

# Hand Counting – Did You Know?

“Hand counting” is short for transparent election systems so simple any average citizen can understand the process. Hand counted generally means elections which are one-day, in-person, ID-verified, with paper ballots cast at the precinct level and hand-counted where cast. (Hand-counted systems may include accommodations for military or disabled.)

**Math required:** First-grade. Counting and adding.

**Workers needed:** Recommendation for Arapahoe County as one of the biggest counties in Colorado is about 1% of the voters, for a few hours on one day. Even people with jobs can do this! Opponents work together, creating community. Bring food and make it a party!

**Cost:** printing and office supplies, possibly cameras, space for a few tables, and payment for workers (if not volunteers). No need to pay for election hardware/software, large-envelope postage to all voters, drop boxes, or weeks of paid election judges.

**Speed:** depends on ballot complexity and number of teams. In 2024 at a major party state assembly, 2000 one-question ballots divided among many teams took only minutes to count. Arapahoe County’s average number of ballots per precinct in 2022 was 635, which a 10-person precinct team should be able to manage Election Night.

**Simple:** Ballots are counted where cast. Few moving parts = hard-to-break system.

**Scalable:** Scale up (more teams: faster) or down (fewer teams: less space, fewer workers needed).

**Adaptable:** humans identify voter intent better than machines, and do it in public, not behind locked doors. Stray marks don’t break the system.

**Benefits:** most hand count systems result in double-checked, auditable, final results publicly available on Election Night.

More information at <https://coloradocountsarapahoe.com/>