25th Annual National Conference
San Diego, California

2009 Professional Practices Program

Bridging the Generation Gap
Sarasota County, FL

Submitted by:
Pamela Cutrone
Poll Worker Coordinator
Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections
101 S. Washington Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34236
(941) 861-8640
pcutrone@sarasotavotes.com
Bridging the Generation Gap

In an area where the population base is predominately senior citizens with limited technology exposure, Sarasota County had the challenge of developing an energetic poll worker base with strong technical skills to meet the changing elections landscape. With the introduction of laptops and cell phones in the polling place and changes in voting systems, it is imperative our poll workers have current and adaptable skills with electronic equipment.

To address these issues, the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections office designed a program to recruit students to work the polls on Election Day. This program’s purpose is to create, maintain and integrate a reliable, energetic and experienced pool of precinct workers to meet the Election Day human resources needs. At the same time, the program engages high school students in the electoral process and instills in them a sense of civic responsibility and community service.

In the beginning, we requested assistance from the Sarasota County School Board to establish a relationship between the elections office and the high schools. Administrative and Instructional staff in the schools have been very supportive of the program and helpful in informing and recruiting eligible students. Guidance counselors and social studies teachers are generally the school contact for the poll worker department. The relationship between our office, the school board, and individual teachers is cooperative and courteous.

Elections office personnel regularly visit local high schools and college campuses to register students to vote and engage them in the electoral process. They talk about the student poll worker program and distribute a flyer to promote it. The flyer contains basic information and directs interested students to our Web site, where they can complete and print a student poll worker application and W-4 form.

Once completed paperwork is received and reviewed by our office, the student is contacted by letter, with an assignment and training date.

Students whose paperwork is incomplete are typically notified by e-mail indicating what information is needed to complete the process. Only students whose paperwork is complete are assigned to a training class and to a precinct.

Training classes for students are typically held on Saturdays and school holidays to avoid conflict with the regular school schedule. We also may have as many as four training sessions, in separate weeks, to accommodate student schedules.
Students who have worked previous elections are permitted to attend “regular” poll worker classes if needed. Most students are more comfortable attending the student classes with friends and their familiarity with electronic devices allows them to proceed through that portion of training more quickly than the older poll workers.

While every effort is made to assign students to a precinct on Election Day, they are assigned on an “as needed” basis like other poll workers. Some students may be called upon to work in other positions on Election Day if not needed in the precincts.

In the 2008 Presidential Election, we trained 255 students to work at the polls. Only 11 of those did not work for various personal reasons (illness etc.), the “drop” rate being approximately equal to that of adult poll workers. This was a significant “plus” to many of the precincts in areas with a younger demographic, where working people generally are not available to participate as poll workers and where typically most of the students reside.

Overall, the response to the program continues to be overwhelmingly positive from the school board and school staff, the voting public, and the older, more experienced poll workers. Students are knowledgeable about and comfortable with technology, have the strength and endurance for the long day, and share their youthful energy with the older poll workers.
Student Poll Workers

STRENGTHEN YOUR COMMUNITY

Be part of the election process.

Become a student poll worker!

Earn $150
Must be registered or preregistered to vote in Sarasota County
(Click here for Florida Voter Registration Application)

1. Click below to access and print all required forms:
   - Student Poll Worker Guidelines
   - Poll Worker Application (complete online, print, sign & date)
   - W-4 Form (complete highlighted areas online, print, sign & date)

2. Copy your signed Social Security Card and Florida Driver License:

3. Return completed forms and copies to:
   Supervisor of Elections
   PIW Department
   PO Box 4184
   Sarasota, FL 34230-4184

4. Click below for information regarding training:
   Class Schedule
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KATHY DENT
Supervisor of Elections
Sarasota County, Florida

STUDENT POLL WORKER GUIDELINES

1. Read Student Poll Worker Guidelines and complete application
2. Complete W-4 Form (highlighted areas only)
3. Copy of your signed Social Security Card and FL Driver License

To sign up visit our web site @ www.sarasotavotes.com
Click on Student Poll Workers

Return completed forms and copies to:
Supervisor of Elections
PW Department
PO Box 4194
Sarasota, FL 34230-4194

Attend student poll worker training class:
Date & Location to be announced

School Board
Teachers & Student Advisory Board
Student Recruitment
Precinct Assignment
Training
Election Day

STUDENT POLL WORKER CONFIRMATION OF COMPLETION OF TRAINING AND ASSIGNMENT

KATHY DENT
Supervisor of Elections
Sarasota County, FL

This confirms that:

(please print name of student)

Attended the four hour state mandated student poll worker training workshop on:

(please print date)

Authorized Signature:

Parent Signature:

Note: Student, please return signed and dated form to sponsoring teacher(s) following Election Day.

1. If you lose a poll worker assignment card, you must report it to your supervisor.
2. Contact your supervisor with any other questions you may have.

Form W-4 (2009)

Form W-4 (2009) is valid for all elections in Sarasota County.

Important: Property tax is not applicable to this form.

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