

Frequently Asked Questions from the Government Accountability Board:

What are the responsibilities of an Election Inspector (poll worker)?

Election Inspectors (poll workers) conduct assigned duties at a polling site on Election Day. Duties can include issuing ballots to registered voters, registering voters, monitoring the voting equipment, explaining how to mark the ballot or use the voting equipment or counting votes.

What are the Hours of Work?

Polling places are open statewide from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Poll workers can work a full day, generally from 6:30 a.m. until approximately 9:00 p.m. or later in the case of November elections. In many municipalities, election inspectors can work a split shift.

Are Election Inspectors Compensated?

Yes, election inspectors are compensated for working at polling places at a rate determined by the appropriate municipal governing body, and, in some municipalities, are also compensated for attending any required training sessions. Poll workers may also choose to volunteer their services by filing a written declination of compensation with the municipal clerk.

What are the Training Requirements for Election Inspectors?

Municipal clerks are required by state law to provide training. This training provides all of the necessary information and knowledge to be a successful poll worker. (Many municipalities require poll workers to attend a comprehensive training course prior to each Primary election.)

An experienced chief inspector who has been certified by the State Elections Board must be present at each polling place for each election. Chief inspectors must receive six hours of continuing election education training during each two-year period.

What length of commitment will be expected of an Election Inspector?

Poll workers are appointed to two-year terms so you will be asked to make a minimum two-year commitment. However, committing to one election cycle (Primary / General) is also appreciated.

Where will I be assigned as an Election Inspector?

In smaller municipalities, there is often only one polling place. However, in larger municipalities there are multiple polling places. In larger municipalities, every effort is made to assign a poll worker to their neighborhood voting site. However, poll workers in larger municipalities such as large cities must be willing to be flexible and consider assignments at other sites.

What are the specific qualifications to be an Election Inspector (poll worker)?

To be an election inspector (poll worker), a person must:

- Be a qualified elector of the county in which the polling place is established (i.e., an adult citizen of the United States who has resided in the election district for 28 consecutive days and is not otherwise disqualified to vote);
- Be able to speak, read, and write fluently in the English language;
- Have strong clerical skills;
- Be able to solve problems;
- Be an effective communicator; and
- NOT be a candidate for any office to be voted on at the polling place at that election.

Can I be excused from my regular job to be a poll worker?

Wisconsin law requires every employer to grant an unpaid leave of absence to each employee who is appointed to serve as an election official, if the employee who serves as an election official provides his or her employer with at least seven days' notice. The leave is for the entire 24-hour period of each election day in which the employee serves in his or her official capacity as an election official. Upon request of any employer municipal clerks must verify appointments.

How do state employees become poll workers?

Wisconsin Statutes provide that state employees appointed by a municipal clerk to serve as election officials must be granted leave without loss of pay or benefits for the entire 24-hour period of each election day in which the employee is serving as an election official. Employees must provide at least seven days notice of the need for leave.

State employees may certify to the municipality that they choose not to be paid as poll workers. Alternatively, those state employees who receive pay as election officials must certify in writing to the (state) payroll office the amount of compensation received. The agency must deduct that amount from the employee's pay earned for scheduled work hours during the 24-hour period of the election day.

State employees who "volunteer" but are not appointed to be poll workers must take vacation or leave without pay if authorized by supervisory staff.