



YMCA CENTER FOR YOUTH VOICE

STUDENT ELECTION JUDGE NETWORK

Election Official Toolkit

Suggestions for Head Election Judges

Modeled after Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services Policies

Student election judges are an integral part of our elections. This program strengthens our elections and helps youth develop valuable skills.

We also take seriously the responsibility to safeguard our youth while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for their development. The guidelines below are to be followed by anyone working with our student judges.

Advance communication with student judges. When you call your team of election judges before Election Day, make a special effort to reach out to student election judges using multiple forms of communication. Elections Headquarters will provide home phone, email address, and mobile phone for texting whenever they are available.

Make multiple attempts at contact. Some youth may be nervous about calling back, yet they often need specific information. Please make an extra effort if needed and leave a message/email with detailed information.

- Cover anything special they need to know about the polling location, such as where to park and what door to enter in the morning. Check in on their transportation plan for the day. Will they drive, take transit, bike, walk, be picked up and dropped off?
- Provide them the best way to reach you on election morning if they are having any issues arriving on time. A text number is often easiest for students.
- Offer advance information on breaks and meal traditions at your precinct.
- Remind students of any dress guidelines discussed in training.

Communicate with Election Headquarters on Election Day. As part of your set up procedures before opening the polls, call or text Election HQ to report on student election judge attendance. It is rare for students not to show up, but we need to know if that happens.

- We need to know before polls open that yes, students arrived as expected or no, they did not. Headquarters staff will follow up with students, their family, and their school to make sure they are safe if they aren't where they are supposed to be.
- Call Election HQ if a student not on your roster shows up to work. They may be in the wrong polling place and we may be looking for them.
- Call if a student does not return from a meal break.
- Call if a student asks to leave before the scheduled shift is done.

Treat Student Election Judges as full team members. Hold them to the same expectations and standards as the adults on your team, and talk with them with the same level of respect. Youth may need more context around a given task than adults because voting is newer to them. Keep that in mind when offering coaching, by providing the reasons for seemingly obscure tasks such as initialing the ballots and tracking voter receipts. Help them see the importance of accuracy in mundane tasks and how they ensure election integrity.

- Be aware that different styles of communication do not necessarily imply disrespect, disinterest, or different goals and expectations. The best way to resolve communication differences is to ask clarifying questions to check your assumptions.
- Ask bilingual students about their comfort with providing language assistance to voters. Students, like adult judges who speak a second language, are not necessarily trained interpreters.
- Rotate students through all the election judge duties throughout the day. Remember, they should participate in everything except duties that require party balance.

Practice team leadership. Student election judges are supervised by a team of adults, both in the Elections office and in the polling place on Election Day. Whenever feasible youth will not be in the primary care of only one adult, and private conversations between youth and adults occur in a public place in view of others. This serves three purposes: youth receive support and supervision at appropriate levels, adults are protected from unfounded allegations, and we reduce the possibility of an adult having undue influence over individual youth.

Transportation. The student's parents or guardians are responsible for providing or arranging for transportation for their youth to attend training or work in the polling place. Staff and volunteers are discouraged from transporting youth, and it is not considered a part of Elections & Voter Services activities. Although staff and volunteers are not responsible for providing transportation, staff should ensure to the best of their ability that youth have transportation home and are not left waiting alone at a training or work site after everyone else has left. If necessary, a team of adult staff may accompany the student home to ensure safety.