Building Statutory Language to
ADVANCE GIS IN ELECTIONS

This model statutory language was developed by NSGIC as a starting point and resource for any state looking to empower and fund GIS in elections through state statute.

VOTING UNIT BOUNDARIES

💬 DISCUSSION

Creation and maintenance of a voting precinct GIS layer is an essential step. These data are critical when current and validated. Collaboration between the county/local legislative body, the state elections officer or body of elections, and the state geospatial coordination office is imperative, with continued effort and attention given to the partnership to coordinate and share these vital framework data layers while adhering to election, legislative, and municipal schedules and deadlines. It is of the utmost importance to use modern technology in elections, and the state geospatial coordination office can be an advisor recommending tools and applications to advance the use, collaboration, access, and availability of the data (for example, recommending webservices to share data rather than recreating data).

§ MODEL STATUTE

Within *<10 days>* after the establishment, division, abolition, or change of a voting precinct, the *<county/local legislative body>* shall file with the *<state elections officer or oversight body>* a notice describing the action taken and an electronic file representing the resulting geographic boundaries of each voting precinct affected by the action.

The *<state elections officer or oversight body>* shall coordinate with the *<state geospatial coordination office>* to produce an official statewide voting precinct map, available to the public at no charge, in an electronic geographic information system file format.

RELATED CIVIC BOUNDARIES

💬 DISCUSSION

Coordination is good government, and coordination between the state elections office and the state geospatial coordination office is critical to ensuring related civic boundary data, key to ensuring a voter receives the correct ballot style for where they live, is accurate, accessible, available, and used in election processes.

It is imperative to use modern technology in elections, and the state geospatial coordination office can be an advisor recommending tools and applications to advance the use, collaboration, access, and availability of the data (for example, recommending webservices to share data rather than recreating data).

§ MODEL STATUTE

Within *<10 days>* after completion of the establishment of, annexation to, or deannexation from a political subdivision[1] of the State, the *<political subdivision, county>* shall file with the *<state elections officer or oversight body>*, a notice describing the action taken and an electronic file representing the resulting geographic boundaries.

The *<state elections officer or oversight body>* shall coordinate with the *<state geospatial coordination office>* to:

> 1. maintain for each political subdivision of the State, an accurate map representation of its geographic boundary that is:
>   a) the official boundary of the political subdivision for purposes of meeting the needs of the United States Bureau of the Census in identifying the boundary of the political subdivision
> 2. at least annually, publish statewide political subdivision boundary maps in an electronic geographic information system file format, that are available to the public at no charge.

[1] The term political subdivision as used above can be narrowed to a specific set of incorporated local government entities whose geography is represented within county-wide election boundaries (for example, counties, cities, towns, and school districts). Ultimately, it may be valuable for a state to require that current geographic boundaries for all incorporated local government agencies be kept in a map-based database.

📍 Using geographic information systems (GIS) in elections can save time, reduce the risk of errors, and contribute to transparency in elections. A working group of GIS and elections experts created this model statutory language in 2020-2021, using the adopted statute from eight states around the country. Learn more at **elections.NSGIC.org**.

ADDRESS POINTS

💬 DISCUSSION

Geocoding, the process of assigning a discrete x, y coordinate location to an address, is a critical process in precincting and districting voters. The technology is also used in areas such as public safety and emergency management. A statewide address dataset is highly recommended for geocoding voter locations.

Collaboration between the state geospatial coordination office and the state elections office is essential, with continued effort and attention given to the partnership to coordinate and share these critical framework data layers while adhering to election, legislative, and municipal schedules and deadlines.

Use of modern technology in elections is essential, and the state geospatial coordination office can be an advisor recommending tools and applications to advance the collaboration, access, and availability of the data (for example, recommending webservices to share data rather than recreating data).

§ MODEL STATUTE

The *<state geospatial coordination office>* shall coordinate with the *<chief public safety officer, state public safety department, and/or 911 board>*, the *<state elections officer or oversight body>*, and *<local addressing authorities>* to publish a statewide database of addresses that:

1. includes the building number and standardized street components of each address,
2. includes geographic coordinates specifying each address location,
3. is updated at least biannually, and
4. is available to the public at no charge.

• States are encouraged to adapt the model statue to their needs, starting with the words in *italics.*

The National States Geographic Information Council (NSGIC) is a state-led organization for developing, exchanging, and endorsing geospatial technology and policy best practices. Its Geo-Enabled Elections project focuses specifically on the use of geospatial information in elections.

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✔ GIS in ELECTIONS