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2025 Annual Report to Tioga County

January 30, 2026

Executive Brief

In 2025, the Board of Elections collaborated with the Tioga Arts Council and launched the county's first "I Voted" sticker design contest to engage our future voters. The winners were recognized at the July Regular Legislative Meeting.

Following the primary elections in June and the general election in November, the county saw consequential results for various town offices like Supervisor, Council Member, and Superintendent of Highways, as well as changes in the County Legislature. Voter turnout at the general election was markedly improved from previous local elections, especially in the Town of Berkshire, which saw over 50% of voters participate – extraordinarily high for a local election.

The Newark Valley Supervisor contest was very close and resulted in litigation to resolve disputed write-in ballots and determine the outcome. The Board is proud to note that the Court's ruling recognized and expressly commended the "professional, fair-minded, and bipartisan manner" in which the election commissioners conducted recount proceedings, "ensuring both electoral integrity and public confidence in the administration of elections."

The Board's priorities in 2026 will be to continue improving our voter outreach efforts, conduct poll site accessibility surveys to ensure sites remain ADA compliant, and continue administering free, fair, and secure elections in Tioga County.

Narrative Summary

Elections

There were 53 local offices up for election in 2025, excluding village offices. While the Board of Elections (BOE) does not administer village, school, or fire district elections, voter lists and poll books are provided to those jurisdictions for their elections as needed. Additionally, the BOE permits school districts to use the county's voting machines to conduct their elections, billing them the cost of labor and associated consumables. Waverly, Candor and Owego-Apalachin School Districts utilized this service in 2025.

A total of 40 nominating petitions (37 designating, 3 independent) were filed, comprising a total of 65 candidates, and resulting in Republican primary elections in the 5th Legislative District, the Town of Berkshire, and the Town of Owego. The primaries were held on June 24, 2025.

The 2025 General Election saw a countywide voter turnout of 21.9%, which is an improvement from the 2023 General Election. Within the county, the highest turnout was 51.6% in the Town of Berkshire, which had a highly contested Superintendent of Highways race. The Town of Barton, which had no contested races, saw the lowest turnout at 11.9%.

Of those who voted at the general election, 12.1% voted early, 81.9% voted on Election Day, 5.5% voted by mail, and 0.5% voted by affidavit.

The election commissioners were challenged when the close results of the Newark Valley Supervisor contest resulted in a manual recount, where they were unable to agree on how to adjudicate certain write-in ballots. The results had to be decided in court. Although the commissioners were at odds, the experience only strengthened their professional relationship and affirmed their commitment to election integrity in service of the citizens of Tioga County.

Voter Registration List Maintenance

The Board of Elections works continually to maintain accurate voter rolls by processing new voter registration forms, address changes, enrollment changes, death notifications, etc. on a daily or weekly basis. Additional list maintenance activities included:

- NVRA Purge
 - The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires that voters who have remained in Inactive status for two consecutive federal elections be purged from the voter rolls.
- National Change of Address (NCOA) List Maintenance

- Each year in February, the USPS provides states with address change data, and boards of elections are required to apply address changes to voters based on such data.
- Mail Check
 - Each year in the spring, boards of elections send informational postcards to their registered voters. Returned mail from the post office from this mailing helps boards to further maintain voter addresses.

In total for 2025, the Board processed 1,282 new voter registrations and 316 new pre-registrations, updated 2,882 existing registrations, and cancelled 1,624 registrations.

Outreach Activities

At the January 30th, 2025 Kiwanis meeting, the election commissioners delivered a presentation on the election process in Tioga County, educating Kiwanis members on all the checks and balances at the Board of Elections to maintain accuracy of the voter rolls and election integrity.

The BOE partnered with the Tioga Arts Council to launch our first "I Voted" sticker design contest. The purpose was to promote positive engagement with the electoral process among future voters. The Board received 28 entries, and a winner was selected from each age group by the county legislators. Winners were recognized and presented with certificates at the July Regular Legislative Meeting. Their designs were printed on stickers and are now the official "I Voted" stickers distributed in Tioga County, at least until the next contest.

The BOE has a program in place with the County Jail, ensuring that voters who are incarcerated for any reason other than a felony can vote by absentee, pursuant to NY Election Law. Voter registration forms are also provided to the jail to be given to felons when they complete their incarceration sentence and once again become eligible to vote.

For other voter registration outreach activities, see the Voter Registration Action Plan appended.

Staffing

Due to improved efficiency with list maintenance procedures, the Board defunded the permanent part-time election clerk positions. Instead, the Board will hire temporary clerks on an as-needed basis during times of high work volume.

The Board held 11 election inspector training classes and appointed 171 election inspectors for the 2025-2026 certification period. Elections were thus fully staffed with

substitutes available, as a minimum of 136 inspectors are needed to cover all 34 election districts in Tioga County.

The Board recognizes the service and contributions of Bruce Layman, who worked as the Republican Voting Machine Technician for eight years and left employment with the BOE in October 2025.

Equipment

State grant funds were utilized to replace 68 electronic pollbooks and upgrade them to the latest state-certified software. Four ballot-on-demand printers were also added to the inventory.

Training and Other Activities

The election commissioners attended the 2025 winter and summer conferences of the NYS Election Commissioners' Association. Each deputy commissioner also attended one of these conferences at the direction of their commissioner, to broaden their perspective and facilitate networking with colleagues in other counties.

Deputy Commissioner Duke began serving on the Tioga County Institute for Advancement (I4A) Committee, and also completed the Leadership Tioga training program.

Deputy Commissioner Hoover began serving on the Policy Review committee.

Goals for 2026

This will be a high-profile election year, with contentious mid-term, gubernatorial, and state legislative races. The Board plans to continue partnering with county leadership, and state and federal agencies, to ensure the BOE office is always physically and operationally secure and enable us to continue providing safe and secure elections for Tioga County voters.

Many of the county's poll sites are due to be re-surveyed for ADA compliance, so the Board can ensure in-person voting remains accessible to all voters.

The Board will continue ongoing voter outreach efforts so the public can stay informed of important election information and deadlines, and to promote higher voter turnout.

COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION ACTION PLAN

Election Law § 3-212.4

COUNTY of TIOGA

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR YEAR 2025 WITH ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR 2026

I. COORDINATOR(S) The Voter Registration Activities Coordinator(s) is (are)

Name/Title	<u>Amber Duke, Deputy Commissioner</u>
Address	<u>1062 State Route 38, PO Box 306</u>
	<u>Owego, NY 13827</u>
Phone/e-mail	<u>607-687-8217 / dukea@tiogacountyny.gov</u>

II. VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS DISTRIBUTION – in 2025

REGISTRATION FORM INVENTORY

1. Number received from State Board	<u>1600</u>
2. Number printed by Board (if any)	<u>0</u>
3. Number remaining in supply from previous year	<u>3447</u>
4. TOTAL	<u>5047</u>

REGISTRATION FORMS DISTRIBUTED

1. Schools	<u>0</u>
2. Post Offices	<u>550</u>
3. Public Offices	<u>1300</u>
4. Community Groups	<u>130</u>
5. Other (issued by mail or OTC at voter request)	<u>77</u>
6. TOTAL	<u>2057</u>

REGISTRATION FORMS REMAINING END OF YEAR 2990

III. OUTREACH PROGRAMS – for 2025

POSTAL PROGRAM - § 5-210

1. Number of post-offices supplied with forms	<u>11</u>
2. Number of voter registration forms supplied to same	<u>550</u>
How many persons registered to vote via this program?	<u>6</u>

We send staff once or twice a year to each site to replenish the supply of forms or replace the supply if a new version is issued by NYSBOE. Generally, supplies of 50 -100 forms are provided to each site, and this is usually adequate to keep sufficient stock available year-round. A notice on the form holder/dispenser directs the site to contact the BOE if the supply is exhausted.

Each registration form distributed for this program is marked by the Board with a stamp, so forms received from this program can be identified and tracked.

SCHOOL PROGRAM - § 3-212.4b

1. Number of school districts, colleges and universities in county/city:	<u>9</u>
2. Number of entities included in #1 above, contacted by your board:	<u>5</u>
3. Number of corresponding designated liaisons in #1 above, to assist:	<u>1</u>
4. Number of schools, colleges and universities conducting programs in which your board participates via on-site visits:	<u>1</u>
5. Number of schools, colleges and universities conducting programs on their own initiative, for which you only supply forms and instructions (no on-site visits):	<u>0</u>
6. Total number of students registered via this program	<u>0/unknown</u>

Schools were sent voter registration information, sample ballots and poll site information ahead of the general election.

Registration forms were not sent to schools this year. Previous feedback from schools indicated that they generally preferred to utilize online resources for voter registration programs, rather than receiving paper forms or having on-site visits.

MEDIA PROGRAM

Legal notices and press releases in local newspapers are utilized within the county to provide election information and registration deadlines. We continued our attempt to reach more voters by publishing notices in three newspapers rather than two, making weekly informational posts on social media (Facebook and Instagram), and interviewing with local television and radio news outlets when pertinent.

IV. PRINT RESOURCES

Brochures to recruit election inspectors, sample ballots, ballot proposal information, the Voters Bill of Rights and Notice to Voters are available at our office and at all poll sites on Election Day. Informational posters on how to register, provided by NYSBOE, are posted on a bulletin board at our office. We also make available a brochure listing all the elected officials for our jurisdiction, including office addresses and phone numbers, and term of office. Most of these items are also available on our website.

ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR 2026

The Board will continue to maintain boxes with voter registration forms at all local post offices, Town Clerk and Village Clerk offices, the County Legislative Clerk's office, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Veterans' Services Office. Additional distribution locations have been added to our list, including Tioga Opportunities Senior Center and public libraries.

Each county high school's Participation in Government faculty will be sent a letter with the current year's political calendar noting the deadlines for registration for the local village, school, primary and general elections per NYS Election Law. We will send information to educate students that Early Voting is an option, or early mail / absentee ballot applications may be requested or downloaded from the web annually while a student is away at college. We will push harder to conduct on-site visits at schools or otherwise increase our involvement in high school voter registration programs.

Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications will continue to be provided to nursing home and retirement center social workers, to distribute to their residents.

Voter registration forms will be made available to party committee chairs or representatives for use during petitioning, so that as committee members gather signatures, they have a supply of registration forms available to register new voters. Community groups will be provided forms upon request for local events and festivals throughout the year.

Early Voting flags and signage will be placed along the road at the entrance to our Early Voting location, to inform citizens of the opportunity to cast their vote during the posted Early Voting hours for Tioga County. Since our Early Voting location is at our office, some of these Early Voting hours can be an ideal time for people to pick up registration forms for un-registered relatives or friends, or for a parent to obtain information on how their student away at college may request a ballot when eligible for upcoming elections. Additionally, voters now have the opportunity to both register to vote and cast a ballot on the first day of Early Voting, as it now coincides with the voter registration deadline.

The Deputy Commissioners will continually track registrations as they are distributed and received from the various sources, such as DMV, agencies, high schools (if possible), online, post office, other counties' three-fold forms, or over the counter. Letters will continue to be sent to voters that have not provided a valid ID verification on their registration. Although

there are no community colleges or universities in our county, we hope to be involved in voter registration drives at colleges in neighboring counties that are heavily attended by our county residents.

All above-mentioned procedures will continue, with press releases as deadlines develop. Election information, deadlines, and other updates will be regularly posted on our Facebook page. We will maintain Tioga County Board of Elections webpage and aim to have information updated in as timely a manner as possible. Forms for civilian and military registration along with Early Vote by Mail and Absentee Applications will be available in our office or found on the Board of Elections web site located at www.tiogacountyny.gov/departments/board-of-elections/.

We will continue utilizing traditional media sources, such as newspaper, radio, and evening news, as well as social media, to distribute information. We hope to expand into alternative methods of information distribution, such as email or text subscriptions, and implement when funding and county support becomes available. Our ongoing goals are to reach more voters, reduce voter confusion, combat election misinformation, and increase voter turnout.