

New Election Judge Orientation Guide 2021

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Introduction

Thank you for choosing to work as an election judge in Ramsey County! Election judges are crucial to ensuring each of our over 300,000 voters has a successful voting experience.

Ramsey County Elections Office is open year-round to administer elections activities. Some of the office's responsibilities include processing voter registration and absentee voting, creating and delivering training to seasonal staff and election judges, corresponding with the 1,500 - 2,000 election judges hired to work each season, 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 for an election judge for the first time as well as these various roles. We hope your experiences learning about and supporting the crucial democratic functions the Elections Office performs are positive and enjoyable!

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.



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.



What are the next steps after submitting my application?

You do not need to interview to become an election judge. Once you submit your application, you will receive an interest letter requesting your availability. If there is a need for election judges, you will be assigned to a polling place on Election Day. You will be contacted via email when you are assigned to work; this is usually two months prior to the election.

You will receive both interest and assignment letters via email. Then, once you receive your assignment, you should indicate whether you 'accept' or 'decline' your assignment. All assignments will be marked as 'accepted' in the days leading up to the election, but it is important that we know as soon as possible if you intend to work or not.

You may sign up for training via the link provided in your assignment email. The head judge you are assigned with will reach out sometime within seven days of the election to provide more information regarding the specific polling place where you are assigned.

What is the time commitment?

Before the election: All election judges must complete the appropriate training by the day before Election Day. You may attend training online. If you do not have access to a computer, you may make an appointment with our office to complete training in person. You will receive more information about training after you receive an assignment.

Day of the election: It is most helpful if judges can commit to working the entire 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. shift. Your head judge will assign you specific jobs throughout the day, as well as determine break and mealtimes. You are encouraged to bring snacks and water and to dress warmly.

Can I have time off to serve as an election judge?

You are not required to take vacation time at your job to serve as an election judge. Minnesota Law mandates that your employer must give you time off to serve. You must provide your employer written notice of the date and hours you will work, and the pay rate you will receive, at least 20 days in advance of the election. Your employer may reduce your salary or wages by the amount you are paid as an election judge during the time you are away from work.

Will I be placed in my home precinct?

We make every effort to place judges close to their homes, but ultimately, we place judges where there is a need. Please note on your application if you are unwilling or unable to work outside of your home precinct.

Can I work with my friends or my spouse?

Legally married spouses are prohibited from working at the same precinct. You may request to work with friends, but ultimately, judges will be assigned based on need. We recommend that you contact our office as soon as you receive your assignment letter if you would like to adjust your assignment for any reason.

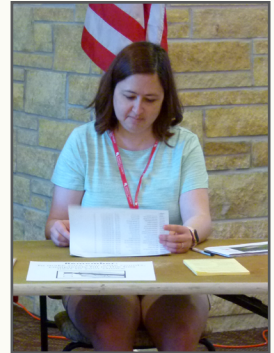
What is expected of me as an election judge?

Election judges are considered employees of Ramsey County while working on Election Day and are expected to adhere to county policy and guidelines. You are also expected to treat all voters with respect, work with integrity, and act in a non-partisan manner. Many election judges will be assigned to work the full 15-hour-day; this is to ensure consistent coverage and that a well-informed team is present for voting hours.

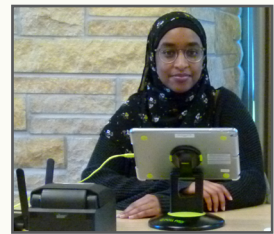
Election judge roles

Ramsey County divides election judges into several roles based on experience, training, and overall need. The following is a general list of the various roles you may find yourself in on Election Day:

Precinct judge: When you first enroll as an election judge, you will be assigned as a precinct judge. Precinct judges may work as greeter judges who welcoming voters as they come in, equipment judges who assist voters with the ballot counter, or ballot judges who provide voting instructions and issue ballots to voters. They may also end up in other roles as assigned by the head judge. More details regarding these roles are discussed in the precinct judge online training, which should be completed by all precinct judges ahead of the election. Additional details for these tasks can be found on the polling place's duty card for that role.



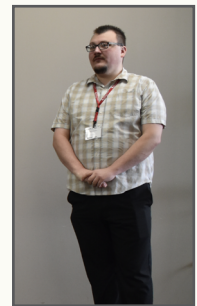
Student election judge: Student election judges perform all of the same duties as a precinct judge except those that require party balance, such as assisting voters in marking their ballot.



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. If you are interested in working in this role, please contact our office roughly a month prior to any election to sign up for training.



Mobile judges: To ensure all polling places are fully staffed on Election Day, Ramsey County hires mobile judges to begin their day at the Ramsey County Elections Office and travel to any polling place, as needed. As staff receives notice from head judges regarding cancellations or no-shows, mobile judges are sent out to work. They 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.



Head judges: Head judges are the managers of the polling place and, as a result, they are expected to perform in many different areas prior to and on Election Day. Many head judges are recommended for the role over time, and they tend to be highly experienced judges. First, head judges are responsible for retrieving the blue supply tub before the election. The blue supply tub contains the necessary documents, instructions, and statistics forms that head judges are responsible for completing on Election Day. The blue tub will be returned to our office by the head judge on election night.

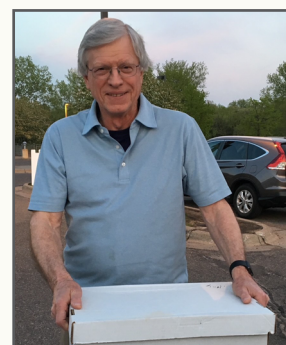


Head judges will complete precinct judge training and any additional head judge trainings, depending on their experience. They will also meet individually with an Elections Administrator to discuss their role, review documents, and discuss the polling place reference guide. Head judges may support in any role on Election Day as needed, but they are ultimately the leaders of the polling place.

Every polling place is different; therefore, head judges are given the responsibility of managing their polling places 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. Head judges are responsible for coordinating breaks, lunches, and managing other housekeeping items as needed. If you need to get in touch with your head judge sooner than the week before an election, please email our office at electionjudge@ramseycounty.us and we will connect you via email.



Area judges: Area judges (formally known as ward judges) are election judges who spend their day traveling between around 10 polling places, answering questions, delivering supplies, and offering managerial support to the head judge. Area judges are typically the most experienced election judges. They can act as the head judge during breaks, assist during set up or tear down, and problem solve with the head judge as needed.



Early Voting

Ramsey County Elections Office hires election judges to work at early voting locations throughout the county. Early voting judges are responsible for entering voter information into the statewide database, issuing ballots, and delivering materials to our Plato office at the end of each day of voting. Anyone can request to work early voting, though positions are limited depending on the size of the election.



