

TAKING CHARGE OF ELECTION INTEGRITY: Citizen Participation

Working elections is a civic responsibility. Our elections can't happen without citizens—you, me, *us*—stepping up to do the work. And it's vitally important work that must be done right.

Citizen election workers are on the front lines of election integrity, making sure voting is honest and accurate. But not just at polling places once a year on Election Day.

Texas has up to 12 days of early in-person voting, depending on the election. Early voting by mail requires teams of workers to verify and process ballots. And elections take place all through the year—in addition to federal and state general elections, there are primary, local, and special elections, as well as runoffs. Every election needs honest, well-trained workers.

WHAT CAN CITIZENS DO?

WORK AT THE POLLS

Poll workers are “seasonal” hires paid by the county to work one or more days operating the polls and processing in-person voters. You can work during early voting, on Election Day, or both. Each polling place or vote center has a Presiding Judge, Alternate Judge, and Clerks.

Election Judges are in charge of polling places and are generally appointed by county political parties. Judges choose their own Clerks, but often the county elections office and/or political parties help recruit clerks. High school students 16-17 years old can also work as Clerks.

WORK ON THE EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD

Ballot Board members are appointed by county political parties and work as needed to process early voting ballots. They work in bipartisan teams to verify the validity of mail-in ballots and process them for tallying.

BE A WATCHER

Any time election activities are happening, watchers are allowed to observe election workers' activities: at the polls, on early voting ballot boards, and in central counting stations where votes are tallied. **Observing the election process is key to transparency and accountability.**

Watchers must be appointed by a candidate, political party, or ballot issue committee.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Contact your County Party and County Elections Office where you're registered to vote. Tell them you want to serve as an Election Judge or Clerk. If you don't hear back, follow up.

TRAINING IS A MUST

County election offices provide mandatory poll worker training that covers election laws and procedures specific to the county's voting system. The Secretary of State's office provides training resources for election workers and is developing a new online program for poll watchers. **Additional training is highly recommended for workers and watchers.**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION PROCESS

POSITION	APPOINTED BY	QUALIFICATIONS	PAID?
Election Judge	County Party	Registered voter in county	Yes
Election Clerk	Election Judge	Registered voter in county	Yes
Student Clerk	Election Judge	Student in county, age 16-17	Yes
Ballot Board	County Party	Registered voter in county	Yes
Poll Watcher	Party, Candidate, Issue PAC	Registered voter in county	No

TEXAS ELECTION WORKER RESOURCES

Texas Secretary of State Election Training

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/education-resources.shtml>

Texas SOS Election Judges and Clerks Handbook

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/judges-clerks-handbook.pdf>

Student Election Clerks

<https://www.sos.texas.gov/elections/pamphlets/seci.shtml>

Texas SOS Early Voting Ballot Board Handbook

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/ballot-board-handbook.pdf>

Texas SOS Poll Watchers Guide

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/pollwatchers-guide.pdf>

County Elections Offices

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml>