

# Office of the Vermont Secretary of State



Secretary of State Jim Condos

## Smart, Good Government Solutions

**In 10 years, we have transformed the SoS Agency:**

- From paper driven processes to a digital environment
- From 0% to >97% online activity
- Give back Millions in 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

## Coming Soon: VT Biz Express

We are working toward the next phase of a one stop business portal to assist small businesses in starting, maintaining and growing their business in Vermont. VT Biz Express strives to bring multiple state services under one roof:

- SOS Business Registration;
- Department of Tax;
- Department of Labor;
- Agency of Commerce & Community Development;
- and more to come...



# The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)

## 'Right Fit' Regulation

*OPR serves 50 professions and approximately 80,000 licensees, currently onboarding the massage therapy profession:*

- Serves the public, employers and licensees in all aspects of our lives every day, from accountants to cosmetologists to nurses to veterinarians.
- Sets and enforces standards for licensure and for practice once licensed; Protects the public from unethical, incompetent and unprofessional behavior by licensed practitioners;



# The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR)

## 'Right Fit' Regulation

*Ensures equity in licensing, regulation & discipline*

- Working on improving licensure in the state through smart licensing policy that benefits all while simultaneously targeting military families, individuals with criminal backgrounds, and New Americans;
- Chapter 57 review gives OPR the power to conduct a sunrise, sunset, or a scope of practice review to ensure that government oversight of a profession is appropriate





## **VT State Archives & Records Administration (VSARA)**

### **Preserving Access to Public Records**

VSARA was established in 2008 to administer a Statewide Records and Information Management Program, which is charged with supporting all three branches of state government and local governments in managing their records and information, regardless of format, according to Federal and state laws, including the Public Records Act, and industry standards and best practices.



## **VT State Archives & Records Administration (VSARA)**

### **Statewide Records & Information Management Program**

- Develop, issue, and maintain standards for managing public records.
- Perform formal appraisals of public records and issue record management policies and record retention schedules.
- Ensure low-cost, secure repositories and systems for public records are available and can support compliance.
- Operate a record center for inactive paper and analog State records.
- Take legal custody of permanent State records, preserving and providing access through a physical state archives and a digital state archives.

*VSARA also support administrative rules, document authentication and several filing functions of the Secretary of State's Office.*



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## 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 1<sup>st</sup> overall in the nation following the 2016 elections on the Election Performance Index conducted by MIT's Election Data and Science Center! (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> following 2018)



## **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:

- Fielding 100+ calls each month from members of the public and municipal officials with questions about the laws that apply to Vermont's municipalities, including:
  - Open meetings, public records, and ethics.
  - Town meeting and local elections.
  - Officer roles and responsibilities.
  - Municipal topics A-Z, from animals, cemeteries, and fire districts, to land use, libraries, and marriage, to ordinances, roads, and taxes.
  - Providing free publications to help local officials do their jobs and to strengthen Vermont's communities by encouraging civic participation.
  - Participating in trainings for local boards on request.
  - 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, #3 State Rankings on the MIT Elections Performance Index
- 1<sup>st</sup> state with new fully ADA Compliant Accessible Voting System



# Vermont Secretary of State's Office

## **Division Staffing**

### **Corporations and Business Services Division**

5 employees (including Director)

### **Office of Professional Regulation**

38 employees (including Director)

### **Vermont State Archives and Records Administration**

18 employees (including State Archivist)

### **Elections Division**

5 employees (including Director)



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Vermont Secretary of State's Office

**THANK YOU!**

**Please call or visit our office with any questions!**

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