Recruiting and training election workers

COVID-19 and Election Administration: Approaches for Election Officials

June 25, 2020
Housekeeping

- Be gracious about **work-from-home setups**
- **Restart Zoom** if needed
- **Slides and captioned recordings** will be available on the registration page
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions
Today’s objectives

- **Recruit** more people from less vulnerable populations and keep them safe
- **Plan** efficient and effective online trainings for election workers
- **Prepare** election workers to handle questions, paperwork, and processes related to the pandemic
Today’s agenda

- Introduction (5 min)
- Who -- and why? (5 min)
- Recruiting election workers (15 min)
- Messaging for recruitment (10 min)
- Training options (10 min)
- Discussion (10 min)
- Wrapping up (5 min)
Hello, there!

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Harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
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Federal resources

- Set of documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials
- Written by the Joint COVID-19 Working Group
  - Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
  - Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
  - Elections Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC)

https://www.cisa.gov/protect2020
Keep in mind

1. This is tough!
2. One size doesn’t fit all
3. Things will change
4. Preparation and flexibility > certainty
5. A supportive team > a solo mission
6. Your work *matters*, and it’s hugely appreciated
Who is an election worker, and why are they important?

WHO -- AND WHY?
Who is an “election worker?”

- **Election workers at voting locations**, including at precincts, early voting sites, and vote centers.
  - “Officers of Election” (VA), “Election Judges” (IL), and “Election Officials” (NC) to name a few

- **Election workers in central locations**, like mail ballot processing and call center workers, and other “back-of-house” workers at your office, central count site, or warehouse.
Why are election workers especially important this year?

- More voters than ever
- More confusion than ever
- More mistrust than ever
More voters than ever

Photo: Alysoun McLaughlin, Montgomery County, MD

Photo: Jeramey Jannene, Urban Milwaukee
More confusion than ever

Kentucky braces for chaotic primary election after cuts to polling locations

16 States Have Postponed Primaries During the Pandemic. Here’s a List.

Reducing the risk of COVID-19 at the polls
More mistrust than ever

Concerns about voter suppression, mistakes mount in primary contests

Voting by mail grows in popularity – but is it reliable?

The truth about vote-by-mail and fraud

Trump predicts 'most corrupt election' in US history
High-performing poll workers created $2.5 - 4.5x$ more voter confidence than low-performing ones.

Democracy Fund, 2017
People are ready to serve

RECRUITING ELECTION WORKERS FROM LOWER-RISK GROUPS

CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE
Some options for election workers

- Other government staff
  - Active government staff
  - Furloughed and laid off
    - Public works, clerk's office, DMV, libraries, recreation, etc
    - Teachers and education support staff (if holiday)
- Furloughed and unemployed residents
- High school students and partnerships (assistants or workers)
- College students and groups (if local or in session)
  - Service groups
  - Political science classes
  - Fraternities and sororities
  - Sports teams
- Political parties
- Companies
- Nonprofits
- Unions

- Community groups
  - PTAs
  - Civic clubs (e.g. Rotary International)
  - Language and cultural groups
  - Disability advocacy groups
  - Recreational leagues
- Faith groups
- Medical reserve corps (assistants)
- Attorneys (continuing education requirements)
- Veterans
- National guard (with caution)
- Recent naturalized citizens
- Newspaper readers
- Family and friends of retired election workers
- Your personal network
Government employees

- Other departments
  - Consider paid time off + compensation
- Furloughed and laid off staff
Furloughed and unemployed residents

- Unemployment offices are overburdened, but you might be able to work with them
- Articles, social media posts, and forwardable emails get the word out about this paid opportunity to serve
- U.S. Census enumeration scheduled to end October 31st
Students

- **College** students:
  - Service groups
  - Political science classes
  - Sports teams
  - Fraternities and sororities

- **High school** students
  = superheroes!
Lessons from Mikva Challenge
Recruiting high school students

- **Recruit and support teachers**, and teachers recruit the students
  - Government and social studies teachers, librarians, office administrators, and college counselors.
- **School support helps** with allowed absences, permission slips, and grade verification.
Recruiting high school students

- **Be clear about why they matter.**
  - Your voting rights are theoretical unless there’s a poll worker at your precinct.
  - Tech and language skills can make a difference.
  - You can be part of the history of making voting more accessible.

- **Be clear about what they gain.**
  - Learn about voting, improve resume/college apps, build new skills.
Companies and nonprofits

- Companies hoping to give back or raise money for charity
- Nonprofits looking to support voting or raise money
Community and faith groups

- Already organized for action
- Diverse communities

Language barriers
Voters with disabilities
Displaced voters
Hard-to-reach voters
PowerThePolls.org

POWER THE POLLS

HELP US RECRUIT THE NEXT GENERATION OF POLL WORKERS
Other groups

- Political parties
- Naturalized citizens
- Dutiful voters
- Veterans
- National Guard (use caution)
  - In plain clothes
  - In neighborhoods where they live
  - Clear chain of command with local election official at the top
Your network

- Friends -- and friends of friends
- Consider inviting a “champion” to help
- Friends and family of retiring election workers
Different strokes for different folks

MESSAGING FOR RECRUITMENT
Messaging

- Be clear about the stakes -- and the impact
- Speak to fears and concerns ahead of time
- Motives
  - Material
  - Social
  - Service
Michigan’s Democracy MVP Program

Be an MVP. Serve your democracy.

Michigan.gov/DemocracyMVP
Online and in-person approaches

TRAINING OPTIONS
Online

- Live and interactive is more successful than recorded
- Use a free or low-cost video platform like Zoom
- Structure content in clear ways
- Make full use of poll and chat functions
- Consider a follow-up assessment via a free survey tool
In-person

- Consider a 1 hour small group “booster session” to practice with voting machines and other set up
- The night before Election Day is a good option
- Use social distancing guidelines
On their own

- Quick cell phone videos uploaded to YouTube
- Weekly emails/text with tips or short quizzes
- Reminders about when and where to show up

Poll Worker Training Videos
These YouTube videos are used to supplement the classroom training offered to all Sussex County Poll Workers.

01. 🎬 Morning Activities: Arriving and Opening the IVOs
02. 🎬 Setting Up the Poll Room and Roster Table
03. 🎬 Loading, Casting and Cancelling Ballots
04. 🎬 Processing a Voter
05. 🎬 Form 100 Name and Address Changes
06. 🎬 Primary Elections
07. 🎬 The Orange Provisional Ballot Bag
On the job

- Good documentation is critical
  - Review materials using CCD's Field Guide
- Clear communication channels
  - Key phone numbers
  - Text updates

civicdesign.org/fieldguides/effective-poll-worker-materials/
Expect questions? Train on them.

- Do I have to wear a mask?
- How do I know this is safe?
- What’s my risk of getting Coronavirus here?
- Can I turn in my mail ballot here?
- I lost my ballot. What now?
- I got a ballot but want to vote in-person. Can I?
- How do I know my vote counts?
- Aren’t people voting twice?
- Is it bad if we don’t know the winners on Election Night?
Let’s talk

DISCUSSION
Share your thoughts

- Any “aha!” moments? Any concerns?
- What questions do you have about what we covered today?
- What questions do you have about what we *didn’t* cover today?
A few final updates

WRAPPING UP
As more questions come up...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll try to find someone for you who can

hello@techandciviclife.org
What was your experience with today’s course?

- Quick poll
- 3 minute survey
- Please complete now to provide feedback and improve the webinar for future participants
See you on Tuesday!

- Supporting election officials (Thursday, May 21)
- Planning 2020 workload and resource allocation (Tuesday, May 26)
- Ensuring access, equity, and inclusion (Thursday, May 28)
- Educating voters about their options (Thursday, June 4)
- Maintaining voter lists (Tuesday, June 9)
- Managing mail ballot request forms (Thursday, June 11)
- Organizing ballot drop off locations (Tuesday, June 16)
- Streamlining the inbound ballot process (Thursday, June 18)
- Verifying and curing signatures (Tuesday, June 23)
- Recruiting and training election workers (Thursday, June 25)
- Implementing public health guidelines for voting locations (Tuesday, June 30)

techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/
Thanks!

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