Poll Workers

Section One
Pol Workers – Table of Contents

3 Qualifications
4 Chief Inspectors
5 High School Students
5 Rapid Response Team
6 Polling Place Assignments
7 Shifts, Breaks, and No-Show
8 Training
10 Compensation
11 Payroll Sheet
12 Government Employees
13 E-mail Group
13 Online Trainings
14 Election Schedule
Poll Workers

Poll workers, also known as election officials or election inspectors, are responsible for maintaining order at the polls on Election Day. Poll workers set up the polling place, register voters, check voter identification, record who has voted, issue ballots, monitor the election equipment, count votes, complete Election Day forms, and close the polls at the end of the night. You will rotate duties during the day.

Depending on anticipated turnout, there will be 9 to 25 officials at your polling place.

Qualifications

To work at a City of Madison polling place, you must:

- Be eligible to vote in the City of Madison (adult U.S. citizen who has resided in the City of Madison for at least 10 days, and not disqualified from voting).
- Have never been convicted of a felony.
- Attend training.
- Pay close attention to detail.
- Speak, read, write, and understand English.
- Be capable of performing each task at the polling place.
- Work a full shift.
- Abide by state and federal election laws.
- Never engage in electioneering at the polling place.
- Treat voters, poll workers, and Clerk’s Office employees with respect.
- Refrain from microaggressions, e.g., comments about voters.
- Refrain from discussing anything political at the polling place.
- Be free from the influence of alcohol and/or drugs while at the polls.
- Not be a candidate on the ballot for that polling location.
Chief Inspectors

The chief inspector oversees the polling location on Election Day. The chief reports to the City Clerk. Your polling place will have the same chief for most every election.

The chief picks up the election supply tote from the Clerk’s Office prior to Election Day. After the polls close, the chief returns the supply tote and election results to the Clerk’s Office.

The chief has the authority to dismiss any poll worker or observer who is disrupting the election process, acting belligerent, or refusing to follow election law.

The chief should not send poll workers away from the polls simply because of low turnout. When turnout is low, poll workers may use their downtime to review election and emergency procedures.

Certification

To become certified, the chief attends a three-hour “baseline” training. Chief inspectors are required to attend six hours of state-approved training every two years. The chief training sessions offered by the Madison City Clerk are approved by the state.
High School Student Poll Workers

High school students may work at the polls as long as they meet these requirements:

- City of Madison resident
- At least 16 years old
- Written approval of parent or guardian
- Written approval of principal

The high school poll worker application is on the City Clerk’s website at [www.cityofmadison.com/election/pollWorkers/apply.cfm](http://www.cityofmadison.com/election/pollWorkers/apply.cfm). High school poll workers are able to perform any Election Day task, except they cannot challenge an elector.

Rapid Response Team

The Rapid Response Team consists of poll workers who are willing to work at any polling place. They agree to fill last-minute vacancies at the polls.
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**“I want to work every election. How can I do that?”**

If you would like to work but have not received a call from our office, call 266-4220.

**“Are you scheduling me based on my race or ethnicity?”**

No. Although we try to recruit a diverse group of officials, we do not keep track of any individual’s race or ethnicity.

**“Is anyone ever removed as a poll worker?”**

Yes. If you do not abide by election law or are electioneering at the polls, you will be removed as an official.

If you yell, swear, or are belligerent toward Clerk’s Office employees, we cannot be certain that you will appropriately interact with voters.

If you are a “no show” on Election Day, or if you miss training more than once in two years, you will be removed from our list.

The Clerk’s Office determines the number of poll workers for each polling place based on the type of election, voter turnout, input from the chief, and the number of wards.

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**Polling Place Assignments**

The City Clerk’s Office schedules 1,300 poll workers for a small election, and 2,100 poll workers to work for a high turnout election.

In the summer of odd-numbered years, the City Clerk’s Office sends poll workers a survey about when they anticipate being able to work.

About one month before an election, the City Clerk’s Office sends polling place assignment via e-mail.

About two weeks before an election, the City Clerk’s Office begins contacting poll workers to fill vacancies. You do not need to wait to hear from us. You can call the Clerk’s Office at 266-4220 to express your willingness to work.
**Shifts**

The City of Madison offers three Election Day shifts:

- A.M. Shift (6 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.)
- P.M. Shift (1 p.m. to Close)
- Double Shift (6 a.m. to Close)

The double shift is used sparingly because it is hard to maintain accuracy on detail-oriented tasks while working a 15 hour shift.

**Breaks**

The chief assigns breaks in a way that does not disrupt the election process.

When you agree to work a shift at the polls, we are counting on you to work that entire shift. Do not plan to leave before the end of your shift. Make plans to care for your children, parents, or pets prior to Election Day.

**No Shows**

If you are unable to work, notify the Clerk’s Office as soon as possible. The Clerk’s Office is fully staffed at 6 a.m. on election morning, and voice mail is always available at 266-4220. If you do not let the Clerk’s Office know that you will not be showing up to work, you will not be asked to work again.

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**Absentee Voting**

“**I will not be working at my own polling place. How do I vote?**”

You may vote absentee in-person. Absentee voting hours and locations are listed on our website at [www.cityofmadison.com/election](http://www.cityofmadison.com/election).

You can send the Clerk’s Office an absentee request from [https://MyVote.wi.gov](https://MyVote.wi.gov). Or you can send a written request to:

City Clerk
City-County Building Room 103
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

Include your name, address at which you are registered to vote, and address to which the ballot should be mailed. Include a copy of your voter ID.

Or, request an absentee ballot by sending an e-mail message to voting@cityofmadison.com. Attach a copy or picture of your photo ID to the e-mail message.

Requests for absentee ballots to be sent by mail must be received in the City Clerk’s Office by 5 p.m. the Thursday before Election Day. The Clerk’s Office needs to receive the ballot back by Election Day.
Chapter 7 of the State Statutes requires all poll workers to attend training.

The City Clerk has determined that the most effective way to meet this requirement is to require all officials to attend training for every election they work.

The Clerk’s Office offers a webinar three or four weeks before Election Day. The Clerk’s Office also offers in-person training sessions before each election. After the live webinar session is complete, you may watch it on demand at http://www.cityofmadison.com/clerk/elections-voting/election-officials/training.

You may only work one election in a two-year period without attending training. If you are not able to attend training before Election Day, attend the Board of Canvassers meeting the Friday after Election Day.

Poll workers sign an oath of office at training. If you do not attend training in person, sign an oath of office at the polls on Election Day.

“Absence from training is neglect of duty, one of the grounds for dismissal,” according to the Wisconsin Elections Commission.
Compensation

The City of Madison pays its poll workers an hourly living wage. Chief inspectors earn an additional 15 percent.

Poll workers earn their hourly rate for training. We can only pay each poll worker to attend one training session per election. The only exception is for new chief inspectors who attend both “baseline” training and the City of Madison chief inspector training.

Paychecks are issued about three weeks after an election. Before submitting payroll to Finance, we must follow-up with each poll worker who did not legibly print their name or did not indicate a start time, end time, or pay source.

If you move, contact the City Clerk’s Office to update your address. Your voter registration is not linked to our poll worker payroll system.

See the next page for examples of issues that slow down the payroll process.

Frequently Asked Questions about Training

“I have been working at the polls for 50 years. Why do I need training?”

Election law and procedures change quickly. And, training is required by State Statute.

“Why can’t the chief just train us on Election Day?”

The chief has many other responsibilities on Election Day, and the City Clerk is required by law to train all poll workers.

“I already know all there is to know about elections. Do I still need training?”

You absolutely must complete training for each election.

Bottom Line:
If you want to work at the polls, you will complete training.
### Sample Payroll Sheet

**Busy Polling Place, Ward 200**

- Indicate **AM** and **PM**. Do not use military time.
- Round hours to the nearest ¼ hour to speed up payroll process.
- Paychecks are mailed approximately **3 weeks** after the election.
- Incomplete payroll sheets delay the payroll process for everyone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (please print legibly)</th>
<th>Pay Source (check one)</th>
<th>Attended Training</th>
<th>Election Day Start</th>
<th>Election Day Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chief Inspector:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No End Time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Hardy</td>
<td>✓ Clerk</td>
<td>✓ Yes</td>
<td>6:00 am</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ Employer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ High School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□ No Pay (Volunteer)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ am pm</td>
<td>No Pay</td>
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<td>Illegible Name.</td>
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</table>

**Elenora E. Dallmann**

- Stitch
- Employer
- High School
- No Pay (Volunteer)
- Yes
- No
- 4:23 am
- 9:00 am
- Military Time?

**Lullabelle Bechtol**

- Stitch
- Employer
- High School
- No Pay (Volunteer)
- Yes
- No
- 6:00 am
- 8:00 am
- a.m. or p.m.?

**Bessie McMahon**

- Stitch
- Employer
- High School
- No Pay (Volunteer)
- Yes
- No
- 6:00 am
- 21:00 pm
- Pay Source?
Government Employees Serving as Poll Workers

State, county, and city employees who get approval from a supervisor are able to work at the polls on Election Day without using vacation time or losing any pay.

We have a form available online for the state agencies that require documentation from Election Day, [www.cityofmadison.com/election/pollWorkers/apply.cfm](http://www.cityofmadison.com/election/pollWorkers/apply.cfm). This form can be printed before Election Day and signed by the chief at the polls.

State, county, and city employees working a full day at the polls should fill out the payroll sheet like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pay Source</th>
<th>Attended Training</th>
<th>Election Day Start</th>
<th>Election Day Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice Jones</td>
<td>Clerk, Employee, High School, No Pay (Volunteer)</td>
<td>□ Yes, □ No</td>
<td>6:00 am □ pm</td>
<td>2:00 am □ pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Jones</td>
<td>Clerk, Employee, High School, No Pay (Volunteer)</td>
<td>□ Yes, □ No</td>
<td>2:00 am □ pm</td>
<td>9:00 am □ pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List training with whichever entity will be paying you for that time.
Additional Resources for Poll Workers

Training Videos

Twitter Updates
Follow the Clerk’s Office on Twitter @MadisonWIClerk.
**Regularity Scheduled Elections:**

**Spring Primary**
Primary held on the third Tuesday in February to nominate non-partisan candidates to be voted for at the Spring Election. §5.02(22)

**Spring Election**
Election held on the first Tuesday in April to elect judicial, educational, and municipal officers, and non-partisan county officers, and to express preferences for the person to be the presidential candidate for each party in a year in which electors for president and vice president are to be elected. §5.02(21)

**Fall Primary**
Primary held the second Tuesday in August of even-numbered years to nominate candidates to be voted for at the General Election and to determine which candidates for state offices other than district attorney may participate in the Wisconsin election campaign fund. §5.02(18)

**General Election**
Election held in even-numbered years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November to elect United States senators, representatives in congress, presidential electors, state senators, representatives to the assembly, district attorneys, state officers other than the state superintendent and judicial officers, and county officers other than supervisors and county executives. §5.02(5)