



Election Division Dispatch

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NEWS & UPDATES

Don't Forget the CAN-5!

When a candidate files to run for office, counties must hand-deliver or mail the CAN-5 (Candidacy Filing Confirmation for 2026) not later than one day after receiving the candidate's filing. You can use the form found on the INSVRS County Portal or use SVRS to generate the document after creating the candidate's profile in the system. Questions? Contact the Help Desk or visit the online training portal for a step-by-step guide.

2025 Annual Report

ALL open candidate and political action committees are required to file a 2025 Annual Report not later than noon, Jan. 21, 2026. Regular party committees are the exception to this deadline; these committees have until noon, March 2, 2026, to file the annual report.

As a reminder, party committees file with IED or the CEB, depending on where the CFA-3 statement of organization is filed; party committees are not required to file in both places. If you are unsure if a party committee files with the CEB or IED visit campaignfinance.in.gov and do a committee search.

If the party committee files with IED, their name will appear along with the term "active." If a party committee closed with the state, the name will still appear but the term "disbanded" will be noted on the record.

Administrative Disbanding of Committees

Not later than January 30, 2026, the CEB must review its campaign finance records to determine if a committee is subject to the administrative dissolution procedure.

To move forward with dissolution, the committee must have not filed any CFA-4 or CFA-11 during the previous three calendar years AND the cash on hand on their last filed report must be \$1,000 or less.

If both conditions are met, then the CEB may move forward with the process found in IC 3-9-1-12, including providing notice by certified mail to the treasurer and making additional findings by the CEB.

Dissolution of a committee does not resolve any past fines. The committee members can be held personally liable for any fine assessed against the committee.

CALENDAR

- 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 (NOON): 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 2, 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. 5, 2026: VLM "freeze" period begins; counties cannot send a SAMC or move a voter's status to inactive now through election day, May 5, 2026
- Feb. 6, 2026 (NOON): Candidate filing for primary closes
- Feb. 13, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for candidate 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
- Feb. 17, 2026: Deadline for VR official to file VRG-21 with IED to confirm completion of VLM tasks
- Feb. 20, 2026: Deadline for CEB to notify candidate committees or PACs that did not file or filed late their 2025 annual report (see related entry on Mar. 2, 2026)
- Feb. 20, 2026: Deadline for VSTOP to provide random list of voting systems to use at their public test
- Mar. 2, 2026 (NOON): Deadline for party committees to file their 2025 annual report

JANUARY 2026 WEB TRAINING

- Dec. 30 & Jan. 6 | Convention Delegate Setup in SVRS
- Jan. 8 & 9 | Petitions Overview
- Jan. 20 & 22 | User Account Management/Accessing County Portal
- Jan. 26 & 28 | January Build Placeholder
- Jan. 27 & 29 | New User Overview

2026 Calendar is posted to the INSVRS County Portal and subject to change.

IN FOCUS: CANDIDATE FILING REMINDERS

General Tips

- Candidate filings must be original documents with a “wet” signature. Candidate filings cannot be filed by email or fax! If ailed, the CEB must receive the candidate forms by noon, Feb. 6, 2026. The form must be rejected if received after the deadline, even if the envelope is postmarked on or before the deadline.

- Clerks and their deputies are considered notaries under state law and must provide this service free of charge to candidates for their candidate filings. (IC 33-42-14-1(f))

- Any person can file candidacy paperwork on behalf of a candidate. However, the candidate must have their forms notarized head of time. Notaries witness the person signing the document; therefore, it is not permissible for the form to be notarized after it is signed.

- Do not allow a person to alter their filing once it is notarized and file stamped. If an error is discovered on the filing and the filing deadline has not yet passed, the candidate can submit a second form to amend their first filing. We recommend adding “amended” to the top of the form.

- In 2026, the D Party has PC/delegates on the ballot in May. Any D who wants to run for BOTH offices must file two CAN-37 forms; one for PC and one for delegate. A reminder that party offices do NOT file a CAN-12 or need to open a campaign finance committee.

Limits on Rejecting a Candidate Filing
Clerks, their staff, or the election board are NOT the candidate police at the time the form is presented for filing but for the reasons noted below. If you need more information, *The Election Administrator’s Manual* covers this in more detail:

1) Candidate running for state office (federal, statewide, state legislative, judge, prosecuting attorney) presents their candidate filing incorrectly to county when they should file with IED/SOS, or when a candidate for local office or party office tries to file with IED/SOS instead of the CEB. (IC 3-5-4-1.2)

2) Form filed after the noon, prevailing local time of candidate filing deadline. For 2026, the period to file for the May primary is Jan. 7 through noon, Feb. 6, 2026. (IC 3-5-4-1.9)

3) Filing made on a form NOT approved by the state. (IC 3-5-4-8)

4) Declaration of candidacy is not accompanied by the required statement of economic interest. (IC 3-8-2-11; IC 3-8-9-6)

5) Candidate form improperly filed by email or fax. (IC 3-5-4-1.7)

However, if the forms are filed with the office and an error discovered, the filings cannot be rejected after the fact. A CAN-1 challenge must be filed by a party chair or voter within the election district.

Candidate Challenges

Questions about candidate qualifications are managed through the CAN-1 challenge procedures. For example, a candidate does not have the required vote history to run as a D/R candidate in the primary election or is not a registered voter of the election district. The CEB must accept the candidate filing, unless there is a deficiency as noted above. Then, a CAN-1 can be filed not later than noon, Feb. 13, 2026. This prompts the CEB to hold a hearing after giving proper notice to the parties involved. Challenges must be resolved by noon, Feb. 26, 2026.

Upcoming VLM Projects

County voter registration officials will have access to at least two pieces of information from other county officials to assist with voter list maintenance at the end of January.

At minimum, the county sheriff must file on a quarterly basis a list of each Indiana resident who has been convicted of a crime and placed in a county correctional facility during the previous quarter. The list for the period of Oct. to Dec. 2025 is due to the county VR official not later than Feb. 2, 2026. The VRG-1 cover sheet is to be attached to any list provided to the county from the sheriff's office.

Using the sheriff's list, the county VR official is to move a person's registration status to “cancelled” **ONLY IF** the person is currently imprisoned following conviction of a crime. **If the individual is no longer imprisoned by the time the list is received**, then the person's registration is not to be moved to “cancelled” status. (IC 3-7-46-6; IC 3-7-46-1)

Notice of disposition must be mailed to the voter if their registration is cancelled due to imprisonment following conviction. If a voter's status is cancelled due to disenfranchisement, the person may re-register to vote even if they are on probation, parole, home detention, or enrolled in a community correction program.

Additionally, the local health department files a copy of death records with the county auditor and NOW with the county clerk pursuant to IC 16-37-3-9(d) on a quarterly basis. Filing directly with the county VR official is a relatively new requirement for the local health department, so you may want to reach out to their office to make them aware of this change. Counties then use this list to move a registered voter's status to “cancelled” as the individual is certified as deceased. (IC 3-7-45-2.1(d); IC 3-7-45-1)

Later this spring counties will be hearing from IED about a project using data from the U.S. Northern and Southern District Courts. Stay tuned!

Voting Systems & ePB Inventory Due Feb. 2, 2026!

Each year county election boards must certify to SOS that the inventory the county enters and maintains in the VSTOP voting system and electronic poll books inventory database is accurate. This review must be completed not later than Jan. 31, 2026 and the deadline to file the IEC-22 to VSTOP@bsu.edu rolls to noon, Monday, Feb. 2, 2026. (IC 3-11-16-5)

Ensuring an accurate inventory is important for election administration, especially the public test of voting systems. If you have questions about the VSTOP inventory database, please email VSTOP@bsu.edu. Their team can assist counties with logging into their system.

POST-CONFERENCE FEEDBACK

A reminder that the survey to share your feedback about the 2026 Election Administrators' conference is available now through end of day, Jan. 9, 2026 (please email our office if you need the link re-upped in your inbox). We appreciate you taking a few minutes out of your day to help us improve for the next event!

We have started to review your feedback. Several people shared their concerns about slide decks, breakout sessions, and the location/timing. To specifically address those concerns, up until a few years ago, we did print out each slide deck to provide with the conference materials. However, county feedback asked that the slide decks be formatted in color or black or white or three slides per page or just one slide per page. We were not going to be able to accommodate everyone's request, so a decision was made to post them online and let counties decide how to print their decks (or not). We also acknowledge that having presentations available a week before the conference is ideal. This year the four of us responsible for those decks were supporting legislators during an unprecedented special session and responding to discovery requests in the three lawsuits the agency is involved at the same time as we were working on our materials that then go through bi-partisan review before they are shared with counties. We certainly do try our best to provide the information in advance; this year it was a little out of our hands with competing priorities. Lastly, we have no plans to print and bind the presentations ahead of conference.

We have offered breakout sessions in the past. But, the overwhelming feedback was that counties preferred general sessions. The biggest concern conveyed was that the information discussed in breakout sessions, namely the question and answer period, would not be heard by everyone. The request was to keep everyone in the same space to hear everything to not miss out on information. Counties often ask for networking opportunities. If a county wants to organize one, please email our office. We can work with the hotel to secure space before or after each conference day to meet. Our time with you is limited, so the preference is to focus on sharing information with everyone at the same time.

Lastly, the location—downtown Indianapolis. Feedback on hosting conferences downtown is always mixed. Some people love it; others hate it. Our office is trying to find the location that offers the most “bang for your buck.” This last solicitation went to event spaces or hotels downtown but also outside of Marion County. Our conference hovers around 450 attendees, which is too large for most hotels and too small for most event spaces, so some locations will simply not respond. The choice to be downtown this year was based on the most competitive bid; the spaces outside of Indianapolis were more expensive.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Q. [This was posted in the Nov. 2025 Dispatch, but came up a few times in conversation at the conference. Re-upping here as a reminder.] Can the county clerk run for elected office in 2026, either to be re-elected as clerk or to another office, and manage elections for the county?

A. Yes, the clerk can run for office and continue to manage local elections. State law does not require a county clerk to set aside their responsibilities to manage the county's elections under Title 3, even if their name appears on the ballot for elected office.

However, state law does require the county to use the generic seal on its absentee and provisional ballots and the clerk's signature cannot appear on those ballots, if the clerk is running for elected office.

Anecdotally, our office hears from some clerks who choose to step back from some election duties when on the ballot. There are ways to delegate some “clerk” responsibilities to the CEB or to staff using procedures found in IC 3-6-5, generally. Or, the clerk could appoint a proxy to act on their behalf during CEB meetings, for example.

Lastly, party offices—delegate and precinct committeeman—are NOT elected offices. The clerk can run for these offices, and the county would use the “regular” county seal and use the clerk's signature.

Q. I'm bummed that the Title 3 Election Code Book isn't being printed. Where do we go now to get this information?

A. We are disappointed, too, about not having a published code book this year. There are two vendors that IED has used in the past to produce “bespoke” code books. One vendor did not respond to our solicitation; the other did respond but only to notify our office that they were no longer producing “bespoke” books like ours.

The best place to access the Indiana Code is through the General Assembly's Website here: <https://iga.in.gov/laws/2025/ic/titles/1>. If you know the Title (T), Article (A), Chapter (C), and Section (S) that you need to review, you can enter each element into the search bar to be taken directly to it. Or, you can enter “3” in the Title field to be taken to Title 3 that then lists all of the Articles, or specific categories of state election law.

For example, IC 3-7 is Voter Registration; IC 3-9 is Campaign Finance; and IC 3-13 is how to fill ballot or elected office vacancies. You can type in the Title and Article, and then a list of the chapters will appear for that particular category of election law. The chapter headings are useful to identify the “type” of information you are seeking and then you can drill down further to find the specific cite.

Another nice feature of the website is being able to enter keyword search terms to search Title 3. It's surprisingly accurate! The website also allows you to download all of Title 3 (or any other Titles you might be interested) as a .pdf. Just click on the down arrow next to “Reference Materials and select “Download PDF.”

Valerie presented on this topic at the Dec. Conference and her slide deck is available on our website in the Election Administrators Portal. This may be a helpful tool to keep around as we brave this new world, together! She talked about some “cheat codes” like relying on the forms that include the code cite the form is based on or using the IED guidebooks to find the subject matter, as most paragraphs are well cited.