

OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation to the 2024 General Elections in the United States of America



As a participating State of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United States of America, through the State Department, has invited the OSCE to observe the forthcoming elections taking place on 5 November 2024. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the primary OSCE institution for election observation. This is the eleventh time since 2002 that ODIHR will observe elections in the United States; most recently, ODIHR observed the 2022 mid-term elections.

First steps

ODIHR carries out pre-election Needs Assessment Missions (NAMs) in all OSCE participating States holding national elections. A NAM is a fact-finding visit that assesses election preparations and recommends what type of election observation mission to deploy. The NAM for these elections took place from 13 to 17 May 2024.

During the NAM, the ODIHR team met various representatives from the government, political parties and the election administration, as well as public and private media and civil society. These meetings enabled a thorough assessment of election preparations and any potential challenges. The NAM looked at the legal framework and technical preparations and considered the concerns of key political stakeholders.

The NAM report was published on 9 July 2024, and is available on the [ODIHR website](#).

Observation format

In line with the outcome of the pre-election needs assessment, ODIHR has deployed a Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) to the United States. The LEOM format is used where the focus is more on the pre-election environment, election preparations, the campaign, media coverage and the handling of election disputes, and where fewer concerns are raised about the technical administration of the voting process on election day. A core team is based in Washington D.C., and Long-term Observers (LTOs) are deployed across the country and will stay for a couple of weeks after election day to follow the tabulation and announcement of the results and any post-election electoral dispute resolution. ODIHR has not deployed any Short-term Observers (STOs) to monitor election-day proceedings and the LEOM will not undertake a systematic and comprehensive observation of election-day proceedings.

Closer to election day, the ODIHR LEOM will be joined by observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), who will just observe the election-day procedures in several states. At that point, the ODIHR and OSCE PA missions will form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

The observation mission to the United States will provide a comprehensive analysis of the entire election process for its compliance with the commitments made by all OSCE countries to hold democratic elections, and with other international standards and national legislation.

What will this ODIHR observation mission cover?

The core team and LTOs will look at a wide range of activities, including:

- The legal framework, including federal and state election legislation
- Election administration, including voter registration, voter identification, alternative voting mechanisms and measures to ensure secrecy of the vote
- New voting technologies, focusing on the type of technology used in the elections, certification and evaluation of these technologies
- The campaign environment
- Campaign finance
- The election dispute resolution process
- Coverage of these elections by the media, including online media

As with every election observation, the team will also thoroughly assess the implementation of recommendations from previous ODIHR election observation missions.

The mission team

The LEOM to the 2024 United States general elections started on 30 September 2024. The mission is led by Tamás Meszerics (Hungary) and is comprised of 15 experts from 14 OSCE countries and 64 LTOs from 17 countries.

The core team members have been recruited directly by ODIHR; they are leading international experts in their field. Most LTOs are sent directly by OSCE countries, meaning they are selected and have their expenses paid for by their governments. This is standard ODIHR practice. Most importantly, observers do not represent

their respective governments. ODIHR thoroughly briefs them, and the observers are obliged to follow ODIHR's [election observation methodology](#) and are bound by ODIHR's [code of conduct](#) for election observers. ODIHR election observation is funded by all 57 participating States of the OSCE.

Deploying observers

ODIHR aims for balanced geographical coverage and considers the different electoral laws and practices across the United States, particularly the extent to which individual states permit international observation. Pairs of LTOs, each from a different country, combine their different backgrounds and perspectives to ensure balance and neutrality in reporting. They will meet various state and county officials, representatives of political parties, civil society and the media and report back to the core team. For these elections, the LTO teams will deploy to 48 states from 5 October until 8 November.

Observation reports

A report of the observation mission's interim findings will be published on ODIHR's website about two weeks before election day. The day after the elections, the IEOM will publish a report of preliminary findings and conclusions. The ODIHR LEOM will then produce a final report, including recommendations for the government and other institutions involved in the elections to improve the process in the future. All reports are shared with the United States government and the public.

Further Information

- [ODIHR election observation in the United States](#)
- [ODIHR election observation infographic](#)
- [ODIHR election observation handbooks](#)



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