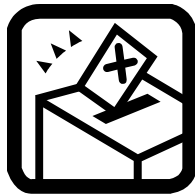


# Precinct Caucus Training

*Finding your power in the DFL Party...*



DFL Progressive Caucus  
255 E Plato Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55107  
651-251-6381  
[www.progressivecaucus.net](http://www.progressivecaucus.net)



What IS a precinct caucus?

Why are people asking me to attend my precinct caucus?

## Why Attend your Precinct Caucus?

- ✓ Candidates running for elected office often seek the **endorsement** of a political party.
- ✓ **Delegates** endorse candidates at various **conventions**.
- ✓ To become a delegate to an endorsing convention yourself or to support others who want to be delegates, you must first attend your **precinct caucus**.
- ✓ A **precinct caucus** is a local political meeting with the people who share your polling place and who affiliate with the same political party.
- ✓ Endorsed candidates enjoy party benefits such as access to mailing lists, campaign workers, increased name recognition money, and - in the ideal world - solidarity of support.
- ✓ Depending on the political district, a party's endorsement is the election. For example, the endorsed Democrat in a very strong Democratic district will likely win in the general election.



### Examples:

Candidates Running for....	are endorsed at...	Example
Statewide office	State Conventions	Senate, Governor, Sec. of State, Atty General, Auditor
Congressional District office (8 CDs in MN)	CD Conventions	U.S. Congress
MN Senate & MN House	Senate District Conventions	State Senator, State Rep.
Countywide Office	County Conventions	County Commissioner, County Atty, Auditor
Citywide office	City Conventions	Mayor, School, Library & Park Boards...

## DFL Precinct Caucuses

In addition to participating in a political party's endorsement process, there are other reasons to attend your precinct caucus.

1. **Get to know your neighbors and discuss issues!**
2. **Become a party officer.** Attending your precinct caucus is the doorway into getting more involved in the DFL including holding party officer positions.
3. **Introduce and vote on resolutions.** Passing identical resolutions through multiple precinct caucuses is how we determine the Party's platform at the various organizing levels (e.g., city, county state).

**Note:** Passing resolutions is not as effective as endorsing and electing a candidate. However, it can be a good organizing exercise and it offers a concrete way to measure the success of that exercise as well as support for an idea.

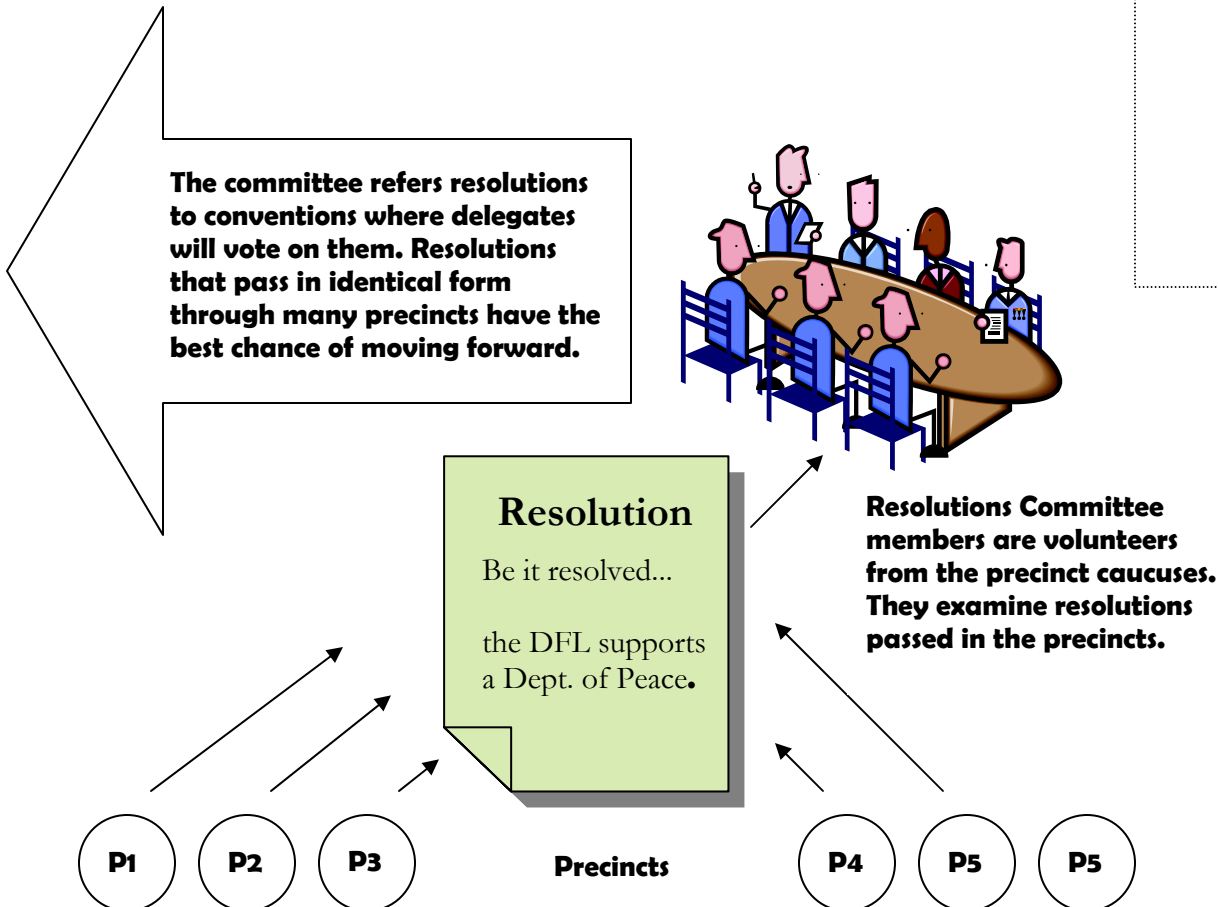


## History

The current DFL State Party Asst. Chair, Donna Cassutt attended her first precinct caucus in 2004 when she supported Rep. Dennis Kucinich for president.



Peace in the Precincts organized a campaign to pass a series of peace resolutions that were ultimately adopted by the State Convention.





I've never been to a precinct caucus. Aren't they just for a bunch of boring old political hacks?

How do I find my precinct?

How do I find out where my precinct caucus is going to be held?

What are some tips for newcomers who are afraid of getting ?

Everyone who meets the basic requirements is welcome to attend their DFL precinct caucus. The DFL is not a party of "insiders" but a party of those who show up. That's usually a mix of the new and inexperienced as well as some experienced old hands who can help you learn the ropes.

**To participate in your DFL Precinct Caucus you must:**

- ✓ Live in the precinct in which you are caucusing.
- ✓ Be at least 16 years old to introduce and vote on resolutions.
- ✓ If you want to vote for candidates or become a delegate to conventions, you need to be eligible to vote by the time the next general election is held in November.
- ✓ Believe in the principles of the DFL Party.
- ✓ Not be an active member of another political party; you cannot attend the precinct caucuses of more than one political party during the same election cycle.

**To find your precinct**

- ✓ Minnesota Secretary of State: [pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us)
- ✓ Ask a neighbor
- ✓ Call the State DFL at 651-293-1200

**To find out where your precinct caucus is being held**

- ✓ Watch your local newspapers.
- ✓ Call your county auditor.
- ✓ See the DFL State Party website: [www.dfl.org](http://www.dfl.org)
- ✓ Call the State DFL at 651-293-1200

**Have fun! Go with friends! Ask questions! Be bold!**

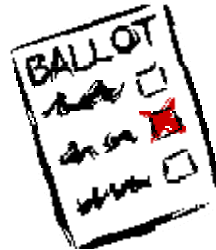
- ✓ The meeting belongs to the group and you are an equal member of the group. Ask questions. Be bold. It's your Party!
- ✓ Doing new things with the support of you friends can be helpful. Invite your friends and neighbors who live in your precinct to join you and support you to be a delegate.<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Arrive early to post signs and distribute lit for your candidate. Folks who live outside of your precinct can help with this too.

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<sup>1</sup> Your supporters need to go with you to the district convention to push you forward to the Congressional District and State Convention.

## What to Expect

1. Arrive at your caucus place on **Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m.** Sign your name in the register.
2. Participate in a straw poll and vote for candidates running for statewide office. This vote does not determine the endorsement. **Delegates who attend conventions at the various levels determine who will ultimately be endorsed.**
3. Introduce and vote on resolutions.
4. Volunteer to be a delegate to the district convention. There are a limited number of people who can be delegates. Most of the time this is not a problem and most people who want to be delegates can do so. If there is competition for the delegate spots you can either 1) avoid having an election for delegates and volunteer to be an alternate instead. Alternates have a good chance of being seated as delegates. Or, 2) elect delegates.



What can I expect at my precinct caucus?

### Tip

After the caucuses, check in with the campaign or group you are working with and let them know that you have become a delegate! They will likely want to pull their supporters together to prepare for the conventions.

**Be certain to get any information that is available regarding the time and location of the conventions and put them on your calendar right away.**

5. If you Volunteer for committees, get the name of a contact person and if possible the time and location of the first meeting. This is often left for the end of the meeting. If needed, ask about it. Committees you can serve on are:

**Credentials** - Verifies credentials of delegates

**Nominations** - Recommends party officers.

**Platform** - Evaluates resolutions and moves them forward

**Arrangements** - Helps make arrangements for the convention.

**Rules** - Proposes rules of the convention.

## DFL Conventions

If you are supporting specific candidates, be sure to get elected as a delegate to the appropriate endorsing convention.

### Congressional District

Date: \_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Endorse candidates for U.S. Congress
- ✓ Elect party officers
- ✓ Vote on resolutions

3

### State Convention

June 9-11, Rochester

Endorse statewide candidates

- Senate
- Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- Auditor

Elect party officers

Vote on resolutions



↑  
**Delegates elected to the CD convention are also delegates to the state convention.**

### Senate District

Date: \_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Endorse candidates for MN House/Senate
- ✓ Elect delegates to cong. dist. and state convention
- ✓ Elect party officers
- ✓ Vote on resolutions

2a

### County

Date: \_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Endorse candidates for countywide office:
  - Commissioners
  - Auditor
  - Attorney

✓ Elect party officers

✓ Vote on resolutions

2b

### Minneapolis

Date: \_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

Endorse candidates for citywide office

Elect party officers

Vote on resolutions

- Vote YES on IRV

2c

▲ ▲ ▲  
**Delegates are elected and resolutions pass through committees.**



### Precinct Caucus (Neighborhood Meeting)

Tuesday, March 7, 7 p.m.

- ✓ Straw poll
- ✓ Elect delegates to the endorsing conventions.
- ✓ Propose and pass resolutions. (e.g., Democrats favor single-payer universal healthcare.)

## About Sub-Caucusing

Sub-caucusing is a type of proportional voting used to elect delegates and party officers. For the most part it is not used at the precinct caucus level because there are usually enough delegate and alternate slots available for those who wish to move on and be delegates at the district level. However, beyond the district level delegate slots are more competitive. For example, to become a delegate to your congressional district, you will likely need to be elected out of a sub-caucus. There will be plenty of time to learn about sub-caucusing before you attend your district convention, so don't sweat it. Below is a quick preview.

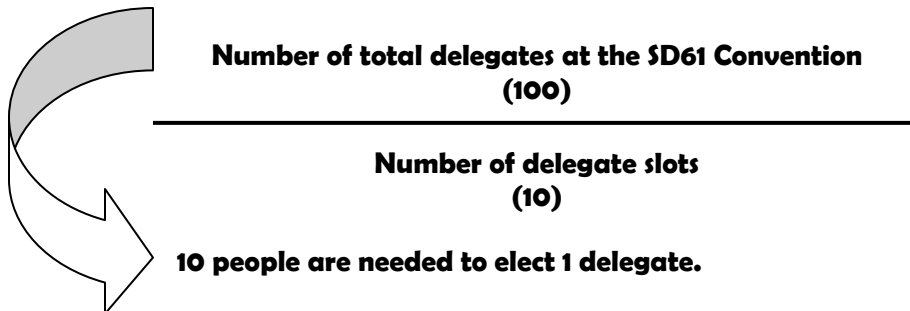


Do I need to worry about learning about sub-caucusing at my precinct caucus? What is it anyway?

### Example (numbers are not accurate):

In Senate District 61 there are 100 delegates; 50 want to go to the CD Convention. However, there are only 10 delegate slots. Assuming no one changes their mind or opts to be an alternate instead, delegates will need to be elected.

1. Determine how many people it would take to elect 1 delegate:



2. The chair will let you know what the "viability number" is.
3. Sub-caucuses are called. Sub-caucus names contain candidate names or "uncommitted" and often an issue. For example: "Dean-Health Care for All", or "Teachers for Kerry" etc.
4. In this example, a sub-caucus that had 10 people could elect 1 delegate. A sub-caucus that had 20 people in it could elect 2 delegates, etc.
5. "Non-viable" sub-caucuses will merge with other sub-caucuses.



Where can I learn more?

## Resources

### Peace First!

[www.peaceintheprecincts.org](http://www.peaceintheprecincts.org)

Peace in the precincts is organizing Peace First! delegates who will commit to putting peace first when endorsing candidates for U.S. Senate and U.S. Congress.

### Better Ballot Campaign

[www.betterballotcampaign.org](http://www.betterballotcampaign.org)

This is a Minneapolis initiative to put IRV on the ballot. You can help by introducing and supporting an IRV resolution at your precinct caucus, then going to the Minneapolis Convention to help pass it. Help is also needed to collect signatures from registered voters in Minneapolis.

### DFL Progressive Caucus

[www.progressivecaucus.net](http://www.progressivecaucus.net)

A good resource for general information about finding your power in the DFL party. Training available for your group.

### Minnesota DFL

[www.dfl.org](http://www.dfl.org)

### Senate District 61 DFL

[www.sd61.dfl.org](http://www.sd61.dfl.org)

These sites include descriptions of the party structure with links to relevant documents such as **The Call**, a must read for those who want to know the nitty gritty of precinct caucuses.

### Minnesota Secretary of State

[pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us)

Find your precinct and polling place (not necessary the site of your precinct caucus).

### Minnesota Joint Departments and Commissions

<http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/depts.htm>

Find precinct and district, demographic information, contact info for you state representatives, information on bills and more.