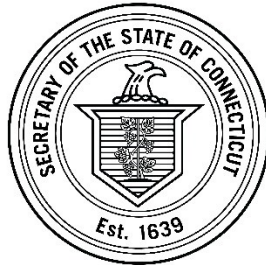


Office of the Secretary of the State



At a Glance

Office of the Secretary of the State

Stephanie Thomas, Secretary of the State

Jacqueline Kozin, Deputy Secretary of the State

Established - 1639

Statutory authority - State Constitution; CGS Sec. 3-77 et seq., CGS 9-3, 9-4 and Title 9 Generally; CGS Titles 33-35.

Central office – 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Number of employees - General Fund: 74 permanent full-time (69 filled)

Recurring operating expenses: General Fund: \$13,882,526 (FY 2023-24), YTD for FY 2024-25 is \$1,749,926 as of 8/28/2024.

Revenue deposited: General Fund: \$56,905,488 (FY 2023-24), YTD for FY 2024- 25 is \$5,784,263, as of 8/28/2024.

Organizational structure –Business Services (Commercial Recording) and Publication Divisions (Christopher Drake, Esq., Director, Nancy Nicolescu, Asst. Director); Legislation and Elections Administration Division (Kristin Sullivan, Esq., Director); Management and Support Services Division (Rachel Moser, Director, Program Monitoring and Fiscal Review); Information Technology (Thomas Miano, Manager).

Mission

Through the commitment of a knowledgeable staff and advanced technology, the Office of the Secretary of the State works as a team to provide a wide range of services for the people and businesses of Connecticut.

We are a repository of records for the state and provide important information and resources regarding business and commercial filings, elections, and authentication as prescribed by the constitution, federal, and state laws.

We seek to support business development opportunities and to foster a more inclusive political process by educating, informing, and engaging communities and youth in civic participation.

Our vision is to be the leader in providing prompt quality service, increasing access to information, and promoting participation in the democratic process.

Statutory Responsibility

The Secretary of the State is designated by the Constitution and General Statutes of Connecticut as the official keeper of a wide array of public records and documents. The office is a vital source of information regarding various businesses, commercial lenders, elections, legislation, regulations, and other areas, and responds to more than 600,000 requests for information annually. It also publishes, distributes, and sells the State Register and Manual and other publications.

Connecticut law makes the Secretary of the State responsible for the administration of many aspects of business law including the approval of all certificates of incorporation, organization and dissolution, as well as annual reports. Trademarks are registered here as well.

As Commissioner of Elections for the State of Connecticut, the Secretary is charged to administer, interpret, and implement election laws and ensure fair and impartial elections. Under the terms of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Secretary has the same responsibility for federal elections.

Affirmative Action

The Secretary of the State's Office is an affirmative action employer and is committed to an aggressive and comprehensive Affirmative Action plan. This policy applies to all current and prospective employees without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, genetic information, learning disability, physical disability, (including, but not limited to, blindness) mental disability (past/present history thereof), military or veteran status, or criminal record, unless the provisions of Sec. 46a-80 (b) or Sec. 46a-81 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes apply or a bona fide occupational qualification exists that excludes a protected group. The Office also recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct which is used as conditions of employment decisions or which operates to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment will not be tolerated. These policies are pursuant to all applicable federal and state constitutional provisions, laws, regulations, guidelines and executive orders. It is the intention of this Office to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of these laws and regulations, which, in addition to guaranteeing equal employment opportunity, require that special affirmative action be taken by the Office of the Secretary of the State to overcome the effects of past discrimination.

Public Service

The office serves the public through five divisions:

- ***Business Services Division (BSD)*** files and maintains legally required records showing the formation of and fundamental changes to corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, limited

partnerships, and other business entities. The BSD disseminates that information to the general public and the business, banking, and legal communities. Transactions relevant to security interests in personal property are perfected by filing statements under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) statutes with the Research and Response unit. These filings protect the holder of the security interest by securing the lien and providing public notice that such interest exists. Trade, service, collective, certification, and device marks are granted registration, and the Division investigates and collects fees and penalties from foreign corporations doing business in Connecticut without authority. BSD offers real time access to corporate and UCC documents via business.ct.gov. Over 96% of business filings are now completed online. Our Public Service Area is open for customers from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The division is responsible for administering the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which provides services to victims of crime.

BSD is also responsible for commissioning Notaries Public in Connecticut. The Division processes about 10,000 notary applications, renewals, and reinstatements annually, over 99% of which are filed online through the state's eLicense system at elicense.ct.gov.

BSD also processes requests to apostille or authenticate state public records pursuant to the Hague Convention and as authorized by the United States Department of Homeland Security. This process allows the holder of a Connecticut public record such as a birth certificate, marriage certificate or death certificate, to have the record recognized as legitimate in a foreign country.

- ***Legislation and Elections Administration Division (LEAD)*** administers, interprets, and implements all state and federal laws pertaining to elections, primaries, nominating procedures, and the exercise of voting rights. The Division encourages and monitors the implementation of the federal National Voter Registration Act (motor voter), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and other voter registration and election administration laws in Connecticut. In conjunction with local town clerks and registrars of voters, the division provides training for local elected officials. The Division, working with local officials, has put into operation a statewide-computerized voter registry system, which complies with the Help America Vote Act. More recently, the Division has launched online voter registration, Election Day Registration, begun to implement automatic voter registration and improved compliance with the motor voter law through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Division also administers the Voter Registry Privacy Program, which allows voters to opt out of the publicly disclosed voter file, if inclusion in that file would put the life or safety of the voter or the voter's family at risk.

Additionally, the Division is the official keeper of all acts, orders, grants, and resolutions of the General Assembly, receives and maintains legislation and a wide range of other public documents as required by statute, as well as updates information on state, local, and federal government on a weekly basis. The Division administers a statewide, online calendar of public meetings held by state agencies that includes access to agendas and minutes.

- **Information Technology (IT)** is responsible for the administration, support, development, and maintenance of all computer systems and related applications within the agency. It also provides support to the Centralized Voter Registration System (CVRS), the Election Management System (EMS), Business Registration System (BRS), the Office's website, and all E-Government initiatives within the agency. Within the Secretary's office, Information Technology also has the primary responsibility for ensuring the cybersecurity of the office, as well as coordinating cybersecurity efforts with other agencies.
- **Management and Support Services (MSS)** supports the office in the areas of budgetary oversight and fiscal administration, grant management, affirmative action, revenue depositing, purchasing, data processing, and other support services. It also serves as the sales agent and distributor of the *Connecticut State Register and Manual*.
- **Publications Division** administers eRegulations, the online platform for the promulgation and publication of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. All aspects of the system are electronic, including notice, drafting, and final publication. It also publishes the Connecticut State Register and Manual (the "Blue Book") and other agency publications, including online publications.

In addition, the Office of the Secretary of the State administers a wide range of programs and services for Connecticut's voters, citizens, and businesses. These include:

- **Civic Health Initiatives** – The Secretary of the State's civic health initiatives are designed to foster civic participation, increase interest in civic institutions, and supplement civic education initiatives for Connecticut's residents. These initiatives include the CEO – Civically Engaged Organization – a program that partners with businesses, nonprofits and other organizations to help raise civic awareness; Next Gen Elections – a program designed to build Connecticut's next generation of poll workers by recruiting college-aged individuals and provide high-level training; Family Civic Trivia events; Poll Worker Appreciation Days; the Red, White, & Blue Schools program; the Civic Ambassadors program; work with the Connecticut Kid Governor; and various other programs.
- **The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)** – The ACP program became effective on January 1, 2004. The goal of the ACP is to help survivors of certain

crimes (family violence, sexual assault, injury or risk of injury to a minor, or stalking) who relocate for protection purposes keep their new address confidential. The ACP offers its participants two services to help keep the survivor's new location private. One service is the participant's use of an ACP substitute mailing address. The ACP provides cost-free mail forwarding services. The Office of the Secretary of the State serves as each program participant's legal agent for service of process and receipt of first-class mail. The second component of the program prevents public access to a participant's actual address on government records including voter registry lists and keeps marriage records confidential.

- **Business Initiatives** – The Business Services Division (“BSD”) continues to operate the Connecticut Business Registry on business.ct.gov in partnership with the Department of Administrative Services. In Fiscal Year 2024, there were over 45,000 new Connecticut businesses were formed on business.ct.gov and BSD received and accepted over 440,000 total business filings, with more than 97% of those via online applications. BSD is working on a project called “Business Registry System 2.0” (“BRS”) to enhance the services available on business.ct.gov and ensure that the data available to the public is accurate and timely. The division is also engaged on an initiative to offer a completely new online experience for its document apostille/authentication customers that will result in offering online ordering, order tracking, and, where appropriate, the issuance of apostilles electronically. It is expected that both the BRS 2.0 and apostille/authentication projects to finish in late 2024 / early 2025.
- **Records Management** - The Records and Archiving Unit supports the Secretary's constitutional duty to “have the safe keeping and custody of the public records and documents” by providing records management, archives, and library services to the Office of the Secretary of the State. It also serves as the office's liaison to the Public Records Administrator, as required by law. It maintains the Office library, administers on and off-site storage of, and access to, the wide variety of records filed with and generated by the Office. The Unit also researches, prepares, and implements record retention schedules for the Office, creates microfilm and digital copies of records, responds to hundreds of annual staff and public reference requests, and creates indexes and guides to Office record series to enable staff and public access to information. In addition, the Unit provides indexing, access, and preservation services for the original bills, acts, and resolutions of the General Assembly, state agency regulations, and various special documents filed with the Office by state law.

Improvements/Achievements 2023-24

- **Implementation of Early Voting** – In May 2023, the General Assembly approved an Early Voting measure, which the Governor later signed into law. 2024 marked the historic first year of early voting in Connecticut,

which required new regulations, as well as training for all registrars of voters, town clerks and poll workers in each of the state's 169 towns. Early voting launched with a four-day early voting period in advance of the April 2, 2024, Presidential Preference Primary, followed by a seven-day period prior to the August 13, 2024, Primary. The November 5, 2024, General Election will include 14 days of early voting.

- **Launch of the “Next Gen Elections” program** – The Secretary launched this innovative initiative focused on recruiting college-aged civic leaders to serve as poll workers. “Next Gen Elections” will infuse the state’s current ranks of election workers with enthusiastic, young civic ambassadors, during a time when nationwide poll worker shortages have increased and as the need has grown in Connecticut with the addition of early voting. This two-year, paid program was made possible by a grant from the Elections Assistance Commission (EAC) and will see college students complete the highest level of poll worker training, after which they will be available to serve at voting locations across Connecticut during the 2024 and 2025 general elections. They will play a vital part in ensuring the state’s elections are run safely and smoothly and may work in a variety of roles.
- **Continued enhancements of the CVRS and EMS/ENS systems** - The Office enhanced its Connecticut Voter Registration (CVRS), Election Management (EMS), and Election Night Reporting (ENR) systems were enhanced to support early voting. These enhancements allow town election officials to issue, receive, track, and provide reporting on early vote ballots. These systems were successfully used during the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary.
- **Issued RFP for the state-wide replacement of the Vote Tabulator Systems** – On October 6, 2023, the state Bond Commission granted the office \$25 million in bonding for projects, including for the purchase of new tabulators for the state. Later that same day, the Office of the Secretary of the State issued an RFP for the purchase. The Office created a selection committee that consisted of both state and local representatives, which reviewed the proposals submitted by tabulator vendors. As of the time of this submission, the RFP remains in process.