



OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA
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Minnesotans should not have to choose between their health and their right to vote.

The presence of COVID-19 requires us to treat the upcoming statewide elections as a public health issue. The CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health have urged voters to avoid polling places if possible. People have taken that advice seriously. According to a recent national poll, 66% of Americans feel uncomfortable going to a polling place during this pandemic. We should listen to them.

In Minnesota, we will average around 1,000 voters per polling place in the general election. (We have about 3,000 polling places, and we expect roughly three million voters.) That's too many voters circulating in the relatively tight confines of our polling places on a single day. We need to drive that number down substantially in order to make Election Day safe for voters and poll workers.

What can Minnesotans do to make polling places safer?

(1) Help persuade Minnesotans to vote from home in 2020.

Under current law, any eligible voter may order an absentee ballot to come to their home. There is no requirement that the voter state a reason or an excuse. They just need to make a request that the ballot be mailed to them. The best way to order an absentee ballot is to go to mnvotes.org and make a request online. (There are also options to fill out a paper form.) The more people who vote absentee by mail, the safer our election will be.

(2) Help persuade Minnesotans to serve as poll workers.

A statewide election in Minnesota requires 30,000 people to serve as poll workers (also called election judges). Without adequate staffing, polling places will not function well (or at all) – which could potentially shut out voters. Typically, a large percentage of poll workers are over the age of 65 – a high risk demographic for serious COVID-19 complications. We need to recruit poll workers who are not in high risk categories. The job is a paid position. And our office will ensure each polling location has protective supplies (such as masks, gloves, and wipes), as well as social distancing protocols.

What can Foundation and Non-Profits do to support these efforts?

- Share the voter engagement toolkit – a package of communication tools to use in your existing relationships and communication channels to promote voter information and encourage grantees to promote voter education. The voter toolkit will include item such as: Sample social media posts, shareable graphics, or sample emails to for distribution to a variety of audiences.
- Support community led voter education initiatives happening in your area and networks, including student led voter engagement initiatives on campuses
- Convene your own community event with the focus on voter participation and voting processes