HOW TO BECOME A POLL WORKER

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Florida
Poll Worker Toolkit
Disclaimer

This guide provides basic information and should be used as a reference only. It is not a substitute for legal advice, and it does not purport to provide a complete recitation of the relevant local, state or federal laws. The law changes frequently. The information provided may not be current and may not apply to your specific set of facts or circumstances. If you require legal advice, please consult your attorney.
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VIII. Be a Proactive Poll Worker
I. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a poll worker in Florida. By coming this far, it’s clear that you cherish the principle of “one person, one vote” — a bedrock of our democracy. At the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law (BC) and the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCR), we also cherish that principle and therefore work every day to preserve and protect the right to vote for every eligible citizen. Poll workers are an essential part of the voting process. Informed and engaged poll workers contribute to that process, benefit their communities, and help ensure the right to vote is not unduly impeded. Indeed, a lack of qualified poll workers (different from poll watchers) has been a serious impediment to voter access. When states face difficulties attracting and hiring qualified poll workers, polling places are often understaffed or mismanaged, resulting in long lines, the spreading of misinformation, and even incidents of bias and intimidation. Additionally, poll workers are often the only election officials with whom voters interact, so they play an important role in how voters experience and think about the voting process.

To address these issues, we have teamed up with the Association of Pro Bono Counsel (APBCo) to create state-specific guides to encourage qualified candidates to become poll workers — poll workers who know the relevant laws and processes, how to assist and troubleshoot effectively, and how to help voters have a positive experience on Election Day.

This toolkit for Florida provides an overview of the process for becoming a poll worker. We hope it is useful to you as both a technical and practical guide, including pointers we have gleaned from experience. It is NOT a substitute for training materials provided by the state, county or local government. Instead, it is meant to equip qualified people like you with the information you need to become a poll worker and enjoy the important job of serving your fellow voters well. We hope this guide encourages you to join the movement and make a difference!
II. Overview of Florida’s Election System

Approximately 13.7 million active voters are registered in Florida. Because poll workers manage the polling stations throughout the state, they have a significant impact on voters’ experiences. They can make voters feel welcome with a friendly face, help them get to work on time, and ensure their vote is properly counted, even if there are unexpected difficulties or misunderstandings. A well-staffed polling place will run smoothly and efficiently, allowing the maximum number of eligible voters to cast their votes with minimal inconvenience.

Unfortunately, Election Day polling place problems that prevent voting are not uncommon in Florida. One study estimated that long lines in Florida discouraged as many as 200,000 people from casting ballots in the 2012 presidential election. During elections in 2016, voters were reportedly turned away improperly when a polling place ran out of ballots. In one of Florida’s most populous counties, nearly all voting machines were temporarily dysfunctional, a problem that was only completely resolved by 5:00 pm.

The importance of the poll workers cannot be overstated. This job is vital to the voting process and essential to the well-being of our democracy. Thus, recruiting qualified candidates and training them properly is essential to minimizing mistakes, hassle and wait time.

This guide presents straightforward information about Florida poll worker positions, including job descriptions, training requirements, qualifications, compensation, and details about the application process. Subsequently, there is an in-depth look at common polling place issues, along with the appropriate responses, to demonstrate how to adequately protect voter rights.

- Part III explains the roles and duties of poll workers on Election Day. It additionally details the qualifications needed to become a poll worker under Florida election law.
- Part IV describes the process for applying to become a poll worker.
- Part V outlines the process after you file the application to become poll worker. This includes how to make sure your application is properly filed, tips to overcome objections, and the timeline of the appointment process.
- Part VI provides a list of available resources for poll worker training.
- Part VII details some hands-on issues that a poll worker should be particularly prepared to handle, with tips on how to respond.
- Part VIII describes steps a poll worker should take to make voters feel more comfortable in the polling place.

Florida statutory law is cited throughout this guide. Be aware that counties throughout the state do handle some aspects of election work differently, and local rules should also be consulted because this guide is not an exhaustive survey of every county. However, Miami-Dade County information is included as illustrative, particularly where it differs from statutory law (due to its size and depth of materials).
III. Description of Roles

a. Qualifications

To be a poll worker:

You must be able to read and legibly write in English.

You must be a registered voter or preregistered to vote in the county in which you serve. In order to register to vote, you must be:

✓ A citizen of the United States;
✓ 16 years of age or older; AND
✓ A Florida resident.

You are ineligible to vote if:

✓ You have been legally judged ineligible to vote for mental incapacitation;
✓ You have yet to complete an outstanding sentence for a felony conviction, including incarceration, probation, parole, and payment of legal financial obligations. Note, once you have completed your sentence, you are eligible to register to vote.

You must take an oath to perform one’s duties according to the law and to attempt to prevent all fraud, deceit, or abuse in conducting the election.

You are ineligible to become a poll worker if you are an opposed candidate running for any office.

Inspectors, clerks, and deputy sheriffs must attend the mandatory training provided by the supervisor of elections, including the trainings for duties/responsibilities and disability sensitivity, prior to every election cycle. The following are the minimum hours of training required by law:

✓ Three hours for Clerks
✓ Two hours for Inspectors

Furthermore, clerks must demonstrate a working knowledge of the laws and procedures relating to voter registration, voting system operation, balloting and polling place procedures, and skills related to problem solving and conflict resolution.

Miami-Dade County

There are additional qualifications to serve in Miami-Dade County. You must:

✓ Possess excellent customer service skills;
✓ Be respectful of all voters;
✓ Be able to represent the county in a professional manner;
✓ Be able to arrive at the assigned polling place at 5:30 a.m. on Election Day;
✓ Be able to work more than 12 hours\(^\text{16}\);
✓ Be able to assist with pre- and post-election setup (equipment, supplies, etc.) and closing procedures as necessary;
✓ Remain nonpartisan while at the polls;
✓ Possess transportation to and from the polls; AND
✓ Have a valid email address.

Once your poll worker application is processed and all information is verified, a representative from the Elections Department’s Scheduling Section will contact you regarding New Poll Worker Training. You may also contact the Elections Department at (305) 499-8448 to reschedule any classes you cannot attend. Any poll worker who is not fully trained before an election is not eligible to work.\(^\text{17}\)

Although statutory law requires three- and two-hour training sessions for clerks and inspectors, respectively, Miami-Dade County has lengthened the training session for both positions to four hours.\(^\text{18}\) You must complete the entire four-hour class and fill out the sign-in sheet in order to attain credit for attendance.\(^\text{19}\)

The following image is an example of a written oath for Miami-Dade County:
OATH TO BE TAKEN BY CLERK OF ELECTION

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE

I, ___________________________, Clerk of Miami-Dade Election held at Ben Sheppard Elementary in Voting Precinct No.(s) 321/322, in the County of Miami-Dade, and State of Florida, on the 15th day of March, 2016, do solemnly swear that I will perform the duties of Clerk of Election according to Law, and will endeavor to prevent all fraud, deceit or abuse in conducting the same. I further swear (or affirm) that I have not been paid for working in support or opposition of any candidate or proposal appearing on the ballot.

__________________________
Clerk

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 15th day of March, 2016.

__________________________
Jane Wade
Assistant Clerk or Inspector

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY INSPECTORS AND ASSISTANT CLERK OF ELECTION

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE

We, the undersigned Inspectors and Assistant Clerk of Miami-Dade Election held at Ben Sheppard Elementary in Voting Precinct No.(s) 321/322 in the County of Miami-Dade, and the State of Florida, on this 15th day of March, 2016 do solemnly swear that we will perform the duties of Inspectors and Assistant Clerk of Election according to Law, and will endeavor to prevent all fraud, deceit or abuse in conducting the same. We further swear (or affirm) that we have not been paid for working in support or opposition of any candidate or proposal appearing on the ballot.

1. Nicholas Lee
2. Polina Powell
3. Brianna Flowers
4. Dorothy Brown
5. ____________________________
6. ____________________________
7. ____________________________
8. ____________________________
9. ____________________________
10. ____________________________
11. ____________________________
12. ____________________________
13. ____________________________
14. ____________________________
15. ____________________________
16. ____________________________
17. ____________________________
18. ____________________________
19. ____________________________
20. ____________________________
21. ____________________________

Inspectors  Inspectors  Inspectors

__________________________
Jane Wade
Assistant Clerk

__________________________
Susana White
Clerk

NOTE: Oaths of Clerk, Assistant Clerk, and Inspectors may be taken before any officer authorized to administer oaths, or before one of the persons chosen as Inspectors.

Figure 1: Miami-Dade County Oath to be Taken by Clerk of Election
TIP: Make sure you are registered to vote before you file your application by checking the Florida Department of State’s “Voter Information Lookup” website at: https://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus

Figure 2: To Check If You Are A Registered Voter

b. Categories of Poll Workers; Responsibilities and Duties

Florida law requires poll workers to be appointed in each county to serve as either clerks or inspectors. There may be differences across counties with respect to qualifications, training and compensation. This section describes the duties of clerks, inspectors, poll deputies, and election/tech specialists under Florida law and as practiced in Miami-Dade County. Florida residents should visit the website of their local supervisor of elections for additional county-specific information. You can find your County Supervisor of Elections online here: https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections/
The term “Poll Worker” encompasses all of the roles described in this section: Clerks, Inspectors, Poll Deputies, and, in Miami-Dade County, Election/Tech Specialists.

1. **CLERK**

   **Florida Law**

   Clerks both (i) ensure that other poll workers carry out their duties and responsibilities and (ii) prepare and manage each polling place. On Election Day, a clerk should arrive at his or her polling place by 6:00 a.m., open the site to the public at 7 a.m., and keep polls open until 7 p.m. on the same day. Before opening, he or she makes the polling place user-friendly by, for example, arranging the furniture, supplies, and voting equipment. Unless the supervisor of elections does so, the clerk designates the “no-solicitation zone” within which there is no contact with voters, except by poll workers in the course of their ordinary duties. Individuals are prohibited from campaigning and seeking an opinion or fact in the no-solicitation zone. Should there be any disturbance, the clerk is authorized to maintain order, which may involve directing poll deputies to take appropriate action.

   Clerks verify voter ID at polling places, including the voter’s signature. If the voter’s ID contains their signature, the clerk will compare it to the signature in the precinct register. If the voter’s ID does not contain their signature, clerks verify signatures by asking voters to sign an electronic pad or in the space provided on the precinct register and then comparing the voters’ signatures with those in the precinct register. Clerks also assist with the administration of election results by drafting and signing a certificate of results upon completion of all counts in all races at each precinct.

   **Miami-Dade County**

   In Miami-Dade County, there is one clerk at each polling place, and each clerk’s duties are prescribed by the supervisor of elections. Clerks in Miami-Dade County must arrive at the polling place by 5:30 a.m. on Election Day. Before the polls open, clerks assign inspector positions, complete required paperwork, and administer the oath to all poll workers (except the poll deputy and elections specialist). While polls are open, they rotate the inspectors’ positions, manage voter flow and customer service, assign lunch and break times in accordance with election turnout, and resolve issues on site or relay them to Election Central. After the polls close, they return supplies and complete the required paperwork.

   Miami-Dade County also has assistant clerks. The night before an election, the assistant clerk reports to the precinct in order to set up. He or she must be familiar with all clerk procedures to assist or take over for the clerk if necessary. The assistant clerk also ensures that there are sufficient ballot replacements.

2. **INSPECTORS**

   **Florida Law**

   Inspectors check in voters and assist with the set up and close of polling places. On Election Day, Inspectors must arrive at the polling place by 6 a.m., open the site at 7 a.m. and close the polling place at 7 p.m. the same day. Before opening, they arrange the furniture, paper work, and voting equipment. They must also make the announcement of the opening and closing of the polls. As voters arrive, the inspectors verify identifications, including signatures. They also maintain a poll list containing the names of electors who have voted or a list of registered electors who have voted. Should there be any disturbance, inspectors possess full authority to maintain order at polls and enforce obedience to its
lawful commands by instructing poll deputies to take appropriate action.

Inspectors are also involved with post-voting administration. They draft and sign a certificate of results upon completion of all counts in all races and deliver the results to the supervisor of elections for immediate publication. They are also responsible for sealing the ballot boxes, ballots, ballot stubs, memoranda, and papers of all kinds that were used in the election. The inspectors seal these documents before they are transferred to the local supervisor of elections office.

**Miami-Dade County**

In Miami-Dade County, there are various types of Inspector positions. The clerk should rotate inspectors’ tasks and positions throughout the day. For instance, there is an EViD (Electronic Voter ID) inspector who is responsible for checking voters’ identification on the EViD system and verifying voter signatures. He or she sends the voter to the ballot table inspector and participates in the pre-election setup of the polling place.

The other types of inspectors are ballot table inspectors, optical scan inspectors, and privacy booth inspectors. A ballot table inspector takes a voter’s voting pass and issues a ballot according to precinct number and ballot style and records the number of ballot pages the voter will receive. An optical scan voting equipment inspector directs voters to the correct optical scanner and assists voters if there is a problem with the optical scan voting equipment. Finally, privacy booth inspectors direct voters to the next available privacy booths, redirect voters heading in the wrong direction, and advise them to make their selections at the privacy booth (but not which selection to make). They also explain to voters the process of marking the ballots.

3. **POLL DEPUTIES**

**Florida Law**

Poll deputies are deputy sheriffs that maintain order at each polling place and early voting sites. They are entrusted with maintaining good order at the polls or early voting sites when they open and until the election is completed. Poll deputies must follow the lawful commands of a clerk or inspector.

**Miami-Dade County**

In Miami-Dade County, poll deputies help set up polling places. They measure the 100-foot no-solicitation zone and 75-foot exit polling zone with rope, and mark the areas with tape. They are entrusted with enforcing the boundaries and ensuring that solicitors and campaign signs remain beyond the no-solicitation zone. The deputy also installs all required ADA ramps.

Poll deputies also play an important role in the processing of voters during the day. They greet voters, and ensure that they have their IDs ready. The deputy records current time and distributes “Wait Time Tickets” to a voter in line at the top of each hour. He or she also instructs the voter to give the ticket to the EViD check-in inspector. Poll deputies must notify the clerk and/or the assistant clerk if the line of voters extends beyond the 100-foot mark. They also stand at the end of the voting line at 7 p.m. when the clerk declares the polls are closed.

4. **ELECTIONS SPECIALIST/TECH SPECIALIST (Only in Miami-Dade County)**
In Miami-Dade County, elections specialists ensure that the election equipment is turned on and working properly at their assigned collection centers. They also complete affirmations, issue provisional ballots, activate iVotronic ballots for voters, transmit results from the precinct, and bring and return required items to the Collection Center. Only county employees are eligible for this position.

c. **Party Affiliation**

Poll workers within each county cannot all be members of one political party; except in a primary in which only one party has candidates appearing on the ballot, in which case all clerks and inspectors may be of that party. When a clerk or inspector must be replaced, the incoming poll worker must be from the same political party.

d. **Term of Office**

In at least some counties, poll workers do not need to reapply as long as they have previously worked the polls on Election Day. Therefore, individuals who have previously worked as a poll worker should contact their local supervisor of elections before reapplying.

Furthermore, if there is an opening for a poll worker position, the supervisor may appoint individuals to fill the vacancy, but the appointee must have attended previous training sessions up to two years before the election. If no such person is available, the supervisor of elections may appoint someone who has not yet received the required training.

e. **Compensation**

The supervisor of elections for each county will determine the compensation for poll workers and poll deputies. Poll workers may also receive compensation and travel expenses for attending required poll worker training. The table below outlines the compensation schedules for Miami-Dade County.

**Miami-Dade County**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>TRAINING</th>
<th>PRE-ELECTION</th>
<th>POST-ELECTION (IF APPLICABLE)</th>
<th>ELECTION DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$45.91</td>
<td>$22.50</td>
<td>$160.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant clerk</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$35.31</td>
<td>$22.50</td>
<td>$123.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election specialist</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$46.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$168.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poll deputy</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$30.02</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$105.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EViD inspector</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$30.02</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$105.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to be paid for training, a poll worker must perform his or her Election Day duties.

IV. Application Process

The application process varies county by county, and applicants should consult their local Supervisor of Elections for more details. That information can be accessed at: https://www.dos.myflorida.com/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections/. The following application information pertains to Miami-Dade County:

a. How to Apply

For residents of Miami-Dade County, an applicant must fill out an online application at the Supervisor of Elections website. You can access the online application at: https://miamidadecounty.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3QVL8wElK8km2mp. (see example below)

Those with further questions about the application process are encouraged to write to: pwinformation@miamidade.gov.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$40.00</th>
<th>$30.02</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>$105.06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other inspectors</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$30.02</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$105.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standby</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$18.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Miami-Dade County Elections Poll Worker Application

Contact Information:

Name: 
Date of Birth: 
Street Address: 
Apartment Number: 
City: 
State: 
Zip Code: 
Home Phone Number: 
Work Phone Number: 
Cellular Phone Number: 
Email Address: 
Voter Registration Number: 

Do you have any computer or technological experience?

☐ Yes (Please specify) 
☐ No 

Do you speak any other languages fluently?

☐ Yes (Please specify) 
☐ No
b. Deadlines for Filing

There are no application deadlines for Miami-Dade County, because poll worker recruitment is performed on a rolling basis.
V. AFTER APPLYING\textsuperscript{45}

a. Following Up

Applicants should contact their local supervisor of election’s office shortly after submission to ensure receipt of their application. In addition, applicants should ask for an estimate as to when an application will be reviewed, and then follow up at such time if they have not been contacted. Miami-Dade County residents may use the following email address for their inquiries: pwinformation@miamidade.gov.

b. Overcoming Objections

When filling out the application, take time to provide all requested information so that your application can be reviewed and approved without any issues. If you find something on the application form confusing, make sure to contact your local supervisor of election’s office to ensure the application is filled out correctly. Finally, make sure that you are registered to vote before you file your application by using the “Check Your Voter Status” webpage on the Florida Division of Elections’ website at: http://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus.
VI. Training Resources

Please consult your local county supervisor of election’s website for potential training resources. You can find contact information for your county supervisor through the Florida Department of State website at: https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections/
VII. High-Priority Florida Issues

Florida voters and poll workers have encountered certain problems on a recurring basis. Long lines and delays impacted many voters in 2012, with one study suggesting up to 200,000 voters were discouraged from casting their ballots. In 2016, there were again reports of a range of problems that are important to poll workers, including voter intimidation and clerks’ failure to adhere to proper procedure.

Because of these and other barriers to a seamless voting experience on Election Day, the Florida Division of Elections, the Election Protection Coalition, and Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections have offered the following guidance for poll workers. The guidance below is generalized, except in the case of guidance that is specific to Miami-Dade County. As a reminder, poll workers should consult local county rules and procedures.

a. Options for Voters Without Proper ID

- It is acceptable for a voter to present one ID that includes both the photo and signature (e.g., Florida driver’s license) or a photo ID and a signature ID (e.g., a student ID with a photo and a credit card with the voter’s signature).
- If a voter shows up at the polls without acceptable photo identification, the voter can still cast a provisional ballot that will be counted if: (1) the voter was entitled to vote at that location; and (2) they had not already cast a vote in the election.
- In Miami-Dade County, poll workers are encouraged to direct the voter to the Elections Specialist to have a provisional ballot issued. Poll workers are also reminded they should not turn voters away. Rules should be re-explained and alternatives considered when possible. For example, if a voter has valid ID but left it at home, please encourage the voter to retrieve it, time allowing.
- The following are acceptable forms of ID:
  - Florida driver license.
  - Military ID.
  - Neighborhood Association ID.
  - Florida ID card issued by Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
  - Student ID.
  - Public assistance ID.
  - U.S. passport.
  - Government employee ID card (federal, Florida, county, municipality).
  - Retirement center ID.
  - Veteran health ID card.
  - Debit or credit card.
  - License to carry concealed weapon or firearm.
b. **Voters Who Have Moved**

- If a voter has moved to a different precinct in the same county prior to the election, he or she has the right to vote at the polling place of their *new* residence upon updating their voter registration record (at the polling place) by completing a Change of Legal Residence of Registered Voter form.\textsuperscript{53}
- If the voter moved to a different county where an electronic poll book is used, the voter may change addresses at the poll and cast a regular ballot. Otherwise, the voter must cast a provisional ballot.\textsuperscript{54}
- If the voter’s change of address results in a change of polling place, the clerk must direct the voter to the proper polling place corresponding to his or her new precinct.\textsuperscript{55} A provisional ballot will not count if the vote is cast in a precinct other than the one that corresponds to his or her legal residential address.
- However, if the voter appears not to be in the proper polling place but insists that he or she is, you should allow the voter to cast a provisional ballot.\textsuperscript{56}


c. **Voters Who Are Not on the Rolls**\textsuperscript{57}

- If the voter’s name is not on the precinct register or in the electronic database, the inspector shall:
  1. Recheck for name variations.
  2. Ask the voter if the voter’s name or address has changed:
     a. **Name Change**
        - If the voter’s name has changed, instruct the voter to complete a “name change” on an affirmation or a voter registration application before continuing the voter check-in process.
        - If the voter’s former name is not on the precinct register, the clerk or other designated person must call the supervisor of elections or access a master list of registered voters to determine if the person is eligible to vote in the precinct. If eligible, the same affirmation or voter registration must be completed.
     b. **Address Change Within County**
        - If the voter is only making an in-county address change, instruct the voter to complete an affirmation or voter registration application for an address change.
     c. **Address Change From Outside County**
        - For precincts using electronic databases, instruct the voter to complete an address change affirmation or voter registration application.
        - For precincts that do not use electronic databases, the voter shall be allowed to vote a provisional ballot. The voter does not need to fill out a separate address change affirmation or voter registration form. The provisional ballot certificate affirmation may be copied and used for that purpose. Note that if the voter’s new address corresponds to a different precinct or polling place, direct the voter to that precinct or polling place to vote.
3. If the voter indicates no change of name or address, contact the supervisor’s office or, if available at the precinct, check the master list of registered voters in the county to determine if the voter is eligible to vote.
   a. If the voter is eligible to vote in the precinct, he or she may continue with the voter check-in process.
   b. If the voter is eligible to vote but is registered in another precinct, the clerk shall direct the voter to the proper precinct.
   c. If the voter is an unverified voter (i.e., someone whose personal identifying number — such as a Florida driver’s license number, Florida identification card number or the last four digits of a Social Security card — could not be verified by the State), the voter shall be allowed to vote via provisional ballot.
   d. If the voter does not appear to be registered or eligible to vote, but believes that he or she is, then the voter may cast a provisional ballot.

d. **Provisional Ballots**\(^{58}\)

   - In addition to scenarios involving an improper ID and when a voter’s information is not on the rolls, the voter is entitled to a provisional ballot in the following situations:
     - The voter requested a vote-by-mail ballot that they did not receive or did not cast, but that cannot be confirmed by elections officials.
     - A voter who voted early but who maintains that he or she has not already voted in this election.
     - The voter’s right to vote has been challenged by an inspector who believes the voter is not entitled to vote at that precinct.
     - A federal or state court order extends the time for closing the polls beyond that established by state law, and the voter votes during the extended period of time.

e. **Right to Voting Assistance**\(^{59}\)

   - A voter who needs assistance because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write is allowed to receive assistance in voting.
   - If a voter asks for help, let the voter know that he or she has the option of voting on a touch screen or other accessible ballot marking device which will allow him or her to vote without assistance. The voter should then be asked if he or she would like to vote on the device or would rather have assistance. No further questions should be asked about the existence, nature, or extent of someone’s disability.
   - If a voter wants help and a notation is already on the precinct register that the person is eligible to receive assistance, the voter does not need to complete the “Declaration to Secure Assistance.” Otherwise, the voter must first complete the Declaration to Secure Assistance.
• If the voter is unable to fill out the declaration, the clerk or inspector should complete the declaration and have the voter sign it. After completing the form, the voter is allowed to vote with assistance.

• A poll worker shall tell the voter that he or she may receive help from either two election officials or another person of his or her own choosing (other than the voter’s employer, an agent of the voter’s employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union). With the exception of an election official or poll worker, any person providing assistance must complete the Declaration to Provide Assistance.

• If a voter asks for instructions or assistance regarding how to mark the ballot or use voting equipment after entering the voting booth, two poll workers from different political parties shall assist the voter. If two poll workers of different political parties are not available, two poll workers from the same party shall assist the voter. In no circumstances should poll workers ever attempt to influence or induce a voter to vote for a certain candidate, amendment, or proposition.

• Tips for engaging with disabled voters:

  1. Generally
     • If it appears that an individual may need some assistance, approach the person and ask how you can help.
     • Identify yourself and your role before making contact with the person.
     • Use acceptable “people first” language (i.e. “disabled” and “mobility impaired” instead of outdated terms (i.e. “handicapped” or “crippled”).
     • Do not insist upon providing assistance, merely offer assistance.
     • Speak directly to the person with a disability if possible, not through a third party.
     • Treat the individual with respect.
     • Be professional, courteous, and patient.
     • Be on the lookout for voters who may have a hard time standing in line; offer a place to sit inside the polling room, with additional chairs provided, until the voter’s turn to vote arises.
     • Treat assistive devices as an extension of the voter.
     • Listen carefully to the voter to learn best how to help them.

  2. Cognition
     • Use a calm demeanor.
     • Use simple words and short sentences to explain the process.
     • Repeat the process as needed. Give them time to move through the process without feeling rushed.

  3. Mobility Impaired
     • Ask for permission before pushing a person in a wheelchair.
     • Make sure there is a clear path from the parking lot to the polling room (particularly on ramps).
     • When talking to someone in a wheelchair, stand back a few steps so the person can avoid neck strain when looking up.
• Be aware of the reach limits of people in wheelchairs. If a counter is too high for a wheelchair user to see over it, step around it to conduct business with the person.

4. Hearing Impaired
• Speak clearly, with your face unobstructed.
• If you have difficulty understanding someone’s speech, politely let the voter know.
• It may be helpful to use gestures, or to write down what you are trying to say.
• Do not shout.
• Tap the person on the shoulder to get his or her attention.

5. Visually Impaired
• Be prepared to offer assistance.
• Do not shout.
• Do not grab or pull the voter. If the voter asks to be guided, offer an arm or shoulder to guide and walk slightly in front of the voter.
• Describe the setting, including any partly open doors, steps, or ramps.
• Do not touch a person’s cane.
• Remember that guide dogs are working dogs, not pets.

6. Speech and Communication
• Be patient and do not interrupt.
• If needed or requested, provide the voter a pen/pencil and paper to write questions and answers.

f. Voter Mistakes on Ballots
• If a voter makes a mistake or “spoils” his or her ballot, but it was not cast, the voter has the right to receive a replacement after returning the spoiled ballot (although no voter can be furnished more than three total ballots).
• If there is a problem with a voter’s signature on a provisional or vote-by-mail ballot, the supervisor of elections must notify the voter and give them the opportunity to cure their ballot by submitting an affidavit until 5pm on the second day after the election. The voter can prove their identity with a copy of a current and valid photo ID. Florida driver licenses and Florida identification cards issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles are also acceptable forms of identification for the purposes of curing a vote-by-mail or provisional ballot.

g. Voting Machine Breakdowns
• Miami-Dade County poll workers are instructed to use emergency ballots when normal ballots cannot be scanned due to equipment malfunctions. The emergency ballots are temporarily placed inside the Voter Deposit Box.
• Miami-Dade County inspectors, assistant clerks, and collection center workers are instructed to notify the Elections Specialist or Clerk immediately if optical scanners malfunction.
• More generally, all Florida poll workers should immediately notify their supervisor of a voting machine malfunction. In addition, poll workers should familiarize themselves with alternative voting methods before Election Day.

h. Voters Standing in the Line by 7 P.M. Must Be Permitted to Vote

• At 7 P.M., the inspector or clerk announces, “The polls are closed,” and, if there are voters in line, establishes a procedure to mark the end of the line (e.g., directing the deputy to stand behind the last voter). This is the last voter according to state law.

i. Polling Place Accessibility

• All polling locations should be wheelchair accessible and offer parking for persons with disabilities.
• A disabled voter has the right to vote using: (1) a touch screen voting machine that is available at wheelchair accessible heights; or (2) a machine that has audio capability.
• Voters with disabilities must cast their ballots on voting systems that produce a voter verifiable paper output (VVPO) for canvassing and recount purposes.

j. Campaigning at the Polling Place

• No person or group may solicit voters inside the polling place. With the exception of exit polling, no person or group may solicit voters within 150 feet of the entrance to the polling place or early voting site.
• Before the polls open, the clerk or supervisor of elections shall designate the no-solicitation zone and mark the boundaries.
• The words “solicit” and “solicitation” include such things as:
  o Asking someone for his or her vote;
  o Offering to provide someone assistance to vote;
  o Asking for someone’s opinion;
  o Asking for a contribution;
  o Distributing any political or campaign material or handout;
  o Conducting a poll (note “exit polling” exception below);
  o Asking someone for his or her signature on a petition; or
  o Selling any type of item.
• The only exception to the no-solicitation law is for exit polling that media or others may conduct. They may only approach voters who are leaving the polling place.
• The supervisor of elections or the clerk may take any reasonable action to ensure order is maintained at the polling place. That means, if necessary, having law enforcement officers remove disruptive persons from either the polling room or from the no-solicitation zone.
• Poll workers themselves must remain nonpartisan during the early voting period and on Election Day.
  o DO NOT discuss any candidate, political party, issue, or any related topic with other poll workers, poll watchers, or voters.
DO NOT wear campaign buttons, shirts, hats, or any other items that are politically oriented.

k. **Voter Intimidation and Disruption**

Florida’s “Voter Protection Act” prohibits individuals from inducing or compelling an individual to:

- Vote or refrain from voting (either generally or for a specific candidate/measure);
- Refrain from registering to vote;
- Refrain from acting as a legally authorized election official or poll watcher.

Individuals cannot use false information to challenge an individual’s right to vote or to induce or attempt to induce an individual to refrain from voting, registering to vote, or acting as a legally authorized election official or poll watcher.

Voters have a right to vote free from interference or intimidation. Some common examples of voter intimidation are:

- Aggressively questioning voters about their citizenship, criminal record, or other qualifications to vote in a manner that is intended to interfere with the voting process;
- Falsely presenting oneself as an election official;
- Spreading false information about voter requirements, such as an ability to speak English, or the need to present certain types of photo identification (when there is no such requirement);
- Displaying false or misleading signs about voter fraud and the criminal penalties of voter fraud; AND
- Other forms of harassment, particularly harassment targeted towards non-English speakers and voters of color.

Poll workers should take all reports of voter intimidation seriously.

l. **COVID-19 Concerns**

The spread of COVID-19 means that information and election practices are changing rapidly. You should contact your local election administrator to verify all information in this guide before relying on information contained herein.

Florida recorded its first two COVID-19 cases in early March 2020. Governor Ron DeSantis issued an executive order declaring a state of emergency in Florida on March 9; most recently, he extended that state of emergency for another sixty days on July 7. The spread of COVID-19 throughout the state—and its potential impact on primary and general election voting—has spurred multiple lawsuits over Florida’s voting accommodations and vote-by-mail rules. For example, advocacy groups brought legal action seeking relief for voters who were unable to safely cast a ballot in Florida’s March 17 presidential primary. The court rejected the plaintiffs’ request. Most recently, advocacy groups have filed suit on behalf of Florida voters in advance of the August 18 congressional primary and November 3 presidential election. The parties settled the case on July 19 with an agreement that requires state officials to educate local election officials on pre-paid postage for mail-in ballots, and to encourage local officials to maximize the number of early voting days allowed and the number of ballot drop boxes used in their
jurisdictions. Please contact your local election officials for the most updated information concerning mail-in voting practices.

m. Recent or Potential Changes in Election Laws to Consider

Voting Restoration for People Convicted of a Felony
In March 2019, Florida lawmakers enacted a law that cuts back on the historic changes to the state’s felony disenfranchisement laws that voters passed overwhelmingly in November 2018. The law specifies that people with felony convictions must pay any legal financial obligations included as part of their sentence before they can register to vote. However, an ongoing lawsuit is challenging this law. The litigation is ongoing, and the law could change before the 2020 election.

Currently, people with felony convictions—except convictions for murder or sexual offenses—can register to vote once they have completed the terms of their sentence, including probation, parole, and payment of legal financial obligations.

According to the Division of Elections (DOE), it is the state’s responsibility to screen out felons who should be excluded from registering to vote under the new law, in part by reviewing financial obligation documents to determine if the individual has paid their fines, fees, and restitution. However, if there is any discrepancy, the DOE has said they will err on the side of the voter.

Ballot-on-Demand Technology
A law enacted in 2019 allows supervisors to use ballot-on-demand printing systems at polling places on Election Day, not just at early voting sites.

Process for Curing Provisional and Vote-by-Mail Ballots
Since 2017, Florida voters have been able to cure problems with their vote-by-mail ballots using an affidavit. If a voter fails to sign the certificate on the back of their vote-by-mail return envelope, or if their signature does not match the signature in the registration books or precinct register, the supervisor of elections must notify them immediately. The voter may then cure the defect by submitting an affidavit. A 2019 law has extended the deadline to cure defective vote-by-mail ballots from 5pm on the day before the election to 5pm on the second day after the election. It also requires voting officials to undergo formal signature match training.

Additionally, the new law creates an identical process for voters to cure problems with provisional ballots.

Expanded No-Solicitation Zone
A 2019 law expanded the no-solicitation zone around polling places and early voting sites from 100 feet to 150 feet. However, the law also prohibits property owners/operators from restricting solicitation beyond the 150-foot zone.
n. **Other Relevant Issues**

1. **Student Voting**
   - A student attending school in Florida can register to vote in Florida using their campus address. Florida courts have held that the best proof of a voter’s residency is “where he says it is.” As long as someone is registered to vote using a legal Florida address, no further proof of residency should be required.
   - Florida residents who move out of the county, state, or country to attend school can still keep their Florida voting residency. The only way to lose this residency is by establishing legal residency in a new state, for example by registering to vote there. So long as a student considers his or her parents’ address as a permanent residence and intends to return there after graduation, the student should be able to continue to register to vote from that Florida address.

2. **Voter Already Voted — Miami-Dade County Advice**
   - If the electronic voter ID system indicates a voter has already voted (via vote-by-mail ballot or via early voting), the voter should be asked whether or not they voted early. If they confirm a prior vote, they are not to be issued a provisional ballot.
   - If the voter refutes having already voted, the poll worker should refer the voter to Election Central to verify the voter’s record.
   - If Election Central confirms that the voter has already voted, and the voter continues to insist they are eligible to vote, then the voter must be issued a provisional ballot.

3. **Signature Mismatch**
   - The Florida Division of Elections recommends that when a clerk or inspector doubts whether the signature on an ID and the signature signed at check-in belong to the same person, voters should be asked to complete a signature affidavit before continuing. If the person chooses not to complete the affidavit, then he or she must vote through a provisional ballot.
   - Miami-Dade County poll workers are instructed that if the voter’s signature appearing on the electronic voter ID system indicates a voter has already voted (via vote-by-mail ballot or via early voting), the voter should be asked whether or not they voted early. If they confirm a prior vote, they are not to be issued a provisional ballot.

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**While Polls are OPEN, only the following people are allowed in the polling room:**

- Poll Workers;
- The Supervisor of Elections or deputy supervisor of elections;
- Voters;
- A person in the care of a voter (e.g. child);
- A person caring for a voter or assisting a voter (for example, someone assisting a voter who cannot read or does not speak English);
- A person who is helping with or participating in a simulated election for minors which has been approved by the Supervisor of Elections (e.g. Kids Voting program);
- Poll watchers approved by the Supervisor of Elections; AND
- Election observers appointed by the Department of State.

**The following people may NOT enter the polling room:**

- Candidates, except to vote;
- Members of the media, except to vote; AND
- Law enforcement officers or emergency service personnel in a capacity other than as voter, unless permitted by the clerk or the majority of poll workers on-site.
ID’s screen is significantly different from that on the ID, they are NOT to process this voter.

- Miami-Dade County poll workers should contact the clerk to press the “Reject Signature” button. The clerk will then escort the voter to the elections specialist to fill out an affirmation.
- Please note that voters may be upset if their signature is challenged. It is important to behave professionally, with sensitivity toward the voter’s grievances. Poll workers should be careful to apply all applicable rules fairly and consistently to all voters.

4. Miami-Dade County Advice for Managing Poll Watchers

- Each political committee or candidate may have only one poll watcher in a polling room at any time during an election.
- Poll watchers’ names should appear on the “Approved Poll Watcher Designation List” (see Ex. 1), located in the document folder. Poll workers must verify that each poll watcher is approved.

Exhibit 1: Approved Poll Watcher Designation List

5. Who’s Allowed In?

- While the polls are open, the only persons allowed in the polling room on Election Day or during the early voting period are:
  - Poll workers;
  - The supervisor of elections or deputy supervisor of elections;
  - Voters who are present to vote;
  - A person (such as an elderly person or a child) in the care of a voter;
  - A person caring for a voter or assisting a voter (for example, someone assisting a voter who cannot read or does not speak English or assisting an elderly person or a person with disabilities);
  - A person who is helping with, or participating in, a simulated election for minors that has been approved by the supervisor of elections (for example, the Kids Voting program);
  - Poll watchers approved by the supervisor of elections; AND
• Election observers appointed by the Department of State.

• While the polls are open, the following persons or activities are NOT allowed in the polling room on Election Day or during the early voting period:
  o Candidates, except to vote;
  o Members of the media, except to vote; AND
  o Law enforcement officers or emergency service personnel in a capacity other than as voter, unless permitted by the Clerk or a majority of the poll workers at the polling place.

• The public is allowed to enter the polling room and watch the procedures before the polls open and after the polls close when all the voters have cast their ballots.

• No photography is allowed in the polling room or early voting area; if you should witness someone taking photographs, politely instruct them to refrain. If they persist, poll workers should seek assistance from a Clerk or Deputy on-site. However, as of 2019, voters are permitted to take a photo of their own ballot.92

• If the polling room is in a location commonly used by the public for discussion or access to their home/business, there may be other people traveling through the polling area. However, care should be taken that the voting process is not interfered with.

• If intruders do not leave when instructed, poll workers should seek assistance from a Deputy on-site.

6. Miami-Dade County’s Guidance for Recording Incidents93

• Incidents that may affect the vote count should be recorded on the incident report log (see Ex. 2).

• Accidents or illnesses in the polling room should be recorded in the precinct accident/illness report (see Ex. 3).
Exhibit 2: Incident Report Log
Exhibit 3: Precinct Accident/Illness Report
VIII. Be a Proactive Poll Worker

A good poll worker is proactive and focused on the voter’s experience. You should be sensitive to voters’ needs and treat every voter like a valued guest. When in doubt, err on the side of protecting the voters’ right to vote. If you are prepared, respectful, positive, attentive, and courteous, voters will come away satisfied and more eager to return for the next election.

**Be Prepared**
Preparation is key to ensure Election Day runs smoothly at your polling place. One of the most common voter complaints on Election Day is the long line at the polling place. You can significantly reduce this hassle through organization, anticipating issues, and quickly resolving problems as they arise. For example, a poll worker/election inspector/etc. can be prepared by:

- Regularly checking the supplies (like ballots or pens) to prevent a shortage that would halt the voting process;
- Ensuring that entryways are not blocked;
- Researching available resources in advance;
- Having a cheat sheet with answers to frequently asked questions and references you can contact immediately for help; and
- Having alternatives at hand (what alternative IDs are valid, etc.).

**Be Respectful**
Be respectful to each and every voter. Treat all voters with courtesy, regardless of differences in political affiliation, race, gender, age, ethnicity, or religion. The voter has the right to vote without feeling uncomfortable or discouraged.

**Be Positive**
The voter’s experience, whether good or bad, is marked by your attitude. Work to de-escalate tension if there is confrontation or frustration. If you are supportive and solution-oriented, the voters will have a positive impression of the voting process.

**Be Attentive**
As is the case with any customer service, be attentive and responsive. If a voter seems confused, ask if he or she needs help. Be inquisitive, but not disruptive, to make sure that voters who want assistance can get it quickly. But be mindful of cues that a voter may want some space.

**Be Courteous**
When the voters enter, offer a warm greeting, make eye contact, introduce yourself and let them know you are there to help. Welcome voters by name, if you know them. By making the voters feel valued, they will have a positive impression of the election process and will be more likely to return.


5 See id. (stating the voting machines in all 199 precincts in Duval county were out of commission); see also Polls Open for Florida Primary; Computer Issues Fixed, Action News Jax, Mar. 15, 2016, available at https://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/local/polls-open-for-florida-primary/162342098/ (last visited July 13, 2020).

6 Miami-Dade County provides a useful illustration because it is the largest county in Florida and thus its information affects the greatest number of registered voters (approximately 1.4 million). See Voter Registration – By County and Party, FLORIDA DIVISION OF ELECTIONS, available at https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/data-statistics/voter-registration-statistics/voter-registration-reportsxlsx/voter-registration-by-county-and-party/ (last visited July 13, 2020). In addition, the County provides a significant amount of information (in contrast to other counties).

7 Fla. Stat. Ann. §§ 102.012; 102.014(1), (4), (7). Note: The qualifications listed apply to all poll workers, and there may be additional qualifications set by each county in Florida.


9 *Note: Individuals can pre-register to vote at 16 years old, but they will need to wait until they are 18 years old to vote. See Fla. Stat. Ann. § 97.041.

10 Note: In November 2018 Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment automatically restoring the right to vote to individuals with felony convictions in their past. The amendment restores the right to vote for people with felony convictions, except individuals convicted of murder or felony sexual offenses, once they have completed the terms of their sentence. The Florida Legislature passed, and Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law, SB7066, which expands an individual’s felony sentence to include any outstanding financial obligations connected to their convictions. However, an ongoing lawsuit is challenging this law for people who cannot afford to pay. In October 2019, a federal court blocked the state from applying the law to 17 plaintiffs who sued for their right to vote, and in February 2020, an appeals court upheld the ruling. Currently, people with felony convictions—except convictions for murder or sexual offenses—can register to vote once they have completed the terms of their sentence, including probation, parole, and payment of legal financial obligations. See Voting Rights Restoration Efforts in Florida, BRENNA N CENTER FOR JUSTICE (May 31, 2019), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-rights-restoration-efforts-florida; Litigation to Protect Amendment 4 in Florida: Gruver v. Barton (Consolidated with Jones v. DeSantis), BRENNA N CENTER FOR JUSTICE (Aug. 3, 2019; last updated July 10, 2020), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/court-cases/gruver-v-barton-consolidated-jones-v-desantis; Amber Phillips, How a Court Battle on Felon Voting Rights in Florida Could Affect the 2020 Election, WASHINGTON POST (Feb. 19, 2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/02/19/florida-felon-voting-rights-explained/.


14 Id.


16 *Note: Polls are officially open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and some positions require pre- and post-election activity.
20 Id.
23 Your Supervisor of Elections will correspond with the county in which you reside. Contact information for your County Supervisor of Elections can be found here: https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/contacts/supervisor-of-elections/.
26 “The terms ‘solicit’ or ‘solicitation’ may not be construed to prohibit exit polling.” Id. at §§ 102.031(4)(a), (b); see also CBS Broad., Inc. v. Cobb, 470 F. Supp. 2d 1365 (S.D. Fla. 2006).
30 Election Central is a help-line for the Clerk to get advice, report problems, check on voter status, etc.
31 Although the Miami-Dade training manual states that clerks are the only poll workers who complete post-election tasks (unless he or she is unavailable in which case the assistant clerk finishes them), other election workers still have post-election responsibilities, although they may not receive additional compensation for that work.
36 Tape and rope are provided by the county.
39 Fla. Stat. Ann. § 102.014(2), (3); Be a Proud Poll Worker, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, available at https://www.miamidade.gov/global/service.page?Mduid_service=ser1496340543264351 (last accessed Jan. 30, 2020) (“Once you have worked at the polls on Election Day, your poll worker record will remain active. Meaning, you will not have to reapply to be a poll worker for future elections.”); Poll Worker Information, DUVAL COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS, available at https://www.duvalelections.com/Poll-Workers/Poll-Worker-Information (last accessed Jan. 30, 2020) (“As long as you are an active poll worker, you do not have to apply again. If you have worked the polls on Election Day in the past, your record will remain active.”).
42 As noted in note 16, supra, although other poll workers do have some post-election responsibilities, only clerks (and possibly assistant clerks if called upon) receive compensation for those responsibilities.
43 If standby is not called by noon, a poll worker will be paid $18.54 + $40.00 for training. If standby is called and he or she chooses not to work, a poll worker will only get paid $40.00 for training. If standby is called and the poll worker arrives at a precinct to work within one (1) hour, he or she will be paid his/her regular election day pay (depending on position) + $40.00 for training.
45 Id.


Walker v. Harris, 398 So. 2d 955, 958 (Fla. 4th Dist. Ct. App. 1981) (quoting Ogden v. Ogden, 33 So.2d 870, 873 (Fla. 1947)).


See Walker v. Harris, 398 So. 2d 955, 957-58 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1981) (“A person may have several temporary local residences, but can have only one legal residence”; reversing trial court’s judgment that appellant did not establish new legal residence based on insufficient evidence when appellant moved to new residence for sole purpose of establishing legal residence).

Bloomfield v. St. Petersburg Beach, 82 So.2d 364, 369 (Fla. 1955) (“if a man actually becomes a bona fide resident of this state and intends to remain permanently a citizen of the state, mere absence with the specific clear-cut bona fide intention of returning will not destroy the residence actually theretofore established.”).


