

The 2014 Gubernatorial Election: An Analysis & Recommendations

MINNEAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL
Standing Committee on Elections & Rules

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Report and Analysis of the 2014 Gubernatorial Election

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I. Overview of Elections in 2014

2014 was a full year for the Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services Division. Bucking national and statewide trends, Minneapolis achieved more than a 55 percent turnout for the 2014 Gubernatorial Election, roughly comparable with previous mid-term elections. Activities throughout the year further emphasized the need to ensure a state of readiness to administer elections at any time and under any circumstances so all Minneapolitans have free and fair access to exercise their constitutional voting rights. This report summarizes experiences and lessons learned from the 2014 Gubernatorial Election. Additionally, it highlights a series of process improvements and policy recommendations aimed at further streamlining service delivery in advance of the 2016 Presidential Election.

A. The year in context

In early January, Hennepin County Third District Commissioner Gail Dorfman announced her resignation effective at the end of February, necessitating a special election.¹ Due to the large number of candidates filing for the open seat, a primary was required followed by a special general election. In the midst of preparations for these special elections as well as the rest of the 2014 election cycle, the Division experienced major change in its central operations.

In January 2015, Dani Connors Smith retired. This marked a 100 percent turnover in core elections staff since 2010. Because of the special election, several seasonal staffers started much earlier in the year than usual, and continued to work through December. Ongoing life safety upgrades to City Hall reached Room 1B, the long-time home of the Division, requiring a move to Room 201 in early March, adding to the unique challenges during the year's first quarter. The Division's new headquarters means less direct access for voters, and required significant work-around solutions to ensure excellent voter service was maintained throughout this transition and for the remainder of the year.

There were also several unique aspects to the regularly scheduled elections in 2014. In the August primary, a particularly contentious race in the DFL campaign for the State House District 60B seat garnered statewide and even national attention. The combination of this high-interest race and the implementation of "no-excuse" absentee balloting resulted in record-setting participation by absentee voters, including large numbers of voters casting absentee ballots in person at City Hall, and the need for language support throughout the period for in-person absentee voting and in polling places.² Following the primary, a recount was requested in the at-large school board race, encompassing all 29,129 ballots cast in the primary, which was completed in just less than eight hours on August 26 with the help of 39 election judges and 17 staffers.

Initially, the Division planned to participate in the statewide 2014 electronic poll book (e-poll book) pilot. The goal was to deploy e-poll books in select precincts during the general election; a total of five precincts were identified: one with high Election Day registrations (W3-P1), three co-located within a single building (W9-P2, W9-P5, and W9-P7 all in the Powderhorn Park Building), and one with a high level of need for second language assistance (W9-P3). After selecting VOTEC as its e-poll book vendor and ensuring their solution was certified for use, the City worked with Hennepin County to implement the pilot. Unfortunately, just two weeks prior to the election, glitches remained. Consequently, the City withdrew from the pilot project.

B. Voter turnout and participation

Nationally, 2014 saw a significant drop in voter participation. Even for a mid-term election, turnout rates fell to levels not seen since World War II, with just 36.4 percent of eligible voters across the United States coming out

¹ Pursuant to MN Stat. § 383B.031, a special election is required to fill a vacancy of more than six months on the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners.

² See Exhibit A for a more detailed description of several unique factors encountered as part of the 2014 Primary Election.

to vote.³ In Minnesota, turnout dropped to just over 50 percent, the lowest mid-term rate since 1986. As a consequence, Minnesota lost the distinction of having the highest level of voter participation in the nation, slipping from first to seventh place. In other states, turnout ranged from a high of 58 percent in Maine to a low of 28 percent in Indiana.

In Minneapolis, turnout for the general election bucked national and state trends. The city's 55.55 percent turnout rate was on par with the 2010 mid-term election, at 55.59 percent.⁴ This is slightly below the city's 10-year average for mid-term elections between 2004 and 2014 of 59.7 percent. Nevertheless, the consistency of participation rates by Minneapolis voters stands in contrast to what was observed across most of the nation.

❖ 2014 PRIMARY

Primary turnout in Minneapolis was also slightly higher than for the state as a whole.⁵ A total of 29,129 ballots were cast in the August 12 primary: 25,199 at polls and 3,930 by absentee ballot. Despite beating state turnout rates, city-wide participation was substantially lower in 2014 than in the 2010 mid-term election. In the 2010 primary, turnout was 22.28 percent in Minneapolis, compared to an average 15.93 percent for the state.⁶

Research consistently demonstrates one of the most critical factors driving turnout in any election is ballot content. Competitive races accompanied by robust campaigns typically increase participation. This was evident in the DFL primary race for State House District 60B. As shown in Table 1, 8 of the 13 precincts in that district showed voter turnout levels above the city-wide average; in fact, four of those precincts had turnout levels of more than 24 percent, or twice the city-wide average.

Table 1. 2014 Primary turnout in House District 60B

Ward-Precinct	Turnout % Absentee	Turnout % at Polls	Turnout % - Total
2-3	22.55%	12.35%	15.68%
2-4	18.18%	0.56%	0.69%
2-5	19.56%	21.41%	25.96%
2-6	10.81%	29.89%	33.27%
2-7	31.03%	6.04%	8.64%
2-8	4.04%	17.58%	18.17%
2-9	14.86%	18.16%	20.99%
2-10	20.45%	1.24%	1.56%
3-1	6.94%	3.06%	3.27%
3-2	13.68%	9.37%	10.73%
3-3	18.69%	20.23%	24.46%
6-2	51.38%	18.59%	36.25%
6-3	77.05%	11.49%	44.95%
Citywide Average	13.49%	10.86%	12.46%

³ DelReal, Jose A., "Voter turnout in 2014 was the lowest since WWII" *Washington Post*, Nov. 10, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2014/11/10/voter-turnout-in-2014-was-the-lowest-since-wwii/>

⁴ The Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services Division measures turnout by dividing the number of ballots cast by the total number of registered voters (including those registering on Election Day).

⁵ Summary statistics for the Aug. 12 Primary available at: <http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-129731.pdf>

⁶ <http://hometownsource.com/2014/08/21/final-minnesota-voter-statistics-confirm-10-37-turnout-rate/>

❖ **2014 GUBERNATORIAL GENERAL ELECTION**

A total of 137,362 ballots were cast in Minneapolis during the general election, resulting in a 55.55 percent turnout. While there is not conclusive data explaining the contrast between turnout in Minneapolis compared to national and state turnout rates, some reasonable assumptions can be made. The City of Minneapolis has supported many voter engagement initiatives in recent years, including expanded service hours and targeted outreach efforts to under-represented groups, which are complemented and strengthened by GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV) campaigns conducted by community-based organizations and candidates. Additionally, statewide implementation of “no-excuse” absentee voting impacted voter turnout rates, evidenced by record-setting absentee participation levels in both the primary and general elections in 2014.

Precincts vary in size and number of registered voters greatly, and accordingly, the total number of ballots cast in each precinct also varies tremendously, from a high of 2,030 ballots cast to a low of just 89.⁷ As shown in Table 2, the precinct with the highest number of total ballots cast (Ward 12 - Precinct 5) also had the highest number of ballots cast in the polls, while the precinct with the smallest number of total ballots cast (Ward 12 - Precinct 7) also measured the highest percentage of votes cast by absentee ballot at 53.93 percent. Precincts located near the University of Minnesota again topped the list for Election Day registrations, with some precincts seeing more than 500 same-day registrations, including Ward 2 - Precinct 4, with 526 voters registering at the polls and Ward 3 - Precinct 1 with 761 such voters.

Table 2. Minneapolis precincts with highest and lowest numbers of ballots cast

Precincts with Highest Number of Ballots Cast					
Ward - Precinct	Neighborhood	Total Ballots	Turnout Percent	Ballots cast in polls	Absentee Ballots
12-5	Ericsson	2,030	68.05	1,894	136
13-5	Fulton/Lynnhurst	1,999	71.67	1,786	213
8-7	King Field	1,998	67.71	1,842	156
13-7	Kenny	1,996	70.96	1,849	147
13-4	Fulton	1,956	68.42	1,761	195

Precincts with Lowest Number of Ballots Cast					
Ward - Precinct	Neighborhood	Total Ballots	Turnout Percent	Ballots cast in polls	Absentee Ballots
12-7	Hiawatha (Veterans Home)	89	53.94	41	48
5-6C	Harrison	292	34.03	263	29
3-12	North Loop	362	60.13	321	41
7-10	Stevens Square/ Loring Heights	393	47.87	360	33
2-7	University	396	45.83	354	42

It is also notable that within Minneapolis there was a range of Election Day turnout.⁸ The precinct with the highest turnout had 73.45 percent of voters casting ballots while the precinct with the lowest participation experienced 31.24 percent turnout. Table 3 shows the five precincts with the highest and lowest turnout levels

⁷ See page 17 for further discussion regarding precinct sizes.

⁸ Summary statistics for the General Election are available at: <http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-133823.pdf>

respectively, while Figure 1 on page 6 illustrates voter turnout results by wards and precincts in a city-wide heat map.

Table 3. Minneapolis precincts with highest and lowest levels of turnout

Precincts with Highest Levels of Turnout		
Ward - Precinct	Neighborhood	Turnout Percent
7-1C	Bryn Mawr	73.45
11-1	Tangletown	72.52
11-5	Page	71.90
13-5	Fulton/Lynnhust	71.67
7-7	Bryn Mawr	71.31

Precincts with Lowest Levels of Turnout		
Ward - Precinct	Neighborhood	Turnout Percent
5-7	Near North/ Sumner Glenwood	31.24
2-10	University/ Prospect Park	31.62
5-2	Jordan	32.30
5-8	Hawthorne	32.81
6-3	Cedar-Riverside	33.39

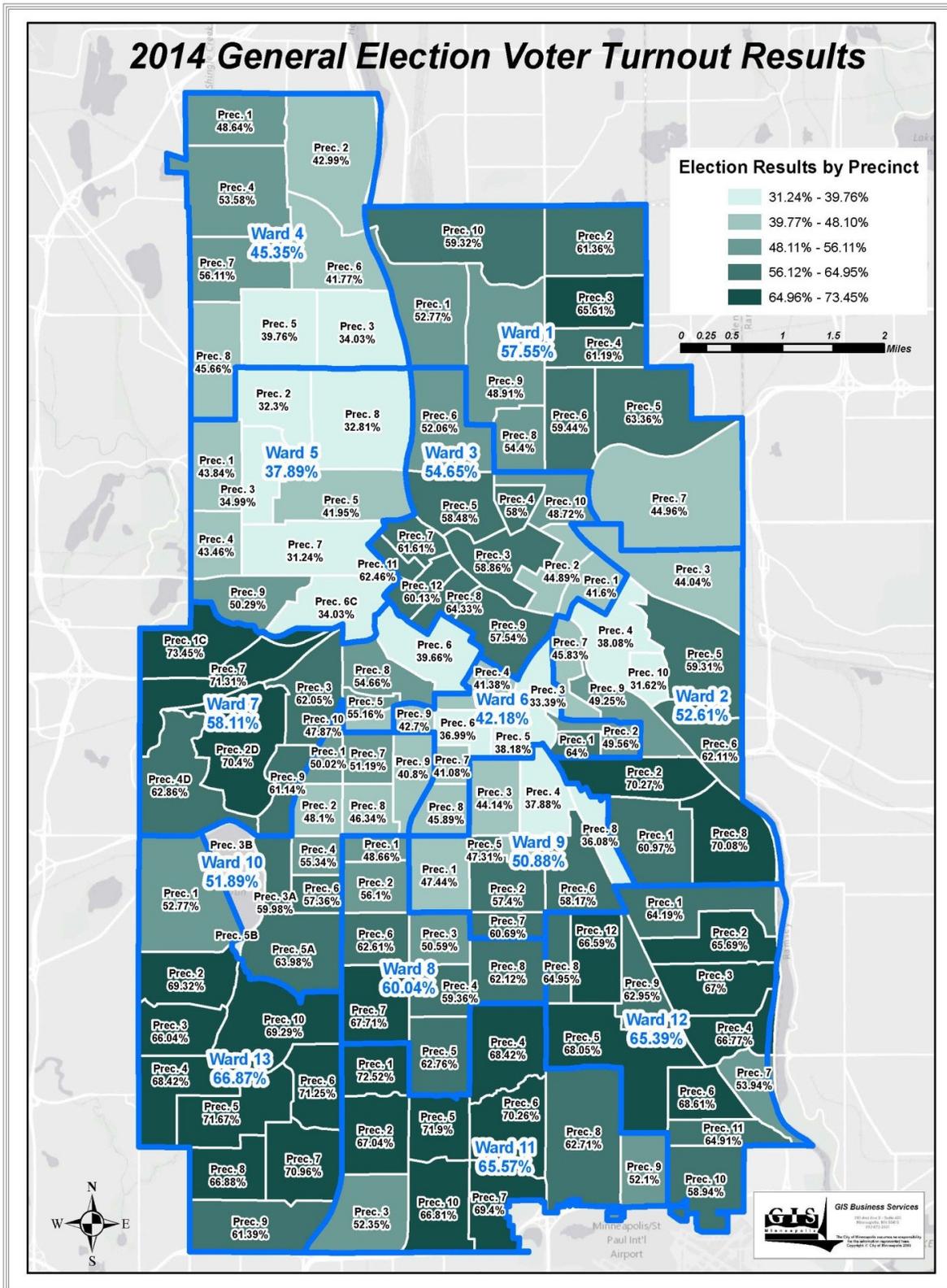


Figure 1. Map of voter turnout in the 2014 General Election by ward and precinct

C. “No-excuse” absentee voting

In Minnesota, absentee voting begins 46 days before each regularly scheduled election. In 2014, absentee balloting for the primary ran June 27 through August 12, while the period for absentee voting for the general election spanned September 19 to Election Day on November 4.⁹ In 2013, the State Legislature authorized “no-excuse” absentee voting, which became effective with the 2014 Gubernatorial General Election.¹⁰ Not surprisingly, new records were set for the number of absentee ballots cast in both primary and general elections during a mid-term cycle, as shown in Figure 2 below. Minnesota is the twenty-seventh state, in addition to the District of Columbia, to authorize unrestricted (no-excuse) absentee voting.¹¹

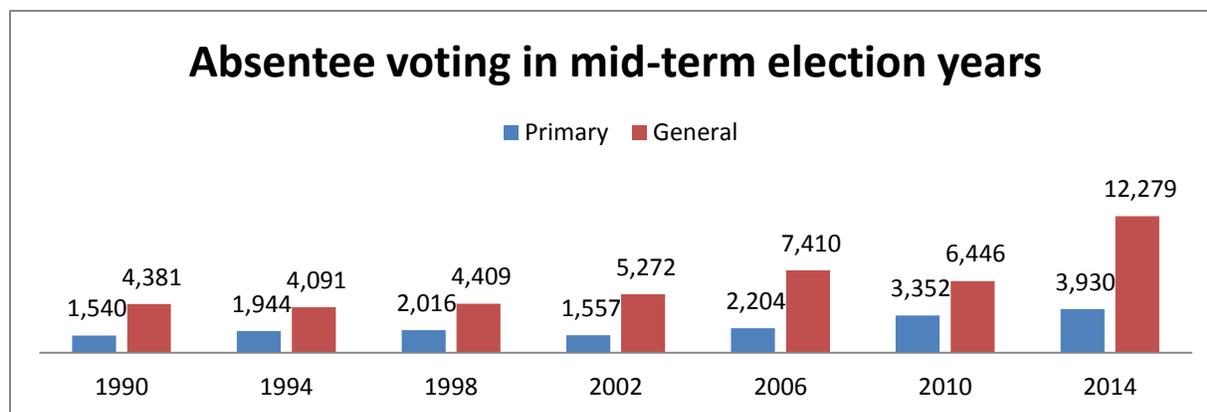


Figure 2. Number of absentee ballots cast by Minneapolis voters in mid-term elections since 1990

In a four-year election cycle, absentee voter turnout—along with overall turnout—is typically highest during a presidential election year. In 2014, the 3,930 ballots accepted for the primary in Minneapolis marked the largest primary total on record, regardless of year in the election cycle. Absentee ballots in the primary accounted for 13.49 percent of all votes cast, up from 6.55 percent in the 2010 mid-term and up from 5.75 percent in the 2012 presidential primary election. On a state level, absentee voting levels tracked at 8.14 percent of all primary ballots cast in 2014, also up from both 2010 and 2012, which saw absentee voting rates at 5.16 and 5.46 percent, respectively. The general election total of 12,279 accepted absentee ballots cast by Minneapolisians was the fourth largest for any election on record going back to 1990.

As shown in Figure 3 (next page), absentee turnout rates in 2014 trended much more closely in line with rates usually associated with a presidential election year rather than prior mid-term elections. This is also reflected in Table 4 (next page), which shows that the number of absentee ballots in the 2014 election increased monumentally over the two most recent mid-term election years—up 91.7 percent from 2010 and 65.7 percent over 2006.

⁹ Minn. Stat. § 203B Subd. 3

¹⁰ Minn. Stat. § 203B

¹¹ National Conference of State Legislatures, as of March 2014 <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx>

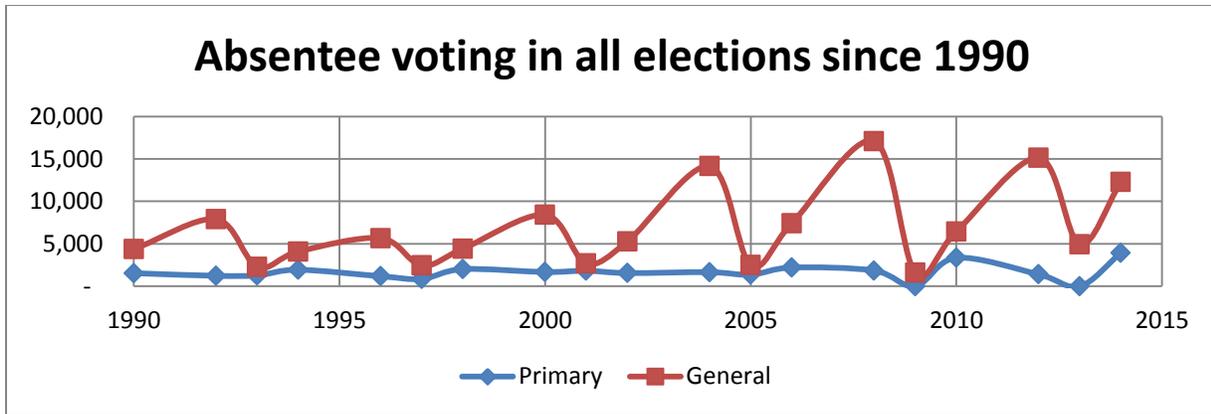


Figure 3. Number of absentee ballots cast by Minneapolis voters in all elections since 1990

Table 4. Minneapolis absentee votes as a percent of ballots cast

Year	Absentee Votes as Percent of Ballots Cast	Absentee Votes
2014	8.94	12,279
2010	4.56	6,405
2006	4.96	7,410

91.7% increase

❖ HOW ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE CAST

Absentee ballots are cast either in-person or by mail. In-person absentee voting is similar to and is even sometimes referred to as early voting, but is differentiated by the fact that ballots are not immediately placed in the tabulator by the voter. Instead, absentee ballots, whether cast in-person or by mail, are handled separately according to specific timelines and procedures established in law. As noted in Table 5, the majority of absentee ballots in the 2014 primary were cast in-person while the general election saw a greater percentage of absentee ballots submitted by mail.

Table 5. Total absentee voters served by how ballot was cast in 2014 primary and general election

ABSENTEE STATISTICS: TOTAL ABSENTEE VOTERS SERVED				
	2014 PRIMARY	PERCENT OF AB BALLOTS	2014 GENERAL	PERCENT OF AB BALLOTS
IN-PERSON	1,805	46%	2,559	21%
MAIL	1,331	34%	8,061	65%
HEALTH CARE FACILITIES	420	11%	708	6%
HENNEPIN COUNTY	330	8%	1,142	9%
AGENT DELIVERY	34	1%	11	0%
TOTAL	3,930		12,481	

A smaller percentage of absentee ballots come from other sources; this includes: absentee ballots cast by residents in health care facilities; absentee ballots submitted by agent delivery; and absentee ballots cast in-person at local election offices.¹² As shown in Figure 4, there are also multiple ways for voters to request an absentee ballot. Absentee voting requires every voter to complete an application for a ballot, whether cast in-person, by mail, or through another process. For the 2014 primary, 810 voters submitted online applications; that number rose dramatically to 4,120 for the general election.

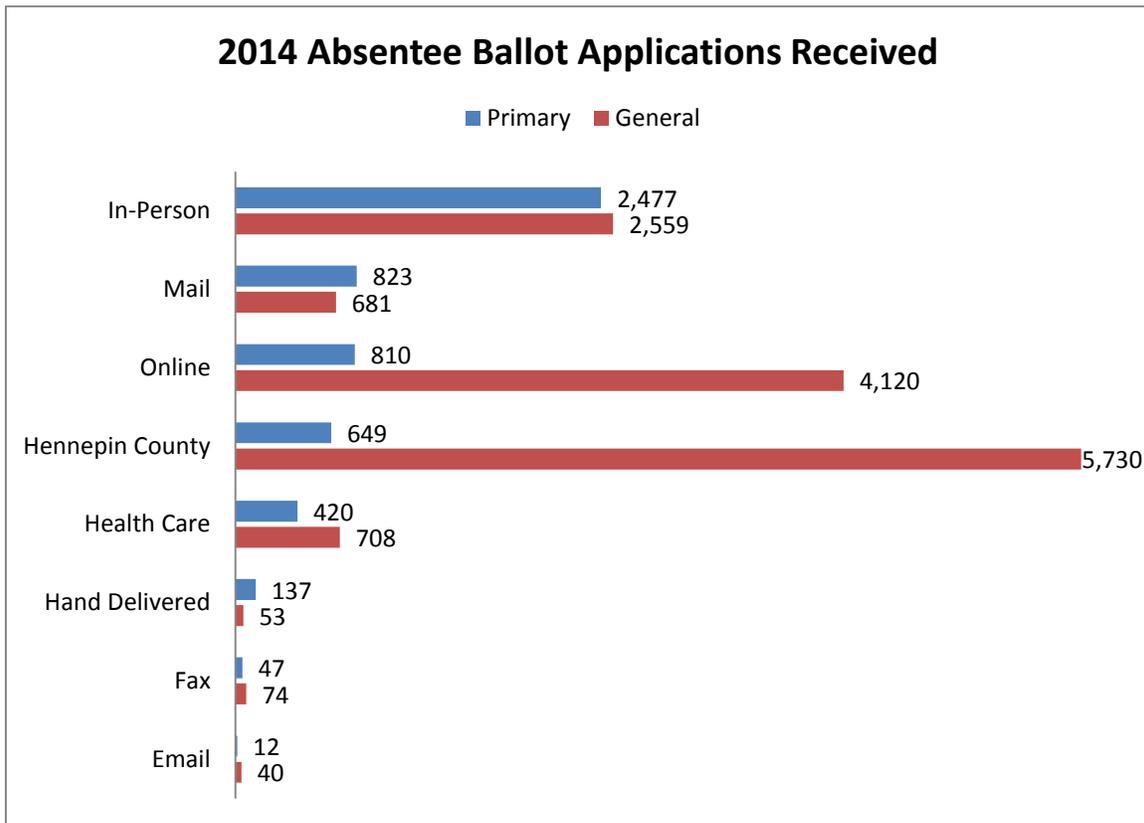


Figure 4. Absentee ballot applications received from Minneapolis voters in 2014

In the 2014 General Election, the vast majority of absentee ballot applications were collected by non-profit and political organizations through a range of GOTV initiatives. Several of these organizations sent volunteers door-to-door to specifically invite voters to complete absentee ballot applications. Applications collected through such efforts are delivered to the Minnesota Secretary of State where they are then sorted by county for distribution. Hennepin County’s Elections Division sorts and distributes these applications to each of its municipalities. Minneapolis received 648 of these applications for the primary, and 5,730 for the general election.

The differential between the number of ballots requested and the number of accepted ballots returned in 2014 was also at a record level. In the 2012 Presidential Election, more absentee ballots were accepted and counted; however, in the 2014 Gubernatorial Election, a greater number of applications were submitted and absentee

¹² UOCAVA ballots are an additional distinct type of absentee ballot. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) was enacted by Congress in 1986, and requires all states to allow certain groups of citizens to register and vote absentee in elections for Federal offices. United States citizens covered by UOCAVA include members of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty or eligible spouses or dependents of such a member, or a U.S. citizen temporarily residing outside the U.S., or other U.S. citizen residing outside the U.S. All UOCAVA ballots are processed by Hennepin County Elections.

ballots sent to voters, as reflected in Figure 5. One trend which likely contributed to the lower rate of returned absentee ballots in 2014 was the higher number of non-registered ballots sent out compared to prior election years. While absentee ballots cast by non-registered voters comprised only 8 percent of all absentee ballots returned in the general election, non-registered voters received 30 percent of the absentee ballots that were not returned.

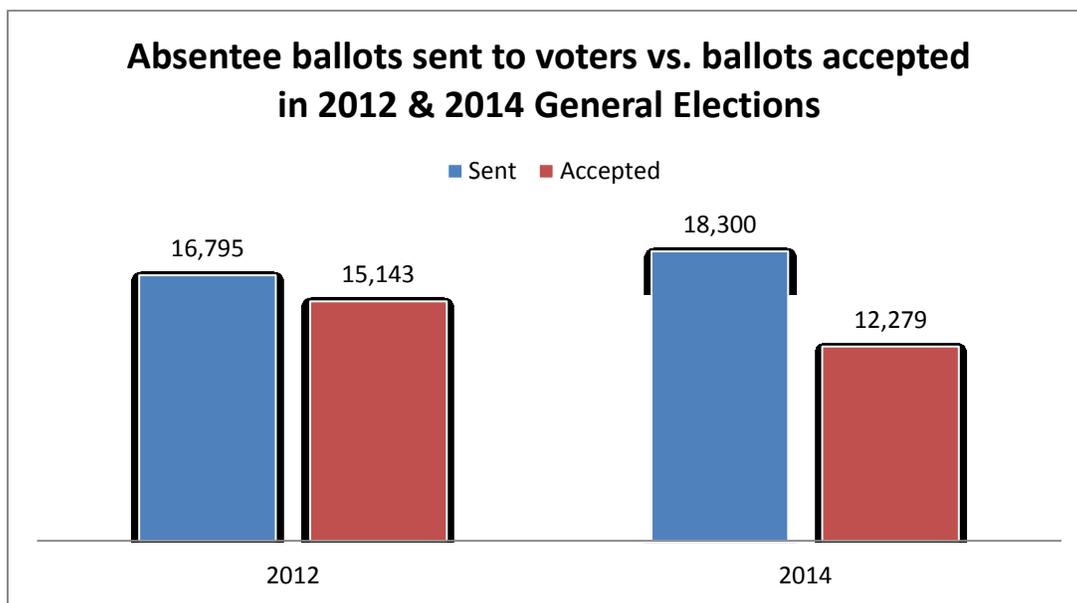


Figure 5. Absentee ballots sent to voters as compared to ballots accepted in the 2012 and 2014 General Elections

❖ ANATOMY OF THE ABSENTEE VOTING PROCESS

Absentee balloting is marked by three “p’s”: paper, people, and postage.¹³ It is a complex, paper-intensive, costly process requiring multiple steps by a dedicated team of workers. The paper comes in the form of a precinct-specific ballot, instructions, multiple postage-paid envelopes, and a voter registration application. All of that paper is handled multiple times through each of the steps involved in absentee voting. City staffers, election judges, and seasonal workers are the people that support absentee balloting. They prepare and process applications; verify the accuracy and completeness of voter data to accept or reject the absentee ballot; maintain accurate data in the State Voter Registration System; secure voted absentee ballots and provide chain-of-custody documentation; prepare absentee ballots for tabulation; and serve as members of the City’s Absentee Ballot Board. As a consequence of the three “p’s,” every absentee ballot adds a considerable cost in time as well as human and physical resources compared to ballots cast on Election Day in a polling place.

D. Expanded in-person service hours

On the first day of in-person absentee voting on June 27 for the primary, more than 400 voters arrived at City Hall to cast absentee ballots. The Elections & Voter Services Division responded to this historic turnout by converting the City Hall rotunda into a polling place to ensure all voters received pleasant, fair, and efficient service. During the primary, the volume of in-person absentee voters dropped after the first week, but picked back up in the final two weeks prior to Election Day. More than 524 in-person votes were cast in seven of the last eight days of the absentee voting period, including more than 100 votes on Saturday, August 6. As directed by City Council, service hours for in-person absentee voting were extended during the two-week period before

¹³ See Exhibit B for a more detailed look at the full absentee voting process.

the general election, beginning October 20. On weekdays, an additional two and a half hours were added, extending service from standard City business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to start instead at 7 a.m. and run until 6 p.m. On the two Saturdays during that period, service was continued at existing levels (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.¹⁴) and Sunday hours were added for the first time during both weeks, from noon until 5 p.m. Adding Sunday hours in particular was a change embraced by several non-profit organizations who organized a “Souls to the Polls” rally modeled after similar efforts across the country to encourage voting on the Sunday before Election Day.

For the general election, the volume of in-person absentee voting started as a small trickle and steadily increased as Election Day drew closer. More than 1,767 absentee ballots were cast in-person in the last eight days before the election, including 309 on Saturday, November 1, and 345 on Sunday, November 2. Figures 6 through 8 show the average total of voters per hour over each of the two weeks of extended hours. As shown in Figure 6, on weekdays voting peaked between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

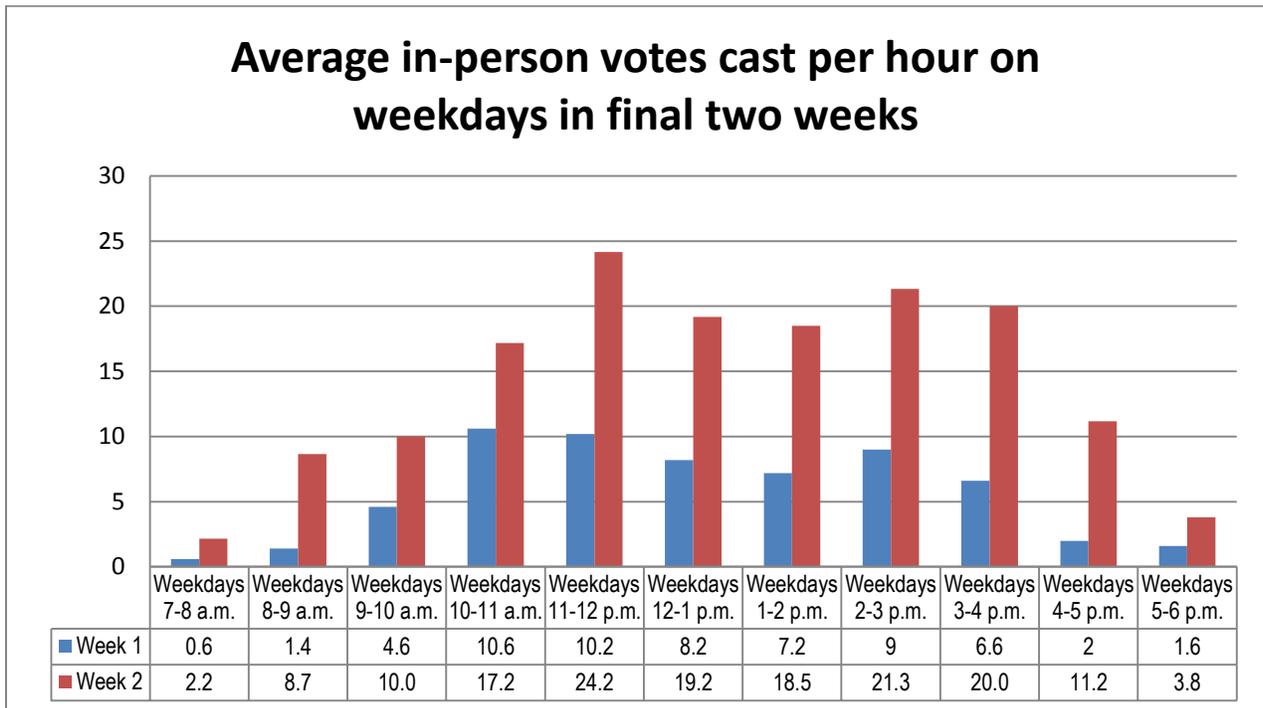


Figure 6. Average in-person votes cast per hour on weekdays during the extended hours period of the final two weeks before Election Day

On both weekend days, in-person voter turnout was relatively strong, with levels highest in the middle of the day both days as well, demonstrated in Figures 7 and 8 (next page).¹⁵

¹⁴ State law requires extended hours on the final Saturday before Election Day from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., and on the day before the election until 5:00 p.m.

¹⁵ See Exhibit C for a complete hour-by-hour listing of the number of votes cast during each day the extended hours were in effect.

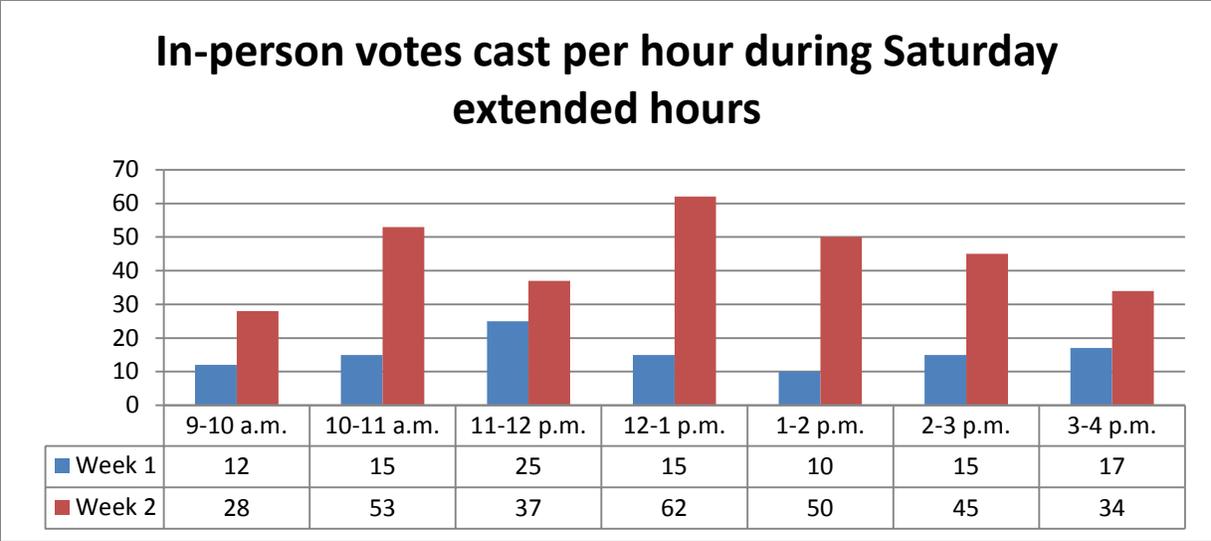


Figure 7. In-person votes cast per hour on Saturdays during the extended hours period of the final two weeks before Election Day

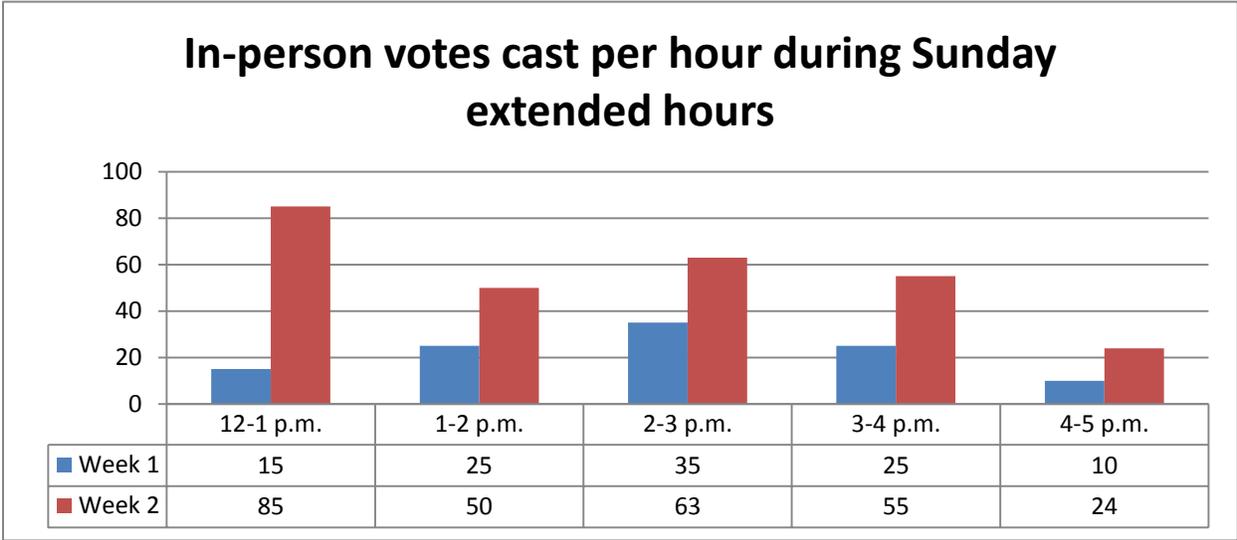


Figure 8. In-person votes cast per hour on Sundays during the extended hours period of the final two weeks before Election Day

As evidenced by the sharp increase in total voters in the second week of extended voting hours, it is probable that more voters will take advantage of in-person voting closer to Election Day in future elections. Consideration of the trends demonstrated in 2014 should inform decisions about extended hours for in-person voting in upcoming years.

Both the increased level of in-person turnout overall and extended absentee service hours required additional personnel to staff the polling place, including bilingual judges to ensure adequate language support. By law, a polling place must have a minimum of four election judges. Additional staffing was also needed daily to set-up and tear-down the rotunda polling place and secure equipment and materials. It is important to recognize that while the number of in-person absentee voters increased substantially as Election Day approached, the number of absentee mail ballots received also skyrocketed during the same period, placing further demands on

elections staff to get all of the absentee ballots being received both in-person and by mail processed and tabulated before November 4.

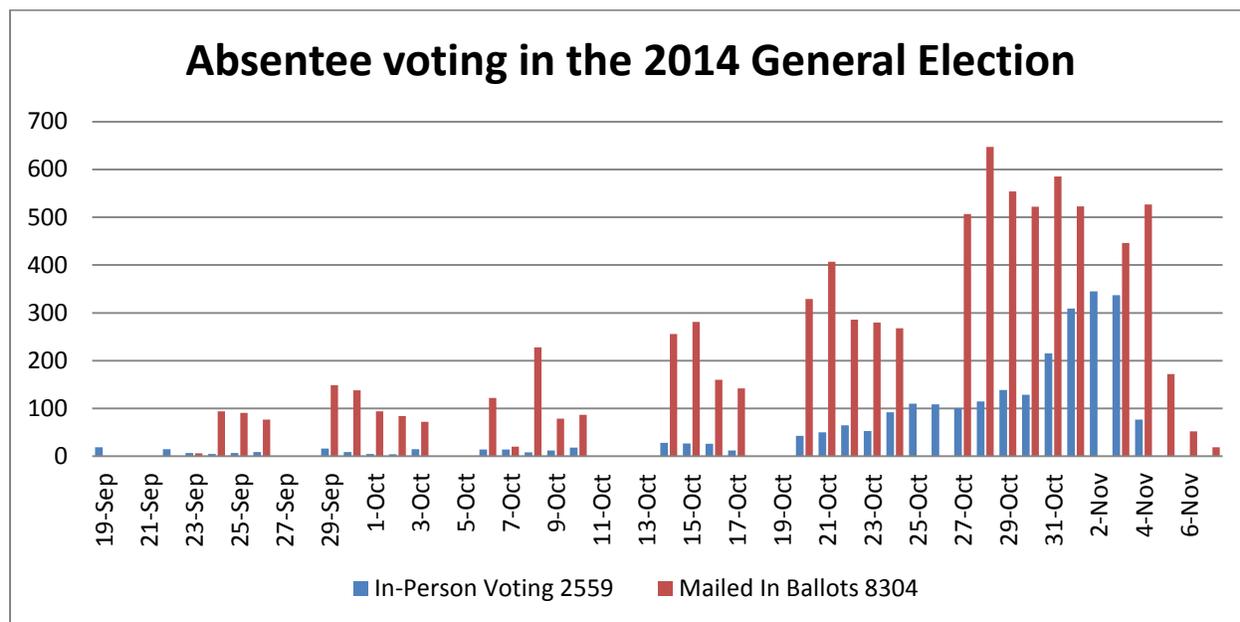


Figure 9. Number of absentee votes cast per day during the absentee voting period for the 2014 General Election

Because the numbers of voters electing to cast a ballot prior to Election Day are likely to continue to increase, it is important for the City to continue to advocate for a legislative change to enact early voting to allow those voters to cast ballots and insert them directly into the ballot tabulator. This change will eliminate both the errors that can occur with absentee voting and the additional processing and tabulation time for these votes when cast by absentee ballot.

E. Recommendations and goals: Absentee voting

❖ ADVOCATE FOR TRUE EARLY VOTING IN MINNESOTA

While expanded absentee voting has proven to be an important benefit to voters, the associated increase in the overall number of absentee ballots that must be received, processed, and included in final election results requires a significant investment of resources and planning. Minneapolis' overall turnout rate of 55.55 percent in 2014 was largely on par with the last midterm election in 2010, but was significantly lower than the city's 80.84 percent turnout rate in 2012. Based upon the differential seen between the last midterm and subsequent presidential election year (2010 and 2012), a further significant uptick in absentee ballots is very likely for 2016. In 2010, 6,446 absentee ballots were counted or 4.59% of total voters in the general election. This year, 12,279 absentee ballots were counted or 8.94% of total voters in the general. In 2012, 15,143 absentee ballots were counted or 7.02% of the voters in the general election. Absentee voting trends over the past several election cycles, as shown in Figure 3 on page 8, demonstrate it is necessary to be prepared for an even larger explosion of absentee voting in 2016, including potentially 30,000 accepted absentee ballots, or about 15% of total likely voters.

In order to most effectively respond to this shift towards more voting before Election Day, the Elections & Voter Services Division's primary goal related to absentee voting is to advocate for adoption of true early voting in Minnesota. Absentee voting by mail should be retained in its current form; however, voters choosing to cast ballots in-person before Election Day should have the same benefits and protections afforded to voters in

polling place on Election Day by having the opportunity to place their ballots directly into the ballot tabulator. This eliminates the possibility of ballot processing errors with the series of envelopes and required signatures involved and provides voters with the opportunity to correct any ballot errors before submitting their ballots. Early voting is more secure than absentee voting, and would also reduce the administrative and cost burdens of processing a large number of absentee ballots in a very short period of time to allow all ballots to be counted on Election Day.

In March of 2015, the City of Minneapolis as well many other municipalities passed a resolution supporting legislation establishing an Early Voting Process for voters in Minnesota. This issue was heard as part of the 2015 Legislative session but was not enacted.

❖ **PARTNERING WITH ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING ABSENTEE VOTING**

The Elections & Voter Services Division supports efforts to increase participation by all Minneapolis voters in elections, and thus welcomes the important work being done by many different organizations. This seemed to be a successful endeavor that will be repeated in the future. It will be critical, however, for the Division to engage these organizations early to educate them and provide helpful resources focused on absentee voting that also promote voter pre-registration, while explaining how absentee voting works including the option to vote by absentee in-person. One thing demonstrated by delving deeper into the absentee voting statistics for 2014 is that there is space for the Division to provide additional education and resources to these organizations about the absentee process. There were a very high number of absentee ballots sent out in response to applications received in 2014 – more than were sent out in 2012 in fact – however the number of completed ballots returned was smaller than in 2012.

II. Precincts and polling places

A. Precinct and polling place changes

Eight new precincts were added in 2014, effective with the August 12 primary. These additional precincts were intended to address recent and projected population increases as well as congestion at specific polling sites that were overly-large based on standards set by the Secretary of State's Office. These additions, listed in Table 6, increased the total number of Minneapolis precincts from 117 to 125.

Table 6. New precincts added in 2014

W1-P10 Columbia Manor/Golf Club	W3-P10 National Guard Armory
W3-P11 514 Studios	W3-P12 Central Library
W5-P9 Harrison Park	W12-P11 Trinity Lutheran Church
W12-P12 Roosevelt High School	W13-P10 St Luke's Episcopal Church

In addition to these new precincts, five polling locations were moved in 2014. Four of these moves are intended to be long-term changes, while one was only in effect in 2014 due to construction, all as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Polling place relocations in 2014

2-5 Prospect Park United Methodist Church*
3-7 Soltvå Apartments
7-5 St Mark's Episcopal Church
11-7 Urban Refuge Church
12-4 Hiawatha School Park

**moved only for 2014, due to construction at Pratt School*

Some of the precinct additions were a return to polling locations that had been used previously and were familiar to voters, while many were completely new locations. Of note among the new sites are a private business (514 Studios) and an apartment building (Soltvå Apartments), both in the North Loop neighborhood. Feedback regarding these new precincts and polling sites has been generally positive from both voters and judges, and the Elections Division plans to continue working with these sites to ensure the 2016 Presidential Election is a success.

B. Signage

All 125 polling places received new IF YOU LIVE WITHIN THE BLUE LINE, VOTE HERE outdoor signage in 2014 displaying a precinct map so voters can confirm that they are at the correct polling location based on their residential address. The Division also continued to partner with the Public Works Department to deploy VOTER PARKING ONLY signs in select precincts. All signage will continue to be refined, adjusted, and improved as needed, based on feedback from election judges and voters.

While the Elections & Voter Services Division has made some changes to exterior signage, little has changed in terms of interior directional and informational signage. By law, judges are required to post several pieces of information for voters in the polling place. Such material is often overlooked and little utilized even by those who need the information,



primarily because it lacks any visual cohesion or interest and tends to blend into the background of other items that might be posted on polling place walls or along access pathways. Staff has been researching interior signage options and examples from other jurisdictions to develop new options for future elections.

Inspired by work produced via the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Design for Democracy project, and a re-imagining of election-related signage and election judge guides created by students at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), the Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services Division has been considering options for a more cohesive, visually-engaging approach for all polling place signage and instructional materials. Ideally, new signage would be highly readable and uniform in terms of colors, fonts, and graphics and would incorporate elements of the City's newly adopted visual identity program and related standards. Coincidentally, the Minneapolis College of Art & Design (MCAD) worked on an election signage design project in 2014 which resulted in new materials that were used at the MCAD polling location (W10-P9) in the 2014 Gubernatorial General Election. The new signage produced by MCAD complies with best practices outlined by AIGA, providing a clean, cohesive, appealing collection of way-finding and informational signage in multiple languages.¹⁶ Having evaluated several options, the Elections Division has initiated meetings with MCAD to discuss how the City might collaborate with their team on finalizing some design principles and produce new uniform signage that could hopefully be debuted in time for the 2016 Presidential Election.

C. Technical issues

The 2014 Gubernatorial General Election included some lengthy wait times at a handful of precincts where voters experienced ballot jams or other technical difficulties, much of which was likely due to inexperience with the relatively new equipment. All ballot tabulators were tested by the Elections & Voter Services Division prior to the election, as required by law, with no technical malfunctions or ballot feeding issues noted.

In 2013, Hennepin County purchased new voting equipment for all jurisdictions. The new tabulators (ES&S DS200) now scan both sides of each ballot as part of the tabulation process. After a ballot is inserted into the tabulator, it takes a few seconds to 'sense' the inserted ballot before accepting and scanning it. The scanning process then takes between five and eight seconds per ballot. The added scanning capacity increases by just a few seconds the total time per voter at the tabulator to accept, scan, and process ballots. Staff anticipates that these added seconds—multiplied by significant voter turnout—could impact overall processing times, resulting potentially in long lines and wait times in the 2016 Presidential Election.

Of course, new processes or equipment always present a learning curve for all parties involved, including voters and election judges. Most commonly, the reason for ballot jams occurring more frequently in polling places during the 2014 election involved voters pushing their ballots into the tabulators before the equipment could respond. Because the scanning takes a few additional seconds, impatient voters would either remove their ballot or attempt to shove the ballot into the tabulator; in either case, this resulted in a jam that required an election judge to intervene. Other ballots were rejected because of stray marks on the ballot. Another possible explanation for ballot jams could be dirt and debris affecting the scanning bars on the tabulator.

It is of note that the ballot jams and increased wait times associated with the new equipment in 2014 was not unique to the City of Minneapolis; similar experiences were reported across the state. Staff will further analyze and evaluate solutions to address these concerns as part of plans for the 2016 Presidential Election, including consultations with partners at Hennepin County and other municipalities.

¹⁶ See Exhibit D for additional examples of signage/design from both RISD and MCAD.

D. Population versus precincts

Over the past twenty years, the total number of precincts in Minneapolis was reduced to accommodate budget cuts. The City hit its lowest number of precincts—a total of 117—during the 2012 and 2013 elections. In 1990, when the City’s population was 368,383, the total number of precincts was 172. By 1994, with nearly the same population, the number of precincts had dropped to 153. Now, when population is increasing, the total number of precincts is still near historic lows, at 125 precincts. Figure 10 contrasts the City’s total population with its number of voting precincts between 2000 and 2014. As the chart demonstrates, there are an insufficient number of precincts to serve the City’s growing population, throwing the ability of the City’s Elections & Voter Services Division to service the projected number of voters in future elections at its polling places into question. Looking to the 2016 Presidential Election, it appears all-but-impossible to avoid impacting voter service at the polls given the increasingly larger-sized precincts. Consequently, it is essential to actively seek opportunities to add new precincts in 2015 to better balance projected voter numbers with population growth to meet voters’ service expectations.

Minneapolis Population vs. Precincts 2000-2014

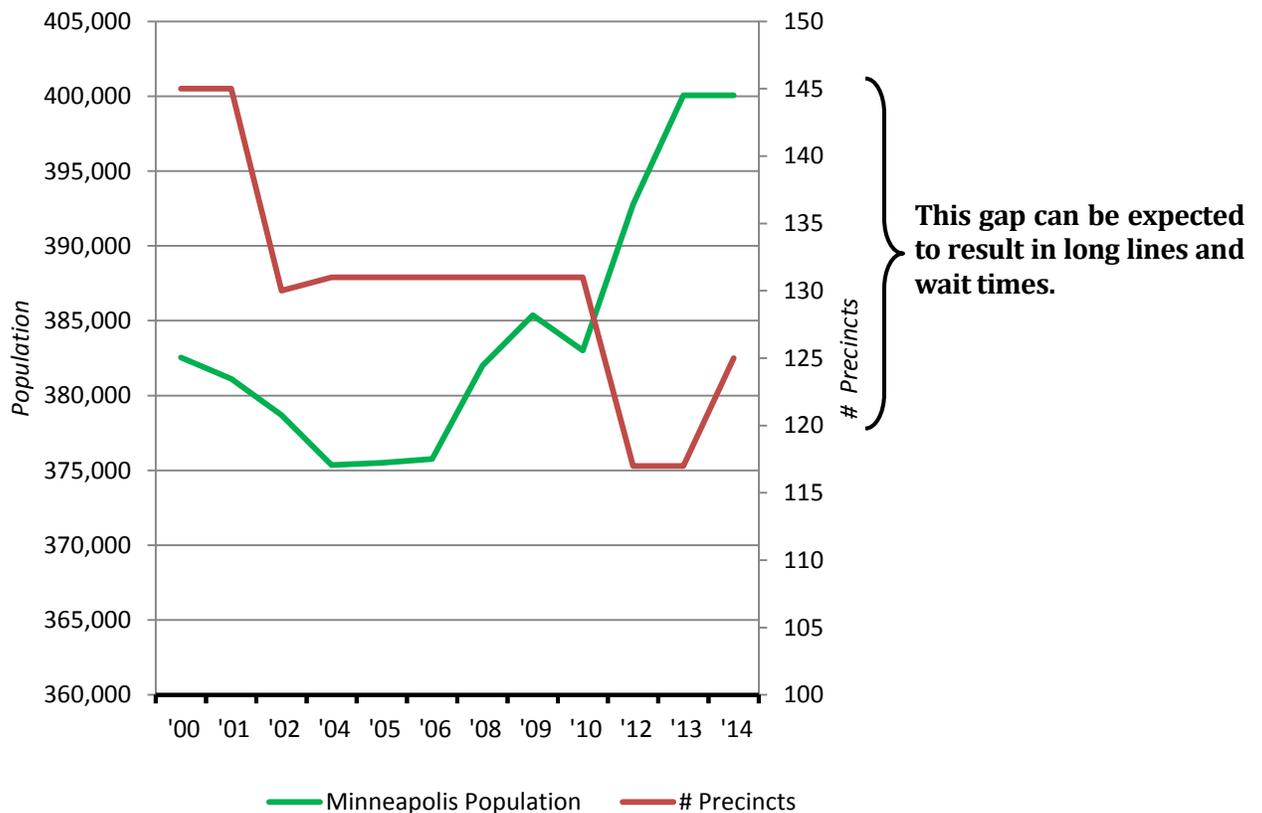


Figure 10. Minneapolis population vs. precincts 2000-2014

Despite adding eight new precincts in 2014, many large precincts remain in Minneapolis in terms of registered voter count. The map on page 19 shows the registered voter count in each precinct across the city. Currently, there are 55 precincts serving populations that exceed 2,000 registered voters; 20 of these precincts have more than 2,500 registered voters. In comparison, in 2012 there were 45 precincts serving 2,000 registered voters or more, of which 17 exceeded 2,500 voters. According to unofficial estimates published by the U.S. Census

Bureau, Minneapolis's population has grown since 2010 by approximately 5 percent, and now includes more than 400,000 residents. This population increase has implications to the City's ability to serve its expanding voting base, particularly if additional precincts and new polling places are not identified soon.

The Secretary of State's Office recommends (and experience in Minneapolis confirms) that precincts with registered voter counts in excess of 2,000-2,500 can become difficult to operate successfully in relation to voter lines, wait times, and overall service experience. Many of these high-volume precincts in Minneapolis also tend to exhibit higher-than-average turnout and will continue to present challenges in terms of long lines, wait times, and congestion, especially in presidential elections when city-wide turnout is typically in the 70-80 percent range. In particular, southwest Minneapolis has a large concentration of these overly-large precincts where voter turnout is usually highest across the city.

Staff has identified a few contributing factors that affect voter service: 1) there has been an increase in apartment and condo development in recent years, especially in Uptown and Downtown neighborhoods, which likely contributed to increased levels of registered voters in these areas; 2) ballot content in recent elections has led to increased voter interest, increasing both the number of voter registrations and turnout in many areas; and 3) the overall population increase since 2010 has bumped a number of precincts that were just under 2,000 registered voters into the 2,000-2,500 or even 2,500+ population-per-precinct categories. The changes made in 2014 were not enough to keep pace with these pressures, and consideration of additional precincts is highly recommended in advance of the 2016 Presidential Election.

One trend that may help counter the increasing number of voters in some precincts is the increase that has also been experienced in absentee voting, especially given record-setting absentee balloting in 2014. While staff anticipates an upward trend in absentee voting, there is insufficient data at this time to suggest this increase in absentee voting alone will reduce voter lines and wait times in some of the busiest and largest precincts. Trends at this point still demonstrate increasing voter numbers at the polls, at least in part due to population growth offsetting the effect that any increase in absentee voting might have had.

One of the most significant challenges to adding precincts is identifying accessible, adequately-sized polling places in convenient locations that have sufficient parking and that meet ADA-requirements. In many areas of the city, school and park facilities are already being utilized. In those areas where the use of schools could be expanded, there are challenges in terms of security, congestion, access, and parking when schools are in session. As recommended by the 2014 Presidential Commission on Election Administration, schools generally make excellent polling places: they are visible, well-known community centers; have sufficient parking; are compliant with ADA requirements; and have sufficient operating spaces to house polling places that serve a wide range of precinct sizes. Staff believes it would be advantageous to explore the potential of partnering with the Minneapolis Public School District to schedule an in-service day in conjunction with Election Day to minimize security concerns. Several states and local jurisdictions have laws encouraging or even authorizing schools to be closed for an election if the school serves as a polling place; Delaware state law, for instance, declares all general election days a holiday for schools and other educational institutions. Without school in session on Election Day, such sites become ideal polling locations. The Elections & Voter Services Division will continue to seek new partners and investigate potential sites to be tapped for future polling place needs.

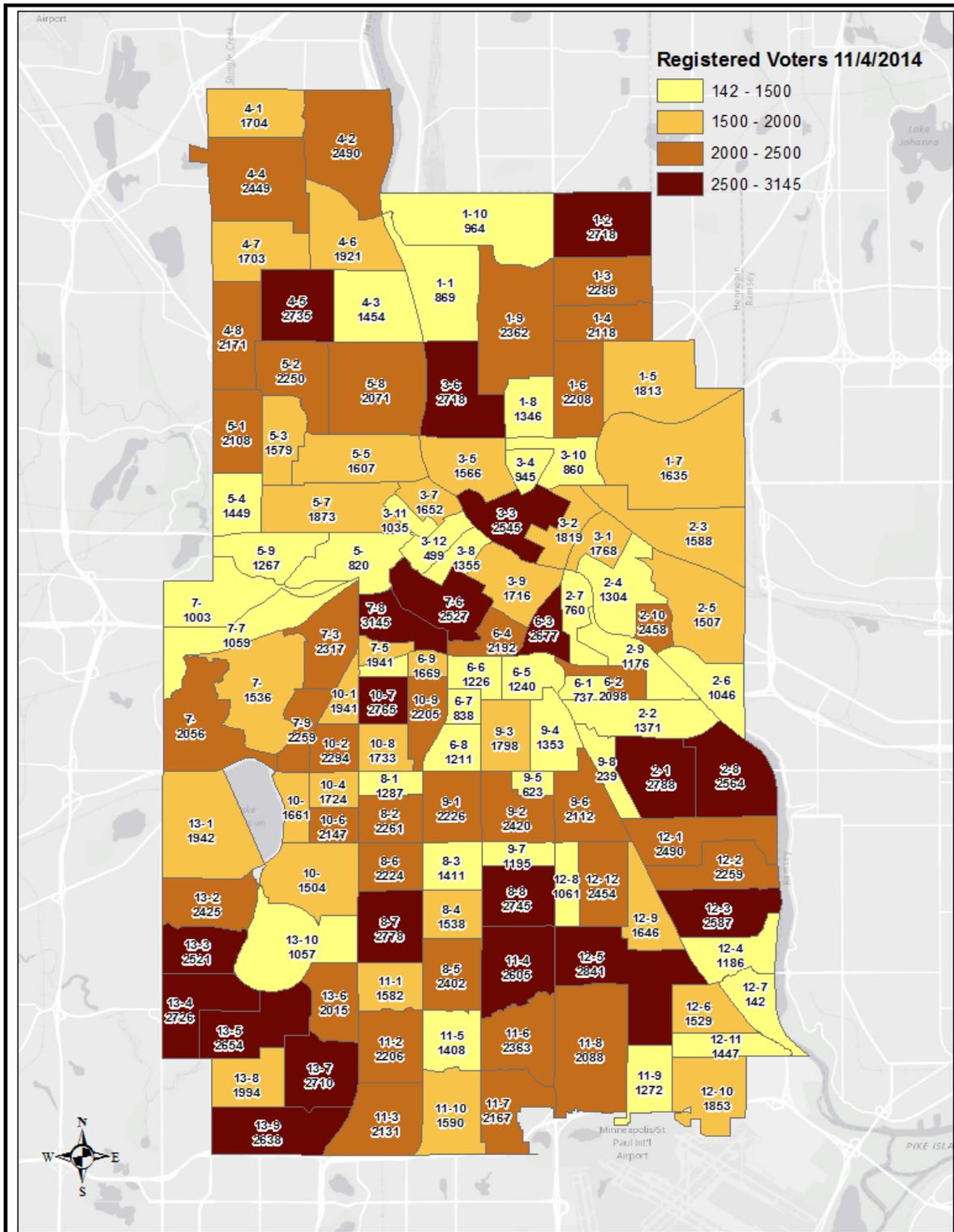


Figure 11. Map of precincts and total voter counts

E. Recommendations and goals: Precincts and polling places

❖ EVALUATE EXISTING PRECINCTS AND POLLING PLACES

As noted, a significant number of overly-large precincts remain in Minneapolis, where registered voter counts exceed 2,000 and even 2,500 voters-per-precinct. As plans are being made for the 2016 Presidential Election, an anticipated high voter turnout combined with population increases can be expected to result in long lines, wait times, voter frustration and fatigue, and potential claims of disenfranchisement. Additional precincts are required to meet the needs of voters. It is recommended that staff identify new precincts, including existing overly-large precincts that need to be split, as well as a list of potential polling places, and return with a final list of recommendations in time for early implementation in 2016. Primary emphasis will be placed on precincts that are currently at or which exceed 2,500 registered voters along with any existing sites that are known to have challenges in serving large numbers within current spaces. Staff would also work to identify any additional polling place moves deemed prudent. With no planned elections in 2015, time should allow for this work to be completed, create new precinct boundaries and maps, and implement a communications plan to inform voters of these changes far in advance of the new regularly scheduled city-wide election.

❖ EXPLORE ESTABLISHING A SCHOOL IN-SERVICE DAY ON ELECTION DAY

Given the difficulty in locating accessible, adequately-sized polling locations, the Elections Division recommends that the City pursue a partnership with the Minneapolis School District to have Election Day be scheduled as an in-service day. As noted and recommended in the Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration¹⁷ issued in January 2014, schools should be closed on Election Day for students to mitigate any security, programmatic, and congestion concerns.

❖ PLAN FOR ALLEVIATING EQUIPMENT & TECHNICAL ISSUES IN 2016

As indicated, the new voting equipment purchased by Hennepin County and first used in 2013 is notably slower in processing ballots, and this additional time can negatively affect queuing lines in polling places, resulting in unsatisfactory wait lines, especially during peak times on Election Day. While the additional functionality provided by the new ballot tabulators is a necessary enhancement which helps—particularly in processing RCV ballots—the additional processing time must be considered in planning for the 2016 Presidential Election. Staff will continue working with Hennepin County, other jurisdictions, and the manufacturer (ES&S) to identify best practices regarding care, preparation, and use of the equipment as well as viable solutions to address potential lines and wait times in 2016. One alternative staff is already exploring is the possibility of deploying more than one tabulator per precinct in order to expedite ballot processing times.

¹⁷ The report can be found at: www.supportthevoter.gov.

III. Election judges

A. Overall

Election judges have been called the “foot soldiers of democracy.” They are the critical front-line workers who provide direct service to voters. With these judges in place, the Elections & Voter Services Division transforms into the largest workforce in the City on each Election Day. For the August primary, 1,047 election judges were recruited, trained, and deployed; for the November general election, 1,727 judges were recruited, trained, and deployed. Beyond staffing polling places, election judges assist in a number of functions in the days and weeks leading up to and immediately following an election. Figure 12 demonstrates how critical election judges are to the success of every Election Day, over 99 percent of the personnel resources required to ensure all necessary functions related to elections are fulfilled to serve Minneapolis voters.

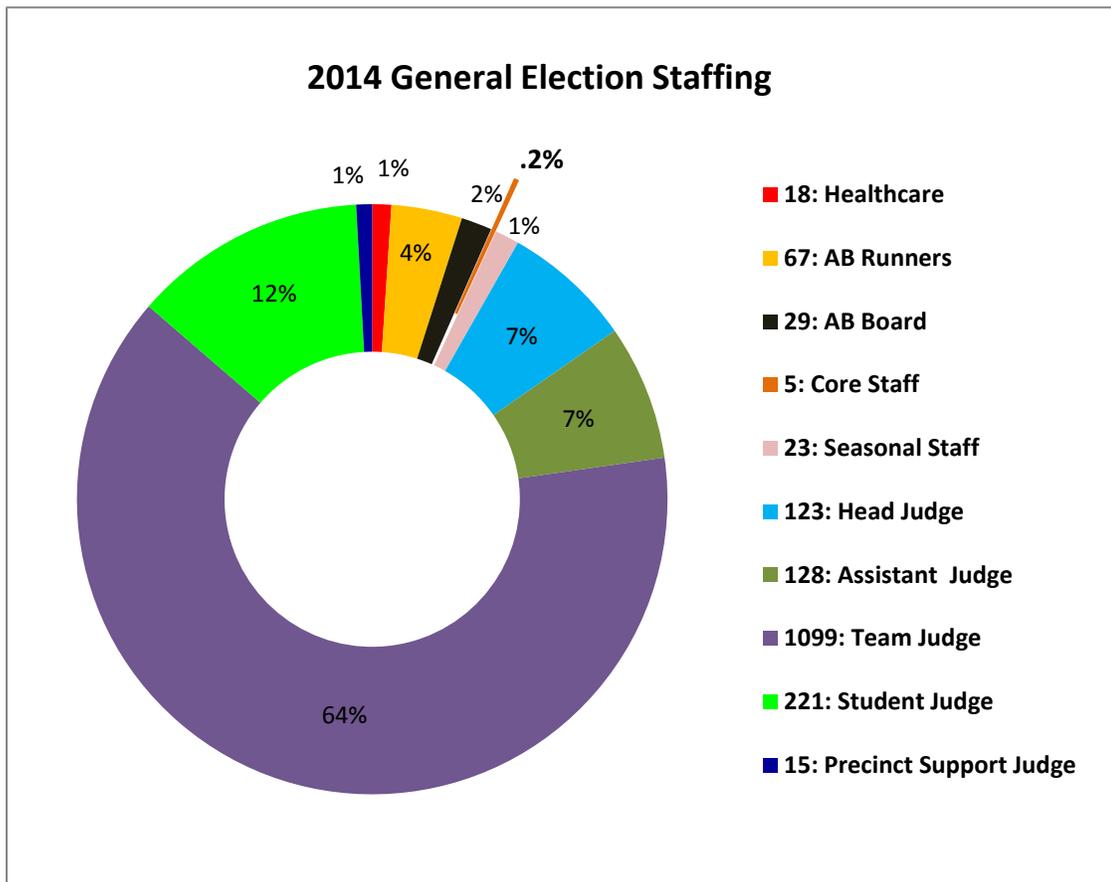


Figure 12. 2014 General Election workforce of election judges

B. Recruitment

Recruiting new election judges is an on-going, year-round task. More than 495 new election judge applications were processed in 2014, with almost half of these applications received in September and October during the critical lead-up to Election Day. With the large volume of new applications, it was possible to attain ideal staffing levels across all precincts two full weeks before Election Day. This gave staff the opportunity to make necessary final coverage adjustments in advance, resulting in less pressure and stress on Election Day.

Election judge staffing goals are based on a coverage formula that takes into account specific criteria, including the number of registered voters per precinct and the identified needs of each community being served. Minnesota law mandates a minimum of four election judges per precinct. The Elections & Voter Services Division has adopted a goal based upon national best practices of staffing one team election judge per every 150 registered voters, not including the two leadership positions of head and assistant head judges. This brings the base staffing level per precinct to six judges. Additional criteria considered for expanded staffing coverage include the type of election, voter turnout analysis, identified precinct-specific needs, and consideration of ballot content.

❖ **DEMOGRAPHICS OF ELECTION JUDGES**

The face-to-face interactions between election judges and voters are crucial to fostering positive Election Day experiences. To this end, the Division believes it is important to staff precincts with election judges who reflect the communities they serve. Doing so helps build trust and confidence in voters, and leads to a more positive experience for voters, particularly those from under-represented populations that have less exposure and experience to the voting process. To diversify and ensure the ongoing sustainability of an expanded corps of judges, the Division has pursued collaborations with neighborhood organizations, local nonprofits, schools, and workforce centers to employ election judges whose demographics reflect the communities they serve.

A key to determining the success of these efforts is having appropriate measures to benchmark against. 2010 census data provides one such benchmark and measures the following major racial/ethnic demographics residing in Minneapolis:

- American Indian & Alaska Native alone
- Asian alone
- Black or African American alone
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone
- Two or more races
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino

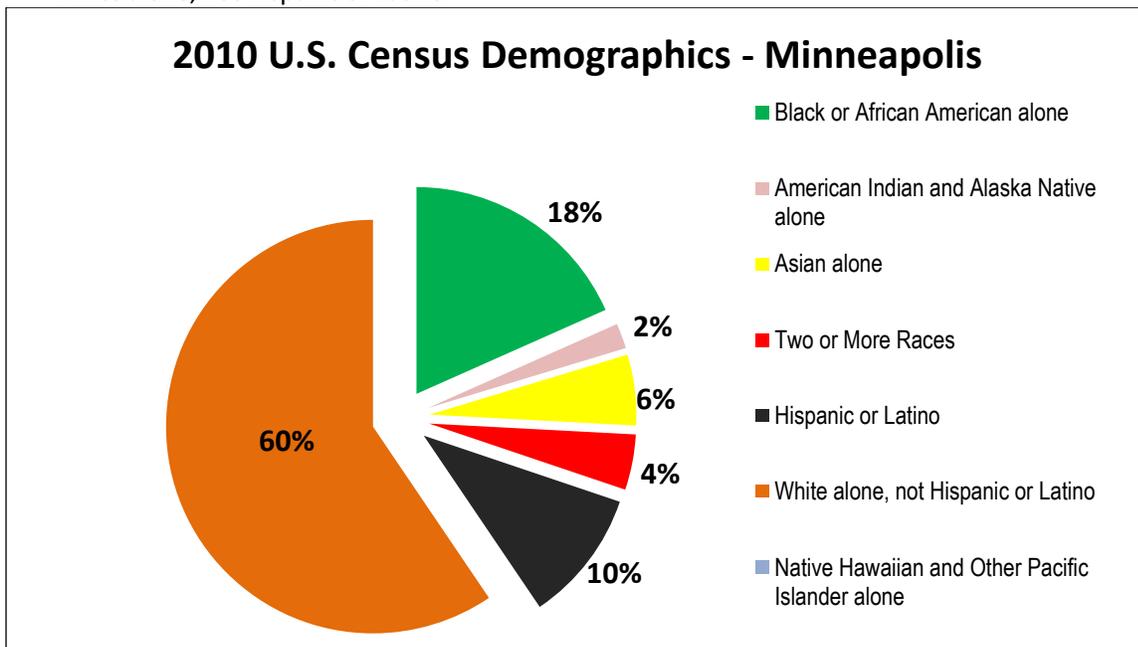


Figure 13. 2010 Census Demographics for the City of Minneapolis

Staff analyzed demographic data from each election year since 2010 based on information provided by election judges, where racial/ethnic group self-identification is voluntarily reported. These results provide one view into how representative election judges are of the overall population in Minneapolis. When election judge demographic data from 2010 is compared to 2014, there is a notable decrease of ten percent in election judges who identify as white. There was also a corresponding nine percent increase in election judges who identified as black or African American, at least partially attributable to concerted efforts to recruit Somali native speakers. It is not possible from looking at this data, however, to separate judges who identify as black or African American into more discrete categories reflecting the range of different communities encompassed by this broad Census category.

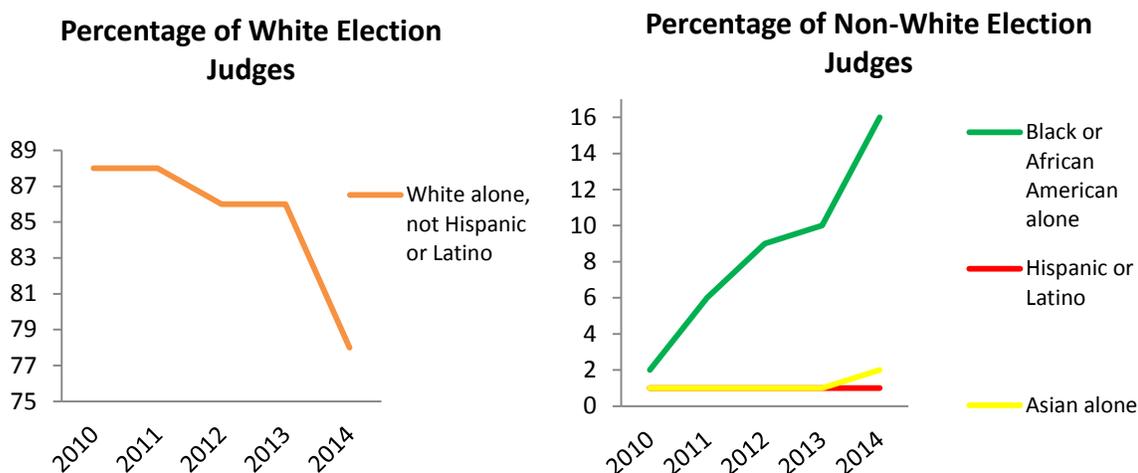


Figure 14. Percentage of white vs. non-white election judges

Although progress has been made in increasing the percentage of election judges who identify as black or African American, a large gap remains between their representation within the pool of election judges and the overall demographic proportions of the city. Other racial and ethnic demographics are also less frequently represented in the election judge corps than in the city’s general population. Over the past five years, the percent of election judges who identified as Asian decreased 1 percent, and the percent of judges identifying as American Indian and Alaskan native has remained flat. Also strikingly, only one percent of election judges in 2014 identified as Hispanic, while census figures show Hispanics comprise roughly 10 percent of the overall population in Minneapolis.¹⁸

Realizing the objective of ensuring polling place staffing is representative of the community being served, the Elections & Voter Services Division intends to continue analyzing available data to identify the best possible precinct-level demographic data, including language needs. This precinct-level data is a crucial complement to city-wide demographic data, and helps ensure resources in each polling place are matched to the needs of the residents being served. To this end, it would be important to conduct a city-wide demographic survey that would support these efforts and provide much-needed, timely data about the composition of the community.

❖ **LANGUAGE SUPPORT**

To better meet precinct-specific needs, the Elections Division has endeavored to ensure sufficient coverage with election judges fluent in the highest-frequency secondary languages in Minneapolis; this includes: Hmong,

¹⁸ See Exhibit E - Demographics of Election Judges 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 & 2014 for a more detailed breakdown.

Spanish, and Somali, as well as Oromo and American Sign Language. Lack of language assistance at polling places can be challenging for both voters and election judges, so adding additional resources able to provide interpretation and translation assistance is a critical element of serving voters and ensuring a free, fair, and equitable experience at the polls.

Minnesota has a long tradition of ensuring its newest citizens can exercise their right to vote. In the 1920s and 1930s, voting instructions were provided in multiple languages, including Bohemian, Finnish, French, German, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, and Swedish. Today, the State and the City of Minneapolis provide that same level of service to populations speaking Hmong, Somali, Spanish, and other languages.¹⁹ The Elections & Voter Services Division offers translated instructions and other materials in all polling places and coordinates with Minneapolis 311 to ensure access to voters who speak English as a second language or who require that assistance for whatever reason. Minneapolis 311 also helps serve voters by providing telephonic assistance using qualified interpreters. The Elections Division has established a goal of placing election judges with proficiency in a second language in those precincts where at least 15 percent of the population speaks one or more of the three most-common languages (Hmong, Spanish, and Somali). In addition to serving as election judges, these multilingual judges provide immediate on-site interpretation services for voters. Multilingual judges wear badges identifying those language(s) he or she speaks.

Table 8. Language skills among election judges in 2014

Language Skills Among Election Judges 2014 Primary		
Language	Regular Judges	Student Judges
Spanish	137	3
Hmong	21	4
Somali	98	2
Oromo	16	0
American Sign Language	9	0
TOTALS	281	7
Language Skills Among Election Judges 2014 General		
Language	Regular Judges	Student Judges
Spanish	171	20
Hmong	20	13
Somali	103	41
Oromo	17	6
American Sign Language	12	2
TOTALS	323	80

As shown above, in 2014, 288 multilingual judges were recruited to serve in the primary and 403 in the general election. This was a six percent increase over the number of multilingual judges deployed to polling places in the 2013 Municipal Election, and a 52 percent increase in multilingual judges deployed in the 2012 Presidential Election. While efforts to recruit multilingual election judges has increased language services provided on Election Day, the level of support remains inadequate to cover all 125 polling places. In addition, provisions in

¹⁹ *Voting Instructions for New Citizens*, found on page 646 of the 2013-2014 Minnesota Legislative Manual published by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

existing state law require two election judges of different major political parties assist voters in marking a ballot, which further constrains the level of assistance that can be provided.

To more effectively meet the need for language support in polling places, the Elections Division explored the potential of using independent interpreters in 2014. Unfortunately, existing state law prohibits such use. As a consequence, the Elections Division supports permissive state legislation that would allow jurisdictions like Minneapolis expanded options for providing language assistance (interpretation and translation) for voters who require such help to cast a ballot.

❖ **STUDENT ELECTION JUDGE (SEJ) PROGRAM**

2014 was another successful year for the student election judge program.²⁰ In total, 221 student judges from 13 schools worked in the 2014 primary and general elections. That reflects a 27 percent growth in participation compared to the 2013 program, which only included students from 10 area schools. Importantly, as shown in Table 8 (previous page), student judges have been invaluable in providing much-needed language support services in polling places. In fact, nearly 20 percent of all election judges with fluency in another identified language in the 2014 general election were students.

The Student Election Judge program also helps diversify our corps of election judges by enrolling younger generations in the electoral process—a process research has shown can lead to a lifetime commitment of active civic engagement and regular participation in elections. The City’s Student Election Judge program was expanded to reach a wider range of young people, including partnerships and collaborations with multiple area universities, the Minneapolis Urban Scholars program, the non-partisan college student-run organization Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG), and the Young Dads’ program. Social media networks have also been used to broaden the Division’s digital recruitment efforts. For example, in 2009, the average age of the Minneapolis corps of election judges was 57, with the SEJ program there has been an incremental reduction in the average age of election judges in the city, now at 54 and expected to continue trending lower in future years.

In 2014, several improvements were introduced to the Student Election Judge program, including the first time for student judges were able to work in a primary and the first opportunity for student judges to perform all non-partisan functions in the polling place. In 2014, student judges attended training with their adult colleagues, and alternate training sites (in Minneapolis high schools) were given priority in order to accommodate student’s schedules and availability. Finally, student judges also qualified for an increase in pay—commensurate with other judges, thanks to action by the Mayor and City Council.

❖ **ADOPT-A-PRECINCT INITIATIVE**

The Adopt-A-Precinct (AAP) program is a specific recruitment initiative focused on bringing in more election judges from within the many communities of Minneapolis. AAP partners are nonprofit organizations who recruit individuals within their organizations to serve as election judges. The recruits in turn donate their election judge wages back to the organization. This creates a new fundraising stream for the organizations while providing them an opportunity to improve voter experiences at the polls. AAP was launched during the 2013 Municipal Election with three organizations: the Somali American Parent Association, the Somali Action Alliance, and the Minneapolis League of Women Voters. Judges recruited by these organizations were given the option to work for pay, to volunteer their time, or to donate their earnings back to their organization. All of the recruits were required to meet standard criteria for serving as an election judge, including eligibility to vote in Minnesota; the ability to read, write, and speak English; and successful completion of a mandatory two-hour training session.

²⁰ See Exhibit F to review the full 2014 Student Election Judge report.

The AAP program was expanded in 2014 with some improvements made to apply some of the lessons learned in its first iteration. As a result, both the number of organizations participating and the quantity of recruitments by most organizations increased. Additionally, in 2014, the Division engaged neighborhood associations to participate in the AAP program. In total, the program now has partnerships established with seven community organizations, including:

- Longfellow Community Council – three recruits
- Somali American Parent Association – three recruits
- Somali Action Alliance – five recruits
- Ventura Village – nine recruits
- Mixed Blood Theater – 10 recruits
- League of Women Voters Minneapolis – 61 recruits

C. Training

Under administrative regulations promulgated by the Secretary of State, pursuant to state law, every election judge must complete standardized training that covers the basics of election law and administration, and this training must be completed every two years.²¹ Judges serving in specialized roles—for example, head and assistant head judges—may require additional training, requirements determined by the local jurisdiction.²² Counties train local municipal election officials, who in turn provide training to election judges. Unsurprisingly, these uniform (minimum) training requirements are insufficient to meet the complexities and variabilities inherent in administering elections in the state’s largest municipality. Accordingly, the Minneapolis Elections & Voter Services Division provides the basic two-hour mandatory training, but complements this training with Minneapolis-specific issues and also offers a separate leadership training course for head and assistant head judges and precinct support judges.

❖ REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR ELECTION JUDGES

The Elections Division provides all judges as much reference content as possible. In 2014, almost all reference materials provided to election judges were re-examined and re-designed, incorporating feedback and suggested improvements gleaned from debriefings and small focus groups with election judges, especially those in key leadership positions.

One of the most important new reference materials for judges developed in 2014 was the City of Minneapolis Election Judge Manual. Every two years, the Minnesota Secretary of State produces a new version of its own Election Judge Guide, commonly referred to as the OSS Guide. This guide serves as the core reference manual regarding service as an election judge in Minnesota. It is a very useful, detailed document, but lacks information specific to how elections are administered in the City of Minneapolis. Using the original 65-page OSS Guide, the Minneapolis Elections Division has expanded its custom Election Judge Manual, which in over 120 pages, serving as a single complete, detailed reference that all election judges in Minneapolis can rely upon in performing their duties. The updated manual was completed in September 2014, in time for all judges to receive a personal copy.

❖ ALTERNATE TRAINING SITES

In 2014, the Division provided expanded options for training classes in locations other than the principal classroom located at the warehouse in northeast Minneapolis. Before the state primary, two classes were conducted at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs on the University of Minnesota’s West Bank campus. Prior

²¹ Minn. Stat. § 204B.25.

²² Minn. Stat. § 204B.19, subd. 4.

to the general election, the Division partnered with four Minneapolis high schools to offer classes at Patrick Henry, Thomas Edison, South, and Southwest. A total of eight basic, two-hour training classes were held at the high schools.

Two main goals were met by using alternate training sites. First, it provided greater accessibility for election judges at locations throughout the city, including locations easily accessed by mass transit. The regular training classroom at the warehouse is not always a convenient option, so providing additional locations was important. Second, in the general election, alternate training sites served to shift the way student election judges were trained. Student judges received first priority to attend the alternate site classes, and were trained for the first time alongside adult team judges in a familiar and convenient setting.

The alternate training site project was not without its challenges. First, the lack of a department-owned vehicle to haul training materials, supplies, and equipment required the Division to borrow vehicles from other departments, which was not always a convenient work-around. Large, heavy equipment like the DS200 Ballot Tabulator and the AutoMARK are essential components of an effective training session, thus they needed to be made available to judges attending alternate site classes just as they are at the principal training location. A department-owned vehicle (ideally a cargo van) would simplify transport to alternate sites. A cargo van could also be used for other operating needs, such as transporting back-up equipment to polling places on Election Day in the event of an emergency and carrying supplies and equipment for voter outreach and education events and demonstrations.

There were additional challenges related to the scheduling of the fall alternate site classes. These classes were not long enough; scheduled too close to the time school releases its students (3:00 p.m.); and too frequent (two classes per day at four different sites in four days). It was an appealing prospect to train 400 election judges in a four-day period, but the realities of this undertaking made it very challenging. The amount of time required to transport equipment and supplies to a training site, set it up, take it down, and return it to the warehouse for storage at the end of the day affects the window of time in which training can actually be conducted. Other auxiliary training functions must be considered as well, such as the paperwork involved, which is greater in quantity for student election judges. It is more reasonable going forward to conduct one alternate site class per day, particularly if the length of class were to be extended at all. Additionally, if the alternate site is within a school, a class should be scheduled at 4:00 p.m. at the earliest, well after students have been dismissed from their final class of the day.

Challenges aside, the 2014 alternate training site project was a success in that it met the two primary goals outlined above. With 52 judges attending training at the Humphrey School and 329 trained throughout the fall sessions, the total number of judges trained at these alternate sites comes to 381, with 177 of those being student judges.²³ Going forward, the Division aims to build on successes from 2014, address the challenges encountered, and evaluate the possibility of establishing permanent alternate locations to use for future trainings.

D. Debrief and evaluation

❖ '360' EVALUATIONS

After every general election all Minneapolis election judges have the opportunity to participate in an evaluation process. This process allows those who serve Minneapolis voters the chance to provide feedback regarding a variety of topics. Following the 2014 general election, nine different types of evaluations were deployed in both paper and electronic formats: five of these evaluation forms were to be completed by either the head judge,

²³ See Exhibit G for detailed breakdown of Election Judges attending alternate site training.

assistant head judge, or both for each polling place; another form was to be completed by each team judge; and three forms were for precinct support judges who oversee an entire ward.

The goal of this 360-degree evaluation process is to continuously focus on process improvements identified by those closest to the “ground level,” where voters are most directly impacted. For instance, responses to polling place evaluations are used to understand how polling place experiences can be enhanced for election judges and voters alike. Seven of the nine evaluation types are performance evaluations of fellow election judges, which are examined to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual judges as well as judge teams in specific precincts, to determine any adjustments in training to meet judge needs, and to identify and develop potential judges for leadership roles. Judges are also invited to evaluate “Elections Headquarters,” which includes the core, permanent staff of the Elections Division.

Potential enhancements to the evaluation process in the future include reducing the quantity of different evaluation forms used, making each of the different forms more distinguishable from one another, and decreasing the amount of paper needed. The goal is to make the evaluation process as simple and accessible as possible for election judges so that all can participate. At a minimum, the Division will continue to use 360-degree evaluations after each major general election.

❖ **2014 DEBRIEF**

On December 8, 2014, the Elections & Voter Services Division held a post-election debrief at Crosstown Covenant Church that included all head and assistant head judges and all precinct support judges. These debrief sessions provide judges in key leadership positions the opportunity to provide direct feedback about their experiences in the most recent election cycle, in addition to the 360-degree evaluations and feedback forms. For the 2014 debrief, just over half of the total of 275 judges were able to participate. As is done following every post-election debrief, the feedback received from election judges will be incorporated into planned process improvements as well as future election plans.



❖ **POLLING PLACE ERROR TRACKING**

Since 2012, Hennepin County has produced reports following each major election detailing polling place errors for each of the municipalities within its jurisdiction. The information from these reports is a valuable tool in terms of evaluating polling place performance and identifying potential training needs. The two types of errors that are tracked include errors relating to the roster of pre-registered voters²⁴ and Election Day registration errors.²⁵ These errors are primarily clerical in nature and relate to the proper execution of duties by election judges that do not jeopardize the integrity or accuracy of the election. These errors do, however, affect voter service by requiring extra time and effort by both the voters and election administrators in cleaning up such errors after-the-fact. The statistical data being collected can also be used to help measure the performance of election judges. These numbers paint a picture of the ways in which election judges excel, and where there are

²⁴ See Exhibit H for a detailed analysis of errors relating to the Roster of Pre-registered voters.

opportunities for improvement. By extension, they shed light on the effectiveness of election judge training and guide how that can be refined as well.

❖ **OTHER ERROR TRACKING: VOTER STATISTICS WORKSHEETS & RESULTS TAPES**

The Elections & Voter Services Division collects error statistics of its own pertaining to the voter statistics worksheets and results tapes that are completed by election judges upon closing polls on Election Day. Like the error statistics produced by Hennepin County (described above), these statistical error reports ultimately allow the Division to better understand where opportunities for improvement lie. The procedure for collection and presentation of these statistics is still in its infancy, thus a primary goal for 2015 is to identify which statistics provide the most value to track and how to establish benchmarks for those measures.

Looking to 2016 and beyond, the Elections Division plans to use these error statistics for internal analysis and also make them available to election judges so they can see precisely where improvements need to be made. From a training standpoint, the Division intends to allocate more time to closing procedures and to utilize a more hands-on approach to the design of these lessons.

E. Recommendations and goals: Election judges

❖ **CONTINUE FOCUSING ON ELECTION JUDGE RECRUITMENT**

Efforts to diversify the City's corps of election judges have seen some success, most notably in incrementally reducing the average age of judges and increasing the percentage of judges who self-identify as black or African American. The Division intends to continue refining precinct-level data regarding demographic trends and language needs to ensure recruitment and placement of election judges supports the goal of staffing polling places with judges who reflect the community being served.

Recruitment initiatives—such as the AAP—will be expanded to target organizations that provide services to Spanish and Hmong communities to increase the number of judges fluent in these languages who can provide interpretation and translation support. With respect to the AAP program, the Elections Division will continue to explore methods to promote the program in under-represented communities, possibly by increasing compensation options for participating organizations and expanding into the private sector.

❖ **ENHANCE THE STUDENT ELECTION JUDGE PROGRAM**

Goals for the Student Election Judge Program in 2015 include exploring options for the increased promotion of the program and the recruitment of student judges and participation from other schools and evaluating strategies for classroom-based presentations about civic literacy, engagement, and the SEJ program.

❖ **IMPROVE TRAINING FOR ELECTION JUDGES**

The major training-related goals for 2015 involve evaluating the viability of permanent alternate training sites; exploring options for greater interactivity in classes; developing online training courses; establishing proficiency testing for election judges; developing procedures for election judges to select the classes they would like to attend (as opposed to receiving assignments); designing a specific Precinct Support Judge training course; creating a course pertaining to cultural competencies; and revising the Minneapolis Election Judge Manual.

In 2016, the Division will likely increase the class length of both basic and head judge training sessions from two to three hours. This will allow for a more detailed, interactive approach to classes. With the high likelihood of increasing the use of alternate sites in the future, the need for a division-owned cargo van will also increase. This would make the coordination and execution of alternate training sites much simpler. This program is crucial in making training more accessible for election judges across the city.

²⁵ See Exhibit I for a detailed analysis of Election Day registration errors.

IV. Voter outreach and education: Reaching out into the community

A. Overview

In 2013, as part of the municipal election using the alternative Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) methodology, the Elections & Voter Services Division launched its first in-house voter outreach program. Because that year's election marked only the second use of RCV, it was important to provide significant education about that process so voters could participate and exercise their right to the franchise. The overwhelming success of those outreach and education efforts led to the formal establishment of a Voter Outreach & Education program within the Division to provide a year-round focus on this important work of engaging and informing voters so they are ready and able to participate in elections.

The statewide nature of the 2014 Gubernatorial General Election shifted the focus of outreach efforts. Rather than focus exclusively on Minneapolis, the Division joined with state and county partners to enhance and amplify outreach and voter educational programs developed for a much broader audience. Still, the work of tailoring statewide educational initiatives for Minneapolis's diverse communities required extra attention. With more statewide participation in outreach and education efforts—led by the Secretary of State's Office—the Elections & Voter Services Division was able to focus limited resources in specific areas to complement work done by partner agencies. One example of successful collaboration was the Voter Engagement 101 for neighborhood and community organizations session developed and presented jointly with the Secretary of State's Office as part of the City's Neighborhood & Community Relations Department 2014 Community Connections Conference.

❖ PRIMARY ELECTION

In Minneapolis, the unique dynamics of the House District 60B DFL contest highlighted the need for attention on the primary as well as the general election. Too often, outreach initiatives focus on the general election, leaving little attention or resources on the primary contest. Primaries utilize a different style of ballot than any other election type, and require voters to adhere closely to instructions in order to ensure their ballots can be counted. Ballot instructions are prescribed by a combination of state law and rule-making authority by the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, these instructions are not as clear and straightforward as they could be, particularly for inexperienced voters. Because state law forbids any alteration to the ballot or preprinted instructions, staff sought to identify alternatives to producing clear messaging to inform voters, particularly those voting absentee, about the unique issues involved in primary elections. One key tool quickly developed as absentee balloting opened was a supplemental instruction sheet which was also translated into the three most commonly used other languages for deployment during in-person absentee voting as well as ongoing voter education efforts leading up to the primary.²⁶

❖ PARTNERSHIPS

A key voter outreach and education strategy to maximize the Division's reach was leveraging the City's role as a trusted information source for partner organizations that were actively engaged in community-based GOTV campaigns. To this end, the Elections & Voter Services Division focused its efforts on the creation of a variety of education tools that could be widely shared through multiple channels, primarily through other agencies and organizations. One of the most successful partnerships was the communication and planning the Division undertook with a number of organizations involved in developing "*Souls to the Polls*" voter engagement plans for the extended weekend service hours just prior to the general election. The Division also made inroads with local human service organizations and shelters to provide information about voting for those who are homeless or in transition.

²⁶ See Exhibit J for a sample of the supplemental instruction sheet (English).

B. Communications

The Elections Division has developed a robust communications strategy that includes multiple channels; for example: the Division’s website, a regular electronic newsletter, social media (Facebook and Twitter), as well as free and paid media in print and broadcast outlets.

The elections website is the centerpiece of the Division’s communications plan and all outreach and education initiatives. Virtually everything produced by the Elections Division –from educational pieces, to training materials and videos, to candidate information and more– are all posted to the website for easy access. Other resources, such as those produced by the Secretary of State, are also linked to the site, along with all the voter tools developed by that office. Voters can now register to vote online, review their sample ballot, find their assigned polling place, submit an electronic request for an absentee ballot, track the status of their absentee ballot, and verify their ballot has been counted—all online from the privacy of their home. Links for all these functions are easily accessible and prominently placed on vote.minneapolismn.gov.



The Division publishes a regular newsletter, *Election Connection*, which is primarily focused on reaching its corps of election judges. This newsletter is distributed electronically, and is in a PDF format that can be downloaded and printed easily as well. Every edition is also posted to the website, allowing all residents and interested individuals a glimpse into some of the plans, activities, and successes that go into administering elections in the state’s largest municipality.

Social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter continued to grow in 2014. Initiated in 2013, the Division’s presence in these realms expanded in the past year. While Facebook has lost some of its direct reach due to changes to how it displays content from business pages in users’ feeds, it is still a frequently visited page that visitors seek out, much like a second web presence, and serves as a tremendous platform for offering shareable content. Twitter has grown into an increasingly valuable tool for receiving immediate feedback from voters and residents, including serving as a first channel for some reports of issues on Election Day, and allows for more interactive communication.

C. Recommendations and goals: Voter Outreach & Education

Moving into preparations for the 2016 Presidential Election and the municipal election that will follow in 2017, the Division is ensuring its outreach and education efforts are particularly focused on eligible potential voters who may not be regular voters. Nationally, significant research has been undertaken around the demographic shifts occurring across the country and the potential impact of those shifts on elections and electoral participation. Groups like the Voter Participation Center - which coined the increasingly used term the Rising American Electorate, or RAE, to refer to the new potential majority voting bloc in the U.S. comprised of unmarried women, people of color, and adults under age 30 - are focusing on the impact of that majority being made up of groups that are severely under represented amongst the electorate as a whole and are working to mobilize those voters.

Nationally, individuals within the RAE accounted for 82 percent of U.S. population growth between 2000 and 2014, illustrating demographic trends that are also present in Minneapolis. Throughout the Twin Cities as a whole, the percentage of residents of color is expected to surpass 40 percent by 2040,²⁷ a level already exceeded in Minneapolis today. The median age of Minneapolitans is 32.1, lower than that of both Hennepin County and Minnesota as a whole. Minneapolis is also home to the University of Minnesota and several other higher education institutions that contribute to a large number of students within the city who are also eligible voters.

One of the key factors identified in research about the RAE is the high percentage of its members who are not registered to vote. Nationally, more than 4 in 10 individuals who fall within the RAE are not registered, including fully half of all young adults.²⁸ Research done by Lake Research Partners following the 2010 midterm election found the primary reasons given by members of the RAE for not registering to vote consist of difficulties with the logistical process of and rules for registering, including challenges associated with a higher rate of mobility amongst this group, as well as feelings of disconnection from politics and the inability to see the relevance of the political process to their daily lives.

In both 2008 and 2012, rates of voting amongst members of the RAE surged, only to drop off much more substantially than the rates for non-RAE voters in both 2010 and 2014 during mid-term elections. That level of drop off is even more pronounced in municipal elections. The reasons for these differentials are many, but include factors that can be addressed at least in part by ensuring the Division's outreach and education work includes appropriate areas of focus. In particular, registration-related challenges can and should be an area of focus for the Division, particularly given the high numbers of students in the city and Minneapolis' lower rate of home ownership than the state as a whole, also contributing to greater resident mobility and the need for an ongoing focus on registration.

❖ **FOCUS ON VOTER REGISTRATION**

Voter registration is perhaps the single most important key to a successful election. Although Elections & Voter Services Division is not responsible for the actual registration process, it nevertheless plays an important role in promoting registration and providing key educational messages about the registration process. Now that Minnesota has implemented online registration, the potential avenues for promoting registration have increased exponentially. The Division believes that it can achieve the greatest return on investments in outreach and education by focusing on the importance of registration: before Election Day and, of course, on Election Day as well, since Minnesota allows for same-day registration in the polls.

Of particular value would be engagement and education efforts promoting registration in areas having higher levels of Election Day registrations and highly mobile populations. Ensuring these voters have the opportunity to register before Election Day would contribute to a faster, smoother experience for all voters at the polls, and could also minimize or eliminate many issues voters otherwise might encounter with required documentation to register at the polls on Election Day.

❖ **PRODUCE ADDITIONAL VIDEOS AND EXPAND SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

In 2013, one of the most valuable educational tools produced for the municipal election was a video produced in collaboration with the Communications Department explaining the RCV process—both how to cast an RCV ballot and how RCV votes are tabulated. In fact, that video received multiple awards for its clear and concise education messages, including a regional Emmy nomination, the Award of Excellence from the Minnesota

²⁷ <http://www.mncompass.org/demographics/overview>

²⁸ Lake, Celinda and Joshua Ulibarri. *The Rising American Electorate: Their growing numbers and political potential*. Lake Research Partners, Washington, D.C. http://www.lakeresearch.com/news/RAE/SHORT_RAE.pdf

Association of Government Communicators, and two second-place awards in the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisers' government programming awards.

Going forward, the Division is interested in producing additional videos to help communicate and connect on key messages. Experience has proven that particularly in cultures with strong oral traditions, like the Somali and Hmong communities, videos are a better avenue for engaging and supporting voters and need to be utilized more fully and regularly.

In addition to focusing more on video alternatives, the Division will continue to strengthen and expand its existing social media accounts. In particular, the adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" has been borne out in the explosive growth of channels like Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube. The Elections Division is pursuing a strategy that thoughtfully takes advantage of the unique attributes of these venues.

❖ **BUILD VOTER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

One of the highest priorities in 2015 with respect to the Voter Outreach & Education program is ensuring the Elections Division better connects with under-represented populations and the myriad cultural communities which comprise the city to build positive relationships that facilitate and support engagement and participation. In many of these communities, trusting relationships are the essential first ingredient before tailored messaging can be effective. Building on successes in 2013 and 2014, the Elections & Voter Services Division anticipates its biggest programmatic expansion in this area over the next four-year period.

V. Administration and operations

A. Core staffing and personnel resources

In the days, weeks, and months leading up to each election, it is necessary to supplement the Division's core (permanent) staff with additional personnel resources to support the complex work that goes into planning and administering an election for the largest municipality in Minnesota. In 2014 this included 23 seasonal staffers. Without hiring 20-25 additional temporary employees during election cycles, the Division could not administer all aspects of each election. Figure 15 below, demonstrates the Division's heavy reliance on these temporary workers who compromise 82 percent of the dedicated workforce during each election season.

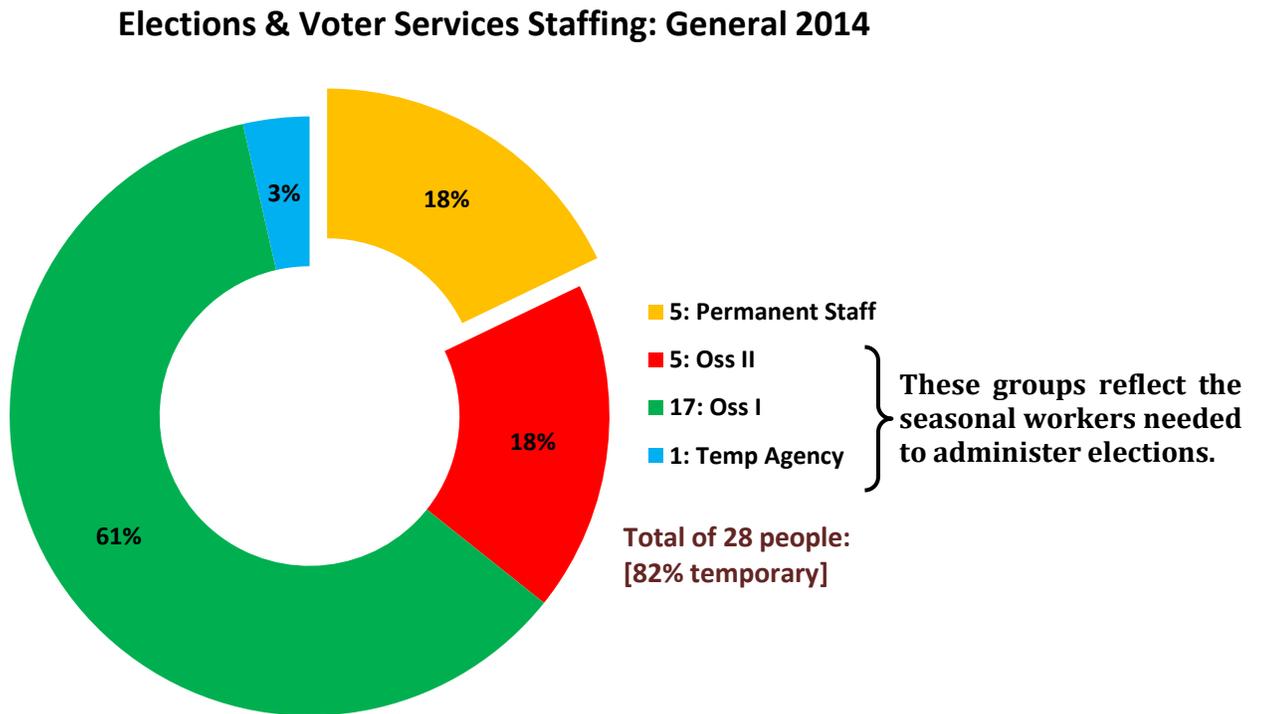


Figure 15. Division staffing for the 2014 General Election season

B. Budget and financing for elections

The following chart provides a breakdown of the requested funding, approved operating budget, and final expenditures as of December 31, 2014, associated with the 2014 Election & Voter Services Budget.

ACTUAL, REQUESTED AND BUDGETED 2014			
EXPENSE CATEGORIES	REQUESTED	APPROVED	ACTUAL ^B
CORE BUDGET	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$771,985
SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS ^A	\$0	\$119,617 ^A	\$119,617 ^A
ELECTION EXPENSES	\$661,317	\$565,421	\$1,191,970
TOTALS	\$1,361,317	\$1,385,038	\$2,083,572

A: Hennepin County Commissioner District 3 Special Election, reimbursed by Hennepin County

B: As of December 31, 2014

This chart shows actual expenditures were above the approved budget, by approximately 53 percent. Given this significant difference in approved budget versus actual expenditures, it is worth examining some of the major factors which contributed to this overage.

1) RELOCATION TO ROOM 201 CITY HALL (LIFESAFETY MOVE) = \$33,876

- Physical Move = \$26,825
- Additional Office Supplies = \$2,500
- Carts and Shelving for Absentee Ballot Functions = \$4,551

The Elections & Voter Services Division relocated from Room 1B to Room 201, on the second floor of City Hall, as part of the multi-staged facility life safety upgrade project. The relocation left open the question of an ultimate (permanent) home for this division as the division will not be relocating back to Room 1 on the ground floor. The Regulatory Services and Police departments, which were co-located there prior to the move, needed the additional space for their operations. Thus, the current long-term plan is to leave the Elections & Voter Services Division on the second floor. It was therefore critical that the office layout was designed and furnished to meet the long term demands of administering elections within the four year election cycle. The relocation and move occurred during the week of March 10-14, 2014. The Division had a small window of opportunity to relocate because this occurred simultaneously with planning for the Hennepin County Commissioner District 3 special election.

The second floor location is less than ideal for a high-traffic, public-facing service agency like the Elections & Voter Services Division. In addition to expenditures required for permanent operations in Room 201, additional expenses were incurred to logistically set-up, deploy, and administer in-person absentee voting functions in a separate “polling place” located in the City Hall rotunda. Additional supplies—including four computers and related peripheral equipment, secure mobile carts to house and transport absentee ballots, and supplies for daily polling place operations throughout the in-person absentee period—added to the unplanned expenses. To accommodate mail absentee voting as well as securing all ballots, the Division expanded its operations to a room located in the Document Solutions Center (DSC) in the basement of City Hall. As a consequence, this meant that a six-person division with supplemental seasonal staff resources were spread across three public floors in City Hall from March through December in 2014, with active operations in the basement, in the City

Hall rotunda on the ground floor, the second floor division headquarters, and the Clerk's Office and conference room 319 on the third floor.

As part of enterprise-wide planning efforts related to City-owned facilities, the Office of City Clerk hopes to work closely with Finance & Property Services to identify a more appropriate permanent home for its Elections & Voter Services Division, including outside locations that may allow us to achieve some additional operating efficiencies and performance improvements.

2) 2013 EXPENSES BILLED IN 2014 = \$36,608

- Ranked-Choice Voting Survey = \$16,000
- Related Expenses = \$20,608

In 2013, as in 2009, the Elections & Voter Services Division contracted with an outside agency to survey voters, non-voters, election judges, and candidates about their experiences in the Municipal Election. The insights gained from that survey will help inform future improvements, especially in regards to refinements in voter outreach, engagement, and education strategies as well as to adapt election judge training to better address voters' needs. Comparing survey results from year-to-year will also help identify trends in these areas. The bulk of the expenses related to the survey were paid in 2013, however the final third of the cost was billed and paid during 2014. Similarly, final payments to close out balances on two other key contracts relating to the 2013 Municipal Election were also paid in 2014. Both Connie Schmidt Consulting and Freeman, Craft, McGregor Group Inc. provided consultation and analysis services relating to the 2013 election.²⁹

3) SPECIAL ELECTION – HENNEPIN COUNTY COMMISSION DISTRICT 3 = \$119,617

A special election was required due to the resignation of Hennepin County Third District Commissioner Gail Dorfman on February 28, 2014. Under Minn. Stat. § 383B.031, which applies only to Hennepin County, if there is a vacancy of more than six months, a special election is required. The special primary was held on April 29 with the special general two weeks later, on May 13. The Third District is comprised of 35 precincts in the southwest quadrant of Minneapolis, and encompasses approximately 76,340 registered voters (as of May 13, 2014). The district also includes the entirety of St. Louis Park. Although the special elections were related to a county office, the affected local jurisdictions within the county are responsible for administering the election with the costs incurred to be reimbursed by the county. As such, the City Council authorized the upfront expenditures, identified as Supplemental Funds to reflect the actual budget.

4) SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 1 RECOUNT = \$5,216

The Minneapolis Special School District 01(SSD 01) primary ballot included the office of School Board At-Large with two seats to be filled. The four candidates receiving the highest votes cast were to have their names placed on the general election ballot for School Board At-Large. The recount was between the candidate with the fewest votes to make the top four in the primary voting, Ira Jourdain (2,249 votes) and Doug Mann (2,199 votes) the candidate with the most votes from the candidates not within the top four vote-getters. Mr. Mann submitted his request in writing, requiring a publicly funded recount as the difference in the votes cast was less than one-half of one percent of the total votes.³⁰

²⁹ For detail on Connie Schmidt's work and observations, see Exhibit B of the November 2013 Municipal Election Analysis, as well as Exhibit B of that report. FCMG's full report was appended as an exhibit to the report entitled *The 2013 Municipal Election: A Report on Final Plans & Preparations*, presented to the City Council's Elections Committee on October 30, 2013.

³⁰ A recount is limited in scope; the sole issue a recount may resolve is whether the election judges arrived at the correct number of votes validly cast for the office to be recounted. Effective August 1, 2013, there are no automatic recounts. (Minnesota Statutes 205A, 204C.35, 204C.36; Minnesota Rules 8235) The losing candidate must request a recount in writing, and the threshold or the difference between the votes cast for that candidate and the winning candidate determines if it is publicly funded, paid for by the jurisdiction of the office in question or discretionary, paid for by the candidate requesting the recount.

Because Special School District No. 1 contracts with the Elections & Voter Services Division to administer its elections, the Division was responsible for conducting the city-wide recount for that race. This was completed with the help of 56 election judges and staffers all working 8 hours on August 26, 2014, to stage and hand count all 29,129 ballots cast in the Primary

5) PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT – FILING FEE & LIQUOR = \$4,576

Under state law, proposed amendments to the City Charter that will appear on the ballot are required to be published in their entirety in the City’s official newspaper, Finance and Commerce.

6) PRECINCT ADDITIONS AND RELATED COSTS = \$63,650

- Base Cost per Precinct \$7,400, 8 Precincts = \$59,200

With an “average” polling place costing approximately \$7,400 to operate each year, inclusive of everything from ballots to staffing to supplies and more, the eight precinct additions increased the operating budget by close to \$60,000, which will be an ongoing annual expense. In addition to the operational costs for these additional precincts, a large number of maps (both citywide maps and precinct specific) needed to be changed or created to reflect the borders. The total cost via the Minneapolis GIS Department to provide the map work was \$4,450.

7) WAREHOUSE ENHANCEMENTS = \$10,201

- New Office Area = \$4,948
- Operational Supplies = \$4,700
- New Security System = \$553

Over the past decade, use of the elections warehouse space has evolved. It is used primarily to secure and store voted ballots for the required period of time following an election, to store election equipment and supplies, and to perform public testing of election equipment and auditing of results. It has also become the primary training space for election judge training classes, is used as the operational space for any recounts or hand-counts, and is transformed on Election Night into a drop-off facility for ballots and other critical materials from all 125 polling places. Three or more seasonal staffers operate out of the warehouse during each election cycle where they manage day-to-day operations and coordinate all of the necessary preparation, organization, packing, testing, and shipping of equipment, materials, and supplies.

Given the expanded role of the warehouse, and given also the Division’s goal of increasing efficiencies and capabilities, several enhancements have been made to the existing facility. Beginning in 2012, security improvements were made, including construction of a locked cage for ballot storage. In 2014, a new office area was installed allowing staff to work more effectively, including cubicles and wireless and hard-wired connections for data, copying, and telephone service. Staff can now produce select documents, labels, and election forms as needed and scan and email mandated documents on Election Night to Hennepin County, City Hall, or other partners. The new wired office space also allows for the efficient check-in of election judges prior to training sessions. Finally, additional wiring for data access was installed to allow for future expansion as new demands dictate. Other efficiencies were achieved to maximize space and productivity through the purchase of equipment, including new storage containers and wheeled staging carts to efficiently pack supplies. The standardization of flags deployed to all polling sites (*see number 8 for additional information*) are now deployed via the trucking contractor that delivers ballot tabulators, voting booths, and other equipment to the polls. Protective containers, carts, and blankets were also purchased for the transport of flags, large signs, and voting equipment to protect them from damage. Finally, staff worked on a new floor layout of the warehouse space to accommodate the election night drop off of critical materials and ballots.

8) POLLING PLACE SUPPLIES = \$75,846

- Voting Booths = \$37,866
- Flags = \$1,572
- A-Frame & Staked Signs = \$4,248
- Election Judge Manual Printing & Postage = \$31,102
- Polling Place Reference Sheets, Binders, Plastic Sleeves = \$1,058

The majority of the current stock of voting booths is approximately twenty years old. 2013 was the first year of an annual capital replacement plan for these booths. Many of the older booths are approaching the end of their serviceable use, with some exhibiting broken latches, broken light fixtures, or faulty legs. At the current rate, all old stock will be replaced in eight years. The new booths that have been put into use have proven to be of lesser quality than the older booths and, while replacement of the current stock needs to continue, staff will be looking for higher-quality alternatives for future purchases.



Placement of national flags at the principal entrance of every polling place is required under state law to indicate to voters that the location is a polling site and the designated point of entry. To provide consistency and a professional impression, the Division purchased additional flags, flag poles, and flag bases in 2014 to standardize and simplify flag deployment from three different types to one. Plastic A-frames and heavy-duty stakes were purchased for use at all polling sites to deploy new signage.

Two new kinds of materials for election judges were produced in 2014: the Minneapolis Election Judge Manual and a set of polling place reference sheets. The manual was intended for use in training, as a home-study aid, and while running the polls; the reference sheets served to provide an easy-use guide for election judges while serving in the polls.

9) NO EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING = \$27,573

- Extended hours = \$4,820
- Double OT = \$10,135
- Extended AB Board = \$5,418
- Additional Computer Equipment and Rotunda set up/teardown = \$7,200

10) MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2014, FOR ELECTION JUDGES = \$155,526

Pursuant to Minneapolis City Charter, Chapter 2, Section 6, “the compensation of election judges shall be forty (40) percent greater than the prevailing minimum wage as defined by state law unless the City Council sets a different rate.”

In its 2014 Session, the Minnesota Legislature took action to approve an increase to the State’s minimum wage, which led to an increase in wages for Minneapolis election judges, consistent with the charter provisions related to election judge wages. Moreover, the legislative action has successive annual increases on August 1 in 2015 and 2016 to \$9.00 and \$9.50 respectively.

On August 1, 2014, the new minimum wage effective date, the base pay rate for all election judges increased by \$2.45 per hour at the direction of the Minneapolis City Council, from \$8.75 to \$11.20 per hour. Correspondingly, higher paid roles such as assistant head, head, health care, and precinct support judges also received an increase of \$2.45 per hour.

In conjunction with increased wages for election judges, the student election judge program also received an adjustment. The Division recommended that student election judges be compensated as team judges to be consistent with the expansion of their service to include all non-partisan election judge duties. This resulted in an increase from \$7.25 to \$11.20 per hour.

Table 9. Minimum wage increase schedule for 2014

Date of Increase	Minimum Wage	Base Judge Pay	Student Election Judge	Asst. Head Judge	Head Judge	Precinct Support and Healthcare Judge
Pre 8/1/2014	\$7.25	\$8.75	\$7.25	\$9.50	\$10.50	\$15.00
8/1/2014	\$8.00	\$11.20	\$11.20	\$11.95	\$12.95	\$17.45
8/1/2015	\$9.00	\$12.60	\$12.60	\$13.35	\$14.35	\$18.85
8/1/2016	\$9.50	\$13.30	\$13.30	\$14.05	\$15.05	\$19.55

Table 10 below displays the total increase in expenses in 2014 due to the wage increase, as well as anticipated future impacts. Specifically, for the 2014 Primary, the increase effective on August 1 affected 1,183 judges for an additional cost of \$82,234³¹, additionally, the expenses for the general election increased by \$124,367, for a total financial impact of \$206,601 in 2014.

Preliminary analysis shows the successive increases to the 2016 minimum wage of \$9.50 will increase election judge expenditures at least an additional \$165,988.³²

Table 10. Minimum wage financial impact 2014-2016

Election	Total Hours ^A	Actual and Projected Expense Increase
Primary 2014	36,307	\$82,234
General 2014	50,762	\$124,367
Primary 2016 ^B	41,590	\$87,340
General 2016 ^B	63,453	\$133,250

A: Volunteer election judges are not included and will vary each election

B: Calculation: 25% increase of 2014 actual hours

The increase in workforce wages will improve recruitment and retention of election judges. The Elections & Voter Services Division believes this will further enhance the professionalism and standards of providing the highest quality services for our voters.

³¹ Includes hours for class, absentee voting, absentee ballot board functions and Election Day, August 12, 2014

³² Based on 125 precincts and 2014 parameters.

C. Technology and core operating systems

❖ IMPLEMENTATION OF A ROBUST ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EMS)

The Elections Management System (EMS) is an Access database currently used to manage polling places, election judges and other related data. Since its inception during the late 1990s, EMS has undergone three major software updates, the last of which occurred in 2009. The database is now outdated and cumbersome, making the management of facilities and election judge records challenging.

Additionally, the current system lacks a module that can be used to monitor the Division's voting equipment inventory. Recent staff initiatives and equipment purchases at the warehouse have greatly improved functionality and flexibility. However, one arena of warehouse management is in great need of attention, especially from a technology perspective: asset inventory control and management. Currently, the Division has no real-time system to assess current levels of supplies and equipment. All tracking and counting of supplies and equipment, along with anything related to equipment issues, have to be managed and recorded manually. There is no automation in terms of tracking items leaving the warehouse and returning to the warehouse, which results in many hours lost to manual counts of supplies, and lengthy processes (and some uncertainty) related to the tracking of items coming and going. A fully-automated inventory and tracking system at the warehouse, compatible with barcoding and scanners, would permit real-time tracking and reporting on equipment and supplies.

Software limitations like these have necessitated supplementation with more labor-intensive processes that have therefore required additional temporary staff to carry them out. In its current state, the EMS does not meet the business needs of election administration.

Due to its inefficiencies, Elections & Voter Services has partnered with the Information Technology Department on a business need analysis and development of a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to acquire and implement a new EMS. The goal is to have the new system in place, tested, and ready for use in advance of the 2016 election cycle.

❖ E-POLL BOOKS

Electronic poll books—also known as e-poll books—will continue to be a priority. Statewide, several other jurisdictions also withdrew from the 2014 pilot project with other vendors for similar reasons as Minneapolis; that is, primarily due to an inability by vendors to meet exact legal requirements for absentee balloting processes in the State of Minnesota. The original pilot project included 50 precincts with five different vendors providing comparable solutions, the goal being to provide baseline data from multiple vendors that the Secretary of State's Office could evaluate and report to the State Legislature in 2015. Almost every vendor experienced challenges meeting the unique election laws of the State of Minnesota. As a result, the pilot project proceeded with just 20 of the original 50 precincts, 19 of which utilized one vendor.



VOTEC and other vendors will continue to pursue their Minnesota specific e-poll book product developed from this pilot. Many jurisdictions with scheduled elections in 2015 will pursue options to pilot. As an active participant at the table with our peers from Minnetonka and Hennepin County, the City had significant input on the design of the pilot project that will most likely carryover into 2015 and beyond. Through this process, the Elections Division developed best practices, forms, and chain of custody procedures for deploying e-poll books. This foundation will be used as well as lessons learned and partnerships to ensure Minneapolis continues to have a presence when decisions are made about the potential use of new technologies in the 2016 Presidential Election.

D. Recommendations and goals: Administration and operations

❖ NEW EMS FOR 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

With the inefficiencies and labor intensiveness of the current EMS System, the Division has moved forward and put out a Request for Proposal for a more robust Election Management System. The goal of the new EMS System is to increase staff productivity, improve election planning, improve support to election judges, improve polling place/facilities management and establish an asset inventory control and management system. The anticipated implementation date for the new EMS System is March 1, 2016 which is ample time before the August 2016 Primary Election.

❖ E-POLL BOOKS – PILOT IN 2017

The Division will continue to pursue e-poll books for future elections. The lessons learned from the 2014 Pilot will allow the Division to work closely with Hennepin County and potential e-poll book vendors with the goal develop the vendors' e-Poll book software to comply with Minnesota Election laws. The lessons learned in 2014 are beneficial to the Division to advance the development of e-Poll books.

❖ IMPLEMENT ASSET INVENTORY CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT AT THE WAREHOUSE

Recent staff initiatives and equipment purchases at the warehouse have greatly improved functionality and flexibility at the warehouse. However, one area of warehouse management is in great need of attention, especially from a technology perspective: asset inventory control and management. Currently, we have no real-time system to assess current levels of supplies and equipment. All tracking and counting of supplies and equipment, along with anything related to equipment issues, have to be managed and recorded manually. There is no automation in terms of tracking items leaving the warehouse and returning to the warehouse, which results in many hours lost to manual counts of supplies, and lengthy processes (and some uncertainty) related to the tracking of items coming and going.

Staff recommends installing a fully-automated inventory and tracking system at the warehouse, compatible with barcoding and scanners, in order to permit real-time tracking and reporting on equipment and supplies. Such a system would, ideally, be a component of a larger elections management system—listed elsewhere as a recommended acquisition for the Elections & Voter Services Division.

VI. Conclusion

Following are the recommended strategies and process improvements discussed in detail in this report:

- ❖ Advocate adoption of early voting in Minnesota to better serve in-person voters before Election Day
- ❖ Advocate permissive legislation regarding the use of qualified interpreters and translators to assist voters as a matter of local policy
- ❖ Continue expanded in-person absentee voter service hours in 2016
- ❖ Promote absentee voting as an “early” option in 2016, including development of a “mobile precinct” approach to take ballots to voters
- ❖ Propose additional precincts and polling places prior to the 2016 Presidential Election, and consider relocating some existing polling sites to better facilities
- ❖ Partner with Minneapolis Public Schools to make Election Day an in-service day so that more school facilities could be used as polling places (where feasible)
- ❖ Continue to explore solutions to known or anticipated equipment errors or technical challenges as experienced in 2014
- ❖ Continue efforts to expand and diversify the existing corps of election judges through targeted recruitment efforts and community-based partnerships, as well as an expansion in the successful Student Election Judge program
- ❖ Expand the successful Adopt-A-Precinct program through more community partnerships
- ❖ Improve training options for election judges, to include multiple alternate training site locations and web-based training videos (like the improved on-line Ethics training program) for mandated basic training
- ❖ Focus outreach and education initiatives on voter registration
- ❖ Build additional voter education opportunities, with a focus on targeting outreach and engagement strategies on under-represented communities
- ❖ Acquire and deploy a new Elections Management System for 2016 Election season
- ❖ Explore e-poll book solution
- ❖ Purchase a cargo van for the Elections & Voter Services Division to be used for training, voter outreach initiatives, Election Day deployment of back-up equipment, etc.
- ❖ Work with MCAD to produce new voter assistance signage



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 - Information Technology
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 - Minneapolis 311
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 - Police
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 - Regulatory Services