

CD ELECTIONS & RECRUITMENT

WHO IS A CD SUPERVISOR?

Supervisors are public officials who must live within the CD, and, in some instances, they may have to reside in a particular area. This is a requirement for those CDs that have a formal residency ordinance that was filed with their county.

Most CD supervisors (typically five) are elected in the general election (MCA 76-15-303) and are often called rural supervisors. The other two supervisors are often urban and are appointed by incorporated municipalities in the CD for three years. CDs without incorporated municipalities do not have urban supervisors, but can convert those to elected positions, still resulting in a seven-member board.

CDs have the authority to pass a residency ordinance that divides the district into areas and require supervisors to live in the area they represent. Many CDs still operate as if they had an ordinance, but unless they specifically passed the ordinance, supervisors may live anywhere in the district.

Exercise 1: Take 10-minutes to examine where the current CD supervisors live, particularly if there are delineated areas on maps (provide a copy of the CD map to board members). If there are vacancies, brainstorm individuals for recruitment for open board positions. If there are no vacancies, brainstorm individuals for associate supervisor positions, who can also become "supervisors-in-training". Remember, if no formal residency ordinance exists, areas can be adjusted and still be representative.

OATH OF OFFICE

Elected supervisors take office for their four-year term following the general election, even if no election was actually held. These supervisors, even if repeatedly serving, must be sworn in and file an oath of office when their new term starts.

It is important to make sure that no conflicts of interest occur as a public official. For example, in small communities, individuals may serve on numerous boards. If there is the potential for conflicts, they may need to resign from some boards in order to serve on the CD board.

IMPORTANT ELECTION TIMELINES

Elections occur in even years. Regardless of how many individuals may run, the appropriate election paperwork must be filed. Elected supervisors have four-year terms. If a vacancy occurs before the election, a supervisor can be appointed but only until the next election, at which point they may be elected but only for two years. Here is the election timeline:

- **December Odd Year:**

Assess who is up for election in the next year.

- **February Even Year:**

Those that are identified as up for election must file a Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy by March. There is no fee for this filing. This does not mean there will be an election. That will depend on how many file, and the election administrator will determine if an election needs to happen.

- **June Even Year:**

Primary if needed.

- **November Even Year**

General Election if needed.

RECRUITMENT

Many CDs don't hold elections because they often don't have more individuals running than open board positions. Vacancies are a common issue, and some CDs have difficulties recruiting new people. In some instances, board members may want to resign but can't find a replacement and stay on without any succession planning.

Although recruitment resources are available that can be printed in the local newspaper (see next page), the best recruitment strategy for volunteerism is a tailored elevator speech that can help generate interest within individuals.

Exercise 2: Take 10-minutes to create a tailored elevator speech. It's important to customize it to what they are interested in, e.g. Focusing on a specific individual from the previous exercise, tailor a speech to their interests and tie it back to something the CD has done. Then focus on something that the CD could do with this individual's participation. Remember, this is focused on generating their interest!



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SAMPLE NEWSPAPER RECRUITMENT MATERIALS:

Volunteers Needed for Conservation District Board of Supervisor Positions

Your local conservation district needs community leaders to advance Montana's conservation legacy and requests. You might ask yourself, what is a conservation district? A conservation district is a local subdivision of government that has statutory authority since 1939. Five to seven individuals are elected to serve on a conservation district board of supervisors and represent the county residents on natural resource issues ranging from air, water, soil health and other natural resource concerns. Locally elected conservation district board of supervisors serve 4-year

terms and meet monthly to address natural resource concerns and conservation district programming. Although these are non-paid positions, mileage is reimbursed for attendance. Step up for your community and for Montana and become a conservation leader today!

Exercise 2: Create an Elevator Speech An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or "commercial" about your organization. It's typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. The reason it's called an elevator pitch is that it should be short enough to present during a brief elevator ride.

What does the conservation district do?

Why do you care about the work the conservation does?

Provide an example of how you serve others.

Identify an interest(s) of the person you are recruiting for the board to include in your speech. This personalization will peak their interest, and illustrate how they can contribute to the district.

