committee	See PAC- 2 or more people that accept anything of value to make contributions or expenditures for a candidate or political party GS 163-278.6
Political Parties	A political organization that seeks to attain and maintain political power within government GS 163-96 through 163-98
Poll books	Listing of those that have voted in an election GS 163-166.7
Polling Places	Facility to which voters are assigned to cast ballots GS 163-128 through 163-131

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Precinct	A space enclosed by the walls or other boundaries of a particular place or building which is used for voting by citizens GS 163-128 through 163-131
Precinct Election Officials	Citizens that work at the precincts on election day GS 163-41 through 163-48
Preclearance	See Voting Rights Act.
Presidential Electors	Group of people that formally choose the candidates for President/Vice-President for the state. The number of electors allotted to each state must equal the number of its congressional delegation
Primary Election	Election held to nominate candidates to be placed on the general election ballot GS163-1
Protest	A process to contest the results of an election. Protest must be in writing and procedures as required by law must be followed GS 163-182.11 through 163-182.14.
Provisional Ballot	Ballot provided to individuals who claim they are registered and eligible to vote but whose status cannot be confirmed. Once voted, ballots are kept separate from other ballots and are not included in election night tabulation. Board decides on Canvass Day which ballots can be counted based on registration research GS 163-182.2(4), 163-165
Provisional Voting	Process of voting a provisional ballot GS 163-182.2(4), 163-165
Public Records	Records in a public office that are to be available for the public.
<u>Q</u>	
Qualifications to Vote	Laws enacted to provide for what is needed for a person to register to vote which includes age and residency. Qualifications are in the NC Constitution and General Statutes GS 163-54 through 163-59
Quasi-judicial	A quasi-judicial body is an individual or organization which has powers resembling those of a court of law or judge and is able to remedy a situation or impose legal penalties on a person or organization. County Boards of Elections are quasi-judicial bodies.
Quorum	A majority of members constitutes a quorum. Pertains to meetings of state and county boards of elections GS 163-31.
<u>R</u>	
Real Time Audit Log	RTAL - paper trail kept on electronic voting machines.
Recall Election	Certain jurisdictions allow elected officials to be recalled at a special election.
Recasting of Votes	Allowed by State Board of Elections under certain conditions when a known group of voters votes were lost GS 163-182.12.
Records Retention	State regulations that require how long public documents have to be retained before they can be destroyed.
Recounts	Re-tabulation of the votes cast in an election GS 163-182.7
Redistricting	When a voting jurisdiction boundaries are redrawn. Usually required after each census.
Referendum	An event in which voters cast votes for or against ballot questions other than the election of candidates to office.

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Removal from office	Refers to an elected official or appointed official who is removed from an office to which they have been elected or appointed. Can apply to elected officials, board of election members or precinct officials.
Residence	The place where a person's habitation is fixed and to which whenever that person is absent, that person has the intention of returning.
Results	Outcome of an election. There will be unofficial results on election night and official results after the canvass.
Returns	Outcome of an election. There will be unofficial returns on election night and official returns after the canvass. Can also be a reference to results from individual precincts.
RTAL	Real Time Audit Log - paper trail kept on electronic voting machines (ES&S iVotronic).
Runners	Persons appointed by the political party chair or unaffiliated candidate campaign to obtain lists of voters during voting hours. GS 163-45.
Runoff Election	In a type of municipal election, if no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast a runoff election is held.
<u>S</u>	
Sample Audit Count	Requires a hand-eye recount of a sample of votes for every election. GS 163-182.7A, GS 163-182.1.
Sample Ballot	An unofficial ballot produced by the county and distributed with all the necessary ballot styles of the official ballot. Used by voters so that they will become familiar with the appearance of the official ballot. Sample ballots shall be posted in every precinct in which an election is conducted GS 163-165.2(a) (b)
Sanitary District	A jurisdiction for which elections can be held. Petitions may be used to create the district GS 130A-48 through GS 130A-83.
SBE	See State Board of Elections GS 163-19 through 163-27.1.
Scanners	Equipment used to read information electronically. Can be used to designate scanning voting equipment, bar code scanning for voter history or verification of correct ballots.
School Board Elections	Elections held to elect officials to manage schools in a jurisdiction. They can be countywide, by municipality or other jurisdiction. Local laws establish election type.
Second Primary	Allowed when candidate/s don't receive the required 40% of the vote in the Primary. Only held if losing candidate/s request that it be held GS 163-111.
Section 5	Refers to a section of the Voting Rights Act that requires obtaining pre-clearance from the US Department of Justice before making any changes to the election process. Forty counties in NC are covered under this requirement.
SEIMS	State Election Information Management System - Statewide Voter Management System GS 163-82.11.
Session Laws	Bills passed by the General Assembly and placed into law.
Signature	The name of a person written with their own hand. Required on voter registration documents, notice of candidacies, absentee requests and other election documents.

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Soil and Water Conservation District	A jurisdiction for which elections must be held in each county GS 139-5 through 139-7.
Spanish Ballot Instructions	Counties with Hispanic populations of 6% or higher must provide instructions in Spanish GS 163-165.5A.
Special Election	Election called by a governmental jurisdiction to allow voters to make decisions on such things as ABC law changes, various referenda, etc.
Standards Board	Help America Vote Act (HAVA) designated a 110-member Standards Board to assist EAC in carrying out its mandates under the law. The board consists of 55 state election officials selected by their respective chief State election official. The other 55 members are local election officials selected through a process supervised by the chief state election official. 42 USC 15301-15545, 163-82.27.
State Board of Elections	See SBE - GS 163-19 through 163-27.1.
State Election Information Management System	See SEIMS - Statewide Voter Management System
Statutes	Laws passed by legislature.
Subpoenas	A document commanding the person to appear in court or at a hearing.
Superior Court of North Carolina	An elective office GS 163-321 through 163-334.
Supreme Court of North Carolina	An elective office GS 163-321 through 163-334.
<u>I</u>	
Tabulator	Device used to tabulate ballots such as the M100 tabulator.
Test Deck	Deck of possible ballot combinations used to make sure that the coding on an election is counting properly.
Touch screen Voting System	Direct Record Electronic (DRE) voting system. A machine that utilizes a computer screen to display the ballot and allows the voter to make selections by touching designated locations on the screen.
Townships	Governmental jurisdiction often used for precinct boundaries.
Training	Training required for Director and County Board of Elections members and Precinct Officials before every Primary and General Election.
Transfer Voting	See Unreported Move. Term used for a voter that has not changed their address by the voter registration deadline. They are allowed to change their address on election day and vote GS 163-82.15 (d) (e).
<u>U</u>	
Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Act	See UOCAVA - The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act ("UOCAVA") was enacted by Congress in 1986. The UOCAVA requires that the states and territories allow certain groups of citizens to register and vote absentee in elections for Federal offices. In addition, most states and territories have their own laws allowing citizens covered by the UOCAVA to register and vote absentee in state and local elections as well GS 163-246.

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Uniformity	Refers to Uniformity Project which is a process to make sure that elections in NC are conducted in the same manner across the state.
Unreported Move	See Transfer Voting - Term used for a voter that has not changed their address by the voter registration deadline. They are allowed to change their address on election day and vote GS 163-82.15 (d) (e).
UOCAVA	See Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Act - UOCAVA was enacted by Congress in 1986. The UOCAVA requires that the states and territories allow certain groups of citizens to register and vote absentee in elections for Federal offices. In addition, most states and territories have their own laws allowing citizens covered by the UOCAVA to register and vote absentee in state and local elections as well GS 163-246.
<u>V</u>	
VBT	See Verified Ballot Transaction.
Verified Ballot Transaction	VBT-Scanner used to compare voter registration data with voter's ballot to insure correct ballot issued to voter.
Voter Registration	Process required for a person to be allowed to vote in any primary or election GS163-54 through 163-59
Voter Registration Application	Form used for a citizen to provide information to Board of Elections so that they will appear on the Voter Registration list GS 163-54 through 163-59
Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail	VVPAT - A voting system feature that provides the voter and opportunity to verify that his or her ballot selections are being recorded correctly before the ballots is cast with a human-readable printed record.
Voters	People who are eligible to vote in any election.
Voting Booth	Device where a voter marks their ballot
Voting Enclosure	Room within the voting place that is used for voting GS 163-166.2 and 163-166.3
Voting Machines	All devices used to display the ballot, accept voter selections, record voter selections and tabulate the votes.
Voting Place	Building or area of the building that contains the voting enclosure GS 163-128 through 163-131
Voting Rights Act	Federal Law passed in 1965 pertaining to all jurisdictions. The Justice Department voting section undertakes investigations and litigation throughout the US and conducts administrative review of changes in voting practices and procedures and monitors elections. Some counties in NC are subject to section 5 of the act requiring pre-clearance before making any election changes 42 USC 1973a-p. http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/index.php
Voting Systems	A system of casting and tabulation ballots including paper ballots and electronic voting equipment. The total combination of all equipment including software, firmware and documentation required to program, control and support the equipment. Voting systems in NC have to be certified for use by the State Board of Elections GS 163-165.7 through 163-165.10

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Voting Tabulation District	See VTD - an area used to maintain voting data as required by state law. Used to report election results GS 163-132.5G.
VTD	See Voting Tabulation District GS163-152.5G.
VVPAT	See Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail.
<u>W</u>	
Withdrawal	When a candidate removes their name from the ballot GS 163-123.
Witnesses	People who sign stating that a person is who they represent themselves to be such as witnessing an absentee ballot.
Write-In Votes	Selection of an individual not listed on the ballot GS 163-165.5 (5), GS 163-165.6(f)
<u>Z</u>	
Zip Drive	Disk storage system used for M650 high speed optical ballot counter.