RAMSEY COUNTY

Update on Voter Engagement

Ramsey County Board Workshop
February 12, 2019

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Today's Purpose

- Review problems related to voter participation.

- Talk about the strategies implemented to address these problems.

- Discuss where we are looking to go in the future.

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Voter Participation in Ramsey County

County & City Partners:

- Elections
- Policy & Planning
- Communications
- Project Management Office
- Ramsey County Libraries
- Ramsey County Property Management
- Ramsey County Public Works
- Ramsey County Sheriff's Office
- Saint Paul Parks and Recreation
- Saint Paul Public Works
- Saint Paul Libraries

Community Partners:

- League of Women Voters
- ACLU
- MNVotes & WeVoteMN
- Common Cause
- MNLead
- UMN
- SPPS
- MnSCU
- ARCH Language Network

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Use Voter Participation to Implement County's Strategic Initiatives

- How it links to Community Engagement and Racial Equity
- Focus on voter engagement, not election technology processes
- Board can expect to see support of these efforts in budget proposals

2018 Voter Outreach Strategies

- **Voter Registration & Voter Engagement**
  - Efforts to Increase Voter Registration Exceeded Goals
  - Successful Engagement Strategy

- **Early Voting**
  - More Locations Expand Early Voting Options
  - More Early Voters Than Ever

- **Student Participation**
  - Creating Voters for Life
  - Participation from Every Public High School

- **Resilient Communities Project**

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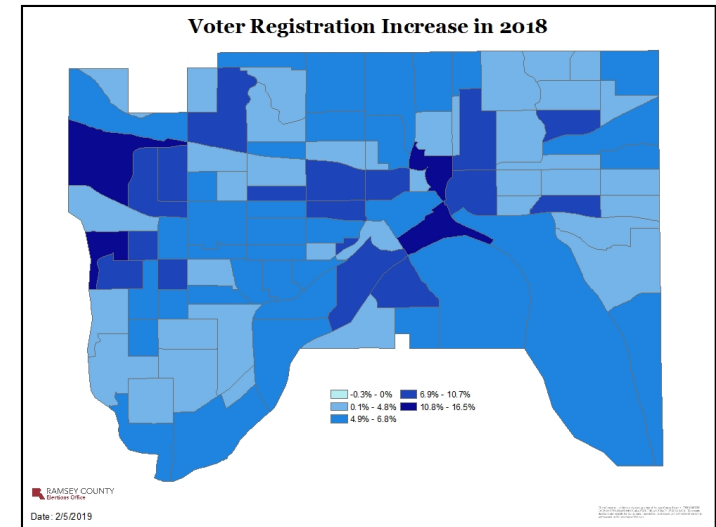# Efforts to Increase Voter Registration Exceeded Goals

- **Goal:** 10,000 new registered voters in 2018

- **Result:** Increase of 13,000
  - 301,000 registered voters in January 2018
  - 314,000 registered voters in January 2019
    - 4.4% increase countywide

  Where:
  - Highest increase was in Saint Paul: **5.8%**
    - Ward 1 Precinct 9, Jackson School: **8.2%**
    - Ward 1 Precinct 14, Mount Airy Hi-Rise: **8.7%**
    - Ward 6 Precinct 8, Eastside Boys & Girls Club: **9.0%**

  - Highest suburban increase was in Maplewood: **3.5%**

  Who:
  - 57% of new registrants in Saint Paul were voters ages 18-26
  - 42% of new registrants in Ramsey County were voters ages 18-26

Voter Registration Increase in 2018

-0.3% - 0%   6.9% - 10.7%
0.1% - 4.8%   10.8% - 16.5%
4.9% - 6.8%

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Services Office
Date: 2/5/2019

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Efforts to Increase Voter Registration Exceeded Goals

Increased Turnout in 2018

– 2014: 181,593 voters countywide

– 2018: 247,050 voters countywide

- **Saint Paul Ward 1 Precinct 9, Jackson School**
  – 2014: 773
  – 2018: 1372

- **Saint Paul Ward 1 Precinct 14, Mount Airy Hi-Rise**
  – 2014: 392
  – 2018: 658

- **Saint Paul Ward 6 Precinct 8, Eastside Boys & Girls Club**
  – 2014: 789
  – 2018: 961

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Successful Engagement Strategy

- **Strategic Community Partners:**
  - **League of Women Voters:** Registered 800+ students in the schools & provided demo voting at libraries and community centers focusing on new voters.

  - **ACLU**: Increased participation in urban centers and recruited election judges who represent the make-up of the community.

  - **MNVoices & WeVoteMN:** Conducted Parade to the Polls & Souls to the Polls.

  - **Common Cause:** Distributed registration and absentee voting materials to the Correctional Facility and the ADC.

  - **City of Saint Paul:** Implemented new tenant voter registration ordinance.

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More Locations Expand Early Voting Options

- **Goal:** Provide more options to vote before Election Day

- **Result:**
  - Arden Hills remote absentee location (46 Days)
  - 12 Early Voting locations (7 days)
    - 9 more locations than any other county
  - Targeted voting location, Saint Paul College (6 hours)
  - Plato Building (Sunday & Special Events)

- **Strategy:**
  - Coordinated with Ramsey County Libraries & Saint Paul Parks & Recreation
    - 3 locations in low turnout neighborhoods
  - Worked with **LeadMN** & **MnSCU** to open targeted voting location at Saint Paul College

More Early Voters Than Ever

- **Goal:** Accommodate the dramatic increase in voting prior to Election Day
  - 2012: 8.7% (15% in-person)
  - 2016: 23.2% (60% in-person)

- **Result:** 60,000 voters before Election Day. 26,000 at 12 early voting locations in 2018 general election.
  - Reduced voter wait times
  - Improved service delivery before and on Election Day through interpreter accessibility and parking availability

- **Strategy:** Making voting more convenient
  - Any voter can vote at any location
  - Extended weekend and evening hours

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Any Voter, Anywhere

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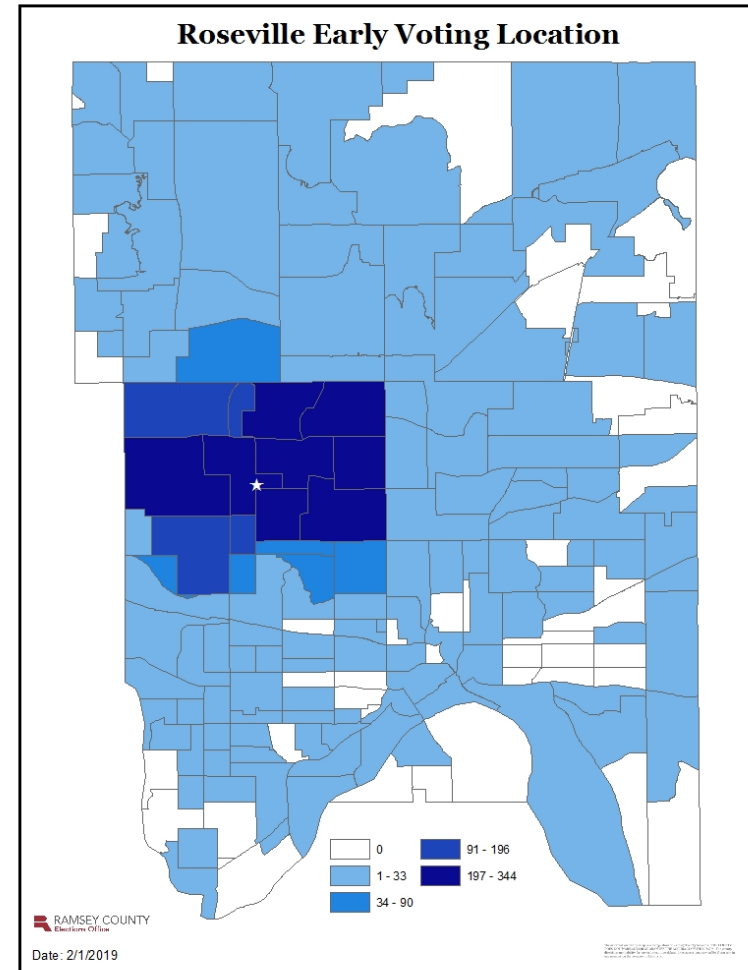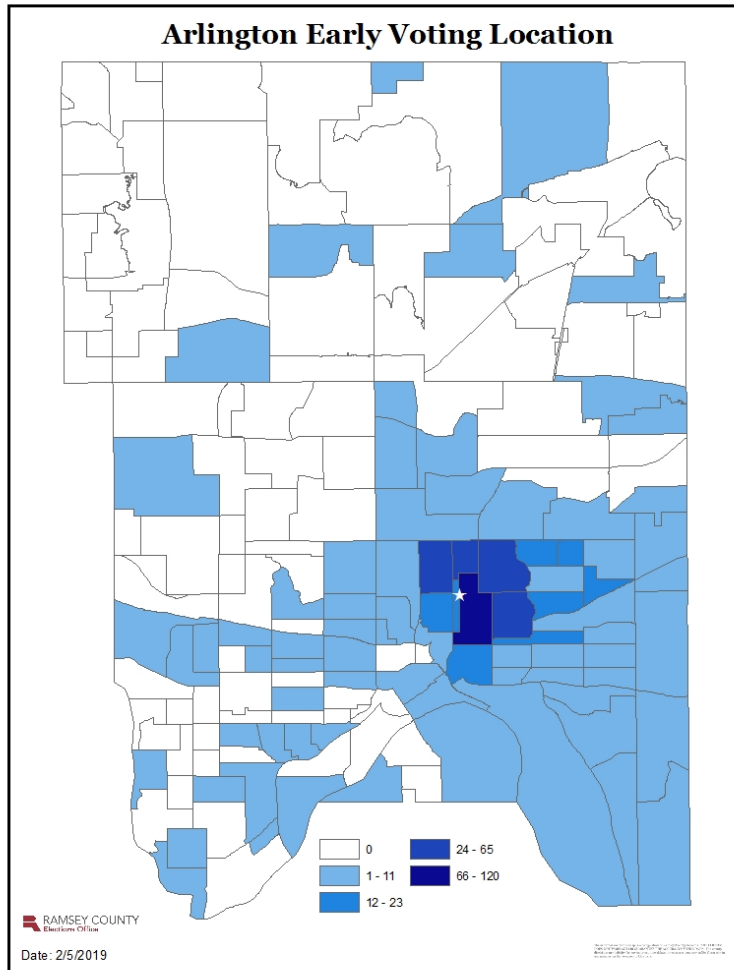
Creating Voters for Life

- **Goal:** Two student judges per polling place
  - 280 students countywide

- **Result:**
  - 441 student judges in 2018 - 40-50 student judges in 2016
  - 17 teacher liaisons in 2018 - newly created for this project

- **Strategy:**
  - Created teacher liaison positions
  - Recruited student election judges
  - Familiarized Washington Tech students with the election process (formerly Arlington High School, North End)
    - Highly diverse student body
    - Largest Karen population in US

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Participation from Every Public High School

- 441 Students served in Ramsey County
  - Average of three students per polling place
  - 86% of students were under 18 years of age
  - Students from every public high school in Ramsey County
    - 50% from SPPS
  - 15 different languages spoken
    - 18% said they assisted a voter in another language
  - 33% helped voters use the assistive voting device
  - At least 36% were persons of color
  - 99% said they would serve again

- 17 Teacher Liaisons
  - A teacher liaison from every public high school in Ramsey County

Resilient Communities Project

- **Goal:** Survey and identify reasons why younger people do not participate in elections
    - Focus on Saint Paul Ward 1 Precinct 9 (Jackson School)

- **Result:** The fall 2018 class gathered the data and the spring 2019 class will develop the solutions
    - High student interest (4 student groups)
    - High response rate to exit poll

- **Strategy:**
    - Resilient Communities Project
        - UMN Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
            - UMN Undergrad Class (fall semester)
            - UMN Graduate Capstone (spring semester)
    - Student presentations

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Excerpts from the Resilient Communities Final Projects

- **Teaching students outside of AP classes**
  - ▷ "... youth on a college track, such as those taking AP courses or attending school in more affluent districts, are more likely to be exposed to high-quality civic education practices in public schools, including being taught about voting" (Kiesa, Levine 3)
  - ▷ Those not in AP classes don't have the interest or the opportunity

Findings

- Misinformation/Lack of information is common
- Social media is a primary source of information for many voters
- Civic education needs to be addressed in schools
- Lack of diversity in politics discourages people from voting
- *Young people feel ignored by politicians, our voices are not being heard*

📌 FINDINGS

American citizens, young adults in particular:

- Don't feel knowledgeable enough to contribute their vote
- Don't know how to register and vote
- Don't know who to vote for
- Don't feel like their vote matters

- **High school IDs**
  - ▷ "...many states have made both registration and the act of voting less convenient or...quite difficult for some eligible young voters. States have implemented photo ID requirements with restrictive lists of acceptable identification...these changes are associated with lower youth turnout." (CIRCLE)
  - ▷ Current Minnesota law- College IDs
  - ▷ Driver's license in rural areas not as popular

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2019 Voter Outreach Project Initiatives

#	Initiatives	Project Descriptions
1	Resilient Communities - U of M	Continuation of activity in fall 2018, to be continued by a capstone class at the Humphrey Institute and build on the work done in 2018 by the Political Science class.
2	Civic Education Wards 5, 6 and 7	Working to develop a program to improve the teaching of civic education in Saint Paul high schools with UMN and Saint Paul Foundation.
3	Student Election Judges -2019 (Ongoing)	Work with teacher liaisons in the high schools to recruit, train and deploy 16 and 17 year old student election judges.
4	Targeted Early Voting 2019	Working to implement a pilot project to administer a day of early voting at colleges campuses, shelters, and libraries.
5	New Tenant Voter Registration (Ongoing)	Implement the provisions of a new city ordinance to require landlords and building managers to provide voter registration information to new tenants in St Paul and dormitories at local colleges.
6	"Low Turnout" Voter Communications	Use social media, mailing, and other methods to communicate voter registration and voter information to households in low turnout precincts in Saint Paul, focusing on W6-P3. W6-P6, W6-P9 and W6-P10. 2020 Census Joint Communication - February 2020 / Presidential Primary 3/3/20 (Super Tuesday)
7	Targeted Voter Registration (Ongoing)	Provide special in-person absentee voting hours and on-site presentations on voter registration and voting (including Parade to Poll).
8	Interpreter Services	Provide translators and/or bilingual election judges to assist English-limited voters at selected polling places and early voting facilities. Translators and bilingual election judges will be deployed to early voting locations at RCE Plato, MLK and Arlington Hills.
9	Voter Registration Marketing Project	Activity to be conducted in conjunction with the Resilient Communities Project and the Carlson School of Business to develop a marketing plan for voter registration outreach activities. This activity would take place in 2019, for implementation in conjunction with the three 2020 state elections. Awaiting a contact - spring and fall 2019.
10	Community Group Partnership	Using our community engagement master contract, work with individuals, community-based organizations, and nonprofits to conduct voter engagement in underrepresented communities and neighborhoods with lower voter turnout.