



Election Division Dispatch

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NEWS & UPDATES

IED Publications

As previously noted, IED is not printing or publishing the Title 3 code book or any publication, such as the VR Guidebook or Campaign Finance Manual. To date, IED has released the following guidebooks that are available online at in.gov/sos/elections under the "Election Administrator's Portal":

- 2026 Campaign Finance Manual
- 2026 Candidate's Guide
- 2026 Election Calendar: Election Administrator's Edition
- 2026 Voter Registration Guidebook

We are finalizing the Election Administrator's Guidebook, and will notify counties by email when it is complete. On a related note, presentations for the Dec. conference can also be found on this webpage as those are released closer to Dec. 15.

Voting System Recertification

IEC renewed the certification of several "legacy" voting systems at its Nov. 3 & 10 meetings:

- MicroVote version EMS 4.4-IN
- ES&S versions EVS 5.2.4.0; EVS 6.0.4.0; EVS 6.3.0.0
- Unisyn version OpenElect 2.2.2

These systems are certified for use in Indiana through Oct. 1, 2029, and may be marketed, sold, and leased by voting system vendors. Vendors can also bring forward modifications to be considered by IEC during this period of time.

Hart Intercivic version Verity Voting 2.3 and 2.5 remains in "legacy" status. Counties are permitted to use the voting system. However, the vendor cannot market, sell, or lease the system to any Indiana county and cannot seek modifications to the system until such a time the system is re-certified. Hart does have an application for a new voting system before VSTOP at this time.

State Convention Delegates

The Democratic and Republican state parties submitted their statewide delegate plans for the 2026 election cycle. Those are now published on the Election Administrator's Portal page at in.gov/sos/elections.

Look for your county and confirm whether the parties are electing their delegates at-large or by district. If the party opted for at-large races, then the number of elected delegate seats is the maximum number of delegates to be elected in May. The party chair does not need to file anything else with the CEB, since the state plan covers it.

However, if district races were chosen, the party chair must file their district descriptions with the CEB by noon, Dec. 31, 2025 and indicate the number of delegates to be elected in each district. If the chair does not, then the CEB must determine the districts before candidate filing opens Jan. 7, 2026.

CALENDAR

Dec. 1, 2025 (NOON): Deadline for D/R State Parties to file state convention delegate plans with IED

Dec. 1, 2025: First day an absentee application can be received for May 2026 primary election (Note: FPCAs, ABS-AG, and ABS-VPDs for 2026 cycle can be received on or after 1/1/26)

Dec. 8, 2025: Third VLM shipment to counties, including first cards returned as undeliverable between 11/1 and 11/26/25, and a secondary shipment with all cards received at the start of the project that counties have already acted upon

Dec. 15-17, 2025: IED Election Administrators' Conference

Dec. 25 & 26, 2025: Christmas Holiday (observed); IED Closed

Dec. 31, 2025 (NOON): Deadline for a county chair to submit boundary descriptions for state delegate districts, if the delegates are not elected at-large

Jan. 1, 2026: New Year's Day; IED Closed

Jan. 1, 2026: First day an FPCA, ABS-AG, or ABS-VPD can be accepted for 2026 elections

Jan. 7, 2026: Candidate Filing Opens

Jan. 19, 2026: MLK Day; IED Closed

Jan. 21, 2026: 2025 Annual Campaign Finance Report Due for all open candidate committees and PACs (party committees can file their 2025 annual report as late as noon, March 1, 2026)

Jan. 30, 2026: Deadline for CEBs to determine if a committee is subject to the administrative dissolution procedure (IC 3-9-1-12)

Feb. 2, 2026: Deadline for county sheriff and local health officer to provide quarterly reports related to imprisonment following conviction or death, respectively

Feb. 4, 2026: Deadline to complete VLM work before freeze period begins on Feb. 5, 2026

Feb. 6, 2026 (NOON): Candidate filing for primary closes

Feb. 13, 2026 (NOON): Deadline to withdraw from primary

Feb. 13, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for a voter in the election district or county chair to file a CAN-1 challenge against a candidate who filed for the May primary election

Feb. 13, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for D or R appointed CEB member to file a request that uncontested candidates for party offices (PC, delegate) must appear on the ballot

Feb. 13, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for a candidate seeking an office paying more than \$5000 in a calendar year to open a candidate's committee (CFA-1) unless they've already done so

Mar. 2, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for party committees to file their 2025 annual report

DECEMBER WEB TRAINING

Dec. 2 & 4 | Election, Office, Candidate & Referendum Setup

Dec. 22 & 29 | Dec. 2025 Build Placeholder

Dec. 30 & Jan. 6 | Convention Delegate Setup in SVRS

2025 Calendar is posted to the INSVRS County Portal and subject to change.

IN FOCUS:

Clerk's Office Closure on Election Day

During this last session, legislators passed a new law that requires the clerk's office to be closed on Election Day but for their duties to manage the election along with their board members. (IC 3-5-4-14)

This applies only to the May and Nov. elections held in even-numbered years, meaning it does not apply to the municipal or special election years.

Subsection (b) of the statute makes it clear that the clerk is not required to perform any "clerk" responsibilities but for election administration. This would extend to any clerk office staff that supports election work.

However, other clerk staff who focus on other work with the courts, for example, would not be required to be at work on the primary and general election day. Of course, clerk staff can be a poll worker, assist staff, etc. but they would not need to focus on other duties of the clerk's office that day.

County commissioners have general authority over county offices and property, so these officials would determine if the entire court-

house was closed, rather than just an individual office. But, even if the courthouse is closed for election day, the clerk's office or wherever the CEB is meeting needs to be accessible to the public.

"Small" Town Elections in 2026

Several counties have asked when the CAN-16 for Democratic and Republican candidates for 2026 is being released. In short—it's not.

State law changed in 2024 to require all "small" towns who moved some or all of their elections to the even-numbered year to require D/R candidates to file for the May primary election, even if they small town did not pass an ordinance making that change.

This means all D/R candidates running for "small" town office will file the CAN-2/CAN-12 from Jan. 7 to noon, Feb. 6, 2026, like other D/R candidates running for federal, state, or other local offices. The D/R parties can fill ballot vacancies on or after May 8, 2026, for "small" town offices, the same as other offices.

Independent and minor party candidates running for a "small" town office continue to sync up with the same filing deadlines as other can-

didates. This means a CAN-3 to be a write-in candidate for "small town" office and CAN-12 must be filed by noon, July 6, 2026 (the July 3 deadline rolls to July 6 due to a state holiday).

If an independent or minor party candidate for small town office wants their name printed on the ballot, then CAN-21 petitions must be filed with the county VR office by noon, June 30, 2026, with the candidate consent due by noon, July 15, 2026.

However, Libertarian candidates achieve ballot access through convention, generally speaking. This means the CAN-16 will be used by Libertarian candidates for "small town" office in 2026, with a filing period of Jan. 7 to noon, Aug 1, 2026. A "small" town convention would only be held to nominate a Libertarian candidate for the Nov. ballot if more than one Libertarian candidate filed for a particular "small" town office.

"Small" towns holding some or all of their elections in 2027 will revert back to the town convention model for D/R/L candidates unless the town council passed an ordinance requiring a primary for D/R parties to nominate their candidates for the Nov. 2027 election.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Q. Must counties provide an accessible voting system at travel board appointments?

A. While encouraged, the CEB determines whether to bring a direct record electronic voting system (DRE) or ballot marking device (BMD) to travel board appointments through a resolution. IC 3-11-10-26.2 permits the CEB to unanimously agree to use these voting systems for travel board purposes. Remember, if a county uses a BMD for travel board, the ABS-7 envelope must be used to store the absentee ballot. The travel board team must witness the voter's signature on the security envelope or attest the voter was not able to sign their name or make a mark.

The travel board members then sign and print their name on their portion of the affidavit. Otherwise, a voter voting by travel board would use a hand-marked paper ballot card, where the voter can receive assistance from the bi-partisan travel board team.

Q. Is the CEB required to accept public comment at its meetings?

A. Not necessarily, with some exceptions. State law changed in 2024 to permit a local governing body, like the CEB, to designate a period for public comment before final action is taken. If the CEB adopts a rule or policy on public comment or removing attendees disrupting a meeting, then it must be announced before taking public comment at the meeting or by posting the rules at the entrance of the meeting. (IC 5-14-1.5-3.3) Hearings are another matter, where the parties involved would be permitted to speak and provide facts to the CEB to consider when making decisions on candidate challenges or campaign finance issues, for example.

Q. Is there a state form for the D or R chair to certify that a candidate is a member of their political party, if the candidate does not have the proper voting history to run in the May primary election?

A. No. There is no official state form. However, IED has a sample certification document available for county use. Otherwise, the county chair may use party letterhead, for example, to sign off of the candidate.

VR CORNER

Prepping for 2026

Last month, Civix held two training sessions to help counties get ready for the 2026 election cycle. These sessions focused on voter address points and assignments along with voter exceptions. If you were not able to attend these trainings, you can access materials and recordings on the County Portal.

County VR officials will also want to keep up with VLM activities, including reviewing SVRS reports such as the one identifying voters who are more than 115 years old or lack a birth date on their record. At least once a year counties must review this information and use the BMV link in SVRS to draw down a birth date, if available, to correct the registration.

Making sure your voters are properly assigned to the right precinct and election district is key to a relatively smooth election. Counties are encouraged to review their precinct key to ensure each precinct has the correct election districts assigned to it. If there is a correction to be made, submitting a County Authorization Form (CAF) through SVRS along with a marked up precinct key is how updates can be made, followed by Batch Redistricting to refresh existing voter records.

Of course, counties need to review office assignments for accuracy in SVRS. You may need to reference the 2022 election cycle to ensure every office on the ballot is present with two exceptions. US Senate is not on the ballot in 2026 in Indiana and judges elected in 2022 will not be the same ones on the ballot in 2026, since they serve six year terms. Not only is the office set-up important for candidate filing, but also results reporting.