



# ELECTION COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES for Local Officials



OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

Updated April 2026

Office of the Minnesota  
Secretary of State



**Local Partners,**

As you are all well aware, elections are much more than a one-day effort – they require year-round attention in all 87 counties. From ballot creation, to public accuracy tests, to post-election reviews and canvassing, your work is essential to our democracy and makes a difference in the lives of all Minnesotans.

Our office is committed to helping you communicate with Minnesotans to continue to maintain the well-earned trust they have in our election system. We hope this guide will answer many of the questions you receive from the community. It is meant to be a reference and overview for elections happening in 2026.

In addition to this guide, know that our website – [mnvotes.gov](https://mnvotes.gov) – is a great source for factual information. In particular, the section *Secure and Fair Elections* may be helpful as it offers a detailed outline of the election security measures in place before, during, and after election day; facts about Minnesota elections; and, opportunities for public access to our elections beyond voting.

Our office also provides a suite of free, online tools to help voters including the new My Ballot tool – now known as VIP or [Voter Information Portal](#). Using VIP, voters can enter their address and find out when their next election will be held, how they can vote, and view a sample ballot.

Minnesotans can also [register to vote](#), [check their registration](#), [request an absentee ballot](#), and [track their absentee or mail ballot](#) in in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Vietnamese, Russian, Chinese, Lao, Oromo, Khmer, and Amharic.

Remember, you are the expert in your community – feel free to adapt the messaging as necessary for your community.

As always, reach out to our office with any questions. We stand ready to support you.  
Thank you for all that you do to ensure elections in Minnesota are secure and accessible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Simon".

**Steve Simon**  
**Minnesota Secretary of State**

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# VOTER REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

## WHEN CAN PEOPLE REGISTER TO VOTE IN MINNESOTA?

Voter registration occurs throughout the year in Minnesota. People can register online, at their local election office or by mail.

There is a three-week period when new registrations are not processed before election day. If someone is not registered before that deadline, they can register to vote at their polling place on election day or at their local election office when they vote early.

**REGISTER IN ADVANCE TO VOTE**

*2026 Primary Election  
Registration Deadline*

**JULY**  
**21**

*2026 General Election  
Registration Deadline*

**OCTOBER**  
**13**

Voters are encouraged to pre-register to vote to avoid lines at the polling place.  
Voters who miss this deadline may still register at their polling place on election day.

## WHAT ARE "VOTER ROLLS"?

The term "voter rolls" is not a technical term used in election administration. It is often used by the public to describe a comprehensive list of registered voters.

Registered voter lists are point-in-time snapshots of the dynamic Statewide Voter Registration System. There are two main types of registered voter lists.

**Public Information Lists:** Registered Minnesota voters can request contact information and voting history about voters for purposes related to elections, political activities, or law enforcement. There are four types of bulk reports that can be provided under this provision – walking list, detailed voting history for all elections, voter mailing labels, household mailing labels.

**Master List:** Public officials may request a master list from the county auditor for purposes related to election administration, jury selection, and in response to a law enforcement inquiry concerning a violation of or failure to comply with any criminal statute or state or local tax statute.

The table on the next page describes the information provided through registered voter lists.

**WHAT INFORMATION IS ON PUBLIC INFORMATION LISTS VS. MASTER LIST?**

	PUBLIC INFORMATION LISTS	MASTER LIST
Voter Name	X	X
Voter ID Number	X	
Date of Birth		X
Birth Year	X	
Address	X	X
Phone	X	
Registration Date	X	
County Code	X	
Minor Civil Division (MCD)	X	
Precinct Code	X	
School District Code	X	
Other District Code	X	
Summary Voting History	X*	
Detailed Voting History	X	
Permanent Absentee Status	X	
Challenged Status**		
Presidential Primary Ballot Selection **		
Voter Registration Method		
Email Address		
MN Driver's License Number or Identification Card Number		
Last Four Digits of Social Security Number		

\*Only data for the past six years is provided.

\*\*Counties may not disclose this information pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 201.091.

\*\*\*This data is private, except that the chair of each major political party receives the list of voters who selected that party.



[Minnesota Statutes § 201.091](#) outlines the creation, maintenance, and public access of voter registration lists, as well as the procedures for voter registration locations.

### WHAT IS THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM?

Minnesota’s Statewide Voter Registration System is a secure, dynamic database that acts as the record for registered voters in Minnesota. The system is maintained and supported by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. The information in the database changes constantly as new information is reviewed and processed by county election administrators to ensure voter records remain current and accurate.

Every day, Minnesotans experience life-changing events – including moving, marriage, divorce, turning 18, or becoming a citizen. These events can impact voter eligibility, which impacts the voter registration system.



Minnesotans can update their voter registration online at: [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register)

## Elections & Voting

Register To Vote

Election Day Voting

Other Ways To Vote

What's On My Ballot?

Election Results

Find County Election Office

Secure and Fair Elections

Get Involved!

### REGISTER TO VOTE

Register or Update Your Registration

Check Your Registration

#### Who can vote in Minnesota

To vote you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day (16 & 17 year olds can pre-register)
- A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote

The [Who can vote](#) webpage has more details about eligibility.

### HOW ARE VOTERS VERIFIED AND CHECKED FOR ELIGIBILITY?

All voter registrations – online or on paper – are processed by local election officials and are tracked using an online database, the Statewide Voter Registration System.

The Statewide Voter Registration System is updated daily.

All voter registrations undergo a verification process to confirm identity and residence.

- **Identity:** a voter's identity is verified when their record matches with an existing record in the Driver and Vehicle Services database or the Social Security Administration database. If a record cannot be verified, it is challenged and additional steps are required before the voter can cast a ballot (additional information on challenged voters is included in the next section).
- **Residence:** once registered to vote, a non-forwardable postcard is sent to the voter's residence to verify their address. If the postcard is returned, the voter record is challenged and additional steps are required before the voter can cast a ballot.

After records are entered into the statewide voter registration system, local election officials use the following points of data to check the eligibility of existing registrations:

- **Inactive voters:** Each year, voters who have not voted or updated their registration in four years are set to a status of "inactive" and must re-register before voting in future elections.
- **Deaths:** Deceased voters are removed upon notification from the Minnesota Department of Health or Social Security Administration.
- **Felons:** The records of those who have been convicted of felonies and are currently incarcerated are marked as challenged based upon notice from the Court System or Department of Corrections.
  - ▶ If someone tries to vote with a challenge on their record, they are required to answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote.
  - ▶ If an individual attempts to register or to vote when ineligible, their case is referred to a county attorney.
- **Revoked Voting Rights:** The court system provides notice when a court has specifically revoked the voting rights of an individual under guardianship. The records of any who are registered to vote are challenged, requiring that they answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote.
- **Non-citizens:** Driver and Vehicle Services provides a list of noncitizens here on temporary visas. The records of any who are registered to vote are challenged, requiring that they answer questions under oath before being allowed to vote, and their case is referred to a county attorney.
- **Moves:** The records of voters who have moved are updated based upon National Change of Address data provided by the Postal Service, Minnesota Driver and Vehicle Service data, or information shared between state governments.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF A VOTER REGISTRATION IS CHALLENGED?

There are many reasons why a voter might need to update their registration. If someone has moved, changed their name due to marriage or divorce, or undergone any other change to one of the parts of their eligibility to vote, they would need to show that eligibility again before being allowed to vote. Minnesota's lawmakers have established clear policies for doing so. One of these policies is the "challenged" designation within the Statewide Voter Registration System. This important designation indicates to local government administrators that more verification is needed before a person can vote. It is an extra step to ensure the integrity of the voter rolls.

The "challenged" designation often indicates that the system has identified someone who may no longer be eligible to vote at a particular address. A person cannot vote until the challenge is resolved, and if the voter's eligibility cannot be established, information is referred to the county attorney for investigation and potential prosecution.

The fact that a person is challenged does not mean that they are ineligible to vote. Challenges most often appear due to an issue with the postal delivery of a mailed notice of voter registration. Challenges may also be present due to differences in how names are entered and recorded in different government databases and reporting delays in reference systems (for example, records from the Department of Corrections are updated monthly, but individuals are released from incarceration every day).

County and local elections officials are not permitted to disclose challenge status.



[Minnesota Statutes § 201.091](#) outlines the creation, maintenance, and public access of voter registration lists, as well as the procedures for voter registration locations.



### WHAT IS AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION?

Automatic Voter Registration began in April 2024. Under this law, Minnesotans are registered to vote, or their voter registration is updated, without having to proactively check a box when applying for or renewing a driver's license or state ID.

The Department of Public Safety only sends information to the Office of the Secretary of State for applicants who have provided proof of U.S. citizenship. Examples of citizenship affirming documentation include birth certificates, passports, and certificates of naturalization. Applications are then reviewed by the Office of the Secretary to verify additional eligibility requirements are met before the information is provided to county election officials to complete the registration process.

Minnesotans automatically registered will receive a mailing and are able to opt out of registering to vote within 20 days of their registration being processed.



More information on Automatic Voter Registration including a decision tree on how registrations are verified is available at:

[www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/register-to-vote/automatic-voter-registration](http://www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/register-to-vote/automatic-voter-registration)

### WHY WOULD THERE BE A HIGH NUMBER OF CHALLENGED VOTERS IN SOME PRECINCTS?

Precincts vary widely across the state in population and demographics. In some precincts with large student populations, people move frequently. Mail delivery issues can cause a registration to be challenged – including issues frequently experienced by those in a university setting with shared living arrangements and where the mail delivery address may differ from the actual residential address.

### ARE DECEASED PEOPLE'S NAMES IN THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM?

The Statewide Voter Registration System keeps a digital record of every registered voter. This system is regularly updated with data from state and federal partners. Deceased voters are marked as deceased and removed from the list of active voters upon notification from the Minnesota Department of Health or Social Security Administration.

Local election officials may also remove voters from the list of active voters by monitoring public obituaries or upon receiving notification from a registered Minnesota voter with personal knowledge that the voter is deceased. Any attempted registration or voting in the name of a deceased record would be reported to the county attorney for investigation.

### WHY WOULD SOME PEOPLE HAVE A BIRTHDATE LISTED AS 1900?

A very small number of active voters have birth years of 1900 in the system. Minnesota state law did not require voters who registered before 1983 to provide their date of birth. When the state moved to a digital voter registration system, the birth year of 1900 was added as a placeholder.

Over the years, the majority of those who were grandfathered into the digital system with the 1900 birthdate have been updated. However, if a voter has not changed their address or name since they registered, and has consistently voted, they may not have an updated birthdate recorded.



Minnesotans can update their voter registration online at: [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register)

### WHAT IS "VOUCHING?"

"Vouching" describes the process in which registered voters may sign an oath confirming the address of another person so that the person can register to vote or update their registration on Election Day.

Minnesota law has allowed for vouching for more than 50 years. However, use of the process is very rare. In the 2024 general election, less than 0.6% of votes cast used this process. Around 71% of those voters were already registered to vote but needed to update their name or address in their voter record.

Vouching can only be used to provide proof of a potential voter's residence in the precinct. The potential voter would still have their identity verified in the same manner as those who register prior to Election Day. Vouching is commonly used in senior living facilities by residents who have not updated their driver's licenses to reflect their current residence. It is also used in cases where an eligible voter has recently moved to a new address and lacks identification indicating the new address.

Under the law, the only persons eligible to vouch are voters registered in the same precinct as the person for whom they are vouching, or employees of authorized residential facilities who provide proof of their employment at the facility. Vouchers must sign an affidavit under penalty of perjury that they personally know the person being vouched for is a resident of the precinct.

Every voter who registers or updates their registration on Election Day, including those who are vouched for, is recorded by local election officials and verified in the statewide voter registration system after each election. If a discrepancy is found during this process it is referred to local law enforcement for investigation and possible prosecution.



[Minnesota Statutes § 201.061](#) outlines voter registration processes including setting standards for vouching.

# VOTING

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRIMARY ELECTION AND A GENERAL ELECTION?

In a partisan primary election, voters may vote for candidates in only one major party. Minnesota has two major parties Democrat-Farmer-Labor and Republican. The candidate who receives the most votes from each major political party will advance to the general election.

Non-partisan contests for certain offices may also require a primary election if more than double the number of candidates file for office than the number to be elected (for example, county offices or municipal offices that allow for primaries). In those instances, the primary election will reduce the number of candidates that will appear on the general election ballot to twice the number to be elected.

In the general election, voters must choose their top candidate(s) for an office. Only one candidate per major party will appear on the ballot, along with any other qualifying minor party or independent candidates. The candidate who receives the most votes for an office will assume the office at the time established in law.

## HOW DO CANDIDATES GET ON THE BALLOT?

The most common way to file for office is to complete an affidavit of candidacy and pay a filing fee to the appropriate filing officer during the designated candidate filing period. There are some variations depending on the office. For example, candidates for judicial office or for county attorney must present a copy of their current attorney license. And there are additional requirements for candidates running for partisan office who are not running as a major party candidate.



Learn more about becoming a candidate at:  
[mnvotes.gov/candidates](https://mnvotes.gov/candidates)

## WHO CAN VOTE IN MINNESOTA?

To register and vote in Minnesota you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day (16- and 17-year-olds can pre-register)
- A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote



The [Who Can Vote webpage](#) has more details about eligibility. If you are eligible to vote, you can register to vote at [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register).

## CAN NON-CITIZENS VOTE IN MINNESOTA?

No. It is a crime for non-citizens to vote. Only citizens of the United States are eligible to vote in elections in Minnesota.

This includes local elections such as city, town or school district elections.

Green card holders are not eligible, and new citizens are only eligible to register after completing their naturalization ceremony.

## CAN FELONS VOTE IN MINNESOTA?

Your criminal record does not affect your right to vote in Minnesota unless you are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction.

## HOW DO I VOTE?

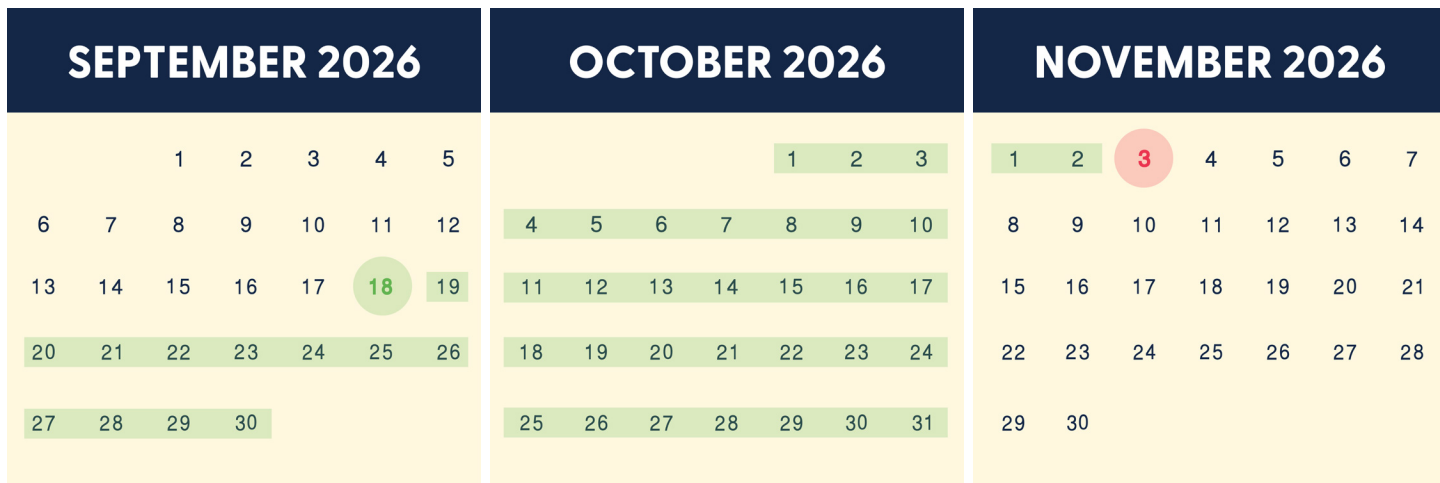
There are three ways to vote in Minnesota – by mail, early in-person, or in-person on Election Day.

1. **By Mail:** Minnesotans can vote by mail by requesting a ballot at [mnvotes.gov/absentee](https://mnvotes.gov/absentee). About 150,000 Minnesotans live in mail ballot precincts and will be mailed a ballot automatically if they are registered to vote. Voters can track their ballot at [mnvotes.gov/trackmyballot](https://mnvotes.gov/trackmyballot).
2. **Early In-Person:** Minnesotans can vote absentee in person at their local election office during business hours starting 46 days before an election. There are also special extended and weekend hours in the days leading up to a statewide election.
3. **In-Person on Election Day:** Minnesotans can vote in-person at their local polling place on Election Day. Find a polling place at [mnvotes.gov/pollfinder](https://mnvotes.gov/pollfinder). Check your registration online at [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register). All polling places are open until 8 p.m. As long as voters are in line to vote by 8 p.m. they can vote. In Minnesota, people can register to vote on election day.



## WHEN CAN I VOTE?

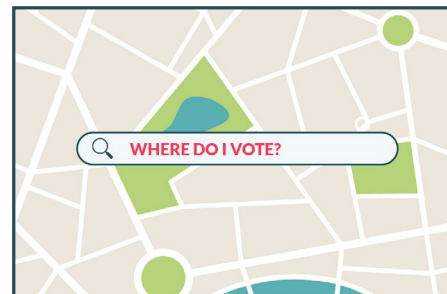
In Minnesota, you can always vote at your polling place on Election Day. You can also vote at designated locations starting 46 days before Election Day for most elections. For the state general election, there are mandatory additional evening and weekend hours for voting before Election Day.



## WHERE DO I VOTE?

Minnesotans can vote early at their county election office. Many counties also offer additional [voting locations before election day](#).

For voting on Election Day, you can find your polling place using the free online tool from the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, available at [mnvotes.gov/pollfinder](https://mnvotes.gov/pollfinder).



## WHAT ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR VOTERS?

There are many ways for voters with a range of disabilities to vote privately and independently. Minnesotans can bring someone to help, ask an election judge, use a machine to help them mark their ballot, or even vote from their car.



Learn more:

<https://www.sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/election-day-voting/get-help-voting>

## HOW DO I KNOW WHO WILL BE ON MY BALLOT?

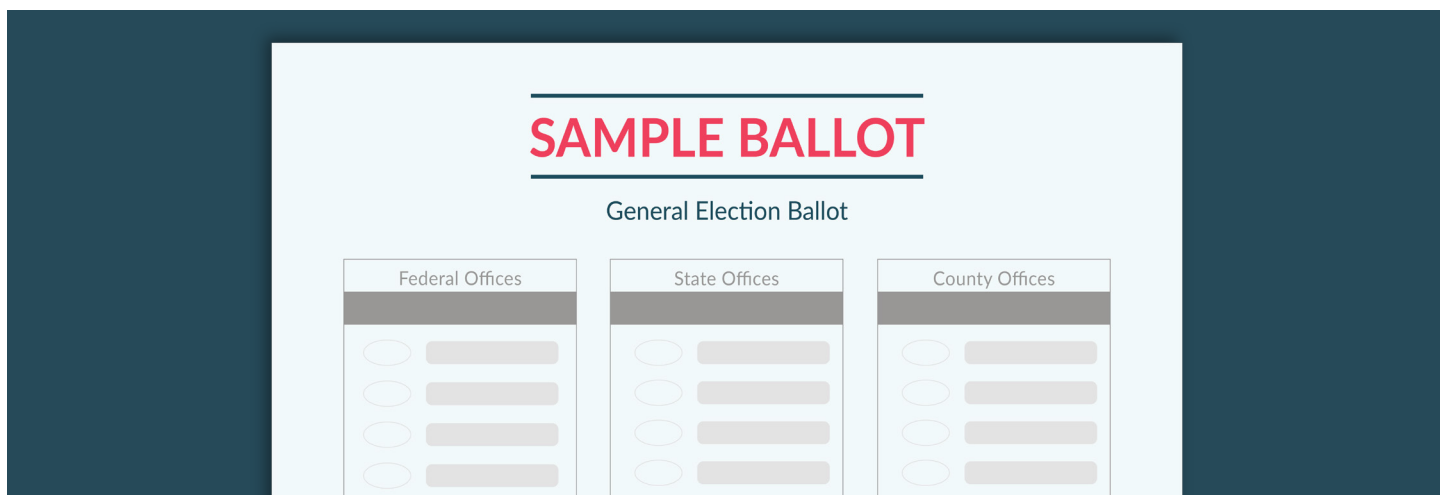
The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State offers a free online Voter Information Portal that allows Minnesotans to look up election information based on their address. Using the Voter Information Portal, Minnesotans can find when their next election will be held, where they vote, and who will be on their ballot.



Access the Voter Information Portal at:  
[mnvotes.gov/myballot](https://mnvotes.gov/myballot)

Information is posted at least 45 days before an election.

A sample ballot is not available for all local elections. In some cases, voters may need to contact the local government (city, town or school district) holding the election.



## WHEN ARE BALLOTS COUNTED?

Absentee and mail ballots may be inserted into ballot counters starting 18 days before election day. Ballots cast in-person starting 18 days before election day are placed directly into tabulators. However, no totals are produced for absentee or mail ballots until after polling places close at 8 p.m. on election night.

At polling places, results are only produced after the close of polls at 8 p.m. and after the last voter in line at the polling place as completed the voting process and inserted their ballot into the tabulator. The count is open to the public.

## DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO I VOTED FOR?

No. Voter history is tracked and recorded in the statewide voter registration system indicating whether or not a voter cast a ballot in an election. However, voter selections are always confidential and never tracked.

# ABSENTEE/MAIL BALLOTS

## WHEN DOES MY ABSENTEE OR MAIL BALLOT NEED TO BE RETURNED?

Absentee and mail ballots must be returned by the following time on Election Day in order to be counted:

- For absentee ballots returned in person or in a drop box: 5:00 p.m.
- For absentee ballots returned via mail or package delivery: 8:00 p.m.
- For mail ballots returned in person, in a drop box, or by mail: 8:00 p.m.
- For eligible voters using the agent delivery process: 8:00 p.m.

To ensure timely delivery, it is strongly recommended that ballots are mailed back at least one week before Election Day or returned in person.

## HOW ARE ABSENTEE BALLOTS TRACKED?

All absentee and mail ballots are tracked using a unique identifier number. The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State offers a free online service that allows all voters to track the status of their absentee or mail ballot.



You can track your ballot at: [mnvotes.gov/trackmyballot](https://mnvotes.gov/trackmyballot)

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY ABSENTEE BALLOT IS RETURNED?

After your absentee ballot is received at the elections office, the signature envelope is reviewed by an absentee ballot board. This board checks that the signature envelope was filled out correctly by the voter and their witness. Each envelope is reviewed by at least two members of the board.

## HOW DOES THE BALLOT BOARD DECIDE IF A BALLOT IS ACCEPTED?

*They look at these things on the signature envelope:*

- Ensure the name and address match what was on the absentee application
- Ensure the ID matches what was on the absentee application
- Ensure the voter has signed the envelope
- Ensure a witness has completed the witness portion

*The board will also:*

- Ensure the voter is registered, or has included a properly completed voter registration application
- Ensure the voter has not already voted in the election

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY ABSENTEE BALLOT IS ACCEPTED?

Accepted ballots are set aside in a secure area, separated by precinct. Starting 18 days before the election, the signature envelopes (with voter information) are opened and the ballot envelopes (with no voter information) are removed and set aside so that no one knows whose ballot is whose. Once the ballot envelopes are separated, they are opened, reviewed by ballot board members, duplicated if necessary, and inserted in the ballot counter. Ballots need to be duplicated if a ballot is not readable by the ballot counter, for example if a ballot is damaged or on the incorrect ballot style for that precinct.

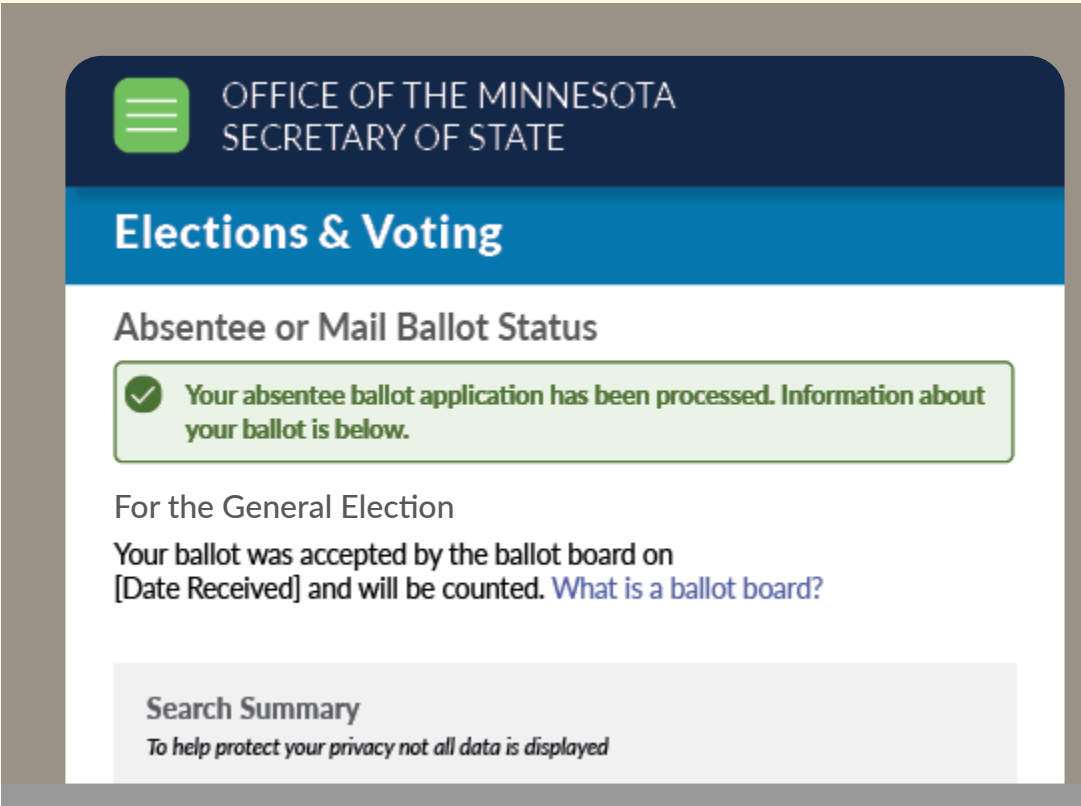
## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY ABSENTEE BALLOT IS REJECTED?

If your ballot is rejected more than five days before the election, you will be mailed a replacement ballot along with an explanation of why your ballot was rejected.

If your ballot is rejected within five days of the election, election officials will attempt to contact you to let you know.

## CAN A PERSON GET MORE THAN ONE BALLOT?

Only one vote is counted per voter. And a voter must always only have a single valid ballot. However, if a voter makes a mistake on their ballot they may request to have that ballot spoiled. Once spoiled, they are issued a new replacement one. All ballots are tracked so election officials can ensure that only one ballot is cast per person.



The screenshot shows the 'OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE' logo and 'Elections & Voting' header. The main content is titled 'Absentee or Mail Ballot Status' and features a green checkmark icon with the text: 'Your absentee ballot application has been processed. Information about your ballot is below.' Below this, it states 'For the General Election Your ballot was accepted by the ballot board on [Date Received] and will be counted. [What is a ballot board?](#)' At the bottom, there is a 'Search Summary' section with a note: 'To help protect your privacy not all data is displayed'.

## HOW DO ELECTION OFFICIALS MAKE SURE PEOPLE CAN'T VOTE TWICE?

All absentee ballots are tracked individually and linked to a voter in Minnesota's voter registration database. Once a ballot is accepted, if that voter tries to vote again, the election official or election judge will see that the voter has an accepted ballot. Voter rosters in the polling place are also updated throughout election day as more absentee ballots are accepted.

# ELECTION SECURITY

## ARE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL ALLOWED AT POLLING PLACES?

Minnesota laws are clear in that law enforcement personnel may not be stationed at or within 50 feet of the entrance of a polling place. They can only enter a polling place if called by the head election judge to restore the peace, or when voting, updating their registration, or registering to vote.



[Minnesota Statutes § 204.06](#) outlines conduct in and near polling places.

## WHO CAN BE AT A POLLING PLACE?

Only individuals who are administering or taking part in elections – or who would otherwise be in a polling location for work or school may be at the polling place.

Each major political party may appoint one challenger per polling place. The only action a challenger may take is to contest a voter's eligibility, if and only if they have personal knowledge of that voter's ineligibility. Suspicion is not a basis for making a challenge. The challenger must personally know that a specific person is not eligible to vote for a specific reason.

Media are permitted in polling places as long as they do not talk to voters in the polling place, make a list of people voting, or interfere with the voting process.



[Minnesota Statutes § 204.06](#) outlines conduct in and near polling places.

## DOES MINNESOTA USE PAPER BALLOTS?

Yes, in Minnesota all ballots are cast on paper. If someone is unable to mark their ballot with a pen, they are able to use a ballot-marking device at their polling place or receive assistance from someone of their choosing or request assistance from election judges.

Ballots are stored and secured locally before, during, and after each election.

## WHO CREATES THE BALLOTS?

Local election officials work closely with election vendors to complete the ballot layout, design and printing. Some counties directly administer most of the steps in this process, while others partner with vendors to perform selected functions. Local election officials are always responsible for proofing and approving ballots before they are printed and issued for use.

## HOW ARE BALLOTS SECURED?

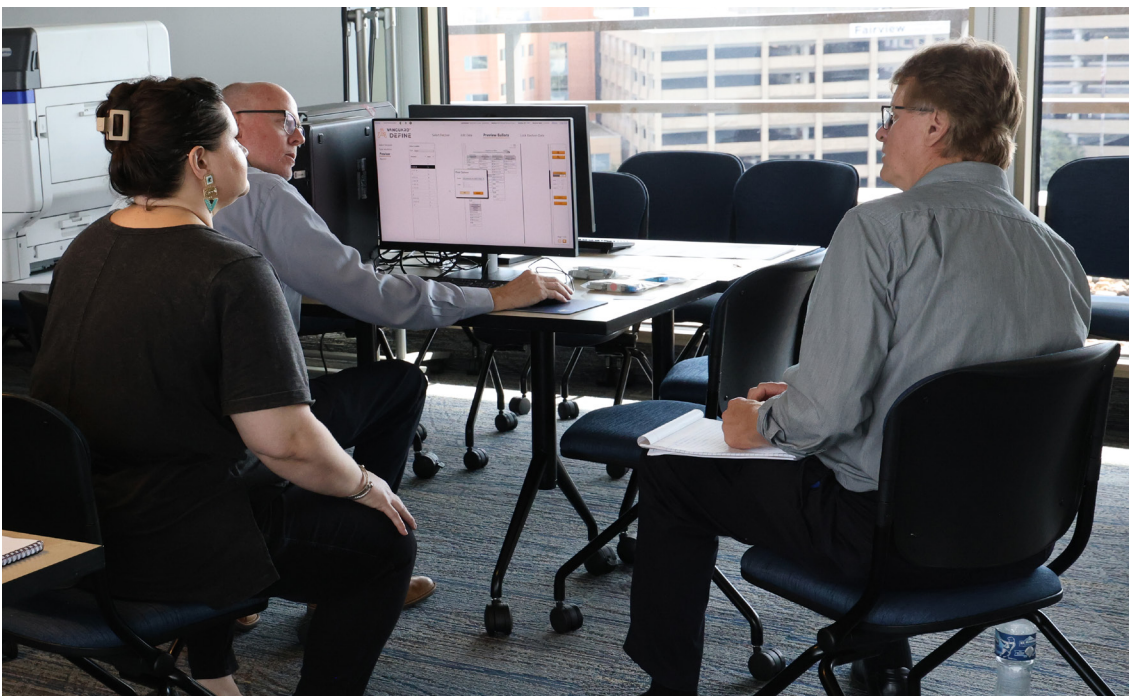
Local election officials take several steps to ensure ballots are securely handled before, during, and after you vote in compliance with requirements in state law. These safeguards include:

- Ballot quantities logged and inventoried
- Secure and documented transfer of ballot materials
- Storing and sealing ballots in tamper-evident cases
- Storing ballot cases in a locked facility with highly-restricted access for only authorized personnel
- Maintaining documentation to log and track access to secure storage

## HOW IS VOTING EQUIPMENT SECURED?

Local election officials ensure voting equipment is secured against tampering in compliance with requirements in state law. Measures to secure voting equipment include:

- Storing voting equipment in a secure, locked facility with highly restricted access to only authorized officials.
- Locks and tamper proof seals placed on voting equipment during testing, documented, and verified on Election Day.
- Secure transportation of voting equipment from election offices to polling places.
- Maintaining a physical chain of custody document to track who, where, when, and why voting equipment was accessed from the time of purchase through the time of discontinued usage.



## WHAT KINDS OF BALLOT TABULATORS ARE USED IN MINNESOTA?

All ballot tabulators used in Minnesota are optical scan, so they “read” the ballot and record a vote for each candidate that has their target (usually an oval) filled in on the ballot. Equipment is usually designed for use in a polling place, at a central counting location, or both. Central count devices typically can handle higher volumes and may be used to count polling place ballots, absentee ballots, mail ballots, or some combination. Certified ballot counting equipment includes:

- Liberty Vote ImageCast Central (central count)
- Liberty Vote ImageCast Evolution (polling place)
- ES&S Digital Scan 200 (polling place & central count)
- ES&S Digital Scan 300 (polling place & central count)
- ES&S Digital Scan 450 (central count)
- ES&S Digital Scan 850 (central count)
- ES&S Digital Scan 950 (central count)
- Hart Vanguard Capture (central count)
- Hart Vanguard Flex (polling place)
- Hart Verity Central (central count)
- Hart Verity Scan (polling place)

Other tabulators have been used in the past. A very limited number of small precincts in the state are still counted by hand. [View a map of ballot tabulators used in the 2022 general election.](#)

## ARE BALLOT TABULATORS CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET?

No. The ballot tabulators approved for use in Minnesota are not connected to the internet.

Minnesota law does permit the transmission of unofficial election results on election night. Some counties choose to do this using a limited secure encrypted modem transmission that can only be initiated by an authorized election official after results have been printed.

## HOW DO YOU TEST ELECTION EQUIPMENT?

Before election equipment can be used in Minnesota, it must first complete extensive testing at a federally accredited test lab. Then, the equipment must undergo additional testing performed by the Office of the Secretary of State to ensure compliance with Minnesota’s election laws. Only after being certified by the Office of the Secretary of State can voting equipment be purchased by local elections officials.

Every election, local election officials test all equipment to be used in that election. For the preliminary testing, ballots are marked with assistive voting devices, a set of pre-marked ballots is fed into the ballot tabulators, and the machine’s totals are compared with the pre-determined results.

Some equipment is also tested at a Public Accuracy Test shortly before the election. Public Accuracy Tests allow anyone to watch local election officials test election equipment before the election. Contact your local election official to find the time and location of their next scheduled test.

## WHO BUYS ELECTION EQUIPMENT?

Local governments are responsible for buying election equipment. They can only purchase and use equipment that meets federal and state standards.

## HOW ARE ELECTION RESULTS CONFIRMED?

After the close of polls, election judges and local election officials tabulate the results at polling places and from absentee and mail ballots. Results are reported by precinct once both polling place and absentee/mail ballot totals are completed. For statewide elections, counties report these unofficial results to the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State to be shared with the public on election night.

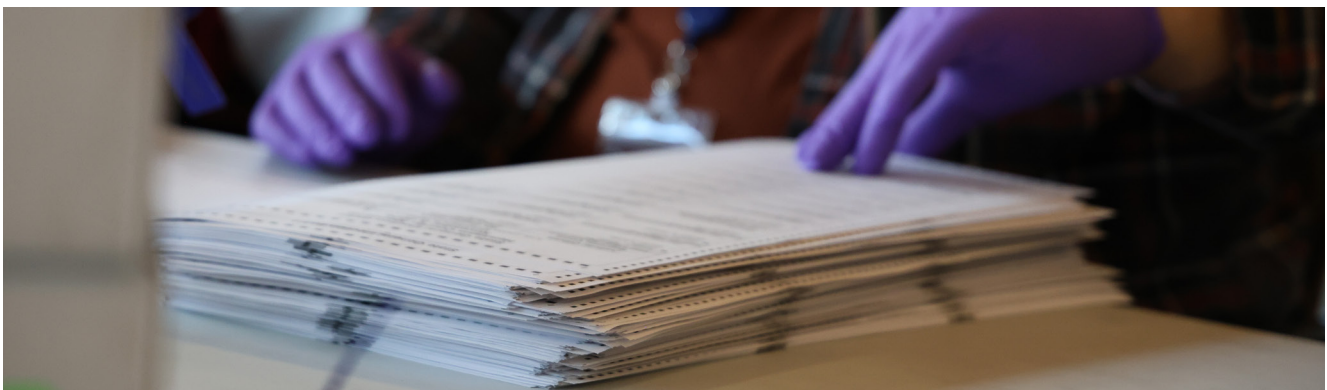
After Election Day, results and statistics are reviewed and proofed to confirm accuracy. Results are certified by [canvassing boards](#). County canvassing boards certify the votes cast within the county for races that go beyond the county boundaries and certify the election results for offices up for election that are voted upon exclusively within that county (county offices and legislative districts that are entirely contained within the county). County canvassing boards also randomly select precincts to undergo a post-election audit to verify that the voting equipment accurately counted the ballots.

The state canvassing board is responsible for canvassing and certifying the results of all statewide elections, including state and federal offices, state constitutional amendment ballot questions, and state legislative and judicial offices that overlap more than one county. In conducting the canvass, the state canvassing board compiles and reviews the results as indicated by each of the 87 county canvassing reports.

## DOES MINNESOTA HAVE POST-ELECTION AUDITS?

Yes. After every state general election, Minnesota counties perform a post-election review of election results returned by the optical scan ballot counters used in the state. The review is a hand count of the ballots for each eligible election (U.S. President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, and Governor) in precincts that are selected at random by the county canvassing board. The results of the hand count are compared with the results from the voting system used in those precincts. Post-election reviews are open to the public and results are posted online – [Post-election Review of Voting Systems](#).

Results from the post-election reviews have always affirmed the accuracy of Minnesota's voting equipment.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

### ***2026 Voter Participation Toolkit***

A document with priority messages for newsletters, emails, and social media; as well as outreach tools and ideas.

- PDF: [2026 Voter Participation Toolkit](#)

### ***Secure and Fair Elections***

The Office of Minnesota Secretary of State has developed a public webpage where Minnesotans can learn about election security measures including specific processes in place to secure elections before, during, and after Election Day.

- Website: [mnvotes.gov/secure](https://mnvotes.gov/secure)

### ***Minnesota Election Facts***

The Office of Minnesota Secretary of State has a public webpage dedicated to debunking common myths and misunderstandings about election administration.

- Website: [mnvotes.gov/facts](https://mnvotes.gov/facts)

### ***Register to Vote Online***

Minnesotans who are eligible to vote can register to vote for free online through the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State. To register they will need their Minnesota driver's license or Minnesota identification card number, or the last four numbers of their Social Security number.

- Website: [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register)

### ***Voter Information Portal***

The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State offers a free online Voter Information Portal that allows Minnesotans to look up election information based on their address. Using the Voter Information Portal, Minnesotans can find when their next election will be held, where they vote, and who will be on their ballot.

- Website: [mnvotes.gov/myballot](https://mnvotes.gov/myballot)

### ***Absentee Ballot Request***

Registered voters can request a ballot to vote from home as soon as 46 days before an election.

- Website: [mnvotes.gov/absentee](https://mnvotes.gov/absentee)

### ***Permanent Absentee Voter Request***

Registered voters can request to be a permanent absentee voter and receive an absentee ballot will at their residence address for every election they are eligible to vote in.

- Website: [Minnesota Permanent Absentee Voter Request](#)

### **Translated Voter Resources**

Minnesota first began providing election instruction materials in other languages in 1896 and has provided translated printed materials since. In 2016, Secretary Simon announced the [largest collection of foreign language voter resources ever made available by the Secretary of State's Office](#), which included ten foreign language pages on the office's website. In 2020, videos were added to the web pages to provide information about who can vote, how they can vote, and where they can vote. As of 2024, eligible Minnesota voters can use online interactive tools in 11 languages to [register to vote](#), [check their registration](#), [request an absentee ballot](#), and [track their absentee or mail ballot](#).

#### **Webpages:**

- [Spanish/Español](#)
- [Hmong/Hmoob](#)
- [Somali/Soomaali](#)
- [Vietnamese/Tiếng Việt](#)
- [Russian/Русский](#)
- [Chinese/中文](#)
- [Lao/ພາສາລາວ](#)
- [Oromo/Afaan Oromo](#)
- [Khmer/ខ្មែរ](#)
- [Amharic/አማርኛ](#)
- [Karen/ကညီကျိာ်](#)

## U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION (EAC)

The [U.S. Election Assistance Commission \(EAC\)](#) is an independent, bipartisan commission whose mission is to help election officials improve the administration of elections and help Americans participate in the voting process.

There are many resources available at no cost to local election officials to help them develop skills around communicating with the public. (See: [Clearinghouse Resources on Communications](#)). Below are some of the key resources.

### **Video Training Series: Communications 101**

An interactive video training series with short activities designed to illustrate core concepts related to public communication. The series includes five videos and takes less than 20 minutes to watch from start to end.

- Available on the [EAC's YouTube channel](#).

### **Communications 101**

Guide covering the basics for successful communication with the public, including planning, branding & messaging, media relations, holding events, & crisis communication strategies.

- Webpage: [Communications 101 | U.S. Election Assistance Commission](#) (July 2024)

### **Communications Checklist**

Best practices and other resources about successful election communication, including award-winning strategies from election offices across the country.

- PDF: [Communications Resources for New Election Officials](#) (July 2024)

### **Quick Start Guide: Media and Public Relations**

Guide outlining three key steps election officials can take to communicate proactively with media and the public.

- PDF: [Quick Start Guide: Media and Public Relations](#) (May 2022)

### **Best Practices: FAQs for Election Officials**

The EAC's Best Practices: FAQ toolkit is designed to assist election officials in creating (or improving) FAQs for their websites. Additionally, the toolkit provides social media guides that election officials can use to quickly promote their FAQs as a trusted source of information.

- Website: [Best Practices: FAQs for Election Officials](#) (December 2025)
- PDF: [Best Practices: FAQs](#)

### ***Election Official Social Media Toolkit***

Toolkit with over 150 customizable images accompanied by alt text, sample posts, and quick tips for community management & social media etiquette.

- PDF: [Election Official Social Media Toolkit](#) (Spring 2024)

### ***Accessibility Checklist: Accessible Communications***

Guide on creating accessible communications across different mediums, including electronic documents, in-person communications, videos and virtual meetings, and social media posts.

- PDF: [EAC Accessibility Checklist](#)

### ***Election Infrastructure Incident Response Communications Guide (CISA & EAC)***

Resource to help officials develop effective incident communications plans with templates and considerations for maintaining transparency, and ensuring accurate and timely updates.

- PDF: [Election Infrastructure Incident Response Communications Guide](#) (October 2024)