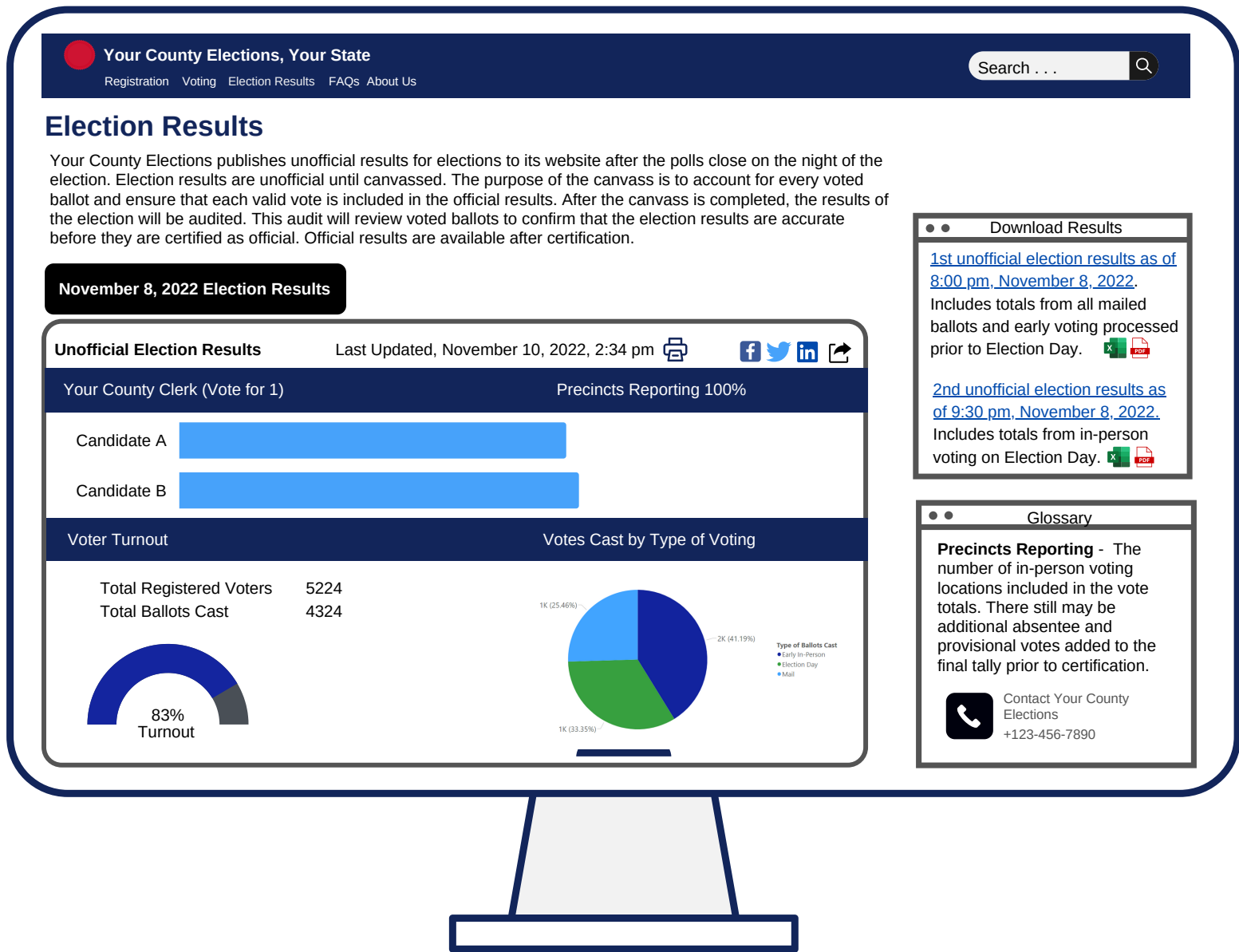# Best Practices: Election Results Reporting

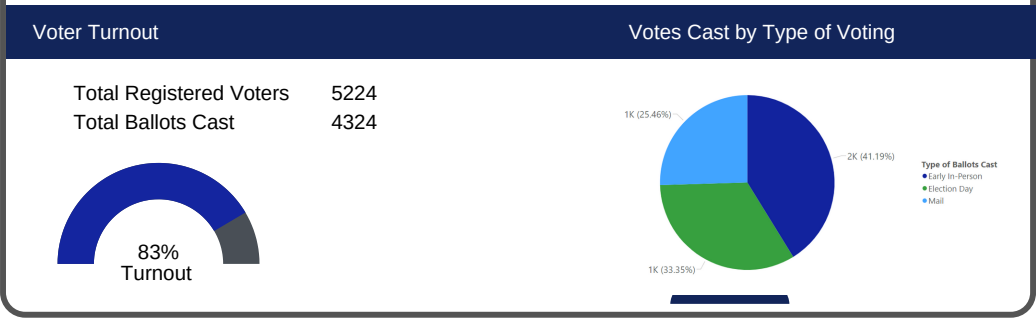**Your County Elections, Your State**

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Election Results

Your County Elections publishes unofficial results for elections to its website after the polls close on the night of the election. Election results are unofficial until canvassed. The purpose of the canvass is to account for every voted ballot and ensure that each valid vote is included in the official results. After the canvass is completed, the results of the election will be audited. This audit will review voted ballots to confirm that the election results are accurate before they are certified as official. Official results are available after certification.

November 8, 2022 Election Results

Unofficial Election Results   Last Updated, November 10, 2022, 2:34 pm

Your County Clerk (Vote for 1)   Precincts Reporting 100%

Candidate A

Candidate B

Voter Turnout   Votes Cast by Type of Voting

Total Registered Voters   5224
Total Ballots Cast   4324

83%
Turnout

1K (25.46%)

2K (41.19%)

1K (33.35%)

Type of Ballots Cast
- Early In-Person
- Election Day
- Mail

Download Results

[1st unofficial election results as of 8:00 pm, November 8, 2022](#). Includes totals from all mailed ballots and early voting processed prior to Election Day.

[2nd unofficial election results as of 9:30 pm, November 8, 2022.](#) Includes totals from in-person voting on Election Day.

Glossary

Precincts Reporting - The number of in-person voting locations included in the vote totals. There still may be additional absentee and provisional votes added to the final tally prior to certification.

Contact Your County Elections
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EAC | Helping America Vote

Voters look to election officials for **trusted information** about election results. How election officials display election results can play a key role in facilitating public confidence in election outcomes. The greater the stakes in an election, the greater the possibility that voters may not trust the results.

Vote totals released on election night are unofficial and may change before final election results are certified. There are several reasons vote totals change, including adding eligible late-arriving mailed ballots and provisional ballots to the final tally. The timeframe for local election officials to complete the certification process ranges from one to 30 days after the election. It is important for election officials to provide context when sharing election results after polls close on election night until results are certified.

Election Results Best Practices: Contingency Planning

Election officials implement multiple best practices in preparation for reporting election results. These may include **contingency plans** for when issues arise. Election officials should plan for unexpected power outages, website failures, or technical problems so that voters, the media, and candidates know how to find results if they cannot be posted on the elections website.

Election Results Best Practices: Presenting Results

Results should be reported in a **logical and consistent order** if possible. Changing the order of contests or candidates can create confusion. Finally, election results reports should be as transparent as possible. Election officials can help the public find information by including links to social media accounts. Also, when reporting errors occur, it is important to provide written information on websites and in press releases about differences in vote totals. For example, if a number was transposed and the error corrected, it should be clear what happened and which reports were in error.

Election Results Best Practices: Provide Clear, Concise Information

Election Results

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Explain the election reporting process in **plain language**. Describe how ballots are tabulated and steps taken to ensure the security, integrity, and accuracy of the reported results.

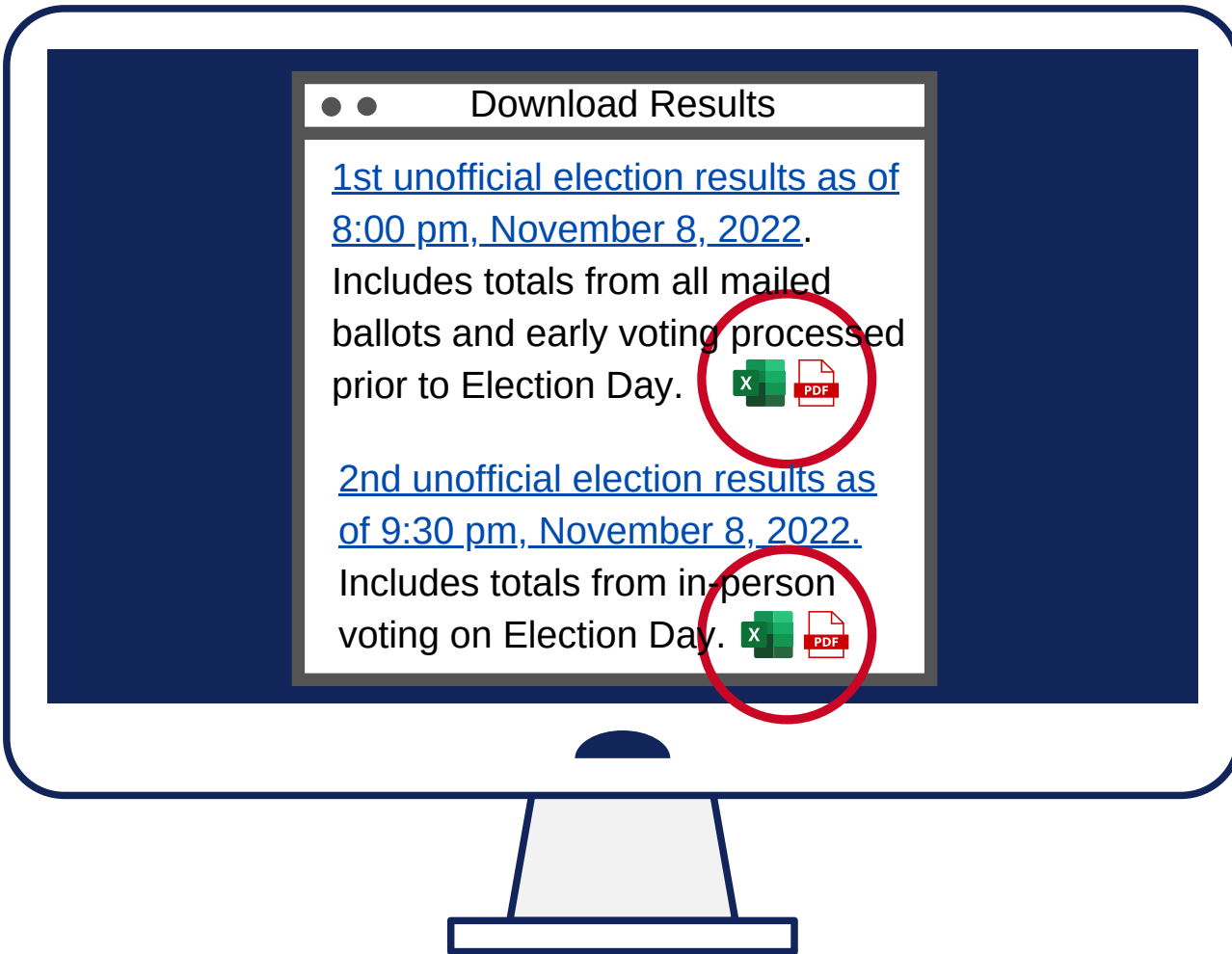**Election Results Best Practices**: Display Report Timestamps

Last Updated, November 10, 2022, 2:34 pm

Each results report should clearly show the **date and time** the report was last updated. Keep a detailed record of all unofficial and official results reports to show how votes changed throughout the canvassing period.

Election Results Best Practices: Make Data Easy to Download

Download Results

[1st unofficial election results as of 8:00 pm, November 8, 2022](#).
Includes totals from all mailed ballots and early voting processed prior to Election Day.

[2nd unofficial election results as of 9:30 pm, November 8, 2022.](#)
Includes totals from in-person voting on Election Day.

When possible, election results should be available to download in common data formats. Many election systems provide detailed results as .csv or .xml files. Display results in categories, if possible, and if it wouldn't violate voter's privacy (i.e., precinct-level data, by mail, in-person). Include information about which ballots (i.e., early voting, by-mail and absentee, election day, provisional, write-in votes) are included in each report and a general timeline of when to expect updates.

Election Results Best Practices: Define Key Terms

Glossary

Precincts Reporting - The number of in-person voting locations included in the vote totals. There still may be additional absentee and provisional votes added to the final tally prior to certification.

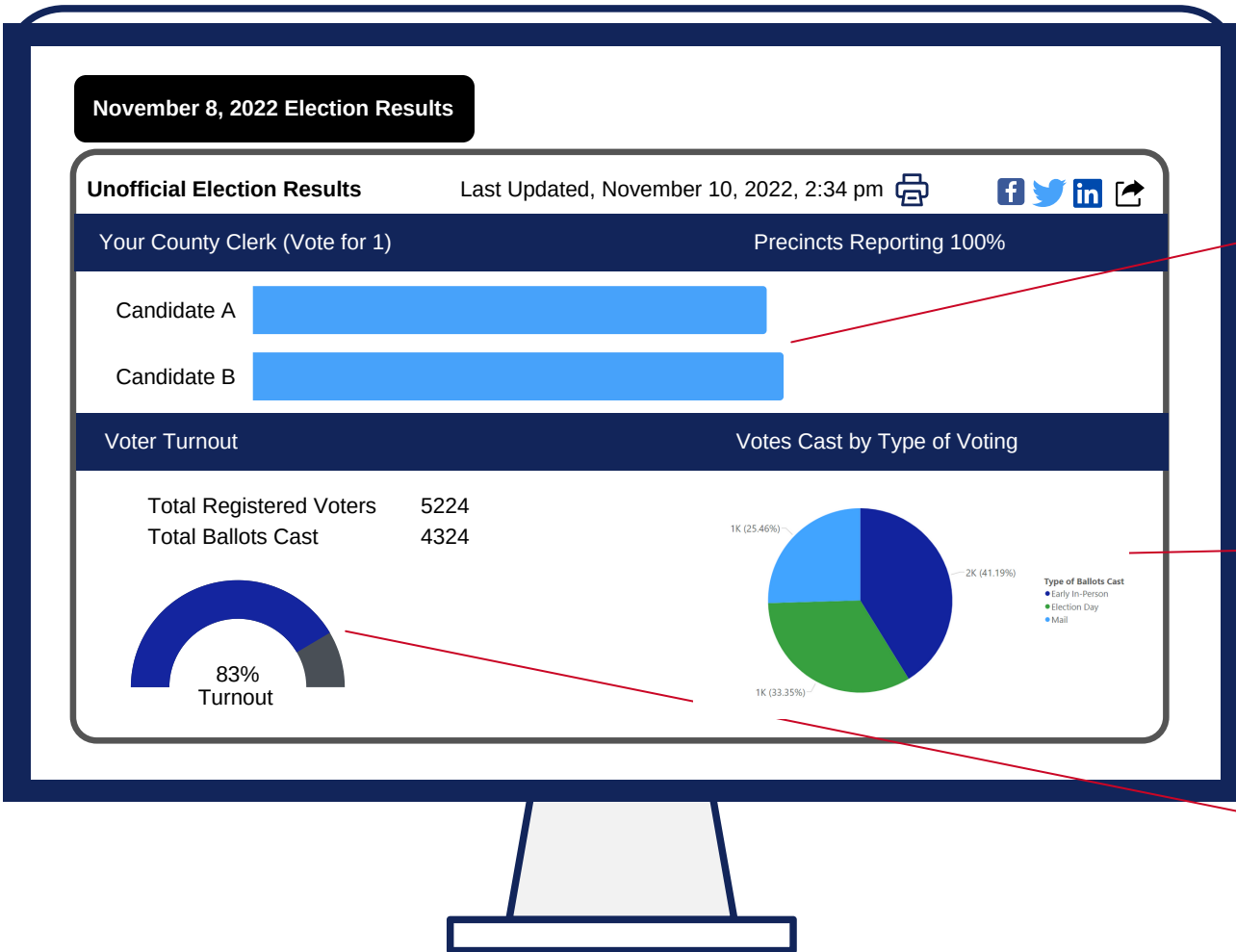📞 Contact Your County Elections
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Providing a glossary of election terms helps to clarify information for the public.

A Glossary of Election Terminology, defining nearly 1,300 words in 21 languages can be found on the EAC website: https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/glossaries-election-terminology.

Election Results Best Practices: Display Election Information Visually

November 8, 2022 Election Results

Unofficial Election Results	Last Updated, November 10, 2022, 2:34 pm
Your County Clerk (Vote for 1)	Precincts Reporting 100%

Candidate A

Candidate B

Voter Turnout

Votes Cast by Type of Voting

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2K (41.19%)

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- Mail

1K (33.35%)

Charts and graphs can quickly convey key information about the election and make the results easier to understand.

- **Bar charts** are easy to read, and their lengths are proportional to the values that they represent. Bar charts are widely used to display candidate vote totals.
- **Pie charts** show the comparisons between different categories and provide useful context for election data.
- **Radial Progress charts** help visualize percentages towards a goal of 100%.

Election Results Best Practices: Accessibility

Make sure that all information is accessible to all voters. Election officials communicate with the public through various forms of media including video, audio, and graphics. Each form of media has different accessibility requirements. The following references will define the required accessibility features for common types of election messaging outreach.

- **Alt-Text** - Also called alt tags and alt descriptions, alt text is the written copy that appears in place of an image on a webpage to help screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers. Learn more: https://www.section508.gov/create/synchronized-media/

- **Section 508 Compliance** - Section 508 is a federal law mandating that all electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the federal government be accessible to people with disabilities. Learn more: https://www.section508.gov/test/web-software/

Election Results Best Practices: Additional Resources

- **U.S. Web Design Systems (USWDS) -** USWDS was created by a collaborative team at 18F and the U.S. Digital Service in 2015 to make accessible, mobile-friendly government websites: https://designsystem.digital.gov/

- **18F Methods -** The 18F Methods are a collection of tools that describe how teams put human-centered design into practice: https://methods.18f.gov/