2009 Professional Practices Program

Ohio’s Poll Worker Training Initiative

Ohio Secretary of State

Submitted by:

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Ohio’s Poll Worker Training Initiative

Proper training is essential for poll workers in an elections environment that is constantly changing and complex. Ohio Secretary Jennifer Brunner states: “Poll workers are the foot soldiers of our democracy.”

Prior to 2008, there was a lack of uniformity in poll worker training at the county level. This created inconsistent application of polling place procedures and, potentially, of the state’s election laws. In response, the Secretary of State prepared training materials, training programs and best practices to assist boards of elections with their poll worker training. This initiative provided the most comprehensive training program ever developed for poll worker training.

First, county boards of elections were given Secretary of State Directive 2008-77 which provided boards with the outline for the minimum requirements and materials for their poll worker training program. The Directive may be viewed at: http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/Upload/elections/directives/2008/Dir2008-77.pdf

Each county board of elections was required to make a part of its poll worker training curriculum, at a minimum, all the following Secretary of State produced materials:

- Poll Worker Manual of Instructions
- Poll Worker Reminder Sheet
- Presiding Judge Reminder Sheet
- Poll Worker Quick Reference Guide

Each of Ohio’s approximate 45,000 poll workers were provided with a copy of the Poll Worker Quick Reference Guide which was incorporated into county poll worker training sessions. In addition, at least three copies were provided in each precinct/polling place kit provided for each of the state’s 11,107 precincts for use on Election Day. The precinct/polling place kit also contained all the required postings to be displayed in each of the state’s 6,077 polling locations, flags to be placed outside the entrance to the polling locations, Secretary of State’s prescribed election forms, poll lists, poll books, contingency plans/emergency contact list, provisional voter notice, precinct voting location guide, payroll statements, extra supplies for the voting equipment and other election supplies.
All of the training materials were available to the county boards of elections by accessing the BOE Extranet. The BOE Extranet is an internal Web site that can be accessed by all 88 county boards of election. This site allows the Secretary of State's office to provide access to training materials, instructions, forms and other elections related documents. The county boards of elections may access the BOE Extranet through a secure Web site which requires a password to logon. This access provided boards with the ability to review the material on their time schedule and prepare for training prior to receiving the printed materials.

In addition to these materials produced by the Secretary of State's office, the Secretary of State's office provided the state's first Online Poll Worker Training Course to supplement the in-person training. The course was designed to follow the Poll Worker Manual of Instructions which allowed poll workers to review the course at their convenience. The course allowed them to practice setting up a polling place, review procedures and test their knowledge of what they had learned at training. The system allowed county boards of elections to know how many poll workers had accessed the program and how frequently. Poll workers in 35 counties accessed the dedicated Web site through their county boards of elections before the March primary election and poll workers from 24 counties accessed the training course for the November general election.

The Online Poll Worker Training Course was also available for the public to view through the Secretary of State's Web site which allowed persons interested in becoming a poll worker to review the course and decide if the person might be interested in becoming a poll worker. The Online Poll Worker Training Course may be viewed at: http://www.ohioelectionstraining.com/.
Poll Worker Manual

Jennifer Brunner
Ohio Secretary of State
The information in this guide is the basic information all poll workers need to know about Ohio law and voting. Your board of elections may provide you with more instructions that are specific to your county. The Ohio Secretary of State's office has provided to boards a more detailed Poll Worker Training Manual that should help answer questions you may have after reading this Quick Reference Guide. You may also contact your local board of elections office with questions.
SECRETARY BRUNNER UNVEILS POLL WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM

2/7/2008

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- In an effort to improve and standardize the training of poll workers around the state, Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner has unveiled an online poll-worker training program available to all county boards of elections in the state.

“Poll workers are the foot soldiers of our democracy,” said Brunner, Ohio’s chief elections officer. “Proper training is essential for poll workers in an elections environment that has become more complex.”

The online training program, paid for partly with grant funding through the Pew Charitable Trusts, is free and voluntary for county elections boards and is intended to provide a uniform supplement to elections boards’ current poll-worker training program.

The public can view the training program at www.ohioelectiontraining.com. Those preparing to become poll workers, however, will participate in the program through a dedicated Web site through their county elections board.

The online training program provides basic information that applies to all poll workers including voter identification requirements and instructions regarding provisional balloting as well as information on voting systems used in Ohio.

The $188,000 online effort was funded, in part, by $128,000 from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The state of Ohio also contributed $60,000 to the effort.

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Ohio Pollworker Training

Welcome. This site provides access to the online pollworker training program that many county boards of election are making available to poll workers. Although boards of election have added tracking features to confirm pollworker participation and some of the functionality is slightly different in each county, the content is exactly the same as that being used in all 88 counties.

- I am a member of the public - click here
- I want to be a pollworker - click here
- I am an official pollworker - click here

Please note: This course is best viewed in Firefox 2.0 or Internet Explorer 5.1 or higher.

To access all the features of this course, Adobe Acrobat Reader and Flash Player are required. Most computers come with these applications pre-installed. But if you have problems viewing any portion of the course, please click on "Site Navigation Tips" at the bottom of the screen inside the course for links to download these applications.

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