

Request for Board Action Details

File #: 2020-279

Type: Administrative Item **Status:** Passed

In control: Board of Commissioners

On agenda: 10/6/2020 **Final action:** 10/6/2020

Title: Increased Compensation for Election Judges for the 2020 Primary and General Election

Sponsors: Property Tax, Records & Election Services

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/6/2020	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: Property Tax, Records & Election Services

Title
Increased Compensation for Election Judges for the 2020 Primary and General Election

Recommendation

Approve a temporary \$4.00 per hour increase to the current hourly rate for election judges assigned by the Ramsey County Elections office for the 2020 Primary and General elections, effective September 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020, with the new temporary rates being:

- Absentee ballot board judges \$20.00 per hour
- Voting system judges \$20.00 per hour
- Area logistics judges \$18.00 per hour
- Head judges \$18.00 per hour
- Assistant head judges \$16.00 per hour
- Precinct & Student judges \$14.00 per hour

Background

The Elections Office is responsible for administering state and county elections for the County and, under contract, to perform similar duties on behalf of 12 municipalities and 5 school districts in the County. Minnesota Statutes section 204B.21 sets forth the duty to appoint election judges and Minnesota Statutes section 204B.31, subd.1(4) requires election judges to be compensated for their service. Election judges are County employees and the County Board sets the compensation of all County employees under Minnesota Statutes section 383A.282.

Serving as an election judge is one of the most valuable methods of civic engagement available to County residents, and election judges play an essential part in the administration of elections in the County. The dramatic increase in absentee voting, attributed to COVID-19, has created an even greater demand for these services at our early vote centers and administrative offices to process absentee ballots.

Neighboring municipalities have set election judge compensation starting at \$17 per hour. To ensure the County remains competitive amid the election judge recruitment process and can recruit an election judge pool

reflective of our county's population, the Elections Office is requesting the County Board approve a \$4.00 per hour increase for all election judges serving in the 2020 General election.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

- Well-being Prosperity Opportunity Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

The Elections Office recognizes the need to remain competitive with other local jurisdictions in the election judge recruitment process, and to ensure our election judges reflect the diverse community which they serve. The Elections Office is working with the County's nineteen community partners to perform voter outreach and recruit election judges, which has enabled the County to focus outreach on specific communities and precincts. The County's community partners have also translated voter outreach and election judge recruitment videos and are attending public events on the County's behalf.

The Elections office follows the 1965 Voter Rights Act which requires election administrators to provide language assistance tools in the polling places. The County has been able to meet and exceed this expectation through the work with the community partners, who have helped the County see up to a 30% monthly recruitment rate, since January 2020, of election judges who identify as non-white and/or are bi-lingual.

Community Participation Level and Impact

The Elections Office actively encourages the widest possible participation in the elections process by members of the community, particularly by those individuals who are traditionally under-represented in the voting population. The recruitment of election judges from non-traditional backgrounds to serve at the 2020 General election is ongoing and will promote social equity.

Work being done to support the County's racial equity and community engagement goals includes the elections communications campaign and work with the County's nineteen elections community partners. The kickoff to the communications campaign was a vote-by-mail postcard. The post card was sent to registered and non-registered voters, hitting every residential mailbox in the County. The post card included content in multiple languages and discussed how to request an absentee ballot. The communication campaign also includes targeted social media outreach, paid advertisements, radio interviews and translated videos. An example of this outreach are radio ads on community-based radio stations - Radio Rey, KMOJ, and KFAI.

- Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Fiscal Impact

The compensation increase will be funded via elections specific CARES Act dollars provided through a grant offered by the MN Secretary of State's Office. The estimate cost is \$145,000 (\$70,000 for General Election judges, \$30,000 for ballot board and early voting judges, \$40,000 for judges fulfilling vote by mail requests).

County Manager Comments

County Board approval is required to change compensation for County employees.

Last Previous Action

On July 19, 2016, the County Board approved the hourly compensation schedule for election judges and election clerks (Resolution 2016-186).

Attachments

1. None