

# CEATS

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## PROGRAM HANDBOOK



**COHORT 8**

2026 - 2027



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## **Introduction and Overview**

Election Administrators are expected to be proficient in diverse subject areas including human resources, poll worker training, election and procedural law, budgeting, physical space management, organizational communication, public relations, information technology, and cybersecurity. This diversity is not traditionally captured in any one single educational or training program.

With ongoing changes in laws and technology surrounding elections in the United States after the 2000 General Election, a need has emerged for a comprehensive educational program in election administration, technology, and security. The Indiana Certificate Program in Election Administration, Technology, and Security (CEATS) meets this crucial need within the State of Indiana while providing a nationally recognized and awarded educational program to election officials across the state.

Those who successfully complete the program receive a certificate signed by the Indiana Secretary of State, Co-Directors of the Indiana Election Division, both Directors of the Voting System Technical Oversight Program, and the President of Ball State University.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Certificate Program in Election Administration, Technology, and Security (CEATS) is to professionalize election administration by educating current and future leaders in elections on fundamental concepts, knowledge, and field techniques required of election administrators.

## **Vision**

By providing quality education to Indiana Election Administrators, our vision is to empower CEATS participants to identify and solve problems, promote election integrity within the communities they serve, and improve overall confidence in elections.

## **Program Objectives and Outcomes**

By the end of this program, you will develop professional competencies in the following areas:

- Preparing for and Managing Elections
- Understanding Implications of Election Laws
- Proficiency in and Understanding of Operations of Election Technology
- Managing, Training, and Assessing Election Personnel
- Ensuring Election Integrity
- Creating Public Value
- Integrating Professional Communication
- Implementing Practices to Improve Election Administration



## **Program Eligibility, Application, and Registration**

To be eligible to participate in the CEATS program, one must be an Indiana County Clerk, an Election Official in Indiana, or contemplating such a role in election administration. Those who are not currently employed with an Indiana county must seek approval from Program Directors and the Indiana Secretary of State prior to their enrollment. Candidates for participation must be in good standing with their county and have no ongoing criminal or civil charges. The VSTOP Directors, with authorization of the Indiana Secretary of State, reserve the right to revoke a participant's enrollment in the program at any time.

## **Program Sequence and Locations**

The program consists of three phases: each with unique objectives. Program offerings will be a combination of in-person and online course sessions for a hybrid learning experience. In-person sessions will generally be held in the Indiana Secretary of State Conference Room (OW 113) at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

Ball State University Oakwood  
Building, Room 113 2501 N  
Oakwood Ave Muncie, IN 47304

Offerings for this program will begin with Phase I annually in May/June, immediately following the graduation ceremony of the previous cohort in April of each year. Participants can expect each session for the first two phases to be held every other week on Mondays or beginning on Mondays. However, the schedule is planned around the election calendar in an effort to avoid key deadlines and conference dates, which may affect the every-other-Monday pattern in some months. All session dates are tentative and subject to change.

Program participants who have satisfactorily completed all Phase I sessions and assigned work with a grade of 75% or higher may continue their training into Phase II. Subsequently, participants must complete all assignments within the timelines required by program directors and staff in order to move forward with their Capstone Projects in Phase III.

The Phase III Capstone Project begins its preliminary planning stages during the latter half of Phase I. During this phase, program participants will submit a project proposal to the CEATS Program Directors and staff for approval; after which data collection and research related to the project may begin.

Each phase and session within the CEATS Program are designed to build on the material presented in prior sessions. Therefore, participants will receive the maximum benefit through the completion of all sessions in chronological order.



## **Program Policies**

### ***Attendance***

Attendance at all in-person sessions is required unless extenuating circumstances arise preventing a participant's presence. If a participant is unable to attend an in-person session, they are obligated to inform the CEATS Program Directors and staff of their predicted absence and must make arrangements to make up any missing work. All participants should also maintain an active presence on Canvas during virtual sessions. Attendance will be evaluated based on the participant's completion of all required assignments by the designated timelines.

CEATS Program Directors and Staff acknowledge that professional responsibilities and personal emergencies may arise, preventing a participant from attending a session, or completing an online session by the designated deadline. In these cases, a participant may be granted an extension for the submission of any tests or assignments, with prior approval from the CEATS Program Directors and staff. Extensions are rare and only granted under very exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the staff and Program Directors.

In instances where a participant is unable to attend an in-person session, arrangements may be made prior to the session to attend the session remotely. If a prolonged situation occurs requiring a participant to miss multiple sessions, the Program Directors reserve the right to require that the participant temporarily withdraw from the program and reenter training with a future cohort, beginning with the first missed session.

### ***Program Fees***

Phase I	\$945
Phase II	\$1,005
Phase III	\$600
<b>Total Program Fees</b>	<b>\$2,550</b>

Program fees cover the cost of all training sessions including books, study materials, and meals and refreshments during in-person sessions. Fees for each phase must be paid in full in advance of the first session.

The Indiana Secretary of State may be able to provide scholarships/fee support to partially or fully offset program fees for eligible applicants. Scholarship information will be posted on the CEATS website prior to the beginning of each cohort.



## *Cancellation and Refunds*

In the event that a participant cancels his or her participation in the program and after the return of all provided materials, the program fee will be refunded as follows:

Cancellation at least two (2) weeks prior to the first session: full refund of the program fee.

Cancellation less than two (2) weeks prior to the first session: refund of program fee less \$50 administrative fee.

Cancellation after the first session: refund of 90% of the program fee. Cancellation after the second session: refund of 80% of the program fee. Cancellation after the third session: no refund of program fees will be provided.

\*Should a participant voluntarily withdraw from the CEATS Program, they may return to the program during the next cohort, resuming at the most recently completed session. This option will not be made available to participants who received a refund for the CEATS Program.

## *Integrity*

Participants are expected to adhere to honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all aspects of the program. Any instances of program dishonesty will be addressed by the CEATS Program Directors. Program dishonesty is the misrepresentation of individual work. Examples of this may include cheating on quizzes, assignments, or using someone else's work as your own. Penalties for behavior in displaying acts of program dishonesty will be based on the discretion of the CEATS Program Directors.

Although the CEATS Program believes it is valuable to learn from others within the program, all work should be completed individually to demonstrate personal proficiency. The program is evolving from each Cohort, and participant's progress is used to evaluate the content of the course.

Integrity is an important part of the work within elections, VSTOP believes that it is critical that all CEATS participants display honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability through their work in the program. By applying these values in the work completed in the CEATS Program, it can be applied to the work that participants engage in their county.



## ***Communication***

Questions regarding the certificate program, such as questions about your grade or anything intended for the instructor regarding the certificate program, should be sent to [CEATS@bsu.edu](mailto:CEATS@bsu.edu). The CEATS Program Directors or staff will typically respond to communication within 48 hours of receiving the message.

## ***Grading***

A due date and time are provided for each assignment. Students seeking approval for late assignments should provide a written explanation of the unavoidable circumstances that would prevent them from completing the assignment on time.

## ***Diversity Commitment***

The CEATS Program aspires to attract and retain a diverse staff and participants. VSTOP is committed to ensuring that all Indiana election administrators are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State, the Indiana Secretary of State's Office, and among those we serve.



## Certificate Phases and Sessions

### Phase I Session Description

The Phase I curriculum focuses on diverse entry-level content important to election administration and the history of elections. Additionally, in Phase I, participants will learn about different departments, agencies, and organizations working to ensure election security and to improve confidence in elections.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session Description</u>
<b>PI-S1: Election Administration, Technology, and Security: An Overview</b>	June 8, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Process of Elections</li> <li>• State and Local Election Officials, Federal, State, and Local Elections</li> <li>• The Election Calendar</li> <li>• Voting Machines and Electronic Poll Books</li> <li>• Physical Cybersecurity of Election</li> <li>• The Statewide Voter Registration System</li> </ul>
<b>PI-S2: <i>Elections in the United States and Indiana – History and Current Landscape</i></b>	June 22, 2026 – June 28, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Australian Ballot</li> <li>• Mechanized, Punched Card and Electronic Voting Systems</li> <li>• The 2000 Presidential Election</li> <li>• The 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA)</li> <li>• The Election Assistance Commission Election Equipment Certification</li> <li>• The Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG)</li> </ul>
<b>PI-S3: <i>Information Technology and Elections</i></b>	July 6, 2026 – July 12, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT Basics for Election Personnel – Basic Components of Computer Systems</li> <li>• Operating Systems</li> <li>• Organization and Management of Files and Folders</li> <li>• Network Fundamentals</li> <li>• Graphical User Interfaces, Spreadsheets and Databases</li> </ul>
<b>PI-S4: Introduction to Operations of Electronic Poll Books (ePBs)</b>	July 20, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Process of Voter Registration</li> <li>• The Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS),</li> <li>• Poll Lists and Electronic Poll Books</li> <li>• Electronic Poll Book Components</li> <li>• Hardware and Software</li> <li>• SVRS Web Services Framework (WSF)</li> <li>• Vote Centers</li> </ul>



<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session Description</u>
<b>PI-S5:</b> <i>Election Integrity</i>	August 10, 2026 – August 16, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Roles and Functions of the Indiana SOS, Indiana State Police, U.S. Department of Justice, Election Assistance Commission, Federal Election Commission, Indiana DHS Regarding Elections and Election Integrity, Department of Homeland Security</li> <li>• Identify common threats and challenges to election integrity, including mis- and dis-information</li> <li>• Recognize the legal and procedural safeguards in place to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability in elections</li> <li>• Strategies to effectively communicate the integrity and security of elections to the public and stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>PI-S6:</b> <b>Introduction to the Operations of Voting Systems –Direct Record Electronic (DRE) and Optical Scan Systems (OPSCAN)</b>	August 24, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting System Components, Hardware, Software and Firmware</li> <li>• Election Management Systems</li> <li>• Technology and Features of DRE &amp; OPSCAN Systems</li> <li>• Similarities and Differences Between DRE &amp; OPSCAN</li> <li>• Election Definitions</li> <li>• The Process of Voting</li> <li>• Tabulation and Reporting</li> </ul>
<b>PI-S7:</b> <i>Preparing for and Managing Elections: Effectiveness and Efficiency</i>	September 21, 2026 – September 27, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ongoing Process of Preparing for Elections – Key stages of the electoral cycle</li> <li>• Effective Election Personnel Management</li> <li>• Election Administration and Media</li> <li>• Contingency strategies</li> <li>• Build effective training and staffing systems</li> <li>• Ensure voting system preparedness</li> <li>• Evaluation tools and debrief processes to assess performance, gather feedback, and inform improvements post-election.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase I Report</b>	October 25, 2026	Participants will choose one of the above-bulleted descriptions from Phase I and explain how it has helped develop their professional competency. Will prepare a double-spaced 1-3 Page Report on the chosen topic.



## Phase II Session Descriptions

In contrast to the Phase I curriculum, which is focused primarily on entry-level and review material for Election Administrators, the Phase II curriculum presents advanced concepts, skills, and tools that an Election Administrator uses to analyze an effective election. The knowledge of the advanced material will aid election administrators in crafting a feasible and practical strategy for their county that will promote election integrity and voters' confidence.

<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session Description</u>
<b>PII-S1:</b> <i>Testing and Certification for Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books</i>	October 5, 2026 – October 18, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indiana Election Law</li> <li>• The Voting System Technical Oversight Program (VSTOP) Certification and Testing Protocols for Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books</li> <li>• Voting System Technical Laboratories (VSTL)</li> <li>• The Acceptance Test for Electronic Poll Books</li> </ul>
<b>PII-S2:</b> <b>Workshop I -- Managing Election Equipment – Direct Record Equipment (DRE) and Electronic Poll Books (ePBs)</b>	October 19, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working knowledge of DRE Voting Systems</li> <li>• Configuration and Startup of DRE Voting Systems</li> <li>• Programming, Operating, and Tabulating Results</li> <li>• Working knowledge of Electronic Poll Books</li> <li>• Configuration and Startup of ePBs</li> <li>• Loading Voter Registration Data</li> <li>• Networking and Syncing</li> <li>• Check-In Process</li> <li>• Post-Election Uploading of Data</li> </ul>
<b>PII-S3:</b> <i>Election Day Reporting</i>	November 16, 2026 – December 6, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Use of Secure Election Management Systems in Producing Election Results for Transmittal to State Certification of Election Results</li> <li>• Legal requirements in Indiana for entering unofficial results into the statewide system</li> <li>• Distinguish between “unofficial results” and “certified results”</li> <li>• Indiana Code restrictions on releasing absentee or election night results before polls close</li> <li>• Monitoring and reconcile reporting discrepancies using standardized forms</li> <li>• Best practices for chain of custody and security.</li> <li>• Dissemination of Results to Media</li> </ul>
<b>PII-S4:</b> <i>Cybersecurity and Physical Security of Elections and Election Equipment</i>	November 30, 2026 – December 13, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical &amp; Cyber Security Pertaining to Elections</li> <li>• Recognize how cyber and physical security measures complement each other to protect the integrity of elections.</li> <li>• Identify common vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Practical strategies and best practices to strengthen security within election environment</li> </ul>



<u>Session</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Session Description</u>
<b>PII-S5: Workshop II – Managing Election Equipment – Optical Scan Systems (OPSCAN) and Electronic Poll Books (ePBs) &amp; Troubleshooting and Security</b>	December 7, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working knowledge of OPSCAN Voting Systems Configuration</li> <li>• Startup and shutdown procedures of OPSCAN Voting Systems</li> <li>• Effective and Efficient Troubleshooting</li> <li>• Strategies for OPSCAN Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books</li> <li>• Preparing for Unanticipated Issues with the Use of Electronic Election Equipment</li> <li>• Anticipating and Managing Physical and Cybersecurity Threats to Electronic Election Equipment</li> </ul>
<b>PII-S6: <i>Election Personnel Training, Management, and Learning Assessment</i></b>	December 14, 2026 – January 10, 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Election Personnel Training and Management Needs</li> <li>• Election Personnel Training Needs Required by Law</li> <li>• The Value of Assessment and Evaluation of DRE, OPSCAN, and ePB Training</li> <li>• Instruction on Effective Training and Management of Election Personnel in Information Technology, Election Personnel Retention, IED Poll Worker Training Programs, Electronic Poll Book Vendor Sponsored Training</li> <li>• Respond to common election day situations</li> <li>• Promote accessibility, equity, and voter assistance best practices</li> <li>• Work effectively and building a strong election team</li> </ul>
<b>PII-S7: Random Audits, Post-Election Audits and Recounts</b>	January 25, 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Random Audits</li> <li>• Post-Election Audits</li> <li>• Risk-Limiting Audits</li> <li>• Recounts</li> </ul>
<b>Phase II Report</b>	February 28, 2027	Participants will choose one of the above-bulleted descriptions from Phase II and explain how it has helped develop their professional competency. Will prepare a double-spaced 1-3 Page Report on the chosen topic.



### Phase III Capstone Project Description

The Capstone for the Certificate Program is an applied research project germane to Election Administration, Technology, and/or Security. Program participants will be required to complete an approved research report or project that will be useful in their profession. Throughout this phase, each participant will be mentored by program directors and staff.

During Phase I of the CEATS Program, each participant will select a project in consultation with one or more CEATS Directors or staff members. Participants will be encouraged to select a project topic in an area relevant to their professional interests. During the remainder of the program, participants will prepare a Capstone Project Proposal including a description of the topic, the goals of the project, methods that will be used in order to carry out the project, and a description of the completed project. The Capstone Project Proposal must be approved by the CEATS Directors or staff prior to beginning any work on the project

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Assignment Description</u>
<i>Capstone Project Cover Sheet &amp; Capstone Project Proposal (First Draft)</i>	August 23, 2026	The Capstone Project Proposal is a written description of the problem participants would like to solve in their county, the plan for solving it, and the measures needed to evaluate the success of the project.
<i>Capstone Project Proposal Revised</i>	October 25, 2026	Participants will receive feedback from CEATS Directors and staff on suggested changes to improve their Capstone Project Proposal. Participants can choose to resubmit their proposal.
<i>Capstone Project Monthly Updates Begin—Monthly Updates due every other Sunday</i>	October 26, 2026	Participants will provide an update to CEATS Directors and staff on the progress of their Capstone Project every other week.
<i>Capstone Project Final Report (First Draft)</i>	February 21, 2027	A detailed description of the completed Capstone Project.
<i>Capstone Project Final Report (Revised Draft)</i>	April 18, 2027	Participants will receive feedback from CEATS Directors and staff on suggested changes to improve their Capstone Project.
<i>Capstone Project Poster Outline</i>	April 18, 2027	The Poster Outline is intended to be a summary of the Final Report. The outline is designed to help participants structure their Poster which will be displayed at graduation.
<i>Capstone Project Abstract</i>	April 23, 2027	The abstract is a concise summary of the entire project. It will be 150-250 words (roughly 2 paragraphs) which will be utilized for the program of the graduation ceremony.



## Session Hours

*All time commitments are approximate and are subject to change based on a participant's level of understanding of session content*

### Phase I

Session No.	Session Topic	Training hours		
		In--session	Pre-Test, Post-Test, and Evaluation	Total
1	<i>Election Administration; Technology; and Security: An Overview</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
2	<i>Elections in the United States and Indiana – History and Current Landscape</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
3	<i>Information Technology and Elections</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
4	<i>Introduction to Operations of Electronic Poll Books (ePBs)</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
5	<i>Election Integrity</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
6	<i>Introduction to Operations Voting Systems - Direct Record Electronic (DRE) and Optical Scan Systems (OPSCAN)</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
7	<i>Preparing for and Managing Elections: Effectiveness and Efficiency</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
Report	<i>Participants will choose one of the above-bulleted descriptions from Phase I. Will prepare a double-spaced 1-3 Page Report on the chosen topic.</i>	3.0	0.0	15.0
<b>Total Phase I Hours</b>		52.0	13.0	65.0



## Phase II Hours

Session No.	Session Topic	Training hours		
		In--session	Pre-Test, Post-Test, and Evaluation	Total
1	<i>Testing and Certification for Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
2	<i>Workshop I - Managing Election Equipment – Direct Record Electronic (DRE) Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books (ePBs)</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
3	<i>Election Day Reporting</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
4	<i>Cybersecurity and Physical Security of Elections and Election Equipment</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
5	<i>Workshop II – Managing Election Equipment -- Optical Scan (OpScan) Voting Systems and Electronic Poll Books (ePBs)</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
6	<i>Election Personnel Training; Management; and Learning Assessment</i>	7.0	2.5	9.5
7	<i>Random Audits, Post-Election Audits, and Recounts</i>	7.0	1.0	8.0
Report	<i>Participants will choose one of the above-bulleted descriptions from Phase II. Will prepare a double-spaced 1-3 Page Report on the chosen topic.</i>	3.0	0.0	15.0
<b>Total Phase II Hours</b>		52.0	13.0	65.0



### Phase III Capstone Project Hours

Session	Session Topic	In-Session	Total
<b>Part I</b>	<i>Capstone Project Proposal (First Draft)</i>	6.0	6.0
	<i>Capstone Project Cover Sheet</i>	.50	.50
	<i>Capstone Project Proposal (Revised)</i>	1.5	1.5
	<i>Capstone Project Weekly Updates</i>	3.0	3.0
<b>Part II</b>	<i>Capstone Project Final Report (First-Draft)</i>	17.0	17.0
	<i>Capstone Project Final Report (Revised)</i>	3.0	3.0
<b>Part III</b>	<i>Capstone Project Poster Outline (First Draft)</i>	7.0	7.0
	Capstone Project Poster Outline (Revised)	2.0	2.0
<b>Total Phase III Hours</b>	Phase III Capstone Project	40.0	40.0

### Total Program Hours

Phase	In-Session	Pre- and Post-Activities	Total
Phase I	52.0	13.0	65.0
Phase II	52.0	13.0	65.0
Phase III	40.0	0.0	40.0
<b>Total</b>	144.0	26.0	170.0

### For More Information:

Please contact the VSTOP Team at [ceats@bsu.edu](mailto:ceats@bsu.edu) or by calling our offices at 765-285-8784. You may also visit our website at: <https://sites.bsu.edu/vstop/ceats/>



## CEATS Program Commitment Form

If accepted into the Certificate Program in Election Administration, Technology and Security, I commit to:

- Reviewing the CEATS Handbook,
- Attending all program sessions,
- Communicating with CEATS Program Directors and staff regarding any absences. If an emergency prevents my attendance at a session, arrangements will be made to make up any missed work with the CEATS Program Directors and staff.
- Completing all phases of the program in order,
- Completing all assignments within the specified time frame,
- Informing the CEATS Program Directors and staff in advance, if I am unable to meet a deadline.
- Actively engaging in the learning process,
- Understands that assignments may be required to complete outside of regular work hours,
- Applying the skills learned throughout this program in my professional work,
- Acknowledging that I am responsible for all travel costs associated with attending on-site/in-person CEATS sessions.

I recognize that I will not receive the Certificate designation unless I fulfill the above commitment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Applicant's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Supervisor Endorsement**

I support this person's application to the **Certificate Program in Election Administration, Technology, and Security. If the applicant is accepted, I understand that the applicant may use county time to participate in-person and online session. AND/OR If accepted, the applicant will be allowed time to participate in in- person sessions.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Supervisor's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date