

# Work the polls



*Every two years – and usually far more often – a massive one-day work force must be recruited, trained, organized and mobilized. America’s poll workers number two million per federal election, nearly double the number of people who work for America’s largest private employer. In many areas, election officials are concerned that the volunteers they rely on-- many of them retirees-- grow older without any major national effort to recruit new volunteers.*

*This is where the young people of America come in! One solution to the widespread shortage of poll workers is to recruit **voting-age students** and **even teens who have not yet reached voting age** to serve on Election Day. Working at the polls is a great way for young people to have an authentic civic experience as part of the team that makes our voting process work!*

*College students and other young people can bring a lot of important strengths to the polling process. Young people are used to learning new things, which will help you keep up with changing voting rules and machinery. Most youth are comfortable with computers and new technologies and may bring skills that can solve technology-related problems with electronic polling equipment. Not to mention that your energy and enthusiasm will be great assets to help everyone get through a potentially long day at the polls!*



## REQUIREMENTS

*Generally speaking, it is a common requirement for poll workers to need to be registered to vote in the state in which they live. You may also need to be a resident of the precinct where you work as a poll worker.*

*However, some states allow students to act as poll workers even if they are not eligible to vote in that state (example: college students who vote absentee in their home state) and thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia have laws that allow students under the age of 18 to serve at the polls in some capacity.*

*Typically under-voting-age poll workers must be 16 or 17 years old and meet other requirements for poll workers such as citizenship and residency requirements.*

*In many states, poll workers are paid for their service either by the hour or a set amount for the day.*

*Typically poll workers must attend a few hours of training prior to their service.*

*If you think being a poll worker is something that you are interested in, most states have a box to check on your voter registration application to mark that you would like more information on being a poll worker. You can also check with your local elections bureau for information.*

*Also be sure to talk to your high school or college to see if they have a student poll worker program. These types of programs are becoming increasingly common and help connect students with training and may offer extra credit or flexibility with your school commitments to make it easier for you to work on Election Day.*