



The Minnesota Participation Project: Nonpartisan Nonprofit Voter Mobilization

Fundamentals of Voting and Voter Registration

Key questions to ask when registering people to vote

- 1) Do you know where your polling place is?
- 2) Do you have relatives, friends or acquaintances who have recently turned 18?
- 3) Do you know someone who has moved since the last election and may not have re-registered?
- 4) Do you know people who do not vote regularly – or have never voted, even though they are eligible?
- 5) Do you know people who have become US citizens within the last few years?

Frequently asked questions

Q: Am I eligible to vote?

A: You may vote if you are:

- at least 18 years of age
- a US citizen
- a Minnesota resident for at least 20 days before the election

A: You may NOT vote if you are

- a convicted felon and have not completed all parts of your sentence, including probation and parole
- under court-ordered guardianship in which the order revokes my right to vote
- found by a court to be legally incompetent to vote

Q: Where do I vote?

A: Your polling place will be close to where you live. You can find out where to vote:

- Minnesota Secretary of State: <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>
- League of Women Voters of Minnesota: <http://www.lwvmn.org/Vote/Election.asp>
- Call county auditor or city clerk (see government section in the front of white pages in telephone book)

Q: What is voter registration?

A: You need to be on the official list of voters before you can vote. If you are not already registered, you can add your name to the list by filling out a Voter Registration Application. When you fill out the application, you must give the address where you are living at the time of the election. If you are a student living at school, you can register either at home or at school (but not both!) depending on your residence. It is illegal to vote at a former residence because the new occupants vote there.

Q: How do I register to vote?

A: Fill out a Voter Registration Application and return it in person or by mail to your county auditor or the secretary of state. Voter registration forms are available at county courthouses, city halls or you can download a copy from the Minnesota Secretary of State's website: www.sos.state.mn.us/election. Voter registration cards need to be received 20 days prior to Election Day in order to be on the rolls the day of the election. You may also register to vote when you apply for or renew your Minnesota driver's license or state identification card.

Q. What if I registered but I didn't receive anything in the mail from the Secretary of State?

A. They should receive information about where to vote within a few weeks of registering. If they do not, they should call their county's elections office and ask them to check if their registration was accepted. They should bring their ID to the polls.

Q. Can I register to vote on Election Day?

A: Yes. You can register at your polling place on Election Day. You will need one of the following to verify your residence:

- A valid Minnesota driver's license, Minnesota ID card, or permit with current address
- A photo ID that does not have your current address along with a document that does have your current address
 - **Eligible photo IDs:** Minnesota driver's license, Minnesota ID card, U.S. passport, U.S. military ID card, Minnesota college/university student ID card, or tribal ID with signature issued by a tribe recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
 - **Eligible documents with current address:** Current student fee statement, an original utility bill due 30 days before or after the election (gas, electric, solid waste, water, sewer, phone, cell phone, television, or internet service provider), or a rent statement that shows utility expenses
- A student ID card that includes photo if living in university-sponsored housing (valid if college/university provided student housing list to election officials)
- A yellow receipt for a valid Minnesota driver's license, Minnesota ID card, or permit with current address
- A registered voter in your precinct who will confirm your address with a signed oath at your polling place, known as a voucher
- A tribal ID card containing your name, current address, signature and photo (tribe must be recognized by the BIA)
- A "Notice of Late Registration" you received from your county auditor or city clerk
- If you moved to a new residence within your same precinct or changed your name; a current, valid voter registration in the precinct
- An employee of a residential facility where you reside (nursing home, group home, battered women's shelter, homeless shelter, etc.) who will confirm your address with a signed oath at your polling place, known as a voucher

It is a good idea to register before November 2. It represents a commitment to vote on Election Day. **It is strongly recommended that you bring proof of identity when you vote.**

Q. Can I vote by absentee ballot?

A. Yes. You can vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to vote in person on election day because you are:

- * away from home
- * ill or disabled
- * an election judge serving in another precinct
- * unable to go to the polling place due to a religious holiday or beliefs.

To vote by absentee ballot, submit a written application to your county auditor or city clerk. You can cast your absentee ballot either in person at a location designated by your county auditor or by mail. You may also request to be placed on an on-going absentee balloting list, where each and every year your absentee ballot will be mailed to your residence. You can remain on this list until request to be removed.

Q. What if my driver's license has a different address from the one I live at now?

A. A voter should register using their current address. On Election Day he or she should be able to vote. If there are problems, the voter may be asked to provide proof of his or her new residence. A utility bill will be sufficient. A voter may also register on Election Day using a utility bill or a voucher. A voucher is someone who lives in the voter's precinct and comes with him or her to the polls to verify the voter's residence. A voter should not forget to bring his or her ID to the polls!