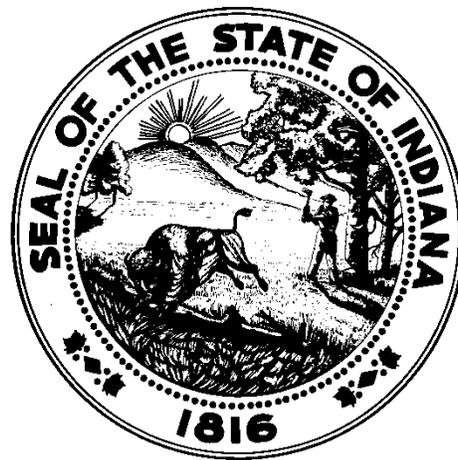# Forms Coordinator

Handbook

STANDARD DEFINITION OF FORM

A form is a basic business tool (whether printed or electronic) for collecting and transmitting information, and establishing a record of what was done.

WHAT IS A STATE FORM?

According to IC 5-15-5.1-1, a State Form is:
"…every piece of paper, transparent plate, or film containing information printed, generated, or reproduced by whatever means, with blank spaces left for the entry of additional information to be used in any transaction involving the state."

State forms are visible evidence of the information processing system of an agency. They document the flow of data. Forms demand action, assign responsibility, and lighten work. They instruct, communicate, record, transmit, and standardize information. Forms record compliance with regulations and are the first component in the life cycle of a record.

Forms are no longer restricted to paper formats. Computers and new technologies impact the functions of forms management. The following items are within the definition of a State form:
- forms used within a confined office or program
- internally-reproduced forms
- forms purchased from commercial vendors
- forms generated by a database
- web-based forms
- temporary forms

Types of forms may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- single (flat or cut) sheets
- continuous forms
- envelopes
- checks / warrants
- identification cards
- ledgers / registers
- receipts
- unit sets (carbonless forms)
- letterhead
- certificates / licenses
- examinations / tests
- labels / tags / decals
- self mailers
- booklets / listings / reports

NON-FORMS

Many items do not fall within the standard definition of a form. These miscellaneous products and publications include posters, engraved items, mailing labels, business cards, newsletters, maps, logo decals, brochures, booklets, packets, annual reports, directories, instructional sheets, and handbooks. These items do not need a control number and are not subject to forms management requirements.

FORMS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

The Forms Management Division operates within the Indiana Archives and Records Administration (IARA). Forms Management serves as the centralized forms management service for the State of Indiana, providing tailored, cost-effective solutions to agencies, while providing a uniform, centralized repository for citizens and constituents.

The Forms Management Division is defined by IC 5-15-5.1-1 as:
"…the program maintained by the commission to provide continuity of forms design procedures from the form's origin up to its completion as a record by determining the form's size, style, and size of type; format; type of construction; number of plies; quality, weight, and type of paper and carbon; and use of the form for data entry as well as the distribution."

The Forms Management Division is charged with the establishment of a central State form numbering system, and a central cross-index filing system for all State forms. This involves standardization, consolidation, and elimination, wherever possible, of forms used by State government.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FORMS MANAGEMENT

The Forms Management Division assigns State Form numbers, and investigates the form's role in an information management system by determining the form's real purpose and need, the data that it should contain, the type or nature of the form, the other forms with which it must work, as well as to identify the needs of both internal and external users.

Some of the tangible benefits provided by the Forms Management Division:
- It provides the user with the recordkeeping system needed to conduct business and to ensure that forms make cost-effective and efficient use of manpower.
- It creates a centralized reference point for information regarding all State forms and associated recordkeeping systems.
- It controls and assists in the elimination of unneeded recordkeeping by providing professional analysis, design, and composition services.
- It reduces and controls all information processing costs (including collection, storage and retrieval) by providing expert systems analysis during development stages.
- It offers training for agency personnel involved directly in the operation of specialized information systems.
- It encourages the elimination of wasteful and ineffective procedures in information processing.
- It prevents and eliminates duplication of forms and related recordkeeping procedures.
- It prevents unnecessary records from being created.
- It facilitates interaction between the user agency and vendor during the manufacture of paper forms.
- It aids the Indiana General Assembly and Office of Management and Budget in understanding the reporting requirements which follow changes in State statute as well as the impact such changes have on State agencies and the private sector.

The Forms Management Division is composed of two sections:

The Forms Control Section is responsible for:
- researching the history and status of a form prior to analysis and design
- maintaining records of printing and revision history of State forms
- assigning and cross-indexing State form numbers
- providing clerical support for State agencies for their forms management system
- reviewing Certificates of Printing Performance for quality control and historical-cost purposes

The Analysis / Design Section is responsible for:
- reviewing all requests for new State forms and revision of existing State forms
- establishing titles for State forms by determining the purpose of the form in order to develop consistency and standardization across State government
- writing specifications for the printing and manufacture of State forms
- online publication of State forms
- providing procedures, flowcharting, and analysis for both manual and automated recordkeeping systems
- determining the format, typography, spacing, and graphic elements of State forms
- preparing layouts of State forms for review by agencies
- providing proofs of the final composition for agency review and approval
- preparing printing specifications and construction diagrams
- generating artwork
- documenting the processes involved in the output of artwork

The Forms Management Division, the Department of Administration's Procurement Division, and Novitex work together in a cooperative effort to provide customers with printed forms in the quality and quantity required. For this reason, all Requests for Print Service are processed by Forms Management before being sent to Novitex for initial determination as to where the form will be printed. Requests to create, revise, or reprint State forms receive Forms Management's direct attention.

AGENCY FORMS COORDINATORS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Each State agency has a coordinator who works with the Forms Management Division to process, develop, and design forms management systems that suit the agency's needs. Coordinators are an integral part of Indiana's successful forms management program.
Every agency is required by law (IC 5-15-5.1-10) to appoint a representative from its staff to serve as a liaison between the agency and the Indiana Archives and Records Administration. By routing all forms and records issues through the agency coordinator, management can maximize the efficiency of its recordkeeping functions.

Large agencies usually appoint separate *Forms Coordinators* and *Records Coordinators.* However, if only one coordinator is appointed, that person is designated as an *Information Coordinator.* A coordinator should become familiar with forms and records issues, as well as systems and processes used within his or her agency.

The agency coordinator's responsibilities include:
- obtaining prior, written approval from Forms Management for the creation of new State forms and/or the revision of existing State forms
- reviewing and initialing all forms requests before forwarding them to Forms Management
- assisting the Forms Management team member by answering questions regarding the intended use of the forms
- reporting all changes to existing forms
- reviewing all forms designs and proofs
- approving or rejecting design proofs
- informing Forms Management of any forms to be deactivated
- coordinating intra-agency recordkeeping functions to simplify the use of forms and reports
- maintaining reasonable knowledge and control over the use of office copiers in the reproduction of unauthorized forms
- informing Forms Management of any intended changes in the information processing functions of the agency
- coordinating reviews of forms and information systems when requested by the Indiana Archives and Records Administration Forms Management Division

THE DESIGN OF FORMS

Unauthorized forms
A stumbling block to any forms management program is the creation and use of unauthorized forms. The internet, computer printers, and copy machines facilitate the reproduction and distribution of unauthorized forms.

Unauthorized forms must be identified. The Forms Coordinator should be on the lookout for such forms and bring them to the attention of the forms originator and user, or directly to the Forms Management Division.

Poor Design
The two common rules of thumb when designing forms are: design for simplicity and consistency in the response, and organize questions/items of similar content. Many forms creators confuse design and construction features with quality. They put a great deal of emphasis on the graphics layout – multicolored backgrounds, graduated screens, shadowed boxes, typography and aesthetic appeal. While these elements may contribute to quality in some circumstances, they are only a minor component. The concentration should be on the informational component – the intended meaning and the perceptions of the document's users.

Can Anyone Design A Form?
While anyone who has access to a computer and the proper software can create a form, good forms design should include input from a professional designer. A professional designer can offer recommendations that may add to the form's usefulness. For instance, a designer will ask questions about the form's purpose to gain an understanding of how the form can best be designed to collect the needed information. Forms designers consider records management issues, multi-purpose use of the collected information, Federal forms design standards, etc. A design professional's expertise can save agencies time and expense by avoiding the novice designer's mistakes.

An added benefit of consulting the Forms Management Division is its knowledge of the forms used currently in State government. Forms Management may suggest a form that is already in use by another agency, thereby omitting the design and approval process. This allows agencies to begin using the needed form immediately.

The Forms analysis and design process reviews and creates forms used by the State of Indiana. This process includes the entire cycle of development through to the final creation of the actual artwork and is provided at no cost to the agency. By creating and maintaining the artwork, subsequent revisions are more readily performed.
Some of the functions performed by this section include:
- artwork composition
- compliance with State and Federal laws
- form layout and design
- language simplification
- specifications for printing jobs

The Forms Management staff is professionally trained in the development of many types of forms for use with various types of equipment. Their expertise includes knowledge of:

- forms manufacturing methods
- forms handling equipment
- microfilming requirements
- numbering systems
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR)
- paper weight, size, and stock
- printing techniques
- type specifications
- U.S. postal mailing regulations

THE FORMS NUMBERING SYSTEM AND GIVING TITLE

The keys to any forms program are its identifiers; i.e., the control number (State Form number or State Publication number) <u>and</u> the name of the printed material (Form title or publication name).

The Forms Management Archive maintains a historical file on each active and inactive State form used in State government. These forms must have State form numbers. Each agency's form files and numbering systems must be designed to conform to the State's form numbering system. Exceptions can be made only after review by Forms Management.

Forms Management makes the official determination regarding the revision criteria for all State forms. The criteria for determining a revision is quite simple: if any substantive part of the form's content is altered from one version to another, it is a revision.

The State Form Number or State Publication Number

A form number is a numeric identifying code used to designate a specific form. It is essential for control of the form and to use in place of long titles, especially for requisitioning, purchasing, warehousing and ordering. The form number must always be followed by the date of the latest revision to differentiate it from a prior design. If the form never changes, it should always show the date of origination. The format of the State form number is as follows:
State Form XXXXX (Origination or Revision Number / Date)
    For example:
        The original version of a form – State Form 12345 (1-12)
        The first revision of a form – State Form 12345 (R / 6-12)
        The successive revision of a form – State Form 12345 (R2 / 11-12)

The control number for all State forms is the State Form number, assigned by the Forms Management Division. All other agency internal numbering systems are secondary to the State numbering system. (*See IC 5-15-5.1-5(a)(2).*)
The following format is to be used for secondary numbers:
State Form XXXXX (Origination or Revision Number / Date) / Agency Number
    For example:
        State Form 12345 (R2 / 11-12) / ABC-123

The Form Title or Publication Name

In addition to the form number, every form should have a descriptive title, which helps the reader quickly understand the function of the form. The form title should be brief, but descriptive of its function. It should answer two questions: How will the form be used and what will the form do? The form title should have a *subject* and a *function.*
    For example: Office Supplies Request
    The subject is "office supplies" and the function is "to request."

Never use superfluous and self-evident terms such as form, or unneeded keywords such as card, sheet, or slip on the title.

DEVELOPING A NEW FORM OR REVISING AN EXISTING FORM

Step One:
Complete State Form 36040, Request for Approval of New / Revised Form, parts one and two.
Complete part three only if the form will be produced by a printing vendor.
(If you have any questions, call Forms Management at 317-232-3380.)
If you need to make the same change to multiple State forms (e.g. a change of address), you may
instead complete State Form 53963, Request for Comprehensive Revision of Multiple State
Forms, and use it to submit all affected State forms to Forms Management.

Step Two:
Specify whether the form will be designed by Forms Management or your agency.
If your request is for Forms Management to design a new State form, attach a mock-up, sketch,
draft, or sample of the proposed form showing how you would like the new form to look.
If your request is for Forms Management to revise an existing State form, attach a printed sample
of the current version of the form with the changes noted in red ink.
If your agency either designed or revised a State form, attach a printed sample and e-mail an
electronic copy of the form to Forms Management.

Step Three:
Send the completed Request for Approval and copy of the form to the Indiana Archives and Records
Administration, Forms Management Division, Indiana Government Center South, Room W472.

If the form will be printed by a printing vendor, complete and send State Form 44874, Request
for Print Service, along with the request. You may also include printing specifications, which
Forms Management will use as guidelines for writing specifications after the form is approved.

Step Four:
Upon receipt of the Request for Approval by the Forms Management Division, the request will
be logged in and assigned to a Forms Management team member.

- If it is an agency design, Forms Management will review the form and either make or
  have the agency make any necessary changes. Once the form is correct, the Forms
  Management Division will finalize the form, complete part four of the Request, and send
  a copy of the completed Request to the Forms Coordinator.

- If it is a Forms Management design, the Forms Management Division will design the
  form and send a proof to the Forms Coordinator for approval. Once the proof is approved
  and returned to Forms Management, the Forms Management Division will finalize the
  form, complete part four of the Request, and send a copy of the completed Request to the
  Forms Coordinator.

Step Five:
State Board of Accounts (SBOA) approval is required when a form has a financial impact.
SBOA requires the following information: a copy of the Memorandum from Forms Management
(State Form 43776); a cover letter stating the purpose of the form, who will use it, all fees
collected, how often it is used, and the audit trail involved; a copy of the signed and dated State
Form Checklist (State Form 56162); a copy of the new or revised form; and, for revised forms, a
mark-up of the current version of the form noting all changes being made to create the revised
version. Send this information to SBOA at Formapproval@sboa.IN.gov. If you have any
questions about the SBOA approval process, please e-mail Formapproval@sboa.IN.gov and note
"Form Question" in the subject line. Upon approval, SBOA will e-mail an approval letter to you
– please forward a copy of this letter to Forms Management so it can be added to the form's
permanent record.

PRINTING

If your agency would like a price quote before printing, complete State Form 55375, Request for Quote, and send it directly to the Novitex Print Center at NovitexPrintCenter@idoa.IN.gov. Once your agency receives the quote and is ready to print, or if a quote is not required, follow these steps:

Step One:
Complete State Form 44874, Request for Print Service.

Step Two:
Send the print request to Forms Management. *All requests for printing of State Forms must be submitted to Forms Management for processing.*

If the print request is for a new / revised form, include it with your Request for Approval (State Form 36040).

If the print request is for a reprint of an existing form, e-mail it to sfprint@iara.IN.gov. You may include a scan of the sample in your e-mail.

Step Three:
Requests for printing new / revised forms will be processed as soon as the form is finalized.

For reprints, Forms Management will receive the request then e-mail a copy of the artwork to the Forms Coordinator for approval. The Forms Coordinator should verify that the artwork is correct and ready for printing, then e-mail approval to the Forms Management Division.

Forms Management will write the specifications and forward the job to Novitex for printing. The Forms Management team member will also e-mail the Forms Coordinator to confirm that the request was processed and sent.

Novitex will obtain pricing and inform the Forms Coordinator of the vendor(s) with the lowest bid(s). The Forms Coordinator will then inform Novitex of the vendor that your agency has selected to produce the job.
If the job is awarded to a Novitex associated vendor, nothing more needs to be done.
If the job is awarded to PEN products, Novitex will release the job to them and is no longer involved in the printing process for that job.

Upon release from Novitex, Forms Management will forward the specifications and artwork to PEN Products so they can begin production. It is up to the Forms Coordinator to work with PEN Products to provide a PO for the job and to review and approve any proofs prior to printing.

Step Four:
Forms Management cannot provide information about print jobs once they have been processed and forwarded to Novitex or PEN Products. Please contact Novitex or PEN Products directly to check the status of a print job.
Once you receive your order, check it immediately to ensure it is correct. If you find that it is not correct, contact Novitex or PEN Products directly to resolve the issue.

Forms Management should receive a Certificate of Printing (COP) and samples from the print vendor upon completion of the job. Forms Management reviews the samples to ensure the form is printed correctly. If the job is not correct, Forms Management will inform the Forms Coordinator. It is up to the agency to work with Novitex or PEN Products to resolve any issues.

Sometimes there is a delay between delivery of a job and receipt of the COP by Forms Management, so it is important that your agency check the job upon receipt.

THE STATE FORMS CATALOG

The State Forms Catalog at Forms.IN.gov is the central repository for State Forms and is maintained by Forms Management.

The State Forms Catalog groups forms first by agency, then by division. To ensure accurate display of the forms, agencies should include the division to which the form belongs on the SF 36040.

When completing SF 36040, agencies must specify which level of access is suitable for the form:
- General public – There is no restriction as to who may access the form
- State employees – Only State employees may access the form; it will not be available to the public
- Agency only – Only employees of your agency may access the form; it will not be available to the public or to any other State employees
- Restricted access / other – The form will not be available on the State Forms Catalog either because it is sensitive in nature (e.g. certificates and licenses), because it is only printed by a vendor (e.g. envelopes and mailers), or because it is only available as part of a specialized program / database

Forms Management will upload a State form to the Catalog as soon as it is finalized.
Agencies may obtain form URLs by searching for their forms on the Catalog, right-clicking on the desired link, and copying the shortcut. The resulting link must be used by agencies should they make forms available on their websites, brochures, e-mails, etc.

60 IAC 3, Electronic Copies of Forms, requires that Agencies use direct links to the State Forms Catalog on their individual websites; agencies may not post form files (e.g. .pdf, .doc, .xls) directly to IN.gov pages. When copies of forms are posted on the internet independent of the State Forms Catalog, they are not connected to the central repository and will not update when the forms are revised. This results in additional work by agency web staff, as well as the ongoing availability of outdated copies of forms – which may contain outdated or incorrect information such as instructions, addresses, and fees.

Forms Coordinators must instruct their webmasters to not post copies of State forms onto the agency websites; webmasters should only post links to State forms onto the agency websites.

Web-based non-file forms such as HTML-created forms may be produced in WebCMS and published on IN.gov. However, web-based non-file forms are still considered to be State forms and must go through the regular form approval process; in addition, the publishing agency must provide a link to Forms Management upon publication of the form.

HELPFUL LINKS	**CONTACT INFO**
- Forms.IN.gov	- IARA Forms Management Division
- State Forms Coordinator List	402 W. Washington St., Rm. W472
- Forms used when working with the Forms Management Division	Indianapolis, IN 46204
- Additional Forms Management resources	- General forms inquiries: fmd@iara.IN.gov
	- Requests for printing: sfprint@iara.IN.gov