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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 provides 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.

**Locations**

**Identifying Precinct Caucus Locations**

It is preferable, although not required, to hold a caucus geographically within the precinct (see page 2 of the DFL Official Call, as well as Minnesota statutes 202A.15 and 202A.156). Ideal locations for caucuses are public schools, city halls, community centers and park buildings. All public buildings must make their facilities available for caucus under state law (MN Statute 202A.19). Schools are especially good if your unit wants to hold multiple caucuses in one facility using separate rooms. Public facility rental fees for caucuses must not exceed the lowest charged any other group (MN Statute 202A.192). If your caucuses are especially large, gymnasiums and auditoriums, often found in public schools, work well. Use of churches and other private facilities may be challenging because they are often inaccessible to people with disabilities, offer limited parking and can be viewed as less-than-neutral. Depending on your unit, you will need to decide how many locations you will need. Here are some things to consider when planning for either one or multiple locations:

**One location for all precincts in your unit:**

- For geographically large areas, be sure the location is centrally-located or near a transportation hub.
- If using this type of facility, consider how you will arrange your registration area. Some units register attendees at one area for multiple precincts/rooms and direct people to the correct room for their precinct, others find that a separate registration area for each precinct room works best.

**Multiple Locations:**

- This is often the system urban Organizing Units find most effective.
- Be very clear in your advertisements, invitations, and flyers about which precincts will convene at which locations.
- Arrange for site coordinators to manage every site.
- For large turn-out precincts, reserve a sufficient number of large rooms, as their caucuses may not fit into standard-sized classrooms.
Internet access is required if you plan to use the Electronic Registration Tool

**Accessibility**

Locations must be fully accessible for persons with disabilities. While most public buildings are required to be so by code, they may not actually as accessible as they appear on paper. It is best to do a personal tour before booking the location. Consider the following:

- Sufficient number of handicapped parking spaces
- Automatic door openers on at least one entrance or low push-bars
- Restrooms with wide aisles and doors
- Rooms for all precincts reachable without stairs or by elevator

More information about accessibility and accommodations will be included in the precinct caucus kits that will be distributed at the SCC meeting on December 7, 2019. There will also be an accessibility resource page at [www.dfl.org/caucuses-conventions/](http://www.dfl.org/caucuses-conventions/)

**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 website at [https://www.dfl.org/proof-of-insurance/](https://www.dfl.org/proof-of-insurance/)

Don’t delay! Submit your request as soon as possible, and not later than the location reporting deadline of November 1, 2019. 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 the 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 contact information for the person who is requiring the certificate.

**Location Reporting – Due November 1**

Locations should be identified as soon as possible! Report caucus locations to the Minnesota DFL Party Affairs office no later than November 1, 2019. Each Organizing Unit has a custom link to upload caucus locations via a Google sheet. Contact Scott Graham (email sgraham@dfl.org) for complete information or assistance.

**Convenors**

**Convenor Recruiting**

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. It does not need to be
reported to the DFL. Caucus convenors are often, but not necessarily, the precinct chairs. Each precinct caucus should have its own convenor, unless multiple precincts are meeting in one room and it’s feasible to share a convenor among them.

**Things to keep in mind for convenor recruitment:**

- Someone who is comfortable in front of people, who can speak clearly and be understood.
- Someone who can stay organized.
- Convenors need to be on-site to set up their caucus by 6pm or earlier.
- People who have worked in the legal profession are often excellent conveyors.
- The person is not necessarily required to be expert at Robert’s Rules. They are basically leading a meeting that can be as formal or informal as the group wants.
- Some units promote the idea of a couple of people or a small team doing this together. For example: two co-convenors supported by a secretary.
- Ensure people are fully trained. Each organizing unit should hold a training session covering what happens during caucus and what needs to be accomplished.

If the person recruiting convenors has VAN access and needs to find more convenors, they can pull a list of people from each precinct who have a fairly high number of Democrat party points. The DFL keeps track of people who have attended prior caucuses or conventions, answered polls, and other things — expressed as party points. A person who has 250+ party points likely has some experience that could be useful. If you need assistance with VAN access, or how to create this kind of list, contact Scott Graham at sgraham@dfl.org.

Bottom line: caucus should be a fun and enriching experience. It is “Democrats getting together to talk politics.” These are neighborhood events so try to recruit convenors who understand the spirit of caucus: friendly, positive and orderly.

**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 convenors. If you absolutely cannot meet with every convenor, be sure to have written materials for each convenor who cannot attend the training. Below is a basic outline for a convenor training. More specifics will be included in caucus kit.

**Training Outline**

- Reinforce that convenors represent the Minnesota DFL to their precinct caucus.
- Caucus convenors must arrive early to set up their sites.
- Convenors should each find additional volunteers from their precinct to help with registration, resolutions etc.
- Caucus timeline is as follows:
  - 6:00 pm set up (or earlier)
  - 6:30 pm registration opens
  - 7:00 pm “time-certain” for convening caucus (calling the meeting to order)
7:30 pm election of Delegates/Alternates must not start prior to this time
8:00 pm caucus must not close prior to this time
- Convenors should listen to their caucus attendees, be friendly, and keep things moving
- 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
- Talk through the precinct caucuses section on pages 1-3 of the 2020-2021 Official Call, as well as the Walking Subcaucus Procedure on page 4.
- Let convenors know how they will pick up packets and materials prior to caucus night
- Remind convenors where to drop off materials after caucuses

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 it passed or failed.

Convenor packets
Convenor packets should be distributed at trainings or before precinct caucuses so that convenors have time to become familiar with them. Convenor packets must include copies of all documents required for caucus. They are listed in the next section “Documents for Each Caucus” and complete instructions will be in the caucus kits distributed on December 7, 2019.

Documents for each Caucus
This is a list of the documents that you will need to prepare for each precinct caucus.

Registration Materials
In 2020, an electronic caucus registration tool will be available and optional. Using this tool makes it unnecessary to use printed sign-in sheets. Training on using the tool will be provided before caucuses. If your unit decides not to use the tool, registration sheets can be printed using the Voter File. Training on this list creation will be available on the DFL Training Hub. Units should also print enough copies of the blank registration sheets to register new attendees. Remind convenors that caucus attendees who have not signed in cannot participate in the caucus. Those who have sent a Non-Attendee Participation Form or letter are able to participate without being present and may be nominated for their choice of office as indicated on the form.

Precinct Convenor/Caucus Chair Instructions
This is a state-standard form. If your local city and/or county DFL will be holding conventions in 2020, your unit may need to add information and procedures related to
electing a set of delegates for city or county conventions or pre-convention committee members. Make copies and place one in each caucus packet.

**Precinct Maps**
You will need to print at least one map for each precinct. Maps can be found at: https://www.gis.leg.mn/html/precincts2018.htm

**Official Call**
The State Party provides a copy for each precinct. They are used for clarifying caucus and convention rules

**DFL Constitution and Bylaws**
You will receive one copy per precinct in your caucus kit. They are used for clarifying caucus and convention rules.

**DFL Platform**
The State Party provides copies - one for each precinct.

**Report Forms**
Make one set of Organizing Unit report forms per precinct. Report forms are used to record information related to all results from each caucus. They are also used as reference by the credentials committee at the Organizing Unit Conventions in case of challenges to Delegates or Alternates. Complete the report forms regardless of whether you used the electronic registration tool to record results.

**Attendee Handouts**
You will need to make sufficient copies for the anticipated number of caucus attendees.

**Local Unit Documents and Procedures**
Check with your city and county DFL organizations (as listed in Article IX, Section 1 of the DFL Constitution), in years when there are elections, about any special procedures they require for the caucus. These procedures can be listed separately or as part of an appended version of the agenda and rules provided in the caucus kit. If this applies to your unit or if you have other local needs, add any related documents and instructions to each precinct caucus packet, including the materials listed above. Some common examples of local unit procedures are local delegate elections, pre-convention committee elections, volunteer forms, or information about upcoming events.

**Caucus Night Procedures**
Prior to caucus night, think through each of these steps to ensure your organizing unit is prepared to run precinct caucuses.
Site Set-Up
A large entryway or common area is desirable for registration, so that attendees are not confined to a small area when waiting to register. Recruit greeters to help participants find their way to registration, stairs, elevators, rest rooms, and caucus rooms. Posting an easily understandable floor plan, and maps of the building, is also helpful. Consider handing out individual building maps, marked with precinct name and room numbers, to attendees as they enter the building. The precinct name and a map showing its boundaries should be visibly posted at each caucus location/room. Signs indicating the nearest accessible restrooms should also be posted around the site.

Distribution and Collection of Materials
If precinct caucuses are being held at multiple locations, arrange delivery of packets to precinct caucus convenors before the caucus.

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

Arrange in advance with caucus convenors where all materials should be returned at the end of the night. You should have contact information for each convenor. Think ahead to your unit conventions and gather any information that does not go to the State DFL such as Pre-Convention committee lists or local volunteer forms.

Make a plan in advance for sorting and distributing information gathered by each precinct: registration sheets for data entry, delegate and alternate lists to campaigns, and information needed by the pre-convention committees (credentials, resolutions, etc.) – especially, any issues that might become credentials challenges.

Reporting to the State DFL
Some results need to be entered using the Electronic Registration Tool including Organizing Unit Delegates and ranked Alternates as well as Election Judges.

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