



Poll Worker Retention: Fostering Long-Term Commitment

Tip Sheet

Retaining poll workers reduces the time and resources needed to recruit and train new volunteers for each election. Experienced poll workers require less supervision, have a better understanding of procedures, and help maintain continuity and consistency at voting locations. Establishing a reliable team that returns year after year can lead to smoother operations, fewer errors, and a better experience for voters.

Below are some practical ways to encourage poll workers to return each year.

Show Appreciation

Poll workers are more likely to return when they feel valued.

- Celebrate service milestones with pins, badges, certificates, or small tokens (if permitted).
- Recognize returning poll workers on your election website, in newsletters, or on social media (with their permission).
- Send handwritten thank-you notes. Personalized messages from election officials or supervisors can create a lasting positive image.
- Allow returning poll workers to select preferred shifts, roles, or locations when possible.
- Offer advanced training or workshops to help workers build skills and stay engaged.



Offer Fair Pay and Prompt Reimbursement

Respecting poll workers' time includes fair compensation and timely payment.



- Pay poll workers quickly, ideally within two weeks after the election.
- When possible, consider compensation for:
 - Training time
 - Travel related to training and Election Day
 - Last-minute or extra shifts
- Some jurisdictions use apps for instant poll worker payments.
- Also, consider regular pay reviews to reflect changes in responsibilities.

Make Re-Engagement Easy

Simplify the process to encourage poll workers to return year after year.



- Maintain a centralized database of past poll workers and contact them first before recruiting new potential poll workers.
- Send "save the date" and invitations months in advance of elections.
- Provide simple online confirmation options.
- Use mobile-friendly scheduling tools that let poll workers easily update their availability or preferences.
- Provide opportunities for advancement and increasing responsibilities.

Deliver High-Quality, Practical Training

Well-trained, confident poll workers are more likely to return.



- Use adult learning techniques to keep training engaging and effective.
- Offer hands-on practice with equipment and real-life scenarios.
- Supply easy-to-use reference materials like checklists and job aids.
- Consider role-specific training with clear, practical instructions.
- Ensure that training spaces are comfortable and provide meals or snacks, if permitted.
- Invite experienced poll workers to help shape future training content through focus groups and other means.

Listen and Respond to Feedback

Poll workers stay invested when their voices are heard and respected.



- Use short, anonymous post-election surveys to gather honest feedback.
- Host optional in-person or virtual debriefs with new and seasoned poll workers.
- Highlight specific changes made based on feedback to show how their input was incorporated.

Create a Supportive Team Environment

Poll workers are more likely to return when they feel connected to the mission and to one another.



- Assign friendly, experienced lead poll workers and pair new workers with mentors.
- Host preelection meetups or icebreakers to build relationships. Encourage lead poll workers to reach out to their team in advance of the election.
- Stress the importance of their role as a poll worker in building trust in elections.
- Provide clear communication and support before and during the election.
- Assign workers to familiar locations when possible.

Stay in Touch Year-Round

Don't let poll workers feel forgotten between elections.



- Send periodic emails, newsletters, or postcards with election news, important dates, or training opportunities.
- If possible, invite poll workers to election office "open houses", volunteer appreciation events, or civic engagement activities.

Additional EAC Resources

- [EAC Learning Lab](#) – Free online training for election officials, including poll worker modules
- [Election Worker Recruitment, Training, Retention, and Evaluation Report](#)
- [Sample Poll Worker Training Survey](#)
- [Clearinghouse Resources on Poll Workers](#)
- [Election Worker Recruitment, Training, Retention, and Evaluation Report](#)
- [EAC Clearinghouse Awards — Best Practices in Recruiting, Retaining, and Training Poll Workers](#)