



Quick Start

Management Guide

September 2006



for **Poll Workers**

The Quick Start Management Guide for Poll Workers is a snapshot of processes and procedures for local election administrators to use for recruiting, training, and retaining poll workers. It is a guide that assists election officials with one of their most challenging tasks—managing the people resources required to conduct an election. A comprehensive Guidebook for Poll Workers is under development and will be released in 2007.

Reaching Out to Potential Poll Workers

- Advertise the need for poll workers by posting a sign-up sheet at polling places and early voting locations.
- Use your office Web site by posting an online, interactive poll worker job application and job description. Partner with area businesses/corporations, city/county governments, chambers of commerce, etc., to post a link to your online recruitment application on their Web site.
- Use technology by developing an e-mail blast to reach employees at city/county government and area businesses/corporations.
- Use existing staff and poll workers as an army of recruiters. Ask them to talk to friends and relatives to encourage them to become poll workers.
- Create an informational brochure to distribute at speaking engagements, make available at front counters, insert in mailings, etc.
- Advertise your need in area neighborhood association newsletters, city/chamber/school district newsletters, church publications, multilingual media publications, etc. Incorporate your need for poll workers with other election advertising needs. Example: *Partner with your area cable public access channel to run public service announcements focusing on opportunities for poll workers.*

- Design and print recruitment posters. Display them at area grocery stores, in libraries, at movie theaters, at mass transportation systems, etc.
- Reach out to the media with the specifics for the neighborhoods where you need poll workers—how many, etc.
- Develop community recruiting partnerships:
 - City/County Government Employees—Work with local government management and elected officials to develop a program that encourages department heads to reassign some of their employees to the Election Office on Election Day.
 - High School Students—Establish a recruitment effort by contacting your local high school principals. If State law permits, assign at least one student to each polling place.
 - College Students—Contact college faculty at area universities and community colleges to develop a college poll worker program. College students could also be assigned to assist with pre-election operational needs and may also be available to assist as troubleshooters/rovers on Election Day.
 - Civic Organizations—Reach out to local civic groups and other membership organizations to recruit their membership to work at the polls. Promote this program by suggesting that members use working

at the polls as a “fundraiser” with participating members voluntarily donating their stipends/earnings back to their organization or to the civic organization of their choice.

- Corporations and Businesses—Reach out to companies and businesses to incorporate poll worker service as part of their ongoing community service program that encourages employees to serve as poll workers on Election Day. Promote this program by suggesting they use working at the polls as a “fundraiser” with participating employees voluntarily donating their stipends/earnings back to the civic organization of their choice.

Reviewing Your Training Program

- Review performance and feedback from past elections to determine if poll workers need better training in certain areas of the operation. Use this information to establish priorities for reviewing/updating training techniques.
- Evaluate your Election Day polling place supplies. Are they all necessary, or have changes in procedures or voting systems made some of them obsolete? Are they easy to find on Election Day, or is there a better way to pack them? Example: *Consider asking a group of poll workers to meet and critique supplies and forms.*
- Review the training manual. Does it need to be revised to reflect changes in

procedures or new equipment? Is the information clearly presented? Ask a team of new poll workers to read the manual and provide feedback.

- Consider conducting separate training for experienced and new poll workers and/or specific poll worker positions.
- Determine what materials poll workers will take home from training. Example: *manual, training video/CD, quizzes, scenarios*.
- Determine what equipment and supplies you need for training. If you are implementing new voting equipment, you will need a large number of voting machines that can be used for practice (in “demonstration mode”) in training. If you are changing forms or the format of materials, such as the provisional ballot application, the voter list, or the precinct map, make sure to have the revised version available for training.

Updating Your Training Techniques

- Don’t re-invent the wheel. Visit other jurisdictions and attend their training sessions. Invite other jurisdictions, the League of Women Voters, or adult education experts to come to your training event to provide feedback. Share ideas with other jurisdictions that use the same election technology.
- Use trainers who know the subject and are experienced in training techniques, or develop a program to “train the trainer.” Training and teaching are different

educational approaches. Example: *A schoolteacher may not know training techniques.*

- Use visual aids throughout your training program. Create poster-sized signs to reinforce the most critical information made in training. Post copies of these signs around the training room. Example: *One poster might remind poll workers to take out the memory cartridges from each voting machine at the end of election night. Another poster could remind them to make sure provisional voters sign the provisional ballot application. A third poster might remind them where to find troubleshooting information.*
- Remember to mirror Election Day throughout your training. That is, what the poll worker sees in training—the opening checklist, the list of voters, the paperwork, the job guides—should be exactly what the poll worker will see on Election Day.
- Develop job guides for all poll worker positions. These tools will remind poll workers how to perform a specific role or task at the polling place. Keep the guides short and simple—no more than one page—and easy to read. Use the job guides in training so poll workers know to look for them on Election Day and understand all the information. Example: *Create separate job guides for the poll worker who checks the list of voters, for the poll worker who assists voters whose names are not on the list or whose names are lost, for the poll worker who gives the voter a ballot, and for the poll worker who assists voters with filling out their ballot or voting on the machine.*

- Invite poll workers to provide feedback on the poll worker training program. Develop specific questions. Example: *“Did you feel confident in your ability to open the polls after training?”* or *“Did you encounter anything on Election Day that was not covered in training?”* and, of course, *“What can we do better?”*
- Incorporate real-life Election Day scenarios with your training program. Ask the participants to visualize and/or roleplay by responding with a solution for each scenario. Roleplaying provides an opportunity for the participants to “see” themselves in action on Election Day. Example: *Ask the poll workers to determine how to process a registered voter who has moved to an address in a different precinct.*
- Develop a refresher list of “20 Questions.” End the training session program by using the 20 Questions in an interactive Q&A session.

Ensuring Success on Election Day

- Provide a dedicated phone line for poll worker support on Election Day. Election staff should receive specialized training on how to respond to poll workers’ questions; for example, how to process a voter or how to open/close a voting machine. Train election staff to document each call and, if necessary, route a support technician to provide quick response to resolve a request for assistance.

- Make sure poll workers have immediate access to a dedicated telephone to place and receive support and emergency calls in their polling place on Election Day.
- Keep it simple. Provide easy-to-follow checklists for opening/closing the polls and flowcharts depicting how to process the various categories of voters (for example, provisional voters). To make it easy for the poll workers to remember important procedures, provide laminated instructional reminders in strategic locations within the supplies.
- Make sure poll workers have an easily accessible troubleshooting guide on Election Day.
- Establish an Election Day support program. Assign troubleshooters/rovers to visit polling places throughout the day to ensure the polling places are set up and open for business and that poll workers are processing the voters correctly. Troubleshooters/rovers can be trained election staff or members of service/voter education organizations. Alternatively, they can be government employees with technical expertise as field technicians who can be recruited from county and city information technology departments. Example: *Develop a checklist to ensure consistency at polling places throughout the county. As part of your Election Day audit, have the troubleshooter/rover and judge sign the checklist and poll worker performance evaluation records.*



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