

Guidelines for Staffing Polling Places for 2020 Primary Election

Act 12 of 2020 was enacted to protect public health during the COVID-19 emergency, while also ensuring access to vote. To achieve these goals, it temporarily permits polling place consolidation and eases poll-worker restrictions, which has been extremely challenging for counties due to poll workers and facilities not wanting to serve on June 2nd due to the concerns about the virus. These provisions and guidelines will best enable county boards of elections to carry out Act 12 consolidations and protect public health by limiting the number of individuals staffing polling places on election day, while still ensuring effective and balanced administration of elections on June 2. Specifically, for the June 2nd Primary only, counties should:

- Fill poll-worker vacancies immediately without court approval, rather than waiting until five (5) days before election day to fill vacancies in polling place staffing.
- If a county determines that an individual currently serving in another role has also been trained to be a machine inspector, then that individual may be used to serve in that capacity for this election.
- Ensure that voters, poll workers, watchers, and constables follow social distancing guidelines.
- Eliminate duplication of duties or roles to temporarily allow consolidation of poll worker tasks, as appropriate, while ensuring sufficient poll workers are present to efficiently process all voters.
- Temporarily provide for consolidated election boards, so long as all polling places have a balance of parties serving as minority and majority inspectors, a designated judge of elections, and sufficient staffing to effectively and fairly administer the election.
- Analyze and determine how many poll workers are needed for each location, and designate individuals to fill those needs.
- Any county requesting approval by the Department of greater than 60 percent reduction of its polling places pursuant to Act 2020-12 must also submit for approval any consolidation of poll worker staffing plans to the Department as well. Additionally, any county that seeks to consolidate the number of polling places within the 60 percent threshold will need to inform the Department of their plans for the consolidation of their poll workers – although approval of these plans is not required.