

Serving as an Election Judge



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Across the United States, more than 1.4 million citizens serve as election judges! On election day, a citizen's right to cast a vote and have that vote count can rest in the hands of the "people on the ground" – the Election Judges. There are few jobs as critical to our democracy as the job of election judge.

Election Judges – whether working at polling places, counting ballots or doing other assigned duties – provide a vital and important function for the voters of the State of Montana. It is in large part because of the time and effort election judges have committed that Montana's elections are fair, accurate and accessible. Together we can help to instill confidence in Montana voters that their vote is valued and important!

**GET INVOLVED, ENGAGE IN YOUR GOVERNMENT,
SERVE AS AN ELECTION JUDGE!**



Qualifications

Election judges

- must be registered voters of the county and precinct where they are serving
 - Except when filling vacancies
- cannot be a candidate, or a spouse, ascendant, descendant, brother, or sister of a candidate or a candidate's spouse or the spouse of any of these in an election precinct where the candidate's name appears on the ballot. However, this does not apply to candidates for precinct offices.

Appointments

- Judges are appointed by the county governing body from a list compiled by the election administrator at least 30 days before the primary election in even-numbered years.
 - **Three or more judges per precinct are appointed.**
 - **A chief judge for each precinct must be appointed.**

Training

- Judges must attend training conducted by the election administrator every other year before the primary election.
- The election administrator must notify judges of their appointment and of the time set for training.
- Training must include how to operate voting systems if voting systems are used in the county.
- Attendees of the training may not be paid for attendance unless the individual is appointed as an election judge.
- Each election judge completing the training is given a certificate of completion.
 - **No one can serve as an election judge without a valid certificate, unless filling vacancies in emergencies.**

- Election judges must be trained and recertified before each even-year primary election.

The Secretary of State provides [model training](#) for election judges and publishes an [Election Judge Handbook](#) that is provided to each election judge by the election administrator.

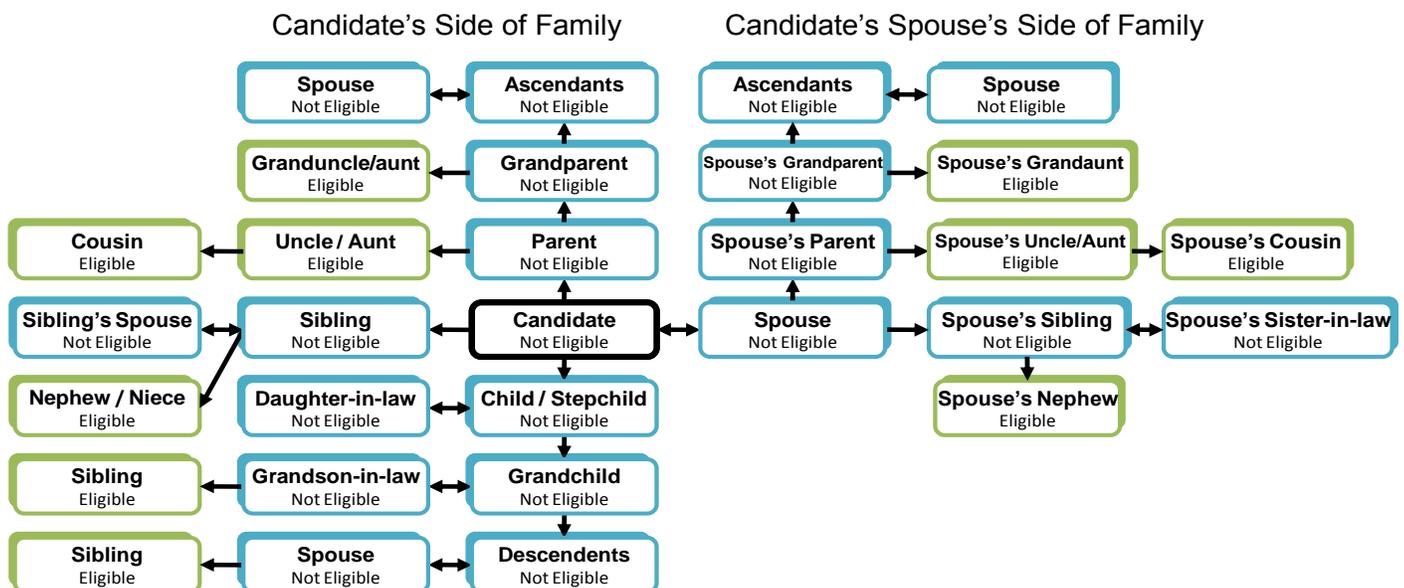
Compensation

Election judges are paid for their service by the county. Hourly rate must be at least the state or federal minimum wage, whichever is greater.

- Montana 2016 minimum wage \$8.05
- Federal 2016 minimum wage \$7.25

Who can Serve as an Election Judge

Election Judge Appointment – Qualification Chart



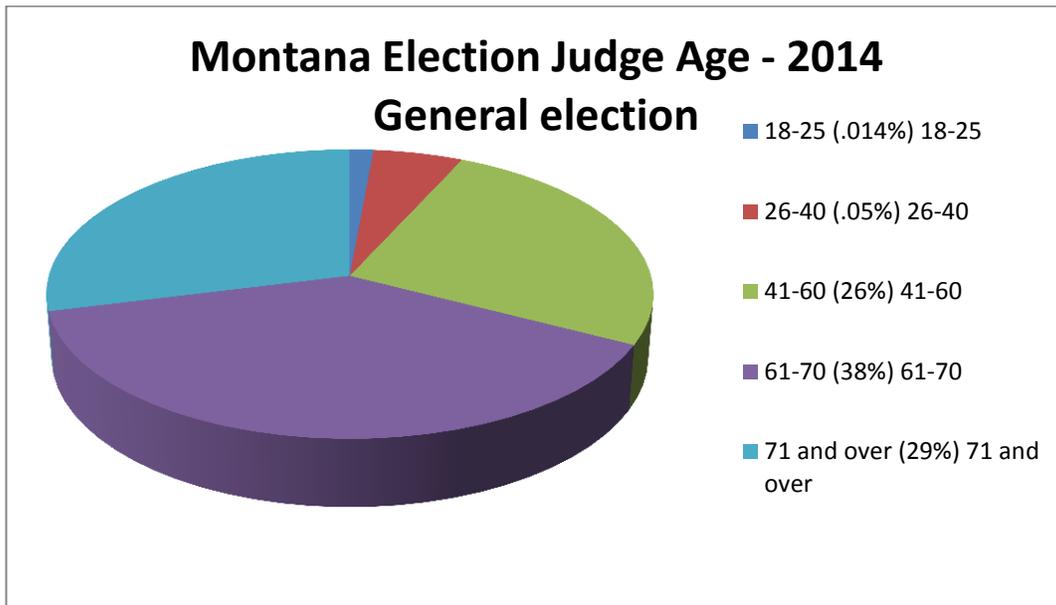
Statute: 13-4-107. Qualifications of election judges.

- (1) Election judges shall be registered electors of the county and of the precinct in which they serve, except as provided in 13-4-102(4).
- (2) No election judge may be a candidate or a spouse, ascendant, descendant, brother, or sister of a candidate or a candidate's spouse or the spouse of any of these in an election precinct where the candidate's name appears on the ballot. However, this does not apply to candidates for precinct offices.

Election Judges in Montana

In the 2014 General Election, 3,809 citizens served as election judges. This is in addition to the hundreds of election officials across the state.

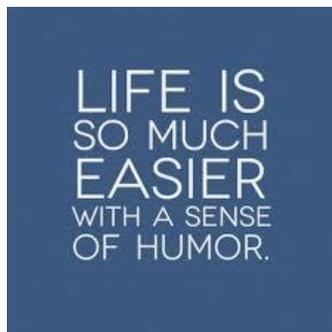
Election Judges in Montana are gradually getting older in age, a trend seen nationally. Below is a chart that shows the ages of judges statewide.



What Do I Need to Know to Serve as an Election Judge?



- *Stamina!*
 - *Election judges frequently are scheduled to work from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m., or after. Because there must be 3 election judges for each precinct at the polling place, there are no breaks in service during the day.*



- *A Sense of Humor Doesn't Hurt!*
 - *Many voters appear to vote at the polling place at the same time, early in the morning before work, at lunch time and after work hours. Some have to stand in line before voting. Some may be cranky! It is important to treat votes respectfully, and to not take things personally as an election judge. A sense of humor helps put things into perspective!*

Who do I Contact if I Want to Serve as an Election Judge?

Contact your county election administrator and/or your county central committee.