



Teacher Resource 2

The Role of Poll Workers

The following tries to capture the various roles poll workers fill on Election Day. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (www.eac.gov) provides useful information about polling places and workers. In addition, the website provides information about a variety of issues such as registration and absentee ballots, and provides links to election information in all 50 states. Another good source is the League of Women Voters (<http://www.lwv.org/our-work>), in particular their Vote411.org site (<http://www.lwv.org/our-work/vote411org>) that also provides nonpartisan information and links to the individual states.

What poll workers do is very much linked to the setup of the polling place. The goal is to have a smooth, effective, and efficient election day. It is very important to facilitate voting while trying to prevent voter fraud. Recruitment and training may vary from state to state, and even county to county.

Using information from either the EAC, your local board of elections/office of the registrar, or the League of Women Voters, try to adapt the information below for your local polling place.

Poll workers are assigned to various positions within the polling place. Their job or function is based on that assignment. Some election precincts like to train their workers on a variety of roles in order to deal with unforeseen situations throughout the course of the day.

Basic areas where workers are assigned:

- Secured entryway—to allow for an orderly flow of people into the polling area
- Private voting booths or voting machines
- Ballot box or computerized ballot scanner area
- The demonstration area (where voters can review the ballot and ask any questions about the voting procedure)
- The registration table with voter lists by alphabetical order or address. This is where registered voters can sign in. The need to use voter cards or other forms of identification varies from state to state. Normally there are two workers per list. The number of registration tables will be based on the number of precincts represented.
- If paper ballots are used, there is a table where the ballots are kept
- Workers are also assigned for setup, counting, takedown, etc.