



NC Office of State Human Resources

Community Service Leave for Nonpartisan Poll Workers FAQs

To support County Boards of Elections across North Carolina in their work to provide full access to all voters, State Human Resources Director Barbara Gibson on September 17, 2024, authorized an exception to allow state employees to use their balance of Community Service Leave (up to 24 hours) to become nonpartisan election workers.

This leave program supports our right to vote and inspires civic engagement by encouraging state employees to sign up as nonpartisan poll workers, working for the county board of election offices across North Carolina.

Use of this leave requires demonstrated need of volunteers from the County Board of Elections where the employee resides, supervisory approval and proof of time served.

State employees and others interested in learning if their County Board of Elections needs volunteers are encouraged to visit the [State Board of Elections Democracy Heroes portal](#). Interested volunteers also may contact their County Board of Elections directly through the [State Board of Elections website](#).

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are provided by the Office of State Human Resources to help state employees understand rules regarding use of this one-time exception for Community Service Leave.

Community Service Leave for Poll Workers FAQs

Why is there a push to recruit nonpartisan poll workers to support County Boards of Elections?

The State Board of Elections has more than a thousand nonpartisan poll worker positions left to fill for the 2024 general election. These nonpartisan workers ensure that elections in North Carolina run smoothly. State employees can help fill the need for nonpartisan election workers across the state.

How do I learn if my county needs poll workers? How can I volunteer?

The State Board of Elections has an online survey that connects interested volunteers to their County Board of Elections. Visit the State Board of Elections [Democracy Heroes](#)

page at <https://www.ncsbe.gov/democracy-heroes-form>, enter your information, and someone from your County Board will follow up, if workers are still needed. You also may contact your County Board of Elections directly through the [State Board of Elections website](#).

Must I be a registered voter to volunteer as a poll worker?

Poll workers must be registered in their home county to serve on Election Day, but you do not have to be a registered voter to work at an Early Voting site. Check your county election website for specific information.

Can I volunteer in a county other than the one in which I reside?

For Early Voting, the State Board of Elections allows North Carolina residents to volunteer in any county that needs nonpartisan poll workers. However, on Election Day, you must be a registered voter in the county where you volunteer. Note that most County Boards require Early Voting nonpartisan poll workers to commit to the entire Oct. 17-Nov 2 period.

The County Board of Elections in my home county needs volunteers and I want to help. What should I do next?

If you wish to use your Community Service Leave for this purpose, you should submit a request to your supervisor. Remember that supervisory approval is required and will be considered in the context of the organization's business needs.

What sort of proof of service will I have to provide to my supervisor?

The County Board of Elections will send you formal communications via email regarding your assignment and role. Provide this to your supervisor, as well as the County Board of Elections pay stub or any after-volunteer communications you receive.

You mentioned at the beginning that I need to show “proof of demonstrated need of volunteers from the County Board of Elections.” How do I do that?

This can be demonstrated by the response from the county setting up training or your assignment and role. Provide this to your supervisor or to Human Resources if you are asked.

Will I have to participate in required training to work during Early Voting or Election Day? Will it be in-person or virtual?

Yes, training will be required. County Boards of Elections are responsible for setting training schedules. Training typically lasts three to four hours. Training typically begins in September and continues into October, often with daytime and evening options to

include in-person or virtual sessions. Confirm specific details with your local Board. You may use Community Service Leave to take the required training, if the training occurs during your regularly scheduled work hours.

My county asked me to volunteer on weekends when I do not normally work at my job. Can I still use Community Service Leave to get paid for this time?

No. Community Service Leave is available only for hours that you typically are scheduled to work. For example, if your work schedule does not include weekends, when many voters may choose to participate in Early Voting, or you opt to take training at night when you normally do not work, those hours would not be eligible for Community Service Leave from your agency.

On Election Day, workers are expected to arrive by 6 a.m. and remain onsite until around 9 p.m. Would I be eligible for paid time off for the entire shift?

No. As with any other form of Community Service Leave, this would apply only to your usual work schedule – for example, an eight-hour or 10-hour day.

What if I've already used some Community Service Leave this year?

Check your Community Service Leave balance and make sure you have enough hours remaining. You cannot get paid Community Service Leave for more than the number of Community Service Leave hours remaining in your annual quota balance. Full-time employees get 24 hours of Community Service Leave each calendar year.

For employees using the HR-Payroll System (commonly referred to as “Beacon” or “Fiori”) you can see your Community Service leave balance by clicking on “My Leave Request” from the home screen. After clicking on “My Leave Request,” some employees will need to click on “More” in the center of the screen to see their Community Service Leave balance.

My County Board asked if I could volunteer for more than 24 hours of work time. Can I get additional Community Service Leave for this purpose if they need help?

No. If a county requests that an employee provide more election assistance than that employee’s remaining number of Community Service Leave hours, the employee must request and be approved for vacation leave (or, if available, compensatory time) for any additional hours served as a poll worker.

The State Board of Elections is required by law to pay election workers. Would I be eligible to keep that compensation if I am approved to use Community Service Leave?

Yes. Compensation of nonpartisan poll workers is mandated. Due to the exception granted to the Community Service Leave policy, state employees who are needed by

the County Board of Elections to perform tasks related to Early Voting or Election Day will be permitted to accept compensation.

How much can I expect to be paid for hours worked?

The rate of pay varies by county, with some providing a flat rate for training or Election Day. Wake County, for example, will pay at least \$15 per hour during early voting and flat rate for Election Day and Watauga County plans to pay between \$9 and \$15 per hour on election day and early voting workers are paid \$11.50 to \$13 per hour. Check your home county's election website for more information.

Is it OK to share this with friends or family interested in short-term work?

Yes. While Community Service Leave applies only to state employees with supervisory approval, counties across North Carolina need workers for Early Voting and Election Day.

Can I use this Community Service Leave to work with other nonpartisan nonprofit organizations that support Early Voting or Election Day, or to support a candidate or political party?

No. Community Service Leave cannot be used to volunteer with nonprofit organizations involved in election activities. It also cannot be used as electioneering for parties or candidates. Community Service Leave is allowed exclusively to volunteer with County Boards of Election that need elections workers.

Employees who are interested in partisan or nonprofit activities cannot use Community Service Leave. They may engage in this activity on their own time. (For employees subject to the State Human Resources Act, this must be outside the work schedule.) They may also ask to take time off or vacation. As always, any vacation requires the supervisor's approval.

Will this be made permanent?

OSHR will form a workgroup to explore the feasibility of making this a permanent exception for Election Day in presidential election years.