

Why YOU Should Become a Poll Worker

COVID19 has placed immense pressure on our electoral system. Across the country this year, staffing shortages have led to long lines at the polls, or worse, polling location closures. These delays and closures often hit communities of color, low-income communities, and immigrant communities the hardest. In order to prevent this from arising in Massachusetts this fall, we must ensure that polling places have as many poll workers as possible. We need your help.

What is a poll worker?

Poll workers are the ones that staff the polls each election. They carry out a variety of tasks, such as setting up voting locations, handing out ballots, and providing language assistance to voters. All poll workers are paid, though rates vary between municipalities.

Who can serve as a poll worker?

Due to the COVID19 crisis, the state has dramatically changed the requirements around who exactly can serve as a poll worker. Typically, individuals must be registered voters in Massachusetts. However, to meet the increased need for poll workers, the state has removed that requirement this year. As a result, individuals may serve as poll workers in Massachusetts regardless of voter registration status.

Why are you asking me to be a poll worker now?

The COVID19 crisis has led to a dramatic reduction in poll worker turnout nationally. Typically, older individuals serve as poll workers, but because of COVID19, we are turning to less vulnerable segments of the population. This means young people, including high school and college students.

Why do poll workers matter?

Without enough poll workers, polling locations experience immense delays, or even close outright. As a result, voting



becomes more burdensome, especially when voters are not provided with adequate information around said closures. In states that have held elections amid COVID19, like [Wisconsin](#) and [Georgia](#), the lack of poll workers has led to mass polling location closures. Oftentimes, these closures disproportionately impact low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities. By serving as a poll worker, you can directly contribute to empowering the voices of those who all too often see their voices ignored.

Where can I serve as a poll worker?

Anywhere in the state, except if you are on the ballot in a specific race. However, some communities are in far greater need of poll workers than others. While most towns are all set with poll workers, many cities are in great need. Bilingual and multilingual individuals, those who speak languages like Spanish, and especially Mandarin, are needed.

So, how do I actually get started as a poll worker?

First, figure out where you want to serve. If you live in a city, odds are that city will need your help. If you live in a town, the closest city to you would probably be your best bet.

To help clarify what the poll worker process looks like in many of the state's cities, we have compiled brief guides for [Boston](#), [Worcester](#), [Lowell](#), [Chelsea](#), [Salem](#), [Lynn](#), [Holyoke](#), and [New Bedford](#).



You can apply to serve as a poll worker on your local elections department website, and call them with any additional questions. You can also visit [the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website](#) to learn more about the poll worker process. If you still have questions, no problem! Contact us at info@massvote.org.

Finally, we and our partners at the [Safe Elections Network](#) have compiled [trainings](#) on how to serve as a poll worker. It is mandatory that each town or city train you to serve as a poll worker, but these materials are meant to assist you if that training is limited, or if you have any outstanding questions. They can also [walk you through](#) the process of becoming a poll worker.