



Texas Secretary of State
ELECTIONS DIVISION



Post-Election Hand Count Audits and Risk Limiting Audits

43rd Annual
Election Law Seminar
for County Election Officials
August 11-13, 2025



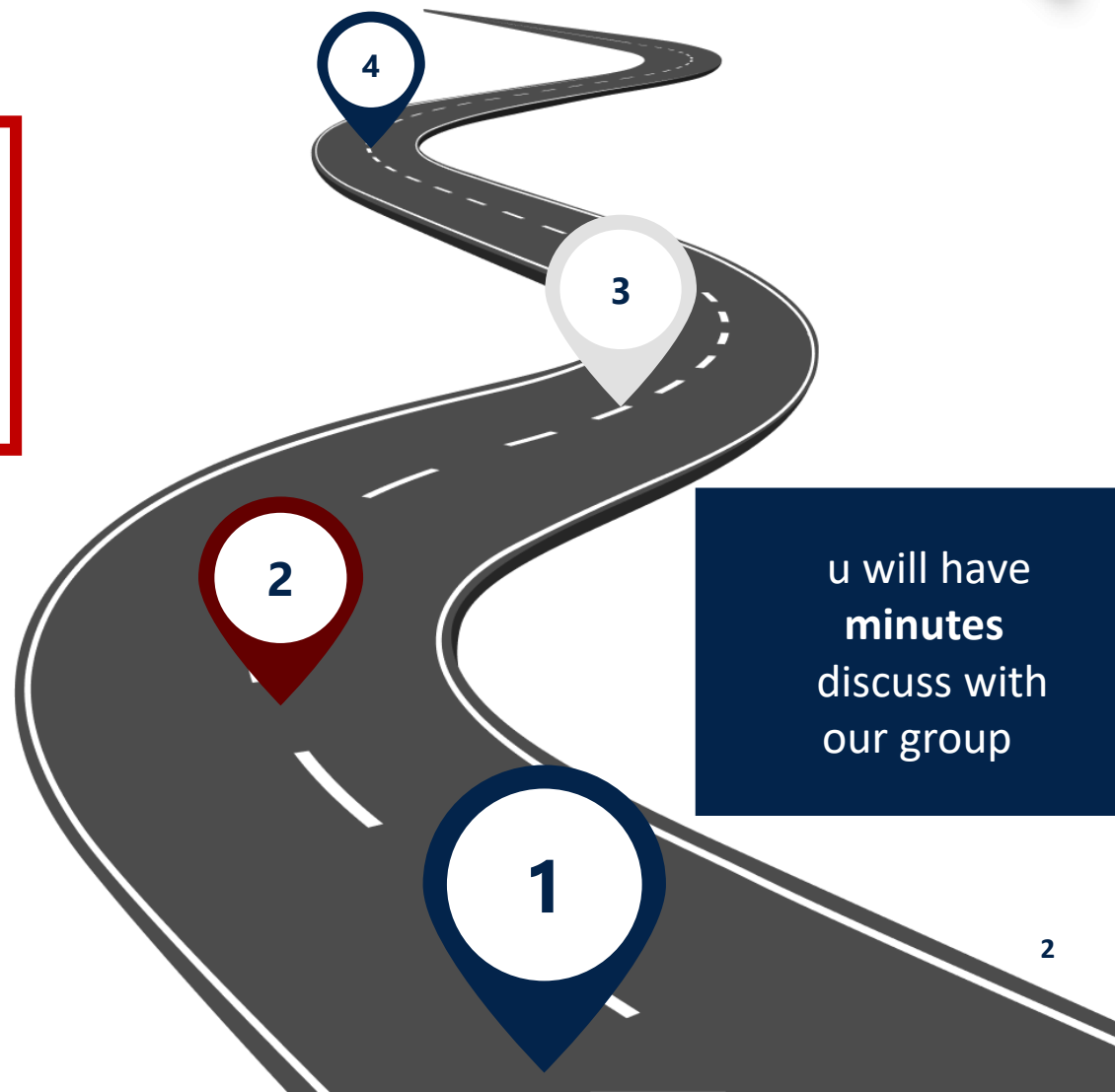
Mapping it Out

Prompt:

- What issues have you had with previous Partial Manual Counts?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you.





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Hand Count Election Audits



Wait...What Happened to the Partial Manual Count?





Hand Count Election Audit Requirement

All counties and local political subdivisions that tabulate voting system ballots electronically are required to conduct the hand count election audit



Hand Count Election Audit for Other Political Subdivisions

In elections conducted jointly with your political subdivisions, a separate hand count election audit for the political subdivision elections will **NOT** be required if the political subdivision shares a joint ballot with the county

- In this instance, the hand count election audit for the county will serve as the political subdivision's required hand count manual audit



Hand Count Election Audit for Other Political Subdivisions

Local political subdivisions should check with their county elections office to determine whether they or the county will be conducting their hand count election audit

- Political subdivisions in counties participating in the Countywide Polling Place Program will have to select three (3) polling locations to conduct their hand count election audit



Hand Count Election Audit Conduct

The hand count election audit must be conducted after every election using paper ballots counted with an electronic voting system. **This includes marked paper ballots and paper ballots generated by a ballot marking device.**

It includes all ballots that were counted with a precinct or central scanner and reported as part of your unofficial results on election night. It also includes:

Early voting in person and by mail ballots that were counted with a precinct scanner or central scanner.

*Ballots cast on a paperless DRE are exempt from the hand count manual audit.



Initial Steps of the Hand Count Election Audit

For the November 4, 2025 Constitutional Amendment Election, the Secretary of State shall select polling locations and precincts to be counted

- Three (3) Election Day polling locations and three (3) Early Voting locations or one (1) percent of the Election Day polling locations and one (1) percent of the Early Voting locations, whichever is greater, will be selected
- No more than three (3) offices or measures shall be designated for the count



General Custodian's Role In the Hand Count Election Audit

General custodian shall conduct a manual count of all races contained on the ballots by mail in at least one (1) percent of the precincts in which a ballot by mail was cast and in which the ballot were counted using automatic tabulating equipment **OR** in three (3) precincts, whichever is greater

General custodian shall select the precincts at random



General Custodian's Role In the Hand Count Election Audit

General custodian shall designate members of the early voting ballot board to perform the hand count election audit

If EVBB members are unable to serve, the general custodian may appoint other individuals

Additional precincts and polling places may be selected



Who Can Attend?

Each person entitled to appoint watchers in the election may attend

Each person may have a watcher present

- Each watcher must deliver a certificate of appointment to the presiding judge “at the time” the watcher reports for service
- Each watcher must satisfy the same requirements to be a watcher in Chapter 33 of the Texas Election Code



Who Can Attend?

Counties with populations of 100,000+ must implement a video surveillance system of all areas containing voted ballots until the canvass of precinct election returns

In counties with the video surveillance requirement and counties that have voluntarily implemented video surveillance, this will mean that the hand count manual audit will be conducted under video surveillance if the hand count manual audit is conducted prior to the canvass



Starting the Hand Count Election Audit

Entities will receive a separate email prior to Election Day from SOS with information specific to the hand count election audit

Once notified, the general custodian of election records will post notice of the date, hour, and place of the count



Starting the Hand Count Election Audit

The general custodian must begin the hand count election audit **within 72 hours** after the polls close on Election Day

Count shall be completed no later than the **21st day after Election Day** (Tuesday, November 25, 2025)

Results of the hand count election audit **must be posted** on the county's website in the same location where election returns and results are posted



Conducting the Audit for Countywide Polling Place Program

For counties that are participating in the Countywide Polling Place Program, for the Election Day count, they will complete the hand count election audit by polling place.

Early voting ballots now required to be counted by polling place in countywide counties. The selected polling places must be counted for early voting ballots cast in-person as well as by mail.



Conducting the Audit for Countywide Polling Place Program

At the convening of the hand count election audit, the general custodian of election records shall identify the applicable ballot boxes containing voted ballots subject to the hand count manual audit

For the selected polling places, the general custodian of election records with at least one individual of the counting team shall inspect the ballot boxes to verify that all locks and seals are intact



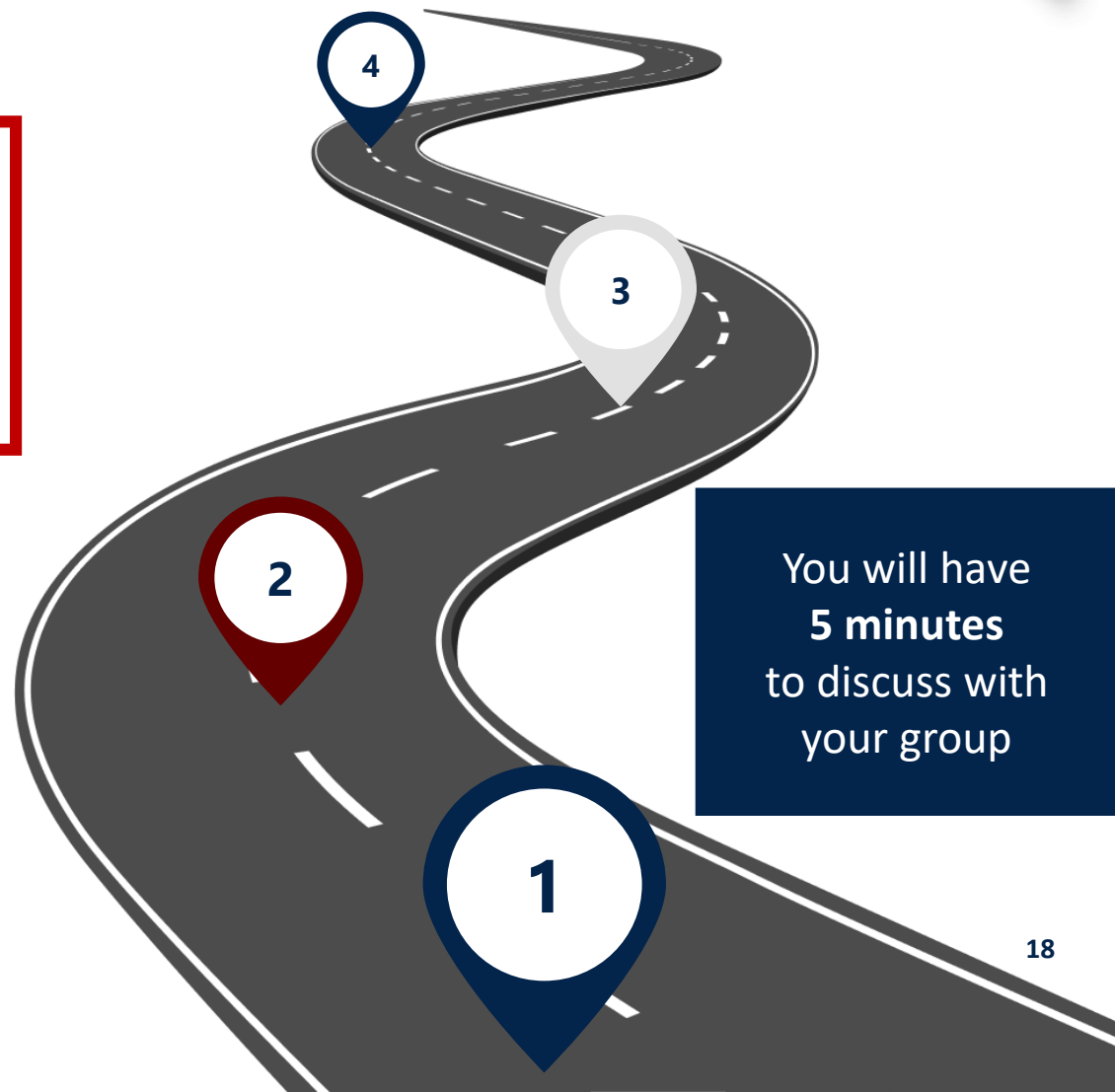
Mapping it Out

Prompt:

- Remembering your issues with PMCs, what can you do differently to prepare for the Hand Count Election Audit?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you.



You will have
5 minutes
to discuss with
your group



Hand Count Election Audit with Risk Limiting Audit

Hand count election audit shall begin not later than the **first business day** after the Secretary of State certified completion of the risk-limiting audit

Must be completed no later than the **30th day** after election or by the deadline imposed by the Secretary of State



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Risk Limiting Audit Basics



What is an RLA?



Checks outcome
of an election

1

Retrieve
random ballots



2

Inspect ballots



3

Calculate risk





Ballot Inspection



Paper ballots



Voter verifiable



Chain of custody



Calculating the Risk



Towards goal



Open source
software



A = risk limit
 S_w = reported proportion of
valid votes for w
 $T = 1$

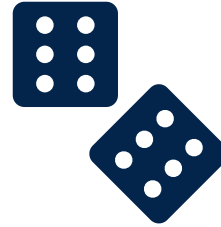
If vote for w ; $T(S_w/0.5)$

If vote for l ; $T((1-S_w)/0.5)$

Stop when $T \geq 1/\alpha$



Random Numbers

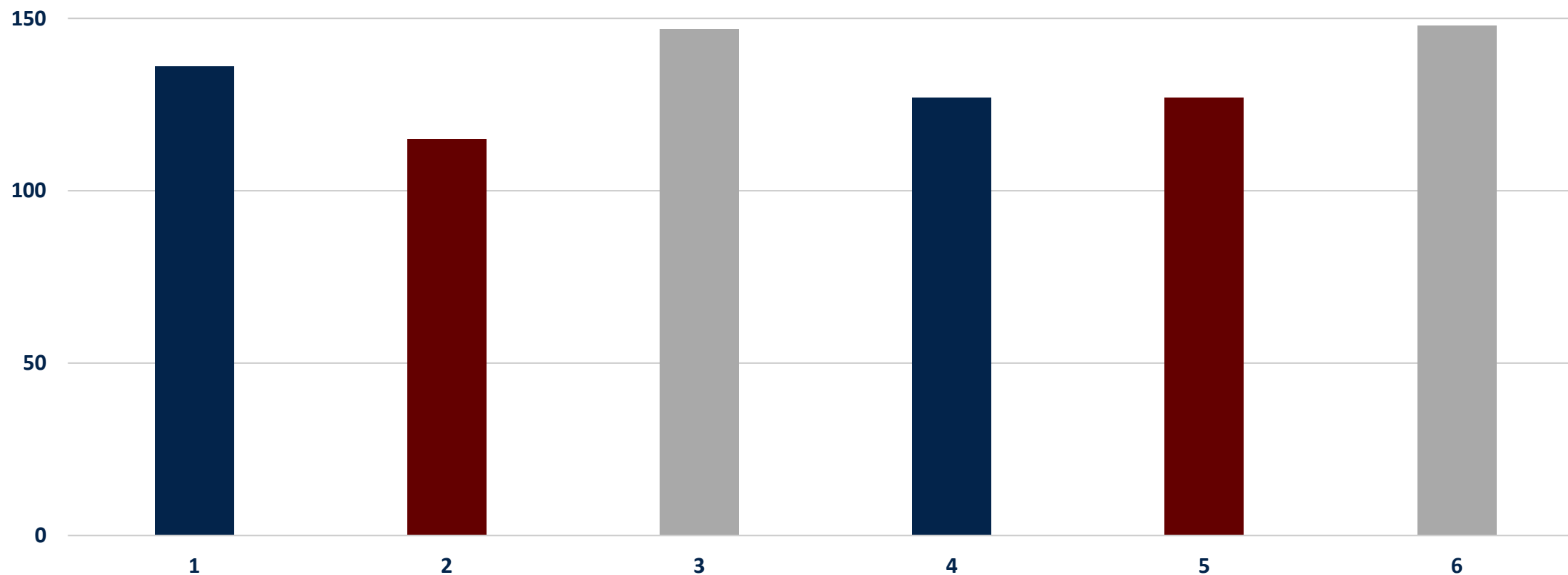


Audience Poll: On your Cvent app, choose a random number between 1 and 6

1. Login to the Event App
2. On the Home page, select **My Schedule**
3. Locate and select session title: **Legislative Updates: Post-Election Hand Count Audits and Risk Limiting Audits**
4. Check-in to the session with code **LAT915**
5. Click **Polls** to begin answering the question

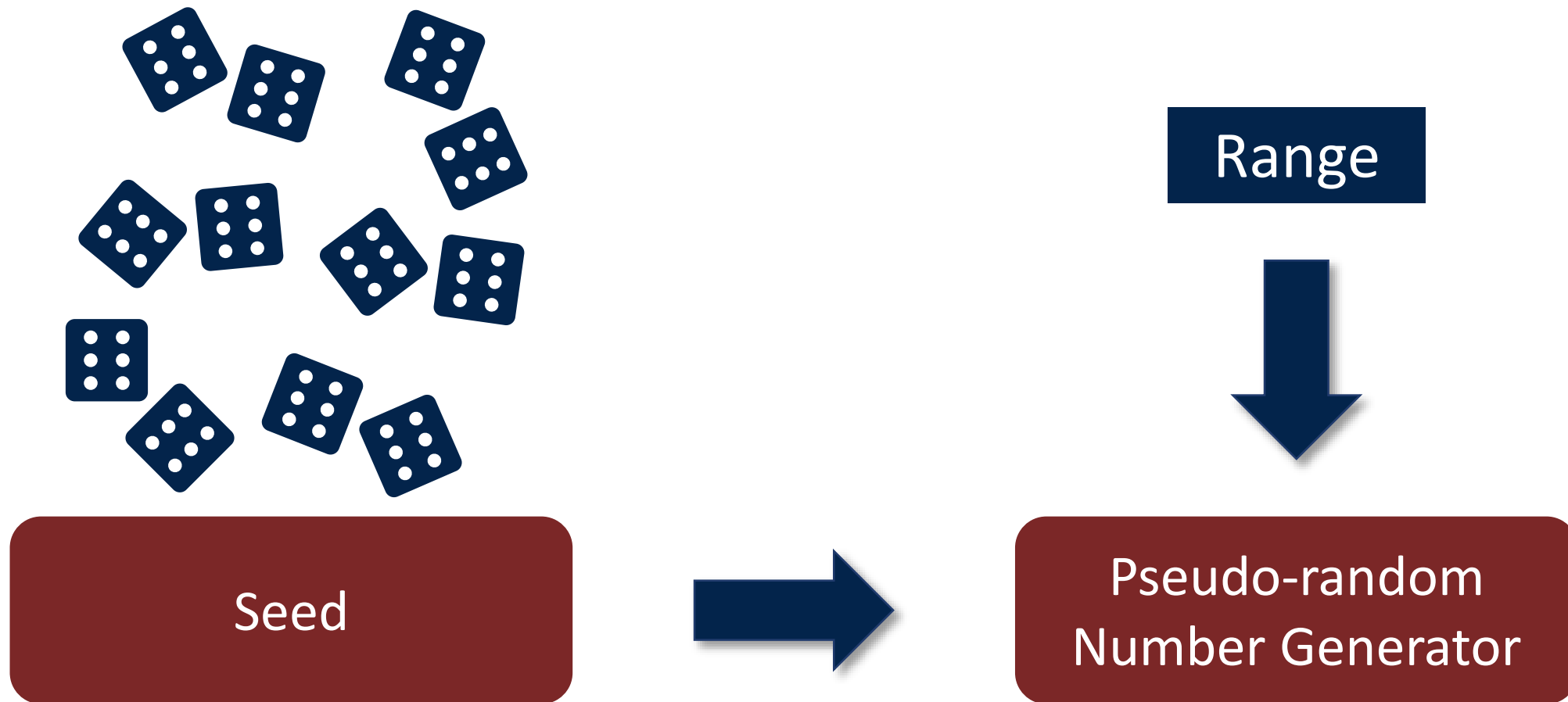


Pseudo-random Numbers Between 1 and 6





Pseudo-random Number Generators





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Risk Limiting Audits in Practice



Ballot Manifest

	A	B
1	Batch Name	Number of Ballots
2	EV Library	762
3	EV City Hall	244
4	EV Main Office, Bag 1	2357
5	EV Main Office, Bag 2	1549
6	ED Library	285
7	ED Main Office	963
8	ED City Hall	174
9	ED NW Community Center	189
10	Mail	102



Poll List



Ballot Retrieval

Audit Board #1

Batch: EV Library

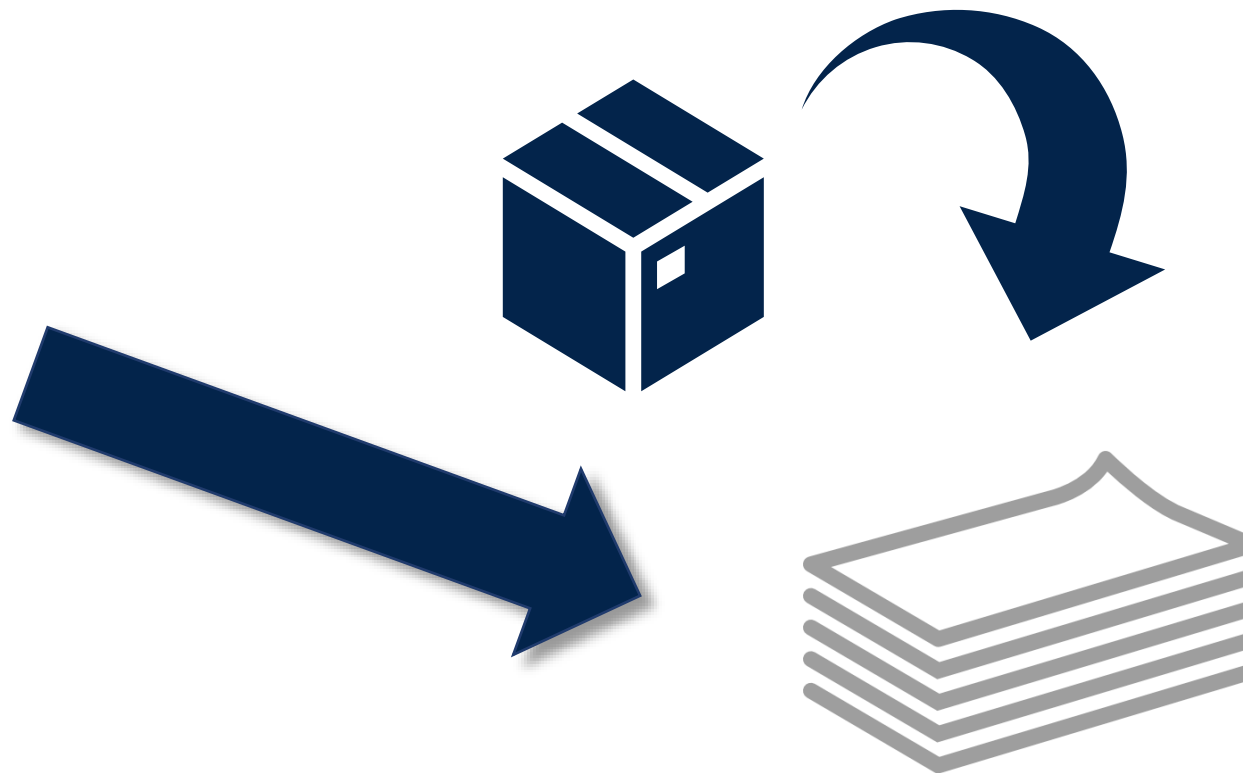
Ballot Number: 538





Ballot Retrieval

Audit Board #1
Batch: FV Library
Ballot Number: 538





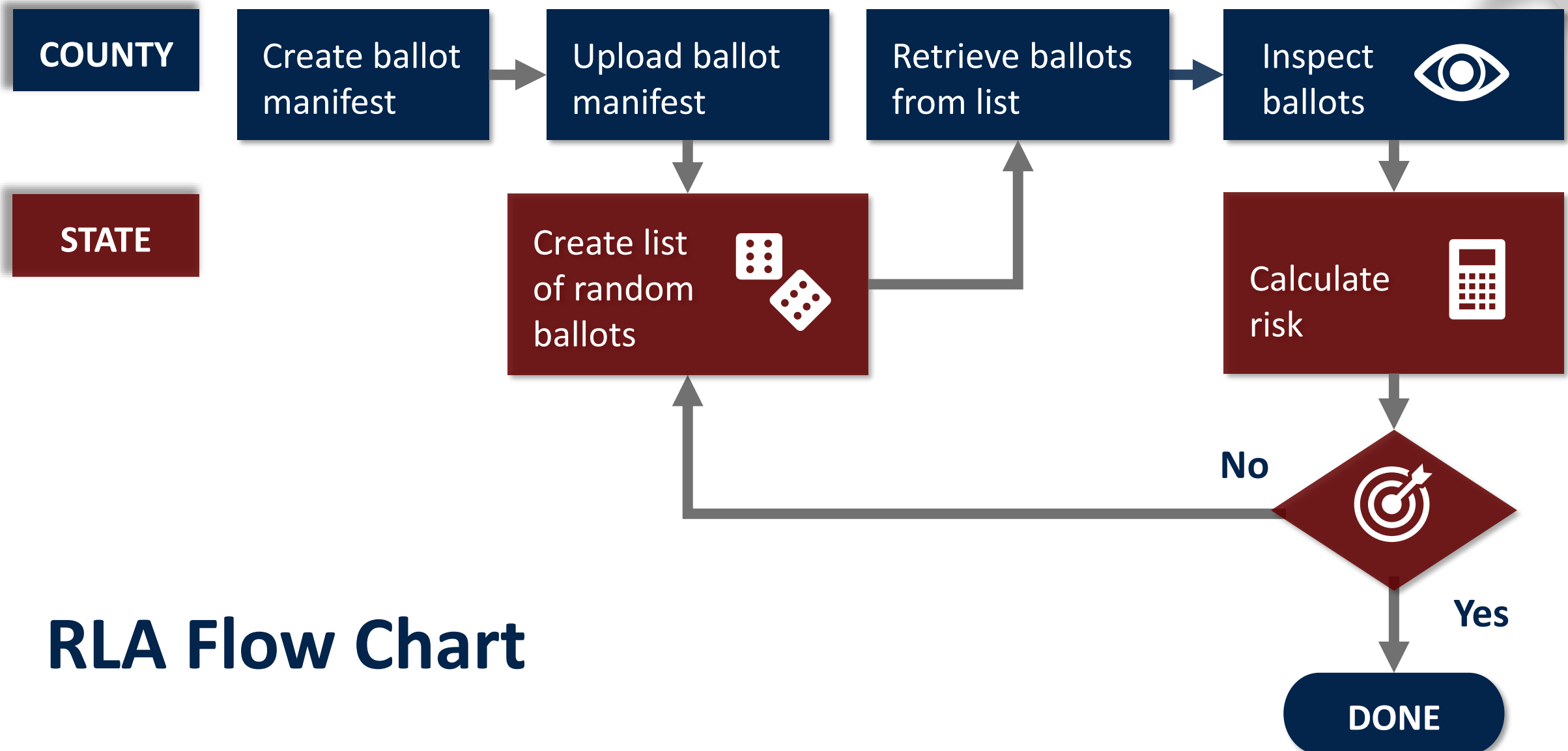
Ballot Inspection



Inspect each ballot

Enter voter choices

A screenshot of the Arlo Audit Ballot Selections interface. The interface shows a header with the Arlo logo and "Audit Board #1: Bob, Jane". Below this is a section titled "Audit Ballot Selections" with a dropdown menu set to "All Ballots". The main area displays "Batch ABM-3" and "Ballot Number 1". To the right of this is a red button labeled "Ballot Not Found". Below the main area is a section titled "Ballot Contests" with a "Colors" subsection. The "Colors" subsection has a list of color buttons: White, Pink, Blue, Green, Yellow, and Orange. To the right of these is a "Blank Vote" button, a "Not on Ballot" button, an "Invalid Write-In" button, and an "Add Note" text area. At the bottom right are "Back" and "Submit Selections" buttons.



RLA Flow Chart



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Risk Limiting Audits

Going Forward



Opportunities to Practice

- Hands-on trainings in 2025 and 2026
- Multi-county practice RLA for November 2025 Election
- Multi-county practice RLA for 2026 Primary Election



**RISK
LIMITING
AUDIT**



Mapping it Out

Prompt:

- RLAs begin in November 2026. What are four steps your office needs to take to reach that goal?

TIP: Start with the goal and work backwards. What are the steps needed to achieve this goal?



Work together with people at your table and the table directly behind you.



You will have
5 minutes
to discuss with
your group



Available Support



WEBINARS



TRAINING



RESOURCES

elections@sos.texas.gov

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

sos.texas.gov