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2008 Professional Practices Program

THE CLOSER ELECTION JUDGE

Montgomery County, Maryland

Submitted by:

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The Closer Election Judge

A Service to Voters; A Path to Participation

Increasing numbers of election judges inquire about and plead for part-time hours' serving voters. Election directors and their operations staff continue to require and plead for an efficient return of all critical election materials on election night. From this intense desire, an idea was born, the Closer Election Judge, a part-time pollworker position. Closers, a solid success, are recruited from voters bringing unique knowledge, skills and abilities to serve their communities in smaller time blocks meanwhile supporting full-time pollworkers, exhausted from 16-18 hours of public service to hundreds of voters.

It's Election Night in Montgomery County, Maryland and election judges are busy serving the herd of evening rush hour voters. At the twelfth hour of service from All Day Election Judges, two fresh, well-trained election judges appear at each of 243 polling places, check in with the Chief Election Judges and assume their role as Closer Election Judges. With two hours of training experience under their belt and their pre-election day Monday night meeting with members of their election judge team behind them, the Closers are ready to begin. The Chief Election Judges are glad to see the Closers, ready for their assistance with rush-hour voters, relief breaks they provide to the all-day team members, support with line control, and finally, assistance with closing voting units and packing critical supplies before they RETURN ALL CRITICAL SUPPLIES to the Board of Elections.

Now, the polling place is officially closed. The Closers become the first-tier assistants paired with a Chief Election Judge to close voting equipment, pack critical supplies, fill out paperwork, load memory chips, to fill out their primary purpose, complete and timely return of critical materials to the Election Return Center.

By investing a \$75 stipend and 2 hours of training to a specific primary responsibility, that is, RETURNING ALL CRITICAL SUPPLIES on election night, both focus and commitment to successful completion of duty is considerably heightened. The objective is clear. The Closer and the entire Polling Place Team knows about the expectation of the position we have created out of necessity. How many times have you hoped all of the supplies are returned on time. How many times have you spent deploying personnel to investigate, secure and recover precious supplies. How many times have you waited for word from those in pursuit of critical items?

In the 2008 Presidential Primary Election, the Montgomery County Board of Elections launched the Closer Election Judge program. That same night the State declared a closing of polling places to be extended by 1 ½ hours due to icy weather. After the election, some 480+ Closer Election Judges arrived in vehicle after vehicle bringing critical supplies to the Election Return Center. The Closer Judges enthusiastically declared they liked the part-time position, would return as judges for the Presidential General Election and thanked us for this part-time opportunity to participate in the democratic process! Some said they would like to become full-time Election Judges, most were content to continue as Closers. Many reasons for taking on this responsibility unfolded. Busy persons were delighted they could put in their work day, then serve as an Election Judge Closer in the evening. Experienced pollworkers who did not want to quit serving, could continue to serve for fewer hours. Students with heavy work and study schedules were thrilled to become a part of the democratic

process. Voters who wanted to get a taste of “inside” elections, but felt uncertain, were glad to take this opportunity to serve, if only for a few hours. Today, additional small elections have occurred and these tenets continue to hold true.

The Closer Election Judge opportunity is detailed on our website (see Election Judge Questionnaire), emphasized at our numerous Community Outreach events and, Closer Election Judges spread the word about their interesting experience. The Board of Elections benefits from the increasing number of trained participants. Adding a part-time category of pollworkers is a success, it's a working opportunity for pollworkers to phase in or phase out or work part-time in the world of voter service. The prime importance to Election Administrators and Boards is the timely return of ALL critical materials on election night with a minimum of stress and resource allocation.

Attachments 3

- Election Judge Questionnaire - Part-time check box
- Website - Closer Judge (Assistant Chief)
- Community Outreach Hand-out - New Closing Judge Positions Available

Montgomery County Board of Elections ELECTION JUDGE QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO:



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS
101 MONROE ST
ROCKVILLE MD 20897-5044

Dear Voter:
 The Montgomery County Board of Elections is recruiting qualified individuals to serve as Election Judges/Poll Workers. You have been contacted in the hope that you will consider helping the community by serving as an Election Judge. If you are interested, please complete and return the form. Thank you.

PART A: PLEASE FILL OUT

Full-time
 Part-time
 (Please select one)

Have you been an Election Judge within the last 2 years? YES NO

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Street Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home # : _____ Work # : _____ ext _____ Cell # : _____

E-mail: _____

PART B: PLEASE ANSWER

1. Are you a registered voter in Maryland? YES NO

2. Do you read, write and speak the English language? YES NO

3. Are you available to work for any of the upcoming elections: YES NO

(If yes, please make your selection from the "drop-down" box below.)

(To select a choice, please click on the "down" arrow. Then, click on your choice.)

4. Are you a candidate for or do you currently hold public or political party office?
(Includes municipal officials and central committee members) YES NO

5. Are you a chairman, campaign manager or treasurer for a political or candidate committee? YES NO

6. Do you read, write and speak any other language, including sign language? YES NO

If yes, what language? _____



PART C: PLEASE PLEDGE

To ensure fair and honest election results, I certify that:

1. I will arrive at my assigned polling place by 6:00 a.m. for full time Judges or 6:30 p.m. for Closing Judges on Election Day and remain until excused by Chief Judge.
2. I will NOT leave the polling room/precinct, for any reason, anytime during Election Day while the polls are open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
3. I agree to be courteous, respectful and to assist all voters regardless of national origin, physical challenge or proficiency in the English language.
4. I agree to wear the name tag supplied by the Montgomery County Board of Elections at all times while performing my duties as an Election Judge.
5. I agree to read and study the Election Judge Training Manual and any additional information. I will attend Election Judge Training so that I am prepared to fulfill my responsibility to conduct the election according to federal, state and local election laws and policies. I will attend a training class as scheduled and the Monday Night pre-election meeting.
6. I understand that I am responsible for the security of election equipment and supplies and I will handle and monitor all such equipment and supplies exactly as instructed. These materials (all that apply) include Touch Screen Voting Units, Electronic Poll Books, Passwords, Integrity documents, Supervisor Cards, PC Memory Cards, Encoders, Keys, Voter Access Cards, Precinct Registers, Voter Authority Cards, Provisional Ballot Applications, and Provisional Ballots both voted and unvoted.
7. I agree to complete all documentation required by federal, state and local election laws for my assigned positions responsibilities as accurately and completely as possible including voter canvasses, Election Day logs and any other documentation designed to reconstruct the election or to document that the number of persons appearing to vote and the number of votes cast guarantee a fair and honest outcome.
8. I agree to report immediately to the Chief Judge any malfunction or possible tampering of voting equipment, unusual or suspicious behavior occurring in the polling room or any other event or occurrence that may threaten the accurate gathering or sanctity of the vote.
9. Should a personal emergency arise that causes me to abandon the position of Election Judge, I will inform the Chief Judge immediately, I understand that I will not be permitted to return to the polling room in the capacity of an Election Judge. I understand that at the discretion of the Board of Elections I may forfeit any stipend(s) due.
10. I understand I will be relieved by a Chief Judge or Voting Operation Judge of the same political party several times during the day, during slow voting periods for meals and breaks as determined by the Chief Judge.
11. I agree NOT to bring newspapers, magazines or other public information materials into the polling room.
12. I agree not to use my personal cell phone for personal calls, text messages or web browsing while performing my duties as an Election Judge in the polling room.

PART D: ELECTION JUDGE OATH

(Your signature is required. Questionnaire will not be processed without your signature)

Please Print Name and Sign.



I, _____

a registered voter residing in Maryland at the address given, under the penalty of perjury, do swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States; and that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of Maryland, and support the Constitution and laws thereof; and that I will, to the best of my skill and judgment, diligently and faithfully, without partiality or prejudice, execute the office of Election Judge for Montgomery County in the State of Maryland, according to the Constitution and laws of this state from the date of my appointment until (thirteen weeks prior) to the next primary election unless excused for good cause by the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NOTICE TO ELECTION JUDGE APPLICANT

In the event you are selected to serve as an Election Judge in Montgomery County, the signed oath above will constitute your commission. Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 33, §10-206(f), Election Judges are required to attend a training class about legal procedures and duties and responsibilities. A stipend is paid for each election day served. Election Judges must attend training and work on Election Day or as an authorized Standby Judge to receive any compensation. You will be officially notified of your appointment and assigned to a training class. Election Judges must provide a social security number as identification and for payroll processing upon request.

- GENERAL INFORMATION 240-777-8533
- DEMOCRATS 240-777-8570
- REPUBLICANS & OTHERS 240-777-8575
- MD RELAY..... 711
- FAX 240-777-8578
- E-mail Democrats@montgomerycountymd.gov
Republicans@montgomerycountymd.gov
- WEB SITE www.777vote.org
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Voting Operations Judge: Perform the following duties, as assigned and directed by the Chief Judge:

- Attend training (3 hours)
- Attend the team meeting on Monday evening before election
- Arrive at the polling place at 6:00 am on Election Day
- Assist with overall operations of the polling place as directed by the Chief Judge
- Assist with the opening and closing of the polling place as needed
- Serve voters casting a Provisional Ballot by:
 - Controlling Provisional Ballots and related materials
 - Assisting all provisional voters
 - Preparing all Provisional Voting documentation
- Check in voters by:
 - Set up the Electronic Poll Books
 - Greeting Voters

Use the Electronic Poll Books to qualify voters to use the electronic voting units, printing Voter Authority Cards and encoding the Voter Access Cards

- Ensure that each voter signs the required documentation
- Assist voters in the voting process by:
 - Managing voters in line
 - Assisting voters with special needs
 - Escorting voters to the voting unit for security reasons

Closer Judge (Assistant Chief): Perform the following duties, as assigned and directed by the Chief Judge:

- Attend training (2 hours)
- Attend the team meeting on Monday evening before election
- Arrive at the polling place at 6:30 PM on Election Day
- Assist with overall operations of the polling place as directed by the Chief Judge
- Under the supervision of the Chief Judge, close down the voting units after the polls close, prepare and post required reports, where appropriate, transmit results to the Board of Elections via telephone modem. Help lift units on storage rack and lock down.
- At the direction of the Chief Judge, return critical materials to the Board of Elections on Election night (requires two judges registered with different parties riding in one car).

New Closing Judge Positions Available

What is a Closing Judge?

The Closing Judge position is new this year, and is responsible for assisting the Chief Judges with closing down the Voting Units and for delivering the critical materials back to the Board of Elections at the end of the Election Day.

What are the hours for a Closing Judge?

The Closing Judges are expected to arrive at their assigned polling place no later than 6:30pm. Their duties conclude once the critical materials have been returned to the Board of Elections. Closing Judges also need to attend a pre-election meeting the Monday before Election Day.

What are the responsibilities of the Closing Judge?

- ❖ Assist voters as directed by Chief Judge.
- ❖ Assist in doing all tasks associated with closing each Voting Unit including completing documents, transmitting results by modem if applicable.
- ❖ Transport the critical materials back to the Board of Elections.
- ❖ Closers must agree to be responsible for this drive even in inclement weather.

What training is required?

Closing Judges are required by law to take a training class. The training is about two hours and includes information applicable to all Election Judges, specifically closing procedures.

Are Closing Judges paid?

Yes! All Election Judges receive a stipend for both training and working Election Day. For service as a Closing Judge you would receive \$30 for training and \$75 for the pre-election meeting and Election Day.

How do I become a Closing Election Judge?

First, you must be a registered voter in Maryland. Second, complete an Election Judge Questionnaire (make sure to indicate your interest in the Closing position on the questionnaire) located at www.777vote.org and mail it to address on the website. You may also fax it to 240-777-8578. Third, you will be assigned a training date and once training is complete, you will be officially qualified to be a Closing Election Judge.