Michigan Department of State Bureau of Elections

2025 Annual Review

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Message from leadership

Following an intense presidential election year, 2025 presented the Bureau of Elections (BOE) with both an opportunity and a challenge: innovate and improve the way we support voters, election administrators, candidates, and others who rely on BOE services, all while preparing for an unusually busy midterm election calendar in 2026. As any election official can tell you, there are no “off years” in elections. In addition to three statewide election dates in 2025, including municipal races in Detroit and other major jurisdictions, BOE made significant updates to the rules, procedures, and technologies that support our election, campaign finance, and public disclosure processes.

The 2025 annual review highlights the great progress we have made in the first half of the election cycle. Thanks to the dedicated work of BOE staff and the invaluable support and input from our partners across the election space, this year saw long-needed updates to our State Administrative Rules, the rollout of many new applications, including overseas military voting, modernized reimbursement for local officials, and a rebuild of the decades-old state software used for campaign finance and lobbying reporting. We also launched a process to purchase new voting equipment for jurisdictions across the state, with the 10-year contract that began in 2017 coming to an end in 2026.

We would also like to again convey our appreciation to all the hardworking election administrators, workers, and countless others in our state who continued to strengthen Michigan’s election ecosystem in 2025. We were particularly excited to hold BOE’s first-ever clerk conference in Lansing, providing a unique opportunity to interact with a significant number of our 1,604 local and county clerks and their election staff.

2026 brings a particularly eventful election year, with open seats in the U.S. Senate, Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General races, in addition to the U.S. House, both chambers of the State Legislature, and numerous local and county races. This also means renewed interest in all aspects of the election process, from how candidates qualify for the ballot and report their campaign finances, to lobbying and financial disclosure of public officials, to the voting process and critical post-election procedures like the canvass, certification, and recount process. Thanks to our ongoing collaboration with local election officials and other stakeholders, we are well positioned to have successful elections in 2026 and beyond.

Notable accomplishments

BOE clerk conference

In 2025, BOE hosted its first-ever clerk conference, bringing together nearly 600 municipal and county clerks and election partners from across the state for two days of training and networking. The conference marked a significant milestone in BOE’s efforts to strengthen communication and provide dedicated, in-person support for local officials who administer our elections.

Attendees participated in more than 20 breakout sessions that covered election security, early voting, voter list maintenance, FOIA, and other important election topics. The event also featured presentations from state and federal partners such as the Michigan State Police, FBI, and U.S. Election Assistance Commission, reinforcing the strong partnerships that help ensure Michigan’s elections remain secure, accessible, and transparent.

Beyond the training sessions, the conference created valuable opportunities for clerks to connect directly with bureau staff, ask questions, share feedback, and build relationships that support their work year-round. BOE received overwhelmingly positive feedback following the event, with clerks highlighting the practical value of the sessions and the importance of a dedicated space for collaboration. The success of the conference established a strong foundation for future events and BOE looks forward to providing more opportunities to empower clerks and strengthen our statewide coordination.

Michigan Transparency Network (MiTN)

BOE completed the development and launched the Michigan Transparency Network (MiTN) in 2025, with full implementation continuing throughout 2026. MiTN is a modern cloud-based disclosure system that serves as the state's central platform for the disclosure of campaign finance expenditures, lobbyist activities, casino ownership interest, legal defense funds, and personal financial disclosure filings. The system was developed to modernize Michigan's disclosure infrastructure and support expanded requirements; provide filers with a secure, streamlined way to submit reports; and improve public access to disclosure information.

The MiTN system significantly improves Michigan's disclosure infrastructure by providing a more unified and user-friendly filing environment. The system replaced multiple platforms, including the antiquated MERTS system, eLobby system, and other disclosure software, which required filers to navigate separate tools. BOE worked closely with filers and technology partners during the rollout to provide training, resources, and ongoing support throughout the transition. This enabled candidates, committees, lobbyists, and public officials to continue meeting disclosure deadlines while learning the new processes.

This investment in Michigan's transparency and disclosure infrastructure will expand the public's access to disclosed information in the coming years and serve as a critical tool for supporting transparent and accessible reporting.

Campaign Finance Data Dive

The Campaign Finance staff hosted Data Dive: Campaign Finance Transparency in Michigan, during which students from the University of Michigan were provided campaign finance data sets and encouraged to come up with creative reporting, identify trends, and analyze the data. Over 80 students participated and presented their reporting and charts to MDOS staff and senior leadership. These creative reports identified donation spikes, in-state and out-of-state contributions, expenditure types and more. It was truly a fun and collaborative learning experience for all.

Administrative hearing process

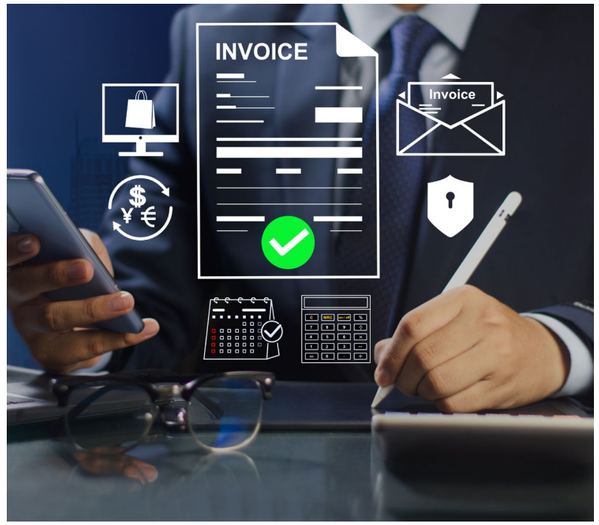
Throughout 2025, the Regulatory Division developed a framework for the administrative hearing process to resolve campaign finance complaints, and the first hearing took place in spring 2026. Generally, complaints alleging campaign finance violations are submitted to the bureau and resolved through a series of written responses between the parties, followed by a determination issued by the bureau, with the potential for a conciliation agreement (where the violator agrees to take certain actions). When a matter cannot be resolved through more informal methods, the bureau now has the ability to hold an administrative hearing to determine whether a civil violation of the act has occurred.

County Election Night Results (CENR) update

BOE updated the County Election Night Reporting (CENR) module in the Qualified Voter File (QVF). This module allows county clerks to upload unofficial election results on election night to facilitate review. The updates have minimal impact on the clerk-facing components but improve public-facing reporting and internal BOE functionality.

Electronic Delivery and Return Portal (EDARP)

After changes in Michigan law, MDOS was required to develop a process to allow members of the military to return their ballot electronically, beginning Sept. 1, 2025. Throughout 2025, BOE determined requirements for a secure portal, issued a request for proposals, selected a vendor, developed a portal in coordination with the vendor, updated forms and instructions with the federal government, and trained clerks and military voters in use of the portal. The first ballots were issued to military members through EDARP on Sept. 20, 2025, ahead of the November 2025 election.



Electronic Orders and Requests (EOR) portal

The new EOR portal allows clerks to submit equipment orders and requests for reimbursement electronically, and for BOE to process those orders and requests in a more streamlined, efficient manner. Once fully implemented, EOR will support reimbursement requests for postage, security camera, drop box, early voting, election security, county voter registration transfer, presidential primary and special elections, along with drop box and supply ordering.

Voting systems Request for Proposals (RFP)

BOE started conversations in January 2025, ahead of the expiration of existing voting system contracts in February 2027. Throughout the spring and summer, BOE held a series of meetings with county and local clerks and representatives of the disability community to determine requirements for the RFP.

Electronic pollbook (EPB) LEAN process improvement workshop/EPB modernization

In January 2025, BOE began a multi-year process of updating the EPB software used by clerks to facilitate and document election processes. First, BOE convened an LPI with county and local clerks and BOE staff to discuss possible improvements and determine priorities. Throughout 2025, that functionality was developed and tested, with a clerk focus group consulted at every step. Full functionality across all EPBs (EV EPB, Election Day EPB, and Early Vote Center EPB) is expected for May 2027.

BOE recognition

On Aug. 22, at the Election Center's 40th Annual National Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, BOE received the Guardian Award for innovation in election security for the Michigan Secure Election Experience. Members of the Election Administration Division accepted the award and presented on the program, which was developed in partnership with local clerks and LKF Marketing to provide clear, consistent messaging and materials explaining how Michigan's elections are secure through every step of the process.

Additionally, three members of the Election Administration team graduated from the Election Center's Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) program at the conference, supporting BOE's continued growth in expertise and standards.

From left to right: Kristi, Carol, and Isaiah

Staff overview

BOE continues to evolve and meet the growing needs of its staff and the stakeholders it serves. Here is an overview of the staffing changes, new additions, and the overall structure that supports our work.

The Operations Division created a Public, Elections and Technology Requests (PETR) Section to provide support for processes that impact the public and internal Bureau of Election (BOE) operations. This section provides support for topics ranging from processing various grants and reimbursement requests from clerks, processing postcards and mail, assisting with public and clerk calls (BOE Support Desk), metrics, website and technology requests.

Total bureau staff:

80

The Regulatory Division created two new sections to address more specialized topics as the bureau's function continues to expand and evolve. The Litigation and Enforcement Section processes campaign finance and notary complaints, partners with the department's Office of Investigative Services to resolve election law issues, and works with the Michigan Department of Attorney General on ongoing litigation issues concerning the bureau. The Regulation and Public Information Section promulgates administrative rules, provides feedback on proposed legislation and support for the implementation of legislative changes, processes the bureau's FOIA requests, and supports internal and external communications.

Years of service at the Bureau of Elections

21%
5 years:
17 staff members

20%
10 years:
16 staff members

13%
20 years:
10 staff members

BOE by the numbers

Regulatory

Eight of the bureau's pending rulemaking transactions wrapped up during 2025, resulting in promulgation of new rules covering a wide variety of topics, including procedures before the Board of State Canvassers, election recounts, and electronic voting systems.

- Board of State Canvassers (effective 5/12/25)
- Conduct of election recounts (effective 5/12/25)
- Electronic voting systems (effective 5/12/25)
- Disqualification from ballot based upon contents of Affidavit of Identity (effective 6/4/25)
- Gifts under the lobby act (effective 7/1/25)
- Lobbyist registration and reporting (effective 7/1/25)
- Electronic return of AV ballots by eligible voters (effective 9/11/25)
- Use of electronic pollbook (effective 10/23/25)

Eight Requests for Rulemaking (RFRs) approved – These were initiated in 2025 and will take effect in 2026, except the use of electronic pollbook rules that were initiated and made effective in 2025.

- Election challengers and poll watchers (submitted 3/6/25)
- Use of electronic pollbook (submitted 3/6/25)
- Voter registration cancellation, challenge, and correction (submitted 3/5/25)
- Campaign finance reports, contributions, and expenditures (submitted 10/22/25)
- Campaign finance committees (submitted 10/21/25)
- Campaign financing [partial repeal] (submitted 10/21/25)
- Disqualification from ballot based upon contents of Affidavit of Identity (submitted 10/21/25)
- General roles and responsibilities of election officials (submitted 12/22/25)

5
public hearings held

1,000+
written public comments submitted

820
FOIA requests processed

6
declaratory ruling requests – four under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, one under the Lobby Act, and one under the Administrative Procedures Act regarding Michigan Election Law

80
Elections-related bills reviewed and considered
- 43 in the Senate
- 37 in the House

4
Petition challenges and 11 candidate appeals processed

11
Board of State Canvassers meetings held

91
Forms and manuals reviewed for legal compliance

55

New notary complaints received.

- 89 complaints closed (34 from 2024 and 55 from 2025).

91

Michigan Campaign Finance Act complaints received

- With the creation of the Litigation and Enforcement team in 2025, which had dedicated resources to managing the complaint process, the processing times for MCFA complaints is 2-3x faster than in 2024.
- 175 complaints closed (84 from 2024 and 91 from 2025).

Election administration

4 Election security table top exercises conducted across the state in Marquette, Lansing, Howell, and Muskegon

1,188 county and local officials attended training sessions, from 719 county and local offices (45% of jurisdictions across the state, from 81 of 83 counties)

719 hours of live training that included in-person and virtual options

29 Training Tidbit virtual sessions hosted where 622 election officials attended at least one session

20+

Events where the bureau conducted demonstrations of voter assist terminals (VATs) at school, community, senior, and disability events.

136 election officials attended an in-person accreditation course

3 election admin staff members graduated with Election Center Certified Elections Registration Administrator (CERA) certification

94% of jurisdictions had at least one user in compliance with accreditation training requirements at the end of 2025

95% of jurisdictions had at least one user who completed their required continuing education curriculum before the end of the year

109,013 trainings completed in eLearning

Filing, disclosure and compliance

Personal financial disclosure

The Personal Financial Disclosure (PFD) Section processes lobby reports from Michigan's registered lobbyists and lobbyist agents, and reviews personal financial disclosure reports submitted by members of the Legislature, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, and Attorney General, and candidates for those offices.

7,586

lobby reports filed (32% increase over 2024)

134

PFD statements filed in MiTN (Candidates for office did not have to file in 2025)

14,223

lobby documents received, including lobby registrations, reports, terminations, and amendments

Campaign finance

BOE increased its filer assistance in 2025, responding to over **7,100** emails and **2,300** phone calls from campaign committees, candidates, treasurers, and bookkeepers.

136 tickets for MiTN drafted, reviewed and tested. Staff continues building on system enhancements and improvements to the MiTN system, making filing campaign statements and viewing information more user-friendly.

10,477 filings received and reviewed from **2,185** committees.

655 late filing fee notices sent.

486 late filing fees assessed for a total liability of **$431,790**.

64 Error and omission communications sent.

5,995 campaign statements received from **1,848** committees.

Office of the Great Seal

The Office of the Great Seal is a section of the bureau that commissions notaries public; certifies and authenticates official documents; and securely and reliably maintains records filed with the Secretary of State.

- **28** filing processes updated and redrafted
- **98,220** active notaries
- **3,498** active e-notaries
- **3,427** active remote notaries
- **13,412** total online notary applications submitted
- **4,273** total mail-in notary applications submitted
- **8,000** authentications processed
- **9,843** vital record requests processed for Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- **450** documents processed for Executive Office of the Governor
- **764** oaths
- **125** warrants
- **530** bonds
- **31** annexation requests
- **100** municipal filings
- **45** notary application requests processed for Michigan Department of Corrections

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