

Elections Manitoba is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly responsible for securing the democratic rights of Manitobans through the conduct of free and fair elections, and for promoting democratic participation. All members of the office must provide professional and non-partisan public service, independent from government and free from political influence, in order to enhance public confidence in, and awareness of the electoral process.

JOB TITLE:	Returning Officer	LOCATION:	Returning Office
REPORTS TO:	Manager of Elections Operations	EFFECTIVE DATE:	December 2018
CLASSIFICATION	Employment Contract based on <i>Election Fees, Expenses and Rentals Regulation – Tariff of Fees</i>		

JOB SUMMARY

Appointed by the chief electoral officer (CEO) and reporting to the manager of elections operations, the returning officer (RO) manages provincial electoral events (including general elections, byelections and referendums) in the designated electoral division (ED). As the manager of the election in his or her ED, the RO must plan, organize, implement and monitor all activities, as well as being available to participate in a variety of activities during an election period. The RO is also responsible for completing election preparation tasks before the writ is issued, as well as post-election assessment and reporting. *The Elections Act*, policies, procedures and guidelines that govern the conduct of elections dictate the variety of responsibilities that must be carried out with minimal deviation. The RO must maintain a non-partisan public image and represent Elections Manitoba in a positive light through adherence to the Code of Professional Conduct for returning officers. The RO oversees all aspects of a successful election, including the voters list, candidate liaison and confirmation of nomination, all voting opportunities and efficient election administration.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Plans and prepares for an election by carrying out pre-event tasks that include but are not limited to the following:**
 - a) Negotiates for and leases office space and required services
 - b) Identifies requirements for furniture and equipment, the purchase of sundry supplies and printing services, and liaises with vendors and Elections Manitoba Headquarters (HQ) as needed
 - c) Determines office requirements (floor space, furniture/equipment, office supplies) finalizes arrangements and acquires supplies from HQ
 - d) Recruits, appoints and trains office staff
 - e) Locates suitable and accessible space for the returning office and for voting places and negotiates with landlords
 - f) Reviews the ED’s addressing information to ensure that voters are registered at the correct officially designated address
 - g) Identifies areas for targeted registration and revision, such as new residential developments, high-mobility areas, institutions, etc.
 - h) Reviews voting area boundaries
 - i) Implements and enhances an outreach action plan for high mobility, low voter turnout and each of the target groups in their electoral division

2. Plans and organizes targeted registration and all voting opportunities in the ED.

General

- a) Appoints and directs the work of over 150 election staff and ensures they are trained in procedures and understand their roles and responsibilities
- b) Administers oaths and ensures election staff respect confidentiality guidelines issued by Elections Manitoba
- c) Reviews a list provided by HQ of recommended election workers and recruits from other sources if lists provided are insufficient to fill all available jobs
- d) Coordinates the review and preparation of the voter information cards for all registered voters
- e) Works with HQ to identify areas for targeted registration and determines methods to reach these voters to ensure they are added to the voters list
- f) Arranges for the distribution of the voters list(s) to candidates
- g) Responsible for the revision and printing of the voters list

Advance Voting

- a) Establishes advance voting places and stations, including leases, furniture and equipment needs
- b) Recruits and trains advance voting teams, including for high traffic locations
- c) Provides for advance resident and advance non-resident voting needs
- d) Establishes safe movement and storage procedures for advance materials
- e) Oversees advance voting reports to HQ and candidates

Election Day

- a) Establishes voting places and stations in ED in accordance with *the Act*
- b) Assigns election staff to voting stations, ensures they receive proper training and issues their supplies
- c) Implements security measures as required for the protection of information, assets, staff and the general public at the returning office and at voting places
- d) Oversees election night count and reporting to HQ
- e) Oversees final tally
- f) Coordinates, validates and reports on the results of the vote

Post-Election

- a) Oversees efficient close of office and return of supplies
- b) Ensures ballots and voting books are returned securely
- c) Attends the judicial recount process, if necessary

3. Manages and controls financial, material and human resources:

- a) Monitors the available budget for staff, essential services, supplies and materials
- b) Develops a plan for allocating resources
- c) Ensures payroll processing for office staff and election staff is completed
- d) Ensures compliance with the instructions of the chief electoral officer
- e) Establishes a floor plan and supervises set-up of returning office
- f) Manages the inventory, supply and distribution of materials
- g) Coordinates the return of election documents, furniture, equipment and telephone apparatus

4. Supports the administration of *The Elections Act*:

- a) Ensures the adherence by staff and election officers to all legal requirements of *The Elections Act*, as directed by HQ
- b) Ensures that registration and voting processes are conducted in compliance with *The Elections Act*, as directed by HQ
- c) Ensures the maintenance of peace and good order throughout the electoral process

5. Communicates information to the public, candidates and HQ by:

- a) Responding to daily questions from HQ and ensures ongoing updates for the Election Management System
- b) Responding to requests and questions from Elections Manitoba Support Networks which includes RO Support Officers and Field Support
- c) Responding to enquiries from the public, HQ, candidates or their representatives
- d) Complying with Elections Manitoba policies and directives with respect to media inquiries and social media
- e) Ensuring that candidates are provided with all documentation and material to which they are entitled

6. Contributes to the improvement of the electoral process:

- a) Participates in post-event reviews and reporting
- b) Continuously seeks more efficient ways of administering the electoral process within his or her ED
- c) Engages in consultations with Elections Manitoba that contribute to procedural, organizational and/or technical improvements that improve the efficiency of the returning office

SUPERVISORY MANAGEMENT

1. Provides direction to the assistant returning officer
2. Hires, trains and manages approximately 150 electoral staff

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- Eligible voter (18 years or over, Canadian citizen, Manitoba resident)
- Satisfactory security check
- Non-partisan in fact and appearance

EDUCATION

- Completion of Grade 12 or equivalent
- Successful completion of two years of an acceptable post-secondary education program
or
- An acceptable combination of education, training and relevant experience

KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE

Essential

1. Demonstrated leadership experience/ability to lead a team
2. Demonstrated community knowledge of ED

3. Experience in managing human resources, financial management, material management and project management
4. Exceptional analytical and problem-solving skills
5. Strong verbal and written communication skills
6. Strong computer skills and experience in using computer programs and navigating the internet
7. Experience in managing special events in short time frames

Desired

8. Experience in the administration of electoral processes
 10. Ability to communicate in both official languages, particularly in bilingual EDs
 11. Ability to communicate in a minority language spoken in the ED
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SKILLS/COMPETENCIES

1. Knowledge of the mandate, role and responsibilities of the office of the chief electoral officer (Elections Manitoba) and the office of the returning officer
 2. Ability to implement the statutory and administrative requirements of the office of returning officer
 3. Leadership
 4. Interpersonal skills
 5. Organizational skills
 6. Analytical/problem solving skills
 7. Ability to use computer programs and navigate the internet
 8. Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing
 9. Time management skills for a deadline-driven environment
 10. Recruitment skills
 11. Adult training skills
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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with Section 33 of *The Elections Act*, the following persons may not be appointed and may not act as an election official:

- A member of the Assembly or the Executive Council
- A member of the House of Commons or the Senate of Canada
- A judge of any court or a justice of the peace
- A candidate
- A person who has been convicted of an offence under this Act
- A person who within five years before the proposed appointment was convicted of an indictable offence, or
- Served any part of a term of imprisonment for an indictable offence

Section 36(1) of *The Elections Act* provides that the RO must be an eligible voter of the electoral division.

Section 38 of *The Elections Act* stipulates that once appointed the RO has a duty to be impartial and must not:

- Be a member or employee of a registered political party, a political party or constituency association, or hold a position with or contribute to any of them
- Be an employee of a candidate or a person seeking to be a candidate, or
- Hold a position with or contribute to either of them; or engage in partisan political activities of any kind