

My background:

Education

Susquehanna University Graduate – Political Science & Psychology, BA

I began working in the Northumberland County Election office in August of 2020. Prior to my time as Election Director, I was a Community Liaison for a Health Center where I specialized in workers compensation issues and insurance reimbursement at the state level. I was an appointed political advisor to party committees to guide them on by-law changes and internal party procedures. Additionally, I was a paid judicial intern and participated in local election and re-districting cases.

When I took the job as Elections Director, I resigned my political positions and became dedicated to the political process. I consider myself a governmental institutionalist – caring more about the bodies of government over the office holders themselves.

Election Process:

Northumberland County established two teams for election day:

1. The first team was the Election office team led by myself (Chief Registrar). We coordinated with the judges of election/poll workers and made sure the phones were answered. This team also accepted ballots over the counter up until 8pm on election night.
2. The second team was the mail-in/absentee ballot scanning team and was led by our County Chief Clerk. This team consisted of several county department heads/employees who processed the ballots and scanned them to be counted in the totals. All members of this team were sworn in on election day by the Chief Registrar. Additionally, this team was in a locked room so they could begin scanning without interruption/outside input.

Integrity:

Our goal in Northumberland County was to have an election that was transparent and observable. We took the following measures to make this a reality:

- Our scanning room team was in a large room and was able to be observed through a large open window. Our goal was to have the scanning process be transparent, but also secure. Observers were able to ask questions and oversee the entire process.
- All ballots were locked in a building with three secured doors, and a security guard.
- We worked closely with both major party chairs to ensure they were comfortable with the way we conducted the election.
 - The Democratic party chair suggested we turn over the list of “naked ballots” that were received so those voters could be contacted and told to go vote provisionally. We agreed to do this with an important understanding – members of **any and all** parties would be contacted. Many of these voters did follow-through and go to vote at their polling locations.

- Our Chief Registrar, Chief Clerk, and County Commissioners were all heavily involved in the 2020 election. The minority commissioner spoke out publicly to re-assure voters the election was being handled with “patience, integrity, and transparency.”
- Our office worked with poll watchers and international observers. They were from Georgia (country) and Switzerland.
 - These international observers complimented our county and said we ran with organization and efficiency.
- We checked ID at the counter when people physically dropped off their mail-in/absentee ballots.
- Several handicapped people came to the office and had their ID in the car. We would walk out to the cars to ensure the voter was present and turning in their own ballot.
- We worked with the local post office so people could drop off their ballots in the local box and avoid them being sent to Harrisburg for sorting.
- Northumberland County opted not to use drop boxes.
- I held dozens of media interviews and worked closely with County IT to have constant updates to the website.
 - We worked closely with the state resources to check ballot status, registration status, and requests.
- Northumberland County also participated in the Risk Limiting Audit (RLA)

Post election both major party chairs attended a public commissioners meeting and commended the way in which our election was handled. Through a joint statement they shared their thoughts on our cooperation and their ability to be involved in the process.

Notably, when our military and overseas ballots were re-created, we used a team of four Democrats (and chairman) and four Republicans (and chairwoman) overseen by myself. This worked like an alternating assembly line and all members were able to review the ballots before they were submitted for counting.

Summary:

Northumberland County benefitted largely from several factors - The involvement of the commissioners, Chief Clerk, department heads, party chairs, and extra staff was essential to the election. We also worked diligently with the media and had a hand in the narrative. Additionally, our State Reps (Lynda Schlegel-Culver and Kurt Masser) and State Senator (John Gordner) publicly backed our work in the Elections office.

We also benefitted from employees working 110 hour weeks, extensive poll trainings, and grant money received from CTCL. Our county accepted ~\$44,000 from the Center for Tech and Civic Life. This money was spent on extra balloting supplies and temporary staffing.