



Election Division Dispatch

Brad King & Angie Nussmeyer, Co-Directors | October 2025

NEWS & UPDATES

2026 Publications

IED is working on publications for the 2026 election cycle. Currently, only the 2026 Election Calendar Brochure is available but we hope to start releasing electronic versions on our website in advance of the December Conference. As announced at the IVRA and Northern District Clerk's Conference, we are no longer printing publications due to budget constraints. Additionally, the vendors we solicit for the Title 3 code book did not respond to our request for proposal, meaning there will be no code book available for purchase. Counties are encouraged to use the searchable Indiana Code available on iga.in.gov. You can also download a full copy of Title 3 at <https://iga.in.gov/laws/2025/ic/titles/3>. Click the down arrow next to "Reference Materials" and click "Download PDF."

Statewide VLM Project Update

In October, counties are expected to have cleared their VLM Inactive Hopper (and preferably, the VLM Exception Hopper, too) by October 3, 2025. This is necessary for Civix to load all of the "late arriving" cards to SVRS for counties to merge the scanned images into the voter's documents on their record. "Late" voter response cards are also being loaded for counties to take action upon to update, cancel, or confirm the registration address. More details about this process, including how to handle the late arriving voter documents and their retention, will be shared in a memo.

The memo also touches upon an issue where a second card was mailed to a voter and the card was either damaged or missing part of a mailing address. IED could not confirm whether the voter actually received the second card before it was returned as undeliverable due to processing issues. As a result, IED is mailing a SAMC (not a card 2) to this universe of about 50,000 voters so that counties will not have to bear the cost of this issue. The SAMC will look just like the form created out of SVRS and will include the return mailing address to the county. Counties should treat this SAMC the same as any other SAMC received by your office. There is no "special" handling required. Please read the memo closely and email elections@iec.in.gov if you have any questions.

ABS Envelope Templates

As preparations begin for 2026, please take a look at your ABS templates provided to you by the state to make sure your mailing address printed on them is accurate. If not, you will want to make sure the template is updated with the correct information. If you are one of several counties that opted to use the intelligent mail bar (IMB) code on their return envelope AND your mailing address has changed, you will need to work with the USPS to get a corrected bar code for the mail piece. IED can assist with making a connection, if needed.

CALENDAR

Note: This calendar includes dates to assist counties who have a special election in certain precincts on 11/4/25. These dates do not apply to a county if no election is being conducted.

- Oct. 6, 2025:** Voter Registration Deadline (for counties with a special election only); last day for counties holding a special election to move a registration to "inactive" status in those precincts where a special election is being conducted, as "freeze" period starts the next day (Oct. 7, 2025)
- Oct. 7, 2025:** Early voting begins (for counties with a special election only) unless CEB reduces hours under IC 3-11-10-26.5
- Oct. 13, 2025:** Columbus Day, IED Closed
- Oct. 16, 2025:** Travel Board begins (for counties with a special election only)
- Oct. 22, 2025:** First VLM card shipment to counties, including first cards returned as undeliverable on or after 7/10, which counties may use to send a SAMC
- Oct. 23, 2025:** ABS-Mail, ABS-VPD deadline to request an absentee ballot for special election
- Oct. 25, 2025:** First of two early voting Saturdays, unless CEB adopts resolution under IC 3-11-10-26.5
- Nov. 1, 2025:** Second of two early voting Saturdays, unless CEB adopts resolution under IC 3-11-10-26.5
- Nov. 1, 2025:** Inspector supply pick-up weekend
- Nov. 3, 2025:** Early voting ends at noon; ABS-Traveling Board apps due by noon; deadline to receive FPCA for an email ballot for any special election
- Nov. 4, 2025:** Special Election Day
- Nov. 12, 2025:** Second VLM card shipment to counties, including first cards returned as undeliverable between 10/11 and 10/31/25, which counties may use to send a SAMC
- Nov. 18, 2025:** Registration re-opens for May 2026 primary
- Nov. 27 & 28, 2025:** Thanksgiving; IED Closed
- Nov. 30, 2025:** 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 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

OCTOBER WEB TRAINING

- Oct. 2 & 3 |** September Build (just announced)
- Oct. 7 & 9 |** County Directory Use & Maintenance
- Oct. 21 & 23 |** 2FA After Hours Validation

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

IN FOCUS: Voting System Renewals

On October 1, 2025, the four year certification for voting systems approved by the Indiana Election Commission will expire and those systems become “legacy” until the certifications are renewed. So what does this mean for county election officials?

Under Indiana law, a “legacy” voting system may still be used in federal, state, and local elections. However, the vendor may no longer market, sell, or lease a “legacy” system in Indiana and cannot modify its hardware, software, or firmware. Counties are authorized under state law to continue using the “legacy” system, being mindful that their vendor is limited on the “sales” side of their relationship with local officials.

The Commission approved an amended protocol to the 2021 voting system standards at its September meeting. Recent changes to state law requiring the addition of a “no public question” style ballot in the November election for voters using a fail safe when certain public questions are on the ballot and adding party affiliation to school board offices were added to the testing protocols for voting system renewals for the next four-year period.

Several vendors have applied for renewal or recertification. IED will send letters to those counties informing them of their application. VSTOP will review their documentation and perform a field test to confirm the systems meet the requirements of state law under the amended 2021 protocols.

IEC will meet later this fall to hear reports and recommendations from VSTOP on the renewals. If approved, the voting systems will become certified in Indiana for the next four years through October 1, 2029. This means the vendor will be able to market, sell, or lease their equipment in Indiana but also can improve the voting system through modifications that are approved by IEC.

The renewal process cannot consider “new” features on a system. Voting system vendors can seek modifications whether minor (or “de minimis”) or not after their renewal request is approved by the Commission. This is a separate application process and those systems will be reviewed using an updated 2025 testing protocol that will be approved at a future Commission meeting.

The 2025 testing protocol uses the amended 2021 protocol as its foundation, but also includes the new ballot retraction feature that optical scan voting systems may use once approved by the Commission.

While the MicroVote DRE (or any other DRE approved for use in the future) is required to have ballot retraction under state law, optical scan systems do not. Retraction is an optional feature for opScan systems, as absentee ballots can remain sealed in an envelope to reject without the need for scanning. This is not possible on a DRE system, as those votes are stored electronically in the system itself. (The VVPAT tape is NOT a ballot.)

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Q. Can a PAC disband their committee at any time? Or are they bound by the same rule as a candidate's committee?

A. A political action committee, or PAC, is not part of the state's definition of “candidate”. For this reason, a PAC can disband at any time, assuming there is a \$0 cash on hand, no debts owed to/by the committee, and the “final/disbands” box is checked.

Q. Does the new law permitting a school board candidate to affiliate with a political party mean that the office is going to be on the May primary ballot?

A. No. School board elections are still held at the November election. There is no primary election nominating process; however, the D and R candidates do have to meet the “vote history” requirement or attach a chair's certification to their petition of nomination and consent form. Additionally, the parties are not limited to fielding candidates that equal the number of seats to be voted upon. For example, if the school board seat is a “vote for 1” election, the D or R party can have an infinite number of candidates and are not bound to only one. Or, if it's a seat that you select “not more than 3”, the party is not bound by this number and can field an infinite number of candidates. The same is true for the Libertarian or other minor party candidates and Independents.

Q. What about straight party voting - will that apply to school board races now?

A. No. Straight party voting will NOT apply to school board races, even though a candidate may have a party affiliation associated with them.

VR CORNER

VR & Nursing Home Residents

A few counties have reached out to ask where a person living in a nursing home or other care facility should be registered to vote - at their home address or the facility. The answer boils down to the voter's intent. Residency is incredibly fact sensitive. IC 3-5-5, generally, states the residency standards for registering to vote or being a candidate or elected official. This can be helpful to the voter to make the best decision for their circumstances.

For example, if the voter intends to return to their home, (whether or not such a return is likely) then they may continue to be registered at their home address. If they don't wish to remain registered at a former address, then the voter may choose to be registered at the care facility.