

Introduction

- The Special Qualities of Student Poll Workers
- Student Poll-Worker Strengths
- Student Poll-Worker Challenges

Legal Guidelines For College Poll-Worker Programs

- Residency and Registration
- Political Party Affiliation
- Term Requirements
- State Compendium

Selecting the Right School

- Is a Given School a Good One for a Poll-Worker Program?
- Tips for Election Officials
- How to Convince a Local College or University to Participate: Aim for the Top

The Campus Champion and the Team: Choosing a Champion

- Building a Well-functioning Team
- The Election Official

Timing

Developing the Program

The Recruitment Process

- Recruitment Methods

Recruiting Minorities & Bilingual Students

How to Integrate Poll Work into a Class

Student Commitment

- Tracking Student Participation

Training

Evaluation

Retention & Program Sustainability: Retaining Students For Multiple Elections

Guidebook Background & Methodology

Sample Pages

State Compendium

The Special Qualities of Student Poll Workers

In This Chapter:

- **Background**
 - **Student Poll-Worker Strengths**
 - **Student Poll-Worker Challenges**
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This Guidebook is an authoritative collection of practical and successful practices for recruiting, training and retaining college students as poll workers. College students are an important category of poll workers. The Guidebook describes the particular strengths and challenges these energetic and enthusiastic new voters and workers bring to the task, and presents a collection of lessons learned, as well as proven strategies for designing and running a college poll-worker program.

Two audiences will benefit from this Guidebook: colleges and universities interested in motivating their students to become involved in the electoral process, and election jurisdictions interested in recruiting college students as poll workers.

The Guidebook's advice is practical, not merely theoretical. Every practice recommended in this Guidebook has been tested in the field by election professionals and college/university staff and faculty. As such, the contents of this Guidebook are grounded in the realities and hard-won experience of actual student bodies and current election jurisdictions. The authors have striven to recommend only practices that are replicable and sustainable, rather than stunts that can leave poll professionals struggling to find new tricks for the next Election Day.

The Guidebook is organized in an easy-to-follow format so that readers can develop their own programs to fit their specific needs. It gives a timeline of activities for planning and implementing student poll-worker programs. It can also, however, be used as a cookbook — allowing readers to jump ahead to a section where they can find multiple strategies from which to pick. Some sections are more pertinent for a college administrator than for an election jurisdiction official (and vice versa), and they are clearly labeled as such. Members of either group, however, may find it useful to read all the strategies to better understand their counterparts' role in a college poll-worker recruitment program.

Note on Terminology

The immense variety of election terms posed a challenge for the authors. Across the country, poll workers are called Judges, Booth Workers, Precinct Officials, Board Workers and Poll Workers. For simplicity, we refer to all workers in a polling place as poll workers. Likewise, elections are run by many different local government entities from a county Board of Elections, or city Elections Department to a city or county Clerk's Office. We refer to all government units running elections as election jurisdictions.

The Guidebook was prepared under a 15-month long contract (2005-2006) from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to the Center for Election Integrity at Cleveland State University.

The Special Qualities of Student Poll Workers

Student Poll-Worker Strengths

College students bring important strengths to the polling process:

- College students are well educated and are used to learning new things.
- College students tend to be comfortable with computers and other new technologies and may bring skills to help solve technology-related problems. These skills are increasingly important given, the election jurisdictions' greater use of computerized poll equipment.
- College students are generally younger and have the energy and enthusiasm to make it through a long day at the polls.
- College students are generally physically able to carry needed supplies and set up heavy equipment.
- College students often have flexible schedules.

In addition, using college students as poll workers provides specific benefits for the students and for the community at large. College students are more likely to vote, and develop a lifelong commitment to civic involvement, if they are encouraged and integrated into the democratic system at an early age. Direct exposure to the democratic process through poll work can facilitate this process.

Student Poll Worker Challenges

However, the use of college poll workers presents special challenges:

- Some states laws may severely limit, or even prohibit, the use of non-resident college students as poll workers.
- In addition to an effective election jurisdiction program, student poll-worker programs require an effective campus poll-worker recruitment and management process. Such programs require a substantial investment of time to design, implement, and manage.
- While often enthusiastic and more available for poll work

“There is a critical shortage of poll-workers in this country. Many election officials fear the problem will grow even worse as the volunteers they rely on, many of them retirees, grow older with little national effort to recruit new volunteers. Experienced and well-trained poll-workers are essential to making our elections run properly...”

*House Report from
Help America Vote Act*



Photo Credit: Cleveland State University

than the fully employed, students have many interests and commitments competing for their time and attention. Special retention techniques should be used to maintain their interest in poll work and their reliability as workers.

The authors chose the college poll-worker program strategies described in this Guidebook based upon three criteria: that they were practical, feasible and sustainable. That does not, however, mean that all such programs are carbon copies of each other. College poll-worker programs come in all shapes and sizes. The sample materials provided are meant to spark ideas and serve as templates; not necessarily to be copied verbatim. A given program's design will depend, in part, upon the needs of the election jurisdiction, the type of student body available for recruitment, and the role the college or university counterpart is able and willing to play.

However, some hypothetical examples of different programs can give a flavor of what is possible:

- A professor makes working as a poll worker a class requirement by building it into the curriculum as a service learning assignment. Twenty-five of thirty students participate.
- A community college, with the active support of the college president, runs a recruitment campaign with posters, information tables, mass emails, media coverage and peer recruiters. The school recruits about 150 students.
- The political science department of a large university decides to provide five extra credit points for any student in an introductory course who works as a poll worker. The school recruits about 250 students.
- A university's sorority and soccer team each "adopt" a polling place. The school recruits ten students.
- A university's career services office sends out an email to all students about an Election Day job opportunity as a poll worker. The school recruits about 50 students.

This section is designed to help you plan and implement the student poll-worker program that best meets your needs and situation.



Photo credit: Cleveland State University



Legal Guidelines for College Poll-Worker Programs

In This Chapter:

- **Residency and Registration**
 - **Political Party Affiliation**
 - **Term Requirements**
 - **State Compendium**
-

A key preliminary question for schools and election officials that desire to establish student poll-worker programs is whether their state's laws will unduly hamper their ability to do so. States' legal criteria for the selection of poll workers can impede the establishment and implementation of college poll worker programs in three primary ways. First, some state registration and residency requirements prohibit the participation of college students who cannot meet these standards. Second, some state laws require poll worker affiliation with political parties or that poll workers be chosen primarily from nominations by political parties, causing obvious problems for students without such affiliations. Finally, many state statutes obligate poll workers to serve for a specific number of years, a condition that may be difficult for college students to fulfill. These issues are examined in greater depth below.

Residency and Registration

In most states, a poll worker must be registered to vote in the state. While simply registering to vote is an option in some states, others prevent college students from registering because they do not consider them to be bona fide residents.

Even when students are allowed to register in a state, they may encounter problems in becoming poll workers because statutes often require or prefer that poll workers be voters in the precinct or the county where they serve.

- Approximately 30 states have statutory preferences for poll workers to be residents of the precincts in which they work, though it is hard to know whether those statutory preferences are honored in administrative practice, and whether lack of county residence is truly a limiting factor for potential student potential poll workers.
- On the other hand, two states, California and Massachusetts, allow state residents to be poll workers anywhere in the state.



Photo credit: Grand Rapids City clerk

- Another six states allow state residents to be poll workers anywhere in the state if there are insufficient numbers of county residents available: Arizona, Alaska, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, and Virginia.
- At least one state, Delaware, has created a special exception for students. Normally poll workers in Delaware must be residents of their election district unless insufficient numbers require the appointment of county residents. However, Delaware's election law includes a college student exception, allowing state residents who are registered voters, and who are enrolled as at least half-time students in colleges or universities within the respective county, to be appointed as election officers for that county.

Other states allow students to be poll workers, but deny them the right to vote.

- Two of the states where there is no voter registration prerequisite for poll workers, Idaho and Washington, are also reported to have strong restrictions on allowing college students to register in the jurisdictions where they attend school. Thus, ironically, a state that presents the most open field in terms of placing college students as poll workers may also disenfranchise them.

Restrictions on the registration of college students are generally based on the premise that their residence is not "bona fide" because their presence is temporary, and the community in which their college is located is not their primary concern. Critics of these state laws say such restrictions create an ethical dilemma by asking a college student to be a poll worker in a precinct, county, or state that will not allow him or her to register to vote. They argue that a willingness to be a poll worker in the community is strong evidence of a student's interest in the community.

Obviously, an option for those who oppose these and other types of state poll-worker restrictions is to seek a legislative change. Several states have changed their law in recent years to allow state residents to work as poll workers in any county, regardless of where they are registered to vote. Some jurisdictions obtain special disclaimers allowing them to use non-residents. Others create special roles for students that do not require residency. For example, out-of-state students at the University of Baltimore were able to participate on Election Day by serving as "parallel testers" of the state's new election voting system.

Student poll administrators should also be aware of the effects state requirements can have even when they do not absolutely ban student participation. Some states, for example, allow students to register in the jurisdiction where

"The position inspired so much passion in me to continue the fight for justice and equality, so that this country can continue to be a greater and better democracy."

-College poll worker, Wiley College, Marshall, TX

the college is located, which means that almost all of those students will be voters in one precinct. Given that only three or four poll workers are typically needed in any given precinct, if the state follows a protocol giving preference to residents of the precincts over non-resident students, there may be very few spots available for college poll workers.

In addition, some students may resist registering in their college state because they prefer to remain registered in their home state to be able to cast absentee ballots. A 2004 survey found that 70 percent of college students register to vote in their hometown, compared to 28 percent who register at their school address. Research suggests that those students who do change their voter registration to their school address do so because they believe their vote matters more in the new location than in their hometown.

Political Party Affiliation

A second hurdle imposed by some states' laws is their requirement that poll workers be affiliated with a political party. All but six states or territories (California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Nevada) require that poll workers have political party affiliations, or that preferences be given to the poll-worker nominees of political parties. Massachusetts, for example, allows the selection of a limited number of unaffiliated poll workers, but only after the leading political parties are represented. Even when affiliation is not explicitly required, in practice, poll workers are chosen first from party lists, and unaffiliated candidates are chosen only when there are insufficient numbers of party members available to serve.

These limits mean that in the vast majority of states, college poll-worker programs may need to work with the political parties to get students nominated for positions. This is clearly problematic for colleges and universities that prefer to not be involved in a partisan process. In addition, the parties themselves may not be eager to accept student poll workers. Parties may resist to using new people with whom they are unfamiliar, and may instead prefer to use local people who have been part of the political system for years. Schools have successfully recruited students, only to find that local political parties were not interested in placing all of them at polling sites. It is very discouraging for a student to volunteer, go through training, and then not be allowed to work.

Buy-in from local and state political parties is extremely important in these situations. There must be a commitment from both political parties to place all college students who apply and fulfill their training commitment. Typically, by the week before elections, if the parties have not filled all poll-worker positions, the election jurisdiction can fill them.



Term Requirements

Twenty-three states have poll worker term requirements, ranging between one and four years, that might be very difficult for college students to honor. The rigor with which such requirements are enforced may depend on the language in a given state statute. Wisconsin, for example, has a two-year term and statutory language that explicitly states that poll workers “shall serve at every election in the ward during their term of office.” On the other hand, some states appear to interpret the term requirement as merely stating the period of time during which the poll worker is certified, rather than requiring that the poll worker actually be available for every election during that period. Certain states have a practice of sending out notices to certified election workers to see if they are available for an election.

A number of states have terms of service only for poll workers in positions of highest authority, while allowing appointment of poll workers with less authority for each election. In Pennsylvania, poll judges and inspectors are elected for four-year terms. Those elected officials in turn appoint clerks and machine operators on an election-by-election basis. Such procedures may ease the participation of college poll workers in subordinate positions, but possibly at a cost of relegating them to less interesting work.

State Compendium

The authors are mindful of the complications imposed by myriad state laws governing who may serve at the polls. To assist schools and election jurisdictions, the authors collected state laws governing who can serve as a poll worker and have included them in a compendium of state requirements for poll workers. However, users of this research should ask their legal counsel to provide a final check to catch any new legal developments.



Is a Given School a Good One for a Poll-Worker Program?

In This Chapter:

- **Background**
 - **Tips for Election Officials**
 - **How to Convince a Local College or University to Participate: Aim for the Top**
-

Just as some states are more receptive to student poll worker programs, some universities and colleges are better suited to providing poll workers. While every school is different, the following factors are general considerations that can affect the success of a recruitment program.

- **Students from out of town.** For states whose residency requirements for poll workers limit student poll-worker participation, as discussed above, a school whose student is predominately from outside the state (or elsewhere in the same state) can find participation difficult. Even in states where students are allowed to register in their college town, many prefer to keep their voter registration in their home town, which may limit their ability to participate as poll workers. Community colleges may have an advantage in that their students are almost exclusively local residents and are likely be registered in the same area in which they would be asked to work. State schools also tend to draw predominantly from state residents who are more likely to meet poll worker requirements.

Likewise, schools whose students tend to stay in the area after graduation, such as community colleges or state schools, may make better long-term partners for election officials. At such schools, rather than having to train new students every year, election officials can enlist the same students regularly and enter them in a permanent database of volunteers.

- **Students who work.** All schools have some students who also work; however, community colleges tend to have a majority of students with full-time jobs. Working a full day at the polls may be impossible for a student with a full-time job. A smaller private school with a majority of full-time students living on campus may have a higher proportion of students available for a full day's work, especially if the school adopts a policy excusing them from all classes.



Photo credit: Cleveland State University

- Size of the student body.** The size of a school's student body affects the availability of students for poll-worker service. In a small school, a school poll-worker recruiter is more likely to have one-on-one contact with a large percentage of the student body and have more opportunities for quality networking and relationships with students. Likewise, student peer networks will also be tighter and facilitate more effective recruiting. Small campuses may also make it easier to create a sense of excitement around a program. Larger schools, however, are more likely to have a well-established email system and website that students rely upon, which can make contacting students easy and inexpensive. At large universities, a tremendous number of students can often be reached by simply targeting a few core classes. For example: ten professors teaching an Introduction to Government class with an average of 200 students per class equals 2,000 students who could potentially be recruited as poll workers with very little effort. If each professor offered extra credit for poll work, the number of students who volunteer would probably be significant.

Tip for Election Officials

How to Convince a Local College or University to Participate: Aim for the Top

Election jurisdiction officials who have not yet identified colleagues at local schools to assist recruiting college students as poll workers should try to start at the top. Gaining high-level support from top campus administrators will greatly ease the tasks of finding a campus coordinator for the program and implementing it. A variety of approaches to contacting campus leaders can be employed. An election director or board chairman could call the university or college president to explain the proposed program and to ask the latter to recommend staff or faculty at the school to work with. Election officials also have used connections with their state senator or representative to ask these individuals initiate the first contact with a school. Inviting all schools in an area to one big meeting to encourage participation in poll-worker programs may spur interest by causing administrators at different colleges to motivate one another. School presidents are generally interested in positive media coverage for their schools, an offer to send out a press release about an agreed-upon partnership may provide added incentive.

When the university or college president has agreed for the school to participate, he or she can pave the way to full campus support. Election officials may wish to suggest that the school president promote a campus-wide policy excusing student poll workers from all classes on Election Day. The



school president also could work with the faculty to develop an extra credit policy for student poll workers. While internal university politics differ with some presidents having more influence than others regarding such matters, starting at the top is generally the best way to begin a long-term working relationship with a school.

"I helped a Somali woman vote for the first time and she gave me a hug. It was the most patriotic feeling I've ever had."

-College poll worker, Suffolk University

The Campus Champion and the Team: Choosing a Champion

In This Chapter:

- **Background**
 - **Tips for Election Officials: How to Identify a Campus Champion**
 - **Building a Well-Functioning Team**
 - **The Election Official**
-

Running a successful college poll-worker program requires two key people: a dedicated staff person at the election jurisdiction, and an advocate at the partner school to present the program to students. This section explores the role of a “campus champion”, including how to find one, and developing his or her team. The school’s poll-worker advocate and the election jurisdiction leaders will interact, and their tasks should be coordinated. This section also compares and contrasts the two roles and their duties.

Colleges have successfully managed student poll-worker programs through a variety of school structures, including academic departments, service learning or career services offices, and student activity centers. What is more important than the structural box the program falls under is that it be led by a strong individual committed to advocating for the program’s needs and administering it effectively. This “campus champion” serves as the main point of contact for students and as the liaison to election officials. The more passionate the champion is about the student-poll worker program, the better, as the champion will spread enthusiasm and energy about the initiative and attract others to the cause.

Whether the champion is a professor, a student services staff member, or holds another position, someone needs to take on this responsibility. This individual must be willing to commit the substantial amount of time required to manage a well-run program. For example, at California State University Long Beach, the secretary of the political science department dedicates four to five hours a day for several weeks prior to an election. The program administrator at Roxbury Community College worked 35 hours per week for the eight weeks of their 2004 program. Cleveland State University’s Office of Career Services committed two part-time staff people to run their program, providing 15 to 20 hours per week each for three months.

“Championing a college poll-worker program is generally done as a labor of love.”

– Charles Noble, Political Science Professor and campus champion, California State University, Long Beach.

The campus champion serves as a spokesperson and advocate for the program. He or she may go to classes to recruit students or speak at school-wide events. The champion also serves as an administrator, and must be prepared for numerous and wide-ranging student problems and concerns that will inevitably arise. These can include students' inability to attend training, rescheduling needs, addressing miscommunication between students and election officials regarding items such as precinct assignments and records of students' poll service, and needs for transportation to polling sites.

How To Identify a Campus Champion

It may take patience for you to identify your counterpart at a local school. Send out multiple feelers to find the right person. You should eventually go to meet interested partners in person.

These are good places to initiate your search for a champion:

- The college or university president
- Faculty officials, such as department heads (including, in particular, that of Political Science)
- The Department of Student Services/Student Life
- The Office of Service Learning
- The Office of Career Services
- The Employment office
- The Student Government Association
- The Leaders of the campus voter registration campaign

Once you find a passionate counterpart, hold on tight. Remember to keep in touch with your champion between elections. But also be aware that positions at universities frequently change (for example, department heads change and faculty take sabbaticals) so your liaison may not be able to serve in the same role the following year.

Building a Well-Functioning Team

To be effective, every champion needs a strong team. Champions and their poll-worker programs work better when administrative staff are available to execute organizational tasks, answer students' questions, and solve problems. In addition, champions should build a multi-disciplinary team of individuals and campus organizations to help implement a

Handy Hint

Pulling in Faculty. The champion needs to work closely with faculty to encourage them to integrate pollwork experience into their curriculum (or, at the very least, to agree to excuse student absences from class on Election Day). Faculty generally will not want the added administrative duty of tracking which of their students are working as pollworkers. The campus champion should make it as easy as possible for faculty to be involved.

student poll-worker program. This will improve the program's results by allowing access to different individuals' skills and by increasing access to students. Campus champions should consider collaborating with:

- Interested faculty members and department heads
- The Department of Student Services
- The Office of Service Learning or Career Services
- The student government association
- Student groups, such as fraternities, sororities, and sports teams
- Campus news outlets (newspaper, radio, television)
- Voter education and registration groups on campus
- The Department of Public or Media Relations

It is not enough, however, to merely add a wide variety of individuals to a program to make it strong. The campus champion must ensure that all participants are following the same plan. The champion needs to maintain the lead and keep everyone working together.

The champion will need to work particularly closely and tactfully with campus faculty, whose cooperation can be vital to the success of poll-worker programs. Champions may need to encourage professors to integrate poll-work experience into their curriculum (or, at the very least, agree to excuse student absences from class on Election Day). Champions also should attempt to avoid burdening faculty with the administrative duties of tracking which of their students are working as poll workers and evaluating their performance in those roles, as many faculty members will resist taking on these duties. In sum, the campus champion should make it as easy as possible for faculty to be involved (see the section on How to Integrate Poll Work into a Class). In one county, faculty who participate in the program by recruiting students are paid a small poll-worker stipend as a "thank you" for the time they put in. Although not much money, it is an effective way to show appreciation.

The following are examples of tasks for the campus champion and his or her team:

- Plan recruitment strategy.
- Provide poll worker applications, voter registration forms, and absentee ballots to students.



Photo credit: Northampton Community College

- Go to classes to promote the program and recruit students.
- Answer students’ questions about being a poll worker.
- Collect applications and email, fax, or send forms to the election jurisdiction.
- Follow up with students who did not fill out applications correctly.
- Facilitate on-campus training.
- Confirm student assignments with the election jurisdiction.
- Remind students repeatedly of training and Election Day duties.
- Follow-up after the election to confirm who worked.
- Plan a “thank you” event for the students.

The Election Official

Just as schools designate a campus champion, so too should election jurisdictions identify an individual to serve as the main liaison with schools providing poll workers. This individual should be responsible for reaching out to schools, as well serving as a contact point with the jurisdiction to answer poll- worker program questions and solve problems as they arise. Students may need special attention in the first year of a program to enable them to be effective poll workers.

Depending on the design and scope of the poll worker program, this can require extensive time commitments. Election jurisdictions report working with student poll workers for 10 to 25 hours per week, in the four weeks before an election. Based on their experience, they recommend that jurisdictions hire a part-time employee for six months to coordinate and administer the program.

Comparison of Election Official & Campus Champion To-Do Items

Issue	For Election Officials	For Campus Champions
State Poll Worker Law	Review your state’s requirements for poll workers and decide whether, and how you can use non-resident or unregistered students.	Include voter registration information with poll-worker recruitment materials. Poll workers are usually required to be registered voters. Students may need to register to qualify.
Planning	<p>Do not underestimate the TIME it takes to run this initiative.</p> <p>Start as early as possible. For a November election, ask schools to start mentioning the opportunity to their students during their spring semester (end of April – May). Start collecting and reviewing applications by the end of September or early October.</p> <p>Clarify early the roles students will play, the requirements, the application process, the training schedule, and all important dates and deadlines.</p>	<p>Do not underestimate the TIME it takes to run this initiative.</p> <p>Start planning as early as six to nine months prior to an election. Give faculty time to incorporate the initiative into their curricula.</p> <p>For a November election, start mentioning the opportunity to students during their spring semester (end of April – May).</p>

Issue	For Election Officials	For Campus Champions
School-Election Official and Intra-School Communications	<p>Communicate, communicate, communicate!</p> <p>Complete a Memorandum of Understanding with the school and set up weekly meetings with the Campus Champion and his or her team members. Select one person at your office to serve as the liaison.</p>	<p>Stay in close contact with your representative from the election jurisdiction. Set up weekly meetings.</p> <p>Galvanize broad and high-level support from the school administration and faculty. Include representatives from various fields and departments who can help the program, such as Career Services, the Political Science Department, the Communications Department, the College of Law, Student Life, and Public Relations.</p>
Student Recruitment and Incentives		<p>Face-to-face contact is the most effective way to recruit students. For example, making classroom presentations is often the most successful recruitment method.</p> <p>Take photographs of students at training sessions, recruitment events and on Election Day. Use these pictures in campus newspapers, websites and with the local media to garner recognition for the students and to recruit in future years.</p> <p>Implement an Excused Absence Policy for all college poll workers.</p>
Relations with Students	<p>Upon receiving an application, follow-up immediately (phone, e-mail, or letter) with information on the process and timeline. Do not let the students think that you have forgotten about them.</p>	
Training	<p>Keep training classes small and provide hands-on experience with voting equipment.</p> <p>Provide multiple options for training times and locations, including on campus</p>	

Issue	For Election Officials	For Campus Champions
Record-keeping and Follow-up	Be very diligent about keeping records. Make sure you have complete contact information for all students and keep detailed notes on all your correspondence (e.g., placement requests, hours available on Election Day, language skills, last minute drop-outs, etc.)	Do not assume all students who fill out applications will serve on Election Day. Continue to remind and motivate them to attend training and to show up on Election Day. Mass email is the fastest and cheapest way to communicate with many students and can be an important tool. However, it provides little control over the quality and commitment of the students.
Showing Appreciation to Students	To keep students coming back for future elections, thank students for participating. Send thank you letters, give out certificates of appreciation, or throw a party and pay them promptly.	Show students appreciation and give recognition to encourage future participation. Consider throwing a party for the student poll workers, give out certificates of appreciation, or publicly thank the students by listing their names on a website.

Start Early!

In This Chapter:

- **Timelines Help**
 - **Important Dates for Any Timeline**
-

The issue of timing is so critical to the success of poll-worker programs that it merits separate discussion. Designing and implementing student poll-worker programs, and especially new poll-worker programs, takes much more time than might be expected. Election officials and college administrators experienced with college poll worker programs recommend starting to plan programs as early as January of an election year. It takes time to develop a good relationship between the school and the election jurisdiction, and trying to do so during the rush of final election preparations can be maddening. It also takes time for executives of both sides to approve policies and establish reasonable timelines that work with the calendars of both sides.

Election officials should keep in mind that schools may choose to work with several jurisdictions and will need time to establish a good relationship with each. For their part, many election jurisdictions prefer to recruit poll workers for full-year or even two-year terms. Starting in January also potentially allows recruitment of students to work in primary elections.

Both sides will need time to confirm all poll worker requirements and discuss alternative roles for students who do not meet them.

An early start also gives a school time to establish a good internal team, introduce information about working the polls into Registration and Welcome Week activities, and integrate the program into course outlines. Have all recruitment materials (handouts, posters, banners, and/or website) ready before students arrive on campus for the fall semester. You will be able to start immediately with recruitment.

Once a college recruitment program is in place with committed advocates on campus and established relationships with local election officials, the work will concentrate around the beginning of semesters (to get word out among students about the opportunity to work the polls) and the time leading up to, and immediately following, Election Day. Schools should determine when they have had the most success recruiting students in past years, and focus their efforts there.



Timelines Help

A good timeline will facilitate poll-worker program planning. An eight-month calendar used by Los Angeles County to implement its college poll -worker program is included on the next page. Even if a student poll-worker program must be implemented in less than eight months, in this “to do” list can help you create your own timeline of tasks. A list of typical calendar items is also included below. No matter when a school and jurisdiction begin their program, they should take time to develop a joint work plan, clarify roles and expectations, and identify important dates, such as when applications are due, when training begins and ends, and when midterms are. Each side should know each the other’s items on the calendar, not just their own obligations.

[Sample page 64: Los Angeles County Timeline](#)

Important Dates for Any Timeline

School Dates

- Welcome Week and other new student activities
- Course registration period
- Classes begin
- Midterms
- Campus-wide events
- Deadlines for entries to campus publications
- Mailers going out to entire student body

Election Jurisdiction Dates

- Primary Election Day
- Voter registration deadline
- Poll-worker application deadline
- Other statutory or logistical deadlines
- Training schedule
- General Election Day

“It was a wonderful networking opportunity and a chance to take pride in our country.”

-College pollworker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH

In This Chapter:

- **Establish a clear relationship and easy communication as early as possible**
- **Issues to discuss**

Student poll-worker programs vary significantly among different schools and jurisdictions. However, similar steps can facilitate the development of any school-jurisdiction relationship and student poll-worker program. Here are a few suggestions for laying the groundwork for a successful and sustainable student poll-worker program:

Establish a Clear Relationship and Easy Communication as Early as Possible.

The key personnel contacts and obligations of both sides under a student poll-worker program must be clear. If the program is intended to be on-going and involve more than a small group of students, it may make sense for the school and jurisdiction to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a written document governing the relationship between the school and the jurisdiction by outlining each side's roles and expectations for the program. While signing an MOU is an extra bureaucratic step, it provides a clear understanding from the beginning and can help build trust between the parties. In addition, announcing the signing of an MOU to the press can garner positive media attention for both parties and the student poll-worker program.

Sample page 65: Memorandum of Understanding

Sometimes school-jurisdiction relationships begin without a MOU, leading up to a more formalized agreement only if and when the program proves successful. Even without an MOU, it is important to clearly define to both sides' satisfaction the elements of the poll-worker program, the process by which it will be developed, and the timeline under which the program will unfold. An easy strategy at the outset is to have the main players meet for lunch. This is a friendly way to establish a working relationship and clarify needs, timelines, and requirements in one meeting. The parties may wish to establish a regular weekly meeting or telephone call, to work on the program. As the elections near and schedules get busy, having a set time when you know you can reach each other will be invaluable. In dealing with election officials, schools also need to recognize that election jurisdictions are visible public entities, and their officials are often under political scrutiny.



Issues to Discuss

Having a clear agreement on the issues listed below is critical to the design of a program. The school and election officials may periodically need revisit some of their initial decisions on these issues as matters evolve, but as long as they are in regular communication, this should not cause problems. Key initial issues include the following:

- **Review the state requirements for poll workers.** Do all poll workers have to be registered to vote in the election jurisdiction? Are there any additional local requirements or variations to the state guidelines? Do these issues affect student recruitment? Officials may need to register students to vote when you recruit them as poll workers, and some may not be eligible.
- **How many poll workers are needed?** Decide upon the number of college students to be recruited. It is extremely discouraging for a student to get excited about working the polls and attend the training and then learn that he or she is not needed. Take into consideration the number of students who can be processed and trained with available resources. Be realistic.
- **How will poll workers be used?** Sometimes roles are specified in a state's election statutes, but it is often left to the local jurisdiction's discretion to create needed positions. It is up to the local jurisdiction to decide what positions they will have, and requirements for any special positions.

Students often express particular interest in those jobs that require them to be active, moving between precincts on Election Day and using whatever special skills they may have (technical, language) to feel they have really contributed something vital to the electoral process. These can include:

- Runners
- Voting center coordinators
- Answering phones at election headquarters
- Working information tables
- Translators
- Roving technicians for voting equipment.
- **Where are the poll workers needed?** Are the polling sites near the college or university? If not, are they accessible by public transportation? Will the students need private transportation? Students should be informed immediately if

TIP FOR SCHOOLS: HOW TO BUDGET FOR IT

Program costs will vary depending upon the scope and design of the program and the school's role in promoting and administering it. The amount of staff hours necessary to administer the program can be extensive. While some schools find the tasks fit well within the existing workload of a staff member, many find it necessary to hire part-time workers to administer the program for its duration. Student workers or recent graduates can make excellent program coordinators and are generally less costly to employ. Marketing materials are an additional expense. While some election jurisdictions can provide the recruitment materials, schools often spend money designing and producing fliers, posters, bulletin boards, websites, advertisements and T-shirts.

they may be asked to serve far from their home or campus. To facilitate participation and to reduce no-shows, assign students to polling sites close to their homes or campus. Some schools have organized carpools on Election Day, while others asked their local election officials to place students at stations within walking distance of campus or near public transportation.

- **Will the jurisdiction or the school provide recruitment materials?** Is the school or the jurisdiction in a better position to design eye-catching recruitment materials? Should they collaborate on materials? Whose budget will cover the costs if specialized recruitment materials are designed?
- **How will the students be placed?** Some jurisdictions prefer to simply follow their normal routine for dealing with poll workers, notifying each student individually after his or her application is processed and he or she is assigned to a polling locale. Others prefer to use the school as a go-between to communicate with the students. While either method is fine, keeping the school in the loop about students' assignments will allow schools to help monitor students before Election Day, to make sure they fulfill their commitment, and after Election Day, for debriefing (and in some cases, to award class credit).
- **How will students' availability be monitored?** Some election jurisdictions hope to use student poll workers for primary elections as well as final elections. Primaries, however, are often in late spring or summer, and may coincide with students' summer breaks or final exams. Schools should determine whether it is feasible to recruit students at the times they are desired. Jurisdictions' desired dates of service and student obligations and calendar milestones, such as when fall semester begins and when midterms start, should be added to the shared timeline.
- **How much will students be paid?** The financial incentive is important to many students and will play a role in recruitment. The precise amount and composition of such compensation should be determined. For example, will students also be paid for the time spent in training? What about transportation or food costs?
- **How will applications be processed?** Generally, election jurisdictions prefer to receive student applications on a rolling basis rather than having the school collect them all and turn them in at one time. This gives the election jurisdiction more time to process the applications and start filling positions.



Developing Policies and Procedures to Facilitate the Application Process

In This Chapter:

- **Anticipating Student Concerns**
 - **Recruitment Methods**
-

The application materials should perform a dual role of facilitating selection of students and providing information and outreach to them. The application materials should include both an Application Form and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) form.

The application form. This form should be simple and clear and should collect the same information jurisdictions require from all poll workers. Election jurisdictions might want to collect some additional information to help fine-tune recruitment in future years. Typical data requests of particular relevance to student workers include the following:

- Email and cell phone numbers. These are generally the two best ways to reach most students.
- GPA. You may want to set a minimum grade point average.
- College year and major.
- Do they have access to transportation? This will help you with placement decisions.
- Are they willing to serve in hard-to-recruit areas?
- Do they speak and understand a foreign language? If so, which languages and at what level of proficiency?
- If there are different positions available, do they have a preference?
- How did they hear about the poll worker opportunity?
- Why are they interested in this opportunity? This may help identify students who are less likely to carry through with their polling commitment.

The form should include the deadline for applications, as well as clear instructions on how and where to return the

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission estimates that the average age of poll workers is 72. Students can ensure that America's voice is heard loud and clear. Join a new generation of pollworkers.

Why wait until you're 72? You can make a difference. Be a pollworker.

-Help North Texas Vote College Program

completed application. The application process should ideally be a one-step procedure. Designating a drop-off point on each campus is an excellent idea as it saves students the extra steps of having to fax or mail their application. Ideally, students should be able to email their completed applications or fill out an online application; however, many election jurisdictions do not yet have this technological capacity. Election jurisdictions may wish to create, or require, a special application form for each school at which they recruit, with each particular school's name clearly indicated at the top of the form. This will allow tracking the number of students recruited at each school.

Sample page 66: L.A.County Student Application Form

The FAQs Sheet. Create a handout for all students that clearly explains the requirements and the process for becoming a poll worker, as well as the answers to the most frequently asked questions. If possible, post this information on both the election jurisdiction website and the school's website. This will save both the campus champion and the election-official liaison from having to answer the same questions repeatedly. Frequently asked questions include:

- What are the requirements to be a poll worker?
- What will I be expected to do?
- What are the hours?
- How much will I be paid?
- Where will I be posted?
- How soon will I receive my post assignment?
- How long is the training and where and when is it?
- How do I get to my assigned post?

With respect to the important question of what they will be doing, the FAQs response can state that as poll workers, students can expect to set up the polling place, greet voters, check off names on the registry, check identification (if necessary), ensure that all registered voters get the chance to vote, demonstrate how to use voting machines, ensure the secrecy of each ballot, answer voters' questions, problem solve, act as translators (if necessary, and if they are able), secure machines and votes at the end of the day, count ballots and transmit the results. With new electronic equipment being introduced in many jurisdictions for the first time in 2006, students can be told that they will be expected to play a very important role in explaining how to use the machines, and trouble-shooting problems.

Handy Hint

If you feed them, they will come. The best way to attract students to an information table is by offering free food and fun. Northampton Community College found its most successful recruitment strategy was a "Recruitment Day" that included tables set up in strategic spots throughout campus. These tables featured food, a magician, and a caricaturist along with pollworker materials. One hundred students were recruited in one day.

Anticipating Student Concerns

Efforts to anticipate students' concerns about the obligations of poll work can reap large dividends in participation.

Consider Split Shifts. One frequent student complaint is that they are not able to work an entire 12-hour shift. Although not yet widely tested, some students welcome the option to split shifts. They believe only having to serve a half-day will make participation possible. Jurisdictions that permit split shifts may want to consider pitching this to students.

Anticipate Fears about Grades. Students will often miss several classes by serving as a poll worker. Schools need to assure them that they will not be penalized for missing classes. One solution is to get faculty cooperation at the outset. Many students also have work obligations; this is a problem that most individuals of working age face when asked to commit for a full day, and it is why the majority of poll workers currently are retirees. Some jurisdictions provide students with a flyer or letter explaining to their professors or employers why they will be absent on Election Day.

[Sample page 67: Cleveland State University Statement Regarding poll worker excused absence policy.](#)

TIP FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

Transportation. While signing up students from one campus may sound like a dream come true, keep in mind that there are only so many polling places within a comfortable radius of a school. You will probably want to mix college students with veteran poll workers. This means that some students may have to drive some distance on the morning of Election Day to get to their assigned polling place. Make sure students know this when you are recruiting. Also, be aware that some students are apprehensive about serving in an area they do not know. Be prepared to help them with maps, or to find the best available public transportation.

Follow Up Quickly. Students can be impatient. If possible, email students when their applications are received and let them know how long they will take to process. Tell them when they can expect to get their placements and when training will be scheduled. This follow-up task could fall to either the campus champion or the election liaison, depending upon how your program is designed. Treating students professionally and with respect increases the likelihood that they will honor their commitment to serve on Election Day, and will do so in a professional manner.

[Sample materials:](#)

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections sent a letter to all



college poll-worker applicants immediately after receiving their applications. Here is an excerpt from their letter:

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Election Day Worker for the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. We have received your application and are in the process of assigning you to a polling location for Election Day.

Enclosed in this packet you will find information regarding the mandatory training session. The training is eight hours. Please follow the attached instructions and register for a training class today. Once we have placed you in a polling location, we will send you a Notice-to-Serve card. You must return the bottom portion of that card to confirm that you will work on Election Day.

If you have any questions regarding training or your responsibilities as a poll worker, please call 216...

Recruitment Methods

Recruiting for student poll workers is similar to any recruitment campaign, including use of incentives, selection of a message and use of proper outreach tools. But effectively reaching and motivating potential student poll workers involves particular challenges that are discussed in this subsection.

Creating Incentives. Motivating students to become poll workers begins with understanding the primary incentives for their participation. For college students, the three primary incentives are course credit, money, and fulfilling civic duty.

- **Course Credit.** Course credit, or offering Election Day work as an alternative to a class assignment, are attractive incentives, especially when paired with the incentive of pay for the day's work. Courses can be designed around volunteering on Election Day. In her study of students at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona who participated in a student poll-worker program, Professor Elizabeth Bergman found that 80 percent of students participating in the study were motivated by the incentive of class credit. Lesser incentives were pay, a sense of civic duty, or a desire to volunteer.
- **Money Talks.** Marketing poll work and training as a chance to make some quick cash is universally successful. Poll workers are paid for their Election Day service, and most election jurisdictions also provide compensation for the training sessions. Jurisdictions determine the stipend, which typically ranges from \$50 to \$250. Schools in a position to augment the election authority's payment with an additional stipend have an even easier time in motivating students to show up at 5:30 a.m. on Election Day. Schools are not usually in a position to provide



additional financial incentives. Promoting the stipend provided by the election authority, however, will attract many cash-strapped students.

- **Civic Responsibility.** Many students regard poll work as a chance to play an important role in the political process. Being a poll worker gives students an opportunity to be involved and to feel, for perhaps the first time, like a responsible citizen.
- **Other Incentives.** Schools have offered a variety of other incentives that, while they did not always attract students to work on Election Day, nonetheless raised the level of student energy, and made poll work a more pleasurable experience. For example, a program at University of Indiana-Purdue University gave student poll workers invitations to Election Night parties thrown by the political parties. The opportunity to celebrate in a relaxed, festive setting with political and community leaders proved extremely popular among students, and added a touch of glamour to a long, tiring day.

Other successful incentives include:

- An excused absence from classes
- Mention of poll work experience on scholarship applications and resumes
- Free T-shirts or sweatshirts
- Coupons for lunch on Election Day
- Free transportation

Finally, students always appreciate public recognition for a job well done. Some schools hold ceremonies or luncheons to thank students and publicly recognize their contribution, or add mention of poll-work service to regularly scheduled events. For example, the graduation ceremony at Roxbury Community College featured speakers who praised poll-working students for “carrying the torch of leadership” among a new, young group of political activists, and presented course diploma and award plaques to deserving students. Another idea is to invite a public official (e.g. mayor, council person, state representative) to a post-election celebration for poll workers. In Boston in 2006, student poll workers were invited to a reception with the mayor.

Developing a Message. To a greater degree than the general population, college students do not have a clear idea of what a poll worker does, and do not realize they can work as one. Recruiting materials and presentations should explain the basic role of a poll worker and the financial stipend, but they

“It’s fun to work with veteran pollworkers who know so much about the community.”

-College pollworker, Cleveland State University, Cleveland, OH

should also emphasize the important role poll workers play in the democratic process. Explaining the impact they can have as poll workers on the right to vote and the importance of counting ballots accurately can help persuade students that the role is an important one, and motivate them to want to participate. When designing recruitment materials, consider including photos of students and quotes from them about why they liked being a poll worker, an exciting moment while volunteering, or why their participation was important. Students can be effective persuaders of other students.

Similarly, recruitment materials should try to counterbalance some of students' common negative perceptions of being a poll worker:

- “It’s boring.”
- “Spending the entire day with ‘old people’ is not appealing.”
- “I’ll be the only young person there.”
- “I don’t want to just sit there all day.”
- I want to do something important like working for a candidate.”

Sample page 68: sample recruitment posters from the University of North Texas

Sample page 69: sample recruitment posters from the Golden Key International Honour Society

Sample page 70: sample recruitment posters from Grand Rapids Community College

Program Pitfall

Remember the importance of ALL poll workers! In designing your recruitment message for college students (particularly if you are sharing it with the media), be careful not to inadvertently insult your older, veteran poll workers. They still comprise the lion’s share of your workers. Rather than emphasizing the need for young people, which might make the veterans feel rejected or unappreciated, emphasize the need for more poll workers to replace those lost to attrition and new poll workers with special skills.

Recruitment Tools

Personal contact is best. Face-to-face recruitment and personal contact are the most effective and successful recruitment methods observed to date. Being asked to participate in person, whether by a friend, student leader,

“Working with people from my neighborhood gave me a sense of being, a sense of purpose.”

– College poll worker, Roxbury Community College, Boston, MA

or professor, is persuasive. Consider the following effective strategies:

- **Peer networks.** Many schools use student workers to recruit fellow students as college poll workers. One motivated student leader or recruiter using natural peer groups and existing networks can reach an impressive number of students. For example, eight youth leaders for the Los Angeles Conservation Corps recruited 152 poll workers, 120 of whom worked on Election Day.
- **Professors as partners.** College professors have incorporated student poll work into class curricula in a variety of ways. Professors at several colleges have used poll work as a service learning opportunity, or have offered poll work in lieu of a class research paper. Other professors integrate poll work into their curricula and give students class credit or extra credit. Even if not incorporated into the curriculum for extra credit, promoting the program in classes has proven to be a very effective recruitment tool in many schools. Presentations in classes on communication, business, psychology, philosophy and government have proven highly successful in recruiting students.
- **Student Activities Office.** Getting the word out to students about a paid “volunteer” opportunity like poll work is a natural function for many student activities or student life offices. Staff in these offices often know many students by name, and can personally recruit those whom they think will be interested. For example, in fall 2005, an election official asked the student activities office at Illinois Central College to recruit students for the March 2006 primary election. By offering a service credit and a stipend paid by the county, the office easily recruited 10 students as poll workers in a very short time.
- **Student Groups.** Outreach to large student groups is an effective recruiting tool on campuses with strong student organizations. On these campuses, informal meetings with student organizations give programs an opportunity to quickly reach a large group of students who are involved in civic organizations. The Golden Key Chapter at the University of Tennessee, for example, collaborated with the Student Government Association, the Intra-Fraternity Council, the Pan-Hellenic Association, and Team Vols (a large volunteer organization) to recruit more than 140 student poll workers.

Other Recruitment Tools. Beyond personal contact, schools have used a number of recruitment approaches. All are good ways to get the word out, although none by itself is extremely effective. The key is to combine approaches so that students receive the message repeatedly in different ways. Schools



should start such promotion during registration and Welcome Week activities, and continue the message through to Election Day. Among these approaches are the following:

- **Table Tents, Fliers, Posters, Banners, and Campus Bulletin Boards.** Students report that their main sources of information on campus are table tents, fliers, and posters in dining halls, student unions, and other high traffic areas around campus. Some schools have campus bulletin boards or television monitors that students regularly check for upcoming events and activities.
- **Information Tables.** Many poll-worker programs set up information tables in high traffic areas to hand out recruitment materials and applications. While some programs set up their information tables on a daily or weekly basis, others have created campus-wide excitement around one big “Recruitment Day” with a major push to recruit as many students as possible on that day. Many schools, including Grand Rapids Community College, find that providing information tables during Welcome Week and other campus events yields high numbers of student applicants. One caveat is that this approach can generate a large number of applicants who do not follow through. Signing your name at a recruitment table during Welcome Week is easy; attending training and serving on Election Day requires much more effort.

Tip for Schools

If you feed them, they will come. The best way to attract students to an information table is by offering them free food and fun. Northampton Community College found that its most successful recruitment strategy was a “Recruitment Day” that included tables set up in strategic spots throughout campus. These tables featured food, a magician, and a caricaturist, along with poll-worker materials. One hundred students were recruited in one day.

- **Email and Websites.** Internet recruiting at large universities and at colleges with a well-established broadcast email or listserv system is an effective and efficient method of reaching students. It may be the only way to reach the entire student body. Indeed, some election jurisdictions regularly rely upon local schools to send out campus-wide electronic recruitment messages, and do no other form of college student recruitment. Cleveland State University, with a student body of 16,000, cited mass email communication as one of its three most effective recruitment strategies. Be aware is that it is crucial to know how students at a particular school receive information. Electronic campaigns are not very effective at colleges where email and listservs are not the primary means of reaching the student body.



In addition to email, a college website can facilitate recruitment by providing information on local requirements to work at the polls, registration forms, and links to local election jurisdictions. For example, the University of Baltimore set up a dedicated website for students with information on volunteering as a poll worker, including a downloadable application form.

When a student body is accustomed to relying upon the college website for information and downloading forms, it is a good idea to provide a website location that serves as the central clearinghouse of information. These sites can save staff time and are convenient for students. Even greater efficiencies obtain if the schools' election jurisdictions are able to accept electronic applications. If so, create a special website that allows students to apply online and forward their applications to the election official. This way, the school can keep track of the students who apply to be poll workers, and provide follow-up.

- **Media.** Advertisements or public service announcements in campus publications or student radio shows usually do not directly generate applications, but are effective in heightening the level of awareness on campus. Repeated exposure to the same message is a strong principle for recruitment campaigns. Reaching out to local media (newspapers, radio and television) aids in recruitment and serves as a great public-relations tool. When students see their school's program mentioned in the mass media, they are more likely to become interested about serving as poll workers. They see that it has importance in the greater community and will pay more attention than if they simply receive a handout. In addition to serving as a recruitment tool, the local media can bring good publicity to the school and the election jurisdiction itself.

Some methods of gaining media attention from both local and campus media include:

- Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.
- Invite local media to your kick-off event.
- Provide local minority and foreign-language media with information about the poll-worker program to attract a more diverse population of student poll workers.
- Provide press releases to public service bulletin boards, local libraries, and other areas where students may congregate.

Sample page 71: Sample Press Release from Grand Rapids Community College

Handy Hint

The cool factor. Recruitment will be most successful if it generates excitement on campus about volunteering on Election Day. The more students involved as multipliers, the better. For example, one year California State University - Long Beach had t-shirts made that said, "Love Me, I'm a Pollworker." When students filled out a pollworker application, they were given a t-shirt and were asked to wear them around campus. Cheerleaders and other campus groups wore them to school events. Such activities raise campus-wide awareness about the program and create a "cool factor" that encourages participation.

Tip for Schools: The Cool Factor

Recruitment will be most successful if it generates excitement on campus about volunteering on Election Day. The more students who are involved as multipliers, the better. For example, one year California State University-Long Beach used T-shirts. When students filled out a poll-worker application, they were given a T-shirt and were asked to wear them around campus. Cheerleaders and other campus groups wore them to school events. Such activities raise campus-wide awareness of the program and create a “cool factor” that encourages participation.

The Special Challenge of Recruiting for State and Local Elections. There is naturally more excitement on campuses about national elections, especially presidential elections, than local and state elections. It is easier to recruit students as poll workers when they are engaged in the political drama of a presidential race. Recruiting students in off-years requires the same recruitment and incentive efforts described earlier, but schools and jurisdictions should realize that it will take more energy to generate interest. Fortunately, jurisdictions often require fewer poll workers for local elections because voter turnout tends to be lower. Some jurisdictions avoid this entire problem by opting to not use college students for small elections or primaries.



In This Chapter:

- **Background**
- **Tips for Election Officials**
- **How to Convince a Local College or University to Participate: Aim for the Top**

Minority and bilingual students are important components of poll-worker programs. The key is letting them know that they are especially needed. Explain during recruitment efforts why their participation is particularly important.

Attracting bilingual poll workers is not just good outreach; in some jurisdictions, it is the law. The federal government requires that some jurisdictions provide bilingual assistance at selected polling places. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act requires certain jurisdictions to make language assistance available at polling locations for citizens with limited English proficiency. The Federal Register provides a list of those jurisdictions at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/sec_203/203_notice.pdf. College students can help jurisdictions meet this federal requirement.

Attracting racial and ethnic minority students is important for other reasons. Minorities have historically been excluded from the democratic process, and may be skeptical about the functioning of the democratic system and about the value of serving as poll workers. Creating dialogue between minority students and staff from your poll-worker program provide as an opportunity to increase minority participation in your program and in elections in general.

Attracting minority and bilingual students may require special effort and different techniques from those previously described. Here are some examples of effective strategies used by college poll-worker programs:

Target Organizations, Groups, and Classes that Attract Minorities. Schools have enjoyed success by engaging organizations and departments at universities and colleges with a large percentage of racial and ethnic minorities and bilingual students. Creating dialogue among these groups may facilitate for creating a more diverse base of student poll workers. The University of North Texas found that those minority students already involved in campus organizations were more likely to volunteer their time elsewhere. Seventy-five percent of the students who showed interest in working the polls were affiliated with a campus organization. The university held a pizza party at its multicultural center to attract bilingual students. They also sought out academic and civic groups, fraternities and sororities, religious and spiritual groups, and other organizations that attract minorities



Photo credit: Suffolk University

with second language skills. The university also contacted bilingual faculty who teach classes with a higher percentage of bilingual students.

Work with a community-based organization. Sometimes neighborhood recruiting is a good strategy. Professional and civic organizations (e.g. the local chapters of the National Association of Asian American Professionals or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP) are great sources for recruiting minorities. Enlisting bilingual or minority students to recruit within their communities can also be very effective. For example, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps' "Girls Today, Women Tomorrow" program hired eight students to be team leaders and to recruit other students. Those students successfully recruited 152 college poll workers, 75 percent of whom were bilingual. Of these, 120 actually served at the polls.

Offer a class on civil rights and political participation. Urban and minority students may be more cynical about the democratic process than other college students. In focus groups, they express doubt that the political system is working for them, and too often do not see the point of voting.

Roxbury Community College in Boston, which has a predominantly African-American and Hispanic student body, successfully overcame this hurdle in 2004 by including work at the polls within the context of a course on the democratic process, the history of civil rights in the United States, and how individuals can make a difference in the political process. Students were encouraged to participate in political activities and to educate their friends. As a result, these students embraced the role of encouraging their generation and their neighbors to vote. They came to see their role as peer-educators as pivotal. While money was initially the biggest incentive for these students to sign up, being part of a class that discussed voting rights and history and the importance of civic participation kept them engaged (see **How to Integrate Poll Work into a Class** for more details on this curriculum).

International students who are ineligible to serve as poll workers can serve in other capacities. Many election jurisdictions require individuals who serve as poll workers to have U.S. citizenship. However, some programs utilize international students who express an interest in working as a poll worker in other roles that may not require citizenship, such as:

- Translators/ Interpreters
- Runners
- Voting center coordinators

"If not for the class, we wouldn't have been pollworkers. We had a much better appreciation of voting. We heard from political speakers. It opened our eyes to legislative issues like the Voting Rights Act [of 1965]."

– Student pollworker, Roxbury Community College, Boston, MA

- Processors of voter registration applications
- Answering phones at election headquarters

Program managers should check their state's eligibility requirements. In addition, some states require Election Day workers to have Social Security numbers, even if they do not require citizenship.

**Tip for Schools:
Recruitment Methods for Minority Students**

- Recruit through student organizations that represent minority students (e.g., minority student unions, fraternities/sororities, religious and spiritual groups, multicultural centers).
- Ask minority students and faculty to recruit other minority students.
- Invite inspiring role models to speak about voting rights and political participation.
- Ask professors in African-American, Hispanic, or International Studies Departments to serve as recruiters of students who are racial and ethnic minorities. Invite local media that target minority populations (radio stations, TV news shows, newspapers, websites, etc.) to assist with recruiting students.

Recruitment Methods for Bilingual Students

- Recruit through student organizations that represent bilingual students (multicultural centers, international centers, religious and spiritual groups).
- Ask bilingual students and faculty to recruit other bilingual students.
- Recruit in advanced language classes.
- Ask professors in ethnic or international studies departments (Asian/Pacific, Latin American or African Studies) to serve as recruiters of bilingual students.
- Invite local ethnic and foreign language media (radio stations, TV news shows, newspapers, websites, etc.) to assist.

Tip for Schools: Public Recognition

Minority students who have served as poll workers emphasize the importance of receiving public recognition for their service. This public acknowledgment deepens their commitment to



continuing their community service. At Roxbury Community College, the program held a graduation ceremony and provided certificates of participation. Students expressed pride in their participation, and felt they had an important civic role to play within their communities.

How to Integrate Poll Work into a Class

In This Chapter:

- **Announcements in class**
 - **Program Pitfalls**
 - **Service learning requirement**
 - **Create a new class**
-

Integrating poll work into a class is a good way to guarantee a renewed pool of students every year, and to provide participating students with an understanding of the importance of poll work within the democratic process. There are many ways to integrate the experience into a class. Some popular methods are discussed below.

It is important that students be granted an excused absence from all of their classes on Election Day and for training as well. Schools can accomplish this in a variety of ways. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed at the beginning of the year between the school and the election authority, may make this a school-wide policy; the faculty senate may pass an Election Day excused absence policy; or an individual professor may provide his or her students with a letter to their other professors requesting excused absences on Election Day.

Sample page 72: [Sample letter to faculty seeking involvement in College Poll Worker Program](#)

In addition, schools planning to integrate poll work into classes should allow time for internal university review and approval. Present the idea at faculty departmental meetings and assemblies in the spring prior to Election will give faculty time to consider the options for integration.

Announcements in Class

The most basic integration technique is a brief recruitment presentation to the class by the school sponsor, or campus champion, of the poll-worker program, sometimes accompanied by an election-jurisdiction official. The school sponsor often targets classes relating to the political system, although other classes can, and have, been used. The sponsor explains the opportunity, including the need for young and intelligent poll workers, what the job entails, and the requirements to be selected. It is critical to have application forms available for interested students to fill out on the spot.



Suffolk University recruited 120 students in one year by making presentations in classes.

For some programs, this is the extent of the school's role. The election official collects the applications and follows up directly with the students about the training schedule and placement details, as the election jurisdiction would with any volunteer. The only thing asked of the professor is to create the time within the class for the presentation. No follow-up by the school is required.

This approach works particularly well at larger universities with large "Introduction to Government" classes providing a ready pool of hundreds of students with a potential interest in the political process. For example, in 2004 the campus champion at Indiana University-Purdue University sent an email to 10 professors teaching large classes at the university and had them announce the opportunity in class. Students were promised the normal pay, a day off from classes, and the opportunity to attend either of the political parties' "after parties." Many students expressed interest, and 75 were trained on campus as poll workers.

Smaller schools and community colleges with fewer full-time students find that they have to provide more incentives, and coordinate the program from beginning to end, to recruit and retain a significant number of volunteers.

Program Pitfalls

Excused Absences

The program will fail if students are not granted an excused absence from all classes on Election Day. If one professor gives extra credit to those who work as poll workers, but another professor schedules an exam for that day, students will not be able to participate. The authors recommend that schools adopt a college-wide policy giving students who serve as poll workers an excused absence on Election Day. Such policies ideally require or request that professors do not schedule exams or research paper deadlines on that day.

Extra Credit

Providing students with extra credit for work on Election Day is a strong incentive. The decision to offer extra credit is made either by individual professors or an entire department. Some courses — political science, American government, civics, sociology, American history, or public policy are obviously suitable for Election day extra credit. A school will usually require that alternative extra-credit options also be offered to those students who cannot volunteer to work the polls for whatever reason (work schedule conflicts, ineligibility due to residency requirements). Be aware, however, that some

Tip for Schools

Alternative extra credit ideas for those who cannot be pollworkers on Election Day:

- *Volunteer for a local political campaign.*
- *Volunteer with an advocacy campaign or civic action organization involved with election reform or monitoring issues.*
- *Create your own blog on political issues.*
- *Facilitate other students' applications for absentee ballots.*
- *Work for a Get Out The Vote effort (GOTV).*
- *Work on a voter registration drive.*
- *Volunteer for your local election board office before Election Day.*
- *Write a paper on some aspect of the electoral process.*
- *Write an essay on the importance of voting.*

university regulations do not allow students to be paid for work for which they are receiving credit.

At California State University, Long Beach, for example, all professors teaching one of the 10 “Introduction to American Government” classes in the fall semester offer five to 10 extra points for being a poll worker. This provides a pool of almost 2,000 students with a strong incentive to work as poll workers. The campus champion visits the classes with a representative from the election jurisdiction, and they spend 15 minutes explaining the opportunity and answering questions. They also give out a brochures and application, which are collected at the end of class. In 2002, their first year running a program, 280 students applied and over 230 students worked the polls in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This number subsequently has increased each year.

A variation on extra credit is offering service as a poll worker in lieu of another class assignment. A professor at Suffolk University in Boston invited honor students in a political science class to be poll workers instead of writing one paper. Eight of the ten students decided to participate.

Schools should be aware, however, that offering extra credit necessitates an extra layer of administrative duties for the school. Individual professors or the campus champion will have to track student interest, facilitate training and site placement, and have a system in place to confirm students’ participation in order to receive the extra credit.

Program Pitfalls

The Importance of Tracking. Election officials need to be able to tell professors quickly which students participated in polls so extra credit can be factored into their grades. Tracking how many and which students served also enables the election jurisdiction to be able to track the number of students recruited each year. This is the only way to measure success and develop more effective strategies over time.

Service Learning Requirement

Service learning is a community service requirement formally connected to the academic curriculum. Increasingly, service learning is a graduation requirement and faculties are gaining experience in integrating service opportunities into their curricula. Introducing poll work as a service-learning opportunity is relatively easy, if faculty are given enough time to incorporate it into curricula.

A valuable resource for implementing service-learning curriculum components is Campus Compact, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting community



service, civic engagement, and service learning in higher education (www.compact.org). Its website provides sample curricula that include service learning, a number of which could be modified to promote student poll-worker initiatives.

Professor David Redlawsk, a Political Science professor at the University of Iowa, teaches a local-politics class that requires a service-learning component. Many students have volunteered on political campaigns as part of his class, but in 2005 Prof. Redlawsk expanded the program to offer poll work as a service learning option. Below is an excerpt from Redlawsk's course curriculum in which he explains the required service-learning component:

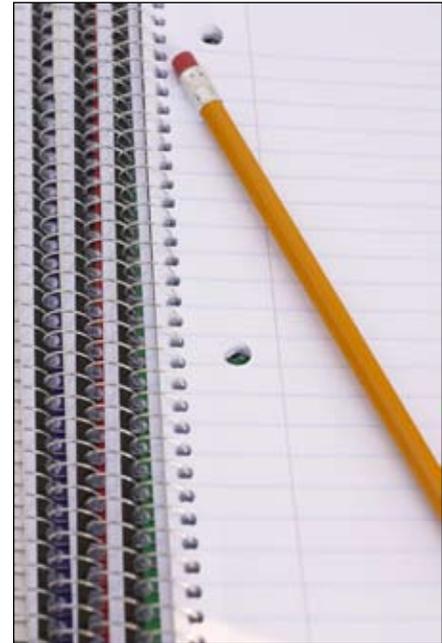
"Completion of a service learning/civic engagement project focused on local politics in Johnson County is required. This is an election year for city council of Iowa City and for other cities in our county. In addition, there is a campaign surrounding whether Iowa City should establish a municipal electric utility. Other groups are also active in the local political scene. During the semester, you will work with one of the city council campaigns, as a pollworker for Johnson County or with some other entity directly involved in local politics. This involvement will mean actively participating, maintaining a journal of your experiences, and sharing your reflections on appropriate days as listed in the syllabus.

"The idea is that you will provide something of value to the campaign or organization and at the same time you will have 'real-world' experiences that should connect to our in-class activities and local government simulation. This project is expected to take a minimum of 40 hours over the semester including your organization/campaign work, your journaling activities, and in-class reflections.

"By participate, I mean you will do useful work for the organization -- something of value -- and you will reflect on that experience in an ongoing journal, considering how what you experience in 'real' local politics does or does not fit with what we learn from our texts, discussions, and visitors."

Create a New Class

Some schools have created entire classes around their poll worker program. In general, they include the required election training, additional training by the school, and seminars on political participation and the democratic process. Some are have been semester-long courses while others are four-week seminars. Schools have offered from one to three credits for the class. The main hurdle is finding a professor who is interested in developing and teaching a new class.



"Doing Politics:

Here are some examples:

- In 2004, Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, Connecticut structured a two-credit course around working at the polls. The course included material on the history of elections in America, the role of state and local governments, and the variety of election regulations across the country, as well as poll-worker training sessions.
- Roxbury Community College offered a one-credit class in 2004 taught by an outside consultant who runs a program to engage youth in the political system, the Dunk the Vote Leadership Institute. He adapted his institute's leadership training to include working the polls on Election Day. It proved extremely effective in enlisting minority students in the program.

Sample page 73: Roxbury Community College Leadership Class Course Description

Professors can use the curricula of schools that already run poll worker programs within courses as a starting point for designing a new course. In addition, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has developed a handbook for faculty and administrators that could be a valuable resource for designing curricula. The handbook, "Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Political Engagement," contains the curricula of 21 courses and programs designed to foster informed political activity and to promote an understanding of electoral politics at the local, state, and national levels. A list of relevant curricula is also available on the Carnegie Foundation website at: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/programs/index.asp?key=25>

Tip for Schools: How to Create a Course Reading List

The Lanahan Readings in State and Local Government.

John R. Baker, (Ed.) Baltimore: Lanahan Publishers, 2001.

City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy, 4th Ed.

Dennis R. Judd and Todd Swanstrom. Longman Publishers, 2003.

High Tech Grass Roots: The Professionalization of Local Elections. J. Cherie Strachan. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Education for Democracy. Benjamin R. Barber and Richard M. Battistoni (eds.) Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993.

"The class gave me the knowledge to affect change and to teach others in my neighborhood."

– Student pollworker, Roxbury Community College

An Owners Manual for Public Life, Harry C. Boyle and Kathryn Stoff Hogg. Minnesota: Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 1992.

Democracy in America. Alexis de Tocqueville, New York: Penguin Group, 1956.

The Public and its Problems. John Dewey. Swallow Press, 1927.

National Service, Citizenship, and Political Education. Eric Gorham, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Give Us the Ballot We Will Transform the South. Martin Luther King, Jr. in James M. Washington (ed.) "A Testament Of Hope," San Francisco: Harper, 1986.

The Youth Service Movement: America's Trump Card In Revitalizing Democracy. Matthew Moseley. National Civic Review, Summer/Fall, 1995.

Selected from three courses:

Local Politics. Professor David Redlawsk, University of Iowa

Citizen Education. Professor James Farr, University of Minnesota

Becoming a Public Citizen: Connecting Community Service and Public Leadership. Professors Ruth Mandel and Tobi Walker, Rutgers University



Tracking Student Participation

After students are recruited, keeping them interested and committed through training and having them actually show up at daybreak on Election Day can be a challenge requiring personal contact and frequent reminders. Getting students to fill out an application is just the beginning.

Election Day drop-out is a serious drawback in using college students as poll workers, despite the best efforts of schools and election jurisdictions. College poll-worker programs have an average Election Day participation of only one-third to one-half of the students who express initial interest. This is partly due to the difficulty some jurisdictions have in training and placing students after they are recruited by the schools. Time commitment, given the competing demands of school and job, is also a major cause of program drop-out.

The experience of two programs illustrates the relatively low rates of student retention that schools and election jurisdictions can expect. A Los Angeles County election official with extensive experience in recruiting and working with college students confirmed that students have a higher drop-out rate than the general population. She reported that, in 2004, only half of the 2,000 students who filled out applications actually worked on Election Day. Some were never given assignments, but many were no-shows. Grand Rapids Community College, working with the Grand Rapids City Clerk's Office, had an even lower retention rate. In 2006, they received 263 student applications. Of these, only 89 students attended training and 82 actually worked on Election Day -- a retention rate of 31 percent.

There is a steep drop-off from the number of students who fill out applications to those who attend training sessions. When students have demonstrated their commitment by attending training (and hopefully being inspired and excited about their Election Day responsibilities), they usually serve on Election Day. Therefore it is wise to make training sessions as accessible as possible for students, and to remind them to attend. In Cuyahoga County, election officials use an automated calling system to remind everyone who submits a poll-worker application to sign up for a training session.

Tips for Schools and Election Officials **The Importance of Frequent Reminders**

School programs that closely track which students sign up to work and receive placements appear to have the best retention rates. Calling, emailing and/or text-messaging the students with reminders and motivation is an effective method



to avoid no-shows. Consider communicating with each student:

- When their application is received
- To provide training times and dates
- To remind them to attend training
- To confirm assignments the week before Election Day
- To motivate the day before Election Day
- To thank them after the elections

Effective Strategies

There are effective strategies for increasing student commitment. If students know that their participation will be verified and that they will not receive promised incentives if they do not show up (especially the work stipend or class credit), their reliability increases.

- Connecting poll-worker service to a class requirement is highly effective. One Maryland professor assigns a one-page paper for students serving as poll workers. If they fail to show up on Election Day, that one-page paper becomes a ten-page paper assignment.
- Some schools have relied upon peer pressure to improve retention rates. In such programs, each student is paired with a “buddy” and they are responsible for making sure the other attends training and works on Election Day. The “buddies” have used text messaging and instant messaging to keep in touch.

Tip for Election Officials With a Little Help from Their Friends

Even better than a buddy, in some cases, is a friend. Many students want to work with friends. Their reasons are varied: they prefer the social aspect of working with a friend; they do not want to spend 12 hours with strangers; or they are too intimidated to go alone. They believe signing up in pairs is an attractive option. Being asked to work by a friend can also be a big incentive. Some jurisdictions have found that if friends were not placed together at the same precinct, both dropped out. However, many election jurisdictions do not want to place students with friends because they fear the students will not pay attention to the job. They also want to have experienced workers overseeing new workers. Seeking a balance is probably the best approach.

“Though the extra paperwork and separate training sessions for the students were time-consuming, nevertheless, we do strongly think that this program is worthwhile and hope to continue recruiting college students for future elections. In addition to having their much-needed help, we also hope that their involvement in the electoral process will lead to greater civic interest and participation in the future.”

*-Helen Wong, Language
Coordinator, Boston Election
Department, MA*

Tracking Student Participation

If poll work is required as part of a class or for extra credit, schools need a reliable method of confirming that a student worked. Most election jurisdictions provide a “proof of service” form that the polling-site manager or monitor signs on Election Day. In addition, in the weeks after the election, many jurisdictions provide a list of all the university’s students whom their records show worked on Election Day. On their end, schools should be able to provide a list of those students who claim that they worked and have an election official confirm it. Some schools even require every student to call the school when they arrive at the polls to confirm arrival; however, the more students recruited, the less feasible this level of hands-on verification becomes.

On the following pages are two sample worksheets that may help track student participation. The first is an attachment for each student’s application that tracks how they were recruited, if they were placed in an assignment (or why not), if they attended training, and if they served on Election Day. The second worksheet synthesizes this information for the program as a whole.

[Sample page 74: Student Application Attachment Tracking Performance](#)

[Sample page 75: Program-wide Performance Tracking Document](#)

Tip for Schools Behind the Low Retention Rates

Do not expect 100 percent retention of students from application to Election Day. In 2006, Suffolk University, working with the City of Boston, found their retention rate was just over 50 percent.

This was their experience:

- 217 applications received
- 48 did not attend training
- 19 were ineligible for various reasons
- 3 applied too late
- 8 could not be placed in a precinct and did not want to serve as alternates
- 139 were placed in positions



- 25 cancelled or did not show up
- 114 served on Election Day

In This Chapter:

- **Training Content**
 - **Augmenting Poll Worker Training**
 - **Inter-generational Communication**
-

In most jurisdictions, students will be required to take the training provided by the local election jurisdiction. Depending on the size of the jurisdiction, election officials will typically offer several different times and locations for poll-worker training. If these are convenient for students, they can simply sign up through the jurisdiction for the time and location they prefer.

If possible, jurisdictions should consider the students' particular scheduling needs. Students who live on campus, for example, may prefer a weekend training session, while those who commute may prefer training during the week when they are already on campus for classes.

Many schools, however, find that the location and timing of training is not convenient for their students. Sometimes locations are only accessible by car, or training sessions are held during common class times. Schools may wish to request special training on campus. Many election officials are happy to do this, especially if there are large numbers of students to train. Holding training on campus facilitates retention of recruits.

Unfortunately, this solution is not always possible. If a school is providing students to several jurisdictions, it may be impractical to organize special training sessions on campus for each one. It is also difficult to combine training for service in different jurisdictions. Although poll-worker training may be similar across jurisdictions, each jurisdiction may have slightly different procedures and different equipment. These considerations lead most jurisdictions to require that poll workers attend jurisdiction-specific training.

Training Content

Training quality and content varies greatly among election jurisdictions. At worst, it can leave poll workers woefully unprepared for their duties on Election Day. While schools cannot dictate the training materials or trainers used by a jurisdiction, they can make suggestions on how students learn best and how trainers can improve students' understanding and retention of the materials they teach.

Students prefer training experiences where they receive hands-on demonstrations, including role-play and discussions



Photo credit: Peoria County-HAVCP-Training, Illinois Central College

about possible situations they may actually face on Election Day. Role-playing various potential situations is the best way to teach procedures and to quell any fears students may have about their ability to perform well.

Realism helps, too. Trainers should bring the actual equipment poll workers use on Election Day. The opportunity to practice on real voting machines is important. Students also generally prefer smaller training sessions. They complain that it is difficult to absorb all the information presented in a large training session, and that they feel uncomfortable or unwelcome asking questions.

Election officials looking for more practical guidance on successful training approaches should review the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's "Guidebook on Successful Practices for Pollworker Recruitment, Training, and Retention."

Augmenting Poll Worker Training

While schools usually do not direct the primary training of students as poll workers, they can provide independent, supplemental training or education. Such instruction can improve students' performance, enrich their experience, and help them understand how poll work relates and contributes to American democracy. Election Day itself can be a long, rather tedious day for poll workers. Providing students with a greater understanding of how their work fits into the larger whole promotes pride and a commitment to future electoral volunteerism. Training can include a number of activities and subjects:

- Review the United States electoral system
- Introduce relevant electoral laws, such as the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)
- Discuss citizenship and civic duty
- Analyze the development of the right to vote
- Describe current issues in voting
- Outline the political process
- Discuss the special role of local government

Many college poll workers may also be first-time voters. Election jurisdictions suggest providing an "introduction to voting" class that reviews the voting process and all election-related terminology before sending these students to a regular poll-worker training session.

Handy Hint - Scheduling

Students who live on campus may prefer a weekend training session while those who commute may prefer having training during the week while they are already on campus for classes.

Schools also provide specialized, additional task-related training to improve their students' performance on Election Day. This training can include sessions on topics such as multi-generational communication, multi-cultural sensitivity, or customer service. Below are examples of supplemental training programs:

Florida Memorial College: In addition to county-mandated training held on campus, the college required students to attend training activities offered by the school. This additional training included a documentary on the 2000 General Election in Florida, as well as training on constitutional rights, customer service and multicultural sensitivity. Prominent political figures spoke to the students to motivate and encourage them.

Eastern Michigan University: The school required students to attend a special evening training session in which two professors led discussions on the political process and inter-generational communication. Food was provided to keep the energy level high.

Inter-Generational Communication

College students who work an election, either as a poll worker or as an office worker, will probably find that most of the people they work with are 20 to 60 years older than they are. If you are creating a college poll-worker program, it is a good idea to include at least a small training segment on inter-generational communication.

Such training should include the following points:

- Dress appropriately. Casual business attire is considered appropriate. Your clothes should cover your midriff and tattoos.
- Remember your manners. Say “please” and “thank you.” Be courteous to everyone.
- No swearing.
- No personal portable listening devices.
- Keep conversations polite and non-political.
- Offer to do the lifting and moving of equipment and any type of legwork tasks.
- When someone is having difficulty with technology or equipment, ask if you can help. While you are assisting them, remember that older people did not grow up with computers and may not have the technical vocabulary that you do.



Photo credit: Cleveland State University

- Many elderly people experience hearing loss. Speak clearly and audibly so that you can be heard.
- Have patience.
- Some elderly people use voting as a social outing, and you are part of it. Seeing young people who are polite, helpful, and understanding makes their experience a positive one.
- Remember that you are working for the election officials and need to follow any rules and guidelines they give you.

It is equally important to train older poll workers in working with younger poll workers. Students often complain that older poll workers do not treat them with respect and as equals. In training both younger and older poll workers, emphasize their common goals for Election Day. Keeping their attention focused on what they share, rather than on differences, helps produce cooperation and mutual respect.



Election officials and schools should evaluate their programs after the election to see how they can improve the process. As part of the evaluation, election jurisdictions should track how many student applications they receive each year, how many students actually serve, and how students heard about the program (this data can easily be requested on the application form). Knowing how well different recruitment methods allows focus on the most effective techniques in the future. Knowing the percentage of students who are likely to serve is also vital planning information.

Student surveys or focus groups examining the quality of training and the student experience as a poll worker are also helpful tools for improving the program each year. Without this feedback, it is hard to know if the program is fulfilling its goals and if it is worth continuing. Schools can also play a role in evaluating the program. In addition to the above issues, some schools have used surveys and focus groups to measure the effect of volunteering on students' civic know-how, political involvement, and views of the political process.

The following is a sample student survey.

Thank you for serving as a pollworker in the recent election. In order to improve our efforts at recruiting college students to work as pollworkers, we need your feedback.

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey. There are only 12 questions. All information will be kept confidential, with only aggregate results reported. Please fill in your responses below and bring it to XXXX Office in CAMPUS LOCATION.

Please respond by Date XX, XXXX. [*Consider offering an incentive*] Thank you!

1. How did you hear of the opportunity to become a pollworker? Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth/other students	<input type="checkbox"/> Ad or article in campus publication
<input type="checkbox"/> Professor	<input type="checkbox"/> Announcement on college website
<input type="checkbox"/> College staff person	<input type="checkbox"/> Announcement on campus radio
<input type="checkbox"/> Information table	<input type="checkbox"/> College-wide e-mail
<input type="checkbox"/> Posters/flyers	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted e-mail (What affiliation or organization? _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe: _____)	

2. What motivated you to become a pollworker? Check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> A friend was doing it	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra credit
<input type="checkbox"/> A professor or advisor suggested I do it	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning experience
<input type="checkbox"/> A student group I'm a part of was participating	<input type="checkbox"/> Pay
<input type="checkbox"/> Course credit	<input type="checkbox"/> Sense of civic duty
<input type="checkbox"/> Class assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Service learning credit
<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Explain: _____	

3. Please tell us about the training you received to become a pollworker. Mark how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The training location was convenient	1	2	3	4	5	DK
The training duration was appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	DK
The training adequately covered all the necessary topics.....	1	2	3	4	5	DK
The trainers knew the subject matter.....	1	2	3	4	5	DK
I was given an opportunity to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5	DK
The hands-on part of the training was sufficient.....	1	2	3	4	5	DK
I felt prepared for the work.....	1	2	3	4	5	DK
I was able to perform well at my assignment.....	1	2	3	4	5	DK

4. Is there any area in which you feel like you needed more training?

Yes – If yes, please describe: _____

No

5. What suggestions would you give your election jurisdiction to improve your time as a pollworker?

Sample student survey continued

6. What suggestions would you give your school to improve the recruitment of more college pollworkers?

7. Please indicate how likely you are to do the following:

	Definitely ▼	Likely ▼	Unsure ▼	Unlikely ▼	Definitely Not ▼
Recommend working as a pollworker to other students.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....
Work as a pollworker in future elections	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....
Vote in the next election.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....

8. Did you vote in this election?

- Yes
 No

9. Did your experience as a pollworker affect your likelihood to vote in the future? Are you:

- More likely to vote
 Same
 Less likely to vote

10. Overall, how would you rate your experience as a pollworker?

- Very satisfied
 Satisfied
 Neutral
 Unsatisfied
 Very unsatisfied

11. College students play many roles on Election Day, such as precinct worker, roving technician, translator, assistant at headquarters, etc. What was **your** job on Election Day?

12. Please share any stories you may have, either highlights, challenges or lessons you learned from this experience:



Thank you! We appreciate your feedback. If you have any questions about this survey, or if you would like to provide additional input, please contact: NAME, PHONE, EMAIL, LOCATION

Retaining Students for Multiple Elections

In This Chapter:

- **Designing a Sustainable Program**
 - **Some Steps to Building a Sustainable Program**
-

Election officials rely on having a reliable pool of poll workers whom they can call upon to serve several times a year, over many years. These veterans are the core of most poll-worker programs. College students, for numerous reasons, are not likely to become part of this core group. Students' class and work schedules change from semester to semester, their addresses may change from year to year, interest ebbs and flows with the type of election, and after they graduate, students often leave the city or state. When asked in focus groups if they would be willing to commit to more than one election, students unanimously said no, generally citing their uncertain schedules.

Some students, of course, will embrace the experience and consider it their civic duty throughout their lives. Some may become core poll workers many years down the road. For the majority of students, however, the best that election officials can hope for is opening these students' eyes to the opportunity and, possibly, persuading them to serve as poll workers on a periodic basis. Keeping in touch with them throughout their college career is wise, as their schedules are often flexible and they may very well opt to serve again if asked.

Remember that students and younger adults may move more frequently than older adults. Students recommend reaching them via email and their cell phones, two important data points that are not always collected on application forms. Election officials looking for more practical guidance on successful retention practices should refer to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's "Guidebook on Successful Practices for Pollworker Recruitment, Training, and Retention."

For an election jurisdiction looking to increase its regular pool of experienced poll workers, consider focusing on community colleges and those state schools where students tend to be local residents, as these students will be more likely to stay in the community after graduation.

"Recruiting college students is no more difficult than other recruitment strategies, but more worthwhile. Since the 18-to-21-year-old age group often reflects the lowest voter turnout, any effort to involve students in the electoral process is worthwhile."

*-Terri Hegarty, City Clerk,
City of Grand Rapids, MI*

Designing a Sustainable Program

As the preceding section suggests, the key to a successful college poll-worker program is not retaining the same students for every election, but rather establishing a sustainable process with a partner school so that the election jurisdiction can count on receiving a certain number of students for every election (or at least every November). The faces may change, but the energy and skills students bring will be a constant.

Since the student body changes every year, education and outreach has to be repeated every year. Every new freshman class needs to be introduced to the idea of working at the polls, and provided with the opportunity to do so. Students who hear the message for four years are also more likely to become involved.

This creates a large burden for school employees who organize and run the program. Without care, this repetitive effort could lead to burnout. The best way to sustain a program and avoid burnout is to ensure that it becomes as streamlined and integrated with a school's normal functioning as possible. The program should become part of the school's culture, and should be supported with adequate and reliable funding and resources.

Some Steps to Building a Sustainable Program Include:

Create Institutional Memory. An election-official liaison should keep track of whom they contact at each school, how many students, how many students they recruit from each school, and by which recruitment methods. A campus champion should document how recruitment occurs and which individuals perform roles, which will allow a program to live beyond one person's involvement and survive the campus champion's departure.

Sign an MOU. Signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the election jurisdiction and the school in the first year will ease administration of a student poll-worker program in future years. The MOU spells out what roles the school and the election jurisdiction will play, and also guarantees that the school's leadership (the president, the faculty senate, etc.) is aware of the program, supports its goals, and hopefully provides the institutional infrastructure, resources, and understanding necessary to enable the program to function smoothly. For example, the MOU might state that the school recognizes the duty of working the polls on Election Day as an automatic excused absence from all classes.



Use an Adopt-a-Poll Program. Some counties have created an “Adopt a Poll” program under which groups and organizations agree to provide all the workers for a specific polling location or precinct. Rather than earning individual stipends, each organization’s workers treat the money earned as a fundraiser for their organization. If allowed in your state, consider developing an agreement for your school to provide all poll workers for certain precincts for every election. This will simplify the process of assigning students and providing follow-up. The challenge will only be to recruit enough students each year and train them. Student organizations, fraternities and sororities, sport teams and other groups might consider adopting a poll as a fundraiser.

Incorporate Poll Work into Course Curricula. As discussed earlier, including poll work in course curricula and as a service learning opportunity guarantees a steady stream of students each year.

Professors at the Polls. Encouraging faculty to volunteer as poll workers is a good way to attract their students as well. The American Association of University Professors ran a pilot program in Maryland in 2006 to encourage professors to become poll workers.

Pay the Program Administrators a Stipend. Election jurisdictions can pay a normal poll-worker stipend to the campus champion managing the program, as well as to faculty or staff who help to recruit students. This is only a token amount, but can help encourage and sustain their participation.

Student Spokespeople. Each year, have students who served as poll workers the previous year speak to classes and small groups about their experience. This builds upon the idea that students who volunteer to work on elections are civic leaders and leaders in their schools. Hearing about the opportunity from another student might motivate to other students.

“Just put up fliers saying you get paid, and anyone without a job will jump at the opportunity.”

*-College student in focus group,
Cleveland State University,
Cleveland, OH*

The Guidebook

This Guidebook is a collection of successful practices for recruiting, training, and retaining college students to serve as college poll workers. It is designed to present these practices in an easy-to-follow format so that readers can develop their own programs to fit their specific needs. It was prepared under a 15-month-long contract (2005-2006) from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to the Center for Election Integrity at Cleveland State University.

The Guidebook's advice is practical, not merely theoretical. Every practice recommended in this Guidebook has been tested in the field by election professionals and college/university staff and faculty. As such, the contents of this Guidebook are grounded in the hard-won experience of student bodies and current election administrations. The authors have striven to recommend only practices that are replicable and sustainable, rather than stunts that can leave poll professionals struggling to find new tricks for the next election cycle.

To ensure that they understood the successful practices, constraints, and challenges of college poll-worker recruiters, the authors interviewed more than 20 administrators of college poll-worker programs of various sizes and characteristics. In addition, they examined other student-recruitment efforts not focused on elections, but which nevertheless offered useful recruitment experiences to share. The authors also relied heavily upon the findings of the 2004 EAC Help America Vote College Poll-Worker Program report, which provided poll-related grants to 15 colleges, universities and student organizations. A Guidebook project working group, consisting of three election officials, three university representatives, and a student, provided further guidance on matters related to the Guidebook's content and overall structure.

To supplement and test the findings from these resources, the authors sought additional data in three ways:

- **Focus Groups.** The authors conducted focus groups around the country with students who had participated in college poll-worker programs and with those who had not. The focus groups provided invaluable information regarding which incentives motivate students to participate in polls, and which considerations impede their participation or interest. The authors tested and fine-tuned potential strategies for recruitment in these focus groups.
- **National Survey of Election Officials.** The authors surveyed members of the National Association of



Counties (NACo) in March 2006 about their involvement in college poll-worker recruiting. The results showed that few counties currently rely upon college students as poll workers. Even among the counties that use students, recruitment efforts appear to be rudimentary, mainly limited to putting an advertisement in the college paper or sending out fliers.

• **Pilot Projects.** From June through November 2006, three pilot projects planned and implemented college poll-worker programs from scratch using the draft Guidebook as their template. The pilot sites were:

- Grand Rapids Community College and Grand Rapids City Clerk's Office (Michigan)
- Suffolk University and the City of Boston's Election Department (Massachusetts)
- Cleveland State University and the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (Ohio)

These three projects represent different-size election jurisdictions and three types of schools: a community college, a private university, and a state university. The project participants have provided the authors monthly feedback on the Guidebook's content, layout, relevance and helpfulness, as well as valuable and practical examples and anecdotes. They thoroughly vetted all the information provided in the Guidebook.



SAMPLE STUDENT POLLWORKER CALENDAR for Election Officials

Adapted/Excerpted from Los Angeles County Calendar

E-DAY	BEGIN DATE	END DATE	EVENT	WHO	DONE
E-200			Refer to previous elections to determine hard to recruit problem areas. Decide where College Pollworkers are needed.	K.M.	✓
E-180			Make calls to College contacts and get commitment for this year's program. Discuss number of pollworkers needed.		
E-80			Mail the Student Application Packets to participating colleges with the training schedule. Include Voter Registration cards.		
E-55			Visit college classes to discuss Election Day opportunities. Bring voting machines and extra Application Packets.		
E-50			Schedule Pollworker Training Class on college campus.		
E-50			As student application forms are received, assign students to polls. Send out appointment notices with training schedule.		
E-34			DEADLINE to receive College Pollworker Applications.		
E-4			Fax report of college pollworkers who are assigned to serve to the university.		
E-Day	11-7-06		ELECTION DAY		
E+13			Generate a report of who served on Election Day. Send list to College contacts. Generate payroll. Call students to find out the reason for no shows.		
E+17			Collect evaluations from College Pollworkers.		
E+22			Prepare pie charts of post election results for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of student application received ▪ Number of students placed vs. not placed ▪ Number of student served, cancelled and no shows 		
E+27			Send Campus Champion and college students "Certificates of Appreciation" and thank you letters to everyone who participated.		

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

between

THE LOCAL ELECTION BOARD/COMMISSION
(hereafter referred to as ELECT)

and

ABC-XYZ COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
(hereafter referred to as ABC U)

to jointly implement
A College Pollworker Recruitment Program

Preamble: Recognizing the shortage of pollworkers faced by our community as well as the special skills, knowledge, and energy that students can offer, the leadership of ELECT and ABC U have agreed to jointly support and implement a College Pollworker Recruitment program. Both parties appreciate the tremendous civic experience being a pollworker can offer in shaping students' lifelong outlook on the democratic process and the role they can play as individuals within a greater community.

1. Names of Key Liaisons: _____ will be the lead liaison and "campus champion" for the program on ABC U campus. _____ will be the main liaison and election official in charge of implementation for ELECT.
2. Goals: ELECT faces a potential shortage of approximately ___# pollworkers for the elections on _____ (year or date). As part of this partnered effort, ABC U plans to recruit and train ___# qualified college students to fill pollworker slots. These goals will be modified in subsequent years to reflect actual needs.
3. Timeline: ELECT needs the names and contact information of interested students by _____ (date or XX days before the election). Qualified students will receive their pollworker assignment and information from ELECT within ___ days of filling out an application.
4. Special Roles for Students (Optional. This is meant as an example only. Actual alternative roles depend on needs of election jurisdiction, voting technology used, and legal requirements of the state.) For those students who do not meet regular pollworker requirements (e.g., they are registered to vote in a different state, etc.), ELECT will create two special positions of "roving technician" and "translator." These positions will take advantage of interested students with special computer or language skills.
5. Roles and Expectations (These are examples; modify as desired.):
 - ELECT will supply all pollworker recruitment materials to ABC U
 - ABC U will distribute and post recruitment materials in high traffic areas on campus, on their website, to targeted classes, through the university email system, and in the school newspaper.
 - ABC U will grant all students who work as pollworkers on Election Day with an excused absence from all classes. ABC U will request that its faculty not schedule tests or assign due dates for major assignments on Election Day.
 - ELECT will send out press releases to local media on this groundbreaking partnership with ABC U and the important role the students are fulfilling for the community.
 - ABC U will provide space and logistics for pollworker training session(s) on campus.
 - ELECT will conduct special pollworker training session(s) with students on campus
 - ELECT and ABC U will coordinate their efforts via their liaisons and other personnel to secure the success and longevity of the college pollworker recruitment program

This Memorandum of Understanding can be modified at anytime if both parties agree to the modification.



COLLEGE POLLWORKER APPLICATION
 County of Los Angeles – Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
 12400 Imperial Highway, 7th Floor, Norwalk CA 90650
Uniform District and Statewide Special Election
 November 8, 2005

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Address: _____ City _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone: () _____ Cell Phone () _____

E-mail: _____ Date of Birth _____
 (If under 18 needs Parent's signature)

College: _____ Professor Name _____

Professor's Signature _____

1. Do you speak and understand a language other than English?.....YES ____ NO ____
2. Which language do you speak/understand (If answered Yes to # 1)? _____
3. Would you like to be placed as a bilingual poll worker? YES ____ NO ____
4. Would you like to also work the Primary Election on June 6, 2006.....YES ____ NO ____
5. Would you be willing to serve in any of these hard to recruit areas?
 Pomona-Walnut Valley West L.A./Pacific Palisades San Gabriel Valley San Fernando Valley
 Beverly Hills Malibu/Santa Monica South Bay/Beach Cities Rowland Heights Glendale/Pasadena
 Antelope Valley Crescenta Valley Santa Clarita Valley Gardena Torrance Hacienda Heights Other _____

 I Certify that I am at least 18 years of age, a United States Citizen and a Registered Voter in Los Angeles County Other County _____

College Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Voter I.D. #: _____ NEW Affidavit # _____
 Business Pct. # _____ Assigned Pct # _____ City _____
 Home Pct. # _____
 Position: Inspector / Clerk _____ SUP # _____

FAX: 562-651-1035 OR 562-462-1073

OR turn in completed application to your College Professor or College Pollworker Coordinator

SAMPLE*Adapted from Cleveland State University Faculty Senate***Approved Excused Absences for College Student Pollworkers*****Whereas:***

- The [XYZ Election Jurisdiction] is undertaking a major effort to recruit new persons into serving as pollworkers for the November Elections, with over [#] persons needed to qualify and serve as poll workers;
- The work of a pollworker has become more demanding than in past years due to new technology at the polls, new laws governing voter ID, provisional ballots, and disabled voter access, and the correct implementation requires analytic, highly competent pollworkers; and
- Students have expressed worry about whether they can serve as a pollworker without academic penalties– thus greatly reducing the number of students who will be willing to serve as pollworkers;

It is proposed that the Faculty Senate enact the following as an amendment to the Missed Class Policy:

Pollworker Excused Absence Policy

1. [ABC College/University] faculty are required to excuse from class attendance and from any assignments, quizzes and other work otherwise due during the period including the day (November x) before the General Election from 6:00 pm through Election Day (November xx), all students who serve in any of the official pollworker and polling support positions (which can include, e.g., polling place translators, technical support for e-voting machines) for the [XYZ Election Jurisdiction].

2. Any [ABC College/University] student who desires to exercise the excused pollworker service option must:

- (a) have officially applied and been selected to serve;
- (b) be scheduled for or have completed training by xx weeks before Election Day;
- (c) inform the faculty whose classes are affected in writing (electronically or in whatever manner the particular faculty member requests) no later than by October xx;
- (d) arrange to make up any course work or quizzes due to their absence; and
- (e) provide official documentation to the faculty member at a later appropriate point of having served as a pollworker or in a polling support position. At all times the responsibility for making up coursework rests with the student.

Did You Know?

Not having enough poll workers can force a polling site to close or lead to delays at the voting booth. According to election officials, the result could prevent people from exercising their right to vote.



You Can Make

The Difference!

BE A POLL WORKER!

Help North Texas college program Vote

Election Day is November 2, 2004

Sign up to become part of the *Help North Texas Vote College Program* and take on a larger role in the United States election process. The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy, and assuring access in all our communities is critical. Because of this, it is imperative that the election process runs smoothly for everyone. A large part of this includes the people that actually work the polls on the Election Day. By signing up on the *HNTV* website, you will provide your name to the county in which you are registered to vote, and if there is a need for poll workers in that county, it is very possible that you will be called upon to serve on Election Day, November 2, 2004.

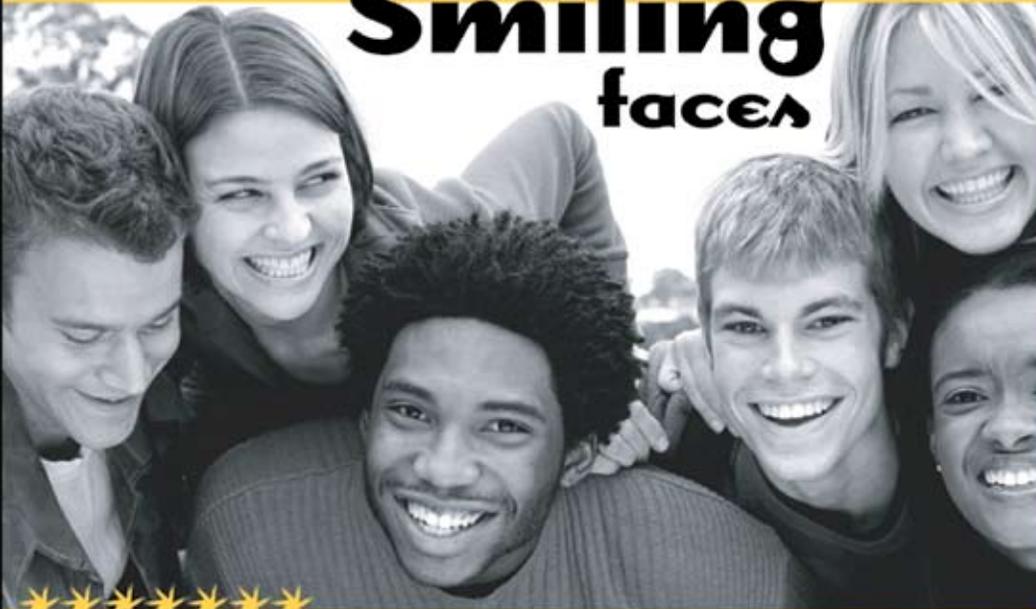
The Need For Poll Workers

The number of poll workers serving on Election Day is consistently not adequate, according to election officials in Dallas, Denton, and Tarrant counties. While an inadequate number of poll workers is a significant problem of its own, an added burden results from the lack of bilingual poll workers. All three aforementioned counties have a need for bilingual workers that includes both Spanish and Vietnamese-speaking workers.

www.helpnorthtexasvote.com

To those who vote, we salute you. But for some, casting a ballot isn't enough. They are America's poll workers, and they make our votes count.

polling places need Smiling faces



Our polling places need your smiling faces — nearly two million of them. So join a new generation of poll workers, and help ensure America's voice is heard.

To learn more, visit www.eac.gov or www.goldenkey.org



Contact your area Golden Key chapter today

"Work The Polls" is part of the Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program, brought to you through a grant given by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission to the Golden Key International Honour Society.



WE NEED YOU!



Grand Rapids Community College and the City of Grand Rapids College Pollworker Program

The GRCC Job Placement Center will be working, in conjunction with The City of Grand Rapids, to recruit up to 200 college students to work as pollworkers for the **November 7th state election. Students will be paid \$125** for the assignment and will be required to attend a paid training session prior to Election Day (after applying, you will be notified of the available training sessions).



To learn more, visit:
The Job Placement Center, Room 103 Main • Phone: (616) 234-3738 • E-mail: callen@grcc.edu

www.grcc.edu/collegepollworkers





MEDIA RELEASE (Example)

CONTACT: Name
Phone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Date

COLLEGE POLLWORKERS NEEDED!

**Joint Recruitment Effort Between
Grand Rapids Community College
and Grand Rapids City Clerk**

**Kick-Off Event
Wednesday, September 13, 2006
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Bostwick Commons**

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) and the Grand Rapids City Clerk are recruiting college students for appointment as election workers for the upcoming General Election to be held on November 7, 2006. The recruitment officially kicks off during GRCC's "Welcome Week" event on September 13th between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. located on the Bostwick Commons. Interested students can also go to www.grcc.edu/collegepollworkers or contact the Job Placement Center directly.

The college pollworker program is an important collaboration, leading the nation in a growing interest to use college students as pollworkers. The City will collaborate with Grand Rapids Community College in the development of a plan for recruitment and training of college students for appointment as election workers. The partnership is designed to motivate students to be involved the electoral process.

GRCC students interested in applying for appointment as a pollworker must be registered voters in Kent County, complete an application form, and attend a mandatory training class. Students appointed will be paid \$125 for election day pay and \$7.50 per hour for the training class.

City Clerk Terri Hegarty said that "My hope is that the college students will vote and adopt a lifelong commitment to civic involvement if they are encouraged and integrated into the democratic system at an early age."

Chris Allen, Coordinator of Student Employment at GRCC, stated that "We are very excited to provide our students with this great opportunity to get involved in the voting process and to assist our community on this wonderful project."

#####

**Sample Letter to Faculty
Seeking Their Involvement in a College Pollworker Program**

Dear Professor ____:

As you may be aware, our college/university has initiated a partnership with the local Elections Office. We are working together to recruit and train college students to work as Election Day workers. Our local Elections Office faces a shortage of qualified pollworkers every year and we feel confident our students could fill those positions while gaining important hands-on experience in the democratic process.

The job of a pollworker is often underrated and misunderstood. They actually exercise critical powers in their service as the gate keepers for the entire election system on Election Day. They are the first-line protection for election legality and for voter franchise protection. They decide:

- whether a voter's signature is sufficiently like the poll registry to permit the person to vote
- whether a person's ID is deemed sufficient for casting a vote [*only in those states with ID requirements*]
- what kind of ballot will be given to the voter ("regular" or "provisional")
- whether to eject persons from the polling place for voter intimidation tactics
- how to help move lines along so that voters can vote efficiently
- how to set up and monitor the voting machines for privacy and security
- whether to help voters in other ways, such as by directing them to the proper precinct tables

We would like your assistance in recruiting students to these positions. Research has shown that hearing about the opportunity to be a pollworker in a class and having a professor endorse the idea is one of the best ways to attract students. If you are amenable, we would like to schedule a 15 minute presentation to your Government 101 class the week of September 15-19. In that presentation we will describe the opportunity and its requirements and provide applications to interested students.

In addition, if you are interested, we would like to discuss ways that you can integrate the pollworker experience into your class as an extra credit assignment, a service learning opportunity, or even as part of your curriculum. Across the country, professors are beginning to see the value of incorporating this real life experience into their class plans. Your participation would greatly strengthen our recruitment efforts.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Sincerely,

Student Political Participation
Roxbury Community College (Boston, MA)
Instructor: Ron Bell, Dunk the Vote Leadership Institute

Course Description:

This one-credit course was designed to encourage and develop student voter participation and political activism. Students attended four seminars on the political process and were required to attend a pollworker training workshop and serve as pollworkers on Election Day. They were also encouraged to recruit other students to attend film viewings and events with young role model speakers who are actively involved in local politics and voter activism. They had several writing and speaking assignments.

In addition to the knowledge gained of government and the political process, students acquired skills in writing, public speaking, and social interaction. The course afforded an opportunity to discuss issues relevant to students' lives and to develop civic activist skills by working as a pollworker and recruiting other students.

Seminars:

1. Voting and Democracy: Analysis of the Presidential Election of 2004
Panel discussion focusing on the attention given to 1) voter registration; 2) appealing to candidate constituencies; 3) the political processes and the inauguration of new voting technology; 4) how these factors affected the outcome. Potential panelists included local politicians and government officials.
2. Voting and the Constitution: Your Elected Officials
Panel discussions with local officials on:
 - Connecting with a local constituency in the age of media and Internet
 - The decision making process in your office – who takes responsibility?
 - Crisis and special event handling – is there a defined plan?
3. What Does Our Vote Accomplish: The Power of the Vote
Focus on “How People Vote,” including what motivates voter to go to the polls and what they connect with in a candidate. Episodes of the Showtime mini-series, “The American Candidate,” will be shown and analyzed.
4. Current Issues and Voting: Connecting with the Issues
Viewing and analysis of “American Candidate” but focus on how voters base their choice on “character” versus “the issues.” Discussion seeks to define how voters determine a candidate’s position on the issues and how they filter those perceptions through their own personal values and activism.

Sample Attachment for Student Applications

- Placed
- Attended training
- Served

How did the student hear about the pollworker opportunity? _____

If placed:

- Where? _____

If not placed:

- Did not attend training
- Ineligible – registered in other jurisdiction
- Ineligible – citizenship
- Ineligible – not registered
- Ineligible – not affiliated with political party
- Applied late
- Unable to contact
- Not placed for another reason

If did not serve:

- Did not attend training
- No show
- Cancelled

Reason cancelled or no show:

- Transportation issue
- Conflicting class schedule
- Conflicting work schedule
- Don't know/no reason given

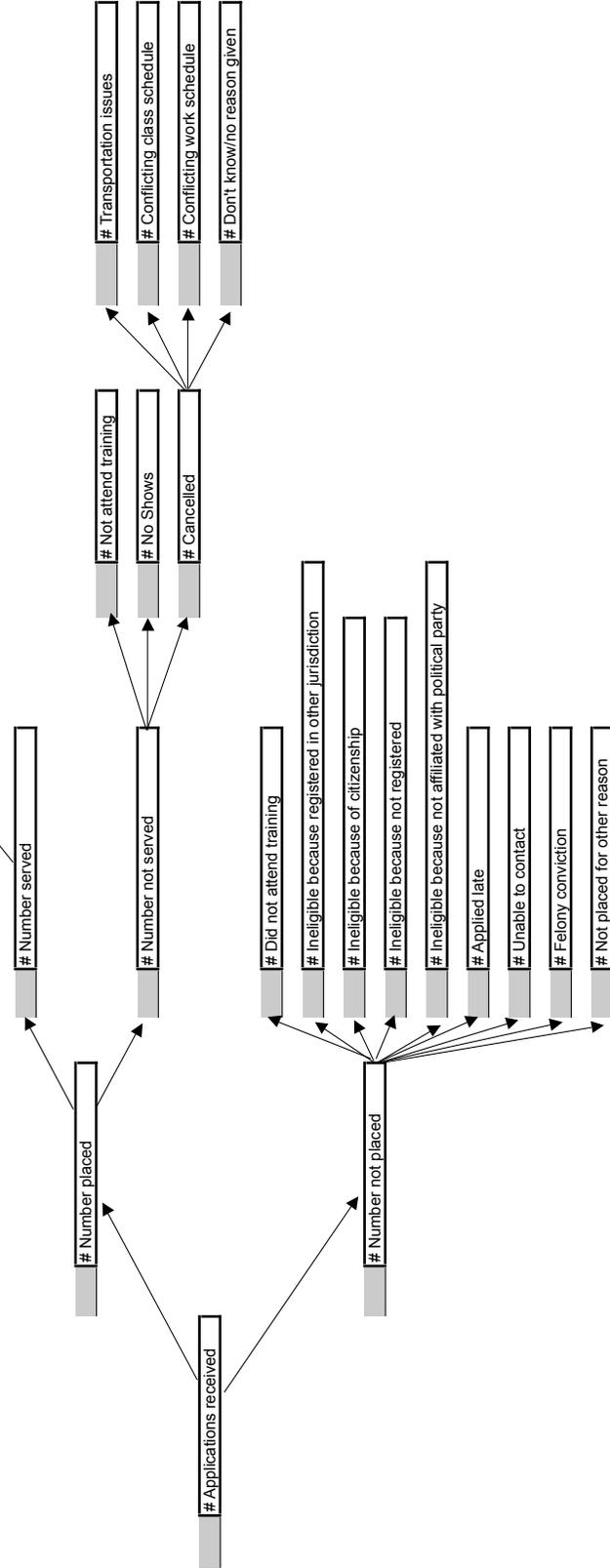
Sample Worksheet for Tracking Participation

Name of College/University: _____

Please fill in the highlighted boxes with the number of students in that category.

Please list the different roles or jobs the students played, and the number of each:

Precinct worker
Other roles:



LEGAL CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF POLL WORKERS

For complete explanations of legal criteria and state statute citations, please refer to individual state sheets available on the EAC website.
 State policies and laws may change frequently.

*** Residency:** Different States require different levels of residency to serve as a poll worker. That is, some require residency at the precinct where you serve, some require residency at the county level, and a few only require that you be a resident of the state. Residency generally refers to the place where you are registered to vote.

**** Duration of Term:** Often poll workers are qualified to work for the term indicated, but not required to work.

******* These states did not verify all of the information listed. Some may have internally contradictory statutes that require interpretation.

N.I. = No Information Available

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Alabama	Yes	18	Precinct Resident	Affiliated given preference.	Parties submit nominees by 45 days before election, board appoints between 20 and 15 days before election, or 25 days before primary	N.I.	N.I.	Yes, if voting machines are used	Electronic Voting Specialists
Alaska	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Youth Vote Ambassador program.	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from District, then choose from State	Affiliated given preference	Party committees nominate by 4/15 of election year. If no nominations, then supervisor appoints	Term specified through agreement	N.I.	No, but must swear oath to perform duties	Youth Vote Ambassador for 16 - 17 year old students. Will be trained and compensated
Arizona***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	No affiliation required for Clerks and in non-partisan elections. Affiliation required for Inspectors, Marshals and Judges	Board of Supervisors appoints clerks and party nominees. Parties submit nominees 90 days before election	Election	N.I.	Yes	16 - 17 year olds with election officer supervision, if trained and have parent's permission

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Arkansas	Yes	18 or student in Election Page program	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	Affiliated given preference	Political party commissioners on county board designate nominees at least 20 days before election	N.I.	Yes	Yes, for some election officials	Election Pages (volunteers under 18); and College Students selected as election officials by county board in cooperation with student government
California***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	State Resident	No affiliation required	Election board appoints. Parties may submit nominees 90 days before election	N.I.	Varies by County	Varies by county; legislation for uniform standards pending	Translators; and 16 - 17 year old students, with at least 2.5 GPA and in good standing. Will be compensated
Colorado***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident given preference, then choose from State	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County appoints party nominees submitted 10 days after caucus, and appoints unaffiliated the last Tuesday in April of even years	Two years starting last Tuesday in May of even years	N.I.	Yes	16 - 17 year old students if in good standing, trained and have parent's permission. Will be compensated
Connecticut***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Town or District Resident	Affiliated given preference	Registrar appoints. If insufficient numbers, may appoint from outside geographic area or political party	Election	Yes for voting machine tenders and checkers	Yes	Voting Machine Mechanics do not have to be registered voters; 16 - 17 year old students if resident, trained & have parent permission.
Delaware***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	District resident given preference then choose from County. College students who are Delaware residents may serve in school's county.	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	Election officers appoint from party nominees submitted by 2/1. County government may recruit students.	One year from 4/1	N.I.	Yes	16 - 17 year old students if Delaware citizens and have parent's permission

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
District of Columbia***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Youth Pollworker Program	District Resident	No affiliation required	N.I.	N.I.	Yes, but only for students	Yes	Roles available for H.S. & College students 16 and up who are residents but not qualified registered electors. Part time possible.
Florida***	Yes	18 or 17 and pre-registered	County Resident	No affiliation required	County Supervisor of Elections appoints election board members at least 20 days before election	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	N.I.
Georgia	No	16	County resident or resident of Municipality for purely municipal elections	No affiliation required	Superintendent appoints. Will consider nominees of political parties for appointments	None	N.I.	Yes, except for special elections	None. Students 16 and up may be appointed as part of normal, standard practice.
Hawaii	Yes ¹	18 or 16 if insufficient registered voters available	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from District, then choose from unregistered	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	Chief election officer appoints from party nominees submitted at least 60 days before election.	N.I.	N.I.	Yes for new workers, and maybe for others	N.I.
Idaho	No	None or 17 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	No residency requirements, but in practice, Precinct residents given preference	Affiliated given preference	Precinct committeemen nominate. If numbers insufficient, County clerk nominates.	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	No more than two 17 year old students may be appointed per precinct. Must be U.S. citizens and under supervision of election board member

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Illinois **	Yes	18 or 17 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Precinct resident, but one judge in each precinct may be from County	Affiliation required	County board appoints from party nominees submitted 10 days before Board's annual meeting	Two years	N.I.	Yes	17 year old students, U.S. citizens, in good standing, 3.0 GPA, parent's and principal's permission, having completed training
Indiana	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Assistant Poll Clerk statute	County resident	Affiliation required; College student exception: Non-partisan roles available if parties fail to make nominations	County board appoints from party nominees submitted at least 21 days before election.	Election	Yes, except for Inspector position	Yes, for Inspectors. County may require for others	College students, registered to vote, may serve as non-partisan workers if political parties miss deadline for nominations
Iowa	Yes	18	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County. Students may choose home or school residence for registration & voting.	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	Commissioner appoints from party nominees submitted at least 20 days before election.	Usually two years	N.I.	Yes, for some election officials	Student Election Assistant legislation is pending
Kansas	Yes	18	Voting Area or County resident	Affiliation required	County election officer appoints from party nominees submitted at least 30 days before primary or general election.	N.I.	N.I.	County must provide training (unclear if required)	One 16 to 18 year old may serve on each election board
Kentucky	Yes	18 prior to next election	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	Affiliation required, unless emergency appointment is necessary	County board appoints from party nominees submitted before 3/15 each year.	One year, except for minors who serve for election	N.I.	Yes, unless excused for illness or other emergency	One 17 year old, turning 18 prior to next election, may serve on each election board

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Louisiana	Yes	18 prior to next election	Precinct residents given preference, then choose from Ward, then from Parish. Students may choose either home or school residence for registration & voting..	Affiliation required	Parish board chooses certified candidates on 20th or 29th day before election. Rules may be different for Elections held within one year of declared emergency.	One year or one election, depending on role	No	Yes	17 year old students, not voters but otherwise qualified, may serve in precinct where will be registered.
Maine***	Yes	18, but may consider 17 year old student for position	Resident of municipality, unless a nonresident municipal clerk is acting as a pollworker	No affiliation required for Officers Affiliation required for Clerks	Municipality appoints Officers. Officers appoint clerks from party nominations submitted by 4/1 of election year.	Two years for clerks	No	Secretary of State encourages biennial training	17 year old students may be appointed and may perform all the functions of an election clerk.
Maryland	Yes	18 or 17 if determined qualified	County resident given preference, then choose from State	Affiliated given preference	Election Directors appoint; local boards approve. Equal numbers from major parties required.	18 Months	Yes, except for Chief Judge	Yes	Montgomery County recruits Spanish speaking judges per Voting Rights Act; 17 year olds who are qualified.
Massachusetts	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Commonwealth resident	Affiliated given preference, but some spots reserved for unaffiliated	Election commission or clerk appoints from party nominees submitted by 6/1 each year.	One year, starting in September	N.I.	No, but training legislation is pending	Two 16 - 17 year old students may serve if Commonwealth residents, have parent's and principal's permission, and are trained.
Michigan	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident	Affiliation required	Board appoints from party nominees submitted by 5/15, but individuals must also file personal applications.	Election	N.I.	Yes	One 16 - 17 year old county resident, not voter but otherwise qualified, may serve but not as chairperson.

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Minnesota	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from State	Affiliation required	County auditor appoints from party nominees submitted by 7/1 of the election year.	N.I.	Yes, except for head judge	Yes, but if under 100 voters only 2 judges need to be trained	16 + year old students appointed without party affiliations. Must be county residents, and have training and parent's permission.
Mississippi***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident	No affiliation required in general & special elections. Affiliation required for primaries.	County appoints for general and special elections. Parties appoint for primaries.	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	16 + year old students, enrolled in high school or college, recommended by school official, resident of municipality, trained and under supervision.
Missouri	Yes	18 or 15 pursuant to Youth Election Participant statute	Resident of Jurisdiction, unless jurisdiction's election authority gives special permission to work in another jurisdiction	Affiliated given preference	Election authority or Board appoints party nominees, and from its own list of unaffiliated and minor parties.	Election, or term coincident with Board's term	Yes	Yes	15 - 17 year old students who show age appropriate academic ability and demeanor and are of good repute.
Montana	Yes	18	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	Affiliation required	County appoints from party nominees submitted at least 45 days before primary election in even-numbered years.	Serve until other judges appointed	Yes, if three judges present at all times	Yes	"Election worker" is individual designated to perform election support duties and can be youth.
Nebraska	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	In places with Commissioners - County resident. In places without Commissioners - Precinct resident given preference	Affiliated given preference	Election Commissioner or County clerk appoint, dividing appointees along major party lines.	2 years or four elections, depending on size of County	Yes	Yes	One 16 - 17 year old may serve in each precinct if meets all requirements other than age and registration. Considered unaffiliated.

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Nevada***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Election Officer Trainee statute	County resident	Affiliated given preference	County appoints party nominees submitted by 60 days before election.	Day before election until contest deadline expires	N.I.	Yes for chairmen and others using mechanical systems	One 16 - 17 year old high school student may serve in each precinct if trained. Considered unaffiliated.
New Hampshire***	Yes	18 or 17 pursuant to Assistant Election Official statute	Voting District (Precinct) resident	No affiliation required for assistant moderators and assistant town clerks. Affiliation required for Inspectors.	Moderators (elected) & Town Clerks appoint assistants. Parties appoint inspectors.	Inspectors: two years; Assistants: election	N.I.	Training available, but may not be required	17 year olds may be appointed to central polling place in state elections as assistant election officials.
New Jersey	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County board appoints from individual applications in consultation with county parties.	One year starting 4/25	Yes	Yes, every two years	Translators of Hispanic origin and fluent in Spanish; 16 - 17 year olds if in school or graduated and have parent's permission
New Mexico***	Yes	18	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	Affiliation considered in effort to maintain equal political party representation	County appoints party nominees submitted by 30 days before appointments. Also appoints from non-party lists.	Two years	N.I.	Yes	Messengers and Translators
New York***	Yes	18	County resident, or for New York City: City resident	Affiliation required	County appoints from party nominees submitted by 5/1 each year. Also may appoint from own inspector list.	One year or partial unexpired term from 7/15 - 7/14	Legislation Pending	Yes, every three years	Translators, information clerks and door clerks may not need to be registered. Legislation pending to allow student poll clerks.
North Carolina	Yes	18 or 17 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Precinct resident given preference	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County board appoints party nominees submitted at least 5 days before the 3rd Tuesday in August.	Two years, unless substituting precinct resident	No	Yes	Part-time Assistants; 17 year old students if county residents, with exemplary record, principal recommendation & parental consent

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North Dakota	Yes	18 or 16 if in school or graduated	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from legislative district, then from county	Affiliation required for judges and clerks, but inspectors may be unaffiliated.	District party chairs appoint judges & clerks by submitting names 21 days before election.	Inspectors serve until successor named	N.I.	Yes	Two 16 -17 year old high school or college students (or graduates) per election board. Must be in good standing & precinct residents.
Ohio***	Yes	18 or 17 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident	Affiliation required.	County boards appoint by majority vote on 9/15 each year. Presiding judge chosen from dominant party.	One year starting 9/15	No	Yes	Additional officials (affiliation required) and Interpreters; One 17 year old H.S. senior per precinct if county resident & declare party affiliation
Oklahoma	Yes	18	County resident	Affiliation required for judges and clerks, but inspectors may be unaffiliated	County election board appoints from party nominees submitted every 4 years beginning 6/15/75.	Judges & Clerks - 4 years; Inspectors until resign or removed	N.I.	Yes, every two years	Assistants, but must meet same requirements as precinct officials.
Oregon Oregon is a "Vote-by-Mail" state, and therefore uses very few pollworkers.	Yes ²	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident	No affiliation required	County clerk appoints, and political parties may file objections which must be considered.	2 Years	N.I.	Yes	One non-electer county resident may serve in each precinct, but not as Chair. If the non-electer is 16 - 18 year old, must have a valid work permit.
Pennsylvania***	Yes	18 or 17 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Election District resident	Judges & Inspectors elected at municipal elections	Election for Judges and Inspectors. Inspectors appoint clerks and machine operators.	Judges & Inspectors - 4 years; clerks & operators - no term	Yes	Yes for Judges, Inspectors, Operators. No for Clerks.	Overseers; Two 17 year old students per precinct, county residents, with principal's approval and parent's consent. May not be judge or inspector.
Rhode Island***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Trainee statute	City, town, senatorial or representative district, or voting district resident.	Elected in some jurisdictions. In others, affiliation considered in effort to maintain equal political party representation.	Methods for choosing pollworkers differ greatly by jurisdiction	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	Election Inspector and Translators; 16 year old student trainees compensated, if municipal residents, academically acceptable, with parent permission.

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
South Carolina	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	County resident, or resident of adjoining county.	No affiliation required, except to limited degree in primary elections.	Commissioners appoint. For primaries, appoint from party nominees submitted 45 days before primary.	None	N.I.	Yes	One 16- 17 year old student assistant for every two pollworkers, if trained
South Dakota	Yes	18	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from County	Affiliation Required	County auditor appoints from party nominees submitted at least 45 days prior to election	N.I.	No	Available, but may not be required	N.I.
Tennessee	Yes	17	State house legislative district or County resident, depending on pollworker roll and government organization.	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County commission appoints from party nominees submitted 30 days before appointments made.	N.I.	N.I.	Yes, but sometimes waived, except for inspectors	N.I.
Texas	Yes	18	If judge, precinct resident given preference, then choose from county. If clerk, county or subdivision resident.	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County appoints judges from party nominees submitted in July. Presiding judge appoints clerks from party nominees.	Usually one year starting on 8/1	Yes, for clerks	Available, but may not be required	Translators Fluent in English and Spanish
Utah	Yes	18	County resident for general and primary elections. Jurisdiction resident for local elections	Affiliation required in general and primary elections, unless insufficient workers available	County appoints from party nominees submitted by April 1 of even-numbered years. Municipalities nominate & appoint.	Two years, but may not serve at every election during term	N.I.	Training being developed	Many requirements for election judges will change contingent on pending legislation

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Vermont	Yes, unless approved 16 or 17 year old assistant	18 or 16 pursuant to Youth Election Assistant statute	Voting District resident; Exception for larger municipalities with combined voting districts	Affiliation considered in effort to maintain equal political party representation	Town clerk is generally presiding officer, and board of civil authority appoints assistants.	Assistants serve for term of election	Possible. Hours set by presiding officer.	Yes	May be elected to Board of Civil Authority that administers elections; 16 - 17 year olds may serve if supervised.
Virginia***	Yes	18	Precinct resident given preference, then choose from Commonwealth	Affiliation generally required "if feasible." Equal political party representation required, unless there are an odd number on Board.	Electoral board appoints party nominees submitted 10 days before 2/1 each year.	No more than 3 years	Yes, except for chief and assistant chief officers	Yes	N.I.
Washington	No. Must be qualified major party member or trained	None	Precinct Resident	Affiliation required, unless insufficient workers available	County auditor appoints from party nominees submitted by 6/1, or from off the list if there are insufficient nominees.	Election	N.I.	Yes, but may be waived for those with experience	N.I.
West Virginia	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Election Official Trainee statute	County resident for county-wide elections. Resident of municipality for municipal elections	Affiliation required for two of three positions in a precinct	County appoints 2 workers from party nominees submitted 56 days before election, and then selects the 3rd worker.	Election	N.I.	Yes	16 - 17 year olds who have met the requirements other than being registered voters.
Wisconsin	No ³	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	Ward or election district resident. In emergency may fill vacancies from residents of other wards or districts.	Affiliation required unless insufficient workers available	Governing body or Board appoints from party nominees submitted by 11/30 of even-numbered years.	Two years starting 12/1. Must serve at every election.	N.I.	Yes	Special election deputies for registration and absentee voting; 16 - 17 year old students with 3.0 GPA and parent's permission.

States and Territories	Must be Registered Voter in State	Age Requirement to Serve as Pollworker	Residency Requirement to Serve as Pollworker*	Political Party Affiliation Required	Nomination Process to Become a Pollworker	Duration of Term Required for Service**	Part-Time Available	Training Required	Alternative Positions
Wyoming	Yes	18 or 16 if otherwise qualified as an elector	County resident	Affiliation required unless insufficient workers available	County appoints first from party nominees, then from municipal nominees, submitted by the 3rd Tuesday of May.	Two years or until successor appointed	N.I.	Yes	16 - 17 year olds may serve, but no more than one under 18 in precinct.
American Samoa	Yes	18	District resident given preference, then choose from outside the district	No affiliation required	Chief election officer appoints from public's applications and list of local government officials.	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	N.I.
Guam***	Yes	18 or 16 pursuant to Student Election Assistant statute	District resident	No affiliation required	Election Commission appoints not less than sixty days prior to election	N.I.	N.I.	Yes	No more than two 16 - 17 year old students per precinct if seniors and in good standing with at least a 2.5 GPA
Puerto Rico***	Yes	18 by next general election	Election district resident (Must be in possession of Elector Identification Card.)	Affiliation with party, candidate or organization participating in election, is required.	Local elections commissioners (political party representatives) appoint pollworkers.	Election	No	Yes	Pollworkers are not compensated.
U.S. Virgin Islands	Yes	18	District resident	Affiliation considered in effort to maintain equal political party representation.	Board appoints, no later than 20 days before election. Parties have right to submit nominations.	N.I.	N.I.	N.I.	N.I.

1. In Hawaii, the statute allows unregistered voters to be pollworkers if there are no registered voters available. However, any unregistered workers would have to meet all of the qualifications making them eligible to register.
2. One unregistered Oregon citizen may serve on each board.
3. A Wisconsin citizen does not have to be registered to vote to serve as a pollworker, but they must still meet all of the qualifications making them eligible to register.