

Elections

Mission

To govern the fair, legal and orderly conduct of elections in Indiana.

Summary of Activities



Elections in Indiana are regulated and coordinated by the combined activities of the **Indiana Election Commission** and the Election Division of the **Office of the Secretary of State**. Those activities are described below:

Training: One of the most important goals of the Division, this is accomplished through seminars including an annual conference, publications, and website: <http://www.state.in.us/sos/elections>.

Overseeing Voter Registration: The Division and the Commission prescribe voter registration forms, compile and maintain a statewide voter registration file, and oversee day-to-day operation of the state's voter registration.

Enforcing Campaign Finance Law: The Division and the Commission administer the Indiana Campaign Finance Act, serving as the repository for campaign finance data from thousands of committees and offering them for public inspection in the Division office and on www.indianacampaignfinance.com. The Commission is empowered to levy penalties for violations.

Certifying Voting Systems: The Commission must approve all voting systems prior to their purchase by counties or use by voters in Indiana elections.

Maintaining Election Maps: The Division is required to maintain complete legal descriptions and maps for all precincts in the state and approves proposed changes to those precincts.

Serving as Indiana's "Clearinghouse" for Election Law and Procedure: The Commission serves as a clearinghouse of information pertaining to election laws, administrative rules and other data for county election officials, news media, political organizations and the general public.

The Division and Commission are also responsible for printing and distributing the certifications of candidacy and official paper ballots for all federal, state and judicial offices, resolving candidate eligibility challenges, administering polling accessibility standards, and developing a uniform set of election forms for use throughout the State.

External Factors

The number of candidates and political committees filing with the state can drastically affect the amount of mailing and data processing costs the Division incurs during an election cycle. It also impacts the amount of fines incurred when a committee files late or not at all. This makes the income of the campaign finance program unpredictable. However, it is the Division's desire to lessen or even end late campaign finance filings through education and improved filing so the Division never counts on these funds when budget planning.

Several outside organizations conduct voter registration drives as part of their "get-out-the-vote" efforts. It is difficult to predict with any certainty how many of these drives will take place during a cycle and therefore difficult to determine the Division's print orders to provide forms free of charge, as required by law. Increased registrations also come from the **Bureau of Motor Vehicles** and other public service facilities who are required to provide voter registration to their customers.

Evaluation and Accomplishments

Over the last four years the Election Division has undertaken some very different duties. Campaign finance has grown as a portion of the agency's duties, from merely housing files to maintaining a searchable electronic database of campaign finance data that is made available through the Internet. The campaign finance website has become a national model for state campaign finance disclosure, inspiring Maine's new database. The Division, through its education efforts and

prompt customer service, has cut the number of late filings by more than half and the dollar amount of fines imposed on committees by more than one-fifth.

Through greater computerization, candidate tracking has been streamlined and made available for viewing by all interested parties via the Division website.

The Division is distributing voter registration forms and absentee ballot requests in Spanish and providing all election publications as electronic documents available for download through the web.



Plans for the Biennium

As a result of boundary changes to be mandated by the 2001 session of the General Assembly, the Election Division will be assisting Indiana counties with redrawing their precinct boundaries, and will become the primary clearinghouse for map data to the counties and the public. Cost factors inherent in this process include but are not limited to: mapping software; printing materials and equipment, and possibly one additional staff member.

The administration of campaign finance reporting and public disclosure of those reports continues to grow as a responsibility of the agency. Focuses for this biennium includes: continued compilation of campaign finance data; improving internet disclosure capabilities; and implementation of more user-friendly electronic filing procedures.

At present, there is an ongoing debate about the future of Indiana's voter registration system. Questions being discussed

include the issue of whether the General Assembly should enact either the adoption of the last four digits of the social security number as Indiana's voter identification cross-reference or opt to create a statewide interactive voter registration database system that links the



92 county voter registration files. Both options include short-term costs, but could create a savings opportunity that offsets that cost in the long run.

<i>Program: 0930</i>	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Appropriation (All Funds)	\$1,049,579	\$995,776	\$995,776	\$992,736	\$1,178,736
Expenditures	\$865,522	\$984,958	\$1,031,629		

**Sources of Funds
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ General ■ Dedicated ■ Federal ■ Other

98%
2%

**Uses of Funds
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ Personal Services ■ Distributions ■ Capital ■ Other

51%
49%