

Where did Voter Information Project come from? How is it organized?

In the fall of 1992, a small group of Nebraska residents, both Democrat and Republican, had a discussion about being good citizens and informed voters. They had been unable to find the information they wanted about local candidates for local offices in the newspaper. As a result, they decided to write their own questions, contact local candidates, and share the answers they received with the group. They also made this information available to others. The information was favorably received and from this humble beginning, Voter Information Project (VIP) was born.

With each election since 1992, interest has grown and as more volunteers became available, more candidates and counties were added. In addition, people volunteered to research ballot issues and help translate the ballot language from “legalese” into English to aid voters. Also, professionals who know the judges contributed their opinions so voters would have a basis to evaluate whether judges should be retained. Several organizations and individuals have contributed questions for VIP to use. Many others have donated funds to cover expenses incurred in bringing the information to the voters.

VIP’s distinctive is that questions are asked of each candidate to help voters determine not just the political views of the candidates, but the “why” behind those views. Information on the judges is also unique to VIP.

Initially, back in 1992, candidate answers were distributed to voters on paper in a “packet”, and so the effort’s official name was chosen to be Voters Information Packet. Since then everything has been computerized. The official name hasn’t been “officially” changed, but most people now know us as Voter Information Project. VIP is a non-profit corporation in Nebraska with tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status since November 2013. The current board of directors includes: Kathy Holkeboer, Tom Holkeboer, Hope Golden, and Deb Stortvedt, all volunteers. The list of our other volunteers is LONG!