About Risk-Limiting Audit Pilots

Verified Voting

What is a Risk-Limiting Audit?

A risk-limiting audit (RLA) is a type of post-election audit that helps ensure—and reassure the public—that reported winners really got more votes. RLAs are considered a rigorous, efficient, and cost-effective tool for election officials. They can confirm that the unofficial election outcome matches the ballots cast, or trigger a full hand recount to correct the outcome before the election results are certified. **Learn more at https://verifiedvoting.org/audits/whatisrla/.**

What is a Risk-Limiting Audit Pilot?

Risk-Limiting Audit pilots are test runs for jurisdictions. They:

- Are not binding on the official election outcome and can occur well after the election
- Can adapt to the jurisdiction's size, resources, and election procedures
- Help election workers test audit methods, document best practices, and prepare for full RLA implementation that occurs precertification
- Build support for RLAs that are fully binding on the election outcome among legislators, county officials, state elections offices, other stakeholders, and the general public

Risk-Limiting Audit Pilots in Action

Pennsylvania: After conducting RLA pilots from 2019-2022, the state adopted an RLA audit directive in 2022 requiring statewide RLAs in primaries and general elections, the result of years of hard work alongside cross-partisan stakeholders

Georgia: After passing a statute and conducting RLA pilots in 2019, the state conducted an RLA of the 2020 presidential election (by means of a full hand tally) and has continued the practice in subsequent elections

Texas: The state passed an RLA law in 2021 that requires the secretary of state's office to pilot RLAs with several counties through 2026, after which RLAs will be required statewide

Virginia: The state passed a new RLA law in 2022 that requires RLAs to be completed before the election results are certified, the capstone of years of patient investment in educating legislators and helping election officials implement pilot RLAs in the state

Verified Voting Helps Jurisdictions Conduct RLAs and RLA Pilots

Our team provides advice and assistance to election officials around the country in conducting statistically sound post-election audits. During the RLA pilot process, we can:

- Help design pilot procedures
- Provide time and personnel estimates for state and local election officials
- Provide guidance on RLA preparation and on different RLA methods
- Work closely with stakeholders from beginning to end