

## Minnesota Voters Turnout

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**Minnesota and the rest of the Upper Midwest usually lead the country in voter participation.** Although turnout in non-presidential election years is noticeably lower than during presidential election years, Minnesotan citizens are still more engaged in these “off year” elections than citizens in other states.

In elections since 2000, Minnesota has led the country with the highest turnout of the voting eligible population. In 2004, **Minnesota led the country in turnout, with 77% of eligible voters turning out compared to 60% in the nation as a whole.**

Minnesota is also a leader in the Upper Midwest. In presidential elections since 1960, voting by eligible adults in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Wisconsin has averaged 68%. Minnesotan voters lead the pack in presidential elections during this span, with 72% voting.

### **Voter Turnout In Presidential Elections, 1992-2004**

Year	Iowa	Minnesota	South Dakota	Wisconsin	National Average	Upper Midwest Average
2004	69.3	<b>76.8</b>	68.9	76.2	<b>60.3</b>	72.8
2000	63.2	<b>69.6</b>	57.7	67.6	<b>54.2</b>	64.5
1996	58.8	<b>66.1</b>	61.1	58.4	<b>51.7</b>	61.1
1992	65.8	<b>73.7</b>	66.8	69.9	<b>58.1</b>	69.1
Total	64.3	<b>71.6</b>	63.6	68.0	<b>56.1</b>	66.9

Source: United States Elections Project, Department of Public and International Affairs, George Mason University.

Voters generally turn out at lower rates for mid-term elections – elections that lack the drama of a presidential contest. But **Minnesota voters once again stand out in recent mid-term elections**. Turnout was 64% in 2002, 62% in 1998, 55% in 1994, and 58% in 1990. This far exceeds the national rates, which are only just above a third. The participation of Minnesotans is also greater than those found in Iowa, Wisconsin, and South Dakota in recent elections.

**Voter Turnout In Mid-Term Elections, 1990-2002**

Year	Iowa	Minnesota	South Dakota	Wisconsin	National Average	Upper Midwest Average
2002	47.9	64.1	60.7	45.4	39.5	54.5
1998	45.3	61.9	49.0	46.3	38.1	50.6
1994	48.0	54.5	60.1	42.4	41.1	51.3
1990	48.5	57.6	52.3	39.0	38.4	49.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>51.4</b>

Source: United States Elections Project, Department of Public and International Affairs, George Mason University.

**Same-day registration has contributed to Minnesota’s strong voter participation, accounting for 15 percent to nearly 21 percent of the state’s turnout.** (Minnesota is one of just six states -- including Wisconsin -- that permits same-day registration. Most of these states lead the country in voter turnout.)

**Election-Day Registration In Minnesota, 1998-2004**

Year	Number Of Election Day Registrations	% Of Voters Registering On Election Day
2004	581,904	20.6
2002	342,978	15.0
2000	464,155	18.9
1998	332,540	15.8

Source: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

Same day registration puts a premium on the ability of each party and candidate to mobilize its supporters and to get them to the voting booth. The emphasis on turnout up until the polls close also puts pressure on public opinion pollsters to identify not only voters who are already registered but also those who may register on Election Day.

A lively discussion of these results and other political topics can be found at the **Smart Politics blog**: <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/oster017/smartpolitics/>