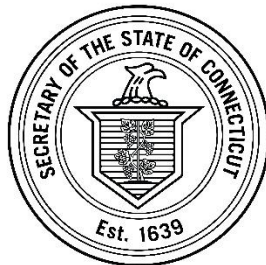


# Office of the Secretary of the State



## *At a Glance*

**Office of the Secretary of the State**

**Stephanie Thomas, Secretary of the State**

**Jacqueline Kozin, Deputy Secretary of the State**

***Established - 1639***

***Statutory authority - State Constitution; CGS Sec. 3-77 et seq., CGS 9-3, 9-4 and Title 9 Generally; CGS Titles 33-35.***

***Central office – 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106***

***Number of employees - General Fund: 90 permanent full-time (78 filled)***

***Recurring operating expenses: General Fund: \$12,361,548 (FY 2022-23), YTD for FY 2023-24 is \$1,389,066 as of 8/17/2023.***

***Revenue deposited: General Fund: \$58,640,737 (FY 2022-23), YTD for FY 2023- 24 is \$5,415,221, as of 8/17/2023.***

***Organizational structure –Business Services (Commercial Recording) and Publication Divisions (Christopher Drake, Esq., Director, Nancy Nicolescu, Asst. Director); Legislation and Elections Administration Division (Kristin Sullivan, Esq., Director); Management and Support Services Division (Rachel Moser, Director, Program Monitoring and Fiscal Review); Information Technology (Thomas Miano, Manager).***

## **Mission**

***Through the commitment of a knowledgeable staff and advanced technology, the Office of the Secretary of the State works as a team to provide a wide range of services for the people and businesses of Connecticut.***

***We are a repository of records for the state and provide important information and resources regarding business and commercial filings, elections, and authentication as prescribed by the constitution, federal, and state laws.***

***We seek to support business development opportunities and to foster a more inclusive political process by educating, informing, and engaging communities and youth in civic participation.***

*Our vision is to be the leader in providing prompt quality service, increasing access to information, and promoting participation in the democratic process.*

### **Statutory Responsibility**

The Secretary of the State is designated by the Constitution and General Statutes of Connecticut as the official keeper of a wide array of public records and documents. The office is a vital source of information regarding various businesses, commercial lenders, elections, legislation, regulations, and other areas, and responds to more than 600,000 requests for information annually. It also publishes, distributes, and sells the State Register and Manual and other publications.

Connecticut law makes the Secretary of the State responsible for the administration of many aspects of business law including the approval of all certificates of incorporation, organization and dissolution, as well as annual reports. Trademarks are registered here as well.

As Commissioner of Elections for the State of Connecticut, the Secretary is charged to administer, interpret, and implement election laws and ensure fair and impartial elections. Under the terms of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and the Help America Vote Act of 2002, the Secretary has the same responsibility for federal elections.

### **Affirmative Action**

The Secretary of the State's Office is an affirmative action employer and is committed to an aggressive and comprehensive Affirmative Action plan. This policy applies to all current and prospective employees without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, ancestry, intellectual disability, genetic information, learning disability, physical disability, (including, but not limited to, blindness) mental disability (past/present history thereof), military or veteran status, or criminal record, unless the provisions of Sec. 46a-80 (b) or Sec. 46a-81 (b) of the Connecticut General Statutes apply or a bona fide occupational qualification exists that excludes a protected group. The Office also recognizes that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Therefore, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct which is used as conditions of employment decisions or which operates to create an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment will not be tolerated. These policies are pursuant to all applicable federal and state constitutional provisions, laws, regulations, guidelines and executive orders. It is the intention of this Office to adhere to both the letter and the spirit of these laws and regulations, which, in addition to guaranteeing equal employment opportunity, require that special affirmative action be taken by the Office of the Secretary of the State to overcome the effects of past discrimination.

### **Public Service**

The office serves the public through five divisions:

- ***Business Services Division (BSD)*** files and maintains legally required records showing the formation of and fundamental changes to corporations, limited liability companies, limited liability partnerships, limited

partnerships, and other business entities. The BSD disseminates that information to the general public and the business, banking, and legal communities. Transactions relevant to security interests in personal property are perfected by filing statements under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) statutes with the Research and Response unit. These filings protect the holder of the security interest by securing the lien and providing public notice that such interest exists. Trade, service, collective, certification, and device marks are granted registration and the Division investigates and collects fees and penalties from foreign corporations doing business in Connecticut without authority. BSD offers real time access to corporate and UCC documents via [business.ct.gov](http://business.ct.gov). Over 96% of business filings are now completed online. Our Public Service Area is open for customers from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The division is responsible for administering the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), which provides services to victims of crime.

BSD is also responsible for commissioning Notaries Public in Connecticut. The Division processes about 10,000 notary applications, renewals, and reinstatements annually, over 99% of which are filed online through the state's eLicense system at [elicense.ct.gov](http://elicense.ct.gov).

BSD also processes requests to apostille or authenticate state public records pursuant to the Hague Convention and as authorized by the United States Department of Homeland Security. This process allows the holder of a Connecticut public record such as a birth certificate, marriage certificate or death certificate, to have the record recognized as legitimate in a foreign country.

- ***Legislation and Elections Administration Division (LEAD)*** administers, interprets, and implements all state and federal laws pertaining to elections, primaries, nominating procedures, and the exercise of voting rights. The Division encourages and monitors the implementation of the federal National Voter Registration Act (motor voter), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and other voter registration and election administration laws in Connecticut. In conjunction with local town clerks and registrars of voters, the division provides training for local elected officials. The Division, working with local officials, has put into operation a statewide-computerized voter registry system, which complies with the Help America Vote Act. More recently, the Division has launched online voter registration, Election Day Registration, begun to implement automatic voter registration and improved compliance with the motor voter law through the Department of Motor Vehicles. The Division also administers the Voter Registry Privacy Program, which allows voters to opt out of the publicly disclosed voter file, if inclusion in that file would put the life or safety of the voter or the voter's family at risk.

Additionally, the Division is the official keeper of all acts, orders, grants, and resolutions of the General Assembly, receives and maintains legislation and a wide range of other public documents as required by statute, as well as updates information on state, local, and federal government on a weekly basis. The Division administers a statewide, online calendar of public meetings held by state agencies that includes access to agendas and minutes.

- **Information Technology (IT)** is responsible for the administration, support, development, and maintenance of all computer systems and related applications within the agency. It also provides support to the Centralized Voter Registration System (CVRS), the Election Management System (EMS), Business Registration System (BRS), the Office's website, and all E-Government initiatives within the agency. Within the Secretary's office, Information Technology also has the primary responsibility for ensuring the cybersecurity of the office, as well as coordinating cybersecurity efforts with other agencies.
- **Management and Support Services (MSS)** supports the office in the areas of budgetary oversight and fiscal administration, grant management, affirmative action, revenue depositing, purchasing, data processing, and other support services. It also serves as the sales agent and distributor of the *Connecticut State Register and Manual*.
- **Publications Division** administers eRegulations, the online platform for the promulgation and publication of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. All aspects of the system are electronic, including notice, drafting, and final publication. It also publishes the Connecticut State Register and Manual (the "Blue Book") and other agency publications, including online publications.

In addition, the Office of the Secretary of the State administers a wide range of programs and services for Connecticut's voters, citizens, and businesses. These include:

- **Civic Health Initiatives** – The Secretary of the State's civic health initiatives are designed to foster civic participation, increase interest in civic institutions, and supplement civic education initiatives for Connecticut's residents. These initiatives include the CEO – Civically Engaged Organization – program that partners with businesses, nonprofits and other organizations to help raise civic awareness; Family Civic Trivia events; Poll Worker Appreciation Days; the Red, White, and Blue Schools program; the Civic Ambassadors program; work with the Connecticut Kid Governor; and various other programs.
- **The Address Confidentiality Program (ACP)** – The ACP program became effective on January 1, 2004. The goal of the ACP is to help survivors of certain crimes (family violence, sexual assault, injury or risk of injury to a minor, or stalking) who relocate for protection purposes keep their new address confidential. The ACP offers its participants two services to help keep the

survivor's new location private. One service is the participant's use of an ACP substitute mailing address. The ACP provides cost-free mail forwarding services. The Office of the Secretary of the State serves as each program participant's legal agent for service of process and receipt of first-class mail. The second component of the program prevents public access to a participant's actual address on government records including voter registry lists and keeps marriage records confidential.

- **Business Initiatives** – Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Secretary of the State has maintained a collaborative effort with the Department of Administrative Services and has continued to make improvements to Business.CT.gov to ensure that all Connecticut businesses have access to vital business information. The platform's optimization offers a one stop experience, whether they are starting a new business or initiating changes to their existing business. This fiscal year more than 54,000 businesses have been established through the business.ct.gov platform.
- **Records Management** - The Records and Archiving Unit supports the Secretary's constitutional duty to "have the safe keeping and custody of the public records and documents" by providing records management, archives, and library services to the Office of the Secretary of the State. It also serves as the office's liaison to the Public Records Administrator, as required by law. It maintains the Office library, administers on and off-site storage of, and access to, the wide variety of records filed with and generated by the Office. The Unit also researches, prepares, and implements record retention schedules for the Office, creates microfilm and digital copies of records, responds to hundreds of annual staff and public reference requests, and creates indexes and guides to Office record series to enable staff and public access to information. In addition, the Unit provides indexing, access, and preservation services for the original bills, acts, and resolutions of the General Assembly, state agency regulations, and various special documents filed with the Office by state law.

### **Improvements/Achievements 2022-23**

- **Approval of Early Voting** – In May 2023, the General Assembly approved an Early Voting measure, which the Governor later signed into law. The legislation will implement a 14-day voting period for General Elections, seven days for Primary Elections, four days for Special Elections, and four days for Presidential Preference Primaries, plus expanded voting hours. The Secretary and her staff are working with Registrars, Town Clerks and other elections officials to develop the blueprint for the formal implementation of the program, which will begin with the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary. Connecticut is one of 47 states, plus the District of Columbia, that has authorized Early Voting.

- **Digitization of Historical Business Filing Documents** – The Office’s IT Division undertook a project to digitize approximately 5 million historical microfilm-based business filing documents. The digitized documents have been imported into the Business Recording System and are now available online.
- **Launch of the CEO (Civically Engaged Organization) Program** – The Secretary launched the Office’s CEO Program, which invites businesses and non-profit organizations to commit to being civically engaged, either through active participation in the local community or by helping to broaden public and employee civic awareness. The program debuted in May 2022 with nearly 40 businesses and organizations pledged to be CEOs, and the list continues to grow.
- **Replacement of the Central Voter Registration System and the Election Management System** – The Secretary and staff are in the process of replacing the outdated Central Voter Registration System (CVRS) and Election Management System (EMS). After gathering input from the local election officials who are the main users of the systems and other key stakeholders, the office created criteria, released a Request For Proposal, evaluated those proposals, selected a new systems vendor and signed a new contract with that vendor. The new systems implementation project is underway with a June 2024 implementation date.