



2024 Annual Report to Tioga County

January 31, 2025

This was a momentous year for the Board of Elections. The Board faced the year with some significant personnel changes, had to accommodate new procedures with the impactful new election law of Early Vote by Mail, and navigated the unique challenges of running a highly contentious presidential election.

- Staffing changes:
 - Republican Commissioner Johnson started the year new to her position, and Republican Deputy Commissioner Hoover started the year new to the Board of Elections.
 - A new Republican Election Clerk (PT) and Democratic Voting Machine Technician (PT) were hired early in the year.
 - The Democratic Election Clerk (PT) position was vacated and filled in the summer.
 - Election inspectors transitioned to become county employees, which required enormous effort and cooperation between Board of Elections, Personnel, Treasurer, and Legal staff to complete the onboarding and training of ~200 new employees.
- Both commissioners attended the Winter and Summer conferences of the NYS Election Commissioners' Association (NYSECA) for ongoing training. Commissioner Wahls also serves on the NYSECA Executive Committee.
- Democratic and Republican Presidential Primary Elections were held April 2nd:
 - While voter turnout was low, this election presented unique challenges being so close to the Easter holiday, and coinciding with the filing of designating petitions.
- Tioga County did not see a primary in June for federal, state, or local offices. The Board used the extra time to better focus on election inspector recruitment and training, gathering supplies, and preparing office staff for the upcoming general election.

- The Board collaborated with the Legislature, Sheriff, ITCS, and Emergency Services to ensure the election would be secure, and that we would be prepared to respond to any potential incidents.
- With higher interest in participation this year, we trained enough election inspectors to fully staff all polling locations, assigned additional inspectors, and still had some substitutes to ensure Election Day poll sites would run smoothly with the higher voter turnout.
- The General Election was on November 5th
 - On the ballot were Electors for President and Vice President, United States Senator, Representative in Congress for the 23rd District, State Senator for the 58th District, Member of Assembly for the 124th District, County Legislators for the 3rd, 6th, and 7th Districts, Town of Candor Justice, Town of Nichols Council Member (unexpired term), Town of Tioga Supervisor, and a statewide proposal for an amendment to the state constitution.
 - We are grateful to our staff, who deserve recognition for working daily, including weekends, up to 12 hours/day (and 18 hours on Election Day) from October 21st through November 8th, to ensure this contentious election ran smoothly.
 - Tioga County saw a total voter turnout of 70%.
- Other Notable Accomplishments in 2024:
 - The Dominion Election Management Software upgrade was completed in January, and 9 new ICP2 scanners were procured while 8 old ICP scanners were decommissioned.
 - Five staff attended training for the new software.
 - Jurisdiction boundary shapefiles were imported to our voter registration software to ensure that all voters are assigned to their correct districts
 - The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) conducted a free security assessment of the Board of Elections offices and Early Voting Center at the invitation of the commissioners. The assessment identified potential security vulnerabilities and suggested remedies, which the Board ensured were put in place ahead of the 2024 General Election.
 - Our Election Day ePollbooks were put online, following NYS network security regulations to maintain cybersecurity. This allowed the office to improve communication with poll sites, stay informed of any issues and implement quicker resolutions, monitor voter turnout statistics in real time, and save a lot of time post-election for voter history collection.

- It should be noted that electronic poll books have no connection with voting machines, and voting machines in NYS are never connected to the internet.
- Both deputy commissioners completed the County's Institute for Advancement training.

- 2025 Goals:
 - Replace the aging electronic poll book laptops with newer model using state grant funding.
 - Continue improving voter outreach and Board of Elections visibility in the community.
 - We want to conduct an "I Voted" sticker design contest for students in Tioga County and have the community vote to select winner(s), which we will use as the official "I Voted" sticker(s) in Tioga County from there forward.
 - Continue partnering with county leadership, and state and federal agencies, to ensure the BOE office is physically and operationally secure at all times, so the Board can continue to provide safe and secure elections for Tioga County voters.
 - Successfully administer the 2025 local elections, with at least 51 local offices up for election in Tioga County this year.

New York State Board of Elections
COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN
Election Law § 3-212.4

COUNTY Tioga

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR YEAR 2024 WITH ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR 2025

To be submitted to State Board of Elections no later than January 31st of each year, pursuant to Election Law. Use additional pages, as necessary.

I. COORDINATOR(S) The Voter Registration Activities Coordinator(s) is (are)

Name/Title	<u>Amber Duke, Deputy Commissioner</u>
Address	<u>1062 State Route 38, PO Box 306</u>
	<u>Owego, NY 13827</u>
Phone/e-mail	<u>607-687-8217 / dukea@tiogacountyny.gov</u>

II. VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS DISTRIBUTION – in 2024

REGISTRATION FORM INVENTORY

1. Number received from State Board	4800
2. Number printed by Board (if any)	0
3. Number remaining in supply from previous year	516
4. TOTAL	5316

REGISTRATION FORMS DISTRIBUTED

1. Schools	0
2. Post Offices	650
3. Public Offices	1200
4. Community Groups	120
5. Other (issued by mail or OTC at voter request)	102
6. TOTAL	2072

REGISTRATION FORMS REMAINING END OF YEAR	3,244
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III. OUTREACH PROGRAMS – for 2024
POSTAL PROGRAM - § 5-210

1. Number of post-offices supplied with forms	11
2. Number of voter registration forms supplied to same	650
If you track these forms, how many persons registered to vote via this program?	Did not track*

*Due to staff turnover this was not tracked consistently in 2024, so an accurate number is not available.

SCHOOL PROGRAM - § 3-212.4b

1. Number of school districts, colleges and universities in county/city:	9
2. Number of entities included in #1 above, contacted by your board:	5
3. Number of corresponding designated liaisons in #1 above, to assist:	1
4. Number of schools, colleges and universities conducting programs in which your board participates via on-site visits:	0
5. Number of schools, colleges and universities conducting programs on their own initiative, for which you only supply forms and instructions (no on-site visits):	0
6. Total number of students registered via this program	0/unknown

If you do not currently track the return of forms you distribute, develop a process to do so, so that you can assess the impact of your various programs, and modify them to get more responses for your outreach efforts.

Please answer the questions below, using additional sheets if necessary:

I. POSTAL PROGRAM. Report your current method of monitoring program supplies at postal sites. What systems are in place to ensure an adequate supply of forms is available at all times? Include information on how you track your receipt of completed forms from this program.

We send staff once or twice a year to each site to replenish the supply of forms, or replace the supply if a new version is issued by NYSBOE. Generally, supplies of 50 -100 forms are provided to each site, and this is usually adequate to keep a sufficient stock available year-round. A notice on the form holder/dispenser directs the site to contact the BOE if the supply is exhausted.

Each registration form distributed for this program will be marked by the Board with a stamp, so forms received from this program can be identified and tracked.

II. SCHOOLS PROGRAM. Describe any school registration programs conducted in the past year.

Schools were sent voter registration information, sample ballots and poll site information ahead of the general election.

Registration forms were not sent to schools this year. Previous feedback from schools indicated that they generally preferred to utilize online resources for voter registration programs, rather than receiving paper forms or having on-site visits.

III. MEDIA. Describe any media program, either paid or public service, involving Radio/TV/Print you have conducted. Provide any relevant statistics, where possible.

Legal notices and press releases in local newspapers are utilized within the county to provide election information and registration deadlines. We continued our attempt to reach more voters by publishing notices in three newspapers rather than two, making weekly informational posts on social media (Facebook and now Instagram), and interviewing with local television and radio news outlets when pertinent.

IV. PRINT RESOURCES. Describe how your board utilizes or creates any brochures or posters or other promotional/advisory/instructional pieces that you make available.

Brochures to recruit election inspectors, sample ballots, ballot proposal information, the Voters Bill of Rights and Notice to Voters are available at our office and at all poll sites on Election Day. Informational posters on how to register, provided by NYSBOE, are posted on a bulletin board at our office. We also make available a brochure listing all the elected officials for our jurisdiction, including office addresses and phone numbers, and term of office. Most of these items are also available on our website.

ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR 2025

Please describe your County Voter Registration Action Plan for the coming year. You should include information relating to your Postal, School, Media and Print Programs, as well as any other programs you may be considering. It is especially important to give a detailed description of your ideas for a school program pursuant to the requirements of § 3-212.4.

**For your reference, from Election Law § 3–212:
VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN (to accompany annual reports)**

(b) Said annual report, as required by paragraph (a) of this subdivision, shall include a detailed description of existing programs designed to enhance voter registration. Such report shall include a voter registration action plan which details the various activities and programs of each board, including a description of those steps which shall be taken in the future to increase registration opportunities, especially for those identifiable groups of persons historically underrepresented on the rolls of registered voters; and coordinate voter education programs with school districts, colleges and universities within the board’s jurisdiction including voter registration of qualified applicants and instructional or extracurricular activities promoting participation in the electoral process.

(1) Each voter registration action plan shall provide for the designation by the board of a registration activities coordinator. Such designee shall be responsible for initiating contact with each school district, college and university within the area served by the board to request that such school district, college and university designate an administrative liaison who, together with the registration activities coordinator, shall plan, prepare and implement voter education and registration programs to enhance electoral participation. The state board of elections shall promulgate rules and regulations providing guidelines for county board of election assistance to school districts, colleges and universities in the establishment of electoral participation programs.

(2) Each voter registration action plan shall set forth existing activities and planned programs designed to insure compliance with the requirements of subdivision two of section 5–210 of this chapter regarding the distribution of registration application forms.

Action Plan for 2025: The Board will continue to maintain boxes with voter registration forms at all local post offices, Town Clerk and Village Clerk offices, the County Legislative Clerk’s office, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Veterans’ Services Office. Additional distribution locations have been added to our list, including Tioga Opportunities Senior Center and public libraries.

Each county high school’s Participation in Government faculty will be sent a letter with the current year’s political calendar noting the deadlines for registration for the local village, school, primary and general elections per NYS Election Law. We will send information to educate students that Early Voting is an option, or early mail / absentee ballot applications may be requested or downloaded from the web annually while a student is away at college. We will push harder to conduct on-site visits at schools or otherwise increase our involvement in high school voter registration programs.

Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications will continue to be provided to nursing home and retirement center social workers, to distribute to their residents.

Voter registration forms will be made available to party committee chairs or representatives for use during petitioning, so that as committee members gather signatures, they have a supply of registration forms available to register new voters. Community groups will be provided forms upon request for local events and festivals throughout the year.

Early Voting flags and signage will be placed along the road at the entrance to our Early Voting location, to inform citizens of the opportunity to cast their vote during the posted Early Voting hours for Tioga County. Since our Early Voting location is at our office, some of these Early Voting hours can be an ideal time for people to pick up registration forms for un-registered relatives or friends, or for a parent to obtain information on how their student away at college may request a ballot when eligible for upcoming elections. Additionally, voters now have the opportunity to both register to vote and cast a ballot on the first day of Early Voting, as it now coincides with the voter registration deadline.

The Deputy Commissioners and Election Clerks will continually track registrations as they are distributed and received from the various sources, such as DMV, agencies, high schools (if possible), online, post office, other counties' three-fold forms, or over the counter. Letters will continue to be sent to voters that have not provided a valid ID verification on their registration. Although there are no community colleges or universities in our county, we hope to be involved in voter registration drives at colleges in neighboring counties that are heavily attended by our county residents.

All above-mentioned procedures will continue, with press releases as deadlines develop. Election information, deadlines, and other updates will be regularly posted on our Facebook page. We will maintain Tioga County Board of Elections webpage and aim to have information updated in as timely a manner as possible. Forms for civilian and military registration along with Early Vote by Mail and Absentee Applications will be available in our office or found on the Board of Elections web site located at www.tiogacountyny.gov/departments/board-of-elections/.

We will continue utilizing traditional media sources, such as newspaper, radio, and evening news, as well as social media, to distribute information. We hope to expand into alternative methods of information distribution, such as email or text subscriptions, and implement when funding and county support becomes

available. Our ongoing goals are to reach more voters, reduce voter confusion, combat election misinformation, and increase voter turnout.