

## **Race/Office Descriptions for Countywide Offices**

### **County Commissioners**

#### Sample #1

County Commissioners Qualifications: To be eligible to run for state, legislative or local office, a person must be registered to vote in the election district the person seeks to represent. A candidate for the office of county commissioner must have resided in the county for at least one year before the election and have resided in the district in which seeking election, if applicable, for at least six months before the election.

Duties: Each county is governed by a Board of Commissioners consisting of three elected persons. The commissioners are elected from separate districts (in which they must reside) but by vote of the county. Commissioner districts must be redrawn at least once every 10 years and may be redrawn in any odd numbered year.

The terms of office of county commissioners are four years on a staggered basis. In general, the Board of Commissioners is responsible for the administration of county business. The commissioners may enact ordinances to meet local conditions and exercise other authority vested in the board by the legislature. The base salary for the commissioners is established by the salary ordinance.

The Board of County Commissioners serves as the executive and administrative authority for the county. The Board of County Commissioners duties include appointment of certain county and township officials; audit and authorization of claims against the county; authorization of contracts and received bids; control, maintenance, and supervision of county property; service as the Board of County Finance; and supervision of construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, <https://www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov/635/Commissioners-Purpose-and-Duties>

#### Sample #2

County Commissioners serve as the executive and legislative body of the county. They appoint all non-elected county offices and boards. They maintain and supervise county property, supervise construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, and establish solid waste districts and they serve on the waste district boards. They maintain the courthouse, county offices, and jail. They have the power to issue bonds. They have the power to alter waterways, work on private properties to maintain those waterways and regulate food establishments. The three commissioners are elected from a district in which they must reside. These districts must be redrawn every 10 years. They are elected on a staggered basis to a term of 4 years.

#### Sample #3

County Commissioners hold a wide variety of administrative and executive powers and are organized into a board of 3 commissioners (except in Marion County, where the County Auditor, Treasurer, and Assessor hold these positions). Commissioners are split into individual districts and must be a resident of that district to run, but each commissioner is elected by the entire county. County Commissioners are elected every four years on a staggered basis.

- The Board of Commissioners is responsible for administering all county business. Duties of the Commissioners include:
- Controlling, maintaining, and supervising county property, including courthouse, asylums, hospitals, libraries, jails, and their respective equipment and facilities
- Creating, dissolving, or changing the boundaries of the county's townships
- Auditing and authorizing claims against the county as well as receiving bids and authorization of contracts
- Providing highway construction and maintenance on behalf of cities and towns within the county, if so authorized.
- Furthering economic development and the development of land
- Providing housing and building regulations and instituting zoning restrictions
- Providing services to veterans
- Passing ordinances to incorporate new towns within the county

Each county's Board of County Commissioners meets on a regular schedule that is typically biweekly. County Commissioners also appoint representatives to various county positions such as members of public library boards, alcoholic beverage commissions, and local transportation authorities.

## **County Council**

### **Sample #1**

County Council has the financial powers of the county, which serves as a check on the Commissioners. The County Council adopts the annual budget after estimates are submitted by the various county agencies. They fix the tax rate for county properties. They have the power to set local income taxes and wheel taxes. The County Council sets the salaries for county officers based on recommendations by the County Commissioners. There are seven County Council members three elected at large and one from each of four districts. They are elected to four-year terms on a staggered basis.

### **Sample #2**

**County Council Qualifications:** To be eligible to run for state, legislative or local office, a person must be registered to vote in the election district the person seeks to represent. A candidate for membership on the county council of a county must have resided in the county for at least one year before the election and must have resided in the district in which seeking election, if applicable, for at least six months before the election.

**Duties:** The council is the financial power of the county, serving as a check on the Board of County Commissioners. The Council duties are to adopt annual budgets; fix salaries; fix the county tax rate; furnish financial assistance to any community center for the mentally handicapped located in the county; incur county indebtedness; levy taxes to provide funds for constructing; make appropriations, re-appropriates and transfers of funds; and repair and remodel jails. (Add a link to your own County Council page.)

### Sample #3

Members of the County Councils are responsible for the fiscal security of the county they serve. Each county council is made up of 4 members who each represent a specific district within the county in addition to 3 at-large members. The four district representatives must reside within that district to be eligible.

Members serve for four-year terms. Responsibilities of the county council include:

- Fixing the tax rate for the county
- Approving the sale or lease of county property
- Reviewing and adopting the annual budget from many county agencies
- Establishing the salaries of county employees
- Making appointments to boards and committees such as the Alcohol Board Commission

## **County Sheriff**

### Sample #1

The sheriff is a constitutional officer, elected for a four-year term by vote of the entire county. The sheriff is prohibited from serving more than two terms within 12 years.

The sheriff's duties, largely prescribed by statute, are as follows:

- To serve as conservator of the peace
- To serve warrants, subpoenas and other forms of process as an officer of the courts
- To collect delinquent state income taxes or levy upon the property of corporate or individual taxpayers for the amount due
- To sell mortgaged property under foreclosure proceedings and execute deeds to real estate sold under execution
- To serve processes for the Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals
- To attend sessions of the county council and county commissioners and execute its orders

Another critical statutory duty of the sheriff is to take charge of the county jail and its prisoners. The sheriff may also board prisoners, including those on federal charges or allow jail inmates who are financially responsible for a family to work in private or public employment under certain conditions. Assisting the sheriff is an advisory committee appointed by the sheriff and the judge to help carry out these functions.

In addition, each county is required to have a five-member, bipartisan sheriff's merit board. This board is created by ordinance or resolution of the county council. Members of the board are appointed by the sheriff, except for two who are elected by members of the county police force. The board administers certain police appointive functions under a merit system.

Term 4 years

## Sample #2 (Brown County)

The Sheriff keeps the peace. The primary law enforcement agency in Brown County is the county sheriff's department. The Sheriff is an elected constitutional official and is an officer of the court responsible for serving warrants and court documents. The sheriff's department currently consists of three major divisions: enforcement; jail; and dispatch.

The Sheriff serves as an officer of the courts through service of warrants, subpoenas, and other forms of process. The Sheriff collects delinquent state income taxes or property levies. The Sheriff sells mortgaged property under foreclosure proceedings. The Sheriff manages the county jail and its prisoners, including work release. The Sheriff attends sessions of the Board of County Commissioners and the County Council and executes their orders.

The Matron is responsible for the female inmates in the jail and oversees the administrative area of the department. The Jail Commander oversees the day-to-day operation of the jail with the jail officers reporting to the Commander.

The dispatch division consists of a dispatch coordinator and eight dispatchers. The division dispatches for the Sheriff's department and also communicates with the Town Police Department, local fire departments, ambulances, emergency management personnel, animal control, community corrections, Department of Natural Resources enforcement officers, and Indiana State Police officers.

## Sample #3

The sheriff is the highest law enforcement officer in the county. The sheriff is elected for the position and their duties include maintaining county jails, policing unincorporated areas, serving warrants and court papers, and providing security to courts in the county.

## **County Treasurer**

### Sample #1

The treasurer is a constitutional officer, elected by vote of the county at large for a term of four years, but prohibited from serving more than two terms within 12 years.

The treasurer collects, retains custody of and disburses county funds. The treasurer collects delinquent taxes (including sale of real property for taxes) and is required daily to enter all judgments paid in the record maintained by the clerk of the circuit court. The treasurer collects local and state general property taxes for all units in the county, inheritance taxes, and tax on capital stock, deposits of banks and trust companies, and capital stock and surplus of building and loan associations. The treasurer is required to annually send each person charged with taxes a statement of the amount of property tax owed.

The treasurer also serves as a member of the county board of finance, treasurer ex officio of the county board of education and treasurer to the board of hospital trustees.

### Sample #2

**Qualifications:** To be eligible to run for state, legislative or local office, a person must be registered to vote in the election district the person seeks to represent. A candidate for the office of county auditor, recorder, treasurer, sheriff, coroner, or surveyor must have resided in the county for at least one year before the election.

<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2019/ic/titles/003/#3-8-1-20>

**Duties:** The Constitution of Indiana imposes no duties upon the county treasurer. It only provides that he/she shall “perform such duties as may be directed by law.” It is through statute that the county treasurer is considered the custodian of all money belonging to the county and the investing officer of these funds. The treasurer is responsible for reconciling between the cashbook and financial institutions. One of the largest sources of money coming into the county is property taxes, and the treasurer has the duty to collect property taxes through a billing and receipting process. The county treasurer, along with the board of county commissioners, make up the county board of finance which has the inherent duties to determine the local public depositories for all the public funds of the county as well as review the overall investment policy.

<https://www.in.gov/sboa/4864.htm>

### Sample #3

The County Treasurer is a constitutional office elected by all county residents to a four-year term. The Treasurer collects, retains custody of and disperses county funds. The Treasurer collects delinquent taxes including the sale of real property for taxes and is required daily to enter all judgments paid in the record maintained by the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

## **County Auditor**

### Sample #1

The auditor is a constitutional officer, elected for a four-year term from the county at large but prohibited from serving more than two terms in 12 years. The auditor serves as secretary of the board of commissioners and county council.

Duties of the auditor as the fiscal officer of the county include keeping the county’s accounts and issuing warrants for the payment of claims following an audit of the expenditure. The auditor is responsible for the preparation and tracking of all budgets for county expenditures, preparation of an annual report accounting for all money spent within the year as well as balancing all county funds with the treasurer on a regular basis.

The auditor is also responsible for the creation of county maps showing land ownership and assessed valuation, maintaining a fixed assets ledger, maintaining ditch records for the collection of fees in counties that collect on drains, and tracking properties sold during a tax sale.

## Sample #2

**Qualifications:** To be eligible to run for state, legislative or local office, a person must be registered to vote in the election district the person seeks to represent. A candidate for the office of county auditor, recorder, treasurer, sheriff, coroner or surveyor must have resided in the county for at least one year before the election.

<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2019/ic/titles/036/#36-2-9-2>

**Duties:** The Hamilton County Auditor's Office is responsible for maintaining property tax maps and ownership records for the entire county. All deeds transferring property must be processed through the Real Property Department of the Auditor's Office prior to being processed by the Hamilton County Recorder. The county auditor is considered the fiscal officer for many of the duties in the county and works closely with all other departments and county offices. This includes being responsible for documenting the financial activity in a county's various funds and reporting this activity yearly into the State's Gateway System.

The county auditor is to keep accurate account current with the county treasurer, keep account for each item of appropriation made by the county council, issue warrants and certify claims. The county auditor is part of the property tax process, which includes being responsible for the preparation, preservation, alteration, and maintenance of the tax duplicate. The county auditor is also to perform the duties as clerk at meetings for both the county commissioners and county council. All of these and more place a heavy duty of fiscal responsibilities onto the office of county auditor. <https://www.in.gov/sboa/4863.htm>

## Sample #3

The Auditor is the Chief Financial Officer of the County. The staff is responsible for:

- Calculating property tax for all real, personal, mobile home, drainage and special assessment records
- Completing annual reports for review by the State Board of Accounts
- Controlling distributions of tax collections, special assessments, and special revenue collections for all units of government within Tippecanoe County, including the Cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette and 3 full and one shared school districts
- Creating financial statements for the county
- Handling all receipts and disbursements of county funds
- Handling all transfers of ownership of real property
- Maintaining property boundary information on the County GIS system
- Processing payroll for all county employees

The Auditor also serves as the Secretary to County Council. The Auditor maintains all budgets, salary ordinances, additional appropriations, transfers, and abatement applications as well as the minutes of all County Council proceedings.

## **County Assessor**

### Sample #1

The primary function of the Assessor's office is to assess the value of real and personal property. Property taxes in Indiana are collected by the local county treasurers, based on assessments that are provided by the county assessors. These assessments are based on guidelines and regulations set forth by state legislators and adopted by the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (which can be found on the [Overview of Assessments page](#)).

Following are some of our other functions, responsibilities, and services.

- Acts as Inheritance Tax Appraiser and audits and approves Inheritance Tax forms
- Calculates the total assessed value of each taxing district
- Certifies current gross assessments to the County Auditor's Office
- Collects and maintains sales information on properties sold from 1997 to present
- Ensures uniformity and equitable assessments for all property owners
- Selects the Assessment Software and Computer Systems
- Oversees review and verification of the self-reported values of all personal property in each taxing district
- Oversees the General Reassessment process
- Processes Appeal of Assessment petitions
- Processes Not-For-Profit Property Tax Exemption Applications
- Serves as Secretary on the County Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals (PTABOA)
- Utilizes Sales Disclosures to establish base market rates and values in each neighborhood and adjusts base values for location, distance to amenities, and other influence factors

### Sample #2

The county assessor is a statutory officer who is elected to a four-year term and is not subject to term limits. He or she functions under the direction of the state board of tax commissioners and is subject to removal by that board. A candidate for the office of county assessor who runs in an election after June 30, 2008, is required to have attained Level II certification. After January 1, 2012, candidates will have to have a Level III certification.

If the county is one of the 22 counties that still have separately elected township assessors, the county assessor advises and instructs the county's township assessors as to their duties, reviews their returns and has the same powers as a township assessor. The assessor is the county inheritance tax appraiser and represents the state inheritance tax division on issuing consents to transfer property held in joint names. In addition, the assessor oversees a general reassessment in the county and serves as secretary of the property tax assessment board of appeals, which hears appeals on property tax assessments.

### Sample #3

The primary function of the Assessor's office is to calculate and verify the value of real and personal property in each taxing district. The assessor certifies the current assessment to the County Auditor's Office. Property taxes in Indiana are collected by the local county treasurers, based on assessments that are provided by the county assessors.

## **County Surveyor**

### Sample #1

The County Surveyor is a constitutional office elected for a four-year term. The primary duties of the Surveyor are to survey and keep records of all section corners throughout the county. The Surveyor must supervise all civil engineering work of the county, including construction and maintenance of drains and ditches. The surveyor serves as a member of the County Drainage Board and as a member of the County Planning Commission. The Surveyor is required to prepare, maintain, and keep in custody a record book showing maps of each section, grant, track, subdivision, or group of such areas in sufficient detail. If the Surveyor is not a licensed land surveyor, the court must appoint a licensed land surveyor.

### Sample #2

Qualifications: To be eligible to run for state, legislative or local office, a person must be registered to vote in the election district the person seeks to represent. A candidate for the office of county auditor, recorder, treasurer, sheriff, coroner, or surveyor must have resided in the county for at least one year before the election.

<http://iga.in.gov/legislative/laws/2019/ic/titles/003/#3-8-1-20>

Duties: The primary duties of the surveyor are to maintain a legal survey record book for all legal surveys within the county, keep and maintain a corner record book showing original government section corners, maintain annexation descriptions and dis-annexation descriptions for each city and town, certify permit locations, among other duties. The county surveyor is a member of the county plan commission to provide technical reviews of plats and drainage systems. <https://www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov/directory.aspx?eid=149>

### Sample #3

The surveyor is a constitutional officer, elected for a four-year term by the voters of an entire county. There is no restriction upon eligibility for re-election.

The primary duties of the surveyor are to survey and keep records of all section corners throughout the county. The surveyor must supervise all civil engineering work of the county, including construction and maintenance of drains and ditches and of highways, bridges, and culverts. The surveyor is authorized to appoint as many deputies and assistants as the work requires, subject to budget limitations and approval of the county council.

The surveyor is also required to prepare, maintain, and keep in custody a record book showing maps of each section, grant, tract, subdivision, or group of such areas in sufficient detail. This record book is maintained so the approximate location of each legal survey can be shown.

Besides these duties, county surveyors also serve as members of the county drainage board and the county planning commission.

## **County Recorder**

### Sample #1

The recorder is a constitutional officer, elected for a term of four years by vote of the county at large, but prohibited from serving more than eight years within a 12-year period.

The chief function of the recorder is to preserve public records, including deeds, mortgages, liens, leases, articles of incorporation and amendments, certificates authorizing foreign corporations to do business within the state, army and navy discharges, bankruptcy notices and other documents. The recorder receives a fee for recording instruments and certificates, which are paid to the county treasury.

The recorder cannot accept recording instruments that do not bear printed, typewritten, or stamped names of the people signing them, unless accompanied by an affidavit certifying the correctness of the names represented by the signatures. This rule does not apply to court orders, decrees and judgments, writs, wills, death certificates or instruments executed outside of the state.

### Sample #2

The County Recorder's function is to maintain permanent public records involving a wide variety of instruments. These documents detail transactions involving real estate, mining, personal property, mortgages, liens, leases, subdivision plats, military discharges, personal bonds, etc. The recorder maintains and preserves all legal documents affecting title to real property. These records are the legal basis for determining ownership. The degree with which the recorder fulfills his or her responsibilities ultimately forms the legal foundation for the institution of private property.

### Sample #3

The recorder maintains and preserves all legal documents affecting title to real property. These records are the legal basis for determining ownership. We also record many other types of documents ranging from deeds and mortgages to business names and military discharges.

## **County Coroner**

### Sample #1

The coroner is a constitutional position elected every four years, and he or she must have been a resident within the county for at least one year before assuming the position. County coroners investigate suspicious, threatening, or unusual deaths and serve as the administrator of the death investigation.

The coroner is responsible for filing certificates of death and overseeing the need and implementation of autopsies in relation to the death investigation. Coroners thus work closely with county sheriffs and investigators during death investigations.

The county coroner may also act as the sheriff in an investigation if the sheriff has a personal interest in the case, is incapacitated from serving, or has no chief deputy who can execute his duties. Should a sheriff be jailed, the coroner is responsible for overseeing the jail during the sheriff's imprisonment.

### Sample #2

County Coroner is a constitutional office elected for a four-year term. The chief responsibility of the coroner is to determine the manner of death in cases involving violence or casualty or when someone is found dead in unexplained circumstances. Once the cause of death is determined the coroner must file a report with the local health officer. There are no professional requirements to be Coroner; however, there is required training that must occur within six months after Coroner takes office. If an autopsy is necessary, the coroner is required to employ a qualified physician to direct the autopsy.

### Sample #3

The coroner is responsible for identification of the deceased, determination of the cause of death and manner of death. In the process of doing his/her job, the coroner is considered an officer of the court with the power to investigate the death, subpoena information/persons and order an autopsy. The coroner is also responsible for the personal property of the deceased.

The coroner is required by state law to investigate all unnatural deaths or deaths where the attending medical doctor is unable to state a reasonable cause of death as well as cases where the deceased has not been seen by a doctor for 20 days prior to death.

Some responsibilities of the coroner include:

- Pronounce death and determine what time the death occurred.
- Scene investigation.
- Take custody of the body.
- Make positive identification of the deceased.
- Identification and notification of next of kin.
- Death Certificates.
- Reports.

## **County Prosecutor**

### Sample #1

The prosecuting attorney represents the state of Indiana and prosecutes violators of state statutes in various courts with criminal jurisdiction. As a constitutional officer, a prosecutor is elected in each judicial circuit for a term of four years. The office is not strictly a county office, because the prosecutor is elected for a judicial circuit in the same manner as a judge and must be a practicing attorney.

The prosecuting attorney is authorized to appoint a chief deputy and one or more investigators to help collect and assemble the evidence needed for criminal prosecutions.

In any judicial circuit, the prosecuting attorney and/or deputy may receive supplemental salary from the county or counties served by the circuit. County funds are used to pay the salaries of additional deputies and investigators and the costs of clerical assistance, operating expenses, and travel allowances.

### Sample #2

A prosecutor acts as a legal representative of a victim of a crime. Prosecutors research and present the case in a criminal trial in an effort of punishing the individual accused of committing the crime.

The responsibilities of prosecutors include interviewing witnesses, reading police reports, and performing legal research for the prosecution of each case.

#### **Additional Responsibilities:**

- Working with police officers and court staff.
- Instructing and advising counsel in court.
- Liaising with criminal justice and law enforcement agencies.
- Ensuring that criminals are punished fairly.
- Screening possible criminals.
- Handling appeals.
- Preparing criminal cases for pre-trial and trial.