

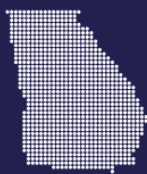
# GEORGIA

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE  
TWENTY YEARS  
*at New York University School of Law*



## HOW TO BECOME A POLL WORKER

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE



**Georgia**  
*Poll Worker Toolkit*

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## I. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a poll worker, also known as a “poll officer”, in Georgia.<sup>1</sup> 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 recruiting 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, and so they play an outsized 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 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 that 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 that this guide encourages you to join the movement and make a difference!

## II. Overview of Georgia’s Election System

Georgia holds regular elections every even-numbered year to elect candidates for the various federal and state offices. Georgia has an open primary system, where registered voters can vote in a party’s primary election even if they are not members of that party. Georgia, however, has a majority vote requirement for both its general and primary elections. If no candidate secures the majority vote, Georgia holds a run-off election, pitting the top two candidates from the primary or the general election against each other.

Recognizing the essential contribution poll workers make to the elections process, Georgia counties hire paid poll workers during each primary and general election to help conduct the election.<sup>2</sup> Poll officers interact directly with the voters and thus play a significant role in the voting experience of Georgians. Ultimately, poll officers are in charge of monitoring the polling place and the elections process. Recruiting qualified candidates and training them properly is essential to minimizing mistakes, hassle, and wait time.

A shortage of well-trained poll officers, however, is not uncommon in Georgia.<sup>3</sup> This shortage exacerbates issues that are likely to occur in polling places on Election Day, such as:<sup>4</sup>

- Voting machine malfunctions, including vote flipping;

- Delayed poll openings;
- Incorrect or misleading voter instructions;
- Voter confusion about correct polling location;
- Exceedingly long lines;
- Shortage of provisional ballots;
- Voters improperly turned away from correct polling location; and
- Missing electronic voter lists

The importance of the poll worker role cannot be overstated. A poll worker’s job is vital to the voting process and essential to the well-being of our democracy. Accordingly, well-trained and qualified poll workers are desperately needed. This Georgia Poll Worker Guide will present you with an easy guide on how to become a Georgia poll worker:

- Part III explains the roles and duties of poll workers on Election Day. In addition, it details the necessary qualifications needed to become a poll worker under Georgia election law.
- Part IV describes the process for applying to become a poll worker.
- Part V outlines the process after you file your application to become a 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 available resources for poll worker training.
- Part VII lists the election protection organizations in Georgia.
- Part VIII details some hands-on issues that a poll worker should be particularly prepared to handle, with tips on how to respond.
- Part IX describes steps an election inspector should take to make voters feel more comfortable in the polling place.

### III. Description of Roles

#### a. Categories of Poll Workers—Responsibilities and Duties

The categories and duties of poll workers may vary somewhat between counties. For an exact description, please contact the election office of your local county. Georgia statutes create two main categories of poll officer positions: managers (chief managers and assistant managers) and clerks. Each polling place has a board consisting of one chief manager and two assistant managers who are assisted by clerks.<sup>5</sup> Managers and clerks are appointed by the superintendent.<sup>6</sup>

The following is a list of the responsibilities and duties of poll officers in DeKalb County, an exemplar county.<sup>7</sup>

## **Poll Clerk<sup>8</sup>**

A poll clerk performs a variety of duties and interacts directly with voters. Before Election Day, a poll clerk attends training sessions and may be asked to assist in setting up the poll. On Election Day, a poll clerk assists the elections process by performing duties that include one or more of the following: checking identification; assisting voters in filling out Voter Certificates; marking voters on Electors List; writing voter names on Numbered List of Voters; creating and issuing Voter Access Cards; directing voters to the proper voting unit; ensuring voters return Voter Access Cards; assisting in the closing out of the poll; disassembling voting units; and assisting with paperwork.

## **Assistant Poll Manager<sup>9</sup>**

An assistant poll manager has thorough knowledge of the poll procedures and assists the poll manager in recruiting and managing poll clerks. Before Election Day, an assistant poll manager attends training sessions and studies poll procedures. As part of their duties, an assistant poll manager sets up the election poll ahead of Election Day (which includes assembling voting units and arranging tables for the stations to ensure a smooth voter flow) and, on Election Day, assists the poll manager with any problems or questions that arise, assists with ensuring that the poll functions properly, relieves clerks for breaks, and assists with the poll close out (which includes printing report tapes from voting units, completing necessary paperwork to account for the ballots and voters, and disassembling the voting units).

## **Poll Manager<sup>10</sup>**

A poll manager is responsible for the management of the elections process and the poll workers at their assigned precinct. Duties include: ensuring adequate staffing at the poll; recruiting clerks and assigning duties; picking up election supplies ahead of Election Day; setting up the poll for voting on the Monday before Election Day (including assembling voting units); conducting the election (including resolving any problems that arise, ensuring that the poll opens promptly at 7:00 am and functions properly, and closing out the poll); and returning memory cards and other voting supplies to the appropriate officials.

### **b. Qualifications**

#### **To be a poll worker in Georgia, you must be:<sup>11</sup>**

- A “judicious, intelligent, and upright citizen” of the United States;<sup>12</sup>
- A resident or employee of the county or municipality in which you are appointed;
- At least 16 years old;
- Able to read, write, and speak English.

#### **Other desirable qualifications:<sup>13</sup>**

- Ability to solve problems;
- Ability to communicate effectively; and
- Ability to work long hours.

#### **Disqualifications for working as a poll officer:<sup>14</sup>**

- You hold or are a candidate for public office, other than a political party office;
- You are an immediate relative of a candidate for public office whose name appears on the ballot in the precinct where you will serve (“Immediate relative” means a parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law);<sup>15</sup>
- You were convicted of malfeasance in office, fraudulent violation of primary or election laws, or a felony involving moral turpitude, unless it has been 10 years since you completed your sentence and your civil rights have been restored.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Application Process:**

- You must submit an application to the Elections Division of the county where you want to serve;<sup>17</sup>
- You must undergo training provided by the election superintendent;<sup>18</sup> and
- You must receive a certificate showing you are qualified to perform your duties in connection with the type of voting equipment to be used.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Student Teen Election Participant (STEP) Program<sup>20</sup>**

Interested full-time high school students can also get involved as volunteers. The student will be supervised by a poll officer or manager who is at least 21 years old. The student will work from 4–6 hours on Election Day. The student will get full credit for the school day when they serve. The student must:

- Be a United States citizen;
- Have a Georgia issued driver’s license or identification card;
- Have shown age-appropriate academic ability the previous school year;
- Have a history of responsible school and community behavior; and
- Have their parent’s or legal guardian’s permission.

## POLL WORKER APPLICATION

TITLE

FIRST NAME  MIDDLE NAME  LAST NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY  STATE  ZIP

CELL TELEPHONE  HOME TELEPHONE  WORK TELEPHONE

ETHNICITY  GENDER

EMAIL ADDRESS

ARE YOU A FULTON COUNTY RESIDENT?

DO YOU HAVE A VALID GA LICENSE AND YOUR OWN TRANSPORTATION?

ARE YOU A FULTON COUNTY EMPLOYEE?

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED AS A POLL WORKER IN FULTON COUNTY?

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH PERSONAL COMPUTERS (PCS)?

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH MICROSOFT WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEM?

IF NECESSARY, WOULD YOU SERVE AS AN ALTERNATE (STAND-BY)?

DO YOU SPEAK AND LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH FLUENTLY?

IF YES, PLEASE IDENTIFY THE LANGUAGE(S):

WHY DO YOU THINK POLL WORKERS ARE IMPORTANT TO CONDUCT ELECTIONS?

DO YOU FORESEE ANY PROBLEMS IN WORKING FROM 6:00 A.M. TO 8:30 P.M. (I.E. 14.5 HOURS) ON ELECTION DAY(S)?

DO YOU FORESEE ANY PROBLEMS IN ATTENDING THE MANDATORY POLL WORKER TRAINING CLASSES?

I am not a convicted felon, or if I am, my rights related to voting have been restored. If I am duly appointed as a poll worker, a deputy, or an alternate in Fulton County, I will faithfully perform my duties to the best of my ability and according to the election laws of the State of Georgia. I understand that, as a poll worker, I serve at the will of the Supervisor of Elections and may be removed with, or without cause. I have received a copy of, understand, and agree to abide by the poll worker guidelines.

OATH

SELECT DATE

I'm not a robot 

**SUBMIT**

Figure 1: Example of Georgia Poll officer Application (Fulton County, GA)<sup>21</sup>

### c. Party Affiliation

Georgia law does not require you to declare your political party affiliation to qualify as a poll worker.<sup>22</sup> Political parties may submit lists of poll worker candidates to the superintendent for consideration. When such lists are submitted, the superintendent must appoint an equal number of poll workers from each party, insofar as is practicable.<sup>23</sup> Keep in mind that poll workers, while working at the polls, may be prohibited from (1) wearing anything that suggests a political party affiliation or promotes a candidate or an issue on the ballot and (2) making any partisan statements or remarks.<sup>24</sup>

### d. Terms of Office

The appointment to serve as a poll worker expires when the election is over. New poll worker appointments are made for each successive election.<sup>25</sup> In some counties, active poll workers do not need to re-apply each election cycle, although they do need to complete training prior to each election.<sup>26</sup>

### e. Compensation

Compensation for poll workers per election varies based on county and the position held. Georgia law sets a minimum of \$95 per day for chief managers, \$66 for assistant managers, and \$60 for poll clerks in all counties with populations of at least 200,000.<sup>27</sup> Most counties pay their poll officers substantially more than those minimums. Here are some examples:

- Cobb County pays poll clerks \$115, assistant poll managers \$150, and poll managers \$200. The Cobb County poll workers are also paid to help set up the poll for Election Day and \$20–\$30 for attending training.<sup>28</sup>
- Gwinnett County pays its poll clerks \$105, assistant poll managers \$140, and poll managers \$225, in addition to paying for attending training.<sup>29</sup>
- DeKalb County pays its poll clerks \$110, assistant poll managers \$175, and poll managers \$225, with an additional \$15–\$25 per training session.<sup>30</sup>

## IV. Application Process

### a. How to Apply

The Georgia Secretary of State website provides contact information for each Election Office in each of Georgia's 159 counties. You can access this information at the following web-address: <http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>.



**Figure 2: Georgia Secretary of State—Search for County Election Office Contact Information<sup>31</sup>**

You must contact the County Election Office to obtain a poll worker application form. Some counties provide on-line application forms.<sup>32</sup>

Once you have filled out the poll worker application form, mail it to the County Election Office at the address provided for that office (or submit it online, if this option is provided). Most counties require you to certify and sign the application form.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 3: Certification and signature requirement (e.g., Floyd County, GA)<sup>34</sup>**

**b. Deadlines for Filing**

There is no specific deadline by which a poll worker application must be filed and Georgia Counties accept poll worker applications on a rolling basis. But because Georgia law requires poll workers to be adequately trained before Election Day, if you are applying to become a poll worker for the first time and want to be considered for an upcoming election, contact your County Election Office to find out by when you should apply.

**V. After Applying**

**a. Following Up**

First, you should confirm that the city or township clerk received your application. You can do so by sending the application via certified mail with receipt of delivery or delivering the application to the city/township clerk in person.

After submitting your application, you can contact your County Election Office with any follow-up questions. The contact information for local County Election Offices in Georgia is found at: <http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>.

## b. Overcoming Objections

Generally, once your application is received by the County Election Office, it will be processed to verify the information provided in the application. Once the information is verified, the Election Office will place your name in a poll worker list/database for that County. Thereafter, you will be contacted if there is a need for a poll worker during an upcoming election, and at that time you will receive further information on what will be needed to complete the hiring process.

### TIPS:

While Georgia law does **not require** that you be registered to vote to work as a poll worker, some counties **do require or prefer** that poll workers be registered voters.<sup>35</sup> So, if possible, make sure that you are registered to vote in the county where you are applying to work as a poll worker.

- You can confirm your registration status or register to vote on-line through the following Georgia Secretary of State web-address: <https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/GAOLVR/welcome.do#no-back-button>.

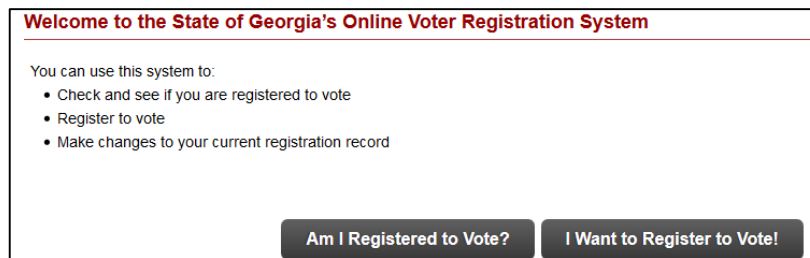


Figure 4: Online Georgia Voter Registration

Take the time to fill out your application carefully to ensure that you have provided all of the requested information. This makes it easier for the Elections Office to review your application and qualifications.

## VI. Training Resources

The Georgia Secretary of State's office provides training materials for poll workers on its Poll Worker Training Resources webpage: <https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

Poll workers are required to attend training conducted by the local superintendent prior to each primary, general, and special election, with the exception of special elections scheduled between a primary and general election.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, some Georgia counties also provide their own training materials online.

For example:

- DeKalb County: <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/PollOfficialOverviewTrainingModule.pdf>
- Camden County: <http://www.co.camden.ga.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2404>

## VII. Election Protection Organizations in Georgia

### **Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda**

Website: <http://thepeoplesagenda.org>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GCPAagenda/>  
Address: 501 Pulliam Street SW, Suite 410,  
Atlanta, GA 30312  
Telephone: 404-653-1199

### **Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials**

Website: <https://galeo.org>  
Address: P.O. Box 29506  
Atlanta, GA 30359  
Telephone: 888-54GALEO

### **Georgia State Conference of the NAACP**

Website: <https://www.naacpga.org>  
Address: 2001 Martin Luther King Jr Drive, Suite 307  
Atlanta, Georgia 30310  
Email: [office@naacpga.org](mailto:office@naacpga.org)  
Telephone: 404-577-8977

### **Common Cause Georgia**

Website: <https://www.commoncause.org/georgia/>  
Address: 250 Georgia Avenue, S.E., Suite 202  
Atlanta, GA 30312  
Telephone: 404-524-4598

### **ProGeorgia State Table**

Address: 1530 Dekalb Ave., Suite A  
Atlanta, GA 30307

Website: <http://progeorgia.org/about/>  
Email: [info@progeorgia.org](mailto:info@progeorgia.org)  
Telephone: 404-539-3689

#### **Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Atlanta**

Website: <https://advancingjustice-atlanta.org>  
Address: 5680 Oakbrook Parkway, Suite 148, Norcross GA 30093  
Telephone: 404-585-8446

#### **League of Women Voters of Georgia**

Website: <https://my.lwv.org/georgia>  
Address: P.O. Box 177, Decatur, GA 30031  
Telephone: 404-522-4598

#### **American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia**

Website: [www.acluga.org](http://www.acluga.org)  
Address: P.O. Box 77208  
Atlanta, GA 30357  
Phone: 770-303-8111  
Fax: 770-303-0060  
E-Mail: [info@acluga.org](mailto:info@acluga.org)

#### **Georgia Advocacy Office**

Website: [thegao.org](http://thegao.org)  
Phone: 404-885-1234 or 800-537-2329  
Email: [info@thegao.org](mailto:info@thegao.org)

#### **The New Georgia Project**

Website: [newgeorgiaproject.org](http://newgeorgiaproject.org)  
Address: 165 Courtland St., Suite A-231  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: 404-996-6621

#### **Fair Fight**

Website: <https://fairfight.com>  
Address: 1270 Caroline Street, NE, Suite D120-311  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
Email: [info@fairfightaction.com](mailto:info@fairfightaction.com)

## Southern Poverty Law Center

Website: <https://www.splcenter.org/state-offices/alabama>  
Address: 400 Washington Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
Telephone: 334-956-8200

## VIII. High Priority Issues<sup>37</sup>

### a. Options for Voters without Proper ID

**A voter without proper identification may vote a provisional ballot.**<sup>38</sup> The voter must swear or affirm that they are the person identified in the voter certificate. For the provisional ballot to count, the voter must present proper ID to the registrar's office within 3 days after Election Day.<sup>39</sup>

Proper forms of identification are:<sup>40</sup>

- 1) a Georgia driver's license;
  - 2) a valid Georgia voter ID card;
  - 3) a valid U.S. passport;
  - 4) a valid employee photo ID card issued by a local, state, or federal government employer;
  - 5) a valid U.S. military photo ID card; and
  - 6) a valid tribal photo ID card.
- **Exception:** A voter who registered to vote by mail but did not furnish the required ID at that time and is voting for the first time in Georgia is required to present either one of the six forms of acceptable IDs or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.<sup>41</sup>

A voter who does not have one of the six acceptable forms of photo ID will receive a letter that outlines the voter's options. A copy of this letter, "To: Georgia Voters – Without Photo ID on Election Day" should be given to all voters without ID before they leave the polling place.<sup>42</sup>

### b. Voters Who Have Moved

#### **Moving Within the Same County**

- A voter who has moved **within** the precinct **more than 30 days before** Election Day should notify their board of registrars by the fifth Monday prior to the election. Otherwise the voter should vote in their **OLD** precinct.<sup>43</sup>
- A voter who moved within the **same** county but to a **different** precinct **more than 30 days** of Election Day should notify their board of registrars by the fifth Monday prior to the election. Otherwise, the voter should vote in their **OLD** precinct.<sup>44</sup>
- A voter who moved within the **same** county but to a **different** precinct **within 30 days** of Election Day can vote in their **OLD** precinct.<sup>45</sup>

## Moving Between Counties

- A voter who has moved to a **different** county **within** Georgia **within 30 days** of Election Day can vote in their **OLD** precinct. The voter should fill out a change of address form for the next election.<sup>46</sup>
- A voter who has moved to a **different** county **within** Georgia **more than 30 days** of Election Day **must** register to vote in their new county of residence. **If a voter fails to register by the deadline, the voter may not vote in the election.**<sup>47</sup>
- If the voter still thinks they are eligible to vote, the voter can use a **provisional ballot.**<sup>48</sup>
- If the voter was eligible to vote and voted in the wrong precinct, only the votes for candidates for which the voter was entitled to vote will be counted, and they will be notified in writing that their ballot was partially counted for their correct precinct.<sup>49</sup>

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

If a voter's name does not appear on the electors list, search the statewide list to see if that voter is registered in a different precinct. If they are registered a different precinct, the voter can choose to go to their assigned precinct or cast a provisional ballot. **Voting by regular ballot is always preferable.** If the voter's name does not appear on the statewide search, review the Supplemental Electors List (if provided) and paper back up list. If the voter's name is found on either list, they can vote.<sup>50</sup> If they are not on any list, the voter can cast a provisional ballot.<sup>51</sup> Inform the voter that all votes cast for candidates for whom the voter is entitled to vote shall be counted and all votes cast for candidates for whom the voter is not entitled to vote shall be void.<sup>52</sup>

Voters who are not registered to vote and are not on the voting rolls cannot vote in an election.<sup>53</sup> Georgia routinely purges its voter rolls to remove the names of those individuals who are no longer eligible to vote in Georgia (e.g., individuals who have moved out of state).<sup>54</sup> **However, if a voter believes they are properly registered, they still have the right to cast a provisional ballot if they were incorrectly removed.**<sup>55</sup>

### d. Provisional Ballots

A voter whose name is not on the list of registered voters, who is without proper ID, or who first registered to vote in Georgia via mail and did not provide identification at that time (and cannot provide identification the first time they vote in person) is entitled to cast a provisional ballot.<sup>56</sup> The voter will complete an official voter registration form and a provisional ballot voting certificate which includes information about the place, manner, and approximate date on which the voter registered to vote.<sup>57</sup>

When casting a provisional ballot, the voter shall use the same type of ballot that used by their county or municipality. That ballot must be sealed in double envelopes and deposited in a sealed ballot box.<sup>58</sup>

The ballot is "provisional" until the voter's registration can be verified. The county registrar has up to three days after the election to determine if the voter was properly registered to vote in that election. If the voter was not eligible to vote in that election, the vote will not be counted.<sup>59</sup>

Votes will be counted for candidates in races for which the voter was eligible to vote.<sup>60</sup> A voter can check the status of their provisional ballot by contacting their local county elections and registration office, whose contact information can be found here:

[https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/check\\_your\\_provisional\\_ballot\\_status\\_for\\_november\\_6\\_2018\\_election](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/check_your_provisional_ballot_status_for_november_6_2018_election).<sup>61</sup> Poll officers must provide the voter with written information about this system.<sup>62</sup>

e. Right to Voting Assistance

A voter who is unable to sign their name or has a disability that prevents them from seeing or marking the ballot, operating the voting equipment, or entering the voting booth without assistance is entitled to assistance. As per a United States District Court Consent Order, all voters who are entitled to assistance with voting may receive assistance from any person of their choice (who is not their employer, their employer's agent, or an officer or agent of the voter's union). Additionally, a person may assist any number of voters. This order eliminates the requirements of O.C.G.A. 21-2-409(b)(2), which limited the people who could provide assistance to any elector who is a resident of the precinct or a member of the voter's family and limited the number of voters that a person could assist to ten.<sup>63</sup>

Any person assisting a voter must identify themselves to a poll worker, who will then record that person's name on the disabled voter's voter certificate.<sup>64</sup>

f. Voter Mistakes on Ballots

A voter who inadvertently spoils a ballot is entitled to obtain another by returning the spoiled ballot. The returned ballot should be immediately canceled.<sup>65</sup>

g. Voting Machine Breakdowns

A voter is entitled to cast papers ballots, paper or written, in case of a voting machine breakdown.<sup>66</sup> In the event of a breakdown, a ballot cast by a voter whose name appear on the electors list shall not be considered a provisional ballot and shall not require verification by the county registrar.<sup>67</sup> A ballot cast by a voter whose name does not appear on the electors list shall be considered a provisional ballot.<sup>68</sup>

h. Voters Standing in the Line by 7:00 p.m. Must Be Permitted to Vote

Polls in Georgia are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day; however, cities with populations of at least 300,000 remain open until 8:00 p.m. during general and some special elections.<sup>69</sup> Any voter in line to vote by 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.<sup>70</sup>

i. Polling Place Accessibility

The polling place is required to be accessible. Georgia law requires polling places to be located in a public facility if possible/practical and within the geographical boundaries of the precinct. The facility must be accessible to persons with disabilities and meet other requirements such as parking, space, heating, lighting, and electrical powering as required by the voting equipment.<sup>71</sup> Every polling place which has optical scanning voting systems must have at least one electronic ballot market that is accessible to individuals with disabilities.<sup>72</sup>

Between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Election Day, any voter who is 75 years of age or older or who has a disability and requires assistance to vote is authorized to vote immediately at the next available voting compartment or booth without waiting in line.<sup>73</sup>

Poll officers should take special care to accommodate voters with disabilities. For example:<sup>74</sup>

- Ensure that directional signs for accessible parking and entrances are clearly displayed.
- Always speak to the voter, even if they have a companion, aide, or sign language interpreter.
- Allow animals that assist people with disabilities into all buildings.
- Always ask if a voter needs assistance before rendering assistance. Do not touch a voter's wheelchair or other equipment without their consent.
- Ensure that there is seating for voters with disabilities waiting in line.

#### j. Campaigning at the Polling Place

Georgia law prohibits people from soliciting votes and from displaying or distributing campaign material within 150 feet of the polling place, within the polling place, or within 25 feet of any voter standing in line to vote.<sup>75</sup> To ensure that adherence to this law, poll workers should remain vigilant and monitor voters in line to ensure that they are not actively campaigning in line or wearing campaign paraphernalia.<sup>76</sup>

Exit polling is permitted if it is done at least 25 feet from the polling place.<sup>77</sup>

If a candidate has placed a poll watcher at the polling place, those watchers shall in no way interfere with the conduct of the election. Poll managers (and election superintendents) have the authority to warn and ultimately remove any poll watchers who have been observed interfering in the election. Poll watchers must wear their "official poll watcher" badge at all times while serving as a poll watcher.<sup>78</sup>

#### k. Voter Intimidation and Disruption

Voter intimidation and disruption of the voting process are a real concern. Under Georgia law, voter intimidation is a felony punishable by a prison sentence (1 to 10 years); a fine of up to \$100,000; or both.<sup>79</sup> Some examples of voter intimidation are:

- Aggressively questioning voters about their citizenship, criminal record, or other qualifications to vote in a manner intended to interfere with the voter's rights;
- 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 toward non-English speakers and voters of color.



**The poll workers should ensure that no voter intimidation occurs in or around the polling place:**

- ✓ Take all reports of voter intimidation seriously!
- ✓ If you see or hear that somebody is acting disruptively or failing to abide by the applicable conduct standards in or around the polling place, immediately approach that individual with a warning that they will be ejected from the polling place if the problem persists.
- ✓ If the problem persists, eject the individual(s) from the polling place.

**I. Effect of Felony Conviction on Elector’s Ability to Vote**

Under Georgia law, individuals who are convicted of a felony involving “moral turpitude” may not register to vote, remain registered to vote, or vote until they have completed their sentence.<sup>80</sup> Georgia election officials have interpreted this law to include all felony convictions. They have interpreted “sentence” to include the completion of parole or probation, and the payment of any outstanding court fines that the individual may owe.<sup>81</sup>

**m. Recent or Potential Changes in Election Law to Consider**

**New Paper Ballot Voting System**

Beginning in the 2020 election cycle, Georgia will join the majority of states in replacing its paperless voting system.<sup>82</sup> Georgia polling places will transition to touchscreen machines that generate a paper ballot, which the voter can then review before inserting it into an optical scanner and casting their vote. If the new system is not completely ready in all counties prior to the presidential primary, voters must use paper ballots filled out by hand.<sup>83</sup>

**“Exact Match” System**

In April 2019, Governor Kemp signed House Bill 316, largely ending the “exact match” system. The “exact match” law mandated that voters’ names on registration records perfectly match their names on approved forms of identification. In the lead-up to the 2018 election, approximately 80 percent of Georgia voters whose registrations were blocked by this law were people of color. A lawsuit filed by a coalition of Georgia civil rights groups forced the state to largely end the policy in 2019.<sup>84</sup>

**n. 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. On March 14, 2020, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp declared a public health state of emergency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>85</sup> That same day, the Georgia Secretary of State announced that Georgia’s Presidential Preference Primary would be postponed until May 19, 2020.<sup>86</sup> In the interim, all eligible voters will be mailed an absentee ballot request form so they have the opportunity to vote by mail. In an effort to protect voters who choose to vote in person on May 19, the Secretary of

State's office will be providing poll workers with additional resources to clean voting equipment regularly and instructions for voters on how to maintain a safe distance while voting. The Secretary of State's office is also working with counties to recruit more and younger poll workers.<sup>87</sup>

## IX. Be a Proactive Poll Worker<sup>88</sup>

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 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 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

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Official Code of Georgia Annotated refers to these positions as “poll officers,” the Georgia Secretary of State and a number of counties use the similar term “poll worker.” See Poll Worker Training Resources, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, <https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Pages/default.aspx> (last accessed Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> O.C.G.A. §§ 21-2-90, 21-2-98.

<sup>3</sup> See Emily Dreyfuss, “Georgia Voting Machine Issues Heighten Scrutiny on Brian Kemp,” *Wired*, (Nov. 6, 2018) <https://www.wired.com/story/georgia-voting-machine-issues-heighten-scrutiny-brian-kemp/>; Erik Ortiz et. al., “Midterms 2018: Voters face malfunctioning machines and long lines at polls across country on Election Day,” *NBC News*, (Nov. 6, 2018) <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/midterms-2018-voters-face-malfunctioning-machines-long-lines-polls-across-n932156>; “Improving economy blamed for poll worker shortage,” *WSB-TV Atlanta 2*, (May 4, 2014) <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/improving-economy-blamed-poll-worker-shortage/138069146/>.

<sup>4</sup> See WXIA Staff, “Verify Election Tracker | Report your poll issues,” *11 Alive*, (Apr. 18, 2017) <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/politics/elections/ballot/verify-election-tracker-report-your-poll-issues/85-432112319>; Rebecca Ayala, “Voting Problems 2018,” *The Brennan Center for Justice*, (Nov. 5, 2018) <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/voting-problems-2018>; Rebecca Ayala, “What’s the Matter with Georgia?” *The Brennan Center for Justice*, (Oct. 12, 2018) <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/whats-matter-georgia>; Kristina Torres, “After mix-up, two DeKalb voting sites will remain open until 7:30 pm,” *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, (June 20, 2017) <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/after-mix-two-dekalb-voting-sites-will-remain-open-until/pbjsDnhvF4J5HNCfIzhX8M/>; Amy Gardner et al., “Brian Kemp’s lead over Stacey Abrams narrows amid voting complaints in Georgia governor’s race,” *The Washington Post*, (Nov. 7, 2018) [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/brian-kemps-lead-over-stacey-abrams-narrows-amid-voting-complaints-in-georgia-governors-race/2018/11/07/39cf25f2-e2b7-11e8-b759-3d88a5ce9e19\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/brian-kemps-lead-over-stacey-abrams-narrows-amid-voting-complaints-in-georgia-governors-race/2018/11/07/39cf25f2-e2b7-11e8-b759-3d88a5ce9e19_story.html); Danny Hakim et al., “Voting Problems Surface as Americans Go to the Polls,” *The New York Times*, (Nov. 6, 2018) <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/06/us/politics/voting-issues-election-day-georgia.html?auth=login-email&login=email>.

<sup>5</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-90.

<sup>6</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-90.

<sup>7</sup> *Poll Employment*, DEKALB CNTY GA, <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/voter-registration-elections/poll-employment> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> *Clerk’s Job Description*, DEKALB CNTY GA, <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/clerk.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> *Poll Manager’s Job Description*, DEKALB CNTY GA, <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/assismgr.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>10</sup> *Assistant Poll Manager’s Job Description*, DEKALB CNTY GA, <https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/manager.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-92.

<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Qualifications%20to%20be%20a%20Poll%20Worker.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-92.

<sup>13</sup> *Qualifications, Conduct, and Training of Officers and Poll Workers*, SEC’Y OF STATE ELECTIONS DIV., <https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Qualifications%20to%20be%20a%20Poll%20Worker.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-92.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-8.

<sup>17</sup> *Qualifications, Conduct, and Training of Officers and Poll Workers*, SEC’Y OF STATE ELECTIONS DIV., <https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Qualifications%20to%20be%20a%20Poll%20Worker.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-99.

<sup>19</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-99.



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- <sup>42</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SEC'Y OF STATE, (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).
- <sup>43</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-218(d).
- <sup>44</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>45</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-218(e).
- <sup>46</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>47</sup> *Register to Vote*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, [https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/Elections/register\\_to\\_vote](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/Elections/register_to_vote) (last visited Feb. 4, 2020); see also *Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SEC'Y OF STATE, (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf> (last visited Feb. 4, 2020).
- <sup>48</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418(a).
- <sup>49</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-419(c)(2).
- <sup>50</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, 97 (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf>.
- <sup>51</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, 61-62, (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf>.
- <sup>52</sup> *Id.* at 62.
- <sup>53</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-451(c).
- <sup>54</sup> See e.g. Elisha Brown, *Federal Judge Backs Georgia's Purge of Nearly 100,000 Voters*, N.Y. TIMES, Dec. 27, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/27/us/elections/georgia-voters-purge.html>.
- <sup>55</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418.
- <sup>56</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, 61-62, (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf>.
- <sup>57</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418(b).
- <sup>58</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-419(a).
- <sup>59</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-419.
- <sup>60</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>61</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418(e).
- <sup>62</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418(f).
- <sup>63</sup> *Notice to Voters Who Are Entitled to Assistance While Voting*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE  
[https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/information\\_regarding\\_voter\\_assistance](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/information_regarding_voter_assistance) (last visited Feb. 4, 2020)
- <sup>64</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-409(a).
- <sup>65</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-433(b).
- <sup>66</sup> O.C.G.A. § § 21-2-334; 21-2-326; 21-2-371.
- <sup>67</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-418(h).
- <sup>68</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>69</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-403.
- <sup>70</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-413(g).
- <sup>71</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-265(d).
- <sup>72</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.21.
- <sup>73</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-409.1.
- <sup>74</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, 23-24 (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf>.
- <sup>75</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-414(a).
- <sup>76</sup> *The Poll Worker Manual*, GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE, 25 (2018)  
<https://georgiapollworkers.sos.ga.gov/Shared%20Documents/Georgia%20Poll%20Worker%20Training%20Manual.pdf>.
- <sup>77</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-414(c).

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<sup>78</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-408.

<sup>79</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-567.

<sup>80</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(b).

<sup>81</sup> Russ Bynum, “Georgia stops voting by felons using broadest reading of law,” Associated Press, (May 28, 2019) <https://apnews.com/44f3c3bd33dd4877b7a27a1592aed0d4>; “Disenfranchisement Laws,” The Brennan Center for Justice, (last visited Feb. 4, 2020) <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/voting-rights-restoration/disenfranchisement-laws>.

<sup>82</sup> Andrea Córdova McCadney et al., *Voting Machine Security: Where We Stand a Few Months Before the New Hampshire Primary*, The Brennan Center for Justice (Aug. 13, 2019) <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/voting-machine-security-where-we-stand-few-months-new-hampshire-primary>.

<sup>83</sup> O.C.G.A. § 21-2-379.23; Mark Niese, *Judges denies paper ballots in Georgia this year but requires them in 2020*, Atlanta Journal Constitution (Aug 15, 2019) <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/judge-denies-paper-ballots-georgia-this-year-but-requires-them-2020/k3OcCITXuj058FRfHWBQfO/>.

<sup>84</sup> Theodore Johnson and Max Feldman, *The New Voter Suppression*, BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE (Jan. 16, 2020) <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/new-voter-suppression>; Corey Goldstone, *Georgia Moves to Abandon Problematic Exact Match Policy*, CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER (Apr. 5, 2019) <https://campaignlegal.org/update/georgia-moves-abandon-problematic-exact-match-policy>.

<sup>85</sup> The Office of Governor Brian Kemp, *Executive Order 03.14.20.01*, (Mar. 14, 2020), <file:///C:/Users/nchabria/Downloads/03.14.20.01.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> Georgia Sec’y of State, *Press Release 03.14.2020* (Mar. 14, 2020), [https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/secretary\\_of\\_state\\_raffensperger\\_postpones\\_the\\_presidential\\_preference\\_primary](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/secretary_of_state_raffensperger_postpones_the_presidential_preference_primary)

<sup>87</sup> Georgia Sec’y of State, *Press Release 03.24.20* (Mar. 24, 2020), [https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/raffensperger\\_takes\\_unprecedented\\_steps\\_to\\_protect\\_safety\\_and\\_voter\\_integrity\\_in\\_georgia](https://sos.ga.gov/index.php/elections/raffensperger_takes_unprecedented_steps_to_protect_safety_and_voter_integrity_in_georgia).

<sup>88</sup> 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.