

Minnesota 2014 Just Food Voter's Guide

The Saint Paul – Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission believes that future policy makers and community leaders in Minnesota who understand the importance of food to our state and local communities are critical to achieving a diverse and just food system that eliminates hunger, increases access to nutritious food, and improves the health of all Minnesotans. This effort of the Food and Nutrition Commission outlines questions aimed to raise awareness and promote public discourse around the many issues affecting Minnesota's food system. Issues such as food security, hunger, nutrition, health, food assistance, farming, gardening, processing, farmer's markets, food hubs, food waste and more!

Use the guide to present food system issues at debates, forums, and on the doors, to help you, the voter, to discover the candidate's "recipe" for the future of food in Minnesota.

We have divided the guide into three parts for city/local, state offices, and federal offices. The questions in no way cover the complexity of the food system in Minnesota, but serve as a catalyst for discussion!

Questions for Candidates of Local Offices

- ❖ What would you do to encourage more urban agriculture in the city?
- ❖ What would you do to increase the amount of local, healthy food made available to schools, childcare centers, after-school programs, summer programs, senior meal programs, food banks, and food pantries?
- ❖ Supporting local food businesses and food entrepreneurs is a critical component of strengthening our local food system, What strategies will you use for increasing local food production, processing, and retailing to address the growing consumer demand for local food?

Questions for Candidates of State of Minnesota Offices

- ❖ Some cities are providing land for community gardens or even farms. What would you do to foster that trend in Minnesota?
- ❖ Many low-income people in urban and rural communities live in food deserts - areas in which it's hard to find fresh foods, especially for people without cars. What would you do to solve these problems in Minnesota?
- ❖ How would you increase the use of the SNAP program in Minnesota? SNAP, once known as food stamps, is now the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and is a life net for many seniors, children, and the disabled in Minnesota.

Questions for Candidates of Federal Offices

- ❖ Federal nutrition programs such as WIC, SNAP, school lunch and breakfast programs are important food security resources in communities across Minnesota. They also have an economic impact on retailers and food producers. What will you do to ensure that these programs continue to benefit Minnesotans?
- ❖ One barrier to producing more immediately consumable foods, such as fruit and vegetables, in Minnesota is the lack of crop insurance and/or other price supports for specialty crop farmers. What would you do to see that production of fresh produce is fostered in Minnesota and around the country?
- ❖ Households with children are roughly twice as likely to be food insecure as households with no children. One in five of all children in Minnesota and across the country are hungry (Feeding America, 2014). What will you do to help reduce childhood hunger?

Acknowledgement: We would like to thank the Iowa Food Systems Council for assistance in drafting the guide. <http://iowafoodsystemscouncil.org/>

For more information: http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph/pc/food_and_nutrition_commission.htm



GUIDE TO VOTING 2014

Requirements to Vote

- Be a U.S. citizen.
- At least 18 years old on Election Day.
- Be a resident of Minnesota for 20 days.
- Finished with all parts of any felony sentence.
- You can vote while under guardianship unless a judge revoked your right to vote.

2014 Important Dates

- June 27 — Absentee ballots available for Primary Election.
- July 22 — Last day to pre-register before Primary Election. Voters can also register at the polling place on Election Day.
- August 12 — Primary Election.
- September 19 — Absentee ballots available for the General Election.
- October 14 — Last day to pre-register before Election Day. Voters can also register at the polling place on Election Day.
- November 4 — General Election Day.

Get Registered

To vote in Minnesota, you must register — check your registration status at mnvotes.org.

You can pre-register at least three weeks before Election Day, or register at your polling place on Election Day. You can pre-register online, or mail a registration form to your county elections office.

You must re-register each time you change address, change names or do not vote for four years in a row.

Get Informed

Learn What Is on the Ballot

View your sample ballot at mnvotes.org and learn about the candidates and issues.

Where to Vote

Find your polling place at mnvotes.org, or contact your county auditor or municipal clerk.

Polling places are fully accessible with clearly marked parking spaces, doors and routes to voting areas. If you cannot leave your vehicle to enter the polling location, election judges will bring voting materials to you.

Voting Hours

Most polling places open at 7 a.m., and all must close at 8 p.m. Voters in line before 8 p.m. have the right to vote.

Right to Time Off from Work to Vote

By law, employees can take paid time off from work to vote.

Voter Assistance at the Polling Place

Voters have a right to receive help from election judges or a person of their choice, except an agent of their employer, their union or a candidate.

Go Vote on Election Day

Sign in and Register if Needed

- An election judge will ask for your name and address. If you registered before Election Day, you will be on the voter list and can sign in.
- If you did not pre-register to vote, you can register at the polling place. Learn about Election Day registration at mnvotes.org.

Get a Ballot

- You will receive a receipt after you sign in or register. Give the receipt to the next election judge, who will give you a ballot and show you how to mark it. The judge will answer questions and direct you to a private booth to vote.

Fill out the Ballot

- Ballot instructions will say how many candidates to choose for each office.
- Take as much time as you need. If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.
- Voters can also use the AutoMARK ballot-marking device to complete their ballot. AutoMARK allows voters to vote independently and privately through a variety of accessibility options for marking a ballot — such as large printing, audio instructions, key pad or touchscreen.

Vote Early with an Absentee Ballot

You can vote early by using an absentee ballot — instead of voting in person on Election Day. You may vote absentee by mail or in person. Learn more at mnvotes.org.