

2026 POLICY GUIDES

Nebraska Election Laws

Issue

Nebraska's election system is responsible for ensuring that elections are secure, transparent, accurate and accessible to eligible voters. Election laws govern voter registration, voter identification, absentee and early voting, ballot initiatives, election administration, vote tabulation, audits and certification of election results.

Recent changes to election law in Nebraska and across the nation have generated increased public interest in election administration and election integrity. Policymakers continue to debate proposals related to voter identification, proof of citizenship requirements, voter registration maintenance, election audits, ballot security, absentee voting procedures, cybersecurity, and the initiative and referendum process.

Nebraska Farm Bureau (NEFB) members may wish to evaluate whether existing election laws adequately protect election integrity while ensuring reasonable access for eligible voters, particularly in rural areas of the state. Discussion may also focus on the role of state and local election officials, the costs of election administration and the impact of election law changes on voter confidence.

Background

Nebraska administers elections through a partnership between the state and its counties. The secretary of state serves as Nebraska's chief election officer, while county election commissioners and county clerks are responsible for conducting elections at the local level.

Because Nebraska is a predominantly rural state, election law proposals may affect communities differently depending on population density, distance from polling locations, broadband access and local administrative resources.

Policy discussions may consider:

- Accessibility for rural voters.
- Administrative impacts on county election offices.
- Costs to taxpayers.
- Election security and public confidence.
- Consistency of election administration across counties.

Nebraska utilizes paper ballots, which provide a physical record of each vote cast. Ballots are generally tabulated using certified voting equipment and are subject to testing, canvassing and post-election verification procedures.

Recent policy discussions in Nebraska and other states have included:

- Voter registration and proof of citizenship.
- Voter identification.
- Early voting and vote by mail.
- Expanded election audits.
- Ballot chain-of-custody standards.
- Election security.

Voter Registration and Proof of Citizenship

Individuals must be United States citizens, residents of Nebraska, and at least 18 years of age on or before Election Day to vote. Nebraska maintains a statewide voter registration database that is used to verify eligibility and maintain voter registration records.

Election officials periodically update voter registration records to remove duplicate registrations, deceased voters and individuals who are no longer eligible to vote in Nebraska.

Voter Identification

In 2022, Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment authorizing a voter identification requirement. The Legislature subsequently enacted legislation requiring voters to provide approved identification when voting, subject to certain accommodations and exceptions established by law.

Early Voting and Vote by Mail

Nebraska allows no-excuse early voting. Voters may request an early voting ballot without providing a reason and may return ballots through the mail or other authorized methods. In addition, under Nebraska Revised Statute 32-960, counties with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants may apply to the secretary of state for approval to conduct elections by mailing ballots to all registered voters in some or all precincts. The county clerk must submit a detailed election plan, and the secretary of state must approve the application. Twelve counties in Nebraska have utilized all mail voting precincts or countywide mail in ballots including Boone, Cedar, Cherry, Clay, Dawes, Dixon, Garden, Knox, Merrick, Morrill and Stanton.

Election Audits and Certification

Following elections, counties conduct canvassing procedures to verify vote totals and certify results. Nebraska also utilizes post-election audit procedures to compare machine-tabulated results against hand-counted ballots in selected precincts.

Election audits are intended to provide an additional layer of verification and increase confidence that election results accurately reflect ballots cast by voters.

Election Security

Election security includes physical security of ballots and equipment, cybersecurity protections, voter registration database security, chain-of-custody procedures and election worker training.

Farm Bureau Policy

ELECTIONS (2026). Any persons filing for political office must be a Nebraska resident for at least one year prior to filing for office and be in good standing with all their tax obligations.

NEFB supports the election of county officials be a nonpartisan ballot (i.e. commissioners, sheriff, assessors).

Voting precincts shall not be converted from in-person voting to “mail only” voting without a vote of the people in the precincts affected; and this shall not supersede absentee ballot requests by the voter.

Nebraska Farm Bureau supports statute revisions that would eliminate the requirement of county assessor candidates to be certified prior to filing for the assessor position

All elected county commissioners and supervisors should be required to attend training on their duties and responsibilities including financial literacy and liabilities as well as planning and zoning processes.

VOTER REGISTRATION (2023). Voter registration lists shall be updated annually by the county election commissioner.

FEDERAL POLICY:

103 – Elections Pgs. 9-10

Questions

- Does Nebraska’s current election system adequately balance election integrity and voter access?
- Are additional voter verification measures needed, or are current safeguards sufficient?
- What role should audits play in verifying election outcomes?
- How can Nebraska maintain public confidence in election results?
- What election administration challenges are unique to rural counties?
- Should Nebraska consider changes to voter registration, absentee voting, or ballot initiative procedures?
- What standards should be used to evaluate future election law proposals?