

# Vote Centers

Vote centers are a replacement of traditional Election Day polling precincts. Any registered voter can choose to vote at a vote center located anywhere in the city or county and receive their correct precinct ballot on Election Day. Vote centers eliminate a common issue in Monroe County regarding voter confusion.

Each election numerous voters become frustrated when they realize they are not at the correct precinct before the polls close. Under the voter center method, there is no wrong place to vote. Other common questions the Voter Registration Office hear in elections are "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 is "I can't make it back to the polls by 6 PM on Election Day." Vote centers address these common voter concerns.

The simple fact is our election laws were written many decades ago and have not changed as people's lifestyles have changed. In the 50's there was only one place you could bank because we didn't have bank branches let alone ATMs. Now you can withdraw cash from any number of locations no matter where in the world you may be. It is time our election laws keep pace with the rest of the world.

While it is possible for counties to save money using vote centers, the purpose of the vote centers is to increase voter convenience and accessibility. Monroe County locates several precincts in one location. Vote centers may reduce the necessary equipment needed to conduct an election. With less poll sites the serious problem of not enough poll workers would be greatly alleviated.

According to Indiana Coe (I.C. 3-11-18.1-6), a county is required to have 1 vote center for every 10,000 **active** voters. For every fraction of 10,000 **active** voters, a county is required to have an additional vote center. As of July 11, 2023 Monroe County currently has 81,259 **active** voters. Monroe County would need at least 9 vote centers.

## **Proposed Vote Center Sites**

Bloomington High School North 3901 N Kinser Pike

Bloomington High School South 1965 S Walnut Street

Eastview Church of the Nazarene 4545 E Lampkins Ridge Road

Christ Community Church 503 S High Street

Election Operations 302 S Walnut Street

Fairview Elementary School Cafeteria 627 W 8<sup>th</sup> Street

Highland Park Elementary Gym Entry Door #8 900 Park Square Drive

Indiana Memorial Union 900 E 7<sup>th</sup> Street

Sherwood Oaks Christian Church Entry Door 2700 E Rogers Road

St John's Catholic Church 4607 W State Road #46

University Elementary School Gym 1111 N Russell Road

Another important part of the vote center concept is the financial impact it will have on Monroe 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 poll worker costs and technical support. Currently over 300 people work on Election Day, this number can be reduced to 130 – 150. Less people to recruit, less people to train and less money for meals can only mean a win win situation for Monroe County

**Vote Center Staffing**

1 Inspector	165 + 25 (Meals) + 42 (Training)	\$232.00
2 Judges	135 + 25 (Meals) + 42 (Training)	\$202.00
8 Clerks	135 + 25 (Meals) + 14 (Training)	\$174.00
2 Sheriffs	115 + 25 (Meals) + 14 (Training)	\$154.00
1 Technical Support		\$ ??

9 sites X \$2336 = \$21024 + 9 Technical Support \$\$\$

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

We have been voting under the same process for over 100 years. Voter centers represent a major step into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Some Counties with Vote Centers

Bartholomew	Columbus
Boone	Zionsville
Cass	Logansport
Clay	Brazil
Elkhart	Elkhart
Floyd	New Albany
Greene	Bloomfield
Johnson	Greenwood
Lawrence	Bedford
Marion	Indianapolis
Marshall	Plymouth
Morgan	Martinsville
Owen	Spencer
St. Joseph	South Bend
Tippecanoe	Lafayette, West Lafayette, Purdue University
Vanderburgh	Evansville
Vigo	Terre Haute

Wayne Richmond

To establish vote centers the public will need to be educated. This can be done through the Monroe County Clerk's Office, the League of Women Voters, the Democrat and Republican parties along with news media.

Of course if a voter chooses not to use vote centers they still have the option of voting absentee in person, by mail and travel board.

This presentation was originally composed in 2017. It has been revised to reflect current information.

Respectfully submitted by Bonnie Saft