



Committee of Seventy

Clean and effective government. Fair elections. Informed citizens.

HOW PHILLY WORKS

Looking Ahead to 2013: Running for a Seat on an Election Board

Did you ever wonder who the people working at your polling place are? Or how they got there?

Or what you can do to become one of them?

Heading into 2013 is a perfect time to get answers. Because three of the five seats at each of Philadelphia's 1,687 election districts (that's 5,061 seats) will be up for grabs this year.

Some of you may have run into problems at your polling place and believe you can do the job better or faster. Or maybe you are simply anxious for a taste of the political process. In either case, consider running for a seat at the table. Click [here](#) for our step-by-step guide to making this happen.

--December 26, 2012

Which three positions can I run for?

Three of the five people who make up what's called the Election Board at every city election district (there is one polling place for each election district) are elected by voters: Judge of Election, Majority Inspector and Minority Inspector. The other two members of the Election Board are appointed: Clerk and Machine Inspector. We told you a lot about Minority Inspectors, and how they are chosen, in last week's **HOW PHILLY WORKS**, which you can read [here](#).

I'm not sure I'm qualified to run.

Take this quick test. To run for a seat on an Election Board, you must:

- Be a qualified registered voter in your voting district.
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Not be an appointed or salaried city, county, state or federal government employee within two months of the day you are elected (except for district justices, notaries public or people serving the state militia).
- Not be running for any office to be voted on at any election at which you are serving as a member of an Election Board (except, of course, as an elected member of that Board).

I passed the test. If I win, how long is my term?

The Judge of Election, Majority Inspector and Minority Inspector are elected to four-year terms.



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What are the responsibilities of elected members of an Election Board?

The Judge of Election is responsible for overseeing what happens in the polling place and is in charge of the other members of the Election Board. Majority and Minority Inspectors assist the Judge of Election and check the documents that permit voters to cast their ballots. The Minority Inspector also appoints the Clerk.

Do I get paid?

Yes, but you probably won't do it for the money. Judges of Election make \$100 and Inspectors make \$95 for working a very long Election Day. There is also a small stipend for attending a poll worker training session, which is required for poll workers when they start out but not for subsequent elections.

If I win, can I still help my candidate on Election Day?

No. You have to be strictly non-partisan. If knocking on doors is more up your alley, run for Democratic or Republican Committeeperson. Committeepersons are the "foot-soldiers" for political parties responsible for registering voters, circulating candidate petitions and getting out the vote. They will be on the spring 2014 ballot. Elected committeepersons are permitted to run for seats on an Election Board but must take off their political hats when working at the polls.

I'm interested. Tell me how to get started.

Democratic and Republican candidates for elected seats on an Election Board are required to complete nomination petitions during a three week window between February 26 and March 19. You need to collect a small number of signatures to get on the ballot. The primary is on May 21, 2013. There are different deadlines for independent or minority party candidates.

Keep going...

If we do, you'll never read our How to Run guide.

I'll read it. Any other last words of wisdom?

Here's something most people don't know: According to state election law, you can't get arrested when you are working on Election Day as a member of an Election Board unless a court or judge issues an arrest warrant for election fraud, a felony or wonton breach of the peace.

What's wonton breach of the peace?

Better call your lawyer.

You can always e-mail the Committee of Seventy at futureofthecity@seventy.org with questions about running for a seat on an Election Board. It's a great way to help your neighbors!



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