

Research Guides



ELECTORAL COLLEGE

OVERVIEW

The Electoral College is the method by which the President of the United States is elected. The Electoral College is established in Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution, and has been modified by the 12th and 23rd Amendments.

Instead of electing the U.S. president based on the results of a nationwide popular vote, in the Electoral College each state is allotted a particular number of electoral votes. The number of electoral votes in each state is equal to the state's total congressional delegation. In other words, the number of electoral votes granted to a particular state can be determined by adding the number of U.S. senators (each state has 2 senators) and congressional representatives in the state. For example, Florida, which has 2 senators, and which currently has 27 congressional representatives, has 29 electoral votes. Despite its status as a federal district—rather than a state—with limited congressional representation, Washington D.C. has 3 electoral votes, bringing the national total of votes in the Electoral College to 538.

Until the mid-1800's, it was common for state legislators to determine how a state's electoral votes were cast. Currently, all states use a popular vote to decide how their electoral votes are cast.

If no candidate in a presidential race wins a majority of electoral votes (270 or more), it is up to the House of Representatives to decide the outcome of the election. This has occurred twice in U.S. History, once in 1800 and again in 1824.

At five points in United States history the winning presidential candidate seized the Electoral College, while losing the popular vote across the nation. Since the controversial presidential election in 2000, there have been growing efforts across the nation to reform or abolish the Electoral College.



[HTTPS://WWW.NCSL.ORG/RESEARCH/ELECTIONS-AND-CAMPAIGNS/THE-ELECTORAL-COLLEGE.ASPX](https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/the-electoral-college.aspx)

FINDING BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS

Dewey Decimal browsing numbers: 324.63

In addition to reference books, you may want to search for other books and materials (videos, audiobooks, etc.) on your topic. You can access the Library catalog from the Library or from home by going to www.wtpl.org. A good subject search is **Elections – United States**.

EBOOKS

Visit **EBSCOhost** (www.wtpl.org/research) or <https://wtpl.overdrive.com> to search the thousands of eBooks the Library has to offer. Additional eBooks and resources on the topic may be found at <https://www.hoopladigital.com/my/hoopla>. Library card required. Contact an Adult Services Librarian for additional details.

ARTICLES

The following sources can be used to find magazine articles dealing with your topic:

- [EBSCOhost and General OneFile](#) - Access from the Library or at home using your library card number at www.wtpl.org. Search for full-text articles in these online databases using your choice of keywords. You can limit the search to a certain year or even a certain magazine.

WEB SITES

National Conference of State Legislatures—The Electoral College: Provides an overview of the Electoral College system, including key dates concerning the Electoral College in 2020 and specific information regarding the handling of the Electoral College in different states.
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/the-electoral-college.aspx>

The Electoral College, How It Works in Contemporary Presidential Elections: An in-depth examination of the history, operations, and controversies surrounding the Electoral College.
<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL32611.html>

270 to Win: Features information and interactive maps explaining what happens in the event of an Electoral College tie.
<https://www.270towin.com/content/electoral-college-ties/>