

# The Messenger

Spring 2021



## CONTENTS

### 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- Election judges
- Count center
- Election night returns
- Safe voting

### ELECTIONS IN 2021

- Training
- Tip: poll pads
- Election judge payment

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to all election judges who worked in 2020! You may have worked in March for the first Minnesota presidential nomination primary in 28 years, or in August when Ramsey County had the third highest turnout for a primary in history, or in November when we had the highest total turnout in county history. Maybe you worked all three elections!

**Did you know?** A total of 506,757 ballots were cast during the entire year!

We made history in November 2020, with a record 297,466 total ballots cast. With an estimated citizen voting-age population in Ramsey County of 384,281, turnout for this election was an estimated 77.4%!

For more 2020 voting statistics, visit our [Annual Report](#).



## ELECTION JUDGES DEDICATED TO SERVE

2,400 election judges served throughout 2020! During a year of uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 global pandemic, our office is deeply appreciative of each election judge that chose to serve in our community. 1,861 election judges worked the general election alone—the highest ever number of judges deployed in a single election in Ramsey County!

Ramsey County employed over 1,100 new election judges—the highest ever number of new judges enrolling in a single year! Our community's outpouring of support was so extraordinary, the Elections Office needed to create a waiting list—which ended up topping 500 applicants.

Election judges also played a critical role before Election Day by helping administer the absentee voting process. Election judges helped with accepting, rejecting and counting mail-in absentee ballots. Other judges helped process 50,000 in-person voters at our seven countywide early voting locations. Thank you for your time and effort throughout 2020. Our dedicated election judges continue to provide an excellent voting experience for all Ramsey County voters!



**RAMSEY  
COUNTY**  
Elections Office

## CONTACT US

651-266-2219

[electionjudge@ramseycounty.us](mailto:electionjudge@ramseycounty.us)

## FOLLOW US



[facebook.com/ramseycountyminnesota](https://facebook.com/ramseycountyminnesota)



[twitter.com/ramseycounty](https://twitter.com/ramseycounty)





## ABSENTEE BALLOT COUNT CENTER

Staff from the count center want to again extend gratitude to everyone who helped process over 166,000 absentee ballots for the 2020 presidential election! You tackled this monumental task with humor, dedication and patience. For everyone who has not worked in the count center, each day the election judges worked in teams to perform the following tasks for each precinct's ballots.

### Opening pair

- counted ballot signature envelopes and verified numbers against certification forms
- removed ballots from envelopes while maintaining the voters' privacy
- unfolded and flattened ballots for scanning
- initialed each of the ballots
- completed the official certification forms

### Scanning pair

ran ballots through the high-speed scan, ensuring that every ballot was counted

### Boxing team

- wrapped ballots
- labeled batches with the date
- placed ballots in precinct specific boxes
- secured boxes with security seals



At full capacity, 20 pairs of judges opened absentee envelopes while 10 pairs scanned ballots. Four judges boxed and secured ballots. In addition, two to three judges organized certification forms and signature envelopes and then packed envelopes into boxes for a statutory retention period.

In 2021, we expect far fewer absentee ballots and will be operating the count center with a very small team. We encourage everyone to explore other areas of elections work—including early and Election Day voting locations—but we hope to see many of you back in the count center for the 2022 elections!





## ELECTION NIGHT RETURNS

2020 was the first year Ramsey County accepted election night returns outside instead of inside the Plato Blvd. warehouse. Election judges were able to drive through heated tents—prepared for any type of weather—to safely, securely and efficiently return supplies to staff and volunteers. The process was such a success for the August primary and November general election that we are considering using this same process for all future elections.



## SAFE VOTING IN 2020: WE ALL DID OUR PART!

To meet public health recommendations due to COVID-19, the Elections Office worked with Ramsey County Public Health and the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State to obtain hundreds of thousands of pieces of personal protective equipment. We acquired industrial warehouse space to house the supplies and significantly expanded the typical trucking fleet to manage the enormous shipping operation. With your diligence using these supplies and following public health guidelines, we succeeded in providing voters a safe and smooth voting process.

### SAFE VOTING IN 2021

The Elections Office will be following the same public health recommendations in 2021: social distancing, wearing masks, and placing plexi-glass barriers between election judges and voters. Voting locations will also receive the same supplies: masks, gloves, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and single-use pens. *If you are not able to work with us this year, we hope to see you in future years! If you are able to work, the safety of our election judges and the voting public remains our greatest priority.*



Wear a mask to protect others and avoid touching your face



Use sanitizer after touching items others have touched



Sanitize items and surfaces after voters have come into contact with them



Wash your hands with hot soapy water often throughout the day

# ELECTIONS IN 2021

An August primary may be necessary for White Bear Lake city offices. If so, our office will reach out to the judges who typically work in that area and request availability. If you are interested in working in August but do not normally work in White Bear Lake, please contact our office and we will mark your availability to work.

The 2021 November general election will be busy for local elections. We will assign roughly 1,200 election judges to work countywide. ***Interest letters will be sent by the end of May. Respond with your availability if you are interested in working in 2021.***

## Offices on the ballot in 2021

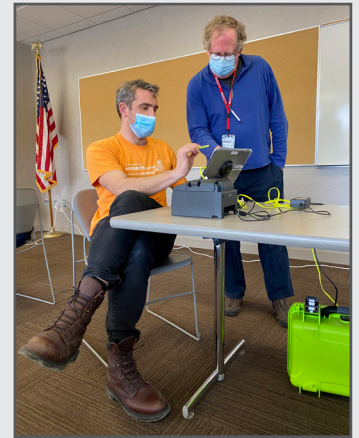
**Falcon Heights** - City Council  
**Saint Anthony** - City Council  
**Saint Paul** - Mayor  
**White Bear Lake** - Mayor & City Council  
**I.S.D. 282** - Board Member  
**I.S.D. 621** - Board Member  
**I.S.D. 623** - Board Member  
**I.S.D. 624** - Board Member  
**I.S.D. 625** - Board Member

## TRAINING

All head judges will need to train in 2021. For all judges, we will be offering the same online training that was offered in 2020. Anyone who has already completed this training will not be asked to complete it again, though any judge who is interested is welcome to complete it again. In-person poll pad training will also be available for all judges who would like to review processing voters on the poll pad. ***A complete list of offered trainings will be outlined in your assignment letter.***

## TIP: SEARCH EVERY VOTER ON THE POLL PAD

Even if voters believe they are not yet registered, it is important that election judges search for every voter in the poll pad first. This step is to verify that the voter is not already registered in that precinct and that they are voting in the correct precinct. More information regarding this process can be found on the *Poll Pad Judge Duty Card* and in the *Polling Place Reference Guide*. Thank you for doing your part to ensure that voters are being properly checked in!



## ELECTION JUDGE PAYMENT

Election judges are paid either by direct deposit or focus card. Focus cards are issued for a number of reasons: if the election judge does not select direct deposit, if there is a problem processing direct deposit information, or if the election judge application is processed just before the election. This means that even if you request direct deposit, you may still receive a focus card; so be sure to keep a close eye on your mail the weeks leading up to payday.

Focus cards are issued by US Bank and the envelope does not say Ramsey County Elections, so the card often gets mistaken for junk mail. ***If you do not receive payment within a month of working an election, please contact our office.*** This usually means the focus card was sent to an outdated address. In that case, the county can issue a new card to an updated address. Once the funds are put on a focus card, they cannot be transferred to direct deposit. For more information, visit our website or email: [silence.marsh@ramseycounty.us](mailto:silence.marsh@ramseycounty.us).



*Example of a US Bank Focus Card, delivered in a generic white envelope*

Thank you again from all of us at the Ramsey County Elections Office.  
We look forward to working with you in 2021 and beyond!

