

Election Q&A for August BOC Work Session

Question 1: *Current hourly pay rates for election workers*

- Election Day Precinct Officials are paid a stipend for their service. This stipend includes pay for the following:
 - Attending a required BOE training class (typically 3 hours long)
 - Assisting with the setup of the polling place the Monday before Election Day (typically 1.5 hours long)
 - Working on Election Day (14.5+ hours)
- An Election Official who performed the above duties would receive a stipend of \$165.00. This equates to an hourly pay rate of \$8.68.
- In contrast, Election Officials who work during the 17-day early voting period are paid, at minimum, \$11/hour.

Question 2: *Training requirements for election workers*

- Each Election Official is required to complete at least one training class prior to each election. Additional training could be required, depending on an Election Official's assigned job.
- Currently, Wake County BOE training classes are three-hours long. After working on Election Day, each Official is paid \$20 per training class completed.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Wake County BOE training classes will be hosted online through zoom and other online formats. An exception will be customized in-person training classes for new Chief Judges.

Question 3: *Any specific concerns you have about staffing the election, in the context of the COVID crisis*

- Election Officials tend to be older, which puts them in the high-risk category for developing complications from COVID-19.
- While we have received great interest in working the upcoming election from our current pool of Officials, we will need to recruit hundreds of new Election Officials in order to fully staff Wake County polling places in November.
- For any given election, we account for ~500-700 Election Officials to request to be removed from their assignment prior to Election Day. For the November 3 General Election we anticipate ~1,500 of these requests prior to Election Day.
- As you know, our response to COVID-19 is fluid, and things may change as the situation evolves. An uptick in positive cases in North Carolina this fall would have a significant impact on the willingness of our current Election Officials to work on Election Day.
- Typically, our experienced Officials make up ~80% of our Staffing. Due to COVID-19, we are seeing a large number of experienced Officials say that they will sit this election out.
- We had our highest attrition rate EVER in the March Primary Election. We received hundreds of "drops" in the days leading up to the election as COVID-19 became a more pressing issue in the news.
- While our current availability numbers are ok, we will need approximately 600 more Officials to account for our anticipated number of "drops."

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- We must account for the unknown. The situation with COVID-19 could drastically change by late October. We must staff more Election Officials than ever to account for the possibility of mass “drops” due to COVID.

Question 4: *Other needs that you have identified to mitigate those concerns*

- As of this time, we are working with the State and County with the already available budget and grant funds provided.
- As we get closer to the election, we need to be fluid to adapt to changes if they arise.
- While we are doing everything we can to work with our budget constraints, there is always the possibility we could need to be back again before the Commissioners for additional funding, but only if necessary.

Question 5: *What the federal election funds can/can't cover*

- There is a lot of flexibility on what it can be spent on to accommodate the current situation:
 - Early Voting
 - Additional absentee expenses
 - Ensuring we have adequate Poll Workers and bipartisan assistance teams
 - Other general operating expenses
 - Funds may be used for bonus or incentives for officials but Wake along with Mecklenburg were at the bottom of the list for per voter allocation. It is anticipated that the federal funds will need to be directed to PPE, Absentee by Mail, and additional staffing and safety precautions during Early Voting.
- It cannot be used to supplement a budget for things that are already funded or required.

As you may have seen in other states conducting Primary elections, there were massive staff shortages resulting in delays, shorter lines, and consolidation of Election Day precincts. Every effort is being made to recruit and retain officials for this November. If we had the election tomorrow, we would be in a great position, but we need to plan for possible changes in official's availability and higher than normal attrition rates. Due to unknown impacts of the current pandemic, we must maintain fluidity in our response.

Without ongoing recruitment efforts for officials there would be a possible lack of adequate officials on Election Day. The following is a summary of current staffing patterns and previous attrition rates.

| Historical Staffing Stats | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Election | # Assigned to Work | # Actually Worked | # Dropped | Drop Rate | First-Time Workers | % First-Time Workers |
| 3/3/2020 | 3,053 | 2,056 | 997 | 33% | 474 | 23% |
| 11/6/2018 | 2,890 | 2,040 | 850 | 29% | 412 | 20% |
| 5/8/2018 | 2,399 | 1,730 | 669 | 28% | 339 | 20% |
| 11/8/2016 | 2,924 | 2,254 | 670 | 23% | 514 | 23% |

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|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3/15/2016 | 2,463 | 1,822 | 641 | 26% | 388 | 21% |
| Anticipated Staffing - 2020 General Election | | | | | | |
| Election | # Assigned to Work | # Actually Worked | # Dropped | Drop Rate | First-Time Workers | % First-Time Workers |
| 11/3/2020 | 3,800 | 2,400 | 1,400 | 37% | 1,000 | 42% |
| Availability Stats - 2020 General Election | | | | | | |
| # Officials Available | # Officials Not Available | # Officials who Worked in March but Will Not work November | | | | |
| 3,169 | 5,212 | 797 (39%) | | | | |