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Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024

ELECTORAL TRAINING IN
MEXICO



Summary

"Electoral training comprises the processes and techniques for transmitting to recipients the knowledge, skills, and information necessary for the adequate accomplishment of tasks within the electoral process."

Electoral Dictionary, Inter-American Institute of Human Rights.

In Mexico, unlike in other countries, polling stations are set up and managed by the voters themselves. They are not civil servants, employees of the National Electoral Institute (INE), or volunteers, but citizens drawn by lot, visited and trained by the INE to receive, count, and register the votes of their neighbors.

Because the Mexican model favors randomness and not professionalization of those who operate the polling stations, the INE trains from scratch those who will serve as polling station officials in each electoral process. By law, 13 percent of the 98.5 million individuals registered on the nominal voter list will be selected, meaning that this year, the INE will visit more than 12.8 million people.

INE's responsibility to visit and prepare the selected citizens for this important task throughout Mexico is known as "electoral training."

This edition of "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024" explains the process through which the INE will select and train citizens to operate more than 170,000 polling stations that will be installed throughout the country on June 2.

In the "Last Glance" section, we offer information on the voting process for Mexicans living abroad, detailing the offices for which they can vote, as well as the procedure for casting ballots. We remind Mexican readers that February 20th is the deadline to register to vote from abroad.

Electoral Training

The citizen lottery

The Electoral Law establishes that polling station officials must be selected randomly in order to ensure impartial integration of the polling station workers.

The first lottery established in the law states that the INE "shall draw lots to select a calendar month which, together with the following month in its order, shall be taken as the basis for the selection of the citizens (born in those months) who will integrate the polling stations."

For the 2024 electoral process the month drawn was March. Thus, citizens born in March and April will be invited to participate as poll workers.

In the lottery, 13 percent of names on the voter registry (composed of those possessing a valid voting card) in each electoral section are selected. If the number of citizens born in the selected months in a section does not represent 13 percent of the registry, then citizens born in the following months will be selected until the target number is reached.

The Electoral Law also requires a second lottery: "In February of the year of the election, the INE shall draw by lot the 26 letters that make up the alphabet, in order to obtain the letter from which, on the basis of the paternal surname, the citizens who will be part of the polling stations will be selected." In the current electoral process, the letter drawn by lot was the letter "A."

Once all those selected in the birth month lottery have been visited by INE officials, the institute prepares a list of those who comply with the legal requirements and have agreed to participate. This list is arranged in alphabetical order (by first surname) beginning with the letter drawn by lot, and citizens are invited to serve as polling station officials in this order until each section has reached the required number of workers. The functions citizen workers perform at the polling station are determined by their level of education: the individual with the highest level of formal education serves as president of the polling station.



12.8 million citizens drawn by lot

On February 6 of this year, the INE randomly selected 12,819,751 people representing 13 percent of the voter registry. Of these, 6,650,201 are women (51.87 percent) and 6,169,538 are men (48.13 percent), with an additional 12 people who identified themselves as non-binary when registering to vote.

The INE plans to install 170,003 thousand polling stations throughout Mexico on June 2. Each polling station will require nine officials: one president, one secretary for the federal elections, one secretary for the local elections, and three individuals serving as ballot counters. Three alternates are also required.

Thus, on June 2, more than one and a half million citizens will be required to serve as polling station officials.

If any of the designated individuals are absent on election day, the vacancy will be filled by the designated officials present according to rank. Therefore, if the president is absent, the role will be filled by the federal elections secretary, with the local elections secretary assuming the federal secretary role. Alternates begin filling the lowest positions (those of the three ballot counters).

If, after the substitutions have been made, the six officials who must fill the polling station are not all present, the present citizen polling station officials, supported by a representative of the INE, will select workers from the line of citizens waiting to vote. Those selected from the line must meet the legal requirements and belong to the same electoral section (people from other sections or neighborhoods, for example, cannot be taken). The people taken from the line will always begin to fill the lower positions and will be accompanied by those who have been randomly selected and trained by the electoral authority.

**Polling Station Officials:
Randomly Selected Citizens**

President
The highest authority in the polling station. Responsible for maintaining order, carrying the electoral package on election day and returning it to the INE offices.

2 Secretaries
Responsible for filling out the election day reports and documents. One manages federal elections, the other manages local elections.

3 Polling staff
Assist the president and secretaries, classify and count the votes, and ensure the proper flow of voters through the polling station.

3 Alternates
They should report to the polling station at 7:30 a.m. to fill any vacancies.

The election in the hands of citizens

Saying Yes to INE: The First Phase of Electoral Training

The INE, along with its 300 district councils throughout the country (see issue 3 of "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024"), has hired 42,657 Electoral Assistant Trainers—known as CAEs—and 7,123 Electoral Supervisors (SE) since last October. These 49,780 staff will visit the citizens selected by lottery. In other words, they are the operational presence of the INE in every corner of the country. The CAEs and SEs are contracted through a rigorous selection process that includes an evaluation of their professional experience, a knowledge test, and multiple interviews. They cannot be members of any political party or civil servants. If any party considers that a person is not suitable for the position, they can appeal the appointment to the Electoral Tribunal.

The role of the CAEs is crucial, as they will not only have to find, convince, and train the 12.8 million citizens selected by lottery, but they will also have key responsibilities including assembling the electoral packages and ensuring that they are in the hands of polling station presidents on time; returning the electoral package to the INE; and monitoring events on election day and reporting any incidents. They also participate in the counting and recounting of votes on the days following the election.

The CAEs and SEs visit each neighborhood of each metropolitan area, town, or village to inform citizens that they have been selected by the INE. In this first phase, the objective is to meet the selected citizens, invite them to participate, give them a brief informational talk, and provide them with basic information about the electoral process. The goal of these visits is to receive a verbal agreement from eligible citizens to participate.

For the 2024 election, this visitation process began on February 9 and will continue until March 31. In these weeks, it is essential that selected citizens agree to serve as polling station officials. Their role is vital. They are the ones who guarantee that people can vote freely and that the principle of "one person, one vote" is respected. In Mexico, elections are in the hands of the citizens.

The polling station: the most pluralistic and observed place on voting day.

Nine polling station officials are randomly selected from among citizens



Political Parties Representatives



Each national party may accredit 2 representatives and 2 alternates at each polling station.

In addition, local parties and independent candidacies are entitled to one representative and one alternate



Election Observers



Members of the general public may be accredited as Election Observers and monitor the operation of polling stations



Foreign Visitors (International Observers)

Non-Mexican nationals may be accredited as foreign visitors and observe the operation of the polling stations

Specialization: Second Phase of Electoral Training

Once a person has been interviewed and determined to meet the legal requirements to serve (literacy, and not currently serving as a high government official, candidate or party leader) they are invited to participate as a polling station official. If they agree, they are considered an "eligible citizen" and enter the second lottery process. If a selected citizen cannot be located by the INE or refuses to participate, they are automatically excluded from the second lottery. An estimated 3 million "eligible citizens" will participate in the second lottery.

In the next phase, CAEs provide titles and assign the roles those selected (president, secretaries and ballot counters). This enables participants to better understand the role they will play as polling station officials on Election Day. The training is mainly face-to-face, but there is also a virtual modality.

Simulations are also used to practice all election day tasks, from setting up the polling station to recording the results of the election. This second phase of training will finalize the selection process for the citizens who will operate each polling station on June 2.

POLLING STATIONS

In Mexico, polling stations are not located in voting centers. By law, they must be located near the voters.

Primary



1 polling station for each section of between 100 and 750 voters.

Contiguous



If there are more than 750 voters in the section, a secondary polling place shall also be established.

Extraordinary



Installed when infrastructure, socio-cultural, or geographical conditions make access to the primary or contiguous polling station difficult.

Special



Used for people who are in transit (for some reason they are not near their homes). Can serve up to 1,000 people.

Who Is In Charge Of The Number and Location of Polling Stations?

As explained in number 3 of "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024," the INE has 300 district councils throughout the country, which are chaired by the Chairperson of the INE's District Board and in which six citizens, who are not election officials, participate with voice and vote.

Each District Council, in which all political parties also participate with voice but without vote, determines the number of polling stations to be installed in the district and the location of each one.

The district councils also approve the composition of each polling station board. These decisions are made in public sessions and with full transparency. This ensures public confidence in the elections.

What Are The Main Responsibilities of a Polling Station Official?

The ten main responsibilities of polling stations officials in Mexico are as follows:



1) Receive the electoral package (materials for setting up the polling stations, electoral documentation, and even the ballots) a few days before the election. They are responsible for transporting them to the location of the polling station on the election day.



2) Beginning at 7:30 a.m., they set up the polling stations. After checking that the ballot boxes are empty, they assemble the boxes and place them on tables with privacy curtains that ensure a free and secret vote.



3) Verify election materials and documentation with political parties. They count the unvoted ballots one by one to make sure they are complete and have not been used before. They guarantee the integrity of votes.



4) Verify that the voters who arrive at the polling station are on the list of voters, that they have their voter ID, and that they are the same person who appears in the photo, both on the ID and on the list. They guarantee that those who have the right to vote are able to do so.



5) Give the ballots to the voters and mark "voted" on the voter list.



6) Mark voters' fingers with indelible ink. They also mark the voter's ID to prevent them from voting again. This guarantees that only one vote is cast per person.



7) Take the votes from the ballot boxes and count them in presence of political party representatives.



8) Record the results on the appropriate tabulation sheets and on a poster outside the polling station so that all neighbors are aware of the results. The representatives of the political parties sign both the results reports and the posters.



9) Record incidents at the polling station, assist in resolving them and, if necessary, call the authorities to restore order.



10) Assemble electoral package materials including tabulation sheets and return them to INE offices.

Last Glance



Vote From Abroad in 2024

Mexican citizens living abroad have the right to vote. As of February 14, 2024, the National Electoral Institute had registered 1,523,738 people abroad in the electoral roll. An additional 131,312 registration applications have been submitted to for the June 2 election.

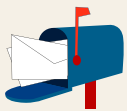
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The registration deadline for Mexican citizens who will be voting abroad is February 20. This registration can be done at: votoextranjero.ine.mx or by calling toll-free: +1 (866) 986 8306 from the U.S. or +52 (55) 54819897 from any other country.



2

There are three options for Mexican citizens living abroad:



a) By mail



b) By internet



c) In person at authorized consulates

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Those voting from abroad will be able to cast ballots for the following positions:

a) In federal elections: Presidency of the Republic and Senate.

b) In local elections: Governors of Chiapas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Puebla, Yucatán and Mexico City. Local deputies for Mexico City, the State of Mexico, Jalisco, and Oaxaca.



Citizens residing abroad who do not have a valid voting card can apply for one free of charge at any consulate without an appointment before February 20, 2024.

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