

Precinct Caucus Planning Guide

For Organizing Unit Leaders

Caucus Night - Tuesday, February 6, 2018

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Introduction

Whether you've planned many caucuses, or this is your first, there are lots of things to consider. This manual is intended to function both as a checklist and to provide more in-depth information and suggestions about running and organizing a precinct caucus. It lists general guidelines for caucus planning, including some local variations depending on the size and structure of local units. Use the methods that work best for your unit, taking into account local considerations, history, and needs.

Location

Proof of Insurance

If you are running an event at a venue that requires proof of insurance, you need to complete the form found on the DFL web site (under Resources → Resources for Local Party Units).

Direct Link: <https://www.dfl.org/resources/>

To get your request processed, submit your completed form to Executive Assistant Lindsay Jacobson (ljacobson@DFL.org) at least two weeks prior to the location reporting deadline. When you complete the form, be sure to fill it out completely or it may not be processed by our insurance agency.

You should confirm the information included on your form with your venue's administrator--in particular, the name of the additional insured needs to be exact, and it may differ from the name of the organization providing the venue. The insurance agency will send the certificate directly to your venue's administrator, so you need to include the correct e-mail address for the person who is requiring the proof of insurance. Locations should be identified as soon as possible!

Location Reporting – Due November 1

Report caucus locations to the Minnesota DFL Party Affairs office no later than November 1, 2017.

Location Considerations

Note: it is preferable, although not required, to hold a caucus within the precinct if feasible (note page 1 of the DFL Official Call, as well as Minnesota statutes 202A.15 and 202A.156).

Accessibility

Consider whether you will be using

- One centralized location
- One location for each precinct
- Multiple locations within a unit

If you use multiple locations, be sure to be very clear in your advertisements, invitations, and flyers, which precincts will convene at which locations

If using one location

- For geographically large areas, be sure the location is centrally-located or near a transportation hub
- For large turn-out areas, be sure the location has multiple large break-out rooms, as many precincts will not fit into standard classroom sizes

Locations must be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. While most public buildings are required to be so by code, many are not actually as accessible as they appear on paper

If in doubt, do a personal tour before booking the location. Look for:

- Sufficient handicapped parking spaces
 - Automatic door openers on at least one entrance or low push-bars
 - Restrooms with wide aisles and doors
 - Room for all precincts to be in locations reachable without stairs
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Site Arrangement

A large entryway or common area is desirable for sign-in, so that attendees are not confined to a small area if they have to wait in line for help

An easily understandable floor plan, and maps of the building, are desirable

If the location is more complex, provide volunteer guides who have been given a tour beforehand

Consider handing out individual building maps, marked with precinct and room numbers, to people as they enter the building

If precincts are likely to be either very small, or too big for a normal classroom, it is often possible to have multiple precincts meet in large common areas such as cafeterias and auditoriums

If you have multiple locations, be sure you have a site coordinator who can handle each site

Requirements for the Caucus Location

Signage:

The precinct name and a map of the precinct should be clearly posted at the location of each caucus.

Signs indicating the nearest accessible bathrooms should be posted around the site.

Convenors

Convenor Selection and Reporting

Please identify caucus convenors as soon as possible. Prepare a complete list with their names and contact information. Keep a copy of this information for yourself.

Caucus convenors are often, but not necessarily, the precinct chairs. Each precinct caucus should have its own convenor.

Things to keep in mind for convenor selection:

- *Are they comfortable being in front of a group?*
- *Can they be at the site on time – by 6:00 p.m.?*
- *Can they get to a training?*
- *Let them know they don't have to be caucus chair, but it would be helpful if they would be*

Convenor Training

Plan to have at least one in-person training for caucus convenors

If they cannot attend training, try to sit down one-on-one with as many convenors as possible.

If you absolutely cannot meet with every convenor, be sure you have written materials for each convenor who cannot attend the training

Training Outline

Be sure each convenor knows they are representing the Minnesota DFL party to their precinct

Caucus convenors must arrive early to set up their sites. Convenors should each find additional volunteers from their precinct to help with registration, the preference ballot, resolutions etc.

Caucus timeline is as follows:

- 6:00 pm set up
- 6:30 registration and balloting begin
- 7:00 time-certain for convening caucus
- 8:00 caucus must not close before this time

Convenors should listen to their caucus attendees, be friendly, and keep things moving on task. Have caucus members introduce themselves if caucus size permits.

Go through the convenor/chair instructions from start to finish during training.

Be sure they understand each portion of the instructions.

Run through the agenda and the sample rules

Resolution instructions

Resolutions must be submitted on the Minnesota DFL Resolution Form, which can be found on page A-1 in the Official Call. Caucus Chair must ensure that all resolution **forms indicate whether they passed or failed.**

Call instructions

Explain the Call to convenors

Run through the Precinct caucuses section on pages 1-3 of the 2018-2019 Official Call, as well as the Walking Subcaucus Procedure on page 4.

Preference Ballot

Balloting needs to be accurate and run like an election

Be sure to go through preference ballot procedures with all convenors

Balloting shall begin when registration opens at 6:30 p.m., and must remain open at least until 8:00 p.m.

Only ballots cast for candidates officially registered for the preference ballot will be counted.

A caucus should not have more ballots than they have members signed in, so be sure convenors are double-checking that all caucus attendees are signed in before balloting ends.

Let convenors know how they will pick up packets and materials

Remind convenors where to drop off materials after caucuses

Convenor packets

Convenor packets should be handed out either at convenor trainings or before precinct caucuses so that convenors have time to become familiar with them

They should include all copies of the documents convenors will need for their caucuses, which are listed on the ***2018 Precinct Caucus Kit Preparation Instructions for OU Chairs.***

Documents for each Caucus

Blank registration forms

In 2018, an online tool for electronic caucus registration will be available to all precinct caucuses. Using this tool, which accesses the VoteBuilder database of registered voters, makes it unnecessary to use sign-in sheets from the DFL's VoteBuilder database, as was done in the past. Training on using the tool will be provided in January, before caucuses.

Units that choose to not use the online tool should print enough copies of the blank registration sheets to register attendees.

Remind convenors that caucus attendees who have not signed in cannot participate in the preference ballot or caucus. Those who have sent a Non-Attendee Participation Form or letter may be elected as a delegate to the next convention level

Precinct Convenor/Caucus Chair Instructions

A copy of this will be provided to each unit

Make copies and place one in each caucus packet

This is a state-standard form, and you may need to include some local information

If the instruction form does not include information on local unit practices, such as electing convention committee members or electing one set of delegates for county and one for city conventions, you should prepare and include supplementary materials for the convenors

Map of Precinct Boundaries

Can be found at: <https://www.gis.leg.mn/html/precincts2016.htm>

2018-2019 DFL Official Call

Hand out one per precinct (or have copies available at each location)

Used for clarifying caucus rules and rules for conventions

DFL Constitution and Bylaws

Hand out one per precinct (or have copies available at each location)

Used for clarifying caucus rules and rules for conventions

DFL Platform

Hand out one per precinct (or have copies available at each location)

Election Judge Sign-up

Election Judge information should be recorded on the caucus registration system and on the appropriate caucus report form.

Preference Ballot

The Minnesota DFL will conduct a gubernatorial Preference Ballot at the 2018 precinct caucuses

Ballots and instructions will not be handed out with the rest of the packet information

The official roster of eligible candidates will not be complete until January 2, 2018. Official ballots and reporting instructions will be supplied to organizing units before precinct caucus night

Ballot duplication is the responsibility of the Organizing Unit chair. Be sure to have extra ballots available at each caucus location.

Ballots

Use the official forms provided by the State DFL. Do not create your own ballot or tally form.

Be sure to provide sufficient ballots for all attendees

Ballots are given to attendees at sign-in

Ballots should only be given to attendees who will be 18 at the time of the general election, November 6, 2018. Check eligibility at registration.

Voting

Attendees check the appropriate box next to the candidate's name. Ballots do not need to be signed on the back. Only candidates who are included on the official list of Preference Ballot nominees (or Uncommitted status) should be counted.

Ballot box or collection envelope

An envelope or ballot box should be provided to each precinct for delegates to place completed ballots

Clearly label each ballot box with precinct name if more than one precinct is meeting in the same room. You must have one ballot box per precinct.

Tellers, elected by the caucus, tally the ballots in the caucus room at 8:00 p.m., unless people are still registering for the caucus.

After ballots are counted, the tellers must complete the tally form and announce the tally to the caucus

Instructions for reporting results to DFL headquarters on caucus night will be provided to Organizing Units.

Instructions

Caucus elects tellers to count the ballots

Only candidates named on the official DFL Preference Ballot or "Uncommitted" are allowed

Ballots that are not filled out or which have a write-in candidate are considered spoiled.

The number of ballots cast must be equal to or less than the number of eligible voters signed in at the precinct caucus

Local Unit Procedures

If your local unit has special procedures or needs, add these instructions in the precinct caucus packet and to the materials listed above

Check with city and county units in years when they will be holding elections, to see if they have any special procedures for the caucus

Local unit procedures can be listed separately or as part of an appended version of the agenda provided by the Minnesota DFL.

Some common examples of local unit procedures:

Local delegate elections

Volunteer forms

Information about upcoming events

Convention committee elections

Some units provide a convention committee sign-up form to pass around. Elections are held only if multiple people are interested in the same spot; otherwise, the slate can be elected by a voice vote of the caucus attendees.

If, however, the caucus has adjourned, the Caucus Chair may choose to simply include a list of volunteers with their packet

In that case, the local unit should have each committee vote to accept members on that sheet. Convention committee members help plan arrangements, decide on rules, screen candidates, and prepare credentials reports. They need not be delegates or alternates to the unit convention.

Convention committee meeting notices should be prepared for distribution at the precinct caucus.

Any committee members elected at the caucus should have information about when their committees will meet before they leave.

Caucus Night Procedures

Distribution and Collection of Materials

If precinct caucuses are being held at different locations, arrange delivery of packets to precinct caucus convenors before the caucus.

If precinct caucuses are being held at the same location, distribute preparatory materials to the convenor before the caucus and distribute the report forms to be filled out at the caucus location

Arrange with precinct caucus convenors where to have materials returned at the end of the night. You should have contact information for each convenor.

Think ahead to your unit conventions

Collect any information that does not go to the State DFL

Convention committee lists

Local volunteer forms or sheets

If you know who will be involved in planning the convention, be sure they are kept in the loop for things like caucus registration, delegate counts, and complaints that might turn in to credentials challenges

Preference Ballot

Opening and Closing Times

Voting is open from 6:30-8:00

Ballots are tallied at 8:00, unless people are still registering for the caucus. Ballots should be tallied and reported as soon afterwards as possible.

Reporting procedures

All votes in the Preference Ballot must be recorded on the official tally sheet

Online reporting of results should be completed as soon as possible on Caucus Night

The caucus chair or teller reads the results for their caucus at the end of the balloting period

Reporting to State DFL

In 2018, the Minnesota DFL is inaugurating an electronic caucus registration tool that, when used effectively, will eliminate the need for data entry after the Caucuses.

This process will require additional training for users, although each party unit can determine the best manner in which it will manage the information using this new system.

Please be sure to work with the State DFL Office to ensure that your unit knows how it will handle the reporting of caucus attendance and delegate elections. Data and Targeting Director Sarah Black can be reached at 651-251-6333 or sblack@df.org

Statewide Preference Ballot

Results must be reported immediately on caucus night. Instructions for reporting by phone or online will be provided to Organizing Units before caucus night. Each precinct must include the results of its Preference Ballot on the tally form.

For any questions about Precinct Caucuses, please contact the State DFL office at 1-800-999-7457 or 651-293-1200.