



ELECTIONS

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Below is a list of election reforms the Cook County Clerk's office has supported or initiated from 1991 to today.

1 of 3 elected officials to testify on behalf of NVRA – July 1991

- The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), or “Motor Voter” as it’s commonly called, required states to allow qualified citizens to register to vote when obtaining or renewing a driver’s license or social services.

Attended the Motor Voter Bill Signing – June 1993

- President Clinton signed the Motor Voter Act into law, even as the Illinois began fighting implementation.

Starts the First Voter Program – August 1995

- High school voter registration programs were launched in 32 suburban Cook County high schools as part of the First Voter program.

End to the two-tier voter registration system – May 1996

- The lawsuit to force Illinois to comply with the National Voter Registration Act, commonly known as the Motor Voter Act, was finally successful.

Passed consolidated election reform – August 1997

- By consolidating all local elections in Illinois to odd-numbered years, the legislation made the election calendar clearer for voters and saved taxpayers millions of dollars.
- This reform has saved Cook County taxpayers about \$4 million every odd year since the first Consolidated Election in 1999.
- Not accounting for inflation, the total savings for the Cook County is just over \$40 million and an estimated \$100 million statewide.

Passed Illinois' First Student Judge Program for high school students – March 2000

- In suburban Cook County, more than 225 students, many of whom were 17 years old, served as Election Judges and shared the same responsibilities as their older counterparts. Young people were allowed to get a first-hand view of democracy, not just from the classroom.

Implemented electronic applications for military and overseas voters – February 2001

- Military voters could apply for and receive Cook County absentee ballots electronically.

New election security standards – August 2003

- SB 428 required election equipment vendors to outfit touchscreens with voter-verifiable paper audit trails for every vote cast.

Comprehensive ballot redesign – March 2004

- The Clerk's office partnered with graphic designers and the University of Illinois – Chicago to improve ballots election materials and voting instructions.

Early Voting arrives in Illinois – February 2006

- The General Assembly passed legislation allowing Early Voting in Illinois – making voting dramatically easier and more convenient for every resident.

Online voter registration – July 2013

- Illinois became the 18th state to allow citizens to register to vote online – the bill took effect in the summer of 2014.

17-year-old voter registration drive – January 2014

- Beginning January 1, 2014, the "Suffrage at 17" law allowed most Illinois 17-year-olds to register and vote in primaries.

Election Day Registration comes to Illinois – July 2014

- HB 105 allowed election-day voter registration, extended in-person early voting hours, removed identification requirements for in-person voting by registered voters, increased vote-by-mail application windows, expanded early and grace period voting throughout the state and also allowed some public universities to serve as election-day in-person absentee voting centers.

Launched the Running For Office Starter Kit (RFO) – October 2016

- The RFO allows suburban Cook County residents to view the elected offices they are eligible to run for and receive the necessary information and documentation – prepopulated with their information – to begin the process of running for office. The in the 2017 Consolidated Election, the RFO resulted in 248 additional candidates participating in 129 races – accounting for 10% of all candidates on the ballot.

Automatic Voter Registration becomes law in Illinois – August 2017

- AVR makes voter registration and voting easier, and Illinois is now one of a small group of states leading the way in voter rights and voter registration accessibility. SB 1933 passed both houses unanimously and made Illinois the 9th state (+D.C.) in the nation with AVR.