

**Observe New Mexico Elections**  
**Findings from the 2024 General Election**

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## Executive Summary

Observe New Mexico Elections (ONME) is a nonpartisan election observation effort to increase trust and transparency in New Mexico's elections. ONME completed a full report on findings from its election observers during the 2024 general election. On Election Day, ONME mobilized 160 election watchers in 29 of New Mexico's 33 counties. During early voting, 50 volunteers observed 91 sites in 24 counties. ONME watchers observed processes from start to finish at their respective locations. They also observed the logic and accuracy testing (testing and certifying election equipment) in 20 counties, poll worker training in 25 counties and the county canvass certification in 24 counties.

### Election Day Voting

#### **Findings**

ONME's observations of voting at 160 sites across 29 counties on Election Day reflected a transparent and well-organized process with robust oversight provided by Democratic and Republican political party poll watchers, media, and other nonpartisan actors. Overall, ONME watchers validated that election workers across the state generally complied with state electoral guidelines and organized a credible election.

A record number of people tried taking advantage of the opportunity for same-day voter registration, but the system was not able to meet the demand. Poll workers proactively sought to address the situation by redirecting voters to other voting locations with shorter lines, issuing provisional ballots to voters seeking same-day registration, or calling voters when they neared the front of ad-hoc virtual lines. Unfortunately, the state's same-day-registration system was overwhelmed, leading to long same-day registration lines in several counties. A few ONME watchers reported some voters leaving before voting due to long lines, with voters reporting they would visit another location or return at a later time. Although many voting locations still had lines when the polls closed, ONME watchers reported that all voters in line were able to vote.

#### **Recommendations**

Same-day Registration: For future election cycles, ONME recommends that the state ensure robust stress-testing of the bandwidth available to allow timely processing of same-day voter registrations and work closely with county clerks to ensure adequate levels of staffing to accommodate the number of people who may choose this voting method.

the bandwidth available to allow processing of

Language Access: During early voting and on Election Day, ONME's watchers were unable to validate that written and oral translation services into Native languages were provided in all areas of the state covered as minority language jurisdictions under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act. ONME recommends, for both early and Election Day voting, that the state and county

clerks use trained translators familiar with elections terminology in order to provide materials and services easily visible and accessible to voters and comply with federal requirements.

**Provisional Ballots:** ONME watchers reported a lack of provisional ballots at seven voting locations. Concerningly, a presiding judge in Sandoval County reportedly told an ONME watcher that the location would not provide provisional ballots because, “*We have a same-day registration station, which makes voting with provisional ballot [sic] obsolete.*” At one location in Santa Fe, ONME’s watcher reported that the presiding judge tried to provide provisional ballots to voters experiencing long lines to same-day-register but concluded that the location had not been provided with any means of producing a provisional ballot.

Provisional ballots are intended as a fail-safe mechanism for voters whose eligibility to vote is uncertain. Provisional ballots should be offered, for example, to voters who may have already cast a ballot in the election or could have been provided to voters when the state experienced long delays to same-day-register. The existence of same-day-registration does not eliminate the need for voting locations to provide provisional ballots.

ONME recommends that the secretary of state’s office provide clear guidance to county election offices in future elections about how provisional ballots should be used in conjunction with same day voter registration.

## **Early Voting**

### **Findings**

During early in-person voting, ONME carried out observation of 91 voting locations in 24 counties. Watchers were trained to complete a checklist of nearly 120 questions that were developed based on state law. Overall, the early voting environment was uneventful and well-conducted. ONME’s watchers reported that during their observations neither political party poll watchers nor academic observers raised public objections to the conduct of any of the processes.

Observers did not raise concerns about any acts of deliberate fraud, manipulation, or electoral malfeasance. There was one notable instance of potential electoral violence, one significant instance of election worker harassment or intimidation, and one report of a voting disruption caused by a power outage. More information on these matters can be found in the full report.

### **Recommendations**

The most significant area for further improvement identified by ONME’s watchers during early voting is that they were unable to validate that election translation and interpretation services were consistently provided in Native American languages covered by Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act in counties designated as minority language jurisdictions. According to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, in covered jurisdictions, “*All information that is*

*provided in English also must be provided in the minority language as well. This covers not only the ballot, but all election information... Assistance also must be provided orally.*” Although ONME watchers reported that voting locations observed on Native lands during early voting generally complied with these provisions, voting locations elsewhere in the covered counties did not consistently make printed election materials or oral translation or interpretation services available in covered Native American languages.

ONME recommends that counties hire interpreters trained in the use of election terminology due to the complexity and specificity of election terminology, even in cases where the translator is a native speaker of the language. This is a best practice regardless of the language being translated. In addition, ONME recommends that all counties display clear signage about language accessibility and assistance in English, Spanish, and the required written Native American languages, consistent with state and federal law.

## **Logic and Accuracy Testing**

### **Findings**

Testing and certifying election equipment, also called logic and accuracy testing, is required in each of New Mexico’s 33 counties and was observed in 20 counties at various points in the 42 days before the election. The testing process verifies that the voting system correctly processes voters’ choices and accurately records and reports vote totals. Known results from a set of test ballots are compared to the voting system’s report results obtained from a live test. Each ONME watcher received training to complete the pre-developed checklist based on state law, and they observed at least one day of testing to assess whether state law and good practice procedures for testing were consistently and correctly applied.

Observers validated that election officials across the state conducted orderly and transparent testing of election equipment and incorporated good practices to ensure the validity of the testing process. Regarding the issue of access for observers, watchers, and the public, ONME watchers reported that they and other members of the public were able to observe in each testing location except for Sandoval County. Sandoval County required our observer to obtain a special ID prior to observing who after acquiring that ID was only able to observe a few hours of the process. The testing environment was generally calm and free of disruptions, influence, or intimidation, with one exception of citizen observers disrupting the process in Socorro County. Lastly, the process was transparent. In 15 out of the 20 locations observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials proactively provided handouts or verbal explanations about how the testing process worked.

## **Poll Worker Training**

## **Findings**

ONME mobilized watchers to monitor at least one day of poll worker training in 23 counties between Sept. 17 and Nov. 4, 2024. ONME watchers used a structured observation form that included 40 pre-identified topics, drawn from the New Mexico state elections handbook and relevant, likely issues based on state election procedures. Topics such as “same-day voter registration,” “how to verify the machine-printed election returns,” “when to issue provisional ballots,” and “how to close the polling locations” were included. While most trainings did not cover all 40 of the identified topics, ONME watchers reported that most of the selected topics were covered in the majority of the trainings they observed.

Overall, New Mexico’s county election officials created a positive training environment that was conducive to learning, with only one report of overcrowding and one report of difficulty seeing and hearing the content presented. ONME watchers did not witness any instances of violence, harassment, or intimidation of trainers, participants, or anyone else present during the training. A rapid assessment of the accessibility of poll worker training indicated that training venues were generally accessible with limited exceptions.

Four training topics less consistently covered included 1) How to enforce rules preventing electioneering, 2) How to enforce rules against voter intimidation, 3) How to accommodate state police officers and officers of the peace, and 4) How to meet federal language access requirements required by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act.

## **Recommendations**

Two of the 40 training topics assessed by ONME watchers were not covered in a majority of the training events attended: 1) how to accommodate state police officers or officers of the peace as observers; and 2) federal requirements under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act to offer ballots in languages including Spanish, Diné and Pueblo languages in certain parts of the state.

Seventeen counties in New Mexico are required under this federal law to provide multilingual election materials, yet this topic was only covered in eight of the trainings ONME observed: Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Grant, one of two McKinley, Mora, and Sandoval counties. Although ONME watchers were present at all counties required by federal law to provide multilingual election materials, watchers reported that the topic was not discussed. Language accessibility would be an important aspect of the poll worker training process to strengthen going forward, particularly in counties that have such federal obligations.

Training topics that were less consistently covered during the sessions at which ONME watchers were present include: how to establish a 100-foot limit around the voting location inside of which electioneering cannot take place; how to enforce rules against electioneering; how to enforce rules against voter intimidation; and how to accommodate voters who require language-related assistance. These aspects of the election process might be fruitfully incorporated into future poll

worker training in counties that do not currently touch on these topics as part of their typical training process.

## **Certification of Results**

### **Findings**

Between Nov. 12 and Nov. 18, 2024, ONME watchers attended 24 county meetings where county canvassing boards convened to review the election results for the county. And after the review, the boards voted to certify them, thereby attesting that they represented a complete and accurate accounting of votes canvassed in the county. Following certification, the election results were ready for transmission to the secretary of state's office.

Certification meetings took place in a calm and orderly environment and all results from all counties were ultimately certified. In all certification meetings except one, ONME watchers reported that the canvassing board members unanimously certified the results with no concerns raised. In all locations observed, the certification of results proceeded smoothly, without any reported disruptions or any instances of harassment, influence, or attempted coercion of the county canvassing board members. ONME watchers reported that members of the media and political parties were present in many locations.

In 20 of the 24 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that copies of the election returns were made available to members of the public who attended the certification meetings. In Bernalillo, Catron, Grant, and San Juan counties, ONME watchers reported that they were not able to view a copy of the election returns to be certified.

### **Recommendations**

ONME recommends that all counties make such returns available to the public in future certification meetings.

### **Conclusion**

ONME conducted the first statewide election monitoring program in the United States in a state with strong, transparent, well-run elections. ONME's observation findings indicate that all votes were counted, the polls opened and closed on time, registered voters did not face long lines, equipment functioned properly, voting privacy was maintained, voters did not encounter intimidation or electioneering, and elections were certified. ONME identified a limited number of areas that would benefit from increased attention to compliance and improved adherence with best practice – including on matters related to same-day registration delays, worker training on federal language access and Voter ID requirements, and the level of attention given to vulnerable populations while voting, including accessibility, visibility, and language options.

## About Observe New Mexico Elections

Observe New Mexico Elections seeks to increase transparency and trust in New Mexico's elections by training and positioning nonpartisan election watchers throughout the state. Nonpartisan election observation is grounded in the idea that elections are administered by and for the people and that representatives of the public interest should have an opportunity to assess key elections processes and determine whether they were conducted in a manner that the entire voting public can trust. Unlike political party observers, who monitor elections on behalf of their parties or candidates, nonpartisan observers – called election watchers in New Mexico - are concerned with the quality of the elections process and not with any particular outcome. Nonpartisan observers or watchers help to dispel rumors around elections through their systematic, fact-based reporting and can offer data-driven recommendations for reform where needed.

Research has long indicated that the presence of nonpartisan or independent election observers or monitors during critical stages of an election can improve election administration and bolster public trust in electoral outcomes. The 2022 Survey of the Performance of American Elections – a national survey administered to 10,200 registered voters – found, for example, that a majority of American voters (61%) would have more confidence in the integrity and security of their state's election system if they knew that nonpartisan poll watchers had observed the process.<sup>1</sup>

## Logic and Accuracy Testing

During logic and accuracy (or L&A) testing of election equipment, county clerks' offices in each of New Mexico's 33 counties verify that the vote counting equipment the county plans to use for an upcoming election is functioning as intended. Equipment must be reprogrammed by humans before every new election; logic and accuracy testing helps to ensure that any errors in the reprogramming process can be identified and corrected before the election takes place. The vast majority of errors detected during testing are human errors related to this reprogramming process. Testing validates that the voting system can correctly process voters' choices and is able to both accurately record and report the vote totals. Known results from a set of test ballots are compared to the voting system report of results obtained from a live test.

Testing may take a day to several weeks depending on the size of the county and the number of pieces of voting equipment that must be rigorously reviewed. Under New Mexico state law this process may begin as early as 42 days before an election and, "The process of preparing, inspecting, certifying and sealing electronic voting machines shall be open to observation by the

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Stewart III HOW WE VOTED IN 2022 A TOPICAL LOOK AT THE SURVEY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. (n.d.). <https://electionlab.mit.edu/sites/default/files/2023-05/How-We-Voted-In-2022.pdf>



public.”<sup>2</sup> This is an important transparency measure that helps to ensure public confidence in the testing process, providing voters with an opportunity to see the equipment and pose questions to election officials about how it was selected, certified, tested and will be used.

During testing, every ballot “style,” or specific combination of contests that can appear on a voter’s ballot in that county, is tested to be sure that the ballots correctly list all candidates and contests. Testing also ensures that votes for each and every ballot style are correctly counted by the tabulators or vote counting equipment, and that the tabulators are handling nonstandard votes (like overvotes or blank ballots) as intended.

Observe New Mexico Elections mobilized election watchers to monitor logic and accuracy testing in 21 counties across the state: Bernalillo, Catron, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Torrance and Valencia counties. Each watcher was asked to attend only one day of logic and accuracy testing to assess whether good practice procedures for testing were consistently and correctly applied. Watchers carried out their monitoring work between September 24, 2024 and October 30, 2024, depending on the relevant dates for logic and accuracy testing in their counties.

#### *Access for Observers, Watchers and the Public*

Space was made available for the Observe New Mexico Elections watchers and other members of the public in each testing location except for Sandoval County. Sandoval County required our observer to obtain a special ID prior to observing. Once the observer obtained the special ID, there was inadequate time remaining to complete a full observation.

In Curry County, testing took less time than initially foreseen by county elections officials and had already concluded on the date when the ONME watcher arrived. County elections officials generously took time to explain the testing process; respond to the questions on the observation checklist on the basis of what had happened during the earlier testing process; and allowed the observer to inspect the zero reports, test ballots, and the voting system reports from the tests.

In Roosevelt County, the ONME watcher received information to attend testing during what turned out to be a limited test of tabulation equipment before a mock election scheduled for October 1-3, 2024. Although the watcher monitored the process and completed an observation report, their findings do not reflect the testing of election equipment in the county prior to the general election.

Participation in the testing process by political party observers and other members of the public was limited during the dates that ONME watchers observed. Democratic Party observers were noted only in Otero County, while Republican Party observers were noted in Doña Ana, Grant,

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<sup>2</sup> Oliver, M. (n.d.). *ELECTION HANDBOOK of the STATE OF NEW MEXICO 2023 EDITION*. Retrieved March 24, 2025, from [https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/ee3072ab0d43456cb15a51f7d82c77a2/c5ceeb07-9546-4517-a7a1-be60a2094578/NM\\_Election\\_Handbook\\_SOS-2023.pdf](https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/ee3072ab0d43456cb15a51f7d82c77a2/c5ceeb07-9546-4517-a7a1-be60a2094578/NM_Election_Handbook_SOS-2023.pdf), 1-11-5. Voting device; preparation; certification, pg. 158.

Otero and Taos counties. ONME watchers did not report the presence of political party observers from any of the other registered parties. ONME watchers observed members of local media in Eddy County during testing but nowhere else in the state. Other members of the public were observed in Otero and Socorro counties only.

### *Testing Environment*

The testing environment was generally calm and free of disruptions, influence or intimidation with one notable exception in Socorro County. Three members of the public monitoring testing in Socorro County initially behaved civilly, but ONME’s watcher reported that they raised increasingly forceful concerns about the potential for election equipment to be connected to the internet and hacked. They also expressed concerns over the manner in which the equipment was being tested – specifically, with test ballots that had been provided by the equipment vendor. They advocated for the ballots to be hand counted instead. They also attempted to touch the test ballots and machines, take unauthorized pictures, and physically intervene in the testing process despite multiple requests by election officials to refrain from doing so. Ultimately, local sheriff’s officers were called to escort the individuals out of the tabulation room so that they could ask their questions away from the area where equipment was being tested. The officers also ensured that the individuals deleted any unauthorized photos they had taken of election equipment. The ONME watcher specified that these events had a negative impact on the testing environment, stating that, *“Throughout the process, the Socorro County staff seemed to be on edge, as they had to constantly monitor the observers to ensure they didn’t touch or photograph additional materials.”*

None of the political party poll watchers present elsewhere in the state nor any of the other individuals present raised any challenges or objections to the conduct of logic and accuracy testing.

### *Transparency of the Process*

In 15 out of the 20 locations observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials proactively provided handouts or verbal explanations about how the testing process worked.<sup>3</sup> These important measures enhance public understanding of equipment that is often seen as a ‘black box’ and could be consistently adopted by election officials across the state when members of the public or observers attend testing. In all 20 counties where ONME observed, elections staff were available to answer questions about the testing process: a positive practice for which ONME commends them.

ONME watchers witnessed the testing of both the ImageCast Central tabulators used in county elections offices and of the ImageCast Evolution tabulation equipment that is commonly used in polling locations. Depending on the date and location, ONME watchers saw between one and 62

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<sup>3</sup> Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Torrance and Valencia counties.

individual pieces of tabulation equipment undergo testing on the day that they were present. In nine counties,<sup>4</sup> ONME watchers also witnessed the testing of accessible voting systems / ballot marking devices. None of the counties observed tested electronic pollbooks during the period that ONME was present.

To facilitate greater transparency and ease of public access to the testing process, Observe New Mexico Elections advises that local election offices post signs at the testing locations indicating how to find the public test (for example, in the venue parking lot or on a front door). Watchers in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Mora, San Miguel, Socorro and Valencia counties noted the presence of such signs; elsewhere, watchers did not notice signs, and, in some locations, reported that they encountered difficulty finding the test venue. In San Juan County, in particular, the ONME watcher reported that testing took place at the voting machine warehouse, which was located on the county sheriff department training grounds and could only be accessed by bypassing several “No Trespassing” signs that might serve as a deterrent to public participation.

#### *Implementation of Testing Procedures*

Overall, Observe New Mexico Elections validated that election officials across the state conducted orderly and transparent testing of election equipment in their counties and ensured a robust testing process. Depending on the county, ONME watchers had varying degrees of access and proximity to the testing process, which made it easier or harder to confirm that certain procedures had taken place. Particularly in large counties like Bernalillo County, where observers were escorted to a designated observation area, it was at times challenging for the ONME watchers to witness the minutia of the process. The findings summarized in **Appendix 1: Detailed Findings from ONME’s Observation of Logic and Accuracy Testing** constitute an accounting of the procedures that observers were able to personally witness but should not be conflated with a definitive account of whether certain procedures did or did not take place.

#### *Success of Observation as a Civic Education Initiative*

17 out of 20 ONME watchers reported that they had a better understanding of the role that logic and accuracy testing plays in an election process as a result of having observed.

## Poll Worker Training

Observe New Mexico Elections mobilized watchers to monitor poll worker training in 23 counties between the dates of September 17, 2024 and November 4, 2024 depending on the availability of training in each county. ONME observed poll worker training in Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos and Valencia counties. In

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<sup>4</sup> Bernalillo, Catron, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Torrance and Valencia counties.

Sandoval and McKinley counties, ONME watchers attended two poll worker trainings in order to learn more about how training might be tailored to different target audiences. In every other county, ONME watchers participated in a single session of poll worker training.

Overall, ONME watchers found the poll worker trainings they attended to be well organized, comprehensive, informative and structured in a manner that promoted learning. In several instances, ONME watchers noted that the vast majority of the individuals attending the training were long-time volunteers who already had extensive experience working the polls. For these individuals, election officials may have provided less in-depth training. In other instances, ONME watchers reported that the poll worker training was divided into sub-groups to allow different categories of poll workers to focus on different stages of the election process. When this happened, the ONME watcher had to select a group and was only able to report on the training topics discussed in their sub-group.

### *Accessibility of the Training*

Prior to attending the training, ONME observers provided a rapid accessibility assessment of the poll worker training venues to gauge how accessible training might be to a poll worker with a physical disability. Training venues were generally accessible according to the metrics used; however, at training venues in Curry (where short-term construction posed a problem), McKinley, San Juan, and Valencia counties, watchers identified multiple potential barriers to access. ONME watchers in only four of the counties observed – Catron, De Baca, Los Alamos and San Miguel – reported that trainers incorporated accessibility accommodations into their trainings, such as large print materials, closed captions or translation into other languages including American Sign Language. Additional detailed statistics about training venue accessibility are in **Appendix 1: Observed Accessibility of Poll Worker Training Venues**.

### *Training Environment*

Overall, New Mexico's county election officials created a positive training environment that was conducive to learning. Estimated sizes of the poll worker trainings attended by ONME watchers ranged from five participants in Mora County at the smallest end of the spectrum to 38 participants in Otero County at the largest end of the spectrum. Only one watcher reported that, in their estimation, the training they attended was overcrowded: a training in Sierra County with an estimated 33 participants and three trainers. In McKinley County, the ONME watcher reported that they did not think all participants could easily see and hear the training content throughout the majority of the training; everywhere else, ONME watchers judged that training could be followed by those who attended all or most of the time. ONME watchers did not witness any instances of violence, harassment or intimidation of any sort during the poll worker trainings they attended.

Trainings were sparsely attended by external watchers or observers. ONME watchers reported that one Democratic Party poll watcher and one Republican Party poll watcher each came to observe

poll worker training in Roosevelt County. They were the only political party poll watchers present in any of the poll worker trainings that ONME attended. In Curry County, a member of the local media attended poll worker training. ONME did not observe the presence of media during any other poll worker trainings.

### *Training Content*

ONME watchers used a structured observation form to evaluate whether the poll worker training they attended addressed each of forty pre-identified topics. These topics were selected by ONME based on its assessment of the New Mexico state elections handbook and of issues that were likely to be relevant under New Mexico state election procedures. These included such topics as ‘same day voter registration,’ ‘how to verify the machine-printed election returns,’ ‘when to issue provisional ballots,’ and ‘how to close the polling locations.’ While most trainings did not cover all forty of the identified topics, ONME watchers reported that most of the selected topics were covered in the majority of the trainings that they observed. **Appendix 2: Training Topics Discussed During Poll Worker Training by County as Reported by ONME Watchers** provides a detailed breakdown of which topics were discussed during each of the trainings that ONME observed.

Training topics that were less consistently well covered included: how to establish a 100-foot limit around the voting location inside of which electioneering cannot take place; how to enforce rules against electioneering; how to enforce rules against voter intimidation; and how to accommodate voters who require language-related assistance. These aspects of the election process might be fruitfully incorporated into future poll worker trainings in counties that do not currently touch on these topics as part of their typical training process.

Only two of the training topics assessed by ONME watchers were not covered in a majority of the trainings attended: how to accommodate state police officers or officers of the peace as observers; and federal requirements under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act to offer ballots in languages including Spanish, Diné and Pueblo languages in certain parts of the state. Seventeen counties in New Mexico are required under this federal law to provide multilingual election materials<sup>5</sup> yet this was only covered as a training topic in eight of the trainings where ONME watchers observed: in Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Grant, one of two McKinley trainings, Mora and in both Sandoval trainings. Although ONME watchers were present at poll worker trainings in Doña Ana, Hidalgo, San Juan, San Miguel and Socorro counties – all counties that are required to provide multilingual election materials under federal law – watchers at trainings in these counties

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<sup>5</sup> Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Doña Ana, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Lea, Luna, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Juan, San Miguel, Socorro and Taos counties. *Notices: COVERED AREAS FOR VOTING RIGHTS BILINGUAL ELECTION MATERIALS—2020* (2021, December 8). Federal Register, Vol. 86, No. 233. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1460416/dl?inline>

reported that the topic was not discussed. This is an important aspect of the poll worker training process to strengthen going forward, particularly in counties that have such federal obligations.

### *Success of Observation as a Civic Education Initiative*

92% of ONME’s election watchers who observed poll worker training (23 out of 25) reported that they had a better understanding of the election process in New Mexico as a result of having attended the training. ONME election watchers in Chaves and Valencia counties reported that attending poll worker training did not help them to better understand the election process.

## Early In-Person Voting Observation

Early in-person voting in the state of New Mexico began on October 8, 2024 in the 33 county clerks’ offices. Expanded early in-person voting took place between October 19, 2024 and November 2, 2024, with many counties opening additional in-person voting locations during that time frame. Days and hours of operation for the early voting locations varied by county and by site. ONME watchers monitored early in-person voting 91 times at 86 unique early in-person voting locations, ensuring that approximately two-thirds of total early in-person voting locations across the state were each observed one time from start to finish during a whole day of voting.

Early in-person voting observations were distributed across 24 counties in the state as follows:

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of Observations</b>
Bernalillo County	10
Catron County	3
Cibola County	1
Curry County	2
De Baca County	1
Doña Ana County	6
Eddy County	3* (one location observed on two different days)
Grant County	1
Hidalgo County	2* (one location observed on two different days)
Lea County	2
Los Alamos County	1
Luna County	2
McKinley County	7
Mora County	2* (one location observed on two different days)
Otero County	3* (one location observed on two different days)
Rio Arriba County	3
Roosevelt County	3
San Juan County	6
Sandoval County	18

Santa Fe County	7
Sierra County	2* (one location observed on two different days)
Socorro County	1
Taos County	4
Union County	1
<b>TOTAL: 86 early in-person voting locations observed through 91 observations in 24 counties</b>	

Overall, ONME’s findings indicate that early voting in the state was extremely well conducted, with only minor problems noted. No election process is perfect and ONME’s watchers did report limited issues with voters engaged in electioneering, equipment breakdowns, shortage of materials, or minor deviations from the election procedures proscribed in state guidelines. These issues were isolated and geographically disbursed. ONME’s findings reflect normal human errors as well as the challenges of conducting elections in a large rural state that is subject to dust, power outages and surges, and unanticipated weather events.<sup>6</sup> New Mexicans should take great pride in the early voting process and the professional manner in which election workers throughout the state addressed unexpected challenges.

The most significant area for further improvement identified during early voting is that ONME’s watchers were unable to validate that election translation and interpretation services were consistently provided in Native languages covered by Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act in counties designated as minority language counties (see **Appendix 3: Current Designation of Covered Counties and Minority Languages in New Mexico Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act**). According to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, in covered jurisdictions, “*All information that is provided in English also must be provided in the minority language as well. This covers not only the ballot, but all election information... Assistance also must be provided orally.*”<sup>7</sup> Although ONME watchers reported that voting locations observed on Native lands during early voting generally complied with these provisions, voting locations elsewhere in the covered counties did not consistently make printed election materials or oral translation services available in covered Native languages.

ONME recommends that counties hire translators that have received specific training in translation of election terminology into the relevant language. Even in cases where the translator is a native speaker of the language, specialized training is needful due to the complexity and specificity of election terminology. This is a best practice regardless of the language being translated. In addition, ONME recommends that all counties display clear signage about language

<sup>6</sup> One ONME watcher in Lea County, for example, had to stop observing midway through and return to safety when a tornado touched down in Hobbs while a watcher in San Juan County noted that an internet outage at one voting location resulted in delays to the same day voter registration process.

<sup>7</sup> *Language Minority Citizens*. (2015, August 6). Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/language-minority-citizens>. Accessed 24 March 2025.

accessibility and assistance in English, Spanish and the required written Native American languages, consistent with state and federal laws and procedures.

Additional detailed findings about each stage of the process follow.

### *Opening*

93% of the early in-person voting locations observed by ONME watchers opened at the scheduled opening time. Three ONME-observed locations opened between one and 15 minutes after the scheduled opening time and two locations observed – one in Roosevelt County and one in McKinley County – opened more than 15 minutes after the scheduled opening time. All sites observed ultimately opened for voting. At the site in Roosevelt County, the ONME watcher specified that the location opened 30 minutes after the scheduled opening time.

Voting locations had between one and 20 precinct board members or election officials present at the time they opened. ONME watchers reported that one site in De Baca County and one site in Hidalgo County each had only one election official present when the location opened. ONME watchers did not report any significant concerns related to insufficient staffing of early in-person voting locations, suggesting that decisions made about staffing were generally appropriate to the local context and the size of the location. As an added security measure during future elections, counties should strive to ensure that at least two election officials are present at all times so that ballots are never handled without oversight.

67% of ONME watchers were able to verify that election officials checked the protective counters on all tabulation equipment in use at the location to confirm that the number of lifetime votes cast as displayed on the counter matched the number recorded on the certificate for the machine at the time it was sealed. This important security measure helps to ensure that voting equipment was not tampered with since the time that it was tested and sealed. In 32% of locations observed, ONME watchers either did not respond to the question or noted that they did not have sufficient observation access to be able to report. Only one ONME watcher, at a voting location in Taos County, reported that election officials in the location did not carry out this security measure.

ONME watchers noted the presence of between one and two Democratic Party poll watchers during the opening of seven of the voting locations where ONME observed: in Sandoval, Otero and McKinley counties. ONME watchers noted the presence of one Libertarian Party poll watcher during the opening of a voting location in McKinley County. The presence of between one and three Republican Party poll watchers was noted during opening at seventeen voting locations where ONME watchers were present: at locations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Luna, McKinley, Otero, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties. ONME watchers reported the presence of one Green Party poll watcher at one location in Sandoval County. ONME watchers also reported that academic observers from the University of New Mexico were present at two voting locations in Sandoval County.



## Setup

Overall, ONME watchers reported that the voting locations where they observed had been set up with all necessary materials present and in a way that made required information easily visible to members of the public. However, ONME watchers were unable to validate that election information was consistently posted and available in Native languages covered under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act in the eight counties that are federally obligated to provide election materials in Native languages.

In addition, ONME recommends that counties review their procedures for posting information about provisional ballots, information about spoiling and replacing ballots, and sample ballots so that these are more easily visible to voters. In counties with a prohibitively large number of sample ballot styles, a system of posting a quick response (QR) code to a wall – a practice observed in Eddy County to provide access to a voter guide – could provide a possible solution.

ONME also notes with concern a limited number of reports from Sandoval County that voters had to provide voter identification to receive a sample ballot even though voter identification is not required to vote under state law for previously registered voters.

ONME watchers reported that every voting location observed had at least one voter check-in station and at least one voting station. 93% of ONME watchers reported that the locations where they observed had a means of producing regular ballots at the time they opened, while watchers in four locations were not sure. Watchers in 72% of locations observed reported that the location had a means of producing provisional ballots.

97% of ONME watchers reported that voting stations were arranged in a manner that ensured secrecy of the ballot. Watchers in one location in Bernalillo County, one location in Lea County and one location in Sandoval County reported that secrecy of the ballot could have been compromised. In Bernalillo County, a heavily trafficked early voting location did not have sufficient room for voters to vote in secrecy and the ONME watcher reported that couples who came to vote together would periodically share a voting station. In Lea County, the ONME watcher reported that the voter check-in table had been installed less than seven feet away from the voting stations and that it could have been possible for a voter checking in to see how voters in the voting stations were casting their ballots. In Sandoval County, the unanticipated breakdown of multiple tabulators on the day when the ONME watcher was present led to overcrowding of the voting location as numerous information technology staff and election technicians mobilized to address the equipment failures. Although these were isolated incidents that do not suggest a concerning trend, election officials could revisit voting location setup in the particular affected locations to ensure that secrecy of the ballot is preserved for future elections.

90% of ONME watchers reported that electronic pollbooks were used in their voting locations, while 5% of ONME watchers reported that paper rosters were used to determine voter eligibility.

ONME watchers in an additional two locations reported that both paper rosters and electronic poll books were used, while two ONME watchers were unable to respond to the question.

ONME watchers were able to identify an accessible voting system in the voting location in 85% of locations observed at the time that the locations opened. Of the 15 locations lacking an obvious accessible voting system during opening, four locations were situated in Doña Ana County; two were situated in Catron County; and one each were in Eddy, Lea, McKinley, Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, San Juan, Sierra and Socorro counties. ONME watchers reported that the setup of accessible voting systems and how voters should use them were covered as topics during the poll worker trainings that they attended in both Doña Ana and Catron counties. However, ONME's reports suggest there may be a need to review the standard operating procedures for accessible voting systems during voting location setup in these counties.

In 94% of locations observed with an obvious accessible voting system, ONME watchers reported the system was turned on when the location opened. In only 44% of these locations did ONME watchers witness election officials running test ballots through the system to confirm that it was working properly before it was deployed for use. This is not a required practice under federal or state statute, but election officials who do not currently incorporate such testing into their practices may wish to consider it as an added assurance that all election equipment is functioning as expected before it is put into service.

Overall, voting locations across the state had clear public instructions and notices for voters in line with state guidelines. ONME watchers in 97% of locations observed reported that the locations had clearly visible posted instructions about how to cast a valid vote. 95% of voting locations observed had posted information about the hours during which the voting location would be open. 89% of ONME watchers reported that the voting locations had posted instructions about how to contact state or federal officials if an individual's voting rights were violated. 87% of ONME watchers reported that they were able to identify posted instructions about how to cast a valid ballot or use the accessible voting system at each individual voting station. Watchers in 87% of voting locations also reported that the locations had a posted notice with information about federal or state laws prohibiting voter fraud and misrepresentation.

Areas of potential improvement identified by ONME watchers included the consistent posting of other instructions about the voting process. ONME watchers identified instructions about how to request a new ballot if a voter needed to spoil their ballot in only 75% of locations observed. Similarly, only 69% of ONME watchers identified clearly posted instructions about voters' rights to request a provisional ballot and how to do so. ONME watchers at six locations in San Juan County and at six locations in Sandoval County reported being unable to identify such information, suggesting that these two counties in particular may need to review their practices for posting information about the right to cast a provisional ballot to ensure that it is visible to voters.

Only 63% of ONME watchers identified a publicly posted sample ballot or sample ballots. ONME watchers at seven locations in Bernalillo County and at six locations in Sandoval County reported being unable to identify publicly posted sample ballots, suggesting that there may be a need for these two counties in particular to review their protocols around the display of sample ballots so that they will be more readily apparent to voters. Several of ONME's watchers reported that sample ballots were available to voters in Bernalillo and Sandoval counties upon request and that poll workers informed them that these counties used so many unique ballot styles that it would be physically impossible to post a sample of each one. A practice observed by an ONME watcher in Eddy County, where one voting location posted a QR code on the wall that linked to a voter guide, may provide one possible solution. Concerningly, however, ONME watchers in multiple locations in Sandoval County reported that voters had to provide voter identification in order to receive a sample ballot. Given that previously registered voters are not required to provide voter identification under New Mexico state law to vote, this requirement would seem to pose an unwarranted barrier for voter access to information.

ONME watchers reported that 92% of voting locations observed had posted electoral information in Spanish. Under state election guidelines, all election materials should be available in both English in Spanish in line with **Article 1-2-3. Secretary of state; instructions; forms; certificates** of the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition. ONME watchers at three locations in McKinley County and one location each in De Baca, San Juan, Sandoval and Socorro counties reported being unable to see posted voting information in Spanish.

Under the federal Voting Rights Act, eight counties are additionally required to provide electoral information in Native languages. Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Juan and Socorro counties are required to provide electoral information in Diné / Navajo. Catron, Cibola and McKinley counties are required to provide electoral information in appropriate Pueblo languages. San Juan County is required to provide electoral information in Ute. ONME watchers reported that electoral information was publicly posted in Native languages in only three of the sites they observed (3% of the total): in Keres at Zia Pueblo in Sandoval County, in Diné / Navajo in the Farmington Museum in San Juan County, and in Zuni at Zuni Pueblo in McKinley County.

### *Voting Process*

ONME's findings indicate that the voting process was smooth and well-conducted. Only minimal issues were observed, and – in general – these were appropriately addressed by election officials. Overall, ONME's reports indicate that state voting procedures were consistently and correctly applied across the state.

The only notable issue observed related to the availability of election interpretation services in counties required to provide translation into Diné / Navajo, Ute or appropriate Pueblo languages under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. While San Juan and McKinley counties generally made interpretation services available in Diné / Navajo in the sites where ONME observed, ONME

watchers could not consistently identify translation services in other covered counties. ONME watchers reported only sporadic provision of interpretation services in Pueblo languages at the sites in covered counties where they observed and did not observe any provision of interpretation services into Ute.

In 100% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials verified every voter's name and registration details on the checklist of voters or electronic pollbook prior to allowing voters to vote.

Only 39% of ONME watchers reported that election officials read every voter's name aloud after confirming the voter's registration details. This requirement enables verbal voter identification to function without the aid of physical identification cards or written communication.

At 12 locations, ONME watchers reported that election officials inappropriately asked voters to present physical voter identification. Under New Mexico state statute, voters are only required to present physical forms of identification if they are registering for the first time or updating their registration. Inappropriate requests for voter identification were reported at one location in Bernalillo County, one location in Hidalgo County, one location in San Juan County and eight locations in Sandoval County. This finding suggests that Sandoval County in particular may wish to review its procedures for training poll workers about when voter identification is and is not a required part of the process.

Voters requesting same day voter registration were reported at 84% of early voting locations observed. At most of the sites where same day voter registration occurred, fewer than 10 individuals requested same day voter registration; however, at approximately one-fifth of the locations where ONME reported requests for same day voter registration, watchers reported that 20 or more individuals made such requests. Many of these high-volume same day voter registration sites were located in Bernalillo, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties.

At one site in Santa Fe County, the ONME watcher reported that the same day voter registration system ceased to function for approximately 90 minutes, during which time an estimated 15 to 20 voters were turned away and told to come back to the location on another day. At two sites in San Juan County, ONME watchers reported a lengthy same day voter registration process. At one site this was due to an internet outage. At the other site, the same day voter registration system seemed to experience significant latency. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible that these incidents were early indications that the state's same day voter registration system did not have the bandwidth to process an unprecedentedly high volume of same day registrants. One ONME watcher in Sandoval County, for example, reported that the site where they observed experienced what – at the time – was its highest-ever number of same day registrants in a single day, many of whom were young voters.

In 86% of the locations that received requests for same day voter registration, ONME watchers confirmed that all individuals requesting same day voter registration were asked to sign an affidavit under oath that they had not already voted in the election, in line with article **1-4-5.7. Registration at voting location prior to voting** of the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition. In the remaining 14% of voting locations, ONME's watchers, who were trained to protect voters' privacy while observing, may not have had sufficient access to verify that this stage in the process took place.

In 96% of locations that received requests for same day voter registration, ONME watchers confirmed that election officials asked all individuals seeking to undergo same day voter registration to present valid voter identification. In one location in Los Alamos County, one location in San Juan County and one location in Sierra County, the ONME watchers reported that, in their estimation, a limited number of voters were allowed to register without providing valid voter identification.<sup>8</sup> Although such potential lapses in state procedure were not widespread and should not undermine overall confidence in the election process, state and county election officials should review how to best ensure consistent verification of voter identification for all voters seeking same day registration or same day updates to their voter registration status, given the importance of this electoral safeguard.

In 27% of locations observed, voters were turned away because they resided and were registered to vote in a different county. In most locations, five or fewer voters were turned away throughout the day. In all but three locations where individuals were turned away, ONME watchers reported that election officials provided the individuals with accurate information about where to vote instead. At one site each in Hidalgo, McKinley and Socorro counties, ONME watchers reported that a small number of voters (fewer than five) were turned away and were not provided with information about where to vote.

In 100% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that every voter who requested to spoil their ballot received and was able to complete a replacement ballot. In 98% of locations where voters had to spoil their ballots, ONME watchers reported that the election judges clearly labelled the ballots as spoiled and retained them separately.

In 100% of locations observed, all voters voting a regular ballot deposited their ballots in a precinct tabulator before exiting the voting location.

In 97% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that the precinct tabulators functioned correctly throughout the day. In locations where the tabulators did not function correctly, ONME watchers did not consider that this had a significantly negative impact on the process. At one

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<sup>8</sup> ONME observers did not report that any of the locations observed had to suspend state voter identification requirements at any point throughout the day because the line to vote had become too long, which would be permitted per *Article 1-12-4.1. Conduct of elections; suspension of certain voter identification requirements* of the Election Handbook of New Mexico, 2023 edition.

illustrative site in Bernalillo County, a tabulator ceased to function and was taken out of service while voters continued to cast their ballots on alternate machines. After multiple unsuccessful attempts by the county technician to fix the machine, the machine was replaced. At another site in Bernalillo County, a tabulator began to generate error codes. The presiding judge concluded that the scanner had become dirty and scheduled the machine for professional cleaning the next day. At a third site in Bernalillo County, a tabulator jammed after a voter mistakenly tried to stick their voter identification card into the machine. The machine was taken out of service for an hour while a county technician successfully repaired it.

In 16 voting locations observed, one or more voters had to vote a provisional ballot throughout the day. In all of these locations, ONME watchers confirmed that the ballots were clearly identifiable as provisional and that they were retained separately by election judges.

Voters brought absentee ballots to 59% of the locations observed. In 92% of these locations where voters returned their absentee ballots, ONME watchers saw an election judge consistently note down in the voter register that the voter(s) had returned an absentee ballot. In other locations, voters were directed to deposit their absentee ballots in a secure locked ballot drop box for later processing. In 100% of the voting locations where voters returned an absentee ballot, ONME watchers saw the election officials store the absentee ballots in a separate marked envelope or container. At no time did ONME watchers see anyone attempt to open or otherwise tamper with any of the official mailing envelopes or containers for absentee ballots.

Voters requested language-related accommodations in 30% of the locations where ONME observed. In most locations this was a limited number of voters; however, at two sites in McKinley County and at one site in San Juan County, five or more voters requested language-related accommodations. ONME watchers reported that all individuals who requested assistance due to language were able to receive it (whether through an official translator or accompaniment by an assistant of their choice).

In 77% of locations observed, interpretation services were available in Spanish. ONME watchers reported that in 100% of the sites required to provide Spanish language interpretation services under federal law, such services were provided. In 16% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that interpretation services were available in Diné/Navajo, including at all six sites observed in San Juan County and at six out of seven sites observed in McKinley County in addition to one site in Bernalillo County and one site in Sandoval County. These findings suggest that McKinley and San Juan counties may be broadly compliant with federal law requiring oral translation services to be available in covered minority languages. Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, however, Diné/Navajo interpretation services should also have been available in all ten sites observed in Bernalillo County, at the site observed in Cibola County, at all three sites observed in Rio Arriba County, at all 18 sites observed in Sandoval County, and at the site observed in Socorro County.

Other forms of language interpretation services observed included interpretation into Tiwa at four locations observed;<sup>9</sup> Keres at one location;<sup>10</sup> Zuni in one location;<sup>11</sup> Arabic, Urdu, Hindi and Farsi at one location;<sup>12</sup>; and American Sign Language at one location.<sup>13</sup> Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, Ute interpretation services should have been available at all six sites observed in San Juan County. Appropriate Pueblo language interpretation services should have been available in all three locations observed in Catron County, at the location observed in Cibola County and at all seven locations observed in McKinley County.

In 66% of voting locations observed, at least one voter with disabilities requested that an assistant of their choosing or an election official assist them to vote. In 19% of voting locations observed, five or more voters with disabilities made such requests. Requests for assistance by five or more voters with disabilities throughout the day were reported at locations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Lea, McKinley, Mora, Otero, San Juan and Sandoval counties. In 99% of these locations, all voters who requested assistance to vote were able to receive it.

Challenges to voter eligibility were reported at only two locations during early voting. The election board at one location in Rio Arriba County unanimously upheld a voter to be ineligible to vote because the individual arrived at the location wearing apparel displaying a candidate in the election. The individual returned later in the day without the candidate apparel and voted. At one location in Doña Ana County, two challenges to voter eligibility were posed throughout the day, but neither challenge was unanimously upheld by the election board. Both voters in question voted a regular ballot.

ONME watchers reported that peace officers were requested to assist in maintaining order at the voting location (including at the entrance) or to observe the election at the behest of the election board in only three locations: one in Doña Ana County, one in McKinley County and one in Sandoval County. Both of these activities are permissible under New Mexico state election guidelines in line with articles **1-12-4. Conduct of election; maintenance of order** and **1-12-5. Conduct of election; state police; other peace officers** in the State Election Handbook of New Mexico, 2023 edition.

97% of voting locations observed did not run out of any essential materials throughout the day. However, ONME watchers reported that three locations, all in Sandoval County, did run out of materials. One location ran out of voter change of address forms, while another ran out of toner

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<sup>9</sup>Sandia Pueblo and the San Ysidro Public Safety Room in Sandoval County, Taos Pueblo in Taos County, and San Juan Pueblo in Rio Arriba County

<sup>10</sup>San Felipe Pueblo in Sandoval County

<sup>11</sup> Zuni Pueblo in McKinley County

<sup>12</sup>Doña Ana Mesilla Town Hall in Doña Ana County

<sup>13</sup> San Ysidro Public Safety Room in Sandoval County

for the ballot-on-demand printers. The ONME watcher at the third location did not provide details of the materials that ran low.

In 98% of voting locations observed during early voting, ONME watchers reported that they did not witness any voters leaving the line to vote because it had become too long.

In 97% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers reported that, in their opinion, the locations had sufficient staff and equipment to ensure a smooth and orderly voting process throughout the day. At two of three locations observed in Roosevelt County, the ONME watchers reported a concern that Spanish speaking voters had difficulty voting because none of the election officials present spoke Spanish, suggesting a need for the county to actively seek to recruit and mobilize multilingual poll workers going forward. At one location in Sandoval County, one primary tabulator and three replacements all appeared to have broken down. The watcher characterized the resulting voting process at this location as “*noisy and chaotic*” despite low voter turnout, noting that at one point 19 election officials, technicians or observers were present alongside five voters and multiple children in a site described as “*far too small for the level of voter traffic.*” Ultimately, technicians identified three faulty circuits in the wiring of the site, which they attributed to a recent power surge, and they successfully plugged the tabulator into a different power outlet. The ONME watcher stated that, despite the over-crowding, all voters who came to the site were able to vote and they did not overhear any voter complaints. At one location in Doña Ana County, the ONME election watcher reported that the presiding judge was not available to let them in to the location to observe for over an hour.

ONME watchers reported that Democratic Party poll watchers were present at some point throughout the day in 13% of voting locations observed: at locations in Bernalillo, McKinley, Otero, and Sandoval counties. Libertarian Party poll watchers were reported at some point throughout the day at one site in McKinley County and one site in Santa Fe County. Republican Party poll watchers were reported at some point throughout the day in 30% of voting locations observed: at locations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Luna, McKinley, Otero, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties. Poll watchers from other registered political parties were reported at some point throughout the day in two sites observed in Sandoval County and at one site observed in Santa Fe County. ONME watchers reported that members of the media were present at some point during the voting process in 9% of voting locations observed: at locations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Sandoval, Santa Fe and Taos counties. Nonpartisan election observers from the University of New Mexico / Florida State University were reported at nine of the 18 sites that ONME observed in Sandoval County. No other independent / nonpartisan observers or watchers were reported.

ONME observers did not raise any concerns about the conduct of the other poll watchers, observers or accredited members of the media in the polls. This finding suggests that the presence of poll workers provided needed transparency and confidence in the process without negatively affecting the environment for voters or election officials.



### *Close of Polls*

Closing procedures observed during early voting varied; locations had different timelines and frequencies for transporting materials and voted ballots back to the county clerk's office for central processing and storage. In some locations observed, county election officials secured and locked all election equipment and the physical location at the end of the day. In other locations observed, election materials and ballots were transported back to the county clerk's office at the end of the day. Although ONME watchers observed a variety of different procedures for closing the voting locations during the early voting period, neither ONME's watchers nor any of the other observers, watchers or challengers present during the closing of locations raised any concerns about the safety, security or integrity of this process.

In 90% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that the locations closed on time. In 86% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that an election judge provided a verbal announcement about the close of polls. In some locations, election officials specified to ONME watchers that they would not be making a verbal announcement of the close of polls because no voters were present in the location at that time.

Only two locations observed, both located in Otero County, had a line at the time polls closed. ONME watchers reported that all individuals who were in line at these locations before the close of polls were provided with an opportunity to vote. No voters entered the line at these locations after the close of polls.

In three locations, ONME watchers reported that individuals who came to the voting location after it had closed were nevertheless provided an opportunity to vote, in contravention of article **1-12-26. Conduct of election; closing polls** of the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition. ONME watchers reported that this was permitted at one location in De Baca County, at one location in Eddy County and at one location in Luna County.

Voting locations had between one and 18 reported election officials or precinct board members on-site to close the locations, with ONME watchers reporting that one site in Hidalgo and one site in De Baca County each had only a single election worker present to close the polls. As a security safeguard, ONME recommends that election offices ensure that a minimum of two election officials should be present at the close of polls for every voting location so that ballots are never handled without oversight from at least one other individual.

ONME watchers witnessed the precinct board complete and sign an election certificate for the voting location in 84% of locations observed.

In 100% of voting locations observed, ONME's watchers reported that no individuals other than the election officials handled the ballots at any time during the closing process.

In 85% of locations observed, ONME watchers saw members of the precinct board certify a copy of the signature roster or a printout from the electronic pollbooks used during voting.

In 91% of locations observed, ONME watchers saw the precinct board members reconcile the number of voters checked in at the voting location throughout the day against the number of ballots cast.

Democratic Party poll watchers were present during the closing of the voting location in 6% of locations observed: in locations in Bernalillo, Otero and Sandoval counties. ONME did not report the presence of any Libertarian Party poll watchers during the closing of voting locations. Republican Party poll watchers were present during the closing of the voting location in 14% of locations observed: in locations in Bernalillo, Eddy, Grant, Luna, Otero, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties. One party poll watcher representing a minor political party was reported during the closing of one location in Sandoval County. Members of the media were present during the closing of one location in Santa Fe County and one location in Sandoval County. An independent election observer from the University of New Mexico was reported at one location in Sandoval County. None of the observers or watchers present posed any challenges or objections to the manner in which the voting locations were closed.

#### *Overall Voting Environment*

Overall, the early voting environment was uneventful and well conducted. Neither ONME's watchers - nor any of the other political party poll watchers nor academic observers - present raised public objections to the conduct of any of processes that they witnessed. At no point during their observation of the early voting process did ONME's own watchers raise concerns about any acts of deliberate fraud, manipulation or electoral malfeasance.

Observers reported that, generally, election officials dealt with unanticipated challenges and worked hard to ensure a positive experience for voters. In the illustrative words of several of the observers, *"The day went very smoothly. The presiding judge was very accommodating and helpful," "I believe I know why New Mexico is top rated," "Election officials were able to assist [sic] all voter questions quickly. Overall the early voting process was properly run," and "This was a very experienced Board!... Totally professional."*

The sole report from ONME watchers of an early voting process that was significantly disrupted came from a voting location in Eddy County that experienced a problem with the main electrical outlet for the election equipment. According to the ONME watcher, voting was paused in this location between 9:20 AM and 10:05 AM while the issue was addressed and then resumed.

Only one notable instance of potential electoral violence was reported by ONME watchers during the early voting period. In a voting location in Bernalillo County, the presiding judge heard reports that an individual in the parking lot was harassing voters. ONME's watcher reported that security from a nearby shopping mall handcuffed the individual and an ambulance and hazmat truck were

also on-scene to assist. A county representative told the ONME watcher that someone had flashed a gun, that local police were called but had not arrived, and that the individual who had been intimidating voters would be banned from the property.

ONME watchers reported only one significant instance of election worker harassment or intimidation during the course of their observation. In one location in Cibola County, a voter responded negatively to an election official who told them that they could not stand behind the table where the precinct board was working.

ONME's watchers also reported isolated instances of electioneering by voters, although these did not significantly disrupt the process. For example, at one voting location in San Juan County, the ONME watcher reported that multiple voters came to vote wearing candidate gear and two yelled out the candidate's name while they were casting their ballots. At one voting location in Eddy County, a woman arrived wearing political party gear and was asked to leave the voting location. An election official, accompanied by the voter's husband, brought a ballot to her outside the voting location so that she could mark her choices. Her husband and the election official then jointly brought the ballot back inside. In Hidalgo County, one voter asked another voter who came in whether they planned to vote for a particular candidate.

#### *Success of Observation as a Civic Education Initiative*

97% of ONME's election watchers who mobilized during early voting observation (88 out of 91) reported that they had a better understanding of the election process in New Mexico as a result of having participated in the observation activity.

## Election Day Observation

On November 5, 2024, Observe New Mexico Elections mobilized 160 watchers in 29 of 33 counties throughout the state. ONME watchers remained stationary in their voting locations throughout the day, watching the process from start to finish in just under one-third of all voting locations in the state. Observers were distributed as follows:

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of Locations Observed</b>
Bernalillo County	20
Catron County	2
Chaves County	1
Cibola County	5
Curry County	2
De Baca County	1
Doña Ana County	16
Eddy County	3

Grant County	3
Hidalgo County	3
Lea County	2
Los Alamos County	2
Luna County	2
McKinley County	13
Mora County	2
Otero County	6
Quay County	1
Rio Arriba County	6
Roosevelt County	3
San Juan County	7
San Miguel County	6
Sandoval County	10
Santa Fe County	22
Sierra County	4
Socorro County	3
Taos County	8
Torrance County	1
Union County	4
Valencia County	2
<b>TOTAL: 160 Election Day voting locations observed in 29 counties</b>	

ONME's Election Day observations generally reflect a transparent and well-organized process with robust oversight provided by Democratic and Republican political party poll watchers, media and a range of other nonpartisan actors. A record number of individuals across the state took advantage of same day voter registration or the opportunity to make same day updates to their voter registration records, overwhelming the state's registration system and contributing to long lines for same day registration in a number of counties throughout the state. Poll workers proactively sought to address the situation. ONME's watchers reported that in some instances poll workers redirected voters to other voting locations with shorter lines, issued provisional ballots, or collected phone numbers and called voters when they neared the front of the ad hoc line. Nevertheless, a number of ONME watchers reported voters leaving the line to vote: potentially to vote at another location or to return at a later date. Although a significant number of voting locations still had lines at the time the polls closed, ONME watchers reported that all voters in line at the time the polls closed in the locations where they observed were ultimately able to cast a ballot.

As during early voting, ONME's watchers were again unable to validate that written and oral translation services into Native languages were provided in all jurisdictions that are covered as minority language jurisdictions under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act. All other issues reported were minor and isolated and reflect the realities of organizing elections in a vast rural state. Overall, ONME watchers validated that election workers across the state broadly complied with appropriate electoral guidelines and organized a credible election.

ONME recommends for future election cycles that the state ensure robust stress testing of same day voter registration software and work closely with county clerks to ensure appropriate levels of equipment and staffing to accommodate the significant numbers of individuals who can be anticipated to undergo same day registration. ONME also recommends, as during early voting, that the state and county clerks make provisions for trained translators who have experience with elections terminology in a manner that will be easily visible to voters and compliant with federal requirements.

### *Opening*

ONME's watchers found that the opening of voting locations was orderly and timely.

Polls across the state opened on time on November 5 with all voting locations observed open by 7:15 a.m. 96% of ONME observers reported that voting locations were open by the official opening time of 7:00 a.m. At one location in Doña Ana County, two locations in McKinley County, one location in Rio Arriba County, one location in Santa Fe County and one location in Taos County, ONME watchers reported that polls opened with minimal delays; after 7:00 a.m. but on or before 7:15 a.m.

All voting locations observed had at least two precinct board members present at the time they opened, with a majority having between three and nine. The greatest number of precinct board members observed in a voting location at the time of opening was 21 board members at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds.

ONME watchers in 64% of locations observed witnessed election workers verifying the protective counters on all tabulation equipment in use at that location to confirm that the number of lifetime votes cast as displayed on the counter matched the number recorded on the certificate prepared for the machine at the time it was sealed. This important security measure helps to ensure that voting equipment was not tampered with since the time that it was tested and sealed. In 35% of locations observed, ONME watchers either did not respond to the question or noted that they did not have sufficient access to observe to be able to report. Only two ONME watchers, one at a voting location in Bernalillo County and another at a voting location in Otero County, reported that election officials did not carry out this security measure.

The opening of voting locations was robustly observed by a variety of different actors. Democratic Party poll watchers were present during opening at 32% of locations observed and were reported

at voting locations in Bernalillo, Chaves, Cibola, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley, Otero, Quay, Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos, Tarrant and Valencia counties. Libertarian Party poll watchers were reported at one voting location in Rio Arriba County. Republican Party poll watchers were present during opening at 26% of locations observed and were reported at voting locations in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley, Otero, Quay, Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Tarrant, Union and Valencia counties. Party poll watchers from the Green Party were reported at one voting location in Eddy County. ONME watchers also reported the presence of observers or watchers with the University of New Mexico, Common Cause, League of Women Voters and election protection efforts in some voting locations.

### *Set Up*

Overall, ONME's findings about the set-up of voting locations on Election Day are consistent with the findings from its early voting observation. ONME watchers reported that the voting locations where they observed were generally well set up in a way that made required information easily visible to members of the public and with all necessary materials present. However, ONME was again unable to validate that election information was properly posted and available in Native languages covered under Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act in the eight counties that are federally obligated to make election materials available in Native languages. In addition, ONME again recommends that counties review their procedures for posting information about provisional ballots, spoiling and replacing ballots, and sample ballots so that this information is more easily visible to voters. ONME watchers also reported seeing limited guidance on how to access and use the accessible voting system. In addition, ONME watchers reported that a few voting locations were unable to provide provisional ballots. Although it may have been possible to produce provisional ballots using ballot-on-demand printers, in at least one instance the presiding judge did not seem to be aware of this possibility, suggesting a need for clearer guidance to county clerks and to election judges about how provisional ballots are to be used in conjunction with a same day voter registration process.

All voting locations observed had at least one voter check-in station, with most having between one and six. All voting locations observed also had at least one voting station, with most voting locations having between one and 12. Of the voting locations observed on Election Day, 75% had a secure ballot drop box where voters could deposit their absentee ballots. In 89% of voting locations with a secure ballot drop box, ONME watchers reported that the drop box was inside the voting location, while the drop box was outside in the remaining 11% of locations.

96% of ONME watchers reported that voting stations in the locations where they observed were arranged in a manner that ensured the secrecy of the ballot. Watchers at seven sites expressed concerns that the voting location layout could compromise secrecy of the ballot: at one location in Doña Ana County, one location in Lea County, one location in Luna County, one location in

Roosevelt County and three locations in Taos County. In Luna County, for example, the ONME watcher reported that one table was set up to accommodate multiple voters without privacy screens. In Doña Ana County, the ONME watcher noted that a small number of voters completed their ballots at a table without privacy screens but that additional voting stations with privacy screens were added to the voting location later in the day. Although these were isolated incidents that do not suggest a concerning overall trend, election officials in Taos County in particular may wish to review their protocols for the set-up of voting locations to ensure that secrecy of the ballot is consistently preserved for future elections.

94% of voting locations observed had an electronic pollbook while 11% of locations observed had a paper signature roster (some locations had both). No ONME watchers reported that regular ballots were unavailable at their locations at the time the location opened. However, 4% of ONME watchers reported that the voting locations where they observed were unable to provide provisional ballots. The lack of provisional ballots was reported at seven voting locations: one in Lea County, one in Los Alamos County, one in Otero County, one in Sandoval County, one in Santa Fe County, one in Sierra County and one in Taos County. Concerningly, a presiding Judge at the location in Sandoval County reportedly told the ONME watcher that the location could not provide provisional ballots because, "*We have a Same Day Registration station, which makes voting with provisional ballot [sic] obsolete.*" At one location in Santa Fe County, ONME's watcher reported that the presiding judge attempted to provide provisional ballots to voters who were experiencing long lines for same day voter registration but concluded that the location had not been provided with any means of producing a provisional ballot.

Provisional ballots are intended as a fail-safe mechanism for voters whose eligibility to vote is uncertain. Provisional ballots should be offered, for example, to voters who may have already cast a ballot in the election. They could also have been provided to voters when the state began to experience delays with the same day voter registration system. The existence of a same day registration system does not eliminate the need for voting locations to be prepared to provide provisional ballots. ONME recommends that the secretary of state's office provide clear guidance to county election offices in future elections about how provisional ballots should be used in conjunction with same day voter registration.

85% of ONME watchers reported that their voting location had a visible accessible voting system at the time the location opened. At 24 locations, ONME watchers could not identify an accessible voting system when the voting location opened: at two sites in Bernalillo, two sites in Cibola, eight sites in Doña Ana, one site in Eddy, two sites in Hidalgo, two sites in McKinley, one site in Rio Arriba, one site in Roosevelt, one site in San Miguel, one site in Santa Fe, one site in Sierra and one site in Taos counties. This finding suggests a need for election officials to review their training protocols for use of accessible voting systems, particularly in Doña Ana County where this similarly emerged as a potential issue during early voting. In 96% of locations where the ONME

watcher could identify an accessible voting system, the system was set up when polls opened and in 94% of these locations the accessible voting system was turned on.

Only 61% of ONME watchers in locations with a visible accessible voting system reported that election workers ran test ballots through the system before opening the polls to confirm that it was working. This is not a required practice under federal or state statute, but election officials who do not currently incorporate such testing into their practices may wish to consider it as an added assurance that all election equipment is functioning as expected before it is put into service. In addition, only 62% of ONME watchers reported that their voting locations had visible posted instructions about how to use the accessible voting system. In Chaves, Cibola, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Mora, Roosevelt, Sierra, and Taos counties ONME watchers were unable to identify instructions about using the accessible voting system in half or more of the voting locations that they observed. This may suggest a need for these counties to review their procedures for posting information about using the accessible voting system, although in some of these counties ONME watchers were only present in a small percentage of the county's total voting locations.

ONME watchers reported that 97% of voting locations had clearly posted instructions about how to cast a valid vote. 88% of ONME watchers reported that the voting location where they observed had clearly posted information about the hours during which it would be open for voting. Nine of the 19 locations where ONME watchers reported that they were unable to identify clearly posted information about the hours that the locations would be open for voting were in Santa Fe County. Election officials in this county in particular may wish to review standard operating procedures for posting information about voting hours to ensure that it is clearly visible to voters.

85% of voting locations observed had posted information about how to contact state or federal officials in the event that a voter's rights were violated. In addition, ONME watchers in 84% of voting locations observed reported seeing a notice with information about state and federal laws prohibiting fraud and misrepresentation. Although ONME watchers observed in only three locations in Hidalgo County and in only one location in Torrance County, they did not report seeing notices prohibiting fraud and misrepresentation in any of the locations where they observed in either county. This may suggest a need for election officials in these counties to review their protocols for voting location layout to ensure that this information is more easily visible to the public.

ONME's findings indicate that there are some areas where standard procedures for posting public information in voting locations could be improved. ONME watchers reported that 79% of voting locations where they observed had instructions posted at each voting station about how to prepare a ballot; they were unable to verify whether such instructions were present in an additional 4% of locations observed. Watchers were unable to identify posted instructions at each voting station in three quarters of the locations observed in Sierra County, more than half of the locations observed in Taos and Cibola counties, and nearly half of the locations observed in



Bernalillo County. This suggests that these counties in particular may wish to review their standard operating procedures for laying out election day voting locations to ensure that instructions about proper ballot preparation are easily visible in each voting station.

In addition, only 75% of ONME watchers identified posted instructions about how to request a new ballot if a voter made a mistake and had to spoil their ballot (a figure consistent with early voting reports). Similarly, and in line with ONME's early voting findings, in only 71% of voting locations observed were watchers able to identify posted instructions on voters' rights to cast a provisional ballot and instructions for how to do so. This was a challenge in limited numbers of voting locations across the state. However, in Santa Fe County, in particular, ONME watchers were unable to identify such instructions in seven out of 22 sites observed, while in Sandoval County ONME watchers were unable to identify such instructions in four of 10 sites observed. In addition, ONME watchers could not identify such instructions in either of the two sites observed in Luna County; in the only site observed in Chaves County; nor in two out of three sites observed in Hidalgo, Roosevelt and Union counties. When paired with early voting findings, this suggests that Santa Fe and Sandoval counties – as well as possibly the counties where ONME's presence was more limited – may wish to review protocols for posting information about provisional ballots to ensure it is more easily visible to voters.

Only 73% of ONME watchers identified a publicly posted sample ballot or ballots at the locations where they observed. Although ONME watchers during early voting were informed that sample ballots could be printed on demand in some voting locations, election judges on Election Day may not have been universally aware of this possibility. At one location in Doña Ana County, for example, ONME's watcher reported that a Spanish speaking voter came to request a sample ballot near the end of the day. The presiding judge was unable to find any sample ballots at the location. The prospective voter ultimately left the location and said that she would return to vote later with her husband; ONME's watcher did not see her return. In counties with a large number of potential ballot styles, ONME appreciates that it may not be physically possible to post a sample of every ballot style on the wall. One possible solution might be to post QR codes that would allow voters with smart phones to view every potential sample ballot for the location, as witnessed during early voting in Eddy County where one location had posted a QR code linked to a voter guide.

ONME watchers reported that 90% of voting locations observed had posted information and instructions about voting in Spanish. Under state election guidelines, all election materials should be available in both English in Spanish in line with **Article 1-2-3. Secretary of state; instructions; forms; certificates** of the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition. ONME watchers at three locations in Bernalillo County, one location in Cibola County, one location in Eddy County, one location in Hidalgo County, seven locations in McKinley County, one location in Santa Fe County, one location in Tarrant County, and one location in Valencia County reported that they were unable to see posted electoral information in Spanish. In addition to the state

requirements, every voting location in Bernalillo and Hidalgo counties should have posted electoral information in Spanish in line with the federal Voting Rights Act. ONME recommends that election officials review their practices for posting electoral materials and information in Spanish, particularly in these two counties, to ensure that it is easily visible to voters.

According to ONME watchers, seven locations observed – three in McKinley County, two in Bernalillo County, one in Cibola County, and one in San Juan County – had posted information and instructions about voting in Diné / Navajo. Two locations observed had posted information and instructions about voting in Zuni: one location in Bernalillo County and one location in McKinley County. In addition, one location observed in Bernalillo County had posted information and instructions about voting in Ute. Under the federal Voting Rights Act, eight counties are required to provide electoral information in Native languages. All voting locations in Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, San Juan and Socorro counties are required to provide electoral information in Diné / Navajo. Catron, Cibola and McKinley counties are required to provide electoral information in appropriate Pueblo languages. San Juan County is required to provide information in Ute. ONME’s findings suggest a need for state and county election officials to review practices for posting electoral information in Native languages to ensure that such information is easily visible to voters and in compliance with federal guidelines.

#### *Midday Reports from ONME Watchers*

As of midday on Election Day, ONME’s watchers reported a voting process that was largely smooth and well conducted. However, a significant percentage of voting locations observed across the state reported ongoing challenges related to periodic latency and unavailability of the state’s same day voter registration system. While this did not impede the voting process for voters who were already registered to vote, ONME watchers across the state reported lengthy lines (estimated as being more than several hours long in some instances) for voters wishing to undergo same day voter registration or a same day update to their voter registration status. In a hearing on November 11, 2024, the Secretary of State’s office addressed the issue, noting that an unprecedented number of voters had made use of same day voter registration, which overwhelmed the server for the registration system. By the time the state added additional server space to enable the software to run more smoothly, many voting locations already had a significant backlog of voters waiting for same day registration.<sup>14</sup>

As of 12:30 p.m., ONME watchers in 90% of voting locations reported that their locations had sufficient staff and equipment to ensure a smooth and orderly voting process. Similarly, ONME

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<sup>14</sup> Lohmann, P. (2024, November 13). *New Mexico’s top election official: “Overwhelmed” same-day voter registration system caused delays*. Source New Mexico. <https://sourcenm.com/2024/11/13/new-mexicos-top-election-official-overwhelmed-same-day-voter-registration-system-caused-delays/?emci=ec7a9c26-1da2-ef11-88d0-6045bdd62db6&emdi=b3a6ec1e-99a2-ef11-88d0-6045bdd62db6&ceid=597669>

watchers in 90% of voting locations reported that there had been no significant equipment malfunctions that could not be repaired or otherwise addressed.

However, as of 12:30 p.m., ONME watchers in 25% of voting locations observed reported that they had significant concerns about issues that had occurred in the voting location. In 19% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers reported a significant concern related to the same day voter registration system being intermittently unavailable or experiencing latency. Watchers reported a range of negative effects resulting from the same day voter registration challenges, from voters opting to leave the line to vote to voters waiting in line for same day voter registration for extended periods of time, which – in some instances – contributed to overcrowding in the voting locations. Several watchers noted that their voting locations seemed understaffed and underprepared for the volume of individuals seeking same day voter registration. Nevertheless, they reported that election officials adopted a range of approaches to address the issue, which included calling technicians, issuing provisional ballots, taking down voter names and phone numbers and calling voters when they were near the front of the ad hoc line, and providing voters with instructions about where to vote at alternate sites with shorter lines.

Although the issues affected voting locations where ONME watchers were present throughout the state, with reports coming from 14 of 29 counties where ONME watchers observed, watcher findings suggest that voters in Bernalillo, Roosevelt, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties may have been particularly affected. Going forward, state and county election officials should anticipate that significant numbers of voters may make use of the same day voter registration process. At the state level, same day voter registration software should undergo rigorous stress testing before Election Day to ensure that it can accommodate a high volume of simultaneous requests. At the county level, clerks should consider incorporating a module on how to address wait times for same day voter registration into their poll worker training curriculum and should ensure that there is adequate staff at each voting location to ensure efficient processing of these voters.

The table below provides a summary of where ONME received reports of challenges related to the same day voter registration system as of 12:30 p.m. on November 5, 2024.

<b><i>Distribution of ONME Observers Reporting Challenges Related to the Same Day Voter Registration System on Election Day (November 5, 2024)</i></b>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Challenges with Same Day Registration Reported (Out of 157 Total Reports Received / Voting Locations Observed)</b>	<b>Effect on Voting Process As of 12:30 pm</b>
Bernalillo County	9 of 20 voting locations	Substantially resolved in one location by 12:30 pm;

		Ongoing concern in eight locations as of 12:30 pm
Curry County	1 of 2 voting locations	Substantially resolved by 12:30 pm
Doña Ana County	1 of 16 voting locations	Substantially resolved by 12:30 pm
Eddy County	1 of 3 voting locations	Substantially resolved by 12:30 pm
McKinley County	1 of 13 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
Otero County	1 of 6 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
Rio Arriba County	1 of 6 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
Roosevelt County	2 of 3 voting locations	Ongoing concern in both locations as of 12:30 pm
San Juan County	1 of 7 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
San Miguel County	1 of 6 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
Sandoval County	4 of 10 voting locations	Ongoing concern in all locations as of 12:30 pm
Santa Fe County	6 of 22 voting locations	Ongoing concern in all locations as of 12:30 pm
Sierra County	1 of 4 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm
Union County	1 of 4 voting locations	Ongoing concern as of 12:30 pm

Other concerns raised in the midday reports from ONME watchers were minimal and isolated. These included a report of a ballot-on-demand printer in McKinley County malfunctioning and inadvertently spoiling voters' ballots, a report of a ballot-on-demand printer in Sierra County that had broken down and not yet been repaired, a report of an electronic pollbook that ceased to function for approximately 30 minutes in Santa Fe County, a concern with polling place layout that may have compromised secrecy of the ballot but was ultimately addressed in Santa Fe County, and a concern about a voting location in McKinley County where the ONME watcher judged that poll workers seemed short-staffed and insufficiently trained on how to manage the voting process.

In addition, ONME watchers reported two minor concerns related to their interactions with political party challengers in Santa Fe County. One challenger attempted to make the ONME watcher leave the voting location and left them feeling intimidated. After speaking with the presiding judge and reconfirming their eligibility to observe, ONME's watcher ultimately remained in the location and had no further issues. A second challenger showed the ONME watcher that they had a document with personally identifiable information for all of the poll workers in the voting location, which the ONME watcher judged could have been used in an intimidating or harassing manner.

### *Voting Process*

ONME's findings indicate that the voting process on Election Day was well conducted overall, although lines for same day registration persisted throughout the day. Lines were reported even as polls closed at a number of locations. In part, this may be attributed to challenges experienced with the registration system earlier in the day. ONME's watchers reported that every individual in line to vote at the time the polls closed was ultimately afforded an opportunity to cast a ballot. In some instances, this meant that New Mexico's dedicated poll workers continued working late into the night to ensure that all eligible voters could vote.

ONME watchers reported that election officials in 100% of the observed locations verified each voter's name and registration details against the paper register of voters or the electronic pollbook before allowing the voter to vote.

In only 44% of observed locations did election officials read every voter's name out loud after verifying their identity: a figure slightly higher but in line with findings during early voting.

ONME watchers reported 10 instances of election officials inappropriately requesting voter identification from voters (e.g. from individuals who were already registered to vote): at three locations in McKinley County, at two locations each in Doña Ana and San Juan counties; and at one location each in Cibola, Mora and Taos counties. In McKinley County, for example, one of the ONME watchers specified that a poll worker asked every voter to provide a driver's license. These counties, in particular, may wish to review their procedures for training poll workers on voter identification to ensure that there is a clear understanding of when it may and may not be required.

99% of voting locations observed had individuals requesting same day voter registration or a same day update to their registration record; in 73% of all locations observed, ONME watchers reported that 20 or more individuals requested same day voter registration or voter registration updates throughout the day. In 97% of these locations, ONME watchers reported that every individual requesting same day registration or a voter registration update presented appropriate photo identification. In two locations in San Miguel County and in one location each in Los Alamos and San Juan counties, ONME watchers reported that a limited number of voters underwent same day

registration without providing appropriate identification. In one of these locations, the ONME watcher specified that election officials started issuing provisional ballots to all voters undergoing same day registration to try to address the problem of long lines. This practice would mean that any individuals who did not provide appropriate identification at the time they registered would have to provide identification to the county clerk's office before their ballot could be counted. In 81% of voting locations where same day voter registration was requested, ONME watchers reported that all individuals requesting same-day-voter-registration or a same day update signed an affidavit under oath that they had not already voted in the election. In the remaining 19% of voting locations, ONME's watchers, who were trained to respect voters' privacy, may not have had sufficient access to verify that this stage in the process took place.

ONME watchers in 37% of observed voting locations reported that between one and five voters were turned away because they were not residents of the county and were registered voters in a different county. In 8% of voting locations - at three locations in Sandoval County; at two locations each in Bernalillo, Cibola and Eddy counties; and at one location each in McKinley, San Juan and Santa Fe counties - ONME watchers reported that between six and 10 voters were turned away from the location because they were not registered to vote in the county and did not reside there. ONME watchers reported that every voter who was in the wrong location to vote received appropriate information about where to vote, except in one location in Taos County where the watcher reported that between one and five observers in the wrong location were turned away and not provided appropriate information about where to vote. ONME watchers did not report any instances of individuals being turned away or prevented from voting because of a previous felony conviction (which would have contravened state statute).

ONME watchers in 99% of voting locations reported that every voter who requested to spoil their ballot received a replacement ballot from an election judge. In 99% of voting locations where spoiled ballots were issued, ONME watchers reported that the spoiled ballots were always clearly labelled as such and retained separately by the election judges.

In 99% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers reported that every voter voting a regular ballot placed their voted ballots in a precinct tabulator before exiting the voting location.

The precinct tabulators functioned correctly throughout the day in 95% of voting locations observed. Issues observed in eight locations – at two locations in Bernalillo County, two locations in McKinley County, two locations in San Miguel County, one location in Curry County, and one location in Los Alamos County – were generally minor and did not have a significant impact on the voting process. At one location in McKinley County, for example, the ONME watcher reported that a tabulator stopped accepting ballots for approximately ten minutes at the end of the day. After an election official cleaned the machine, it began to function again. In Curry County, the ONME watcher reported that a tabulator briefly jammed and a few voters waited while a technician

repaired the machine; however, the repair was ultimately successful and all voters cast their ballots.

ONME watchers reported that provisional ballots were cast in 53% of the locations that they observed and that in 100% of these locations the provisional ballots were always clearly identifiable as such and retained separately by the election judges.

Voters returned absentee ballots to 69% of the voting locations observed. In each of these locations, voters either handed their ballots to an election official or deposited them in a secure ballot drop box. In 97% of locations where absentee ballots were returned, ONME watchers reported that election officials stored all of the absentee ballots received in a separate marked container or envelope or in the secure ballot drop box.

Voters in 41% of voting locations observed requested some form of language accommodation throughout the day: either access to a translator or to be accompanied by an assistant of their choosing to vote. In most locations, fewer than ten individuals requested such assistance. However, ONME watchers reported that at two sites in Lea County; two sites in McKinley County; and one site each in Cibola, Doña Ana, Luna, San Juan and Santa Fe counties ten or more voters requested language assistance throughout the day. All voters requesting language assistance were able to receive it in 96% of locations observed. However, and concerningly, ONME watchers reported that at two sites in San Juan County as well as one site each in Cibola, Eddy, Sandoval and Santa Fe counties, some voters were unable to receive the assistance they requested.

In 75% of voting locations observed, at least one voter with disabilities requested that an assistant of their choosing or an election official assist them to vote. In 13% of all locations observed, ONME watchers reported that ten or more voters requested an assistant of their choosing to vote. In 99% of voting locations observed, all voters who requested such assistance were able to receive it.

In 60% of voting locations where voters requested an assistant to accompany them to vote, ONME watchers reported that all assistants were made to sign the signature roster or the electronic poll book alongside the name of the voter. State law prohibits certain categories of individuals from accompanying voters to vote – such as candidates in the election or the individual's employer or union representative. Asking assistants to sign the signature roster helps election officials to verify that only authorized individuals accompany the voters into the voting booth; this practice should be implemented in those jurisdictions where it is currently not consistently applied.

ONME watchers reported challenges to voter eligibility in only two voting locations observed: both in Santa Fe County. Only one of the challenges was unanimously upheld by the precinct board. In accordance with state law, ONME watchers reported that the individual whose eligibility was unsuccessfully challenged voted a regular ballot while the individual whose eligibility was challenged and upheld voted a provisional ballot.

95% of voting locations observed did not run out of any essential materials throughout the day.

In 33% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers reported that they saw or heard of voters leaving the line to vote at some point throughout the day because the wait had become too long. This issue can likely be attributed to challenges with the same day voter registration system. Based on responses from 149 watchers / voting locations, ONME noted this as an issue in 13 of 19 locations observed in Bernalillo County, eight of 15 locations observed in Doña Ana County, one of two locations observed in Eddy County, one of two locations observed in Los Alamos County, six of 13 locations observed in McKinley County, two of six locations observed in Otero County, two of six locations observed in Rio Arriba County, two of three locations observed in Roosevelt County, two of seven locations observed in San Juan County, four of 10 locations observed in Sandoval County, six of 20 locations observed in Santa Fe County, one of two locations observed in Socorro County and one of eight locations observed in Taos County. These voters may ultimately have been able to cast ballots elsewhere as ONME watchers also reported that election officials in some of the locations observed were actively redirecting voters to other voting locations with shorter lines. However, this finding also indicates a strong need for state and county election officials to learn from the record-high numbers of same day registrants in this election cycle and better prepare for the significant numbers of individuals who can be expected to make use of this avenue for voting in the future.

82% of ONME watchers reported that election officials had sufficient staff and equipment to ensure a smooth and orderly voting process throughout the day. Challenges reported primarily related to delays with the same day voter registration process. Two ONME watchers in McKinley County also reported issues with ballot-on-demand printers that were either misprinting and inadvertently spoiling ballots or were entirely unable to print ballots, noting that it took staff at these affected voting locations a significant period of time to successfully address the issues.

Political party poll watchers provided significant oversight of the voting process on Election Day, contributing to confidence in the fairness and integrity of the process. ONME watchers reported the presence of Democratic Party poll watchers at some point throughout the day in 40% of voting locations observed. They reported Libertarian Party poll watchers at some point throughout the day at two voting locations: one in Rio Arriba County and one in Valencia County. Republican Party poll watchers were observed at some point throughout the day in 44% of all voting locations observed. Party poll watchers with registered minor parties were reported at two voting locations: one in Bernalillo County and one in Eddy County.

The voting process was also robustly observed by a range of other nonpartisan actors. ONME watchers reported the presence of observers with the Department of Justice (both state and federal) in Bernalillo, Cibola, Curry, Rio Arriba and Sandoval counties. ONME watchers saw observers with Common Cause in Bernalillo, Doña Ana, and Sierra counties. Observers from the University of New Mexico were reported across Sandoval County, while observers with the League



of Women Voters were reported in Doña Ana County. International election observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe were reported in Santa Fe County, an observer with the American Civil Liberties Union was reported in Sierra County, and multiple observers associated with an unnamed nonpartisan election protection effort were reported in Santa Fe County. ONME saw members of the media at some point throughout the day in 11% of all voting locations observed. These efforts should give New Mexican voters confidence that a range of actors from throughout the state were mobilized to ensure the integrity of the election and the voting process.

### *Close of Polls*

ONME watchers reported that 87% of voting locations observed closed exactly at 7:00 p.m., in line with the state guidelines. An additional 8% of voting locations closed between one and 15 minutes after 7 p.m. Two locations – one in McKinley County and one in Sandoval County – were reported to have closed more than 15 minutes before 7:00 p.m. Two locations – one in McKinley County and one in Roosevelt County – were reported to have closed between one and 14 minutes before 7:00 p.m. Four locations – one in Doña Ana County, one in McKinley County, one in Sandoval County, and one in Valencia County – were reported to have closed 15 or more minutes after 7:00 p.m. An election judge verbally announced the close of polls in 88% of locations observed.

40% of locations observed still had a line to vote at the time polls closed. Based on reports from 143 ONME watchers, this included 12 of 16 locations observed in Bernalillo County, one of one location observed in Chaves County, nine of 14 locations observed in Doña Ana County, one of two locations observed in Eddy County, one of three locations observed in Grant County, one of two locations observed in Lea County, one of two locations observed in Luna County, six of 13 locations observed in McKinley County, four of six locations observed in Otero County, one of six locations observed in Rio Arriba County, two of three locations observed in Roosevelt County, four of seven locations observed in San Juan County, six of 10 locations observed in Sandoval County, seven of 19 locations observed in Santa Fe County, and one of seven locations observed in Taos County. ONME watchers reported that all individuals in line at the time the voting locations closed were provided with an opportunity to vote. Only in four voting locations did ONME watchers report that individuals who entered the line after 7:00 pm were permitted to vote in contravention of state guidelines: at one site each in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, San Juan and Taos counties. ONME watchers reported that between two and 16 election officials were present at every voting location during the closing of the voting location.

### *Counting and Reconciliation of Ballots; Preparation of Election Returns*

The counting of ballots and preparation of election returns in nearly every location where ONME watchers observed was transparent and open to observation by appointed watchers, challengers, observers or members of the media. The process was observed by a range of political party and nonpartisan actors, who helped to instill confidence and promote the integrity of the process.

Democratic Party poll watchers were present during the counting and reconciliation of ballots in 18% of locations observed. Libertarian Party poll watchers were present in one location in Valencia County. Republican Party poll watchers were present in 28% of voting locations observed. One poll watcher representing a minor registered party was present in Bernalillo County. In addition, media were observed in one location each in Doña Ana, Los Alamos and Valencia counties. Limited numbers of monitors from the League of Women Voters (in Doña Ana County), a nonpartisan election protection coalition (in Santa Fe County), the University of New Mexico (in Sandoval County) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (in Santa Fe County) were also observed during the closing and counting process. None of the observers, watchers or challengers present posed any public objections or challenges to the conduct of the ballot reconciliation or counting process.

In one instance in Santa Fe County, ONME's watcher was asked to leave the voting location during the ballot reconciliation and counting process and complied with this guidance. ONME contends that this was in contravention of **Article 1-2-29. Watchers and election observers; permissible activities** of the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition, which permits accredited watchers to remain in the voting locations until the precinct board completes all responsibilities after the close of polls. However, ONME attributes this issue to the novelty of nonpartisan election observation in the state of New Mexico and notes that election officials may not be universally familiar with the rights and responsibilities of watchers, challengers and observers under state guidelines.

ONME watchers across the state reported that election officials consistently adhered to state guidelines for closing polling locations. Although some observers may not have had sufficient access to validate every security procedure, their findings paint a picture of broad compliance with state practices designed to ensure a robust chain of custody for every ballot cast and an accurate ballot tabulation process. ONME's watchers did not raise any issues with the ballot reconciliation or counting process nor with the preparation of election returns. Detailed findings are as follows:

- 99% of ONME watchers reported that ballots at the locations where they observed were handled only by precinct board members during the closing, counting and reconciliation process.
- In 94% of locations observed, ONME watchers saw the precinct board members certify a copy of the signature roster or electronic pollbook for the voting location.
- In 97% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported seeing the precinct board members reconcile the number of voters checked in at the location throughout the day against the number of ballots cast.
- In 94% of locations observed, ONME watchers saw election judges remove all ballots from the precinct tabulators and place them in a ballot box.

- In 94% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that the ballot boxes were locked and sealed with a numbered seal.
- In 95% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that they saw precinct board members log all seal numbers used on ballot boxes or other containers for storing ballots.
- In 97% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that precinct board members printed copies of the election returns for all precinct tabulators in use at the location.
- In 94% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that they saw all members of the precinct board sign the printed election returns from the precinct tabulators.
- In 97% of locations observed, ONME watchers saw election officials place a copy of the checklist of registered voters for the location and a copy of the printed election returns from the precinct tabulator(s) in an envelope for the Secretary of State.
- In 98% of locations observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials placed the signature roster or a printout from the electronic pollbook, the other copy of the printed election returns from the precinct tabulator(s), and the tabulators' removable storage drives in a container for the county clerk.
- ONME watchers reported that provisional ballots were cast at 41% of locations observed. In 89% of locations where provisional ballots were cast, ONME watchers reported that they saw election officials retain the envelope containing provisional ballots outside of the ballot box of tabulated ballots.
- ONME watchers reported that absentee ballots were cast at 70% of voting locations observed. In 89% of locations where absentee ballots were cast, ONME watchers reported that they saw election officials retain the envelope or container with absentee ballots outside of the ballot box of tabulated ballots.
- ONME watchers reported that in 30% of locations observed there were some ballots that could not be tabulated by the precinct tabulators. In 89% of such locations, ONME watchers reported that they saw election officials retain these ballots in a separate envelope outside of the ballot box of tabulated ballots.
- In 92% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers saw election judges prepare and sign a certificate of election for the voting location.
- In 100% of voting locations observed, ONME watchers saw election officials prepare the ballot box, all envelopes of ballots and any election materials that had not been destroyed for transmission to the county clerk.
- 88% of ONME watchers reported that election officials posted a public copy of the printed election returns from the precinct tabulator(s) in use at the location outside of the voting location, bolstering transparency of the results process.

- 97% of ONME watchers reported that they saw the presiding judge or a designated special messenger take custody of the ballot box(es) and other materials for delivery to the county clerk.

### *Overall Election Environment*

Harassment of election officials was observed in only 7% of voting locations where ONME was present. In Bernalillo County, for example, a voter attempted to pull the ballot out of the printer while it was still printing, causing the ballot to be spoiled. The voter then accused the poll worker of tampering with the ballot. The poll worker spoiled the first ballot according to regulations and printed another ballot for the voter. In Santa Fe County, a poll worker informed the ONME watcher that a voter had harassed the presiding judge and called her vulgar names before exiting the location.

ONME watchers reported only two incidents of potential violence or intimidation within 100 feet of the voting location. In Grant County, an ONME observer reported that a voting machine technician was seen wearing a holstered gun. The presiding judge asked the technician to exit the building immediately and return without the gun. In Sandoval County, a voter openly carried a firearm in a holster under her arm. At check-in, the ONME observer heard her inform the poll worker that she was a “special agent.” The voter was permitted to wear the firearm during the entire voting process. The presiding judge was otherwise occupied and was not informed of the situation. Neither of these issues significantly affected the voting process.

ONME watchers witnessed instances of electioneering in Bernalillo, Catron, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Roosevelt, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra and Union counties. Examples included wearing stickers or clothing promoting a candidate or shouting candidates’ names from inside the polling location. According to ONME watchers, election officials noticed almost all instances in which clothing with a candidate’s name was worn inside the polling locations and asked voters to remove the clothing prior to voting. The majority of voters peacefully complied. In Union County, a poll worker asked a voter to remove a candidate flag from their vehicle.

Watchers identified voting process disruptions, unrelated to same-day registration issues, in nine counties observed on Election Day (Bernalillo, Cibola, Curry, Doña Ana, Grant, McKinley, Mora, Sandoval and Santa Fe). These disruptions generally involved minor technical issues that were quickly rectified, including a printer jam that was repaired within 20 minutes and ballot-on-demand printers that ceased functioning for approximately five minutes. A fire alarm went off in a Sandoval County polling location – there was no fire – and voting resumed in less than 25 minutes. A power outage at a Mora polling location was restored by 7:00 a.m. In one polling place, a voter fainted and was taken to the emergency room. A Bernalillo County voter who had neglected to

update his address was initially very disruptive when he thought he had been given the wrong ballot. Once he understood the situation, he composed himself and voted successfully.

Few instances of interference or attempted influence over the election process were reported by ONME observers. In just two counties observed (McKinley and San Juan), observers reported potential attempts to exert such influence. In McKinley County, an ONME observer saw a voter's younger assistant filling in the ballot with very little conversation taking place with the voter. Also in McKinley County, a voter encouraged the entire room to vote for a specific presidential candidate. In San Juan County, an ONME observer witnessed the election official working the tabulator ask a voter, "Are you sure you wanted to vote for those people?"

#### *Success of Observation as a Civic Education Initiative*

95% of ONME observers who responded to the question (141 out of 149) felt that they better understood the election process in New Mexico as a result of having observed.

## Certification of Results

Between November 12 and 18, 2024, Observe New Mexico Elections watchers attended 24 county meetings at which county canvassing boards convened to review the election results for the county and voted to certify them. Through certification, the boards attested that their results constituted a complete and accurate accounting of votes canvassed in the county and could be transmitted to the secretary of state's office. ONME watched the certification of results in 24 counties: Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Lea, Los Alamos, Luna, McKinley, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos and Valencia.

Certification meetings across the state took place in a calm and orderly environment and all results from all counties observed were ultimately certified. According to the Election Handbook of the State of New Mexico, 2023 edition, members of a county canvassing board may delay certification and may instead issue a summons to the relevant precinct board if they have reason to believe that the election returns are missing for any precinct; that results were not accompanied by a properly executed certificate of results; that there was a discrepancy with the election results; or that there were errors, omissions or ambiguities with the election results. In such instances, the office of the Secretary of State must also be notified, and that office shall transmit a copy of the potentially defective returns to the county canvassing board on the basis of the copies that they received on election night. If it seems that defective returns can only be corrected through a recheck of the voting machines used in the election, the county canvassing board will notify the district court and proceed with a recheck.

In all certification meetings save one, ONME watchers reported that the canvassing board members unanimously certified the results with no concerns raised. In Sandoval County, one

commissioner raised a concern about certifying the results based on a report from the Chief Deputy County Clerk that an election judge in one voting location had removed the media storage device from a tabulator before the machine completely shut down on election night. This corrupted the data on the storage device and prevented a comparison between the paper printed returns and the electronic returns. The Deputy County Clerk explained that a backup device was later retrieved from the tabulator, a comparison made between the paper and electronic returns stored on the backup memory storage device, and that the results matched. Because that comparison occurred after Election Day, however, the commissioner voted against certifying the results. The other five members of the canvassing board voted in favor of certifying and the results were ultimately certified.

ONME watchers reported that members of the media were present to cover certification in De Baca, Eddy, Luna, San Juan, Sandoval, Socorro and Taos counties. Republican Party poll watchers were reported in Catron, McKinley and Valencia counties while Democratic Party poll watchers were reported in McKinley and Valencia counties. In a number of instances, ONME watchers reported that they had insufficient information about the affiliations of other attendees to note whether political party poll watchers were present. None of the political party poll watchers present nor other members of the public raised any objections to the conduct of the certification meetings nor to the certification of the results. In all locations observed, the certification of results proceeded smoothly, without any reported disruptions or any instances of harassment, influence or attempted coercion of the county canvassing board members.

In 20 of the 24 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that copies of the election returns were made available to members of the public who attended the certification meetings so that it was possible to understand the results that were being certified. In Bernalillo, Catron, Grant and San Juan counties, ONME watchers reported that they were not able to view a copy of the election returns to be certified. ONME recommends that all counties make such returns available in future certification meetings as a public transparency effort.

## Appendix 1: Detailed Findings from ONME’s Observation of Logic and Accuracy Testing

- In 18 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers witnessed election officials print zero reports for all tabulators prior to beginning testing. In Curry County, the ONME watcher was provided with copies of the zero reports to inspect after testing had concluded. In Eddy County, the ONME watcher reported that machines had already been zeroed out by the time they arrived, but they could see zeros on the screens.
- In all four counties where political party poll watchers were present (Doña Ana, Grant, Otero and Taos counties), ONME watchers reported that political party observers were allowed to inspect and confirm the zero reports.
- In 20 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials used a test deck of ballots to test the tabulators.
- In 19 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that the test deck included ballots that were blank or under-voted. The ONME watcher in Catron County was unable to respond to the question.
- In 17 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that the test deck of ballots included test ballots that were over-voted. The ONME watcher in Santa Fe reported that the test deck did not include over-voted ballots. ONME watchers in Curry County and Otero County were unable to respond to the question.
- In 18 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials tested all ballot styles that would be in use in the county during the general election. The ONME watcher in Santa Fe reported that the test deck did not include all ballot styles to be used in the county. In Eddy County, the ONME watcher was unable to respond to the question.
- ONME watchers reported that additional non-standard ballots were included in the test decks of 11 out of the 20 counties observed.<sup>15</sup> Depending on the location, these included ballots with stray and errant marks, ballots that had been completed with different colored pens, ballots marked as spoiled, and ballots that were missing timing marks.
- In 13 counties, ONME watchers reported that election officials tested the outstacking functionality of tabulation equipment, meaning its ability to automatically sort or set aside ballots that require human adjudication, such as ballots with write-in candidates or ballot where the voter intent is not clear. It is difficult for third party observers to determine whether outstacking is taking place on an ImageCast Central tabulator as the scanned ballot images are sorted into separate files on a central system rather than the physical ballots themselves being sorted. It is likely that the actual number of locations where such testing took place is higher than what ONME’s watchers reported.

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<sup>15</sup> Bernalillo, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Mora, San Juan, San Miguel, Taos, Torrance and Valencia counties.

- In 18 out of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials secured and retained the test ballots after the testing process concluded so that there would be no possibility of later mistaking them for live ballots. In Valencia County, the ONME watcher reported that they did not see the election officials secure and retain the ballots. In Catron County, the ONME watcher was unable to respond to the question.
- In all 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials generated summary reports at the end of testing the tabulation equipment.
- In three of the four counties where political party poll watchers were present (Grant, Otero and Taos counties), ONME watchers reported that all of the poll watchers verified that the summary report matched the expected results from the test deck. In Doña Ana County, political party poll watchers were present, but the ONME watcher did not report that they were invited to verify the summary report. In future election cycles, this is a good practice for election officials to adopt to increase transparency of testing for political party representatives and enhance party confidence in the process of testing election equipment.
- ONME watchers reported unexpected errors with the testing process in six of 20 counties observed:
  - In Bernalillo County, human operator error caused several tabulators to jam.
  - In Hidalgo County, one of the spare tabulators could not be properly zeroed out. Ultimately, the machine was not certified for use during the election.
  - In San Juan County, election officials reported that two ballot marking devices had failed to function correctly during testing that took place on the previous day. The screen for one machine would not turn on while the screen for a second machine was too pixelated to read.
  - In Socorro County, the ballot marking device and printer associated with one of the voting systems would not function correctly. The county election technician called a representative from the vendor Dominion to assist, but the problem was unable to be resolved.
  - In Taos County, the initial count of a test deck of 132 ballots was off by one and yielded a count of 131 on one of the tabulators tested. The ballots were scanned a second time, and the tabulator produced an accurate count.
  - In Torrance County, the printers associated with multiple ballot marking devices were out of ink and the cartridges had to be changed before the printers could print ballots. The battery in another ballot marking device would not hold a charge during testing. The County Clerk replaced the battery but noted that if the machine continued to fail to hold a charge during further testing it would be removed from circulation.



- In 14 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that all equipment tested during the time that they were present ultimately passed logic and accuracy testing and was certified for use during the election. In Hidalgo County, a spare tabulator that could not be properly zeroed out was not certified for use in the election. In Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Roosevelt, Valencia and Taos counties, additional days of logic and accuracy testing took place after the time period when ONME’s watchers were present. As a result, ONME’s watchers did not witness the final certification of equipment.
- In 17 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials cleared the results of the tests from all tabulation equipment and reset each counter to zero at the end of testing. ONME watchers in Roosevelt and Valencia counties reported that they did not see election officials clear the results of testing from all equipment. In Valencia County, the ONME watcher specified that some machines were zeroed out, but that other machines intended for use in a mock election were not zeroed out. As noted above, all equipment tested in Roosevelt County during the time the ONME watcher was present was intended for use in a mock election. The ONME watcher in Otero County was unable to respond.
- In 15 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that all voting machines and/or accessible voting machines tested during the time they observed were immediately sealed with a metal seal after testing. In Bernalillo, Grant, Roosevelt and San Juan counties, observers reported that they did not see election officials immediately seal all equipment with a metal seal after testing.<sup>16</sup> In Curry County, the watcher was unable to respond to the question.
- In 16 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials recorded the metal seal numbers for each piece of equipment tested on the certificate for that machine. ONME watchers in Bernalillo, Grant, and Roosevelt counties did not see election officials record the metal seal numbers on a certificate.<sup>17</sup> In Curry County, the watcher was unable to respond to the question.
- In 13 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials recorded the reading showing on each voting machine’s protective lifetime counter on the certificate for the machine at the time it was sealed. In Bernalillo, Eddy, Hidalgo, Roosevelt, Socorro, and Valencia counties, ONME watchers did not see election officials record the reading from the protective counters on the voting machine certificates. The ONME watcher in Hidalgo County specified that there was a period during the testing process when this may have occurred, but they did not have a clear line of sight to personally verify whether it took place. In Curry County, the watcher was unable to respond to the question.

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<sup>16</sup> As noted above, equipment in Roosevelt County was only being tested ahead of a mock election.

<sup>17</sup> As noted above, equipment in Roosevelt County was only being tested ahead of a mock election.

- In 16 of 20 counties observed, ONME watchers reported that election officials sealed and retained the printouts from the logic and accuracy tests during the period that they observed. ONME watchers in Bernalillo, Hidalgo, Roosevelt and Valencia counties did not see the sealing and retention of logic and accuracy test printouts.<sup>18</sup> The ONME watcher in Hidalgo County specified that there was a period during the testing process when this may have occurred, but they did not have a clear line of sight to personally verify whether it took place.

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<sup>18</sup> As noted above, equipment in Roosevelt County was only being tested ahead of a mock election.

## Appendix 2: Observed Accessibility of Poll Worker Training Venues

Observe New Mexico Elections mobilized watchers to monitor poll worker training in 23 counties between the dates of September 17, 2024 and November 4, 2024 depending on the availability of training in each county. During this period, ONME watchers observed poll worker training in Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos and Valencia counties. In Sandoval and McKinley counties, ONME watchers each attended two poll worker trainings in order to learn more about how training might be tailored to different target audiences. In every other county, ONME watchers participated in a single round of poll worker training.

Out of the 25 training venues observed, 19 had clearly marked accessible parking places. ONME watchers in Curry, Hidalgo, McKinley, Santa Fe, and Valencia counties reported that the training facilities they attended did not have obvious accessible parking. The observer in Curry County noted that training took place at a public library that is normally fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act; however, the library began undergoing significant renovations on the training date. Construction consequently impacted accessibility of both the parking lot and the entrance to the building on the training day.

ONME watchers at 23 of 25 training venues judged that there was a clear path from the parking area to the building entrance at the location where training took place, which could easily be traversed by a wheelchair user or a visually impaired person. In Curry and San Juan counties, ONME watchers reported that the pathway was not clear and free of obstacles.

ONME watchers in 19 of 25 training venues reported that the main door to the training venue was wheelchair accessible, while ONME watchers in Curry, Hidalgo, McKinley and Sierra counties reported that a wheelchair entrance was available as a side or back door into the training venue. In 18 of 25 training venues observed, the ONME watcher reported that the wheelchair-accessible entrance was clearly marked; however, in Cibola, Curry, San Juan, Santa Fe, Socorro and Valencia counties ONME's watchers reported that the entrance was not clearly marked. ONME watchers reported that the wheelchair-accessible entrance at 22 of the 25 training venues they attended was unlocked. In San Juan and McKinley counties the entrance was not unlocked. The ONME watcher in Otero County reported that the training venue they attended had no wheelchair-accessible entrance at all.

## Appendix 3: Training Topics Discussed During Poll Worker Training by County

Training Topic	Addressed	Not Addressed
Opening the Voting Location	20 trainings	5 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Chaves, Doña Ana, Hidalgo, Santa Fe, Sierra
Materials Provided; How to Find Them and When to Use Them	24 trainings	1 training
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	San Juan
Hours That Voting Locations Will Be Open	22 trainings	2 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos, Valencia <i>*The ONME watcher in one of two McKinley trainings did not respond to the question</i>	Eddy, Sierra
Hours That Precinct Boards / Poll Workers Are Expected to Work	23 trainings	2 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Eddy, Sierra
How to Establish A 100-Foot Limit Around the Voting Location, Inside of Which Electioneering Cannot Take Place	14 trainings	11 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, De Baca, Grant, Los Alamos, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Cibola, Curry, Doña Ana, Eddy, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra

<b>How to Enforce Rules Against Electioneering</b>	15 trainings	10 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Cibola, Eddy, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), San Juan, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra
<b>How to Enforce Rules Against Voter Intimidation</b>	14 trainings	11 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, Mora, Otero, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Socorro	Chaves, Cibola, Curry, Eddy, McKinley (x2), Roosevelt, San Juan, Santa Fe, Taos, Valencia
<b>How to Operate Electronic Vote Tabulators</b>  <i>*The ONME watcher in one of two Sandoval trainings did not respond to the question</i>	22 trainings	2 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Sandoval (X1), Valencia
<b>How to Communicate About and Resolve Unexpected Errors with Electronic Vote Tabulators</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Eddy, Hidalgo, Roosevelt, Sandoval (x1)
<b>How to Set Up Accessible Voting Equipment</b>	19 trainings	6 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos	Eddy, Hidalgo, McKinley (x1), Sandoval (x1), Sierra, Valencia
<b>How Voters Can Use Accessible Voting Equipment to Vote</b>	18 trainings	7 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos	Eddy, Hidalgo, McKinley (x1), Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Valencia

<b>How to Troubleshoot Issues That Voters May Experience When Using Accessible Voting Equipment</b>	18 trainings	7 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos	Eddy, Chaves, Hidalgo, Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Valencia
<b>How to Manage Signature Rosters or Poll Lists and/or How to Operate Electronic Pollbooks</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Chaves, Hidalgo, Roosevelt, Valencia
<b>How to Understand and Resolve Alerts from Electronic Pollbooks</b>	17 trainings	8 trainings
	Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Bernalillo, Chaves, Doña Ana, Eddy, Hidalgo, Roosevelt, San Juan, Valencia
<b>How to Implement Wait Time Reduction Plans If Needed</b>	18 trainings	7 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Chaves, Hidalgo, McKinley (x1), San Juan, Sandoval (x2), Valencia
<b>Who is Eligible and Ineligible to Register to Vote</b>	18 trainings	7 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Chaves, Hidalgo, McKinley (x1), San Juan, Sandoval (x2), Valencia
<b>What Information or Identification Poll Workers May Request from Voters</b>	23 trainings	2 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Hidalgo, Valencia

<b>Same Day Voter Registration</b>	25 trainings	0 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	
<b>How to Assist Voters with Disabilities who Request Accessibility Accommodations</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Socorro, Valencia	Eddy, Los Alamos, Sierra, Taos
<b>How to Assist Voters who Require Language-Related Accessibility Accommodations</b>	14 trainings	11 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Socorro	Chaves, Doña Ana, Hidalgo, McKinley (x1), Roosevelt, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Taos, Valencia
<b>Federal Requirements to Provide Ballots in Languages Covered by the Voting Rights Act</b>	8 counties	17 counties
	Bernalillo, Catron, Curry, Grant, McKinley (x1), Mora, Sandoval (x2)	Chaves, Cibola, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia
<b>Different Types of Ballot Styles in Use for the Election</b>	18 trainings	7 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Socorro	Cibola, Roosevelt, Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Taos, Valencia
<b>Standard Voting Procedures</b>	24 trainings	1 training
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos	Valencia

<b>When to Issue Provisional Ballots</b>	22 trainings	3 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Roosevelt, Sandoval (x2)
<b>How to Process Provisional Ballots</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, San Juan, San Miguel, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Roosevelt, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe
<b>Spoiled Ballot Procedures</b>	25 trainings	0 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	
<b>Procedures for Dropping Off an Absentee Ballot on Election Day</b>	22 trainings	3 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Chaves, Hidalgo, Sandoval (x1)
<b>Political Party Poll Watchers and Other Election Observers</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x1), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Cibola, McKinley (x1), San Juan, Santa Fe



<b>Accommodating State Police Officers or Officers of the Peace as Observers</b>	11 trainings	14 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Mora, Otero, San Miguel, Socorro	Chaves, Cibola, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Roosevelt, San Juan, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Taos, Valencia
<b>Roles, Responsibilities and Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct of Election Challengers</b>	16 trainings	9 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Los Alamos, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x2), Sierra, Socorro	Chaves, Cibola, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), San Juan, Santa Fe, Taos, Valencia
<b>How to Close the Polls</b>	22 trainings	3 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Chaves, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe
<b>Managing Voters Who Arrive After the Close of Polls</b>	20 trainings	5 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Los Alamos, Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Sierra, Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Eddy, McKinley (x2), Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe
<b>Transmitting Results or Delivering Voted Ballots to the Central Counting Place</b>	19 trainings	6 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Doña Ana, Los Alamos, San Juan, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra
<b>How to Verify the Machine-Printed Election Returns</b>	19 trainings	6 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Socorro	Doña Ana, Los Alamos, San Juan, Sandoval (x1), Taos, Valencia

<b>How to Store and Transmit Machine-Printed Election Returns</b>	19 trainings	6 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Socorro, Taos	Doña Ana, Los Alamos, San Juan, Sandoval (x1), Sierra, Valencia
<b>How to Remove and Store the Removable Media Storage Device from the Electronic Tabulators</b>  <i>*The ONME watcher in Taos did not respond to the question</i>	20 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Socorro, Valencia	Eddy, Los Alamos, Sandoval (x1), Sierra
<b>How to Complete an Election Certificate Verifying that All Election Duties Were Properly Performed</b>	17 trainings	8 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Socorro, Taos	Chaves, Doña Ana, Los Alamos, Sandoval (x2), Santa Fe, Sierra, Valencia
<b>How to Prepare to Transmit the Ballot Boxes After an Election</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Los Alamos, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra
<b>How to Prepare and Transmit the Envelopes of Other Election Materials</b>	21 trainings	4 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Los Alamos, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra
<b>Publicly Posting Copies of the Election Returns at Each Voting Location</b>	17 trainings	8 trainings
	Bernalillo, Catron, Cibola, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Socorro, Taos	Chaves, Curry, Grant, Los Alamos, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra, Valencia

<b>Locking Any Voting Machines After the Elections</b>	<b>21 trainings</b>	<b>4 trainings</b>
	Bernalillo, Catron, Chaves, Cibola, Curry, De Baca, Doña Ana, Eddy, Grant, Hidalgo, McKinley (x2), Mora, Otero, Roosevelt, San Juan, San Miguel, Sandoval (x1), Socorro, Taos, Valencia	Los Alamos, Sandoval (x1), Santa Fe, Sierra

## Appendix 4: Current Designation of Covered Counties and Minority Languages in New Mexico Under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act<sup>19</sup>

<b>County</b>	<b>Languages Covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act</b>
Bernalillo County	Spanish, Navajo
Catron County	Zuni
Chaves County	Spanish
Cibola County	Navajo, Acoma, Laguna
Doña Ana County	Spanish
Guadalupe County	Spanish
Hidalgo County	Spanish
Lea County	Spanish
Luna County	Spanish
McKinley County	Navajo, Zuni
Mora County	Spanish
Rio Arriba County	Navajo
Sandoval County	Navajo
San Juan County	Navajo, Ute
San Miguel County	Spanish
Socorro County	Spanish, Navajo
Taos County	Spanish

<sup>19</sup> Notices: COVERED AREAS FOR VOTING RIGHTS BILINGUAL ELECTION MATERIALS—2020 (2021, December 8). Federal Register, Vol. 86, No. 233. <https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1460416/dl?inline>. As the federal notice refers to Pueblo languages as a bloc, the above table reflects Observe New Mexico Elections' interpretation of the appropriate language to be covered in each jurisdiction based on conversations with local stakeholders.

## Appendix 5: Statements from Counties about Voter Outreach Efforts and Innovations

ONME offered the four most populous counties the opportunity to include a brief statement addressing voter outreach innovations that they undertook that may not be apparent to observers during observation of election processes. All counties, upon publication of this report, are invited to submit similar statements.

### **Bernalillo County**

The Bernalillo County Clerk's office is expanding its efforts to inform and engage voters through a series of innovative education and outreach initiatives. Focusing on accessibility and inclusivity, these programs aim to empower residents with the knowledge and tools they need to participate confidently in the voting process.

One of the most exciting projects we're exploring is the retrofitting of our Mobile Voting Unit. In addition to its traditional role during elections, the unit will also serve as a mobile education and engagement vehicle. This transformation will allow it to appear at popular public gatherings such as football games, the State Fair, Summerfest, the Balloon Fiesta, and Isotopes games. Meeting people in their communities and neighborhoods.

Another initiative is the expansion of our voter outreach program. Going beyond event tabling, we will actively partner with local schools and community organizations to develop civic education curriculum, increase election awareness, and build long-term engagement.

Our office is also launching a dynamic media campaign centered on the upcoming Regular Local Election. This effort will include clear, compelling messages about why local elections matter and how residents can get involved.

In line with the County's commitment to equity and inclusion, staff are also working closely with members of the disability rights community to make sure the clerk's website is fully accessible. This includes implementing best practices for digital accessibility so that all voters can easily access critical voting information.

As our office continues to evolve, we remain committed to innovation and community collaboration, moving towards our shared goal of creating a more informed, engaged, and empowered electorate.