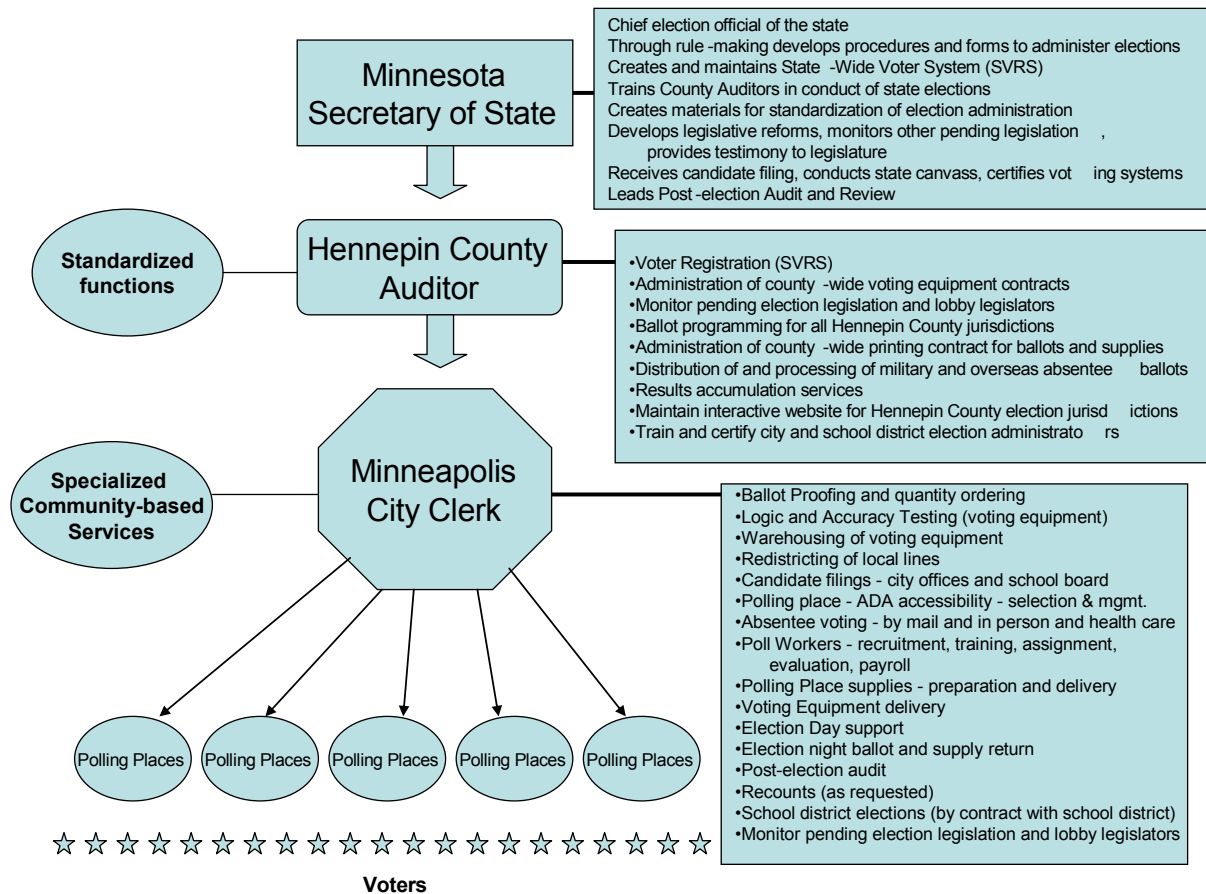


# ELECTIONS IN MINNESOTA

## Overview

Minnesota state law provides for a decentralized management of elections. Certain duties are assigned by law to the county auditor; and others are assigned to city clerks and school districts.



The County is responsible for providing standardized election services, i.e. voter registration, ballot programming, contracts for printing and supplies, purchase of voting equipment for county-wide use, training of city and school election administrators and county-wide election night results accumulation.

The cities are responsible for providing specialized election services to their citizens. This model acknowledges that the local city staff understands the unique voting needs of their diverse population. As an example, the City of Minneapolis provides language support to voters by: 1) recruiting election judges who can translate; 2) providing paper copies of all election materials made available to the Office of the Secretary of State;

and 3) creating a web page that translates election information and voting instructions into the three most common languages of the city, which can also be used by translation support provided through Minneapolis 311.

Each city also provides in-person absentee services to their citizens at area City Halls. City staffs recruit, train and assign election judges to work at polling places on Election Day. These workers have a strong community-based commitment to work in their city on Election Day. Many of these workers are long tenured election judges who work on every election, not just for the dollars earned, but also because of the human factor and the “relationship” that has been nurtured between the election office staff and the election judges.

In fact, managing elections nationwide is often compared to deploying an army. This service is truly the heart of democracy, where even the smallest error is considered unacceptable. The decentralized nature of elections in the United States is strengthened by the checks and balances inherent in the large number of workers that administer the process.

The infamous 2000 Presidential election produced a turnout of approximately one hundred million (100,000,000) voters. Voting for that election was managed at approximately two hundred thousand (200,000) polling places, which were staffed by approximately 1,400,000 election judges. These individuals work just a few days a year for very long hours and there can be no mistakes. Indeed, the selection of polling places, recruitment, assignment, and training of election judges is one of the most critical functions in election administration.

The chart below depicts the magnitude of managing Election Day activities. On that one day, Election Day, election offices across the country become the largest employer in their community. The chart provides a visual snapshot of the checks and balances that are in place. From the Secretary of State’s office...to the County offices...to the City offices...to the polling places and election judges...to the voters, each part of the process is managed by professionals that have been trained to double check each step in the process. One excellent example in Hennepin County is ballot programming. National election standards speak often of the “two person” rule – everything proofed and proofed again by another set of eyes. Hennepin County election staff program all ballots for use countywide. These ballots are then proofed again at the city level. Once both sets of employees have signed off, ballots are ordered and memory cards are downloaded by the county staff and sent to the cities. The city staff is responsible for conducting logic and accuracy (L&A) testing on each voting machine. This separation of duties and two person integrity of the ballot programming and voting machine testing is a testament to the county/city division of duties in the State of Minnesota.

# State of Minnesota

Secretary of State

# Organizational Chart



Actual data for the State of Minnesota is as follows:

Number of counties in Minnesota: 87

Number of total precincts in Minnesota: 4,102

Number of total precincts in Hennepin County: 401 (plus 4 with no voters)

Number of total precincts in the City of Minneapolis: 117 (plus 2 with no voters)

**PROFILE OF ELECTION DIVISION, CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**  
**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS**

**Statistical Profile**

- The City of Minneapolis is the largest and most populated municipality in the state, with a population of 392,880. It ranks as the 48<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation.
- The City has 236,493 registered voters and is the third largest jurisdiction in the State of Minnesota, based on registered voters (counties and cities). The City of Minneapolis is larger than every other Minnesota County except Hennepin and Ramsey. Registered voters in the City of Minneapolis is comparable to all of Ramsey County (293,800 registered voters).
- There are currently 117 precincts within the City, encompassing a total of 13 Wards.
- The City Clerk's Election Division has a total of 5 full time positions (including the Director of Elections).
- A total of 2,142 election judges manned the polling places in November 2012; and 1,595 were on duty at the polling places in November 2013.
- The operating budget for 2012 was \$1,323,135.
- The City contracts with the School District Number 1 to manage their elections. The value of this contract is \$ 46,000 annually.