

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State



Secretary of State Jim Condos

Smart, Good Government Solutions

In 8 years, we have transformed the SOS Agency:

- From paper driven processes to a digital environment
- From 0% to >97% online activity
- Gave back \$1.8M General Fund \$\$
- Improved Customer Service
- More Efficient and Accurate



Our Goal: To do good work, exceptionally well

Four divisions at the Secretary of State's Office:

- Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)
- Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)
- Elections
- Corporations

In addition to these divisions, we have many other programs (to name a few):

- Municipal Assistance
- Safe at Home
- Temporary Officiants
- APA Rules and Legislative Clerk



Corporations and Business Services Division

Common-sense Solutions for Business Registration

The Corporations division is responsible for the registration of business entities—from the small proprietorship (trade name) to the incorporation process.

It also is the filing repository for Uniform Commercial Code Filings for the State of Vermont.



Corporations and Business Services Division

Common-sense Solutions for Business Registration

We strive to provide a business friendly environment, facilitating business in Vermont through the business registration and filings of;

- Corporations;
- Partnerships;
- LLCs;
- UCC filings; and
- Trademark and trade name filings.



Corporations and Business Services Division

The Vermont Business Portal

Pursuant to Section 85 of Act 196, an act relating to simplifying government for small businesses:

“A steering committee composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, and the Secretary of Digital Services shall review and consider the necessary procedural and substantive steps to enhance the Secretary of State’s one-stop business portal for businesses, entrepreneurs, and citizens to provide information about starting and operating a business in Vermont; and submit a design proposal that includes a project scope, timeline, roadmap, cost projections, and any statutory or regulatory changes needed to implement the proposal.”



Corporations and Business Services Division

The Vermont Business Portal

Report filed on December 15, 2018:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Vermont-Business-Portal-Legislative-Report-Final-Report.pdf>

Recommendations:

- simplify the business registration process in Vermont by executing the design, development, and implementation of an enterprise solution that will align many disparate government functions within a single-session environment;
- streamline processes and provide a clearer, more efficient experience; and
- onboard additional agencies responsible for licensing, permitting, registrations, and other filing requirements.



Corporations and Business Services Division

The Vermont Business Portal

Recommendations (cont'd):

- Work Group / Governance Structure
- Concurrent projects
- Build a new foundation (technology platform)
- Business resources site
- Repeatable onboarding
- Staffing
- Funding



The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)

'Right Fit' Regulation

OPR Serves 50 professions and ~70,000 licensees, and;

- Protects the public from unethical, incompetent and unprofessional behavior by licensed practitioners;
- Sets and enforces standards for licensure and for practice once licensed;
- Ensures equity in licensing, regulation & discipline;



The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)

'Right Fit' Regulation

OPR Serves 50 professions and ~70,000+ licensees, and;

- Fairly and responsibly administers the rules and statutes pertaining to these professions/occupations; and
- Serves the public, employers and licensees in all aspects of our lives every day, from accountants to cosmetologists to nurses to veterinarians.



Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

Preserving Access to Public Records

VSARA provides, protects, promotes, and preserves Vermont public records while serving two primary populations:

- The public including Vermont citizens, corporations and organizations as well as those from other states and countries, and
- Public agencies, most directly Vermont public officials and employees at both the state and local levels.



Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

Preserving Access to Public Records

- Advises and guides public agencies in records and information management;
- Files, records, and certifies legislative acts and resolves, administrative rules, state deeds and leases, vital records, oaths and appointments, municipal charters, and similar statutory filings;
- Appraises and schedules public records so they are preserved only as long as they have a legal or administrative value;
- Preserves and enhances access to the State government's archival records; and
- Operates a secure record center for inactive agency records.
- Blockchains for public recordkeeping report filed:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/2019-Blockchain-Legislative-Report-VSARA.pdf>



Elections Division

Fair Elections and Access to Our Democracy

The Elections division protects the integrity of campaigning and elections in Vermont. It administers Vermont's elections, oversees campaign finance reporting and lobbyist disclosure laws and encourages civic participation.

Our elections staff work to;

- Preserve the integrity of campaigns and elections;
- Provide a customer friendly environment to educate and train citizens, voters, candidates, lobbyists and public officials by:
 - Administering federal and state law relating to elections
 - Promoting voter registration
 - Overseeing and assisting in the conduct of elections



Elections Division

Fair Elections and Access to Our Democracy

Our elections staff work to (cont.);

- Provide on-line campaign finance disclosure;
- Administer on-line lobbyist disclosure; and
- Provide ongoing training, support, and guidance to 248 town and city clerks.

*Vermont elections were ranked 1st overall in the nation last year on the Election Performance Index conducted by MIT's Election Data and Science Center!



Municipal Assistance

Supporting Vermont Towns One Call at a Time

Vermont's communities could not function without the service and commitment of our public officials. The Sec of State's Office believes it is important that our local leaders and the citizens of our towns have help navigating the complex and ever-changing laws that apply to them.

Our full time general counsel dedicated to municipal assistance handles;

- Responding to dozens of inquiries about municipal government, open meetings, and public records access laws each week (approximately 1,200 calls/year); and
- Answering questions posed by both members of the public and officials covering every topic imaginable affecting local governments, from abatement proceedings to zoning ordinances.



Municipal Assistance

Supporting Vermont Towns One Call at a Time

Our municipal assistance and support extends to;

- Updating and editing free publications, intended to help local officials do their jobs and to strengthen Vermont's communities by encouraging civic participation;
 - Guide to Open Meetings
 - Access to public records,
 - Digging Deep - Burials and cemeteries;
 - Conflict of interest ordinances,
 - Duties of justices of the peace, and property tax assessment appeals
- Participating in VLCT trainings & in educational opportunities for local boards upon request; and
- Holding a biennial 'Transparency Tour' series of trainings for public officials and community members at locations all around the state.



National Leadership

- President of the National Association of Secretaries of States
- Member, Council of State Governments Executive Committee
- Member, Department of Homeland Security, Critical Infrastructure, Governing Coordinating Council
- Co-Chair of CSG Overseas and Military Initiative
- Expert testimony on Professional Regulation - CSG, NCSL
- #1 State Ranking on the MIT Elections Performance Index
- 1st state with new fully ADA Compliant Accessible Voting System



Division Staffing

Corporations and Business Services Division

5 employees (including Director)

Office of Professional Regulation

35 employees (including Director/State Archivist)

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration

18 employees (including Director/State Archivist)

Elections Division

5 employees (including Director)



THANK YOU!

Please call or visit our office with any questions!

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