

# Poll Worker Recruitment

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Recruiting sufficient numbers of poll workers has presented a challenge for administrators for several years. The 2020 coronavirus pandemic exacerbated the existing problem by taking out of commission the reliable crop of veteran poll workers, who, on average, are over 60 years old and at greater risk of suffering serious health complications from the coronavirus. Outside efforts, such as PowerthePolls.org, have stepped up to recruit a new army of poll workers, but there is still a need for emergency poll workers, bilingual poll workers, and additional recruits in many areas of the country.

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## I. Introduction

The pandemic has exacerbated election administrators' longstanding challenge of finding adequate numbers of people to staff the polls on election day and in early voting centers. In several of the 2020 primaries, states experienced poll worker shortages sufficient to prevent opening polling places or operating polling places at full capacity. In response, a massive recruitment effort, led by both governments and NGPs, began in late 2020 to try to place a new crop of poll workers for the general election. This report looks into some of the strategies and techniques employed to recruit poll workers for the 2020 election.

## II. Poll Worker Shortages

In each recent election even before the pandemic hit, officials in many jurisdictions have faced shortages of poll workers. A U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) survey in 2019 of all 50 states and 6,459 jurisdictions therein found that [more than two-thirds](#) reported it had been “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” to obtain a sufficient number of poll workers for the November 2018 general election. Only 15 percent of the jurisdictions indicated it had been “somewhat easy” or “very easy” to obtain sufficient poll workers. [According to a 2018 New York Times article](#), more than half of potential poll workers for Manhattan dropped out of the process between recruitment and Election Day and as many as 15 percent of poll workers failed to show up for duty on Election Day.

Results of the EAC's biennial surveys on election administration and voting suggest that the shortage of poll workers has been getting worse. In [2016](#), 64.6 percent of responding jurisdictions reported having a somewhat difficult or very difficult time recruiting poll workers; in 2018, that figure increased somewhat to 68.2 percent. In 2016, just over 30 percent of responding jurisdictions reported having a somewhat easy or very easy time; in 2018, that number dropped to 15 percent. As shown in the table below, the EAC's survey data show a steady increase in the number of jurisdictions responding “very or somewhat difficult.”

Table 1. Percentage of jurisdictions reporting difficulty in obtaining sufficient poll workers

| Year | “How difficult or easy was it for your jurisdiction to obtain a sufficient number of poll workers?” |                    |                            |               |           |
|------|---|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------|
|      | Very difficult  | Somewhat difficult | Neither difficult nor easy | Somewhat easy | Very easy |
| 2018 | 19.88%  | 48.32%             | 16.48%                     | 10.05%        | 5.27%     |
| 2016 | 13.88%  | 50.68%             | 4.24%                      | 19.00%        | 12.21%    |
| 2014 | 19.14%  | 32.82%             | 26.91%                     | 11.31%        | 9.82%     |
| 2012 | 18.96%  | 24.78%             | 27.63%                     | 15.86%        | 12.78%    |

Excludes jurisdictions responding “Not enough information to answer” or “Not applicable.”

Source: [U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#), compiled by the Stanford-MIT Project on a Healthy Election.

The difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of poll workers persists despite a [continued decrease](#) in the number of physical polling places and an increased use in alternative voting options, such as early in-person voting, absentee voting, and voting by mail. According to state responses to the EAC survey, in the last [three midterm elections](#), the total numbers of poll workers dropped from around 770,000 in 2010 to just under 640,000 in 2018. By contrast, in the [2012](#) and [2016](#) presidential election years, the total numbers of poll workers reported by responding states were 887,854 and 917,694, respectively.

The EAC [noted](#) that more populous jurisdictions have experienced greater challenges in recruiting poll workers. Of the 50 jurisdictions with the highest number of registered voters in 2016, 88 percent reported that it was “very difficult” or “somewhat difficult” to obtain a sufficient number of poll workers, significantly higher than the national average, and only 12 percent reported that it was “somewhat easy” or “very easy.” Just one week away from the 2018 primary, the [Board of Elections of New York](#) still needed to fill about 6,400 vacancies (out of approximately 34,000 poll workers needed).

Just shy of 60 percent of poll workers were over age 61 in 2018 according to an [EAC report](#), including just over a quarter of total poll workers who were over the age of 70. Those percentages were fairly consistent between [2016](#) and 2018. In some states, the proportion of poll workers who are 61 or older was [far greater](#). For example, in Maine, Montana, Oklahoma, and Alabama, around two-thirds or

more of poll workers in 2016 were 61 or older. In [Oklahoma](#), the average age of poll workers was 70 in 2016.

Poll workers under the age of 26 accounted for just under 10 percent of poll workers in 2016, and under 8 percent in 2018. In 2016, only five states [exceeded](#) the national average for poll workers 25 and younger. In California, roughly a quarter of poll workers were 25 and younger, and in Delaware, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., between 10 percent and 14 percent of poll workers were 25 and younger.

### III. The Pandemic's Impact on Poll Worker Recruitment

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic threatened to turn the aforementioned trends into a pressing problem. The threat of contracting or transmitting coronavirus has prompted many poll workers, especially older poll workers and members of other vulnerable populations, to stay home. As a result, many jurisdictions have been tasked with recruiting younger poll workers and first-time poll workers to fill staffing shortages. Understaffed polling places and poll closures sometimes translate into long waiting times to vote or more difficult access to polling places for voters without cars. Officials and other organizations have been implementing innovative solutions to ensure that polling places are adequately staffed and remain open through the early voting period and on Election Day itself.

#### A. Prospective Poll Workers Are Concerned About Safety

Unsurprisingly, poll workers are more likely to volunteer during the pandemic if they know that robust safety measures are in place. Professor Bob Stein of Rice University conducted a [survey](#) of respondents in Texas related to poll worker recruitment. The survey asked respondents about their willingness to serve under the various conditions and safety protocols. It found that approximately 85 percent of 1,800 respondents said they would serve if the polling station provided personal protective equipment (PPE), installed plexiglass screens, or if it imposed social distancing requirements. Approximately 70 percent of survey respondents said they would serve if the polling station was drive-thru, was outdoor, or restricted voting to one person at a time. Only about 50 percent of respondents said they would serve if the polling station used typical, pre-coronavirus voting protocols.

Table 2. Willingness of respondents to serve as poll workers given certain safety practices

|                           | All Poll Workers | Dems | Reps | Female | Male | Younger than 65 | Older than 65 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------|------|--------|------|-----------------|---------------|
| Distancing Requirements   | 86%              | 83%  | 90%  | 86%    | 87%  | 88%             | 85%           |
| Sanitized Gloves          | 84%              | 81%  | 86%  | 84%    | 84%  | 86%             | 81%           |
| Plexiglass Screens        | 86%              | 88%  | 83%  | 87%    | 83%  | 86%             | 85%           |
| PPE                       | 85%              | 84%  | 86%  | 86%    | 86%  | 88%             | 82%           |
| Drive-thrus               | 69%              | 75%  | 57%  | 72%    | 64%  | 72%             | 64%           |
| Normal Polling Conditions | 52%              | 40%  | 70%  | 48%    | 35%  | 54%             | 38%           |
| Outdoor Polling Location  | 68%              | 64%  | 72%  | 67%    | 69%  | 69%             | 56%           |
| One Person at a Time      | 72%              | 73%  | 80%  | 73%    | 67%  | 74%             | 69%           |

Source: Rice University poll, reported by [Houston Public Media](#).

Proper safety procedures can be effective in limiting the spread of coronavirus and the risk that poll workers contract the disease. In [South Korea’s April parliamentary election](#), for instance, the country instituted mandatory policies for social distancing and the use of masks, plastic gloves, and disinfectants in polling places. The country announced that not one case of coronavirus infection related to the election was reported during the 14-day incubation period, despite 21 million voters (including [those in quarantine](#)) having participated in the election.

## B. Many Poll Workers, Especially Those in High-Risk Groups, Will Opt to Stay Home During the 2020 General Election

The World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) agree that older adults are at the highest risk for severe illness if they contract coronavirus. As shown in Table 1, only 38 percent of voters over 65 years old would be likely to work the polls under “normal polling conditions” (with pre-coronavirus conditions lacking PPE or

distancing requirements), compared to 54 percent of those under 65 years old who would be willing to work under those same conditions.

Interviews with poll workers and election officials provide additional confirmation. Angie Copas, a clerk for the village of Mattoon, Wisconsin, who is at high risk for complications from coronavirus because of existing health conditions, [told](#) the New York Times: “I’m scared. . . . On Election Day, we’re exposed to [hundreds of in-person voters] and everyone they come across.” Joe Gloria, registrar of voters in Clark County, Nevada, [reported receiving calls from poll workers](#) who said they were unwilling to train for or work in the state primary this past spring.

Many states suffered from poll worker shortages during their primaries, and in the [17 states](#) that held primary and runoff elections in August, poll worker shortages were the most common in-person voting administration challenge.

- **Alaska:** The director of elections in Alaska announced on the eve of its August primary that [six polling locations](#) would not open because of inadequate staffing, forcing residents to vote at different locations or absentee at the last minute.
- **Arizona:** [Mohave County](#) officials had to staff 37 polling locations with “[skeleton crews](#)” of around 60 percent the typical number of poll workers this August.
- **Florida:** Eight percent of poll workers in Miami County declined to work in [Florida’s March primary](#), near the beginning of the pandemic.
  - **Pasco County:** Pasco County which had 1,043 workers for the 2018 general election, saw a “[hemorrhaging](#)” of poll workers, as [150](#) dropped out within a week after the first case of coronavirus was reported in the county.
  - **Pinellas County:** Pinellas County [faced a shortage](#) after more than 260 of its approximately 1,700 poll workers withdrew.
- **Kansas:** In Kansas, a lack of poll workers during the August primary caused closures that [forced some voters to travel further](#) to vote.
- **Kentucky:** In [Warren County](#), only 24 people had volunteered to work the polls three days before the June primary, compared to the usual 400 poll workers (the average age of a poll worker in Warren County pre-coronavirus was 72).
- **Illinois:** On the day before the March primary, Cook County [still had only about 5,600](#) workers—down significantly from the usual 8,000.

- **Michigan:** [In Michigan](#)'s August primary, some [Detroit](#) polling places opened late because of poll worker no-shows, a development election officials attributed to coronavirus safety concerns.
- **New York:** [New York](#) suffered a shortage of poll workers in its June primary as [large numbers](#) of its elderly poll workers declined to work. [Thousands](#) have also declined to work this November.
- **Ohio:** Officials in [Ohio](#) reported that for every poll worker the state signed up for its March primary, it was losing three poll workers due to concerns over public health.
- **Pennsylvania:** [Pennsylvania](#) saw massive poll worker shortages across the state for its June primary.
  - **Allegheny County:** [85 percent](#) of polling places in Allegheny County closed because of poll worker shortages.
  - **Philadelphia County:** [75 percent](#) of polling places in Philadelphia County closed because of poll worker shortages.
- **Wisconsin:** During Wisconsin's April primary shortly after the onslaught of coronavirus pandemic in the US, Milwaukee was relying on just under 30 percent of its typical number of poll workers — [400 of 1,400](#). Milwaukee's shortage was so severe that, out of its usual 180 polling places, [only five remained open](#) for in-person voting for the April primary.

## II. Approaches to Poll Worker Recruitment

Many groups and organizations have created innovative ways to help election officials recruit poll workers during the coronavirus pandemic. Some organizations, such as [Power the Polls](#) and [Poll Hero](#), emerged specifically to recruit poll workers for this election. Many existing groups focusing on youth voting and civic engagement, such as [Campus Vote Project](#), [Campus Compact](#), and [Students Learn Students Vote Coalition](#), expanded their work to include recruiting student poll workers. Businesses are also working with election officials to recruit poll workers, either by paying their workers if they become poll workers or by adopting a polling place. Several states have also worked with legal organizations to provide CLE (Continuing Legal Education) credits so lawyers can meet American Bar Association requirements while working as poll workers.

Many states worked to combat poll worker shortages during the summer primaries, by creating innovative policies and partnerships. Tennessee [launched a recruitment campaign](#) in June, and had

recruited nearly 3,000 poll workers by July. The governor of Arizona issued an executive order allowing state employees to take [civic leave](#) on Election Day to serve as poll workers, and Maricopa County trained [extra poll workers](#) to serve as substitutes for poll workers who did not show up for its August primary. Some jurisdictions in [Alaska](#) and [Wisconsin](#) offered higher pay to attract poll workers this summer. Michigan [partnered](#) with the Detroit Pistons basketball team, which encouraged its employees to work the polls in the August and November elections.

## A. Power the Polls

[Power the Polls](#) has recruited hundreds of thousands of potential poll workers across the country to help alleviate poll worker shortages. Power the Polls uses information from [WorkElections.com](#) to connect potential poll workers to election officials in over 4,000 jurisdictions via a single portal. Through Power the Polls, applicants are connected to their specific jurisdiction via follow-up email with [information](#) on poll worker compensation, hours, application links, and training and eligibility requirements. Power the Polls also partners with Secretary of State offices, local officials, and statewide NGOs to keep applicants up to date on training requirements and timing.

The organization created a heavy [social media](#) presence to recruit younger poll workers from Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok and received endorsements from major [influencers](#). Comedians on traditional media also promoted Power the Polls, including [The Daily Show with Trevor Noah](#) and [Full Frontal with Samantha Bee](#). The organization also has hundreds of national and local [partners](#) recruiting in their workforces, nonprofits, and other organizations. Since launching, Power the Polls has recruited around 700,000 applicants to work as poll workers in the November 2020 general election, blowing past their original goal of [250,000 poll workers](#). The organization also collaborates with corporate partners to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to election workers.

Power the Polls is also assisting election administrators in creating backup lists to fill last-minute vacancies, and recruiting rapid response poll workers up until Election Day on November 3. The organization's Election Day [planning guide](#) (Appendix B) and election administrator [hotline guide](#) (Appendix C) are attached to this memo.



## B. Recruiting Students

Some states have targeted their poll worker recruitment efforts at younger voters, whose risk from coronavirus are generally not as severe. Younger poll workers bring more than just immediate relief from the dwindling poll worker task force. [According to the EAC](#), young poll workers are generally more comfortable with new technology employed at many polling places; their energy and enthusiasm are often well received by older poll workers; and the experience they gain at the polls can stimulate interest in elections and help create lifelong voters.

Many states already had well-established recruitment programs tailored at younger demographics, even before the coronavirus pandemic. These programs (described below) can serve as a blueprint for states looking to enact or expand these critical recruitment efforts.

**High school students.** One approach to youth poll worker recruitment is to focus on high-schoolers. States and counties have used the following tactics to recruit high school students in particular.

- **Offer incentives.** Hamilton County, Ohio, developed a “Youth at the Booth” [program](#) that collaborated with teachers from various high schools to recruit high school seniors to work at the polls. Some high schools and teachers gave extra credit for civics, government, and social studies classes for students who volunteered. As part of this program, Hamilton County also created a Youth at the Booth “Challenge.” The school that provided the most students to work the polls was treated to a Pizza Thank You Party from a popular local restaurant.
- **Offer prizes.** [Poll Hero](#) specifically aims to recruit high school and college students through its points-based incentive program. Students can complete a number of [tasks](#) worth a fixed amount of points, from signing up to be poll workers to submitting photos of themselves working the polls. These points can be used for entries in a grand-prize raffle.
- **Lower barriers for volunteering.** Minneapolis runs a [“Student Election Judge” program](#). Although it focuses on recruiting bilingual high school students, its structure is broadly applicable to recruiting all high school students. As part of this program, school personnel guide students individually through the various parts of the poll worker application, including obtaining parental permission and handling scheduling issues. Some schools even provide

additional support, including childcare, transportation assistance, and box meals to bring to the Election Day work site.

**College students.** States, universities, and organizations have also crafted programs for college students. Many groups, such as [Campus Vote Project](#), [Campus Compact](#), and the [Students Learn Students Vote Coalition](#) have been recruiting students to work as poll workers in the 2020 election. Campus Compact and Campus Vote Project, for example, both created peer recruiter initiatives at campuses across the country.

Further, Suffolk University created a [comprehensive strategy manual](#) for recruitment programs at other colleges modeled off its own recruitment program.

- **Develop close working relationships between election officials, college recruitment programs and university administrators.** College recruitment programs can work with local election offices to gather information about key legal requirements and voter registration deadlines. [Martin County](#), Florida, built a “Work the Polls” video that various colleges displayed on their websites and distributed to their students. The program asked various college professors to help recruit students. One such professor, Robert Farley, a History Professor at Indian River State College, recruited 23 of his students to work the polls. The program coordinators in Martin County also sent emails and text messages to all eligible students, held voter registration drives on school campuses, and visited classrooms to present information and answer questions about working the polls
- **Reduce barriers to student participation.** College administrations can help by, among other things, granting excused absences for students who work the polls. Going beyond excusing students for missing class, high schools and universities can [cancel](#) class to increase civic participation and service. Several law schools, including [Stanford Law School](#) and [Northwestern Law School](#) have cancelled classes on Election Day as a means of protecting voting rights and increasing law student participation in the election process.
- **Incentivize students.** To incentivize students to work the polls, education institutions can offer course credit or extra credit for poll workers, or can allow students to meet service-learning opportunities through working the polls.

### C. Recruiting Bilingual Poll Workers

Election officials are frequently in need of poll workers who can speak languages other than English. [Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act](#) requires jurisdictions to provide ballots in languages other than English if more than 5 percent or 10,000 citizens of voting age are members of a single language minority and have difficulty speaking English. Many outside efforts, including [Power the Polls](#), have sought bilingual poll workers, especially in counties with large Spanish-speaking populations, such as Maricopa County in Arizona and Harris County in Texas.

California sought a legislative solution to the bilingual poll worker challenge. In 2013, the state passed [Assembly Bill 817](#) to expand the pool of bilingual poll workers by allowing both citizens and legal permanent residents to serve as poll workers. States and counties can also offer monetary incentives for bilingual poll workers. [Sonoma County, California](#), for example, offers an additional \$25 per day to those who speak certain languages. Finally, one innovative solution to providing language assistance to voters is [Houston's use of virtual translators](#), which links voters to virtual translators (via an iPad) at the polling station that can process 30 different languages.

### D. Recruiting from Businesses and Organizations

Although a number of [national companies](#) are encouraging or paying employees to be poll workers, employees at local businesses can also be a rich source of poll workers. Franklin County, Ohio, for example, implemented a “Champions of Democracy” [program](#) that recruited new poll workers from local businesses. Its “Champions” include seven of the top 30 largest Central Ohio employers and four Fortune 500 companies. Hamilton County, Ohio, also instituted a new program called [“Partners in Democracy”](#) to engage local businesses and agencies. The largest privately held business in Hamilton County was its inaugural corporate partner, and nine separate county government agencies also signed onto the effort. The following are some other ways counties can engage its organizations.

**“Adopt-a-polling place” programs.** Some jurisdictions recruit nonprofits and companies to “adopt a polling place” for certain days of the election. The Election Board provides the company with training and other necessary resources, and the company is responsible for supplying adequate staff for

the day. The following are some incentives that counties and states—including [Alaska](#), [California](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Florida](#), [Georgia](#), and [Nevada](#)—have used to attract organizations to adopt a polling place:

- **Publicity.** By displaying a sign with the organization’s name at the adopted polling place, the county can deliver goodwill publicity for the partner company or organization. A county can also add the participating company’s name to the county’s list of partners on the county’s website and can spotlight the organization during county board meetings.
- **Fundraising.** In some counties, participating companies and organizations can earn money for their fundraising projects or any charity of their choice. If the organization itself is a non-profit entity, counties can pay the participating organization directly, rather than paying the individual workers.

**Direct recruitment of organizations’ employees.** Counties can also engage organizations’ employees directly. For instance, in Franklin County, Ohio’s “Champions of Democracy” program (above), program administrators visited local businesses to promote the program. They encouraged participating businesses and agencies to give their employees a “day off for democracy” to allow them to serve as election workers. Companies can incentivize employees directly by offering to pay their employees to work as a poll worker. [Several companies](#), such as Old Navy and Target, have already pledged to pay their workers if they decide to sign up as poll workers. And election officials and law firms can urge bar associations to provide CLE credits for attorneys who agree to serve as poll workers. [South Carolina](#), [Ohio](#), [Virginia](#) and [Indiana](#), for example, will allow lawyers to put their hours worked as a poll worker towards their CLE requirements.

## E. Increasing Poll Worker Pay

Several jurisdictions found that additional poll worker pay increased the number of people willing to work elections. [In the Rice University survey of Texas cited above](#), 42 percent of voters said that payment was very important to them and their family in deciding whether to work an election. Poll workers in [Milwaukee](#) were given \$100 in hazard pay for the August primary. In some areas of [Connecticut](#), poll workers were also paid an additional \$100 in hazard pay to work the polls for the primary on August 11. [Philadelphia](#) raised poll worker pay as well, which may be partially responsible for the [increase](#) in poll worker recruitment since its June primary.

Some states have offered additional payment statewide to attract poll workers this year. [In Alabama](#), for example, state officials used emergency federal money allocated to pay poll workers an additional \$25 per day for working during the U.S. Senate runoff election in July. Alabama will also be offering extra pay to work the general election in November.

Pay increases may assist election officials in competing with other potentially lucrative short-term alternatives. Cuyahoga County, Ohio, for instance, suffered from a shortage of 500 poll workers for its presidential primaries, [in part because](#) many potential workers instead accepted higher payment to work for the 2020 Census.

## F. Marketing and Advertising for Poll Worker Recruitment Efforts

**Online marketing.** Online marketing can help advertise jurisdictions' poll worker needs and opportunities. For instance, in Iowa, Secretary of State Paul Pate used an online [marketing strategy](#) aimed at attracting people to work the polls. In Michigan, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson started an online "[Democracy MVP](#)" campaign aimed at attracting election workers to help process absentee ballots and other tasks. This campaign has used YouTube videos and Twitter and Facebook posts to spread the word. Over [1,600](#) people applied in the first 10 days to participate in the program. West Virginia launched "[Operation Elective Service](#)," an Uncle Sam online social media campaign geared towards schools and local businesses to recruit 9,000 workers for its May Primary Election.

**Mail.** In Wake County, North Carolina, the Election Board [conducted](#) a mail campaign to implement its "Vote to Volunteer" Program. It mailed a "Vote to Volunteer" buck slip to all registered voters at a cost of \$0.025 per slip, asking them to work the polls. In addition to sending the buck slip in voter mailings, though, Wake County also collaborated with the Wake County Revenue Department to include the buck slip in the Revenue Department's annual tax revenue mailing that is sent to each Wake County resident.

**Snowball recruiting.** The Center for Civic Design [recommends](#) that election officials take advantage of "snowball recruiting," which involves getting poll workers to actively recruit friends and family to work the polls. [Miami-Dade County](#) and some [Ohio counties](#) used snowball recruiting as an

emergency, last-minute measure to cover poll worker shortages during the primary elections, and this method could be more effective with more time for word-of-mouth to spread.

**Emphasize civic engagement.** Poll worker recruitment programs targeting students and younger individuals should emphasize civic duty to form lasting engagement. [Ely County, Minnesota](#), for instance, runs a program that matches veterans with high school students. The veterans not only teach the students about civic virtue but also train alongside them to become poll workers. The online “Democracy MVP” and “Operation Elective Service” online campaigns (described above) also emphasize the importance of well-run elections as the fabric of the United States, placing volunteers in the center of the spotlight as heroes of our democracy.

## Conclusion

Recruiting poll workers often comes down to incentives. Compensation is typically a very important driver of poll worker recruitment, but student poll workers may be drawn to other incentives, like extra credit, raffles or pizza parties. More direct incentives for specific professions, like providing CLE credit for attorneys who serve as poll workers, could also increase the supply of willing volunteers. During the coronavirus pandemic, robust safety precautions and guarantees can alleviate concerns some potential poll workers might have and increase retention. With voting already underway for the general election, these best practices may provide crucial last-minute assistance to create a safe and effective election season and fill in poll worker shortages where they arise.

## Appendix A: Additional Resources

- [\[Tech & Civil Life\] 50 Ideas for Recruiting and Retaining Election Workers \(2020\)](#)
- [\[EAC\] Election Worker Successful Practices \(2016\)](#)
- [\[EAC\] Best Practices National Competition winners \(2016\)](#)
- [\[EAC\] Recommendations for ballot drop boxes](#)
- [\[NASED\] COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [\[GCC\] Health and safety at the polling place](#)
- [\[CDC\] Considerations for Election Polling Locations and Voters](#)
- [\[Suffolk University\] Strategies for Success: Starting a College Poll Worker Program](#)
- [\[Demos\] Poll worker recruitment and training \(2014\)](#)
- [\[Center for American Progress\] Recruiting and Retaining Poll Workers During the Coronavirus Pandemic \(2020\)](#)
- [\[ACLU of Georgia\] Recommendations on Best Practices for County Elections Officials from Georgia Poll Workers \(2020\)](#)

# Appendix B: Election Day Planning

From [Power the Polls](#).



## ELECTION DAY PLANNING

Power the Polls will be tracking all of our poll worker recruits who are placed and those who are also officially waitlisted with their jurisdiction. For those that are placed or officially waitlisted as poll workers, we will be sending a number of reminders and confirmation communications to them to make sure that every Power the Poll recruit shows up to their shift on Election Day. For those that are still eager to serve but not selected, we'll have them ready to be deployed for any last-minute emergencies. We know that most local elections offices have built up robust backup lists and have a rapid response plan to place poll workers at the last minute. Given all the challenges of election administration in a pandemic, we see this as an additional resource available to administrators to serve as an extra level of security.

### [Election Administrator Hotline](#)

Power the Polls is prepared to provide support to election administrators to fill last minute shortages in the days leading up to and on Election Day. Election Administrators should utilize our hotline so we can be ready to help deploy poll workers to meet last minute needs.

### **Confirmation Calls / Emails / Texts**

All PTP recruits will receive confirmation calls in the week leading up to Election Day to make sure they show up for their shifts. We will also have an Election Eve ringless voicemail to all recruits that we know are scheduled to serve, reminding them to show up bright and early. We will also send confirmation texts in the weekend leading up to Election Day, as well as confirmation emails during the week before Election Day and on Monday November 2.



## **Backup Lists Pre-Election Day**

If individuals are not selected, we are asking those folks to be “on call” in the days leading up to Election Day and on Election Day to fill any last-minute shortages. Our goal is to provide a backup list that would cover a 15% last-minute shortage of poll workers. In some areas these lists will be larger based on interest. Where we have an existing relationship, we will provide backup lists to administrators on Friday, October 30. This will allow administrators to utilize the lists as needed on top of their own backup waitlists especially if there are any unexpected shortages over the weekend leading up to Election Day. These lists can also be used on Election Day if poll workers fail to show up in certain areas and an administrator has already exhausted their backup lists.

## **Rapid Response on Weekend Before and Election Day**

In the jurisdictions with smaller overall numbers of poll workers, we anticipate that administrators will be able to call or email through the backup lists quickly on their own, but we will also be available to activate our rapid response reach out to potential poll workers.

In jurisdictions that are larger or have expressed a need for more help managing backup lists, we will be able to provide additional support to help with last-minute placement. This would include blast text messages, phone calls, and potentially email to all of our backup list recruits directing them to report as a backup poll worker. We would require that local election administrators give us directions on where to send these individuals. In many areas, we understand this would be directing them to a central location where the local elections office would complete any rapid training and then deploy those individuals to the polling locations where they are needed. Our local partners will connect with administrators in advance of Election Day to determine the best rapid response plan so we are able to respond quickly.

## **Information Needed for Rapid Response**

- Where do you need folks (jurisdiction-wise)?
  - If we hear from an administrator
- Approximately how many people are needed?
  - This will allow us to target the right number of people to reach out to so we don't overwhelm a local office with last-minute folks showing up.
- Where should folks report to?
  - This should include an address where people should report to, or a phone number they can call for their placement information. We will send you a list of everyone that has indicated their ability to show up as quickly as possible.

- What information do you need from recruits to ensure they are placed if they arrive?
  - Do you need folks to have ID or any other paperwork? If so, please have this information compiled including any links so we can send this to people as soon as they've confirmed they are able to serve.

### Sample PTP Communications

Please find a sample of what we'd plan to send out to our backup waitlist based on information election administrators provide:

#### We would be able to quickly CALL our back up list with the following information:

*Hello \_\_\_\_\_ my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm calling from Power the Polls. It's Election Day and we're calling because you agreed to be on a backup list in case there were shortages in your area.*

*It appears that there is a shortage in [COUNTY OR CITY NAME], so we're calling to see if you are still available to serve today. Can you serve?*

- *No >> Thanks for letting us know! Be sure you get out to vote today if you haven't already done so! Happy Election Day!*
- *Yes >> Great! You'll need to head to [INSERT LOCATION INFORMATION] immediately to get your assignment. Check in with your local elections office representatives there and they will give you all the information you need for your shift today. Thanks so much for answering the call and hope you have a great day serving as a poll worker!*

#### We would be able to quickly TEXT our back up list with the following information:

*Hi - Power the Polls here. It's Election Day and there's a poll worker shortage in your area. Can you help at the polls in [COUNTY OR CITY NAME] today? Reply YES or NO.*

*Yes >> Great! You'll need to head to [INSERT LOCATION INFORMATION] immediately to get your assignment. Check in with your local elections office representatives there. Be sure to bring your [ANYTHING REQUIRED].*

*No >> Thanks for letting us know! Be sure you get out to vote today if you haven't already done so!*

**We would be able to EMAIL our back up list with the following information prior to Election Day. (We would not utilize email on Election Day given the lag time for those opening/responding):**

*Hi -*

*It's Election Day and there's a poll worker shortage in your area. Can you help at the polls in [COUNTY OR CITY NAME] today? We need you to show up as quickly as possible.*

*You'll need to head to [INSERT LOCATION INFORMATION] immediately to get your assignment. Check in with your local elections office representatives there. Be sure to bring your [ANYTHING REQUIRED].*

*Thanks for being ready to help step in to be a poll worker hero in your neighborhood today!*

# Appendix C: Election Administrator Hotline

From [Power the Polls](#).



## ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR HOTLINE

**LAST MINUTE POLL WORKER SHORTAGE? CALL 1-888-880-5913**

**OPEN SATURDAY OCTOBER 31 - TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3**

Power the Polls is prepared to provide support to election administrators to fill last minute shortages in the days leading up to and on Election Day. If you are an election administrator, use this number to call us, and we can be ready to help you deploy poll workers to meet your last minute needs.

**When you call, be ready with the following information:**

- **Provide your contact information.**  
We will want to take down your name, title, local office, phone number, and email to confirm that you work in an elections office.
- **Where do you need folks (jurisdiction-wise)?**  
Be ready to indicate which jurisdiction you are calling from.
- **Approximately how many people are needed?**  
This will allow us to target the right number of people to reach out to so we don't overwhelm a local office with last-minute folks showing up.
- **Where should folks report to?**  
This should include an address where people should report to, or a phone number they can call for their placement information. We will also send you a list of everyone that has indicated their ability to show up as quickly as possible.
- **What information do you need from recruits to ensure they are placed if they arrive?**  
Do you need folks to have ID or any other paperwork? If so, please have this information compiled including any links so we can send this to people as soon as they've confirmed they are able to serve.