

MINNESOTA VOTER REGISTRATION

These resources are current as of 12/1/18. We do our best to periodically update these resources and welcome any comments or questions regarding new developments in the law.

Please email us at advocacy@afj.org.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS GUIDE

The following changes/additions have been made since the previous version of this guide:

- A person may register to vote in Minnesota through the Secretary of State's website with an email address, verifiable Minnesota driver's license number, Minnesota state identification card, or the last four digits of the person's Social Security number.
- Individuals conducting voter registration can help voters fill out registration applications and, with the voter's permission, can mail or drop off the form on his or her behalf. A worker can also help voters fill out online applications so long as it is done with the voter's consent and in his or her presence.
- Organizations may compensate workers for registering voters. However, Minnesota law prohibits compensating workers by a fixed payment per registered voter application and/or compensating workers more or less for achieving a set quota of applications. Breaking this law is punishable as a petty misdemeanor.
- Those registering to vote in person on Election Day may have their name checked to see if have voted by absentee ballot

This guide summarizes key aspects of laws governing voter registration on the state level. It is not intended to provide legal advice or to serve as a substitute for legal advice

In some jurisdictions, city and/or county regulations may also apply to certain political activities. Check with the appropriate local jurisdiction before undertaking any activity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Deadlines for Registration
- II. Photo ID Requirements
- III. Voter Registration Drives
- IV. Contact Information for State and Local Agencies

DEADLINES FOR REGISTRATION

Deadline for registering

- The deadline for registration is 20 days prior to the next election (unless you register in person on Election Day with the proper proof of residence, see below). Registrations received by 5 p.m. on the 21st day before the election will be accepted. [MINN. STAT. § 201.061, subd. 1.](#) A person may register in advance in person or by mail by completing a registration application through their local election office or the Secretary of State's office. A person may also register through the Secretary of State's website with an email address, verifiable Minnesota driver's license number, Minnesota state identification card, or the last four digits of the person's Social Security number. If a voter registered within 20 days of the election, the voter may get a Notice of Late Registration card in the mail. They should bring that card with them to use it as proof of their residence for the purposes of same-day registration. See Minn. Stat. §201.061, subds. 1a, 3.

Does state offer Election Day registration?

- Yes. To register on Election Day, an individual must appear in person at the precinct in which they vote, complete a registration application and make an oath "in the form prescribed by the secretary of state and providing proof of residence." [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 3.](#)
- An individual whose name appears on a list of absentee Election Day registrants who have already voted by absentee ballot will not be allowed to register or vote on Election Day. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 4.](#)
- Election Day registrants must show a form of identification from among the following options:
 - Minnesota driver's license or identification card;
 - any identification document approved by the Secretary of State;
 - a student identification card from a post-secondary institution located in Minnesota, provided that the institution has prepared a list of students and had the list certified by the county auditor;
 - a photo identification and a current student fee statement showing the student's address; or
 - a member of a federally recognized tribal band may prove residence by presenting a tribal identification containing the individual's name, address, signature and photo, or by presenting a tribal identification containing the individual's name and photo along with a current signature and utility bill showing the person's name and address. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 3\(a\) and \(d\).](#)
- Alternatively, a person may register by having a voter who is registered in the precinct vouch that she personally knows the voter to be a resident of the precinct. Or, if the voter resides in a certain type of residential facilities in the precinct, an employee who works in the facility may vouch that she personally knows the voter is a resident of precinct. [MINN. STAT. §201.061 subd. 3\(a\)\(4\).](#)

- A voter who has been vouched for on Election Day may not then vouch for another individual on that Election Day. One registered voter may vouch for up to 8 other voters on an Election Day. This limitation does not apply to an employee of a residential facility if the operator of the facility has submitted a certified list of its employees to election officials 20 days before the election. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 3\(b\); MINN. R. 8200.5200.](#)
- An individual who is eligible to vote by absentee ballot, but not registered, may register and vote at the same time by submitting an absentee ballot and enclosing a completed registration application with their mailed ballot. [MINN. STAT. §203B.04, subd. 4.](#) The individual also must show the identification necessary for same-day registration to the person witnessing the absentee ballot.

Does state allow by-mail registration?

- Yes. To register by mail, an individual must submit a completed registration application to the Secretary of the State, county auditor, or municipal clerk. The application must be delivered by the U.S Postal Service or a commercial carrier and be received by 5 p.m. on the 21st day before the election. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 1.](#)
- Note: The Secretary of State encourages groups conducting voter registration drives to send all registration applications to their office to ensure they are forwarded to the correct local official.

May voter register before turning 18?

- Yes. Any individual who will be eligible to vote at the time of the next election may register prior to the next election. [MINN. STAT. §201.061 subd. 1.](#)

PHOTO ID REQUIREMENTS

Required for registration? If so, what kinds of ID?

- Photo identification is not required to be presented to anyone when registering in advance of Election Day.
- The voter registration form does require those possessing either a valid Minnesota driver's license or a Minnesota state identification card to provide the number of the license or identification card on the application or, if no such identification is possessed, the registrant must provide his or her signature and the last four digits of his or her social security number. If the voter does not have a social security number, she must write "none" in the corresponding box on the application. Writing "none" will not automatically preclude the ability to register. [MINN. STAT. §201.071, subd. 1 and 3.](#)

Required for voting? If so, what kinds of ID?

- Photo identification is generally not required to vote if the voter is registered in advance of Election Day.
- However, voters registering on Election Day or whose registration is not complete before Election Day will be required to provide identification, as described above. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 1a and 3.](#)

Requirement to provide proof of citizenship to register and/or vote?

- Minnesota does not currently require registrants or registered voters to provide separate proof of citizenship to register or vote. However, in order to register, a person needs either a Minnesota driver's license or identification card, which require either proof of citizenship or a social security number to obtain. [MINN. STAT. §201.071, subd. 1 and 3.](#)

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

Does state accept National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) registration forms? Any restrictions?

- Yes. Minnesota accepts the National Form and photocopies of the National Form. There are no restrictions on using the form. [MINN. STAT. §201.071, subd. 1.](#)

May groups “cage” completed registration applications (i.e. ask voters to mail them back to the group, which will then send them to the appropriate elections registrar(s))? If so, may they copy the forms or any of the data included on them? If so, any deadlines for sending the completed forms to the state or to local officials?

- An organization conducting a voter registration drive may ask voters to mail completed voter registration applications back to the organization and then mail them to the appropriate election official. If the organization chooses to do this, it must return the form to the appropriate election officials within 10 calendar days of the when the voter signed and dated the application. [MINN. STAT. §201.061, subd. 1\(a\)\(2\).](#) (This requirement applies to anyone who accepts a completed voter registration application from a voter.)
- State law is silent as to whether an organization may copy information on voter registration applications before submitting them to election officials.

Note, however, that state law provides that voter lists obtained from county auditors may be used only for purposes related to elections, political activity, and law enforcement, and it is possible that this provision also applies to completed voter registration applications. [MINN. STAT. §201.091, subd 4.](#)

May a group “pre-fill” some or all of a voter registration application before sending/giving it to a would-be registrant?

- Minnesota law does not prohibit an individual from pre-filling the blanks of a registration application, but the practice is discouraged by election officials.

May voter registration drive workers assist a voter in completing their registration applications?

- Minnesota law expressly permits individuals with a disability to be assisted by a designated individual. Registration assistance includes reading the registration application and instructions, and filling out the application according to the directions of the registrant. [MINN. STAT. §201.091, subd. 8.](#)
- The statute is silent as to whether workers may assist other voters. However, according to the Secretary of State, workers can help voters fill out registration applications and, with the voter's permission, can mail or drop off the form on his or her behalf. A worker can also help voters fill out online applications so long as it is done with the voter's consent and in his or her presence. <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/get-involved/voter-registration-drives/>.

Does state require training of voter registration workers?

- No. Minnesota does not have any specific statutes that regulate voter registration drives or require training for individuals who register others to voter. Some counties ask voter registration drive organizers to provide a business card or contact information when submitting completed applications, but this is not required.
- Minnesota is exempt from the National Voter Registration Act, and thereby does not have to comply with the Act's mandates regarding third-party voter registration. 52 U.S.C. §§ 20503 (2012).

Does state require registration of voter registration drives? If so, for by-mail drives, too?

- No. Minnesota does not have any specific statutes regulating voter registration drives and does not require training for individuals who participate in voter registration drives or register others to vote.

Any requirement that a group must provide information to voters about how they may contact the group to determine the status of their registration?

- There currently is no Minnesota law requiring an organization conducting a voter registration drive to provide voters with information about how they may contact the group to determine the status of their registration.

May a group pay voter registration drive workers? If so, is it permissible to pay on a per-voter-registered basis?

- Yes. Organizations may compensate workers for registering voters. However, Minnesota law prohibits compensating workers by a fixed payment per registered voter application and/or compensating workers more or less for achieving a set quota of applications. Breaking this law is punishable as a petty misdemeanor. [MINN. STAT. § 201.054.](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

190 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-1603

By telephone at (651) 539-1180 or toll free (800) 657-3889.
By TTY by calling (800) 627-3529 and asking for (651) 296-5148.
By fax to (651) 296-1722 or fax toll free (800) 357-4114.
Email to board: cf.board@state.mn.us
Website: www.cfboard.state.mn.us

Jeff Sigurdson
Executive Director
(651) 539-1189
jeff.sigurdson@state.mn.us

Megan Engelhardt
Assistant Executive Director
(651) 539-1182
Megan.engelhardt@state.mn.us

Written by Sarah Duniway, Gray Plant Mooty
500 IDS Center 80 South Eighth St., Minneapolis, MN 55402

© Copyright 2018. These materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced without permission.

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For assistance regarding these resources or for more information about federal law, please contact our attorney one-on-one counseling service:

Email: advocacy@afj.org
Telephone: 1-866-NPLOBBY (675-6229)

For assistance regarding state law in Minnesota, please contact:

Sarah Duniway,
Gray Plant Mooty,
500 IDS Center,
80 South Eighth St.,
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Phone Number: 612-632-3055