

DIRECTIVE 2026-25

July 9, 2026

To: All County Boards of Elections
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: 2026 Precinct Election Official Training Requirements and Grant

SUMMARY

The Ohio Secretary of State's office is issuing this directive¹ to provide boards of elections with guidance and requirements regarding the recruitment and training of nearly 40,000 precinct election officials (PEOs) for the November General Election. PEOs play a critical role on bipartisan teams, ensuring that each election is conducted lawfully, efficiently, and professionally. They are responsible for assisting voters courteously, resolving potential conflicts, and upholding the integrity of the electoral process.

To support this critical task, the Ohio Secretary of State's office will provide a total of \$1 million to boards of elections allocated by the number of registered voters in each county, with a minimum grant of \$1,000, ensuring that PEOs are properly trained and prepared for the November General Election. Boards are required to **recruit and train** at least 15 percent above the statutory minimum number of PEOs (with a 30 percent target strongly encouraged), ensure all PEOs receive comprehensive and updated training, and adhere to strict guidelines on the allowable use of grant funds.

PEO RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Ohio law requires each county board of elections to select at least four county registered voters to serve as PEOs in each precinct.² However, to ensure sufficient coverage and flexibility on Election Day, boards are required to recruit and train at least 15 percent more PEOs than the statutory minimum. Given the anticipated high turnout for the November General Election, boards are strongly encouraged to recruit and train up to 30 percent above the minimum to ensure an adequate reserve pool of trained officials is available if needed. This approach will help ensure that boards have a ready supply of qualified PEOs for any unforeseen needs on Election Day (last-minute

¹ [R.C. 3501.27\(B\) and \(E\)](#).

² [R.C. 3501.22\(A\)\(1\)](#).

cancellations, illness, etc.). Boards must also review and comply with all relevant provisions in [Chapter 6, Section 6.03](#) of the Election Official Manual (EOM).

All PEOs, regardless of prior experience or previous training, must participate in updated and comprehensive training ahead of the November General Election.

As a condition of receiving grant funding, boards of elections must either 1) use the new and improved poll worker training materials provided by the Secretary of State's office, or 2) certify that their locally developed training program provides comparable instruction that also includes the following training topics required by the Secretary of State's office, listed below. If your board is using locally developed training and is applying for this funding, please complete the attached "Training Attestation" and upload to your county's SharePoint site, into the folder "2026 PEO Grant" (see attached SharePoint Upload Instruction – PEO Grant for more information).

- Verification of voter identity using photo ID
- Acceptable and unacceptable forms of photo ID
- Proper recognition and handling of noncitizen ID
- Best practices for de-escalation and conflict resolution
- Information on how to engage and educate the public about election integrity and security, and how to report concerns
- Polling location setup to ensure proficiency in opening and closing procedures
- Proper placement of required signage in polling locations, including signage clearly displaying parking for curbside voting
- Procedures for multipage (multi-sheet) ballots (if applicable)
- Provisional voting procedures, including procedures for voters flagged to vote provisionally due to a mismatch with BMV/SSA
- Double-voting prevention and proper polling location management, including proper training on replacement ballots

The Secretary of State's office provides comprehensive recruitment and training materials to county boards of elections to support their local efforts. Recruitment strategies and marketing materials can be found at www.OhioSoS.gov/elections/poll-worker-recruitment#recruit-toolkit. Training materials include the [PEO Handbook](#) and [Quick Reference Guide](#), as well as the Ohio Poll Worker training module, to help properly train poll workers and efficiently track assignment and completion of the training. For information on accessing and using this training, please contact OPWT@OhioSoS.gov.

GRANT FUNDING AND ALLOWABLE USES

The grant funding provided by the Secretary of State's office is intended exclusively for the recruitment and training of PEOs for the November General Election. Allowable uses of these funds include expenses such as:

- Recruitment advertising (including print, digital, and radio outreach)
- Facility rentals for training activities
- Costs associated with hiring external trainers or contractors for training-related services
- The printing or reproduction of training materials

Several categories of expenses are expressly prohibited. Grant funds may not be used for:

- Payroll, wages, or bonuses for PEOs or board staff
- Food, beverages, or hospitality costs
- Gift items, promotional merchandise (such as "swag"), or any other incentives or for any expenses unrelated to recruitment and training activities
- Payments to external contractors are permitted only when those services are directly connected to PEO recruitment or training

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

To receive this grant funding, each board of elections must complete and submit the attached Training Attestation and Grant Agreement to the Secretary of State's finance department before funds are disbursed. The Secretary of State's office will communicate specific award allocation amounts and additional instructions for accessing funds directly to each board following this directive via email. Boards may also be required to provide documentation demonstrating compliance with recruitment and training requirements, as well as detailed records on the use of grant funds.

SUMMARY OF ACTION STEPS

In summary, boards of elections are expected to recruit and train at least 15 percent above the statutory minimum number of PEOs, with a recommended goal of reaching a 30 percent buffer. All PEOs must be retrained for the November General Election using approved materials and methods; and all required training topics, including hands-on polling site management, must be thoroughly covered. Grant funds must be spent only

on approved recruitment and training activities, and each board must submit the necessary grant agreement and attestation form (if applicable) and await further instructions regarding funding allocation. Your ongoing commitment to fair, secure, and accessible elections in Ohio is appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact the Secretary of State's office at 614-728-8789 or via email at Intake@OhioSoS.gov.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

Attachment:
Training Grant Agreement and Attestation Form