

JANUARY 2020

# The Dearborn County Vote Center Plan

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Bringing Dearborn County Elections into the 21st Century

Office of the Dearborn County Circuit Court Clerk

Gayle Pennington, Clerk



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	4
What is a Vote Center? .....	4
Why Dearborn County? .....	4
What is required to become a Vote Center County?.....	4
OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS.....	5
The Vote Center Task Force .....	5
The Voting Equipment .....	5
Electronic Poll Book .....	5
E-Poll Book Description and Security Details.....	5
Method for Providing Data to Poll Book Watchers .....	7
Satellite Vote Centers .....	7
Poll Workers.....	7
Vote Center Layout .....	8
Voter Education Efforts.....	8
VOTE CENTER AND SATELLITE VOTE CENTER LOCATIONS.....	9
SECURITY .....	10
Key Players .....	10
General Situations.....	10
Local Preparation and Response.....	11
I.C. 3-11-18.1-4 COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST.....	11
Explanation .....	11
APPENDIX.....	14
A. Resolution Certifying Vote Center and Satellite Vote Center Accessibility .....	14
B. County Commissioner Resolution.....	14
C. County Council Resolution.....	14
D. Current Precincts, Total Voters, Total Active Voters, Total Inactive Voters .....	14
E. Current Polling Places .....	14

# MESSAGE FROM THE CLERK

Citizens of Dearborn County,

Since the vote center concept became a reality in Indiana elections in 2007, leaders in Dearborn County have been carefully observing its effect on voters, county budgets, and on the election process.

The following pages layout our plan to make vote centers a reality in Dearborn County. The vote center concept gives any voter in Dearborn County the opportunity to cast their ballot at any vote center location throughout the county. No one is restricted to one polling place on Election Day. In addition to making it easier for voters on Election Day, the vote center concept also calls for increased early voting opportunities at what are called “satellite vote centers” that are open prior to Election Day.

The most common question we hear in elections is “Where is my polling place?” or “Why can’t I just vote at the polling place across from where I work or drop off the kids for school?” A common complaint we hear is “I can’t make it back to the polls by 6:00pm on Election Day.” Vote centers address these common voter concerns.

Another important part of the vote center concept is the financial impact it will have on Dearborn County. Having to staff fewer locations and provide less equipment and support on Election Day will help the county to realize a cost savings on items such as rental costs, poll worker costs, and equipment costs over time.

By moving to vote centers, voter convenience is improved; election administration is streamlined and made simpler; and this improves the county’s long-term fiscal stance when it comes to elections.

Most Americans have been voting under the same process for over 150 years. Vote centers represent a major step forward and bring elections into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I want to thank all the wonderful people who have worked so hard and in a bipartisan manner to move the county toward vote centers. Dearborn County should be proud of its community leaders who work together for what will be best for all citizens.

Sincerely,

Gayle Pennington  
Dearborn County Circuit Court Clerk

# INTRODUCTION

## What is a Vote Center?

A vote center is a place where any registered voter in the county can vote on Election Day. Vote centers bring to bear new technologies to revolutionize the voting process. Instead of traditional precinct-based polling sites on Election Day, the vote center concept calls for vote center locations where any registered voter from any precinct can go to cast their ballot and retrieve their correct ballot style. Every precinct ballot style is available at every vote center location. In addition, because of electronic poll books, when a voter signs in at one vote center, every other vote center's electronic poll book is automatically updated to reflect that voter as having cast their ballot.

## Why Dearborn County?

Since 2007, Indiana has been experimenting with the vote center concept through a pilot program launched by the Indiana Secretary of State's office and the Indiana General Assembly. In 2011, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation to allow any Indiana county to pursue becoming a vote center county. Since 2007, government and civic leaders in Dearborn County have been observing vote centers' impact on voters and election administration. The pilot programs showed that vote centers streamlined election administration and improved voter convenience. In addition, vote center counties have seen a cost reduction in their elections over time.

Because of these results from the pilot programs in Indiana (which can be found at [www.VoteCenters.IN.gov](http://www.VoteCenters.IN.gov)), leaders in Dearborn County decided to pursue this exciting new approach to election administration.

## What is required to become a Vote Center County?

Indiana Code 3.11-18.1-3 sets forth the requirements for a county to become a vote center county. The first step to becoming a vote center county requires a draft vote center plan which details specifics of how such a transition would occur. This document serves as the vote center plan for Dearborn County. **Indiana Code 3-11-18.1-4 (Version b)** sets forth the requirements of a county's vote center plan. Once a draft plan is submitted for public review and comment at a public meeting of the County Election Board, the opportunity for the public to review the draft plan and submit comments must remain open for 30 days. After 30 days of opportunity for the public to review and comment on the draft plan, the County Election Board holds another public meeting to consider all public comments and then votes to adopt the vote center plan as is or as amended. In order for the county to become a vote center county, the County Election Board must by unanimous vote approve a vote center plan, and the County Commissioners and County Council must approve by majority vote resolutions approving the status of the county as a vote center county.

If all three of those things occur, the plan must be filed with the Indiana Election Division and Dearborn County will officially become a vote center county. Any future amendments to the plan or a decision to return to traditional precinct-based elections must be voted on by unanimous vote of the County Election Board and filed with the Indiana Election Division.

# OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

## The Vote Center Task Force

Once a vote center plan is adopted by the County Election Board and filed with the Indiana Election Division, the County Election Board, the County Election Staff, and the Indiana Team from Election Systems and Software (Collectively known as “the Vote Center Task Force”) will move forward with preparing for this major change in Election Administration for the May 7, 2019 Election Cycle.

The Task Force is made up of people with tremendous experience in the election process. The County Election Board has a track record of working in a bipartisan way to ensure the process is free and fair. The County Election Staff works hard year-round preparing Dearborn County for elections. The ES&S Indiana Team brings to the table experienced managers who both understand Indiana law, the vote center concept, and have an intimate knowledge of electronic poll books.

## The Voting Equipment

Dearborn County has contracted with ES&S to provide vote center equipment.

## Electronic Poll Book

Dearborn County has selected an e-poll book system that will be securely connected to every vote center and to the County Election Board at the Dearborn County Courthouse on Election Day and is the most widely used in the country. It will securely connect every satellite vote center. The ES&S Express Poll meets all standards set out by Indiana law under IC 3-11-8-10.3. The ES&S Indiana Team has intimate knowledge and experience with electronic poll books.

## E-Poll Book Description and Security Details

The Express Poll Electronic Poll Book hardware and software is designed to function as a secure voter validation system. The Express Poll uses a dedicated hardware enclosure which provides a strong, secure enclosure for the unit.

The Express Poll enclosure stores voter validation data using redundant solid state, non-volatile compact flash memory with “no moving parts.” Solid state compact flash memory is used in place of a fragile hard disk drive, as the electronic poll books will receive the same rough handling as tabulation equipment. Hard disk drives, with moving parts, are prone to hard drive crashes when they receive rough handling. Electronic poll books must function properly to keep voter lines moving on Election Day, and the Express Poll ensures this.

When a poll worker turns on the Express poll, the system will cycle to a screen containing one icon, labeled “Launch Express Poll.” The poll worker simply touches this icon to boot-up the Express Poll software. This simplifies poll worker training, as a series of icons that are unrelated to the system’s function, voter validation, are not accessible to the poll worker. During Election Day, a poll worker using the Express Poll system cannot open other programs on the unit, as it is a dedicated electronic poll book. ***If a standard laptop or notebook PC is used to support the electronic poll book software, a collage of icons can appear on the initial screen when boot-up occurs, confusing a poll worker and***

***possibly enabling them to enter other software applications on the PC which could provide a security risk.*** In addition, the electronic poll books cannot be accessed without the coordinated action of two (2) precinct election officers who are not members of the same political party. The precinct election officers will be provided passwords.

When a voter arrives at the vote center, his/her eligibility will be brought up on an Express Poll screen. The clerk will indicate which party ballot the voter has requested (Republican or Democrat). The system will record the time that the voter was checked in and the records will be updated back to the Dearborn County Clerk's Office/Voter Registration office main server. The updated record will be available instantly to the County Election Board and the electronic poll books used by precinct election officers at all other vote centers in Dearborn County. If a voter attempts to vote again, the database will show him/her to be ineligible.

***The dedicated Express Poll enclosure is not susceptible to theft, unlike an off-the-shelf notebook computer which can be enticing to a thief.***

The removable compact flash memory card is physically stored in an enclosed compartment on the top of the Express Poll unit. The door covering the compact flash memory card compartment can be secured using a security tag with an audit number which will expose any attempt to physically tamper with the memory card.

Data stored in the Express Poll redundant compact flash memory can be encrypted using sophisticated RC-4 data encryption. In addition, Dearborn County can deploy VPN routers on WAN to provide native data encryption to transmissions.

The use of an election official's or poll worker's user ID and password provides access to accomplish designated tasks within the system. Every log-on attempt generates an audit log event, so it is very easy to read the audit log and determine what activities were completed by a specific person. The ExpressPoll-5000 units are issued by device ID number in carrying cases, which can be sealed with a numbered seal.

Each Express Poll will have a unique device ID for controlling the log files after an election. This ID is numeric and should be 6 characters. This number becomes the title of the log file (#####.log), and also is the first six characters of the provisional ID when using the auto provisional ID option in Express Poll unit. The hard sided ExpressPoll-5000 carrying case can be locked, and has a latch that can be secured with security (numbered) seals.

A strong security plan with processes that guide usage in a recommended best practice is in the administrator's manual. Two levels of passwords and smart cards are required to set certain configuration options. Election officials can mandate using simple passwords, pass phrases, or two-phase authentication using smart cards and passwords.

Additional password protections are provided at the server and these passwords can be set to expire.

Encrypted user logs are available to identify who has used and modified the system and devices; reports of all election functions performed on the system are available; and statistics can be captured of open, close, log-on, log-off by user ID.

The audit log file contains a time stamp of every transaction, providing the date and time of each voter processed. This log file can be encrypted using one of the following industry standard algorithms

- RC4
- AES-128 in OFB mode
- AES-128 in CCM mode
- AES-256 in OFB mode

The ExpressPoll-5000 USB ports can be physically covered to restrict tampering.

In the future, should electronic poll books require federal certification; the use of a dedicated electronic poll book enclosure will become increasingly important to meet federal certification requirements, as internal hardware components will have to remain consistent to meet the certification standards. A dedicated enclosure will allow jurisdictions to continue to meet these strict standards, while the use of an off-the-shelf computer will not, as replacement components for an off-the-shelf computer will not provide the consistency required to meet federal certification standards.

### **Method for Providing Data to Poll Book Watchers**

The Express Poll comes with printers that will attach to each unit that will allow precinct election officials or officials at election central to print lists of voters who have voted by precinct. The system also comes with Central Point where data can be downloaded in PDF or Excel format for distribution.

### **Satellite Vote Centers**

A key element to the success of the vote center concept has been the concept of satellite vote centers, which are sites open during the 29-day period prior to each Election Day. Satellite vote centers are places where any voter in the county may vote early absentee-in-person. As required under IC 3-11-10-26.3 and IC 3-11-18.1-4(16), Dearborn County will designate at least two satellite vote centers, in addition to the courthouse, and at least one of those sites will also be a vote center on Election Day and will be open for voting the two preceding Saturdays to Election Day. In vote center counties, early voting percentages have risen dramatically, allowing the fewer locations on Election Day itself to work well. To review early voting percentages by county and election, visit <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2400.htm>.

### **Poll Workers**

Dearborn County will require fewer poll workers to administer Election Day vote centers. However, the use of poll workers will increase during the week(s) prior to an Election Day, in order to staff the satellite vote centers. Each satellite vote center and Election Day vote center will have at least one traditional precinct election board made up of an Inspector, at least two election judges of opposite parties, and then at least two clerks of opposite parties, depending on the election size and location of the vote center. Training procedures for poll workers will remain largely the same.

## Vote Center Layout

Vote centers will be set up differently based on location, but the general layout of a vote center in Dearborn County will be as follows:

### DEARBORN COUNTY VOTE CENTER LAYOUT



## Voter Education Efforts

Dearborn County has a full media and community outreach strategy that will involve press releases to widely circulated newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. In addition, we will use our county website ([www.Dearborncounty.in.gov](http://www.Dearborncounty.in.gov)) and the state's voter information website ([www.IndianaVoters.com](http://www.IndianaVoters.com)) to prepare Dearborn County citizens for this change. Moreover, each voter may receive a postcard in the mail prior to the initial elections, informing them of this change and where each vote center is located. We will also plan to attend community events where the Circuit Court Clerk and her staff will speak about the change.

"I am so excited that Dearborn County has decided to make the switch to vote centers," County Clerk Gayle Pennington said. "It has taken a lot of planning and hard work from all those involved, but the benefits to the voters of our county will be well worth the effort we have spent implementing the new model."

Simply put, vote centers are polling places where any eligible voter in the county may go to vote. They eliminate the need for traditional polling places and allow voters in the county more flexibility regarding when and where they cast their ballots. Vote centers throughout the county are linked by secure

electronic poll books which are instantaneously updated as ballots are cast. In addition, significant cost saving is expected over time.

Wayne, Tippecanoe and Cass counties piloted the vote center program in Indiana from 2007-2010. Now, because of the success those counties experienced, both the Indiana House and Senate passed legislation that allows all Indiana counties the option of becoming a vote center county.

Dearborn County will implement the use of vote centers during the upcoming 2019 Municipal Elections.

“Ultimately, our goal is to make voting easier and more convenient for the voters of our county while also saving county money,” County Clerk Pennington said. “As always, we value the feedback of our constituents and encourage you to voice your questions or concerns.”

To learn more about how vote centers operate, to review counties’ vote center plans or to access research on vote centers and their success, visit [www.VoteCenters.IN.gov](http://www.VoteCenters.IN.gov) or [www.Dearborncounty.in.gov](http://www.Dearborncounty.in.gov).

## **VOTE CENTER AND SATELLITE VOTE CENTER LOCATIONS**

Dearborn County plans to utilize possibly 5 if needed vote center locations for the 2019 City and Town Election Cycle. Indiana Code 3-11-18.1-6 only requires one vote center per 10,000 active voters.

The following are vote center locations to be open on Election Day:

1. Agner Hall, 101 Speedway Dr. Lawrenceburg, In. 47025
2. Moores Hill Civic Center, 16610 N. Broadway St. Moores Hill, In., 47032
3. Aurora Baptist Church, 6060 Blair Rd. Aurora, In 47001
4. Dillsboro Civic Center, 9824 Central Ave., Dillsboro, In. 47018
5. Tanner Valley Methodist Church, 19235 State Rt. 1, Lawrenceburg, In. 47025
6. Willies lower level - 19303 Schmarr Dr., Lawrenceburg
7. Dearborn Hills United Methodist Church, 25365 State Line Rd. Lawrenceburg, In. 47025
8. All Saints Parish Church Dover Indiana, 25743 State Rt. 1, Guilford, In. 47022
9. All Saints Parish Church Yorkville, 8844 Yorkridge Rd. Guilford, In. 47022
10. Manchester Twp. Volunteer Fire, 10457 State Rd. 48, Aurora, In. 47001

The following are satellite vote center locations to be open from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on the following Saturdays:

1. Dillsboro Civic Center 9824 Central Avenue, Dillsboro - October 24th
2. Bright Fire House, 23759 Brightwood Dr. Lawrenceburg, In. 47025 – October 24th

3. Dearborn Hills United Methodist Church 25365 Stateline Rd., Lawrenceburg – October 31st

NOTE: Voters from every precinct may vote at any vote center location or satellite vote center location. Every ballot style for each precinct in Dearborn County will be available at each vote center and each satellite vote center (Depending on the Election, the number of ballot styles varies greatly; therefore, this plan does not attempt to provide a specific number of ballot styles). Each vote center and early vote center will be connected to all other voter centers or early vote centers (as well as to the County Election Board) via electronic poll books connected via secured internet lines. At least two electronic poll book terminals will be available at each location. Each location, depending on the election, will also have at least one precinct election board, meaning one inspector, at least two judges of opposite parties, and at least two poll clerks of opposite parties. (See Appendix A for Certification that each location above is accessible to voters with disabilities as required by the Help American Vote Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.)

## SECURITY

### Key Players

The following narrative describes what would happen in case of an emergency during an election. The first responders to any emergency, either man-made or natural event, are local citizens. Poll workers, volunteers, and police and fire personnel will be the first to identify the problem. The next level of response will come from the Dearborn County Commissioners and the Dearborn County Election Board in cooperation with the local emergency management agency. If deemed necessary by the County Commissioners, the Office of the Governor (whose resources included IDHS, the Indiana National Guard, and the state police) and the Office of the Secretary of State's Election Division will be contacted for emergency assistance. In addition, any action taken either by the Office of the Governor or the Office of the Secretary of State may be taken in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that interpretations of the laws are correct.

### General Situations

Five general situations exist in which decision-making may occur regarding the election process and activities in Dearborn County:

- Situation Normal – the status quo exists and the process moves forward according to normal laws and procedures.
- Isolated Emergencies – individual precincts or parts of the county experience disruption to the election process and local agencies respond accordingly.
- Regional Emergencies – an emergency involving Dearborn County and neighboring counties exists and a state-level response is required.
- Catastrophic Emergencies inside Indiana – a large disaster exists that diverts the resources and attention of the citizenry and a state-level response in cooperation with the federal government is required.

- Catastrophic Emergencies outside Indiana – a large disaster exists in the United States that diverts the resources and attention of the citizenry and a federal-level response is required.

### **Local Preparation and Response**

The Dearborn County Commissioners have worked closely with the local emergency management director, the county sheriff, and local police and fire stations to ensure Dearborn County is prepared for emergencies. In addition, the Dearborn County Commissioners will be in close communication with the County Election Board should any emergency occur on or surrounding the election process.

In this endeavor to be prepared for an emergency that could occur on or surrounding an Election Day, Dearborn County takes the following steps prior to each Election Day:

- Review of IC 3-11-8-3.2 which outlines procedures for changing polling locations.
- Review of state’s Quantity Purchasing Agreements (QPA) whereby Dearborn County may buy or lease emergency generators and other supplies.
- Contact is made with power companies to ensure all vote centers have power on Election Day.
- Election Systems and Software will have employees at the Courthouse and in the field on Election Day in the event of any disruption.
- In the event of a power failure at a vote center, the voting machines and e-poll books will be switched automatically to a battery backup because all ES&S products provide battery backup for every unit.
- In the event that the internet is inaccessible at a vote center location, the eligibility of a voter will be ascertained from records maintained by the Dearborn County Voter Registration office via telephone/cell phone.

# **I.C. 3-11-18.1-4 (Version b) COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST**

### **Explanation**

The following 17 items are the requirements for a vote center plan as defined in Indiana Code 3-11-18.1-4. Following each of the 17 requirements a page number listed in red type references where in this Dearborn County Vote Center Plan the particular requirement(s) is met.

(1) The total number of vote centers to be established.

See Page 9.

(2) The location of each vote center.

See Page 9.

(3) The effective date of the order.

The order shall take effect immediately upon the filing of the order with the Indiana Election Division, pursuant to I.C. 3-11-18.1-8.

(4) The following information according to the computerized list (as defined in IC 3-7-26.3-2) as of the date of the order: (A) The total number of voters within the county. (B) The number of active voters within the county. (C) The number of inactive voters within the county.

See Appendix D

(5) For each vote center designated under subdivision (2), a list of the precincts whose polls will be located at the vote center consistent with section 13 of this chapter for an election that is not being held in each precinct of the county

(6) For each vote center designated under subdivision (2), the number of precinct election boards that will be appointed to administer an election at the vote center.

One Precinct Board per each location for the city and town election.

(7) For each precinct election board designated under subdivision (6), the number and name of each precinct the precinct election board will administer consistent with section 13 of this chapter for an election that is not being held in each precinct of the county.

See Page 1. "Note" for explanation that all precincts will be located at all vote centers.

Therefore, all precinct election boards will administer elections for all precincts in the county.

See Appendix D for a list of current county precincts.

(8) For each vote center designated under subdivision (2), the number and title of the precinct election officers who will be appointed to serve at the vote center.

See Page 1. "Note" for an estimation of the number of precinct election officials at each vote center location. Titles for precinct election officials will remain the same (also see Page10.)

(9) For each vote center designated under subdivision (2): (A) the number and type of ballot variations that will be provided at the vote center; and (B) whether these ballots will be: (i) delivered to the vote center before the opening of the polls; or (ii) printed on demand for a voter's use.

See Page 10 "Note" for the explanation that every ballot style will be available at each satellite vote center and each vote center. The exact number of ballot styles will vary by election. See Page [Insert Page] "The Voting Equipment" for a description of how ballots will be provided to voters. Provisional ballots will be issued [Insert Provisional Ballot process description].

(10) A detailed description of any hardware, firmware, or software used: (A) to create an electronic poll list for each precinct whose polls are to be located at a vote center; or (B) to manage data in an electronic poll book through a secure electronic connection between the county election board and the precinct election officials administering a vote center.

See Page 8 for a complete description of the e-poll book equipment and procedures to be used in Dearborn County.

(11) A description of the equipment and procedures to be used to ensure that information concerning a voter entered into any electronic poll book used by precinct election officers at a vote center is immediately accessible to: (A) the county election board; and (B) the electronic poll books used by precinct election officers at all other vote centers in the county.

(12) For each precinct designated under subdivision (5), the number of electronic poll books to be provided for the precinct.

Each vote center will have every precinct's poll list in electronic form. At least two electronic poll books will be available at each vote center.

(13) This subdivision applies to a county in which ballot cards are used at a vote center. For each vote center designated under subdivision (2), whether each ballot card printed will have the printed initials of the poll clerks captured through the electronic signature pad or tablet at the time the poll clerks log into the electronic poll book system printed on the back of the ballot card immediately before the ballot card is delivered to a voter.

(14) The security and contingency plans to be implemented by the county to do all of the following: (A) Prevent a disruption of the vote center process. (B) Ensure that the election is properly conducted if a disruption occurs. (C) Prevent access to an electronic poll book without the coordinated action of two (2) precinct election officers who are not members of the same political party.

See Pages 10 for a description of Dearborn County's security process. See Pages [Insert Pages] for a description of the security relating to the electronic poll book that will be used in Dearborn County.

(15) A certification that the vote center complies with the accessibility requirements applicable to polling places under IC 3-11-8.

See Appendix A.

(16) A sketch depicting the planned layout of the vote center, indicating the location of: (A) equipment; and (B) precinct election officers; within the vote center.

See Page 8.

(17) The total number and locations of satellite offices to be established under IC 3-11-10-26.3 at vote center locations designated under subdivision (2) to allow voters to cast absentee ballots in accordance with IC 3-11. However, a plan must provide for at least one (1) vote center to be established as a satellite office under IC 3-11-10-26.3 on the two (2) Saturdays immediately preceding an election day.

See Page 9.

(18) The method and timing of providing voter data to persons who are entitled to receive the data

under this title. Data shall be provided to all persons entitled to the data without unreasonable delay.

(19) That the county election board shall adopt a resolution under IC 3-11.5-5-1 or IC 3-11.5-6-1 to make the central counting of absentee ballots applicable to the county (if the board has not already done so).

(20) For a plan adopted after July 1, 2014, in a county in which a majority of votes are cast on optical scan ballot cards, any additional procedures to provide for efficient and secure voting at each vote center, including ballot on demand printing.

## **APPENDIX**

- A. Resolution Certifying Vote Center and Satellite Vote Center Accessibility**
- B. County Commissioner Resolution**
- C. County Council Resolution**
- D. Current Precincts, Total Voters, Total Active Voters, Total Inactive Voters**
- E. Current Polling Places**