



# A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO VOTING AND VOTER REGISTRATION IN MINNESOTA

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits' Minnesota Participation Project (MPP) is an exciting effort to increase voter turnout in traditionally underrepresented populations and to expand the capacity of Minnesota nonprofit organizations to effectively engage in legally permissible, nonpartisan voter engagement efforts. MPP provides tools for individuals and nonprofits to do voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities - in 2008 and beyond. MPP exists to be a resource to you! Do you have a question about registering to vote? Want to know where to find more information about the candidates running for office in your area? Call MPP at 651-642-1904 and ask for Maureen or Josh.

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**MINNESOTA PARTICIPATION PROJECT:**  
Nonpartisan Nonprofit Voter Mobilization

[WWW.MNCN.ORG/MPP](http://WWW.MNCN.ORG/MPP)

# VOTING ELIGIBILITY



## 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

## VOTING LOCATIONS

Your polling place will be in your precinct. You can find out your precinct number and where to vote by contacting:

- Minnesota Secretary of State: [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us), 877-600-8683
- League of Women Voters: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)
- Call your county auditor or city clerk (see government section in the front of the white pages in the telephone book).

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2008 ELECTION YEAR:

### Tuesday, August 19

Last day to pre-register to vote in the Primary Election, until 5 p.m.

### Tuesday, September 9

Primary Election Day, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

### Tuesday, October 14

Last day to pre-register to vote in the General Election, until 5 p.m.

### Tuesday, November 4

General Election Day, most polling places will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. A few township polling places open at 10 a.m., check with your town clerk for details.

## VOTING NOTES:

- **Minnesota law allows you to take time off from work to vote** during the morning of the state primary and state general election. The idea is to encourage people to vote early in the day.
- **Remember, you can always register at the polls and vote!**

# VOTING UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES



**IF YOU ARE AN EX-FELON** and you have completed the terms of your sentence, including parole, your civil rights are automatically reinstated and you are eligible to vote. This is known as being “off-paper.” Contact your parole officer if you are unsure about your status. If your status as an eligible voter is challenged, ask for the head election judge, explain your situation, and ask to take an oath swearing your right to vote. Once you have done this you will be able to vote.

**IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**, the safest way to register and vote is by enrolling in the Safe at Home program. Safe at Home is a program offered by the Secretary of State's office in collaboration with local victim service providers. This program is designed to help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or others who fear for their safety establish a confidential address. Safe at Home provides a mail forwarding service. Participants use an address that Safe at Home assigns them and their correspondence is forwarded to their actual mailing address, which is not disclosed.

**For more information contact:**

Safe at Home

PO Box 17370

St Paul, MN 55117-0370

**Toll Free:** 1-866-723-3035

**Email:** [Safe.athome@state.mn.us](mailto:Safe.athome@state.mn.us)

To become a Safe at Home program participant, you must apply with the assistance of an Accredited Application Assistant. A list of agencies is available from the Secretary of State, <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/>.

**IF YOU ARE HOMELESS OR BETWEEN PERMANENT RESIDENCES**, you can register to vote using the address of a shelter where you are staying. You can register before an election using that address, which will be most effective if you plan on living at this location at least some of the time prior to Election Day. You can also register to vote on Election Day using a person who can vouch for you.

# VOTING BY VOUCHER



## REGISTERING TO VOTE BY HAVING SOMEONE VOUCH FOR YOU

A registered voter who lives in the precinct is allowed to vouch for the residence of another voter on Election Day. A person can vouch for up to 15 individuals, as long as they have personal knowledge of their residence in the precinct. For example, if you go to the polls with your neighbor, he or she is allowed to tell the election judge that you live in the precinct, and his or her word will be accepted as proof of your residence.

## THE PERSON VOUCHING FOR YOU MUST LIVE IN YOUR PRECINCT.

There is one exception to this rule: if you live in a registered residential facility, such as a nursing home, domestic abuse shelter, or homeless shelter, employees of that facility may vouch for you, and any other residents who require a voucher on Election Day (there is no limit to the number of residents an employee can vouch for in this case).

## VOTING NOTES:

- **It is a good idea to register to vote before November 4.** It represents a commitment to vote on Election Day.
- **Bring an ID when you vote.** It is strongly recommended, but not required in Minnesota, that you bring proof of identity when you vote.

# VOTING BY ABSENTEE BALLOT



**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 as long as your residence has not changed. You can remain on this list until you request to be removed.

## **THERE ARE LIMITED CASES IN WHICH YOU CANNOT VOTE:**

- You are under court-ordered guardianship in which the court order revokes your right to vote
- You have been found by a court to be legally incompetent to vote

# VOTER REGISTRATION



You need to register and be placed on the official list of voters before you can vote. You can do this by filling out a **Voter Registration Application**. When completing the application, you must give your address at the time of the election. It is illegal to vote at a former residence.

## **REGISTERING TO VOTE BEFORE AN ELECTION**

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 at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us). You may also register to vote when you apply for or renew your Minnesota driver's license or state identification card.

## **REGISTERING TO VOTE ON ELECTION DAY**

You can also register at your polling place on Election Day (Same-Day Registration). You will need one of the following to verify your residence:

- A current, valid Minnesota Driver's License, learner's permit, identification card (or receipt for a new one), or tribal ID containing your address, or
- A "Notice of Late Registration" card mailed to you by your county auditor (if you turned in a registration card late), or
- A person who is registered in the precinct where you live to vouch for your residence, or
- A U.S. passport, U.S. military identification card, tribal ID or student identification card that includes your name and photo *along with* an original bill for water, sewer, gas, electric, phone, solid waste or cable television services that includes your name and current address in the precinct and has a due date within 30 days of election day.

**IF YOU ARE A STUDENT**, you can register either at home or at school (but not both!) depending on your residence. You can also use one of the following documents to register to vote:

- Student photo ID, registration or fee statement with your current address
- Student photo ID if you are on a student housing list on file at the polling place