

Researching candidates on your ballot:

Tips and resources guide on candidates, their records and platforms

How to contact campaigns and what to expect?

- In-person is always best. This includes attending town halls, forums and debates. Virtual events can be helpful, too.
- Sending an email or calling is also an option. You should expect a response. Don't be frustrated if you are sent to a staffer, as staffers have a lot of sway. They are often advising the candidates on the issues.
- Asking questions via social media is not always effective, since campaign staffers can't always tell if users are constituents or not.

What websites and resources are useful when researching candidates?

- Always check your local newspaper(s) and public media stations. They often have interviews, information and profiles regarding local candidates.
- Social media pages of candidates can also be helpful. But don't rely on social media for all your news!
- If a top-priority voting issue for you has an organization that advocates or follows that topic, check their website to see if they have a candidate scorecard or analysis. Note: Individual organizations are inherently advocates for their issues, and those scorecards may be skewed.
- Sign up for campaign emails to find what candidates are saying.
- Talk to people and ask them how certain policies play out in their lives and community.
- Don't rely on the same source for all your information. Seek out information from many sides for a more informed decision.

How can I find voting records for incumbents?

Congress

1. Go to [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)
2. Pick your senator or representative.
3. Choose filters on the left-hand menu

You can see how many of each kind of bill they've been involved in without having to click any more. (Example: U.S. Sen. Todd Young has sponsored/cosponsored more than 250 health bills in his time in office)

State

1. Go to iga.in.gov.
2. Click on legislation.
3. Click by legislator.
4. Find your legislator to view the bills they've authored.

County, city and town

Check their websites for meeting dates and minutes

If the candidate is not an incumbent, their website should list what they have done in their community.

Recommended websites:

Vote411

vote411.org

Ballotpedia

ballotpedia.org

Open States

openstates.org

Indiana Voter Portal

indianavoters.in.gov

Indiana Election Division

in.gov/sos/elections

On The Issues

ontheissues.org

GovTrack

govtrack.us

Resources:

Indiana Civic Health Index

bit.ly/INCivicHealth23

Civically, Indiana

ipbs.org/CivicallyIndiana



Voter guides, issue-based voters

If you are focused on a specific topic, check out groups that advocate on that topic. They may have their own voter guide. Here are a few examples for 2024:

Women

Women4Change

women4changeindiana.org/vote

Guns

Moms Demand Action

gunsensevoter.org/candidates/

National Rifle Association

nrapvf.org/grades/indiana/

Colleges and universities also may have specific resources for students:

engage.iupui.edu/service-opportunities/voting-guide.html

Our statewide team has collected resources and tools to help you be informed on statewide topics. Find it at ipbs.org/CivicallyIndiana

Don't get discouraged

For some races, it's really, really hard to find information. Judges are pretty difficult to research – which is why many states have eliminated elected judicial positions. Some candidates don't campaign, respond to media requests, and attend forums or debates. It's harder to find information about them outside of their voting records if they're incumbents.

And as journalism faces ever increasing cuts, it's pretty hard to find information about local races.

Now what?

- Indiana's next legislative session starts January 2025. It will be a long session, which means it could run well into late April as lawmakers debate the state's next two-year budget. You can track what is happening at iga.in.gov or follow using next year's bill tracker. There are also many Indiana Statehouse reporters that will be working on keeping you informed daily. Follow your local Indiana Public Broadcasting station for reporting from our statewide team during the legislative session. And you can join the Indiana Two-Way for weekly text messages and news updates throughout the session, by texting "Indiana" to 765-275-1120.
- Sign up for updates from the offices of your representatives
- Communicate with your representatives (phone calls and in-person meetings are most effective to share how policy is impacting you)
- File a public record request. Here is how to do that: nfoic.org/indiana-foia-laws/

Here are some explainers that may help you:

How and why are Indiana's elections and state government run?

ipbs.org/CivicallyIndiana

How does the legislative session work?

ipbs.org/projects/indianalegislativetrail/

Learn about roles and responsibilities of government officials

Indiana executive government

ipbs.org/projects/executive-government/

Indiana county government

ipbs.org/projects/county-government/

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