

# Serving as an Election Worker – My Firsthand Experience

—Mary Jo Ebert

After promoting expanded voter rights in 2018 (Prop 3), I decided to sign up to serve as a poll worker. Since then, I've worked for four elections and will do so on November 3. I schedule myself off work to perform this civic function because it's important to me that elections run smoothly. In addition to precinct workers, people are needed to process absentee/vote-by-mail ballots in designated locations.

Yes, it's a long day. Precinct workers arrive at 6:00 a.m. The job can be finished as early as 9:00 p.m., depending on number of people in line to vote when polls close at 8:00. Voters are rapidly shifting to vote-by-mail, which means a lower probability of the job finishing much later. This will vary by location.

Absentee ballot processing runs considerably longer. This may change if proposed legislation to allow working in shifts gets approved in time for the November election.

## Why do I do it?

1. It's satisfying to contribute to a vitally important civic process.
2. The average Michigan poll worker age in past years was 74. People who are at low risk for COVID are needed.  
16 & 17 year olds: Please consider working this year. It's a worthwhile experience.
3. It's interesting to learn how the whole process works.
4. Each precinct team I've worked with has been cooperative and dedicated to doing a good job.

## Other roles to perform

- Poll watcher for your party or organization: Monitor election administration from a public viewing area and report issues to polling place authorities and party officials
- Challenger for a party or organization: May challenge a person's eligibility to vote or the actions of election workers



## Quick Facts

- Registered voters and youth ages 16 and 17 are eligible to work.
- Training is mandatory and detailed process documents are used.
- Precincts and ballot processing locations use extensive COVID safety measures.
- Face masks, shields, gloves, hand sanitizer, etc. are provided.
- Workers are paid for the day and for their training.
- There are lunch periods and breaks. Precinct workers can bring a book, laptop, phone, etc. to use as time permits

***Many cities are in need of election workers for November 3. If you are at relatively low risk for COVID-19, please consider signing up. If you have a full-time job, give thought to asking your employer for the day off work as a way for your company to support the election.***