HOW TO BECOME A POLL WORKER

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

North Carolina
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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I. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a poll worker, known as an Election Official or an Election Worker in North Carolina. 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 has been a serious impediment to voter access in North Carolina. When states face difficulties attracting and hiring qualified poll workers, polling places are often understaffed or mismanaged, resulting in long lines, the spread of misinformation, and even incidents of bias and intimidation. Additionally, poll workers are often the only election officials with whom voters interact, and 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 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 North Carolina provides an overview of the process for becoming an Election Official. We hope it is useful to you as both a technical and practical guide, including pointers that we have gleaned from experience. It is NOT a substitute for training materials provided by the state or county government. Instead, it is meant to equip qualified people like you with the information you need to become an Election Official and enjoy the important job of serving your fellow voters well. We hope that this guide encourages you to join the movement and make a difference!
II. Overview of Election Officials’ Role in North Carolina Election System

North Carolina’s State Board of Elections is responsible for appointing, supervising and advising the county board of elections (each, a “County Board”) for each of the 100 counties in the state. The County Board of each county appoints and oversees the Election Officials in each voting place in its county. Subject to requirements imposed by state law, each county has a significant amount of flexibility in connection with the number of Election Officials serving at each voting place and the tasks performed at each voting place by the different categories of Election Officials.

On Election Day, Election Officials are needed for each precinct in each county. In addition, Election Officials are needed to serve on early voting days in each county. On Election Day, each voter must vote at their designated polling place, but when casting a ballot during the early voting period, a voter may cast their ballot at any of the one-stop early voting locations (the “One-Stop Early Voting Places”) in the county in which they reside.

Election Officials have a significant impact on the voting experience of North Carolinians. Ultimately, Election Officials are in charge of monitoring the voting place and the election process. A well-staffed voting place will run smoothly and efficiently, allowing for voters to cast their votes in a convenient fashion.

While well-trained Election Officials are always in short supply, to address the need for social distancing resulting from COVID-19 this year, there will be more One-Stop Early Voting Places in many counties and many One-Stop Early Voting Places will have longer hours (and mandatory weekend hours), so the demand for Election Officials will likely be much greater. Interest in becoming an Election Official couldn’t come at a better time!

The problem of a shortage of well-trained Election Officials correlates with issues that could occur in North Carolina’s polling places during this election, including:

- Voters being sent to more than one polling place and still not being allowed to vote, or being asked to cast provisional ballots;
- Distribution of campaign or other improper literature too close the polls;
- Voting machine problems or confusion about how to mark ballots;
- Lack of adequate accommodations for voters with disabilities; and
- Election Officials expressing hostility toward non-partisan poll monitors.

The importance of Election Officials’ roles cannot be overstated. Few jobs could be considered more critical to the health of democracy. Accordingly, well-trained, qualified Election Officials are critical to the integrity and efficiency of the election process. This North Carolina Election Official Toolkit will present you with an easy guide on how to become an effective North Carolina Election Official:

- Part III describes the roles, duties and qualifications of Election Officials.
- Part IV describes the process for applying to be an Election Official.
- Part V outlines the process after an applicant applies to become an Election Official. This includes how to make sure the application is properly filed.
- Part VI provides a list of election protection organizations in North Carolina.
• Part VII details some hands-on issues that an Election Official should be particularly prepared to handle, with tips on how to respond.
• Part VIII describes steps an Election Official should take to make voters feel more comfortable in the polling place.

III. Description of Roles

a. Categories and Roles of Election Officials

The following are the categories and roles of Election Officials that are required by North Carolina law at each precinct on Election Day:

(i) One Chief Judge. The Chief Judge at every precinct:

• must swear an oath to defend the constitution and to properly carry out its duties;
• must be a person of good repute who is able to read and write;
• must receive training provided by the County Board;
• has general overall supervisory responsibility for the precinct and for the other Election Officials;
• is responsible for keeping peace and order in the precinct;
• is in charge of the registration list for the purpose of making sure people who show up at the precinct are properly registered to vote there;
• together with the other Judges, is responsible for overseeing ballot counting and submitting the results to the County Board;
• together with the other Judges, hears challenges from people regarding their right to vote in the precinct; and
• must remain at the precinct for the entire day on each Election Day and not leave until all duties have been completed.

(ii) Two Judges (one Democrat and one Republican). Each Judge at every precinct:

• must swear an oath to defend the constitution and to properly carry out its duties;
• must be a person of good repute who is able to read and write;
• must receive training provided by the County Board;
• assists the Chief Judge in connection with supervisory duties;
• is responsible for keeping peace and order in the precinct;
• together with the Chief Judge, oversees ballot counting and the submission of the results to the County Board;
• together with the Chief Judge, hears challenges from people regarding their right to vote in the precinct; and
• must remain at the precinct for the entire day on each Election Day and not leave until all duties have been completed.

In addition to the Chief Judge and the two Judges, each County Board is authorized to appoint additional Election Officials at each precinct (depending upon the size and needs of the precinct), including on an emergency basis if there is an absence or shortage of regularly appointed Election Officials.
(iii) **Two or more Election Assistants.** Each Election Assistant (including an emergency election-day assistant):\(^{11}\)

- must swear an oath to defend the constitution and to properly carry out its duties;
- must receive training provided by the County Board;
- is responsible for checking registration status and providing ballots or guiding voters to voting units, and otherwise assisting the Chief Judge and the Judges; and
- may, at the discretion of the County Board, serve for less than an entire Election Day.

(iv) **Student Election Assistants.** The County Board may appoint up to two Student Election Assistants in each polling place. Each Student Election Assistant:\(^{12}\)

- must perform the various duties stipulated by its County Board;
- is compensated the same way as other Election Assistants;
- is trained in the same way as other Election Assistants; and
- serves under the direct supervision of the Election Judges.

(v) **Ballot Counters.** One or more Ballot Counters may be appointed at each precinct. Each Ballot Counter:\(^{13}\)

- is appointed by the County Board (or the County Board may delegate to the Chief Judge the right to appoint a specified number of Ballot Counters); and
- is responsible for counting ballots under the supervision of the Judges and the Chief Judge.

The specific duties of Election Officials vary county by county, depending upon the size and needs of each county (and upon the qualifications and experience of the applicant pool).
As an example: Below is a description provided by the County Board for New Hanover County of the various Election Officials and the allocation of duties at each precinct on Election Day.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statutory Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chief Judge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each precinct is headed by an appointed Chief Judge. They are responsible for managing all Election Day activities within their precinct, picking up and returning Election Day supplies, setting up and breaking down the polling place and resolving any issues that may arise during Election Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Judge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Judges are appointed to each precinct and work closely with the Chief Judge to manage the polling place. They sign off on all official documents, aid the Chief Judge in resolving challenges and assist with polling place set up and break down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assists the Chief Judge and Judges on Election Day. Assistants are assigned by the Board of Elections to work numerous administrative positions in the polling place including laptop operator, curbside coordinator, ballot distributor – among others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laptop Operator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains the check-in station that a voter gets to upon entering the polling place. Laptop operators are specially trained in checking voters in and updating voter profiles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Help Desk Operator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that all voters who need to vote a provisional ballot or who need some type of update to their information are processed quickly and efficiently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ballot Distributor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matches voters with the correct ballot style to ensure that each voter is receiving the candidates and issues they are legally allowed to vote. The ballot station is the point in the precinct where voters receive their paper ballot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curbside Coordinator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for assisting voters who are unable to enter the voting enclosure due to age, physical disability or physical barriers. The curbside coordinator assists the voter to ensure the voting process is accomplished just as if they had voted inside the voting enclosure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elections Greeter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that voters have their questions answered while they wait in the main check-in line. The elections greeter maintains proper flow of the entrance and exit lines at the polling place and hand out the “I Voted” stickers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. **Necessary Qualifications**

(i) **Election Officials**

In order to be an Election Official (other than a Student Election Assistant or Ballot Counter), in addition to satisfying the requirements described in the subsection above, an applicant must be a registered voter in the county in which they serve.\(^{15}\)

To become a registered voter in North Carolina, an applicant must:\(^{16}\)

1. Be a U.S. citizen;
2. Live in the precinct of their registration and have resided there for at least 30 days before the date of the election;
3. Be at least 18 years old at the time of the general election; and
4. Not be serving a sentence for a felony conviction, including probation, parole, or post-release supervision.

If not registered to vote, in order to register an applicant must complete and submit a voter registration application to the county of their registration.\(^{17}\) A copy of the required voter registration application (together with county specific instructions) is available online at:

https://s3.amazonaws.com/dl.ncsbe.gov/Voter_Registration/NCVoterRegForm_06W.pdf

Alternatively, if an applicant has a North Carolina driver’s license or DMV-issued ID, they can register to vote online at:

https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/offices-services/online/Pages/voter-registration-application.aspx

If an applicant needs to check or update their registration status, they can do so on-line at:

https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/

Eligible voters may also register to vote and vote on the same day during the early voting period at a One-Stop Early Voting Place in their county.\(^{18}\) Each applicant should check with their County Board for details.

In addition to being a registered voter in the county for which an applicant is applying to be an Election Official, an applicant must not hold (or be a candidate for) an elected governmental office or an elected office in any political party or organization.\(^{19}\) Further, an applicant may not serve as an Election Official if they are the spouse, parent, child, sister or brother of any candidate during any election in which their relative is running for office.\(^{20}\)

The following categories of relatives are prohibited from serving together at the same voting place: spouse, child, spouse of a child, sister or brother.\(^{21}\)
(ii) **Student Election Assistants**

To be a Student Election Assistant, an applicant must:\(^{22}\)

- Be at least 17 years old on the day of the election;
- Be a United States Citizen;
- Be a resident of the county in which they are appointed;
- Be enrolled in a secondary educational institution; and
- Be recommended by the principal or director of their school.

c. **Party Affiliation**

Affiliation with a particular political party is not required by North Carolina law, but, as described below, each County Board is required, in the first instance, to make appointments from the pool of applicants recommended by the chairs of each of the political parties in the county. There is no requirement that recommendations by each party be limited to persons that are affiliated with such party.\(^{23}\)

d. **Terms of Office**

(i) The term of office for the Chief Judge and the other Judges is two years from the date of appointment.\(^{24}\)

(ii) Election Assistants, Student Election Assistants and Ballot Counters are appointed on an election-to-election basis.\(^{25}\)

e. **Compensation**

Compensation for Election Officials varies county by county, but all Election Officials within a county are paid the same amount, which may not be less than the statutory minimum wage in North Carolina.\(^{26}\) An applicant should contact their County Board (or check its website) to determine the compensation in their county.
As an example:
To the left is the salary schedule currently published by the County Board of Mecklenburg.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Judge</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Transfer &amp; Equipment Assistant</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Day Assistant</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Day Assistant (8 hours)</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>$25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Set Up</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As another example:
To the left is the salary schedule currently published by the County Board of Durham.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Judge</td>
<td>$255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>$230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant:</td>
<td>$210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Meetings</td>
<td>$15 per hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Application Process

a. How to Apply to be an Election Official

If an applicant is qualified to become an Election Official, as outlined above, they should fill out the general State Board online application at the following link:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3IF2etC5mkSFw-zCbNftGbSu5CXmv0RFtQ9-DB1johdUOU4xMU5CMzVVVTJBTvDNO0RGWFBDRkFYVy4u

OR the applicant can contact and apply directly with their County Board. Contact information for each County Board can be found at the following link (see also the related map below):

https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/

Follow either of the above processes for all Election Official categories except for a Student Election Assistant, the application process for which is outlined below.
b. **How to Apply to be a Student Election Assistant**

The County Board may appoint up to two Student Election Assistants to serve at any voting place.  

If an applicant is qualified to be a Student Election Assistant, as outlined above, they should download and complete the application found at the following link:


and mail it to their County Board. Contact information for each County Board can be found at the following link (see also the related map below):

https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/

c. **Description of the Process to Become an Election Official**

(i) If an applicant is qualified to become an Election Official and they have filled out the general State Board application on the State Board website provided above, their application will automatically get forwarded to their County Board, and, if services are needed in their county, they will be contacted by a member of the Board of Elections.  

If they have applied directly through their County Board, they should follow the procedures established by their county.

(ii) The chairman of each political party in a county has the right to make recommendations to the County Board for individuals to serve as the Election Officials in each precinct.  

Each County Board, in appointing the Election Officials in every precinct, is required to first consider candidates recommended by “the chairmen of each political party in its county.” If the recommendations are insufficient, the County Board may appoint an otherwise eligible person (i.e., one without a recommendation) who resides in that precinct.  

If there is no one in the precinct that the County Board finds suitable to hold any particular office, it may appoint an otherwise eligible county candidate who resides in another precinct.

d. **Deadlines for Applying to Become an Election Official**

North Carolina does not have a specific deadline for filing an application to become an Election Official, but each applicant should consider the timing required for training when deciding when to submit their application. For roles with more responsibility or oversight, early participation can allow advancement as the election cycle progresses or in subsequent elections. Note that emergency appointments for Election Officials can also be made on Election Day by unanimous vote of the County Board.

V. **After Applying**

a. **Following Up**

It is important for an applicant to follow up to ensure that their application was received and was distributed to the correct County Board. If an applicant applied through the general application with the
State Board, they should: (1) contact Noah Grant, Elections Communications Specialist for the State Board of Elections at noah.grant@ncsbe.gov and (2) contact their County Board to ensure that their application was received and ask any follow up questions that they may have.

If an applicant applied directly with their County Board, they should contact their County Board to ensure that their application was received and ask any follow up questions that they may have.

To find the contact information for their County Board, an applicant should use the link below that will direct them to the state map. Simply click on the relevant county and the contact information will appear.

https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/

**Tips: Each applicant should:

- Make sure that they are registered to vote before they file their application.
- When filling out any application, take time to provide all requested information.
- Not be afraid to ask for assistance from the State Board or County Board. These boards recognize the importance of Election Workers and want to help.
VI. Election Protection Organizations in North Carolina

If an applicant experiences any challenges during the application process, they can reach out to the below voting advocacy groups for assistance.

- **ACLU of North Carolina**  
  [https://www.acluofnorthcarolina.org/](https://www.acluofnorthcarolina.org/)  
  Phone: 919-834-3466  
  Email: contact@acluofnc.org

- **Common Cause North Carolina**  
  [https://www.commoncause.org/north-carolina/](https://www.commoncause.org/north-carolina/)  
  Phone: 919-836-0027  
  Email: bwarner@commoncause.org

- **Democracy North Carolina**  
  [https://democracync.org/](https://democracync.org/)  
  Phone: 919-286-6000 or 1-888-OUR-VOTE  
  Email: info@democracync.org

- **League of Women Voters of North Carolina**  
  [https://www.lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-north-carolina](https://www.lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-north-carolina)  
  Phone: 910-236-9220

- **North Carolina NAACP**  
  [https://naacpnc.org/contact-us/](https://naacpnc.org/contact-us/)  
  Phone: Local: 919-682-4700  
  Toll Free: 866-626-2227  
  Email: info@naacpnc.org
VII. **Be a Proactive Election Official**

A good Election Official is proactive and focused on the voter’s experience. An Election Official 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 an Election Official is 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 ensuring Election Day runs smoothly at each polling place. One of the most common voter complaints on Election Day is the long line at the polling place. An Election Official can significantly reduce this hassle through organization, anticipating issues, and quickly resolving problems as they arise. For example, an Election Official 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 that can be contacted 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 the attitude of the Election Official. Work to de-escalate tension if there is confrontation or frustration. If an Election Official is 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 they need help. Be inquisitive, but not disruptive, to make sure 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, the Election Official should offer a warm greeting, make eye contact, introduce themselves and let the voters know they are there to help. The Election Official should welcome voters by name, if they 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.

VIII. **High Priority Items**

a. **No Voter ID Currently Required**
In November 2018, North Carolina voters approved an amendment to the North Carolina State Constitution to require voters to provide photo identification before voting, and in December 2018, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 824, titled “An Act to Implement the Constitutional Amendment Requiring Photo Identification to Vote” (“S.B. 824”). S.B. 824 was vetoed by the North Carolina Governor shortly after being passed, but his veto was overridden by the General Assembly and the Act was codified into law on the following day. Since that codification, S.B. 824 has been challenged, both at the state and federal level, and its implementation has been temporarily halted by both federal and state courts. As a result of the preliminary injunctions, as of the date of the publication of this guide, voters are not required to show an ID in order to vote. It is unlikely that this requirement will change prior to the November 2020 general election.

b. **Voters Who Have Moved**

If a voter has moved from one location to another within the same North Carolina county precinct but failed to file a change of address form with the County Board, the voter must be permitted to vote in the new precinct upon an oral or written affirmation of the new address.

If a voter has moved from one precinct to another precinct within the same county but failed to file a change of address form with the County Board, the voter has a right to vote in the new precinct or at a central location if the voter has lived in the new location for more than 30 days. If the voter has lived in the new location for fewer than 30 days, the voter must vote in the old (former) precinct or may cast a provisional ballot in the new precinct.

If a voter has moved from one North Carolina county to another county, the voter must register to vote in the new county no later than 25 days before the date of the election. Alternatively, the voter can visit a One-Stop Early Voting Place anywhere in the new county and may register and vote at the same time.

c. **Voters Who Are Not on the Rolls**

North Carolina does not offer Election Day registration at polling places. Voters who do not appear on the voter rolls should be offered the opportunity to cast a provisional ballot.

d. **Rights to Voter Assistance**

North Carolina law allows for any voter, upon request, to receive assistance in entering or exiting a voting booth as well as preparing a ballot, as long as the person providing assistance is a member of the voter’s immediate family. The law defines an immediate family member as a spouse, parent, grandparent, sibling, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law, stepparent or stepchild.

Some voters can receive aid from a wide range of helpers. If a voter satisfies any of the conditions below, the voter is eligible to receive assistance from any person of their choice, with the exception of the voter’s employer or union representative, or an agent thereof. Voters permitted to receive assistance from any person of their choice are:
• a voter who, on account of physical disability, is unable to enter the voting booth without assistance
• a voter who, on account of physical disability, is unable to mark a ballot without assistance
• a voter who, on account of illiteracy, is unable to mark a ballot without assistance
• a voter who, on account of blindness, is unable to enter the voting booth or mark a ballot without assistance\(^5^4\)

Any voter who qualifies for and requests assistance while voting at a One-Stop Early Voting Place is entitled to the same assistance as voters who vote at their precinct on Election Day.\(^5^5\)

There is no prohibition against a person assisting multiple voters if those voters are qualified for assistance.\(^5^6\) Persons providing assistance to a voter may not, in any manner, try to persuade or induce them to cast a vote in any particular way, nor keep any record of anything that occurs in the voting booth, nor reveal how the assisted voter voted.\(^5^7\)

e. **Every Voter Standing in Line by 7:30 pm Must be Allowed to Vote**

Election Day polling places are open between 6:30 am and 7:30 pm.\(^5^8\) Voters must be allowed to vote if they are in line or inside the polling place by 7:30 pm (or in line or inside the polling place at the closing time of any One-Stop Early Voting Place).\(^5^9\)

f. **Polling Place Accessibility**

**Accessible Polling Places**
Federal and state law require that polling sites be accessible to all voters.\(^6^0\) Any North Carolina voter who is able to travel to the voting place, but because of age or physical disability and physical barriers encountered at the voting place is unable to enter the voting place without physical assistance, is permitted to vote in their vehicle.\(^6^1\)

Curbside voting must be provided during early voting at all North Carolina One-Stop Early Voting Places and on Election Day at each precinct.\(^6^2\) Voting places must have signage indicating curbside voting and must also have a curbside alert system. Election Officials are required to come to the vehicle to obtain the voter’s name and address. Before a ballot is issued to a curbside voter, the voter must swear an oath affirming their qualification to use curbside voting.\(^6^3\)

**Accessible Voting Equipment**
Both federal law and state requirements mandate that voting systems be equipped for voters with disabilities in a manner that allows such voters to have the same opportunity for access and participation as any other voter.\(^6^4\) It is required that every precinct have at least one accessible voting machine available for use by voters with special needs. This includes all One-Stop Early Voting Places.\(^6^5\)

g. **Voter Mistakes on Ballots**

If a voter makes a mistake on a ballot (called spoiling or damaging), the voter may obtain another ballot upon returning the spoiled or damaged ballot to the Chief Judge or other designated official.\(^6^6\) Voters
may receive up to three replacement ballots. The Chief Judge must retain each spoiled or damaged ballot in the container provided for that purpose.

h. **Campaigning and Voter Intimidation and Disruption at the Polling Place**

North Carolina law prohibits individuals and groups from hindering access, harassing others, distributing campaign literature, placing political advertising, soliciting votes, or otherwise engaging in “election-related activity” in the voting place or in the buffer zone established around the voting place by the County Board. “In determining the dimensions of that buffer zone for each voting place, the county board of elections shall, where practical, set the limit at 50 feet from the door of entrance to the voting place, measured when that door is closed, but in no event shall it set the limit at more than 50 feet or at less than 25 feet.”

The County Board will also “provide an area adjacent to the buffer zone for each voting place in which persons or groups of persons may distribute campaign literature, place political advertising, solicit votes, or otherwise engage in election-related activity.”

i. **COVID-19 Concerns**

The spread of COVID-19 means that information and election practices are changing rapidly. Each applicant should contact their local election administrator to verify all information in this guide before relying on information contained herein. The State Board has a dedicated webpage, where voters can find up-to-date information about elections during the pandemic:

https://www.ncsbe.gov/Coronavirus

Currently, no special circumstance or excuse is needed to cast an absentee ballet. To request a ballot, a voter must fill out an absentee ballot request form here:


The form may be mailed or returned in person to the voter’s County Board.

The North Carolina Task Force on Elections and COVID-19 Response has been created to provide “advice on steps necessary to respond to the pandemic and ensure voting is safe and accessible in 2020.” The State Board is in “regular contact with state and federal health and emergency management officials to ensure proper sanitation and safeguards are in place to protect against the spread of the virus during elections.”

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1 See N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163 (2020).
2 Id. § 163-22.
3 Id. § 163-33(2).


6 See N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-166.4 (providing that county boards of election shall create buffer zone where campaign activity is prohibited between 25 and 50 feet from the polls).

7 One-Stop Early Voting Places are not required by law to be overseen by a chief judge and two election judges.

8 N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 163-41, 163-47; 08 NCAC 10B.0101.

9 N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 163-41, 163-47; 08 NCAC 10B.0101.

10 N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 163-42, 163.42.1, 163.43.

11 N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-42; 08 NCAC 10B.0101(b).

12 N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-42.1.

13 Id. § 163-43.


15 N.C. GEN. STAT. §§ 163-41(c), 163-42(b), 163-42.1, 163-43.

16 Id. §§ 163-55, 163-59.

17 Id. §§ 163-54, 163-82.1.


19 N.C. GEN STAT. § 163-41(b).

20 Id. § 163-41.1(b).

21 Id. § 163-41.1(a).

22 Id. § 163-42.1.

23 Id. §§ 163-41, 163-42.

24 Id. § 163-41.

25 Id. §§ 163-42(a)-(b), 163-41(c).

26 Id. § 163-46.


29 N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-42.1.


31 N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-41.

32 Id.

33 Id.

34 Id.


36 N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-42(c).

37 We credit Board of Elections in the City of New York, Poll Worker’s Manual 9-11 (2012) for many of the tips included here. Special thanks to Sharon Dolente, ACLU of Michigan, for her insight and direction on this section.

38 N.C. CONST. art VI, §§ 2(4), 3(2).


See id.; Holmes v. Moore (Wake County, Court of Appeals No. 18 CVS 15292).


N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-82.15(d).

Id. § 163-82.15(e).

Id.


N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-82.6(d).

Id. § 163-166.7.

Id. § 163-166.8(a).

Id.

Id.

Id. § 163-166.8(b).

Id. § 163-227.2(e).

08 NCAC 10B.0107(b).

N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-166.8(c).

Id. § 163-166.01.

Id. § 163-166.01; see 08 NCAC 10B.0105(c).


N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163-166.9.

08 N.C.A.C. 10B.0108.

Id. See N.C. GEN. STAT. § 163A-1140.


Id.

08 NCAC 10B.0104(b).

Id.

Id.

Id. § 163-166.4.

Id.

Id.

Id. § 163-166.6.


Id.