

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the responsibilities of an election inspector?

Election inspectors conduct assigned duties at a polling site on Election Day. Duties can include issuing ballots to registered voters, registering voters, monitoring the voting equipment, explaining how to mark the ballot or use the voting equipment or counting votes.

What are the hours of work?

Polling places are open statewide from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Election inspectors can work a full day, generally from 6:30 a.m. until approximately 9:00 p.m. or later in the case of November elections. In many municipalities, election inspectors can work a split shift. The use of split shifts must be approved by the passing of an ordinance and can be done in any city, village, or town.

Are election inspectors compensated?

Yes, election inspectors are compensated for working at polling places at a rate determined by the appropriate municipal governing body and, in some municipalities, are also compensated for attending any required training sessions. Election inspectors may also choose to volunteer their services by filing a written declination of compensation with the municipal clerk.

What are the training requirements for election inspectors?

Municipal clerks are required by state law to provide training. This training provides the necessary information to be a successful election inspector. (Many municipalities require election inspectors to attend a comprehensive training course prior to each Primary election.)

An experienced chief inspector that has been certified by WEC must be present at each polling place for each election. Chief inspectors must receive six hours of continuing election education training during each two-year period.

What length of commitment will be expected?

Election inspectors are appointed to two-year terms so you will be asked to make a minimum two-year commitment to all elections in that period.

Where will I be assigned?

In smaller municipalities, there is often only one polling place. However, in larger municipalities there are multiple polling places. In larger municipalities, every effort is made to assign an election inspector to their neighborhood voting site. However, election inspectors in large municipalities such as large cities must be willing to be flexible and consider assignments at other sites.

Besides polling sites, are there other ways election inspectors serve in municipalities which offer these opportunities?

1. A Special Voting Deputy is an election inspector who conducts elections by absentee ballots at residential facilities, such as nursing homes, for resident electors who cannot get to the polls. This task is completed before Election Day.
2. Assist the absentee ballot Board of Canvassers in processing absentee ballots at a location other than a polling site, commonly referred to as a central count location. Only municipalities that have provided for this option by ordinance will count absentee ballots outside of a polling site. Go to this webpage to see if you have any “Central Count Absentee Ballot Municipalities” in your county: <https://elections.wi.gov/clerks/guidance/central-count-absentee>

What are the specific qualifications to be an election inspector?

To be an election inspector, a person must:

- Be a qualified elector of the county in which the municipality is located (i.e. an adult citizen of the United States who has resided in the election district for 20 consecutive days and is not otherwise disqualified to vote)
- Be able to speak, read, and write fluently in the English language
- Have strong clerical skills
- Be able to solve problems
- Be an effective communicator
- NOT be a candidate for any office to be voted on at the polling place at that election.

How are election inspectors selected?

According to Wis. Stat. §7.30(4), the Mayor, President or Board Chairperson of the municipality is required to nominate election inspectors to the governing body no later than the last regular meeting in December of odd-numbered years. The governing body of the municipality appoints the election inspectors for a two-year term before December 31.

The nominees must first be chosen from lists submitted by the two dominant political parties, which are due no later than November 30 of odd numbered years (November 30, 2023), and the lists may be supplemented at any time. Local party chairpersons are responsible for submitting lists of names to the Mayor, President, or Board Chairperson of the municipality, for each polling place.

If a local party does not submit a list, or does not submit enough names, the Mayor, President, or Board Chairperson may nominate qualified individuals on a non-partisan basis, without regard to party affiliation.

The lists may also designate individuals as first choice nominees, who must be appointed first. The party has sole discretion to determine nominee criteria.

When the Democratic and Republican parties' lists are received, the clerk must adhere to "party imbalance" at each polling place. Party imbalance means that the party whose candidate for the Office of Governor or President at the last general election received the most votes at the polling place will have one more election inspector at that polling place than the other party.

Certification of Nominations

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. §7.30(4)(b), each person submitting the names of nominees is required to certify on his or list of nominations that the person has contacted each nominee whose name appears on the list and that the nominee has agreed to serve as an election official.

Oath of Office

Within 5 days after the appointment of the election officials, the municipal clerk will mail each appointee a notice that includes the official oath to be signed by the appointee. The appointees are then required to file the oath with the municipal clerk within 10 days after the mailing of the notice.

Recruitment of Election Inspectors

The nomination of election inspectors lies with each county party. The very first database that should be drawn from is the list of poll workers and election observers from past elections. These individuals have at least a basic understanding and interest in the voting process. It is important, as is required by law that each individual who is nominated to become a Republican election inspector has actually agreed to serve as an election inspector. Often, that initial contact is an indication of interest, but not an agreement to commit to working all elections in their two-year term as an election inspector.

Other options include email surveys, text messaging, or even considering doing a mailer on the effort. You can ask RPW for a list of potential individuals who would be interested in the program. Include updates on the effort, an ask to become a paid poll worker, an ask to become a donor to help the effort/become a member, or an ask to attend a future event or poll worker training.

Follow up with Municipal Clerks

One of the majors disconnects during recent election inspector recruitment cycles was follow through; whether on the part of the municipal clerk or the nominated poll worker. This is why follow up communication between the county party's nomination coordinator and the potential poll worker is critical. Again, robo-calls, mass emails and sign-up sheets are a great place to start; however, individual person-to-person contact with these potential nominees, ensuring that they understand the commitment and process is necessary.

In many instances the municipal clerk would not follow up with the names of nominees on these lists. It is important that a few people in the party are assigned to a handful of municipalities that they are responsible for checking into on occasion to make sure the lists were received and that these names are being used first.

Be sure to stay in contact with the clerks and follow-up with nominees to ensure all nominees are used. This may require several calls/emails between your county party, the clerks, and poll worker nominees. Also, remind your nominees that clerks often only send one email to initiate contact. **CHECK SPAM FOLDERS** and inform your nominees to connect with clerks **EARLY** if they do not receive information before January 15, 2024 about completing the necessary paperwork and training.

Submitting Nomination Letter and Lists

Wis. Stat. §7.30(4)(b)2.a, outlines the submission requirements of election inspectors to the required municipal leaders. All nominations must be signed by both the County Party Chairman **AND** the County Party Secretary.

County Parties should use the provided nomination letter template to submit election inspector nominees. The letter, signed by both officers, and the corresponding excel list of nominees should be submitted by mail (and electronically), to the Municipal Mayor, Board Chairperson, or President, and the Clerk. Submitted lists must include the [name] [address] [phone #] [email] of each individual nominated.

Email and mailing addresses for these officials can be found on the League of Wisconsin Municipalities' website (lwm-info.org), select Resources, Order Handbook & Annual Publications, then Annual Directory of Wisconsin City and Village Officials.

The Chair should designate preference for Special Voting Deputies, Central Count, Absentee Ballot counters, and Chief Election Inspectors as needed/necessary.

Supplementing the list of Nominees

The party's list of nominees can be supplemented at any time following November 30th, 2023. However, these names are only used to fill any vacancies. Municipal clerks are not required to wait for supplemental names to fill vacancies. These lists should be supplemented regularly so that municipal clerks have additional names to choose from in the event of a vacancy.

Eau Claire County Poll Worker Recruitment Plan

OVERVIEW:

1. Appoint a committee whose main task is to recruit poll workers and compile the list of poll workers.
2. Obtain a list of Republican poll worker names from the municipal clerks (city, village, and towns) who worked the last election. If the county provided a list in 2021 obtain a copy of that list and merge it with the list received from the municipalities.
3. Call everyone on the list and ask if they would like to continue being a poll worker for the years 2024-2025. Poll workers who have several years of experience should be asked if they would be interested in becoming chief inspectors. Also ask the poll workers if they have any friends who vote Republican if they would like to become a poll worker.
4. Call every active member of the party who is not on the poll working list and ask them if they would like to become a poll worker.
5. We have set up a poll worker web page on our website that people can fill out. It asks them to provide their name, address, phone number, email address and how many years of poll working experience they have. It also asks if they are available all day, morning, or afternoon. Finally, it asks them to provide the top three polling locations they would like to work at from a drop-down list.
6. Put together the list of workers by polling location.
7. Submit the list to the municipalities, along with a copy of the state statute informing them they must use half of their poll workers from our list (some of the smaller towns have never received a list from the party).