

# Kansas Ballot Proofing

## WHAT IS BALLOT PROOFING AND WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

The process of producing a ballot is complex. County election officials do their best to make sure they have listed every contest and every candidate correctly. But **mistakes happen**. Ballot proofing helps catch mistakes before official ballots are printed. And that's important because mistakes caught after ballots are printed often cannot be fixed. Ballot proofing is therefore one of many tools to ensure that election results accurately reflect voter intent.

So who does this proofing? County officials will proof each ballot before sending it to the printer, but **you have a role to play too**. The more eyes on the near-final version of the ballot, the better. You should feel free to invite staff, voter protection volunteers, and others to participate.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROOF A BALLOT?

Not long. It will take one person a few minutes per ballot to perform a complete review. Because mistakes are usually noticed by a fresh set of eyes, consider bringing in a second person to review.

## HOW DO WE PARTICIPATE IN THE PROOFING PROCESS?

In Kansas, state law does not require that counties send near-final versions of the ballot to candidates to review, but counties are **permitted** to do so. So start by asking county election officials about their process. (There is a requirement that each county superintendent make sample ballots available for public inspection, but this rule only mandates that such ballots be made available at least five days before election, which may be too late in the process to correct errors. However, if you have not already reviewed a ballot at an earlier date, you should acquire a sample ballot during this five-day window.<sup>1</sup>)

Remember, each county handles the proofing process differently and so you should reach out to any target counties now to confirm their

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1 [K.S.A. § 25-604](#).

process, including the date you could expect to receive a ballot to review.

## WHEN DOES THE PROCESS START?

The proofing process in Kansas will likely start in August. Voting for overseas voters begins on September 19, 2020 (45 days before the election); advance voting for domestic voters starts 20 days before the election. The state recommends that counties allow at least three weeks to prepare ballots so that process will begin by late August.<sup>2</sup> At the latest, **you should contact counties by early August so you know what to expect.**

## HOW SHOULD WE REPORT ERRORS OR OMISSIONS?

Work with the county to find the best way to report errors and proposed corrections. In all cases, make sure to follow up on any emails with a phone call to confirm receipt and next steps.

## OTHER THAN ITEMS ON THE PROOFING CHECKLIST, IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO KANSAS THAT WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR?

Note that ballot rotation is required so that the same number of voters see each candidate listed first for each office.<sup>3</sup> For statewide offices (both state and federal), the default is that the Secretary of State is responsible for the rotation by county. Local offices (and sometimes statewide offices) are rotated by the county election official. "Rotation produces many different ballot styles, each of which causes a different setup by the printer."<sup>4</sup> The rotation process can generate errors that may not be identified until the days leading up to the election.

Sample ballots are typically made available on the state's [Voter View website](#).

## CONNECT WITH US!

Have questions? Need help?  
Please reach out to us at:

[ballotquestions@digidems.com](mailto:ballotquestions@digidems.com)

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2 [2019 Election Manual, Chapter II - Election Administration](#) (page II-20).

3 [K.S.A. § 25-610](#).

4 [2019 Election Manual, Chapter II - Election Administration](#) (page II-20).