

Head Judge Orientation Guide 2021

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Introduction

Thank you for choosing to work as a head judge in Ramsey County! Election judges play a critical role to ensure each of our over 300,000 registered voters have a successful voting experience. Those who offer their services as a head judge take on the crucial responsibilities of managing the polling place and assigning tasks to the many election judges hired each election. We thank you for taking the time to serve; it would not be a successful season without your help!

Ramsey County Elections Office is open year-round to administer elections activities. Some of the office's responsibilities include administering voter registration and absentee voting, creating and conducting training to seasonal staff and election judges, corresponding with 1,500 - 2,000 election judges, conducting voter outreach and engagement, managing candidate filing and campaign finance, and many other tasks to prepare for the next successful elections season.

Election judges may serve in different roles throughout this process; this guide serves to introduce you to working as a head judge for the first time on Election Day. We hope your experience supporting these essential democratic functions is a positive one!

What are the qualifications to be an election judge?

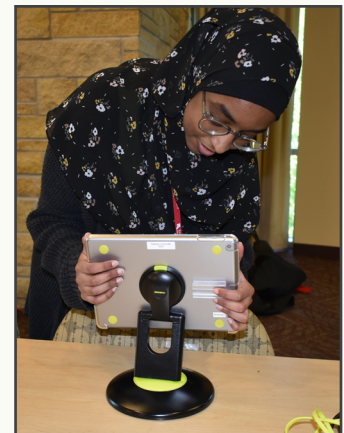
Election judge

- Eligible to vote in Minnesota:
 - » A U.S. citizen.
 - » At least 18 years old.
 - » A resident of Minnesota for 20 days.
 - » Finished with all parts of any felony sentence.
 - » Not under guardianship status in which a judge has specifically revoked your right to vote.
- Able to read, write and speak English.
- Complete and application the required two-hour training.
- Willing to disclose party affiliation in accordance with Minnesota law or state that you are unaffiliated with a party.



Student election judge

- U.S. citizen.
- Must be at least 16 years old.
- Able to read, write and speak English.
- Complete an application and permission form that is to be signed by their parents/guardians and their school's principal.
- Complete a two-hour training.



Payment to serve

Election judges are paid hourly for training and their work in a voting location. New judges are assigned as precinct judges with the opportunity to advance over time. If desired, election judges may choose to volunteer their time and not be paid for service.

- Precinct Judge (\$16/hour)
- Student Judge (\$16/hour)
- Mobile Judge (\$18/hour)
- Assistant Head Judge (\$18/hour)
- Head Judge (\$20/hour)
- Area Judge (AJ) (\$20/hour)
- Early Voting Judge (\$22/hour)



What are my payment options?

It is required that you include a completed direct deposit form with your application. Most judges elect to be paid via direct deposit. The alternative to submitting your bank information is requesting a Focus Card. A Focus Card is issued by US Bank and can be spent just like a debit card. If there is an issue with the direct deposit information you submitted, you will receive a Focus Card in the mail prior to payday. The Focus Card will not be labeled by Ramsey County as it is issued directly by US Bank, therefore you should pay close attention to the mail coming in prior to payday. The funds that you receive will continue to be deposited onto the same Focus Card for each election. If you misplace your focus card, a new one may be issued upon request.



Overview of the head judge role

Head judges, as the managers of the polling place, are expected to perform many different tasks prior to and on Election Day. Head judges should complete the outlined on-boarding process listed below. Head judges may support in any role on Election Day as needed, but they are foremost understood as leaders of the polling place.

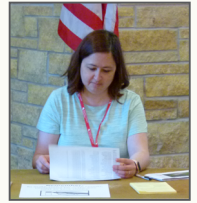
Every polling place is different; therefore, head judges are given the responsibility of managing a given polling place on an individual basis. Some head judges will require that precinct judges rotate roles throughout the day, while others will station judges at one position for most of the day. It's up to you whether you'd like to rotate judges, we just ask that the only judges who process Election Day Registration have gone through the appropriate training. This typically means only head judges, assistant head judges, and some mobile judges should administer Election Day Registration. Additionally, head judges are responsible for coordinating breaks, lunches, and managing other housekeeping items as needed.



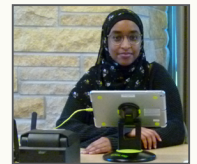
Roles of other election judges

There are a variety of roles that election judges are assigned to work on Election Day. Here is a brief overview of the roles that Ramsey County election judges may find themselves working in.

Precinct judge: When any judge first requests to work as an election judge, they will be assigned as a precinct judge. Precinct judges may work in the greeter role welcoming voters as they arrive, equipment role assisting voters with the ballot counter, or in the ballot judge role providing voting instructions and issuing ballots to voters. Judges may also end up in the poll pad role, checking registered voters in at the start of the process. More details regarding these roles are discussed in the online training, which should be completed by all judges ahead of the election.



Student election judge: Student election judges perform all the same duties as a precinct judge except those that require party balance, such as assisting voters in marking their ballot.



Assistant head judge: Assistant head judges are responsible for registering voters at the polling place. Assistant head judges are typically experienced judges who have been recommended for the role and trained through an additional training for Election Day registration. There is very specific law-mandated documentation required for voters who are registering to vote on Election Day; therefore, it is essential that the assistant head judge is well-trained for their role assisting voters in this process.



Mobile judges: Mobile judges begin their day at Ramsey County Elections Office and travel to any polling place, as needed. To ensure all polling places are fully staffed on Election Day, head judges are encouraged to contact the elections office and request a mobile judge to replace any election judges that canceled or failed to arrive on election morning. Mobile judges may even be asked to deliver materials to a polling place. When deployed, mobile judges may work as precinct judges or assistant head judges, depending on the need.



Area judges: Area judges are assigned to a group of polling places and provide support to the head judges. They may help set up or close a polling place, answer questions about forms or other paperwork, temporarily fill a role like helping with Election Day registration or deliver supplies throughout the day. Area judges are expected to visit each polling place multiple times a day but can also be reached on their cell phone.



Preparing for your role as head judge

To best prepare for your first election as a head judge, you should complete the following:

1. Read through this orientation packet. This packet will provide an overview of the expectations and tasks associated with working as a head judge in Ramsey County.
2. Schedule a two-on-one meeting with Josh Kiley and Silence Marsh within two weeks of Election Day. Here time will be spent going through all blue tub documents, discussing any questions you may have, and discussing this packet in detail.
3. Review the *Polling Place Reference Guide*. This resource was designed to prepare judges for every potential situation and question that may come up regarding Election Day.
4. Complete both the Election Day Registration and the head judge training. These trainings will have sessions offered over Zoom and in person approximately a month before the election. If you are a first-time election judge, you will be asked to read through the first-time election judge packet and complete the new judge training.
5. There is also an option to complete the poll pad training and to schedule a voting equipment training upon request. These trainings provide an opportunity to receive hands-on experience with setting up and using the voting equipment.

Tasks before Election Day

Contact your judges

Prior to the election, our office will reach out to you via email with a list of contact information for the judges assigned to your precinct. Assignments may change as the election gets closer, so you will want to pay close attention to your inbox in the weeks leading up for any updates. We request that all head judges contact all the other election judges assigned to their precinct roughly ten days before Election Day. This is an opportunity to confirm that all assigned judges are still planning to work, and it allows judges to ask their head judge questions about the day. Depending on their experience, judges may have questions about breaks, taking time off, and what they should expect on Election Day. If you need some guidance feel free to call our office, we are happy to help!

Contact your polling place

We encourage head judges to contact their polling place and request to begin setting up their polling place the Monday night before the election as this can make the morning less stressful. Feel free to invite some of your judges to help you set-up the Monday night before – we will pay all judges for these extra hours of work if they are documented on the Election Day timesheet.

Remember: Anything that has a certification number or a seal should not be broken until Election Day morning when your full team arrives.

Pick up and familiarize yourself with the blue tub for your precinct

Next, head judges are responsible for retrieving the blue supply tub before the election. The blue supply tub contains all necessary documents, instructions, and statistics forms that they (along with other judges) are responsible for completing on Election Day. The blue tub will be returned to our office by the head judge on election night. On the Saturday before every election, Ramsey County Elections hosts an event commonly referred to as “blue tub pick-up Saturday” located at our office, 90 W Plato Blvd in Saint Paul. This event serves as an opportunity for our office to relay any last-minute information to head judges and to distribute the blue tubs which contain all precinct-specific documents needed for Election Day.

In the following pages of this guide, there are detailed descriptions of each form located in the blue tub and guidance on how exactly to complete them, along with a checklist which outlines all of the items you'll find in your blue tub. This information will be covered again in your two-on-one meeting with Josh and Silence. If the blue tubs are finished when you attend your two-on-one meeting, you may be able to bring the tub home early. To ensure they are secure, please be sure not to leave these materials in your car between pick-up and Election Day. If you are unable to pick up your materials on Saturday, contact our office to determine an alternate time.

Supply pouch

Head judge ID: must always be worn by the head judge.

Equipment keys: the black key opens the ballot box while the blue key is used to lock the ballot scanner and touch writer tablets into place.

Scissor: used to cut the seals on the poll pad transfer case and ballot transfer case.

Sticker seals and certification: after the polls close, use these sticker seals to seal various envelopes and the ballot transfer case.

Miscellaneous

Emergency roster: if the poll pads malfunction, use the greeter's list to manually verify if voters are registered. Voters then sign the emergency roster.

Greeter's list: full paper list of all registered voters in the precinct.

Equipment power cords: used to power the ballot scanner and touch writer.

Extra poll pad paper: replacement paper for the poll pad printers.

Wi-Fi power cord: used to power the Wi-Fi device.

Green folder: opening the polling place

Checklist: opening the polls – follow this checklist to ensure all steps are completed to open the polls.

Election judge oath: all election judges working at the polling place must take the oath and sign the document.

Opening instructions: ballot scanner, touch writer, poll pad – specific instructions for setting up and opening the voting equipment.

Duty cards: provides short, step-by-step instructions for all the election judge roles inside a polling place. Set these duty cards at their respective stations and instruct your judges to read through the card that applies to their role.

Sign-up to be an election judge: set out this sign-up sheet for voters to sign up to be an election judge.

Official certification forms: ballot scanner, touch writer, and poll pad – complete these certification forms as the voting equipment is set up. Document the blue and red seals from the equipment onto the certification forms.

Unable to register: tally the number of voters that were unable to provide sufficient Election Day documentation to register to vote.

Voter statistics: head judge completes this statistics form by documenting the number of new voter registration applications, the number of check-ins the poll pads, and comparing those numbers to the total from the ballot scanner.

Voucher scoring sheet: stationed at the Election Day registration table, the assistant head judge should record the name and voter ID number of any voucher. A registered voter may vouch for up to eight other individuals.

Hourly tracking sheet: used by the head judge to audit the polling place statistics throughout Election Day.

Election Day journal: Use this sheet to record any noteworthy events that occur in the polling place. This sheet will be used to reconcile any discrepancies in the voting statistics (e.g., jammed ballots, voter did not sign roster, voter left with ballot, etc.).

Roster corrections: use this form to record errors that appear on the poll pad e.g. misspelled name, transposed numbers in an address.

Purple folder: election judge materials

Polling place judge list: list of all the election judges assigned to the precinct. This list contains party affiliation information and therefore should only be viewed by the head judge.

Polling place contact information sheet: contains contact information for the polling place. It is an expectation that the head judge should contact their polling place before Election Day.

Election judge timesheet: completed in full and signed by all judges prior to leaving the polling place. Refer to the example timesheet for more details.

Mileage reimbursement forms: to be used when submitting miles driven or parking paid while serving as an election judge.

Extra direct deposit forms: filled out when a paid election judge needs to update their direct deposit information.

Precinct map: for the election judge or voter's reference.

Polling place map with 100-foot boundary: reference this map to enforce the 100-foot campaigning boundary around the polling place.

Red folder: closing the polling place

Checklist: closing the polls – follow this checklist to ensure all steps are completed to close the polls.

Closing instructions: ballot scanner, touch writer, and poll pad – specific instructions for tearing down and closing the voting equipment.

Checklist: election night returns – follow this checklist to ensure all required materials are delivered back to Ramsey County Elections after the polls close.

Envelopes

Summary statement envelopes: three separate summary statements, or tapes, will be printed from the ballot scanner. These summary statements list the results of the election for your precinct. Using the envelope stickers, seal the statements into the three summary statement envelopes: blue tub copy 1, blue tub copy 2, and green box copy 1. Both blue tub copies should be brought back to Ramsey County Elections after the polls have closed, while the green box copy 1 should be left at your polling place in the green box.

Spoiled ballot envelope: place any spoiled ballots from Election Day into this envelope.

Touch writer envelope: place the test ballot and any printouts from the touch writer into this envelope.

Election Day registration envelope: place any Election Day registration applications, the voucher scoring sheet, any completed oath of challenger forms, and the unable to register form into this envelope.

Voter receipt envelope: place the issued white registered ballot receipts and the yellow non-registered ballot receipts into this envelope.

Poll pad signature receipt envelope: place the poll pad signature receipts into this envelope.

Election Day

Election Morning

On the morning of Election Day, be sure to arrive to your polling place on time. If the door is locked, call the polling place contact person listed on your Polling Place Contact Sheet. If you are unable to reach the polling place contact person, contact the back-up contact person. Staff members typically arrive to our office at 5 a.m. on Election Day to answer election judge phone calls and resolve any issues that come up, so please call us with any questions.

Once you get inside of your polling place, take some time to have everyone introduce themselves. Many judges may be working for the first time, so they will look to you to feel welcome and included. Right away in the morning, you should review the emergency checklist with all your judges and lead your team through reading the *Election Judge Oath*. After everyone is familiarized with each other and the emergency procedure, you'll begin to designate tasks to other judges to get things set up. Refer to the *Opening the polls checklist* and follow the steps if needed. There are duty cards located in the blue tub that describe the process of setting up each role that may be helpful for assigning morning tasks.

If you need help setting up, you may contact your area judge to assist, their sole responsibility is to support the head judges in their area. We typically request that area judges start their day at a polling place with a first-time head judge, so do not be surprised if your area judge begins their day at your precinct.

Election Afternoon & Evening

The busiest parts of the day are typically the early morning, around lunchtime, and then again in the later evening. For quieter periods, feel free to invite your judges to bring quiet activities to keep them busy. Please advise your judges to refrain from bringing any political material, as we strive to make the polling place as neutral as possible.

Once the polls close at 8 p.m., you should begin tearing down your polling place. We want the polling place to feel inviting to all, and we don't want folks to feel pushed out early, so we ask that you leave all signage up until after 8 p.m. Remember:, if someone is in line at 8 p.m., they are legally allowed to vote. Once the clock strikes eight and the polling place is clear of voters, you should focus on getting your polling place torn down. There is a checklist available in the red folder of the blue tub which contains a detailed description of what you'll need to do at your polling place before returning items to Plato. As a reminder, you are encouraged to ask your area judge for assistance during set-up and tear-down on Election Day.

Election Night Returns

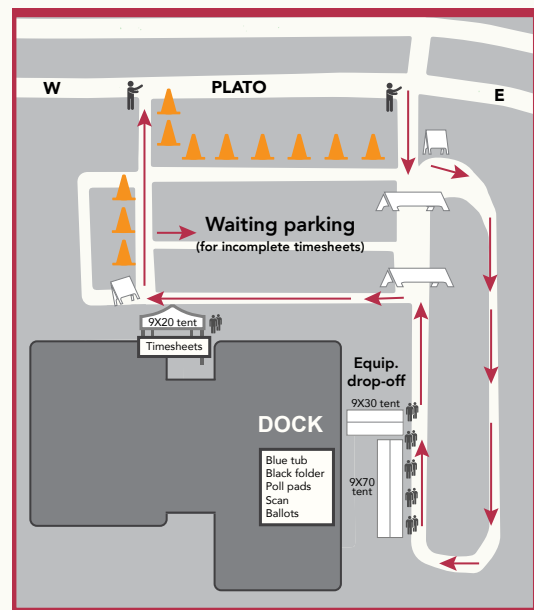
Election night returns is the last step for a successful Election Day. Head judges are responsible for dropping off supplies at the end of the night so that we can post results and begin processing paperwork right away. Once you have everything you need to drop off, you should head down to 90 W Plato Blvd for election night returns. Weather permitting, returns will be held outside. Please refer to the map below to review the layout of returns on election night.

If you are unsure about what you need to bring back to our office at the end of the night, please refer to the *Election Night Returns Checklist*. Be sure to have all judges fill out their timesheets at the end of the night, as we begin processing timesheets immediately on Wednesday morning.

Remember: any hours worked on the Monday before Election Day should be included on your timesheet.

All the items brought back on election night will be used that night by administrators, so it's incredibly important we receive every listed item. If you need any further clarification about election night returns, please call our office directly and we will walk you through the process.

You will pull up to the loading dock to drop off the first round of materials. Fellow election judges will be outside sifting through all blue tubs to ensure all necessary items are accounted for. You will be asked to separate your timesheet from the other materials to be submitted at the timesheet table. Once your timesheet is submitted to a staff member, it will be reviewed and then you will be free to go. Within a few days of the election, we will send out a survey via email. This survey is used to inform future trainings, implement procedural changes, and provide our office valuable feedback. We review every survey after the election in full – thank you for taking the time to fill it out.





RAMSEY
COUNTY
Elections Office