



Hennepin County

Elections Voter Guide

Welcome

The Hennepin County Elections team strives to serve you with integrity and accuracy. When you vote, you make your voice heard, hold elected officials accountable, and impact important issues that affect your community.

This voter guide explains the voting process and gives you resources to become a more informed voter. Please contact our office with any questions you have.

Thank you for taking part in our democracy!

Sincerely,

Ginny Gelms
Elections Department Director

Contents

Welcome.....	2
Who can vote	4
Voter rights.....	5
Voting checklist	6
Registering to vote.....	7
Ways to register	8
Vouching	9
Ways to vote.....	10
Accessibility.....	14
Special circumstances.....	15
Elected offices.....	16
Being an informed voter.....	20
Marking your ballot	21
Get involved	23



Who can vote

You can vote in Minnesota if you meet all of the following requirements:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony sentence
- A judge has not revoked your right to vote under guardianship



Voter rights

You have many rights as a Minnesota voter! Remember, you can't be denied the right to vote if you're eligible.

You have the right to:

- Vote, register to vote, or help someone register to vote without interference
- Ask for help
- Get help from an election judge or bring someone to help you
- Vote when you are no longer incarcerated for a felony sentence
- Take time off work to vote without losing your pay, personal leave, or vacation time
- Bring a sample ballot to your polling place
- Get a replacement ballot if you make a mistake on your ballot before you cast it
- Vote if you are in line by 8 p.m. on Election Day
- Bring your children to the polls
- Register to vote on Election Day with the required documents showing proof of residency. For more info on registering on Election Day see page 8



Voting checklist

Voting can seem intimidating at first, but we are here to help you through the process.

Use this checklist and voter guide to make voting easy this year!

Prepare to vote

☐ Make sure you're eligible to vote (*page 4*)

☐ Register to vote (*page 7*)

☐ Know what's on your ballot (*page 10*)

☐ Have a voting plan:

I will vote by mail (*page 11*)

OR

I will vote early in person (*page 12*)

OR

I will vote on Election Day (*page 13*)

☐ Vote!



Registering to vote

You must register before you can vote.

Registering is a way to prove that you are eligible.

- In Minnesota, you can pre-register up to 21 days before Election Day.
- You can also register when you vote early in person or on Election Day with same-day registration.



Unsure if you're registered?
Check at mnvotes.gov/register

Ways to register

Online at mnvotes.gov/register

- You will need an email address for this method

On paper

- Print a registration application from mnvotes.gov/register or hennepincounty.gov
- Mail or drop off at Hennepin County Elections:
Hennepin County Elections
300 South 6th Street - MC 680, Minneapolis MN 55487

In person

- You need to provide proof of
 - who you are, and
 - where you live

For example, a current and valid Minnesota ID or driver's license
- Find a list of all proof-of-residence options at mnvotes.gov/register

OR

- Have a registered voter in your precinct vouch for you
(for more info on vouching see page 9)

Remember to update your registration when:

- You move to a new address
- Change your name
- Have not voted at least once within the last four years

College students

Register with the address you currently consider home. For example, your dorm, off-campus housing, or your parents' home.



Vouching

If you don't have proper documentation of your current residence, you can have someone vouch for you when voting in person.

The person vouching for you is required to sign an oath confirming your address.

Who can vouch for you?

- A registered voter who lives in the same precinct
(a registered voter can vouch for up to eight voters)

OR

- A facility staff member if you live in a residential facility
- Staff need to show proof of their employment at the polling place
(for example: an employee ID badge or a staff list)

Residential facility staff can vouch for all eligible voters living in the facility.

You cannot vouch for others if someone vouched for you.

Note: If your address can't be confirmed, you may be "challenged" at the polls. You are still able to vote. The election judges at your polling place will have you take an oath of eligibility prior to voting.



Ways to vote

In Minnesota, all voters are eligible to:

Vote early by mail (*page 11*)

or

Vote early in person (*page 12*)

or

Vote on Election Day (*page 13*)

What's on your ballot changes every year and depends on where you live.



Before going to vote, it's important to do research on the candidates and questions that will be on your ballot.

mnvotes.gov/myballot

Early by mail

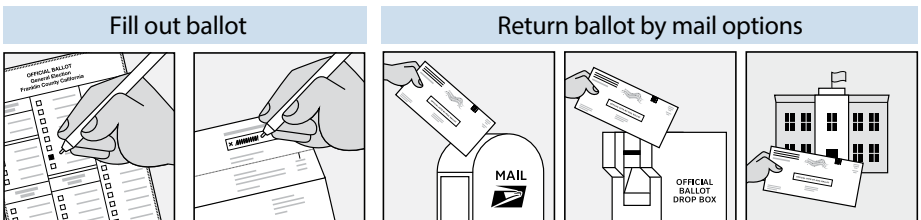
Voting by mail is easy and convenient. You don't have to leave the house and there's no waiting in line!

Steps:

1. Register to vote (*page 7*)
2. Apply to have an absentee ballot mailed to you at mnvotes.gov/absentee or hennepincounty.gov/elections
3. You will receive your ballot by mail
4. Fill out your ballot
 - Make sure to carefully read the instructions
 - A witness signature is required from a registered voter or notary
 - You will get an additional registration form to fill out if you are not pre-registered
5. Return your ballot by mail or in person
 - By mail: Your ballot must be received by Election Day
 - In person: You must return your ballot by 5 p.m. on Election Day

You can track your ballot at mnvotes.gov/track

If you have any issues with your ballot, contact Hennepin County Elections at 612-348-5151 or hc.vote@hennepin.us





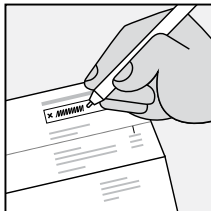
Early in person

You can vote at your local election office or an early voting location up to 46 days before Election Day.

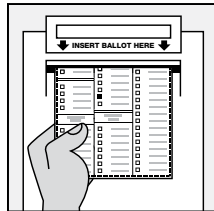
Steps:

1. Pre-register or register when you vote (*page 7*)
 - If you are pre-registered, you don't need to bring an ID
 - If you're registering in person, make sure you bring proper proof of residency
2. Find your early voting locations and hours of operation at hennepincounty.gov/elections
 - Remember that wait times can vary
3. You will complete an absentee ballot application before receiving a ballot
4. Vote!
 - You will vote in a private area
 - You have the right to ask for help or get a new ballot if you make a mistake

Fill out ballot



Insert ballot





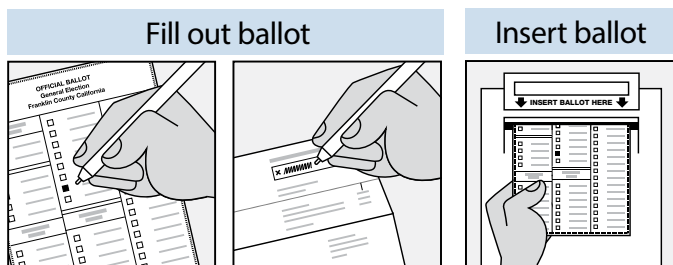
On Election Day

Election Day is an exciting time to vote, and your polling place is usually close to home.

Steps:

1. Pre-register or register when you vote (*page 7*)
 - If you are pre-registered, you don't need to bring an ID
 - If registering on Election Day, make sure you bring proper proof of residency
2. Find your polling place at mnvotes.gov/pollfinder
 - Remember that wait times can vary
 - Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day
3. Vote!
 - You will vote in a private area
 - You have the right to ask for help or get a new ballot if you make a mistake

If you are in line by 8 p.m., you will be allowed to vote.





Accessibility

- Polling places are required to be accessible.
- A voter can bring a friend, family member, or anyone except their employer or union to help them vote.
- A voter can also ask an election judge for help.

Accessible voting technology

Each polling place has an ExpressVote (accessible ballot marking device) for voters with disabilities, allowing anyone to mark their ballot independently and privately without using a pen.

The machine has a screen that can display the ballot in large print or with a high-contrast background. It can also read the ballot to you through headphones.

Voters can mark their choices with a touchscreen or a Braille keypad.

Curbside voting

Election judges can help you vote curbside if you cannot easily leave your vehicle. Two election judges will come out with materials requiring a signature and your ballot. Once you are done marking your ballot, they will bring the ballot inside to the ballot box.

Special circumstances

Voting while homeless

If you're eligible to vote, you can do so regardless of your housing situation. Make sure you use a current address (*for example, shelter, friend's house, outside, etc.*) when registering.

For an outdoor address, write the cross streets and a description of where you sleep (*for example, SW corner of Loring Park near the intersection of Hennepin Ave. and Oak Grove St.*).

If you don't have proper documentation of your current residence, you can have someone vouch for you on Election Day. The person vouching for you must live in your precinct and is required to swear under oath that they personally know you live in the location you provided (*page 9*).

Voting with a criminal record

Your criminal record does not affect your right to vote in Minnesota unless you are currently incarcerated for a felony sentence. Once you are no longer incarcerated, your right to vote is restored.

Safe at Home

Safe at Home is a statewide program to help people who fear for their safety maintain a confidential address.

If you are a participant in the Safe at Home program, please visit the Safe at Home program website, sos.mn.gov/safe-at-home to learn more about how to vote. You can also call the Safe at Home number: 1-866-723-3035.



Elected offices

Federal offices

President: The head of the United States of America. They sign into law bills passed by the United States Congress, or veto bills. The president is responsible for the execution and enforcement of the laws created by Congress. They appoint the heads of more than 50 independent federal commissions and can issue executive orders. The president nominates Supreme Court justices to be confirmed by Congress. The president is the commander in chief of the U.S. Armed Forces. The president and vice president serve a four-year term and are limited to two terms. *Partisan*

Vice president: The primary responsibility of the vice president is to be ready to assume the presidency if the president is unable to perform their duties. The vice president serves as the president of the United States Senate and casts the deciding vote in the case of a tie. They formally preside over the receiving and counting of electoral ballots cast in presidential elections. The vice president runs on the same ticket as the president, so you will vote for them as a pair. *Partisan*

U.S. senator: The Senate is one chamber of Congress. There are 100 U.S. senators, two from each state. U.S. senators propose, debate, and vote on legislation. They have oversight over the federal budget, approve or reject presidential appointments. The Senate has sole

power to approve or reject treaties with foreign governments by a two-thirds vote. They serve six-year terms. *Partisan*

U.S. representative: The House of Representatives is the second chamber of Congress. The 435 U.S. representatives are distributed by population and are redistributed every ten years after the census. Like U.S. senators, representatives propose, debate, and vote on legislation and have the power to impeach federal officials. They serve two-year terms. *Partisan*

State offices

Governor: The chief executive of the state. They appoint heads of departments and agencies, propose state budgets and sign (approve) or veto (reject) legislation. They also appoint judges to fill vacancies and issue pardons and reprieves, and can restore rights to felons. *Partisan*

Lieutenant governor: Assumes the governor's responsibilities in their absence or if there is a vacancy. They also perform other duties assigned by the governor. The lieutenant governor runs on the same ticket as the governor, so you will vote for them as a pair. *Partisan*

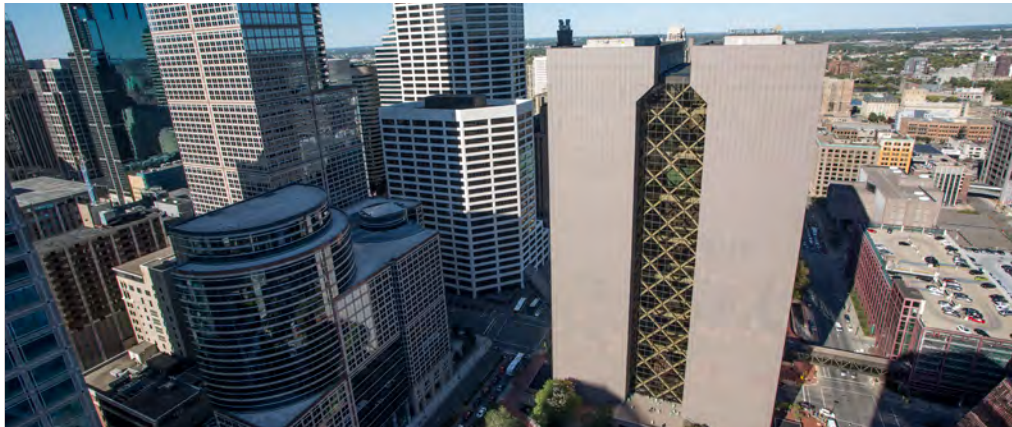
Secretary of state: Acts as the chief election official and oversees the enactment of election laws and training of county elections staff. They also certify official state documents and register businesses and nonprofit organizations. Additionally, they manage the Safe at Home program. *Partisan*

State auditor: Oversees money spent by local governments and performs audits of their financial statements. *Partisan*

Attorney general: Provides legal services to state government, represents the state in court cases, enforces laws concerning charitable organizations and protects public rights. *Partisan*

State senator: The state Senate is the "upper chamber" of the state's legislative branch. Senators propose, debate, and vote on legislation. They are involved in the state budget process. *Partisan*

State representative: The state House is the "lower chamber" of the state's legislative branch. Representatives propose, debate, and vote on legislation. They are involved in the state budget process. *Partisan*



County offices

County commissioner: Approves the annual county budget, determines the county's tax levy, appoints the county administrator and authorizes personnel rules. They also work on long-range planning and capital improvements, authorize the use of state and federal grants, adopt county laws and fill early vacancies of county attorney and sheriff. *Nonpartisan*

County sheriff: Executes all processes, writs, precepts, and orders issued or made by lawful authority. The county sheriff investigates recreational vehicle crashes involving personal injury or death that occur outside the boundaries of a municipality. They serve all papers, post all notices named by law to be served or posted on behalf of the state or of the county, and maintain the charge and custody of the county jail. *Nonpartisan*

County attorney: Provides legal services to the county. They prosecute felony crimes and all cases involving juvenile offenders, oversee juvenile diversion programs, and aid the victims and witnesses who play a vital role in the criminal justice system. The county attorney advises victims of their legal rights and the status of their case, starts legal proceedings to protect the health and safety of vulnerable adults within the county, and brings actions to obtain or enforce child support obligations. *Nonpartisan*

County park commissioner: Seven members make up the Three Rivers Park District Board of Commissioners, five of whom are elected from districts in suburban Hennepin County and two of whom are appointed by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners.

The park commissioners are responsible for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of large parks, wildlife sanctuaries, historical sites, forests and other reserves, and means for public access to lakes, rivers, and streams and to other natural phenomena for the benefit and the use of the citizens of suburban Hennepin County and the metropolitan area. *Nonpartisan*

City offices

Mayor: A mayor is often the chief executive of a city (*although this varies by municipality*). They often make appointments to city offices and preside at council meetings. Mayors are usually involved in proposing a city budget and can veto ordinances proposed by the council. *Nonpartisan*

City Council: Members of a city council typically serve as the legislative “branch” of city government (*although this varies by municipality, as they may also have executive power*). Council members can propose ordinances, set administrative policy, and pass budgets proposed by the mayor. Mayoral appointments to city government typically require council approval. *Nonpartisan*

School district

School board member: Creates school policies, hires a superintendent to provide educational leadership for the district and sets levies to fund the district. *Nonpartisan*



Being an informed voter

Here are some resources to help find more information on candidates, offices or questions on the ballot:

- Visit mnvotes.gov to get the candidates' contact information, including candidates' websites, emails, and phone numbers. You can contact candidates with questions you have about issues important to you
- On mnvotes.gov you can also get the contact information for Minnesota's major and minor political parties
- Candidates' websites and social media platforms
- Candidate speeches and debates
- Press reports from newspapers, television, and radio
- Voting records (*if the candidate is up for re-election*)
- Endorsements (*public support of a candidate*)
- League of Women Voters: lwvmn.org
- Ballotpedia: [Ballotpedia.org](https://ballotpedia.org)
- County offices: Visit hennepincounty.gov to review county board actions and meeting information
- City offices: Go to the city's website and review any information available from their meetings
- School board: Visit your school district's website and review any information available from their meetings



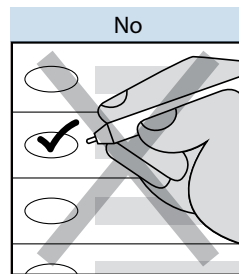
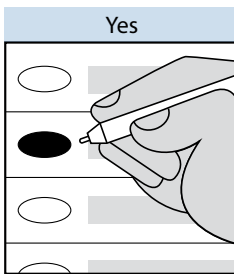
Marking your ballot

Once you get your ballot, it is time to fill it out.

Marking a paper ballot

Voting with a paper ballot and pen is the most common way to vote.

- Vote with a pen and completely fill in the oval next to each of your choices.



Marking on a ballot marking device

- Voters can choose to use a ballot marking device.
- The ballot marking device has many accessibility options for marking your ballot, such as large print, spoken instructions, Braille keypad or touchscreen. The machine will print out your marked ballot.

Remember

- Your vote is secret and you have the right to privacy
- You can bring someone to assist you in voting or ask an election judge for help
- If you make a mistake, don't hesitate to ask an election official for a new ballot





Get involved

Civic engagement doesn't end at the polls! There are many ways to stay civically engaged all year. Here are some ways you can stay involved in addition to voting:

- Be an election judge or student election judge
- Help others in your community with registering to vote and finding their polling place
- Join an election campaign
- Know who your elected officials are and connect with them. They are here to serve you!
- Join your city's boards or commissions
- Attend city and county meetings
- Get involved in your local neighborhood association
- Volunteer with an organization or political party that does work you care about
- Run for office!
- Follow us on Facebook @HennepinElections, X @HC_Elections, or beheardhennepin.org/your-vote-your-voice
- Share this guide with friends, family, and neighbors!

Hennepin County Elections

hc.vote@hennepin.us

612-348-5151

hennepincounty.gov/elections

