

Election Observer Panel Plan Template

I. County and System Information

1. Name of County – **Sierra**
2. Name of Contact – **Heather Foster**
3. Contact's Phone – **(530) 289-3295**
4. Vendor and Voting Systems Used by County – **Premier Elections Solutions Accuvote OS/Tsx**
5. Date – **May 19, 2009**

II. Purpose

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

1. Provide the public with the opportunity to observe and make suggestions on ways to improve the election process.
2. Help ensure the integrity of the election process.
3. Remove some of the mystery associated with the election process in an effort to build voter confidence and encourage more people to take part.

III. Invite

Between E-60 and E-30, prepare letters of invitation (see sample attached) to the following:

1. County Grand Jury – **We always invite the Grand Jury to serve as our Logic and Accuracy Board and observe the vote-by-mail process. If you need a copy of the letter we send, please let me know.**
2. Political Party Central Committee Members – **The Sierra County Democratic and Republic Central Committees have just recently become active and will be invited to participate as part of the Election Observer Panel for the upcoming election.**
3. Advocacy Groups – **No Advocacy Groups.**
4. League of Women Voters – **None that I know of in Sierra County**
5. Media – **Our local newspaper is always present on election night.**

Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing Election Day activities may also be included in the observer panel.

Note: You might want to consider offering to meet with groups to provide an opportunity for the group members to ask questions about the process.

IV. Appointment Letters (for introduction to precinct workers) N/A

After the groups have provided the names of interested panelists, prepare letters of introduction (see sample attached) for the panelist to use when visiting polling places on Election Day. Materials to be prepared for each panelist will include a listing of all polling places within the county for that specific election as well as the central counting site location and hours of operation.

We conduct “All Mail Precinct” elections. No polling places.

V. Mechanism for Feedback

Consider providing observers with a checklist and/or questionnaires to be completed and returned to you.

Sierra County is so small that our observers are very few and they ask questions as we go along. They do not interfere with our processing of the ballots and lucky for us everyone is on a friendly basis.

Many times they comment on the process and how thorough we are and how dedicated we are to maintain the integrity of the voting process.

Our grand jury volunteers always seem to leave on election night with a new “positive” outlook on how elections are handled.

General Rules for Observers N/A in Sierra County - No polling places

Observers may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch election procedures.
- View election-related activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View vote-by-mail and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of poll workers or voters at the polls as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of any part of the voting process.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site as long as they do not interfere with the conduct of the election procedures.

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election process.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the election process.

Observers may not:

- Interfere, in the judgment of the elections official, with the conduct of the election.
- Physically handle any voting materials or equipment.
- Sit at the official worktables or view confidential voter information on any work terminal.
- Communicate with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place) regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Talk to or attempt to stop the central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Make physical contact with election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place or the central counting site.