



2018 Election Ambassador Corps Teacher FAQ and Program Timeline

Program Registration and Class Presentations

What do the class presentations cover?

The presentations include an overview of **why voting matters, the upcoming election** (offices on the ballot and, if applicable, referendums), and the **role of an Election Ambassador**. The session generally lasts ~45 minutes; however, we can extend or abridge the presentation as needed to fit your schedule and needs.

Do students *have to participate after the presentation*?

As far as we're concerned: **no**. This is part of the reason we ensure that much of the presentation covers the act of voting and the upcoming election – important information for any student. Only the final portion of the presentation covers the Ambassador program.

Can this program provide an opportunity for students to earn volunteer/service learning hours or complete a capstone project for graduation?

Potentially, depending on the requirements or policy at your school. Our staff are happy to write confirmation letters for students, if necessary. All participating students receive certificates after the election.

What if only a few students from my class decide to participate?

We understand some students may have commitments on Election Day; others might just be less inclined to spend a few hours out at the polls. If only a few students decide to volunteer as Ambassadors, we'll work with them to determine suitable team and polling place assignments.

How do students register?

We collect students' names and emails during presentation. After the school visit, we email to all students an online registration form. Participating students can list: **1)** up to three (3) of their classmates with whom they plan to partner on Election Day, and **2)** the neighborhood or area in which they plan to visit polling sites.

Are there permission slips required?

Yes. Permission slips are distributed during the school visit and must be returned to teachers by **Thursday, October 25**. Students confirm their participation by returning this form. An **electronic permission slip** is also available and can be sent directly to students and returned directly to Seventy. (We work with any school that requires its own documentation.)

What do I need to do to prepare my students?

Talking up the vital importance of elections to democracy is always helpful! But no particular instruction or preparation is required by the teacher, nor is the school or teacher expected to provide any of the materials. (Materials will be sent or delivered to schools one week before Election Day.)



Email Prep! Because we rely on email to provide students with instructions and resources, it's helpful to encourage them to create an email address before training if they don't already have one. For some, this could be a good opportunity to get into the habit of checking email on a regular basis!

Organizing Students for Election Day

How are students assigned to teams and polling sites for Election Day?

We use the names and neighborhoods/areas submitted in students' registration forms to create team assignments. The number of students per team is typically between two and four, but larger teams can be organized if necessary. *We only partner students with peers from their school.*

Student team and polling place assignments are shared with students and teachers at least a week before Election Day. *We emphasize to students that they must feel comfortable with their team and assigned neighborhood. If adjustments are needed, we accommodate them.*

Please let us know if larger teams may be necessary due to scheduling restrictions (e.g., class is in session on November 6), chaperone requirements or other reasons.

Who supervises the students on Election Day?

Students visit polling sites in their teams without a chaperone or other supervision unless special arrangements are made by the teacher or school. Seventy staff do help coordinate students' team assignments and share them with teachers prior to the election.

We stress to students that they are expected to stay together in their team and perform in a manner that reflects well on their school, their community and the Committee of Seventy. **However**, we can assist in identifying polling sites at or nearby a school if teachers (or other chaperones) wish to stay with their students during their shift on Election Day. For schools in session on Election Day, students can – if approved by their teacher/school – visit polls during class time, lunch/prep or after school.

How long do students serve on Election Day?

The length of time students spend at the polls may depend on the number of volunteer-service hours they need or other requirements set by their teacher or school. We recommend that students record selfies from the polling site at the start and finish of their shift to validate time served. Polls in Pennsylvania are open 7 am to 8 pm on Election Day.

What type of materials do students need and how do they get them?

During school visits, we distribute the following:

- A **one-page summary** of the Election Ambassador Corps
- A **permission slip** for students and parents/guardians
- The sample of the **Election Ambassador Survey** students administer on Election Day
- A **sample ballot** for the upcoming election (if available)

For students who have confirmed their participation by completing and returning the permission slip, additional materials are delivered to schools the week before Election Day:

- **Election Ambassador Handbook**



- **Committee of Seventy lanyard** and Election Ambassador insert
- A **list of polling places** to potentially visit

Election Day!

What exactly would my students be doing on November 6?

Each student team will meet on Election Day and visit at least one polling site in their agreed-upon neighborhood. Students are prohibited by state law from entering the voting area (where the machines are located) but can position themselves nearby the entrance. Here, they have three tasks: **1) administer the Election Ambassador Survey** to voters as they exit the polling site; **2) record images of partisan or campaign literature** (flyers, posters, etc.) they encounter; and **3) help address questions from voters.**

Election law is complex. How can students help voters at the polls?

Many of the same issues and questions come up every election: *Is this my polling place? I'm an independent voter – am I allowed to vote today? What's this ballot question all about?*

The handbook provided to students has answers to most of the questions that come up on Election Day. For more complicated issues or problems, it has contact information for the proper authorities. Students are urged to study the handbook as a reference, ready to locate the relevant section if the need arises. An **online self-assessment** and **multiple evening webinars** will also be provided to students the week before Election Day if they wish to prepare further. If you'd like to make this quiz part of your regular course or provide extra credit, we can provide their scores.

Is there a check to ensure registered students serve on Election Day?

Student teams are instructed to check in with Seventy staff at the beginning of their shift and check out when they're finished. We track this attendance in real-time on Election Day and can share with you via Google spreadsheet. Other options for teachers to verify participation could include asking students to bring samples of campaign literature or sharing pictures from the day.

Other Questions

Are there any costs for students or schools to participate?

No fees are required. However, students should consider transportation costs when deciding where and with whom they plan to volunteer.

Can students serve as an Ambassador and volunteer with a candidate's campaign?

Students are welcome to work with a candidate campaign on Election Day if they wish; however, any partisan volunteering must be done outside of the time committed to serving as an Election Ambassador. **All work while volunteering with Seventy must be strictly nonpartisan.**



Program Timeline

- Wednesday, Sept. 26** • **First day** Seventy staff are available to visit schools for Ambassador presentations
- Wednesday, Oct. 24** • **Last day** for Ambassador presentations in schools
- Thursday, Oct. 25** • **Student permission slips due to teachers** (or back to Seventy if submitted online)
- Tuesday, Oct. 30** • Student teams and polling place assignments completed and shared
 - Handbook and other materials delivered or mailed to schools
- Tuesday, Nov. 6** • **Election Day**

Other questions come to mind? Let us know. Contact Patrick Christmas at pchristmas@seventy.org.