Marion County Election Board

Voter Experience Project

Effort to assess voting best practices and develop a plan to meet the future needs of Marion County voters

NEED:
Marion County’s fleet of aging voting equipment must be replaced as it is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain the overall health of the first generation machines. Additionally, current software contracts expire in 2014 and it is unclear whether or not these systems will continue to be supported by the vendor or certified by the State of Indiana.

Before purchasing equipment, the Marion County Election Board must first determine the type of voting experience residents want in order to make the most responsible fiscal decision. Indiana law permits two main types of voting – precinct-based and vote center. There is also the opportunity to take the best ideas of both methods and develop a hybrid plan that is consistent with state law. Each approach requires different voting technology; however, before an investment is made, a thorough vetting of the future of voting in Marion County must be conducted.

PROPOSED PROCESS:
- Create a study group comprised of elected officials, political party officials, poll workers, community groups, and voters
- Develop a series of public meetings to better educate the study group on:
  - Voting Systems Permitted Under Indiana Election Law
  - General Procedures
  - Voting Locations/Accessibility Needs
  - Voting Technology
  - Security Needs
- Facilitate a final group discussion to draft a report illustrating the benefits and costs of the three voting options
- Use the report to guide a series of public meetings to allow for general public input
- Draft final recommendations and submit them to the Election Board
- Determine a timeline for a RFP to purchase new voting equipment and system software

PROPOSED TIMELINE:
- February: Launch Voter Experience Project
- March: Announce members of study group
- April –June: Hold study group public meetings
- August: Share final study group report at Election Board meeting
- September – October: Hold community-wide public forums to gather input
- November: Finalize recommendations