



Preparations for the Elections in 2026

March 10, 2026

Presenters

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Purpose of this Workshop

Inform the public and the Ramsey County Board of Commissioner about the preparations underway for the highly visible elections held in 2026.



Agenda

- Election Administration in Minnesota
- Contracts for Election Services
- Upcoming Elections and Emerging Trends
- Election Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Upgrading the Voting System
- Preparing to Vote
- Providing Transparent Elections

Who Administers Elections in Minnesota?

Secretary of State's Office

Head Election Official in Minnesota

Support and train county election officials

Statewide Voter Registration & Election Reporting Systems

Various administrative duties in State election years

Counties

Elections are the duty of the Auditor

Support and train city election officials

Manage voter registration records

Ballot layout, printing, and results reporting

Certification



Who Administers Elections in Minnesota?

Cities & School Districts

Elections are the duty of the Municipal Clerk

Manage early voting and election day polling places

Assign and train election judges

Various administrative duties in city & school district election years

Federal Government

Enforce guaranteed rights to vote

Constitution & Amendments

1965 Voting Rights Act

Help America Vote Act, 2001



SAVE Act, Potential Federal Legislation

Amends the National Voter Registration Act by requiring individuals to provide proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections.

- In Minnesota, voters are currently required to attest to citizenship.
- Counties verify citizenship with Social Security and Minnesota Driver and Vehicle Services databases.

Requires states to validate a voter's citizenship status through specified documents, such as a valid U.S. passport or certain military identification.

New enforcement provisions, including private rights of action and potential criminal penalties.

The SAVE Act requirements would only be applicable in Federal Elections.

SAVE Act, Requirements of the County

Collect and verify documentary proof of citizenship for federal voter registration.

- In Minnesota, we currently collect and verify documentary proof of residency.
- This would add another step to the voter check-in process at Election Day and Early Voting locations.
- Require additional staffing of election judges.

Follow a uniform federal framework for voter registration and list maintenance.

- In Minnesota, we use the Statewide Voter Registration System supported by the Minnesota Secretary of State's office.

No defined timelines or guarantee of resources and funding.

- Will need to update training and procedure manuals.

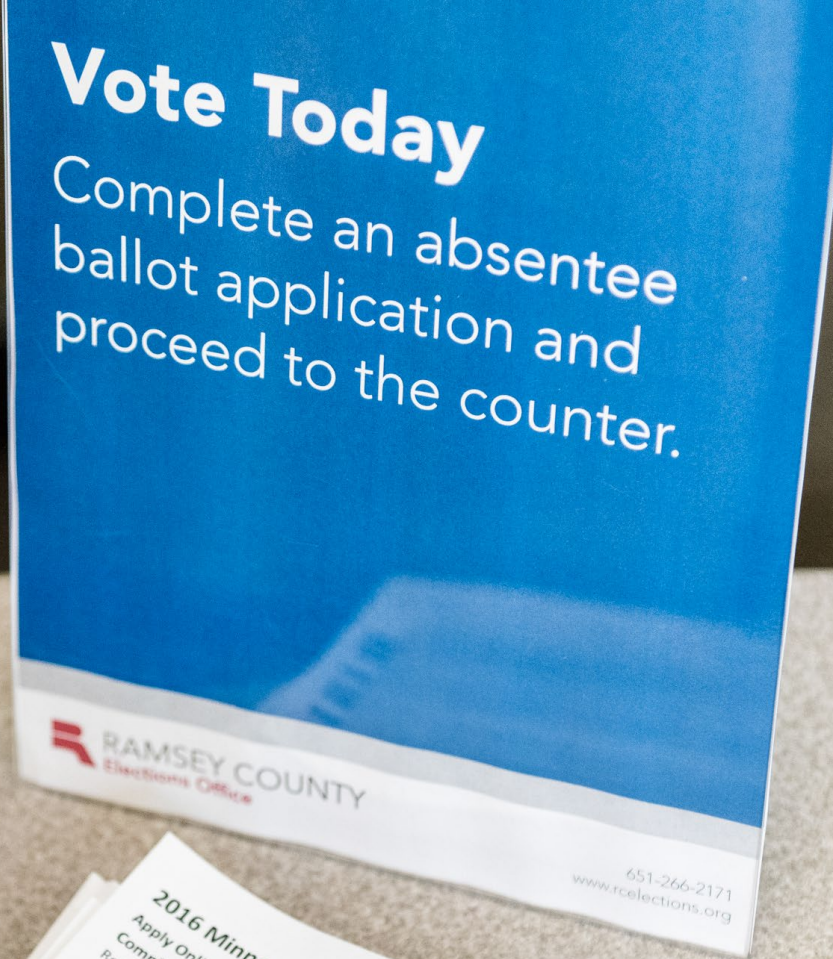


Contracts for Election Services

Since 1996, Ramsey County has entered into contracts with cities and school districts to carry out their election duties.

Current six-year term expires at the end of 2026, in the process of negotiating another six-year term.

Includes a salary increase for election judges, purchase of new voting booths, and accounts for the growth in absentee voting.



Staffing Elections in Ramsey County

Eight full-time employees
Six limited duration employees
30+ seasonal staff
1500+ election judges

Elections are a cross-county effort:

- Communications & Public Relations
- Information Services
- Emergency Management
- Ramsey County Attorney's Office
- HR Business Partners
- Ramsey County Libraries
- Public Works & Fleet Services
- Sheriff's Office and Local Law Enforcement

Upcoming Elections and Expected Turnout

Statewide Elections held on November 3, 2026

- All State Constitutional Offices, such as Governor and Attorney General.
- US Senate, US Rep, State Legislature, and various local offices.
- Expect a busy primary on August 11, 2026.

220,000 to 250,000 voters are expected.

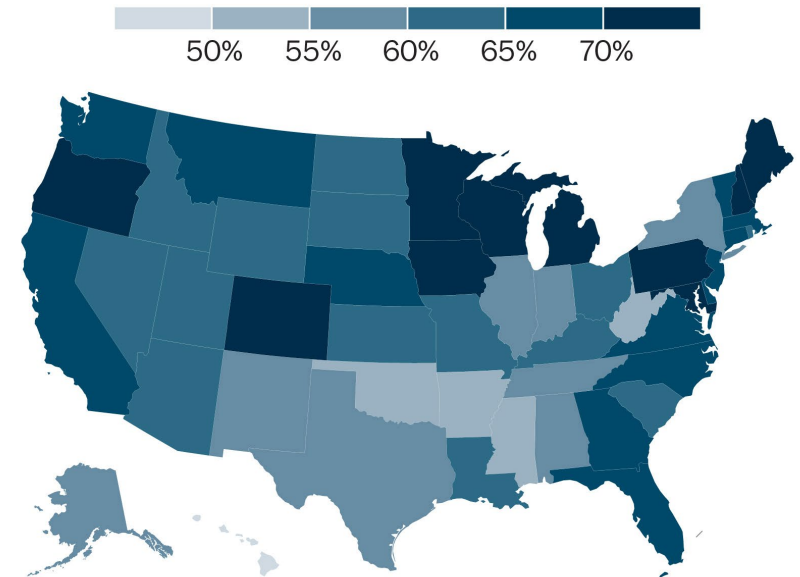
- Four times more voters than off-year elections.
- 324,000 registered voters in Ramsey County.
- Turnout in recent mid-term Elections:

2002: **227,380** 2014: **181,593**

2006: **209,809** 2018: **247,050**

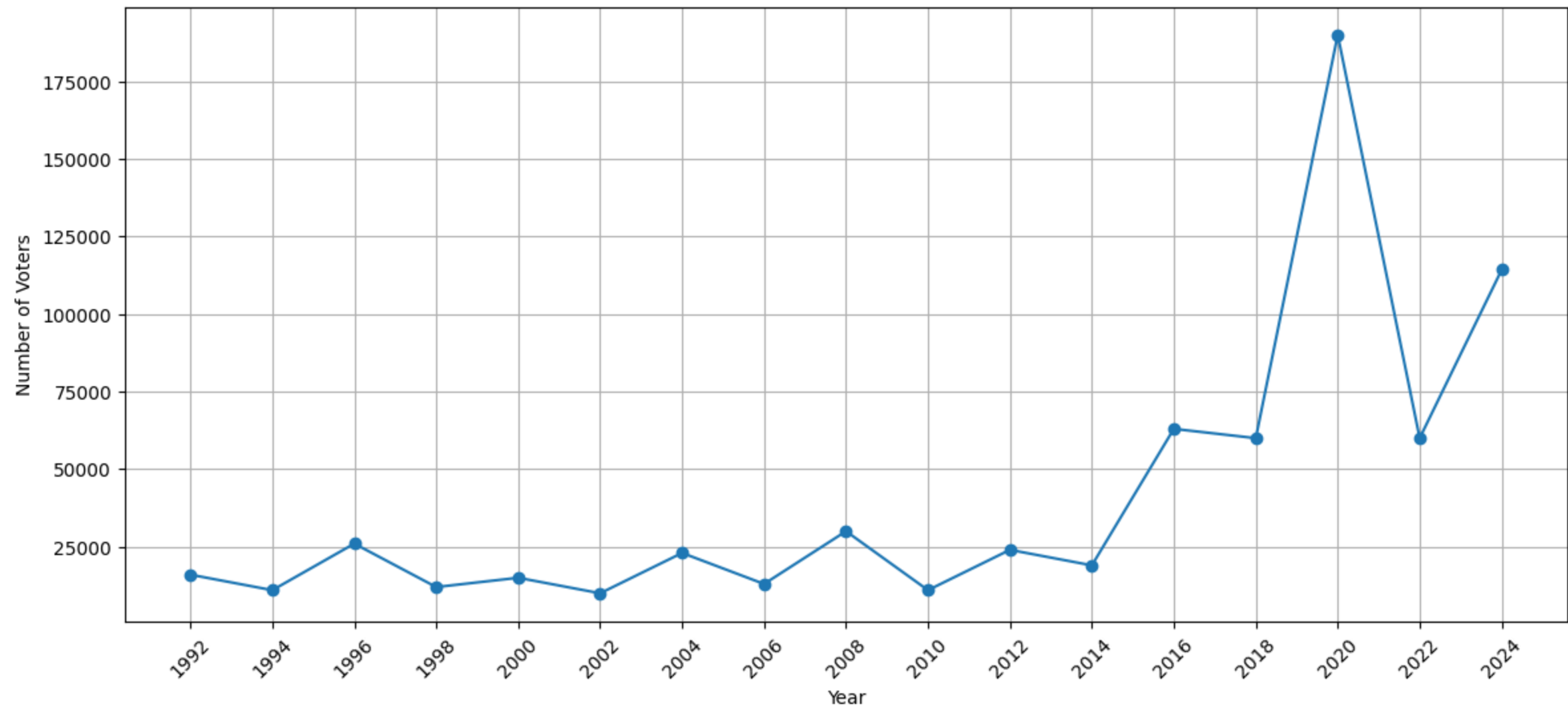
2010: **192,955** 2022: **219,920**

2024 votes cast as a share of the voting-eligible population

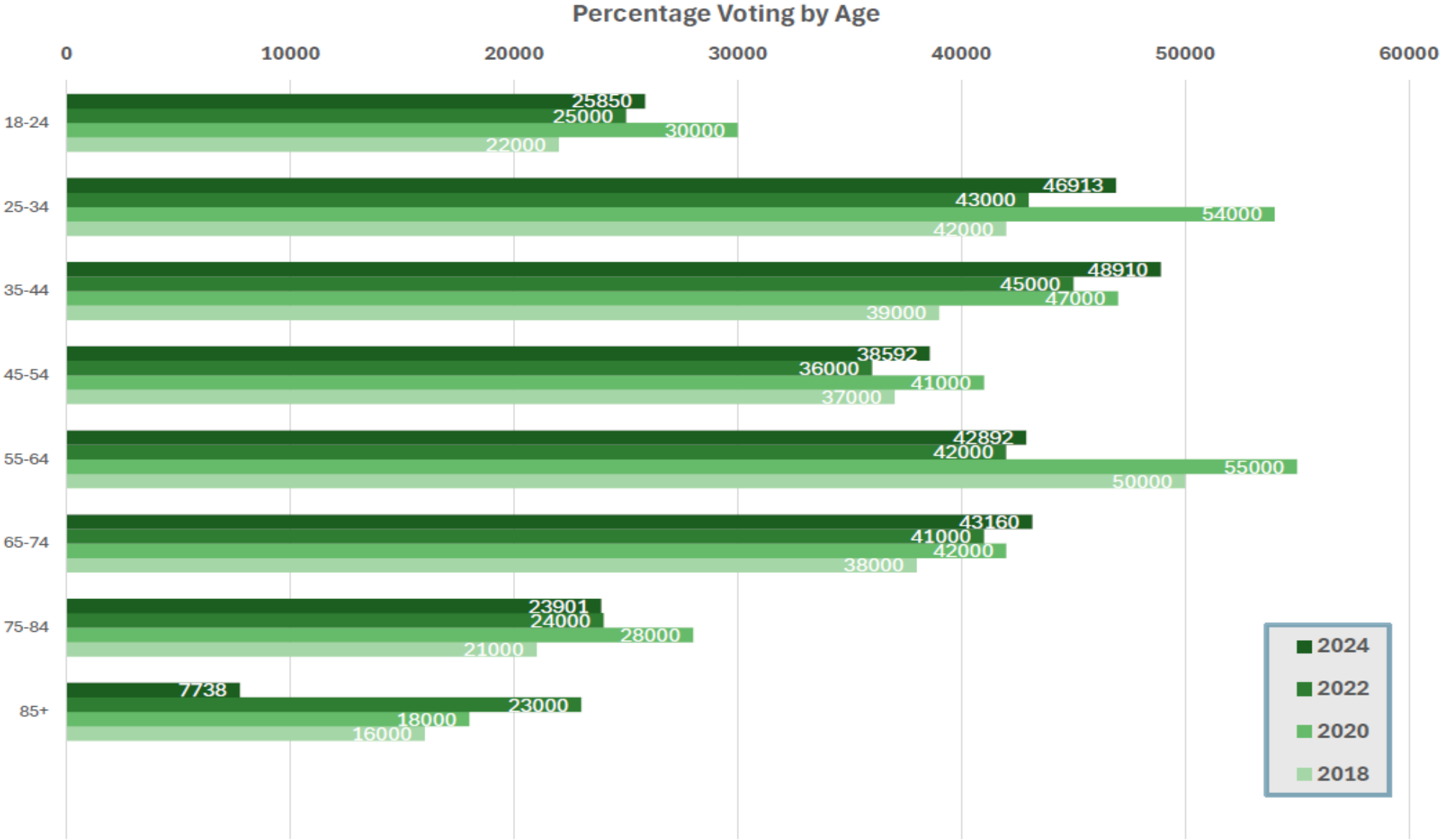


Emerging Voting Trends in Ramsey County

Absentee Ballots Cast in State General Elections Over Time



Emerging Voting Trends in Ramsey County



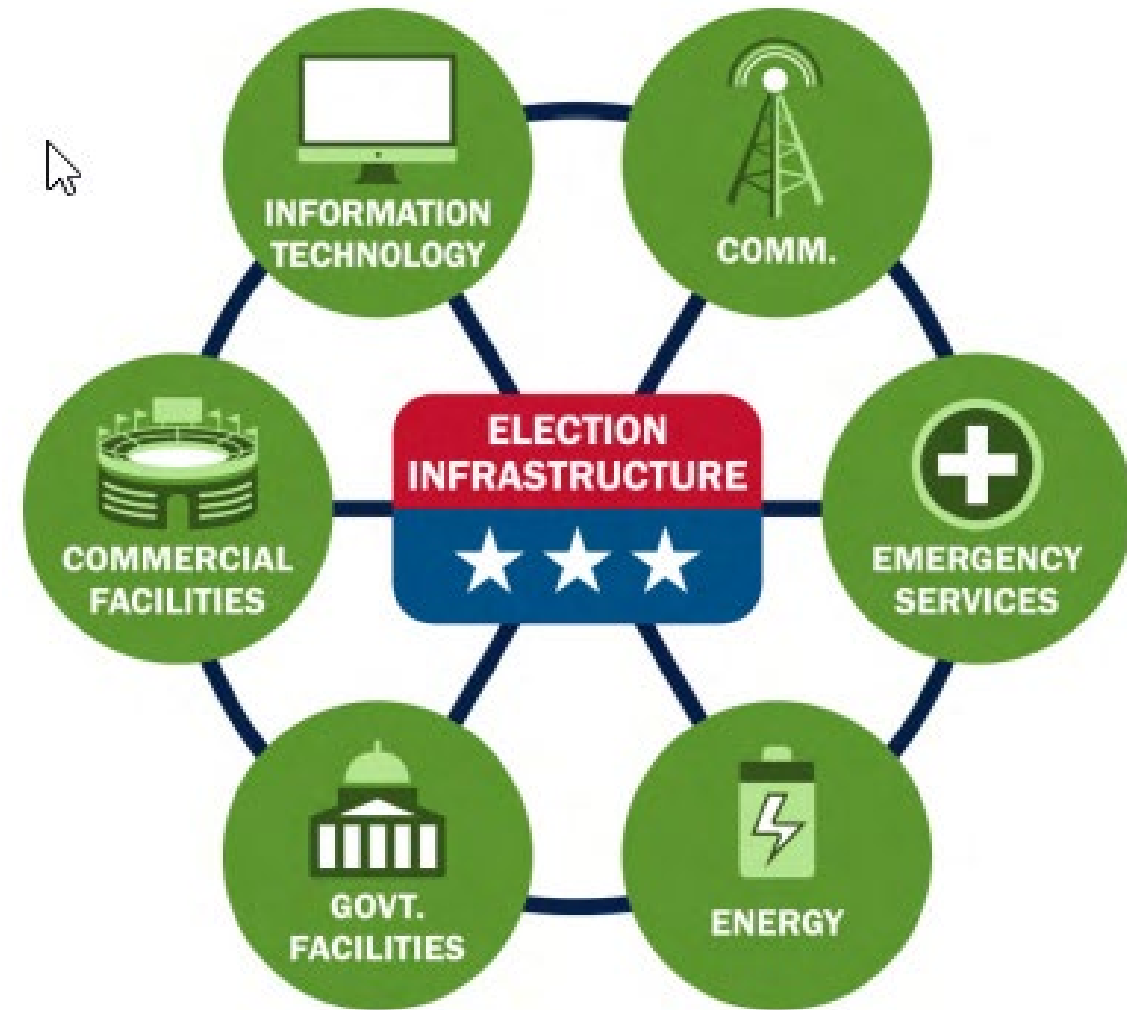
Election Security and Emergency Preparedness

Set up a cross-county emergency response team.

- Emergency Management, Communications, Attorney's Office, Public Works, Property Management, Racial and Health Equity Administrators, and PTRES.

Coordination with Local, State, and Federal partners.

Voting system is deemed Critical Infrastructure.





Upgrading the voting system

Need to meet the **VVSG 2.0** federal standards.

Current system purchased in 2015.

Cities own the polling place's hardware, ballot counters and accessible devices.

The county owns:

- Software and hardware used to create ballots, memory devices, and report results.
- Absentee voting hardware.
- Back-up equipment.

Anticipate upgrading end of 2026.



Prepare to Vote @ MNVotes.gov

Determine your eligibility.

Register to vote, confirm registration, or update registration.

Who represents me? Review sample ballot.

Where do I vote? Find your polling place.

Determine how and when you're going to vote.

Apply for an absentee ballot.



Preparing to vote on Election Day

165 polling places in Ramsey County. Find yours @ **MNVotes.gov** or call 651-266-2171.

Open from 7am to 8pm on Election Day, you must vote at your precinct's polling place.

Pre-register or register on Election Day.

Majority of voters in Ramsey County vote on Election Day.



Preparing to vote by Mail

Starts 46 days before an Election.

Must complete an application either online, in-person, or through the mail. Check status online @ **MNVotes.gov**

Ballots can be picked up and dropped off in person at the Ramsey County Elections Office.

Ballot will be reviewed by a ballot board. Voters will be notified if their ballot is rejected and will automatically be sent a new one.

Expect 4-6 days for mail service in the Twin Cities metro area.



Preparing to Vote Early

Starts 18 days before an Election.

Four locations open across the county and residents can vote at any location.

Extended weekday and weekend hours.

Hours, locations, & wait times available online @ **ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting**

Similar experience to Election Day, except you must fill out an application.

Knowing your Rights as a Voter

Time off to vote - All voters have the right to take time off from work to vote, without losing pay or using paid time-off.

Do I need to bring an ID? - No, you do not need to bring an ID if your registration is current. If you need to register, update your registration, or if you have not voted in the last four years, you will need to show an approved [proof of residence](#) before you can vote.

Register on Election Day - Voters in Minnesota can register at their polling place on Election Day. To register at your polling place on Election Day, you must show an approved proof of residence.

Language Services Available to Voters

Interpreters available at certain Election Day and early voting locations, check for locations @ **ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting**

Election Day language phone line to assist voters needing translation, call **651-266-2185**.

Sample ballots translated in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish languages available at all voting locations.

Recruit bi-lingual election judges to serve at locations where translation services are needed.



Accessible Voting Options

Health Care Facility voting at 27 locations.

Accessible Voting Devices available at all voting locations.

Accessible absentee ballot option using Democracy Live software.

Curbside Voting available at all voting locations.

Election Judges are always available to assist voters.

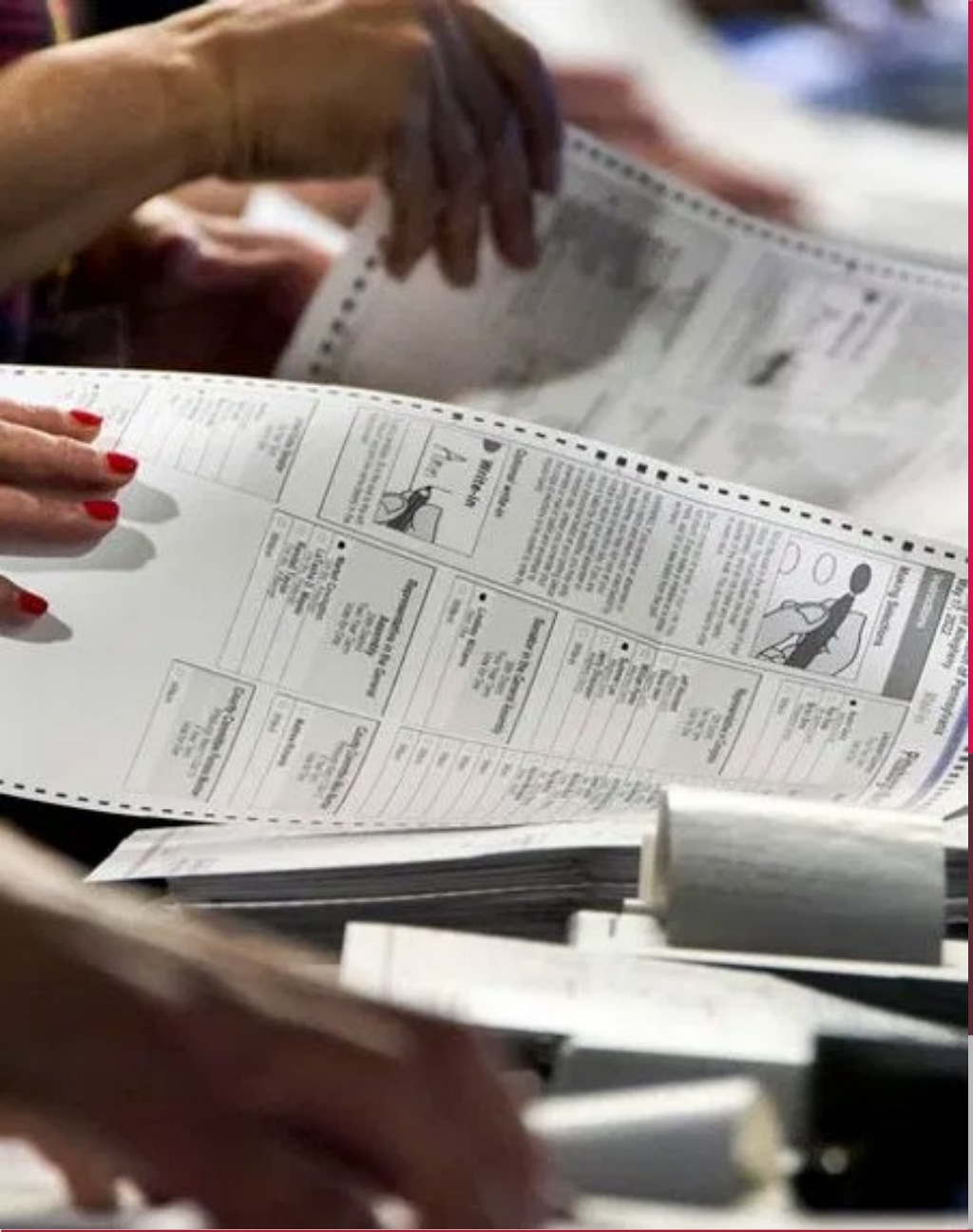
Reporting Election Night Results

Like most counties in the State, we do not use modems to transmit our results.

Complete results will not be available until all polling places in the county have securely returned their materials to the Elections Office. This timeline varies depending on Election Day turnout.

Mail ballots can be returned until 8pm on Election Day. This could delay the reporting of results.

More information on how Ramsey County reports election result can be found @ **ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting**.



Providing Transparent Elections

Events open to the public:

- Election Judge Training

- Public Accuracy Test

- Ballot Board Count Center

- Election Night Returns

- Post Election Review

- Recounts

Citizen Election Judges staff the ballot board, election day and early voting locations.

Community engagement activities.

Election information published on the open data portal.

Responding to media, data requests, and public speaking events.



Next Steps

Another workshop will be scheduled in the fall ahead of the November general election.

Will share this same presentation with City Managers throughout Ramsey County.

Numerous board actions throughout 2026, including increasing rate of pay for election judges, renewing service contracts, and upgrading the voting system.

