



Election Division Dispatch

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NEWS & UPDATES

June Hotfix

Several updates were made to SVRS & indianavoters.com in the most recent hotfix, including:

- Highlighting voter's name as presented on the electronic registration against the voter's name on the BMV record to identify discrepancies for follow-up with the voter.
- Images of scanned cards from VLM project are increased.
- County users can change which search option is the default in the voter search module. Currently, the default is set to "exact" but this update allows a county user to toggle the default setting to "contains" and change it back to "exact" if the user would prefer.
- When using the online voter registration system during the closed period of registration (28-days before election day and about 2 weeks after), voters will see updated language on the "finish" screen to note the registration period is closed and their changes will be made when it re-opens.
- Counties can run a report to summarize the reasons the CEB rejected ABS ballots in an election.
- Voters can log in to indianavoters.com and view the ABS portal part to see why their ABS application or ballot was rejected.
- When completing the online traveling board app, a soft warning message will appear as an attestation that the individual meets the requirements for travel board.

Legislative Summary

After each legislative session, IED compiles a summary doc of changes made to election and election-related statutes. Final review of the document should be complete in early July and once approved, the summary will be emailed to county election and voter registration officials. The summary doc will also be found in the updated *2022 Indiana Code Book* when published this winter, and made available online at in.gov/sos/elections under the "Election Administrators" Portal.

December Conference

Our team has received written bids from several hotels in downtown Indianapolis, and we are negotiating final details. Look for a "save the date" email later this month with specifics. For now, please tentatively hold Monday, December 13 to Wednesday, December 15, 2021, for the 2022 Election Administrator's conference.

ALPHABET SOUP:

VTD = Voting District

VTD is Census Bureau slang for "precinct." You will see this term in Census Bureau publications and data releases, and sometimes hear it from IED and the Indiana Office of Census Data (OCD) at the state level, too.

VTDs with updated 2020 Census data are currently available on the Census Bureau's website <www.census.gov> as shapefiles, which are images used with mapping software to digitally record and display boundaries and map features.

However, in about a month, the Indiana OCD will be releasing a newer version with updated precinct names (those which have been updated since the U.S. Census Bureau received our state's precincts in early 2020). Expect to see more info from our office when the updated shapefile is available for county review.

CALENDAR

July 27, 2021: Final drop date for card 2 to allow for at least 30-days' notice to the voter

Aug 2, 2021 (noon): Deadline for a public question for the Nov. 2, 2021 special election (*Transfers from Sun., Aug. 1*)

Aug 21, 2021: Recommended deadline for a voter to mail back a voter response card from the statewide mailer

Aug 27, 2021: Deadline for IED to receive the VRC from card 2

Oct 4, 2021: VR deadline for precincts where special Nov. election conducted

Oct 4, 2021: "Freeze" deadline for county to move voter to "inactive" status in precincts where a special election conducted (if applicable)

Nov 2, 2021: Election Day, if special election conducted

Nov. 8, 2021: Deadline for some local units of government to file ordinance with new election districts with clerk

Jan. 4, 2022: Deadline for new precinct boundaries to be approved for 2022 election cycle

JULY WEB TRAINING

July 1 | May/June Hotfix

July 13 & 15 | Refresher Training

2021 Calendar now posted to INSVRS County Portal. Dates/times subject to change. Please verify against the calendar.

IN FOCUS: Ramping Up to Fall Reprecincting

Updating and drawing new precinct boundaries is an effort counties can undertake every year, but the matter is more acute in each of the two years following the decennial census.

The decennial census updates information within and the boundaries of census blocks. Census blocks are the smallest geographic units that contain demographic and population statistics. In nearly all cases, precinct boundary lines “snap” to census block boundaries to form precincts in each county.

One of the major drivers of redrawing precinct lines is redistricting at the state level for state legislative offices and Congressional districts. Indiana House and Senate and US House districts cannot split a precinct. But, legislators also have to ensure that the population between the districts is nearly equal.

As a result, the bills adopted by the legislature will include many of current names of counties, townships, and precincts, but also specific census blocks. Those census blocks cannot stand alone and create a split in a precinct where some voters in

precinct A vote for district 1 and the other voters in precinct A vote for district 2. The county executive must decide how to redraw the precinct boundaries so that the precinct is not split by a district line.

Some local units of government must also redistrict in the year following the decennial census (or 2021), and in some cases, those new districts may not split a precinct. Therefore, new precinct lines may be warranted. On the horizon, municipalities will have to redraw election districts in the second year following the decennial census (or 2022) though it will not impact work for 2021.

Because the decennial census revises census blocks, it is possible your precinct boundaries won’t change but the census blocks making up the district will. It’s also possible that the geography or mapping software has improved the boundaries of census blocks. This may create a “sliver” of land between the old and new maps that may be incorrectly assigned to a precinct. In some cases, these issues can be addressed through technical corrections; however, some counties may

opt to draw new precinct boundaries to address this issue.

Another major factor to decide to reprecinct is annexations, which may split an existing precinct where one portion is in the “city” and the other portion is in the “township.” Local officials may want to redraw precinct lines to avoid a split to reduce poll worker or voter confusion. Annexation ordinances are to be filed with the clerk and can drive a decision to create new precinct lines.

Finally, part of balancing all of these competing needs is ensuring your precinct does not exceed 2,000 active voters and has more than 600 active voters. There are exceptions to these “min-max” limits, but checking your active voter counts to ensure compliance with statute might also drive the need to draw new precinct lines.

IED will release a formal notice for reprecincting this month, which will include more detailed information about this process. County users can also find on the INSVRS County Portal a training IED held in June to introduce these concepts to counties.

VR CORNER

Reprecincting & VR

While county executives manage the process to draw precinct boundaries in most counties, county voter registration and election officials may be asked to assist with this process or act as the liaison between the county and IED.

As we wait for the General Assembly to convene and pass legislation with the new state legislative and Congressional district boundaries, there is some early work that can be accomplished. Finding annexation ordinances and running reports in SVRS to determine how many active registered voters are currently in each precinct will help determine if precinct boundaries need to be redrawn.

Additionally, if your county has a GIS expert on staff, going to the U.S. Census Bureau to view Indiana’s 2020 precincts with new 2020 census data loaded into them will drive whether precinct descriptions need to be updated.

There are a lot of moving parts to this process, which is difficult to accomplish in a normal year. But, the delay in census data will condense what would take more than 6-months to accomplish into a 6-week period. Any advance planning this summer would benefit your team and ours.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Q. Does the county clerk or the election board provide a campaign finance committee an EIN?

A. No. The statement of organization (CFA-1 for candidates; CFA-2 for PACs; CFA-3 for parties) does ask where the committee intends to bank, but county election officials do not play any role in what information the bank may require of the committee to open an account. The IRS assigns EINs, and the committee must contact the federal agency to determine their next steps.

Q. Do candidates who express interest in filling an elected office vacancy need to meet the same qualifications that a candidate seeking election on the ballot?

A. Yes. State law requires a candidate to be a registered voter of the election district whether through an election by all eligible voters or selection by a caucus of party officials. The person should be registered and no longer in “pending” status not later than the deadline to file a CEB-5. Length of residency may also apply to an office, and would require a person seeking to fill an elected office vacancy to reside within the district not later than the date of the caucus. In the rare instance where a county chair can fill an elected office vacancy through direct appointment, the person selected should be a registered voter and a resident by the time the CEB-3 is filed. Other requirements to qualify for office may need to be met, and those can be found in state law. The *2020 Candidate Guide* is helpful but does not include information for all offices.