



Thank you for the opportunity to offer a recommendation for the wording on the notice sent to people with a felony conviction informing them about their voting rights.

The Center for Civic Design is a Maryland-based nonprofit organization that focuses on democracy as a design problem. We work with elections offices and advocates across the country to improve the forms, information, and ballots that are critical parts of the voter experience.

A well-designed notice can help people take advantage of their right to vote and promote trust in government through clear, accurate, friendly information. Writing in plain language is especially important for this notice because the sentence structures, word structure, and the use of bullets help people who may not read well or with low English reading skills understand the information more easily.

A few of the plain language principles that we incorporated into our recommendation are:

- **Put critical information where it's needed.** We included the list of eligibility requirements (taken from [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register)) so that readers do not have to look for it – especially because they are at the bottom of the form.
- **Make next steps clear.** When there are options, break them into bullets so each choice is easy to see. (And, use bullets; numbers are for sequential steps.
- **Put the “if” before the “then”** — explain the condition before you say what happens if that condition is met.
- **Speak directly to the reader.** The current draft already does this well, but you can add a phrase at the top of the page that shows why they are getting this notice and how it relates to their individual situation.
- **Keep the paragraphs short.** In this kind of document, a single-sentence paragraph is fine. The space around it makes it more visible.

You will find an edited version of the notice on the next page.

If you have any questions, we'd be happy to hop on the phone or help in any way.

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## Center for Civic Design

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## Your right to vote has been restored

Now that you have been released from prison, you are eligible to vote in Minnesota—as long as you meet all of the other requirements for voting. To vote, you must be:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day (16 & 17 year olds can pre-register)
- A resident of Minnesota for 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote

These requirements are also listed on the voter registration form above your signature.

There are four ways to register to vote (or re-register if you have previously voted in Minnesota):

- On a paper application. Return it to the Office of the Secretary of State or to your county elections office.
- At the DMV through our automatic voter registration process
- At your polling place on Election Day
- Online at [mnvotes.gov/register](https://mnvotes.gov/register). You will need your Minnesota driver's license or Minnesota identification card number, or the last four numbers of your Social Security number.

**There is a voter registration form attached to this notice that you can use.**

The first time you go to your polling place to cast a ballot, you may be required to provide proof of your current residence – see [mnvotes.gov](https://mnvotes.gov) for a list of documents you can use for this proof.

If you violate the conditions of release, the commissioner may revoke your release after due process and reimprison you. If that occurs, your right to vote is lost again, while you are in prison.

You can find out more information about your voting rights:

- On the website of the Office of Secretary of State at [mnvotes.gov/xxxxx](https://mnvotes.gov/xxxxx)
- By phone at 1-877-600-VOTE (8683)
- At your county elections office – look up the contact information at [mnvotes.gov/counties](https://mnvotes.gov/counties)