



County Poll Worker Information

Prepared for the Countywide
City Manager Meeting

September 1, 2004

**Steven P. Rodermund
Registrar of Voters**

**Neal Kelley
Chief Deputy, Registrar of Voters**

Attachment I
**County Employee Volunteers as
Election Day Poll Workers Program**

Background:

On January 8, 2002, the Board of Supervisors adopted the County Employee Volunteers as Election Day Poll Workers Program (County Poll Worker Program). Its primary objective is to provide a pool of trained, skilled and motivated County employees to serve as poll workers on Election Day in order to ensure that the polls are adequately staffed. The program's inaugural election was the 2002 March Primary Election. The goal for the 2002 March Primary Election was to recruit 500 County poll workers with the expectation that it would ultimately be increased to 10%, or approximately 1,700 County poll workers from the County workforce, for all future elections.

The County fell short of its initial goal, netting 307 volunteers for 2002 March Primary Election. In subsequent elections, the County, again, fell far short of its goal of 1,700 County poll workers, netting only 840 for the 2002 November General Election and 486 in the recent 2004 March Primary Election.

The Board, as part of their direction on January 8, 2002, directed the Registrar of Voters to closely monitor the County Poll Worker Program and evaluate its effectiveness and recommend appropriate changes based on the outcomes of the evaluation.

Proposed Intent:

The County Poll Worker Program is intended to meet the Board of Supervisor's primary objective to assist the Registrar of Voters in obtaining a stable pool of poll workers for Election Day in order to ensure that each polling place operates efficiently and courteously, while complying with all election laws.

Objectives:

The primary objective of the amended County Poll Worker Program is to increase the participation of County employees by providing two scheduling alternatives for their consideration. By offering both a Full Day shift and a Split Day shift, as options, the Registrar of Voters hopes to increase the participation of County employees on Election Day. This amendment is expected to assist in meeting the programs initial goal of providing a sufficient number of County employee volunteers as Election Day poll workers, while increasing the chances of being able to provide at least one County employee at each polling place throughout the day on Election Day.

Additionally, it is the objective of this program to provide a pool of highly trained individuals to serve on the Registrar of Voters' "A-Team," which backfills poll worker cancellations at undeterminable locations. County employees will also be utilized as

Election Day area coordinators. These individuals provide oversight to a fixed number of polling locations throughout the day.

To assist the Registrar of Voters in meeting a goal of having 10% of the County workforce serve as poll workers on Election Day, the County Executive Officer will present each department head with a target number of volunteers needed from each perspective department and will work to ensure that each target is being met.

The utilization of County employees to help staff polling places is designed to achieve the following advantages:

- Provide for a consistent pool of staff at polling places on Election Day that can be depended on and built upon for each election;
- Increase and strengthen the availability of bilingual poll workers; and
- Provide the ability to place more Election Day coordinators in the field to handle difficult situations at the polls and to assist in poll closing procedures as necessary.

Eligibility Criteria:

Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and registered voters. The ability to read and speak English is mandatory. The ability to speak Chinese, Korean, Spanish or Vietnamese is desirable.

In addition to this criteria, County employees must obtain appropriate permission from their direct supervisor prior to training.

Polling Place Options and Hours of Service:

The polls are open to voters from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. County poll workers have two options from which they can choose to serve as a poll worker on Election Day.

Option 1 – Full Day

The first, and most desirable option, is for the poll worker to serve the entire shift, which would begin at 6 a.m., allowing sufficient time to adequately prepare the polling place, and conclude by 9:30 p.m. [noting that the time it takes to properly close the polls will vary from polling place to polling place]. Each poll worker is required to stay until the polls close, the necessary paperwork is complete and is signed out by the poll inspector. The poll inspector and one other poll worker are required to transport the voted ballots and supplies to a collection center for return to the Registrar of Voters office.

Each County poll worker, who chooses option one, will receive a total of 90-minutes of break time during the approximately fourteen (14) hours of service.

Option 2 – Split Shifts

County poll workers will have the option to work one of two split shifts, noting that certain restrictions will be in place to guarantee that the entire shift is adequately covered. Shifts have been split into a morning shift, which begins at 6 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m., assuming that the person signed up for the afternoon shift has arrived, and an evening shift which begins at 3 p.m. and concludes at 9:30 p.m. [again, noting that the time it takes to properly close the polls will vary from polling place to polling place].

County employees opting to work the 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. 9-hour shift (morning shift) must recruit a "partner" to work the 3 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. 6 1/2-hour shift (evening shift). In the event the evening shift poll worker fails to show up and relieve the poll worker from the morning shift, the morning shift poll worker agrees to stay and complete the evening shift.

Poll workers that opt for the split shift will receive a total of forty-five (45) minutes of break time during their shift.

The Split Shift option is modeled after the Los Angeles County Employee Poll Worker Program and has been modified based on information provided to the Registrar of Voters by current Los Angeles County program administrators.

Training:

County poll workers will be required to attend one mandatory 3-to-4-hour training class that will include information and materials on County election policies and procedures as well as how to properly operate the electronic voting devices. As necessary, County employees will be released, on County time, to attend this training without the loss of compensation. In 2002, County employees had requested that they be provided the flexibility to attend an alternative training during non-working hours. The Registrar has modified the program to allow for this and has found that this flexibility has enhanced its ability to adequately accommodate each individual's desire and schedule.

In previous elections, the Registrar of Voters conducted approximately 350, 3-to-4-hour training classes during the month preceding a countywide election. The Registrar is looking to expand the number of opportunities for County and non-County poll worker training to approximately 800 training classes, which will be implemented for the November 2004 General Election. Options regarding training dates, times and locations will be provided to each employee who participates in the program. Each County employee, who completes the required training, will receive a \$20 stipend.

Poll Worker Position and Duties:

Each polling place is required to be staffed with a minimum of four (4) poll workers, which includes a poll inspector who serves as the lead poll worker for that specific polling place.

Duties include setting up the polling place, directing voters to sign in, issuing ballots and/or access codes, explaining how to use the direct record electronic voting system, answering voters' procedural questions and closing the polls at the end of the voting day. County poll workers will be provided a full description of each poll workers duties and responsibilities during the training sessions.

Election Day Assignment of Location:

The assignment of the polling location to be staffed on Election Day will be based on the areas of most critical need (i.e. polls located where less than three poll workers are assigned or polls needing bilingual assistance). It is anticipated that, in virtually every case, the assigned poll location would be within ten (10) miles of the employee's residence. This may not be the case, however, for County poll workers who volunteer to be on the "A-Team," which covers cancellations at undeterminable locations.

Compensation:

Each County employee who faithfully fulfills the agreed upon shift will receive their regular workday compensation for serving on Election Day as a poll worker, inclusive of any special pay (i.e., premiums, shift differentials, etc).

Each County employee will have the option to choose from one of two shift options for working at a polling place. The options, as stated earlier are as follows:

1. Full Day – 6 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
2. Split Shift – 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Morning Shift) or 3 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (Evening Shift)

Typically, option one will result in a 12-14-hour workday. County employees choosing option one will receive their regular workday compensation, as well as an additional \$50 stipend.

County employees opting to fill one of the split shifts option will receive their regular workday compensation and an additional \$25 stipend. Should the County poll worker who is scheduled to work the evening shift fail to show up, thereby forcing the morning shift poll worker to cover both shifts, a full day stipend of \$50 will be paid.

Each County employee will sign a release form stating any hours provided to support a polling place over and above those associated with their regular workday compensation are strictly volunteer hours and that the employee will not claim these hours as overtime.

Acceptance as a Volunteer:

Acceptance as a County poll worker is contingent upon meeting the eligibility criteria stated above and whether or not the potential volunteer has a critical job assignment (i.e.,

staffing a 24/7 operation, a single person assignment, or a crucial work load to be determined by the potential volunteer and their direct supervisor).

Each County Department is expected to allow a sufficient number of its staff, as determined by the CEO, to participate in all elections, provided there are no significant impacts to the department operation.

This program will continue to be evaluated for its effectiveness and appropriately amended based on the outcomes of the evaluation.