

Board of Elections Training Requirements

Effective December 15, 2015

The Secretary of State has established a program for the instruction of members of boards of elections and employees of boards in the rules, procedures, and law relating to elections. Each member and employee shall complete the training program within six months after the member or employee's original appointment or employment, and thereafter each member and employee shall complete a training program to update their knowledge once every four years or more often as determined by the Secretary of State.¹

(A) Definitions

1. Members of boards of elections – A person appointed by the Secretary of State to the position of member of a county board of elections pursuant to R.C. 3501.07.
2. Employees of boards of elections – For purposes of R.C. 3501.27(D), “employees of boards of elections” is limited to those persons appointed director or deputy director of a county board of elections pursuant to R.C. 3501.09 or .091, hereinafter “Director or Deputy Director.” A board of elections may require its other employees to participate in the same training required for the director and deputy director.
3. Newly appointed members, director or deputy director of boards of elections – A person appointed as a member, director or deputy director of a board of elections who: a) has never previously served as a board of elections member, director or deputy director; or b) who previously served as a member, director or deputy director of a board of elections but has had a break in service as a director or deputy director for at least four or more consecutive years.
4. Incumbent or reappointed members, director or deputy director of boards of elections – A person appointed as a member, director or deputy director of a board of elections who: a) has previously served in any of these positions and will continue in that role with no break in service as a member, director or deputy director; or b) had a break in service as a member, director or deputy director for less than four consecutive years.

(B) Newly Appointed Members, Director or Deputy Director of Boards of Elections

Within six months of appointment, a newly appointed member, director or deputy director shall attend and complete a minimum of six credits of formal instruction, “New Election Official Training Program,” regarding the duties of a member, director or deputy director of a board of elections sponsored by the Secretary of State’s office. The New Election Official Training Program shall be conducted at locations designated by the Secretary of State, and the program shall be prepared, offered and approved by the Secretary. Upon completion of the New Election Official Training Program, each new member, director or deputy director shall be issued a certificate of completion by the Secretary of State. A newly appointed member, director or deputy director shall be required to receive an additional six credits of formal continuing education training within the first full year of her or his appointment.

¹ R.C. 3501.27(D).

(C) Incumbent and Reappointed Members, Directors or Deputy Directors of Boards of Elections

Each incumbent or reappointed member, director or deputy director shall be required to attend and complete a minimum of eight credits of formal continuing education training annually, on a calendar year basis. For newly appointed members, directors or deputy directors, a calendar year for the purposes of this section begins the calendar year following the year they were appointed. If the additional six credits of formal continuing education training in (B) above are received during the first full calendar year of a newly appointed member, director or deputy director's service, those six credits may be counted toward the minimum of eight credits of formal continuing education training annually for such member, director or deputy director.

In the event a member, director or deputy director exceeds the required minimum of eight credits of formal continuing education, no carryover credits apply to subsequent years. This requirement may be waived upon a showing of hardship in individual cases. The purpose of not carrying over credits is to ensure the highest level of instruction on changes in state and federal law that affect the administration of local, state and federal elections.

Incumbent and reappointed members, directors or deputy directors (and other employees of the board of elections) may attend the New Election Official Training Program to help meet their instructional requirements.

(D) Approved Formal Continuing Education Training Programs

1. The following sponsored programs of instruction may be used to obtain credits for formal continuing education training (unless otherwise specified, in person attendance for the duration of the program or session is required to receive credit):
 - a. Secretary of State's New Election Official Training Program (six credits) – This training will be offered at least twice per year.
 - b. Secretary of State's Summer Conference and Ohio Association of Election Officials Winter Conference (approximately one credit per hour) –The Secretary of State's Office will provide a credit per presentation schedule once a final agenda is available.
 - c. Secretary of State's Topical Webinars (one credit per hour, e.g., if the webinar is 30 minutes 0.5 credit will be granted, if 60 minutes one credit will be granted, etc.) – The Secretary of State's Office will periodically host a webinar on a particular topic of elections administration. Credit requires individual registered participation for the duration of the live webinar.
 - d. Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO) Ohio Registered Election Official (OREO) Program and/or the Election Center Certified Election and Registration Administrator (CERA) Program (one credit per OREO and/or CERA course) – OREO and CERA are multi-course formal training and certification programs sponsored by the OAEO and Election Center, respectively. The Secretary of State's Office will provide a credit per presentation schedule once the course offerings are set.
 - e. Ohio Association of Election Officials Regional District Meetings (one credit per regional meeting) – The OAEO may periodically host regional meetings at which relevant election administration information will be presented.

- f. National Conferences, Workshops and/or Seminars sponsored by the Election Center and/or the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT) (one credit per conference event)
- g. U.S. Election Assistance Commission Webinars and/or Workshops (0.5 credit per event)
- h. Continuing Legal Education (one credit per CLE session/event) – Periodically a training program eligible for the award of CLE's may be offered by a Bar Association or other continuing legal education program provider may be eligible for credit towards formal continuing education program requirements. Such programs must be of substantial topical relevance to the duties of local election administrators, including Ohio public meetings, public records, and ethics laws. A request for credit must be submitted to the Secretary of State's Office along with documentation of program content and attendance.

(E) Exemption

An exemption from all or any part of the member, director and deputy director training requirements may be granted by the Secretary of State based on the physical inability to attend and participate in instructional programs (i.e., illness, weather emergency, etc.) or for other good and sufficient cause.

(F) Miscellaneous

No registration fee will be charged to participants in the New Election Official Training Program sponsored by the Secretary of State's Office. Participants will be responsible for transportation, lodging and meal costs. Attorney General's Opinion No. 2046 (1930) states that the actual expenses of county boards of elections that are incurred in the attendance of meetings, held upon the call of the Secretary of State, may be paid from the treasury of the county which they represent.