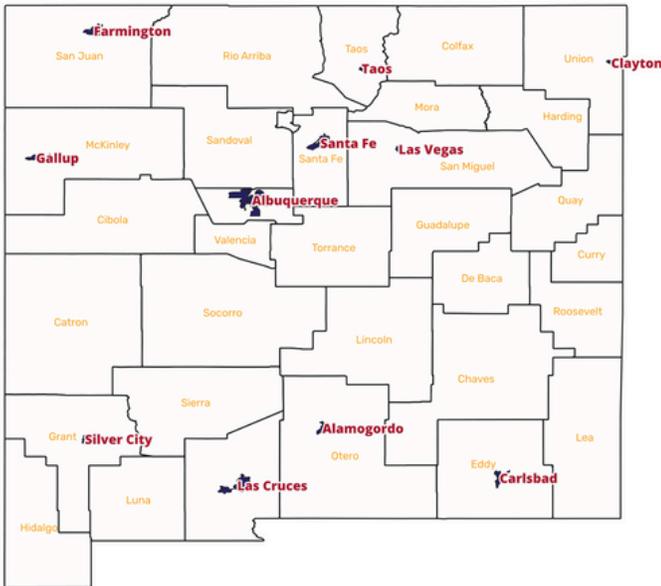


## About Observe New Mexico Elections (ONME)

Observe New Mexico Elections (ONME) is a nonpartisan election observation organization that works to strengthen trust in our state’s elections. We train and mobilize volunteers to observe key parts of the election process and report what they see. The goal is simple: to ensure elections are transparent, accessible, and fair for every voter.

### ONME in the 2025 Municipal Elections

ONME was active throughout New Mexico’s 2025 municipal elections, observing how local electoral processes were prepared, conducted, and certified. Our trained observers monitored poll worker training, logic and accuracy testing, absentee ballot processing, early voting, and Election Day voting in the following 11 municipalities, home to 44% of New Mexicans.



- Alamogordo
- Albuquerque
- Carlsbad
- Clayton
- Farmington
- Gallup
- Las Cruces
- Las Vegas
- Santa Fe
- Silver City
- Taos

These observations provide an independent, data-driven view of how local elections were administered and where improvements could strengthen public confidence.

### Why Municipal Elections Matter

Municipal elections shape decisions about housing, safety, infrastructure, education, and local services, issues that affect daily life in every community. Yet these local elections tend to draw fewer voters than state or federal races. Nonpartisan observation helps show what’s working well and where election processes can be improved and made more consistent and accessible.



## How New Mexico Runs Municipal Elections

Many of New Mexico's counties now conduct consolidated nonpartisan elections, which combine elections for several types of office, such as mayors, city councilors, school boards, and community college boards. County clerks administer these elections utilizing the same procedures as in federal elections. Some municipalities have not opted into the Local Elections Act resulting in different types of elections being conducted by various entities throughout the calendar year. ONME chose to limit observations to consolidated elections in order to ensure that we are comparing similar processes across similar elections.

## Logic & Accuracy Testing

### About Logic & Accuracy Testing

Before any ballots are cast, county clerks test every voting machine to confirm it is counting accurately, a process known as logic and accuracy testing. This step helps catch problems early and shows voters how election equipment is verified before Election Day. ONME observers attended these tests in counties and municipalities across New Mexico, documenting how the process was conducted and how accessible it was to the public.

**During Logic & Accuracy Testing** **11** observers conducted **13** observations at **11** sites

*\*Two sites were observed on multiple days, giving observers the opportunity to observe different parts of the process*

### What Went Well

Logic and accuracy testing was calm, organized, and transparent in most locations. Election staff carefully followed established procedures, tested multiple types of equipment, and resolved issues as they arose, demonstrating that the system's safeguards are working as intended. In nearly every site, officials were available to explain the process and answer questions. Most counties tested all ballot styles, and more sites than last year also performed functionality testing on accessible voting systems, an encouraging improvement from 2024.

### Challenges

Public access and site accessibility varied. A few testing sites lacked clear signage or space for members of the public to observe comfortably, and some facilities were difficult to navigate for people with disabilities. In some cases, ONME observers were not able to view every part of the process because of where they were stationed or because certain steps occurred on different days of testing.

# Poll Worker Training

## About Poll Worker Training

Poll workers are the people who check voters in, issue ballots, and make sure everything at the polls runs smoothly. Before every election, counties hold trainings to prepare them for these responsibilities. The content of this training directly affects how consistently election rules are applied on Election Day. In 2025, ONME observers attended poll worker trainings in 11 municipalities, documenting which topics were covered, how accessible the venues were, and whether key procedures were explained clearly.

**During Pollworker  
Training**

**11**

observers conducted

**11**

observations at

**11**

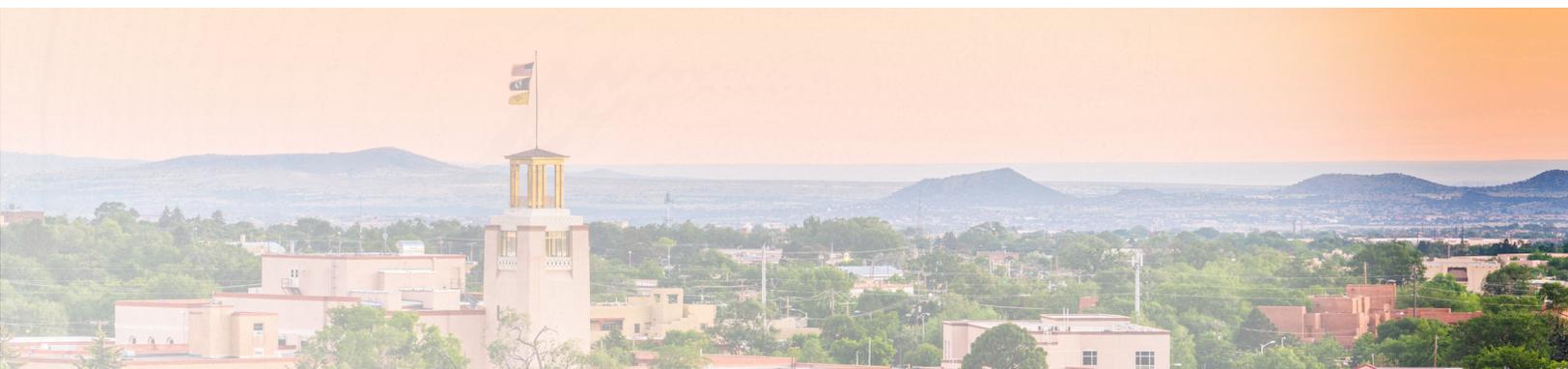
sites

## What Went Well

Poll worker trainings across New Mexico were professional, organized, and welcoming. Most sessions clearly explained how to open and operate polling locations, issue and process ballots, and close the polls. Trainers created a positive learning environment, and observers noted that participants were engaged and able to ask questions throughout. Many counties showed improvement from 2024, especially in the accessibility of training venues. Most sites offered clear entry paths and accessible parking. Some counties also expanded their coverage of technical topics, such as operating electronic pollbooks and troubleshooting tabulators, giving poll workers the tools to successfully manage Election Day operations.

## Challenges

While the overall quality of trainings was strong, content coverage was uneven across counties. In several locations, sessions were abbreviated because most participants had served in previous elections, which meant less time was spent on certain procedures. Observers also found that accessibility and language-related voter accommodations were rarely discussed in detail, even in counties where federal law requires ballots in multiple languages. This is consistent with findings from the 2024 election suggesting a consistent lack of coverage of practices and procedures associated with federal laws mandating language-related voter accommodations. Rules related to voter protection and electioneering were covered inconsistently, with one observer even noting that poll workers were given incorrect information.





## Absentee Ballot Processing

### About Absentee Ballot Processing

Absentee or mail ballots are a growing share of votes in New Mexico’s elections. Municipalities above a certain population threshold are required to count absentee ballots before Election Day to streamline the reporting of results. Before the counting of ballots, county election staff verify voter information, separate ballots from envelopes to protect voter privacy, and prepare them for tabulation. In 2025, ONME observers monitored absentee ballot processing in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces to document how these procedures were implemented and whether they were carried out transparently and securely.

#### During Absentee Ballot Processing

**3** observers conducted **4** observations at **3** sites

*\*One site was observed on multiple days, giving observers the opportunity to observe different parts of the process*

### What Went Well

Absentee ballot processing was well-organized, transparent, and secure in all three locations observed. Election staff created space for observers and were available to explain procedures and answer questions. Observers saw that ballots were always handled by at least two staff members, and multiple layers of security were in place throughout the process. In every site, staff contacted voters when signatures or identification numbers needed verification. Voting machines correctly flagged over-voted or blank ballots for manual review, adding another layer of quality control.

### Challenges

Physical accessibility varied by location. The Albuquerque and Santa Fe facilities were largely accessible, while the Las Cruces elections warehouse had some physical access limitations; county officials reported they are in the process of relocating to a more accessible site. Because absentee ballot processing occurs over several days, ONME observers were only able to view portions of the full procedure. For example, in Albuquerque, observers did not see unopened envelopes being scanned and logged because it occurred on a day when the observer was not present, though other steps of the process were clearly visible.

# Early In-Person Voting

## About Early In-Person Voting

Early in-person voting gives New Mexican voters flexibility to cast their ballots at a time and place that works for them. It also reduces pressure on Election Day and helps ensure shorter lines and smoother operations across the state. ONME observers visited early voting sites in 11 municipalities during the early voting period from October 17 to November 1, 2025 to assess how these locations were set up, how accessible they were, and whether poll workers followed proper procedures for checking in voters, issuing ballots, and securing voting equipment and election materials.

**During Early In-Person Voting**

**32**

observers conducted observations at

**36**

sites

representing

**93%**

of all early vote sites in these municipalities

## What Went Well

Early voting in municipalities observed by ONME ran smoothly and on schedule. Every observed site opened on time, and while a few locations had short lines at opening, they moved quickly. Poll workers were prepared and professional, ensuring voters could cast their ballots without delay. All sites had accessible voting machines available, and voters who needed to spoil or replace a ballot were able to do so easily. Same-day registration worked efficiently, with only a few observed sites seeing more than ten registrants in a day. Equipment issues were isolated and quickly resolved by on-site technicians, allowing voting to continue without interruption. Observers reported that ballot security protocols were followed (materials were sealed, logged, and secured) and that closing procedures included careful reconciliation of ballots and voter check-ins.

## Challenges

Observers noted some inconsistencies in how information was displayed or shared with voters. A few sites lacked instructions inside voting booths about how to cast a ballot or information about spoiled and provisional ballots. While materials were available in both English and Spanish across the observed early vote sites, posted information was not translated into other languages, even in areas where language access is required by the Voting Rights Act. There was variation in whether accessible voting machines were tested before polls opened or had clear posted instructions for use. Testing these machines in advance is a best practice, though not required under state law. Overall, observers saw that issues were managed professionally and did not prevent voters from casting their ballots.

# Election Day Voting

## About Election Day

Election Day is the final and most visible stage of the voting process, when all parts of election administration come together. On November 4, 2025, ONME observers visited polling places in 11 of New Mexico's municipalities to document how they operated in practice including whether locations opened on time, procedures were followed consistently, and voters were able to cast their ballots without barriers.

**During Election  
Day Voting**

**111**

observers conducted  
observations at

**106**

sites

representing

**66%**

of all Election Day sites in  
these municipalities

*\* A handful of sites were observed by observers working in shifts.*

## What Went Well

Election Day during the local elections observed by ONME was generally smooth, transparent, and well-administered. Nearly every site opened on time, with only two observed sites delayed briefly because of building access issues. Lines were short and moved quickly throughout most of the day. Observers saw poll workers assisting first-time voters, resolving small issues with professionalism, and ensuring that anyone in line at closing was able to cast a ballot. Same-day registration worked efficiently, and technical issues with printers, tabulators, or electronic pollbooks were minor and quickly repaired. Polls closed on schedule almost everywhere, with only two observed sites closing late due to lines of voters at the close of polls. Ballot reconciliation at the end of the day was careful and transparent. Observers also reported that electioneering and campaign activity near polling places were handled appropriately by presiding judges, and that ballots were consistently handled only by election officials.

## Challenges

Observers noted a few issues. Some polling places lacked clear signage or posted instructions for voters, including information about how to complete a ballot, what to do if they made a mistake, or how to contact election officials. A handful of sites posted materials only in English. Accessibility varied by location, with a few observed sites posing navigation challenges for voters with mobility needs. Staffing appeared thin at several busy sites, leading to longer lines during peak hours. Equipment issues were generally minor but added to delays at a few locations with high turnout. In isolated cases, voters expressed confusion about district boundaries or specific ballot contests, and a small number left without voting.

## Conclusion

Overall, observers found that the 2025 municipal elections were generally smooth and well-administered, and that voters were able to cast their ballots securely and without disruption. These topline offers an early look at the process; a full report with deeper analysis will follow later this year.