



Electoral College Timeline of Key Dates

The National Archives and Records Administration's Office of the Federal Register prepared this timeline under the authority of 3 U.S.C. 6, 11, 12, and 13 to assist the States in performing their duties.

The term "State" includes the District of Columbia.

The Constitution of the United States and Federal law place certain Presidential election responsibilities on State executives and the electors for President and Vice President.

Key Electoral College Dates and Events

November 6, 2012 – General Election

The voters in each State choose electors to serve in the Electoral College. As soon as election results are final, state officials prepare their "Certificates of Ascertainment," formal lists indicating the names of electors chosen, as well as the names of all other candidates for elector, and number of votes cast for each.

Each state must prepare no less than **SEVEN original** "Certificates of Ascertainment" and send one original along with two certified copies to the Archivist of the United States at the Office of the Federal Register.

*Alternatively, state officials may prepare **NINE original** "Certificates of Ascertainment" and forward three originals to the Archivist of the United States at the Office of the Federal Register.*

In either case, the remaining **SIX original** "Certificates of Ascertainment" are held for later pairing and distribution with the "Certificates of Vote."

December 17, 2012 – Meeting of Electors

The electors meet in each State to select the President and Vice President of the United States. The electors record their votes on **SIX original** "Certificates of Vote," which are paired with the remaining **SIX original** "Certificates of Ascertainment." The electors sign, seal, and certify the packages of electoral votes and immediately send them to Federal and State officials as detailed in the accompanying instructions.

December 26, 2012 – Deadline for Receipt of Electoral Votes

The President of the Senate, the Archivist of the United States, and other designated Federal and State officials must have the electoral votes in hand.

January 6, 2013 – Counting Electoral Votes in Congress

The Congress meets in joint session to count the electoral votes (unless Congress passes a law to change the date).