



Hamline Votes Action Plan, 2026

I. Executive Summary

Background

Hamline University takes the lead in civic engagement by prioritizing the goal of increasing voter participation as a prime institutional concern. Over the past decade, Hamline student voting rates have continued to trend upward; we intend to continue this upward trend through the following plan. The Hamline Votes campaign will create opportunities for students and community members to engage with the democratic process through voter registration and education, early voting, and election-day participation.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of Hamline Votes is to encourage campus-wide civic engagement and increase voter knowledge, registration, and participation, particularly among Hamline University students in local and national elections in the United States.

Approach

Hamline Votes is run by a committee of students, faculty, and staff dedicated to promoting student engagement in elections. Our approach is rooted in behavioral change models and strategies with a goal to raise awareness about the importance of voting and encourage civic engagement on campus through increased voter registration and participation. As outlined in **Section VI: Strategy**, our plans include:

- Point to the destination: voter registration, participation, and civic engagement
- Remove obstacles from the path to this destination
- Provide frequent, educational, and motivational communication and engagement about the voting process and the value of civic engagement

Activities

The Hamline Votes committee directly and indirectly provides voter education content to students and holds in-person voter education events on campus.

Civic engagement is a key learning goal in the general education courses required for graduation, which make up the Hamline Plan. The Hamline Votes committee will encourage faculty to include civic engagement activities in their courses that educate and advocate for the importance of voting; specifically highlighting the midterm election. To remove barriers for student voting participation, the Hamline Votes committee will also ask faculty to avoid holding exams or scheduling project deadlines on or around the dates of elections. Moreover, in First Year Seminar (FYSem) courses, Hamline Votes committee members will request time to present information about voter registration, provide education about elections, and explain the various ways to exercise one's suffrage.

The in-person opportunities organized by Hamline Votes will involve various orientation activities for new students. Hamline leadership, including the university president, will participate in new-student orientation activities and stress Hamline University's commitment to the value of civic engagement. Committee members will table across campus to hand out registration materials, educational information, and inform students on how and where they can vote. These events will coincide with Minnesota's in-person early voting period, National Voter Registration Week, Constitution Day, and the lead-up to the midterm election.

The Hamline Votes committee will facilitate collaborations with campus offices and committees including student groups through Student Activities and Leadership Development (SALD) and the Hamline Undergraduate Student Congress (HUSC), staff through the Hamline University Staff Association (HUSA), and faculty through Faculty Senate.

The Hamline Votes committee also will develop and disseminate the Hamline Votes 2026 Report and Evaluation.

Audience

The primary audiences for Hamline Votes are Hamline undergraduate students, graduate students, and staff and faculty. Eligible voters residing in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood around campus are a secondary audience..

Location

Hamline Votes will organize information and voter registration events around campus. We have also partnered with Ramsey County to provide an on-campus early voting site in our Klas Center on Wednesday, Oct. 7, from 10 a.m. through 2 p.m. On election day, Hamline Votes volunteers will organize transportation to the polling place at Hamline Hi-Rise.

Timeframe

This summer, Hamline Votes committee members will develop educational and promotional materials. The dissemination of educational materials and in-person events will begin in late August, when students return to campus, and will increase throughout the months leading to the elections.

II. Leadership

Hamline Votes 2026 General Committee

Hamline has a long history of leadership in civic engagement. Backed by our university president, Hamline Votes is responsible for a campus-wide approach encouraging students to register and participate in the voting process.

The 2026 Hamline Votes committee is made up of students, staff, faculty, and administrators from Hamline University who collaborate with on- and off-campus partners to ensure diverse voices are represented on our committee and reached by the Hamline Votes campaign.

The Hamline Votes Committee members are as follows:

Staff

1. Erin Hawley, *CASA*
2. Shandi Burrows, *University Archivist*
3. Austin Malberg, *Student Activities*
4. Alex Szeto, Social Media Manager, *Marketing and Communications*

Faculty

1. Jim Scheibel, *Faculty Emeritus*
2. Mike Reynolds, Humanities Division Chair, Faculty English and Communication Studies
3. Trevor Maine, Faculty, English and Communication Studies

Students

1. Alex Brundieck
2. Ema Rehder

Administrators

1. Lisa Nordeen, *Assistant Provost for Student Success and Faculty Development*
2. Dr. Patti Kersten, *VP of Student Affairs, Dean of Students*

Hamline Votes 2026 Subcommittees

Content Distribution

- Ema Rehder,
- Patti Kersten
- Alex Szeto

Programming

- Austin Malberg
- Erin Hawley
- Trevor Maine
- Jim Scheibel

- Molly Doran, *Graduate Advisor: Advanced Degrees and Certificates (volunteer)*

Content Creation

- Mike Reynolds
- Shandi Burrows
- Alex Brundieck

Student Organization and Athletics Outreach

- HUSC - Hamline University Undergraduate Congress
- SAAC - Student Athletic Advisory Council

Faculty Engagement

- Jim Scheibel, *Retired Professor of Practice at Hamline U; Former Mayor of Saint Paul; MN State President of AARP (Co-Chair)*
- Lisa Nordeen, *Associate Provost, Director of CASA (member)*

Collaborators

Campus offices and committees

The Hamline Votes committee will carry out tasks to reach our stated goals. In addition, Hamline Votes will work with Student Activities and Leadership Development (SALD), Faculty Senate, Hamline University Staff Association HUSA), and external partners to encourage voting.

Hamline Student Orgs

Student Activities and Leadership Development (SALD) provides opportunities to get involved in student organizations and build leadership skills. The office is responsible for coordinating major campus programs and holds regular training and events for student organizations and leaders. Hamline has a policy to support student org events around elections and the SALD office provides guidance for these events.

Hamline Elementary

In addition, the Hamline-to-Hamline Collaboration has created partnerships in classroom settings to educate students at neighboring Hamline Elementary about social and political issues.

Succession Plan

This year, the Dean of Students Office will begin hosting the Hamline Votes committee in collaboration with Jim Scheibel, emeritus faculty, who will serve in an advisory role. We will continue to review university structures for the best location at the University. In an effort to allow for more constant work and pushing civic engagement, we have established a dedicated student internship role with Ema Rehder.

The Dean of Students office oversees the Hamline Votes committee. The Provost Office, Student Affairs, Athletics, and the Office of the President also support Hamline Votes by providing resources and support in preparation for any upcoming election.

III. Commitment

Improving Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement

The Hamline University president will sign on to the President's Commitment to Vote Engagement. Civic learning and engagement are fundamental educational learning outcomes for students of Hamline University.

Existing Statements, Documents, and Learning Outcomes

Civic engagement is fundamental to the spirit of Hamline University. Methodist visionaries founded Minnesota's first university on a mandate to make the world better. Their mission? Educate the state's earliest leaders—before there was a state to lead. Out of this trailblazing spirit of civic betterment, Hamline University was born.

Still today, the Hamline community is driven by that same spirit, brought to life in the words of John Wesley: **"Do all the good you can."** These words unite our professors, alumni, staff, and students. We continue to live them out and show our values in the way we champion justice and positive change and develop locally engaged, globally connected leaders.

Today, the institution takes the lead to provide a premier liberal arts education that transforms students of all backgrounds into the leaders they were born to be. Our learning outcomes for civic engagement are measured through the Hamline Plan, which every student has to complete in order to graduate. We emphasize civic engagement with our new first-year student population during fall orientation. In the past this has included a half-day of services and reflection as part of their First Year Seminar class. This being an election year, we are shifting our focus to engage students in conversation about voting as civic engagement and act of service.

Co-Curricular Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement

Many co-curricular activities are infused with the values of civic engagement at Hamline University. For example, current programs include the aforementioned School of Education's Hamline-to-Hamline Collaboration, the Hedgeman Center's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration and Day of Service, and our active McVay Youth Partnership which places our students as mentors for immigrant youth in Saint Paul. The Piper Impact student group and membership in the Midway Coalition are other ways students are involved in their community.

In addition to these programs, many of Hamline's student organizations are classified as political and social action or advocacy and service. These have included:

- Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC)
- Black Student Collective (BSC)
- Delta Tau Sorority (community service group)
- Feed Your Brain (addresses food insecurity on campus and in community)
- FUSION (advocacy for multi-racial identifying students)
- First Generation Scholars

- Global Students Society (GSS)
- Hamline African Students Association (HASA)
- Hamline College Democrats
- Hamline Hand-In-Hand (tutoring organization)
- Hamline Indigenous People's Society (HIPS)
- Hamline Undergraduate Student Congress
- Hamline UNIDOS
- Omicron Delta Kappa (service organization)
- Peer Wellness Educators
- Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC)
- SPECTRUM (advocacy for non-binary, LGBTQIA+ students)

Hamline has a two-tier orientation program which includes programming over the summer and fall. Voter education content will highlight the importance of voting as an act of service during summer and fall orientation. In addition, during fall orientation we will include information about mail-in ballots, finding your polling place, early voting and transportation to voting sites.

IV. Goals

Impact

Hamline Votes seeks to promote informed and involved citizenry, building lifelong voting habits by fostering a commitment to vote. We will build on the institutional commitment to civic engagement in a way that serves as a model for other universities. We will do this by amplifying and facilitating connections between existing campus bodies and civic engagement efforts.

Desired Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to effectively research the platforms of candidates to understand how their vote will impact social, economic, and political issues over time.
- Students will have the skills to reach out to candidates to get answers to questions they have.
- Students will be able to articulate why their vote matters and share that information with other community members (beyond their time at Hamline).
- Students will be able to identify their elected representatives.

V. Strategy

Increasing student voting will mean motivating non-voting students to alter their behavior and ensuring that all students are supported in getting to the polls. To accomplish this, we will follow an approach built from proven behavior change strategies.

Point to the Destination

- **A Clear Goal:** Continue to build on Hamline University's tradition of voter participation and communicate the university's commitment to civic engagement to all campus stakeholders in Fall 2026.
- **Compelling Conversations:** Hamline Votes members and volunteers will provide students with information and encourage them to make a voting plan.
- **Concrete Commitment:** When interacting at Hamline Votes info tables, students will be given the opportunity to register to vote either as an on-campus student in Minnesota or in their home locale. Students will also be given the opportunity to scan a QR code that connects them with reminders on when and where to vote.

Remove Obstacles from the Path

- **Provide Easily Accessible Information:** Hamline Votes has updated pages on its institutional website for primary and secondary audiences. Hamline Votes will also provide accurate information on voting during tabling at our universities common area and in class presentations to actively communicate to students.
- **Explain Voter Registration:** To those who do not understand the registration process, we will explain the process of voter registration (both the concepts of same-day registration so they can register for the 2026 midterm election and updating registration so they can vote wherever they may live while attending Hamline University).
- **Support On-campus, In-person Early Voting:** Hamline Votes has organized a Ramsey County early voting site at the Klas Center. This site will be open to members of the Hamline Community and the general public and will improve access to early voting.
- **Provide a Ride:** Hamline Votes will coordinate transportation for Hamline students to the Hamline Hi-Rise polling place on election day.
- **Set Realistic Commitment Expectations:** We will communicate to students that "voting will only take 30 minutes of your day."

Clear Digital Presence

An important way to inform the local community about local elections comes not only through utilization of physical mediums, but digital mediums as well. Hamline will continue this digital marketing through its consistent updating of Hamline Votes web pages. The function of the webpages (found on the University's main website) is to inform the community about the dedication that Hamline University has had—and will continue to have—towards civic engagement. The Websites allows the community to see a more in depth explanation about voting (the who, what, where, what, and how) through written explanations, present multiple ways to get in contact with Hamline Votes staff, and offer quick links to official government sites that host registration and personalized information about how every individual can vote. Hamline Votes will be adding volunteer opportunities to the webpage.

Educate, Communicate, and Engage

- Voter information and engagement events will take place in high traffic areas on campus and will be supported by academic, co-curricular, and student org programming. Hamline Votes will publicize these events through the appropriate targeted and university-wide communication channels.

VI. Events & Programming

Collaboration with County and Statewide Offices

The Hamline Votes committee will collaborate with Ramsey County and the Minnesota Secretary of State's office to provide accurate information to students on how to register and vote in this year's midterm election. Hamline Votes will also work with these offices to provide an in-person early voting polling place on campus in October 2026.

Fall Semester Hamline Votes Print Campaign

- Create and distribute posters and banners
- Create and distribute lawn signs around campus

Hamline Votes and In-person Events

- Tabling in high traffic areas during Fall 2026
- Two events informing students of who can vote, how to register, and how to make a voting plan

Content

Throughout the semester, Hamline Votes will table in high traffic areas of campus and use appropriate university communication channels to inform students on voting. Messages will focus on:

- Why voting matters and how civic engagement and participation relate to Hamline University's mission and values
- How to register to vote, including who can vote in Minnesota and the documentation needed to register
- How to make a voting plan and what to expect on election day
- How to vote in Minnesota on election day, at in-person early voting, or by mail
- How to request voting materials like mail-in ballots
- How to find resources for students who are eligible or prefer to vote out of state
- Providing accurate information about who can vote in Minnesota
- Where to find trustworthy, nonpartisan information about candidates for national, state, and local elections
- How to spot misinformation

Communications with Student Organizations

Throughout the semester, SALD and Hamline Votes members will keep in contact with student organizations and provide updated outreach information for student use..

Communications with Students Course Sections

Throughout the fall semester, Hamline Votes committee members will present voter information in FYSem classes.

Week Before the Election

The week before elections, the Hamline Votes committee will table, poster, and distribute information in classes. In addition, the university president will send an email to all students, faculty and staff to

encourage participation in the election and voting. Articles in our internal newsletter, Inside Hamline, will amplify the president's email.

Election Day

On Election Day, the Hamline Votes committee will host an information table in the student center and coordinate student transportation to the Hamline Hi-Rise polling place.

VII. Reporting

Hamline Votes content will be available to the Hamline community, the general public, and our external partners. Reporting information will be available on the [Hamline Votes website](#). All visitors to the site can view our goals, voting information, and find resources to help students and community members vote.

- Hamline Votes will collect student voting rates in cooperation with the Dean of Students office and provide this data to the Hamline Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Minnesota Secretary of State's office.
- The NSLVE report will be posted publicly online and shared with current students, community members, and other constituents

Hamline Votes will also share this report with notable voting encouragement organizations such as requested: NASPA (Voter Friendly Campus), LeadMN, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSV Coalition), and the League of Women Voters in Saint Paul, MN.

Hamline University will share the results from NSLVE with the All-In Challenge team. Finally, Hamline Votes will present the outcomes to the Hamline University Leadership Team and the committee will reconvene to plan for the next election season.

VIII. Evaluation

The Hamline Votes committee will engage in an ongoing evaluation to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the 2026 Hamline Votes Action Plan. Our intention in these evaluations is to gather data on strategies that are effective in driving higher rates of voter participation. We will examine the data from our reports and evaluate each goal and strategy in the plan to see what can be improved for the 2028 Hamline Votes campaign at Hamline University.

The **primary measure** of success will be voter participation, measured by the percentage of students who vote in the 2026 General Elections. Our voter-turnout goal for the 2026 el. Hamline University participates in The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) effort to evaluate the students' voting rate participation.

After the election, the Hamline Votes Committee will convene to debrief and process the outcomes and assessments of our 2026 Hamline Votes campaign. We will discuss the following questions:

- How effective was our committee in planning, creating, staffing, and sharing this election?

- Did our team of students, staff, faculty, and administrators work well together and how might we improve?
- How well did this team communicate and work with other departments and stakeholders across the University (e.g. Dean of Students and Board of Trustees)?

We expect to conduct this evaluation at the end of the year. The Hamline Votes committee will also use these results and assessments to modify and expand our work on campus. All measures will be used to evaluate our success, improve our future Hamline Votes campaigns, and propel efforts toward creating an Election Day holiday.