



Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan 2025-2026



Minnesota State College Southeast 2025-2026 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Tracy Rahim

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Minnesota State College Southeast (Southeast) in Minnesota for 2025-2026. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in future elections (first identified election would be the August 2025 primaries). We will continue to add contributing coalition members to discuss this plan and future plans with stakeholders as we develop our goals and outcomes.

The goals for Minnesota State College Southeast for 2025-2026 are:

- To review the data from the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) and continue creating assessment goals based on this information.
- To increase voter registration and turnout among students on both campuses and our online students.
- To further develop a formalized campus coalition of faculty, staff, students, and student groups to continue nonpartisan voter engagement activities.
- To create a welcoming and educational environment regarding civic and political engagement.
- To encourage faculty and staff to be civically engaged and instill this in students.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

- **Tracy Rahim** - Student Life & Basic Needs Coordinator, Campus Vote Coordinator, Student Senate Advisor
- **Tina Langton** - Red Wing League of Women Voters
- **Ruth Charles** - Winona League of Women Voters
- **Chelsi Wilbright** - Winona County Auditor-Treasurer
- **Micki O'Keefe** - Goodhue County Finance & Taxpayer Services
- **Minnesota State College Southeast Student Senates (Winona & Red Wing)**
- **LeadMN**
- **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge**

As we continue to develop this plan further, we hope to include more members from the college and community. We recognize that there are people, departments, and groups missing from our coalition and hope to open this opportunity to share perspectives for all who may be interested as the academic year begins and we get closer to civic holidays and the election cycle. We have yet to meet as a full coalition, but this will be one of our larger goals.

In the event of a change in leadership, the role of the Campus Voting Coordinator is embedded into the Student Life & Basic Needs Coordinator position description. This Action Plan, along with voting resources and information will be documented, stored, and maintained in a Microsoft Teams channel within the college.

Commitment:

Even though civic engagement is not explicitly stated within the mission, vision, and values, the espoused points contribute to the experience of each student as an individual to inspire them to think critically and evaluate their opportunities and potential. Southeast is dedicated to the formation of well-rounded individuals where we cultivate a community of connectedness and meet students where they are at. This action plan aims to bridge our strategic plan with our goals of broader education and civic engagement.

- **Mission**
 - Minnesota State College Southeast prepares students for a lifetime of learning by providing education for employment, skill enhancement, retraining, and transfer, to meet the needs of students and the community.
- **Vision**
 - To enrich lives and communities by being the best
- **Values**
 - We believe college is for everyone.
 - We believe in meeting students where they are.
 - We believe every step towards educational success should be simple and achievable.

The Student Senates on both Winona and Red Wing campuses have been committed to civic engagement. In Spring 2025, four student leaders attended a student summit in Washington DC that was sponsored by LeadMN where students could learn advocacy and leadership skills and meet with elected officials. They are enthusiastic to partner with LeadMN and their new student leadership and professional staff to roll out efforts that the statewide student association will have to engage with students to get registered to vote and follow through with voting in the upcoming elections. They are also a key stakeholder in implementing campus-based activities and events such as tabling, Floats for Votes, class discussions, social media campaigns on the importance of voting, etc.

Southeast's President, Dr. Marsha Danielson, signed the ALL IN's Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation, in Fall 2024 demonstrating her commitment that our campus support and engage student voters. She joins several other Minnesota State Presidents who have signed this national commitment.

This is the second action plan that our institution has developed for ALL IN. The Campus Vote Coordinator role helps to bring continuity and organization to the coordination of the voting process, including voter registration and educational opportunities. This role also includes working with various internal and external stakeholders to inform students and make information more visible and available. Online registration forms are accessible to all students through a specific email that is sent to all students, a link on D2L, and links on our voter information website. Other distribution method strategies will be through consultation with Student Senate.

Southeast is committed to providing students with accurate, nonpartisan information. Students can view their ballot and find links to register to vote on the college website at <https://www.southeastmn.edu/fwd/page.aspx?id=14891>

Landscape:

Southeast is a two-year community and technical college, and part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. Southeast has campuses in Winona and Red Wing and a robust presence of online students, with a total headcount of 2667 who are both full-time and part-time. Approximately 38% of enrolled students (excluding PSEO) are Pell eligible/low income. Our high job placement rates for our graduates are indicative of the success that they have finding jobs in their field within the first year after graduation (on average we have about a 97% job placement rate). Moreover, many of our programs like truck driving, welding, cosmetology, and nursing have a 100% job placement rate. More than 75% of our students come from the 7 main Minnesota counties we serve and choose employment close to home after graduation in healthcare, computer technology, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and more.

Southeast joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2024.

AY 2025-2026 Demographic Information:

- 57.6% female
- 46.9% first-generation
- 31.1% Pell eligible/low-income
- 18.3% students of color
- 1.88% veterans
- All students are considered commuter students as Southeast does not provide on-campus housing.

Since Southeast has primarily been a technical college and changed its mission within the past ten years to include liberal arts and sciences, and transfer pathways, there are not a lot of programs or classes that cover civic learning and democratic engagement. Our courses in history, humanities, sociology, and political science do cover these topic areas to various degrees within the curriculum. Besides a small connection within our academic programs, there have been other internal barriers as well that have prevented our college from having large voter engagement. The Student Life area has been staffed to various degrees over the years with no more than 1-2 staff members and administrators working with student engagement. And with declining enrollment after the pandemic, which is now rebounding, budget sources have been prioritized in other areas. We have mainly relied on the leadership and initiatives of LeadMN to assist. External barriers include being spread between two campuses an hour apart

in two different counties as well as a significant online program student population. Staff must split their time between both campuses and be knowledgeable about resources and programs available in separate communities.

Southeast has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) through 2033 and will receive campus voting data in the future from Tufts University.

Below are the results from the 2022 midterm elections NSLVE campus report. Further detailed data can be found at this link:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:7b56af70-73c8-4cbb-a189-fb0c160e9664>

The charts and graphs shown below are from the 2022 NSLVE campus report to identify the voting statistics from the last national election.

Figure 1. Overall campus student voting rate

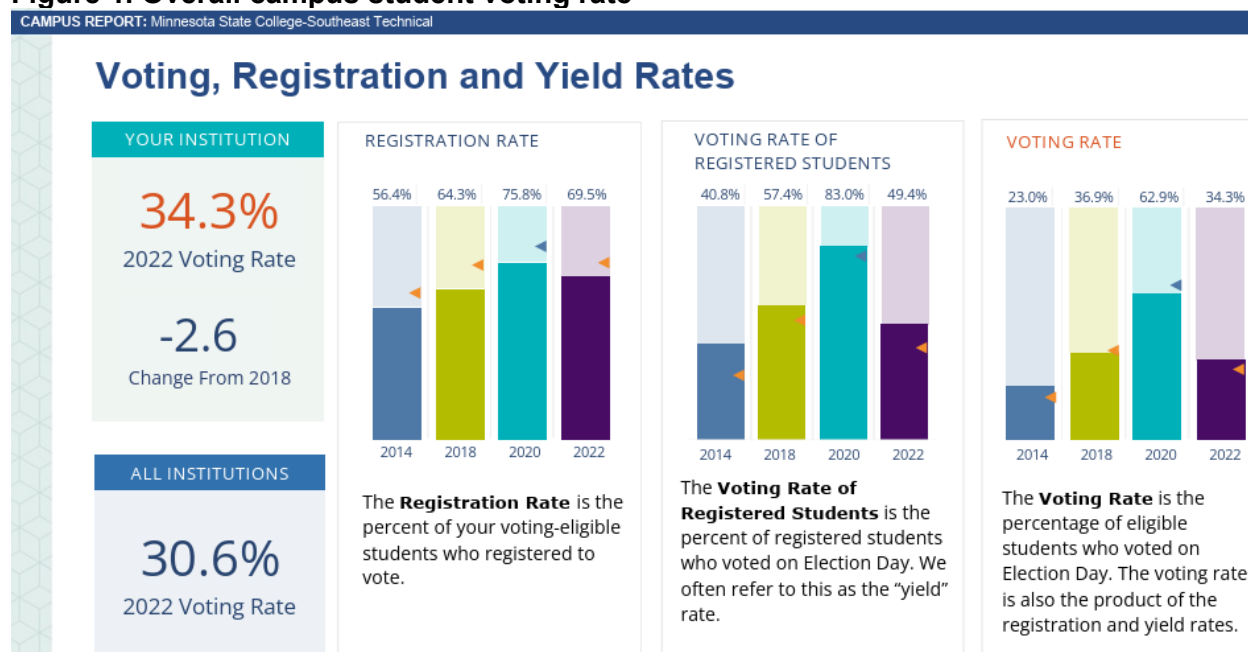


Figure 2. Voting rate compared to national average of similar institution type

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical

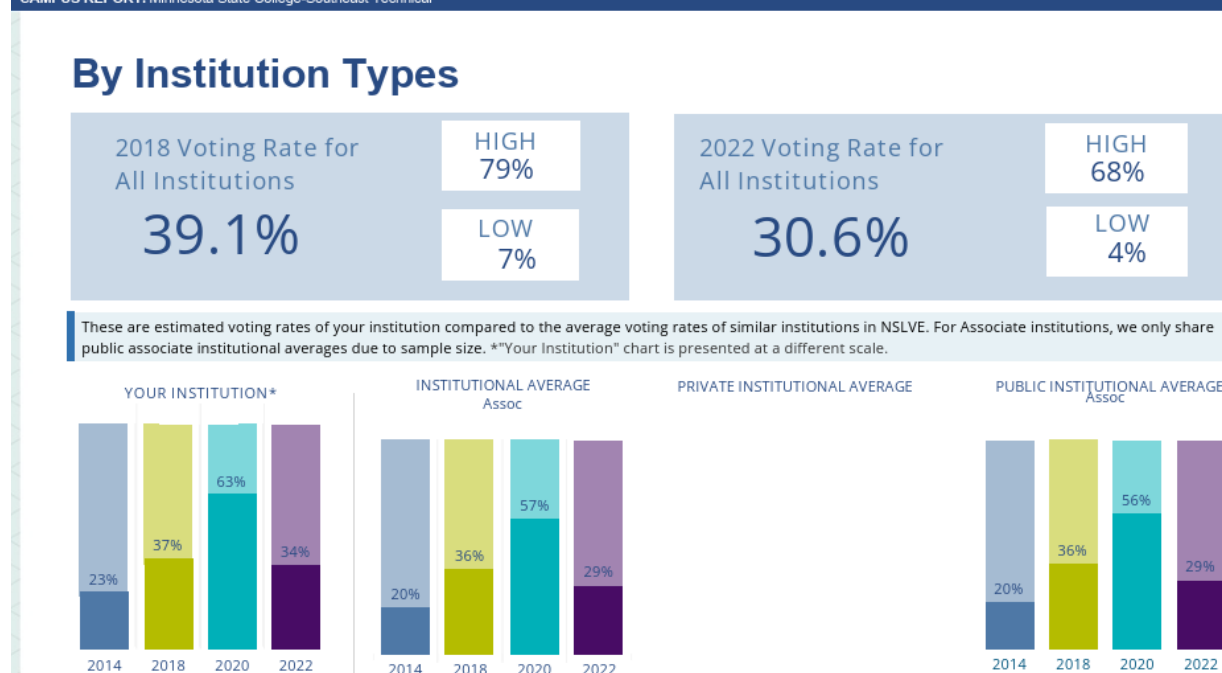


Figure 3. Campus voting rate by race/ethnicity

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical

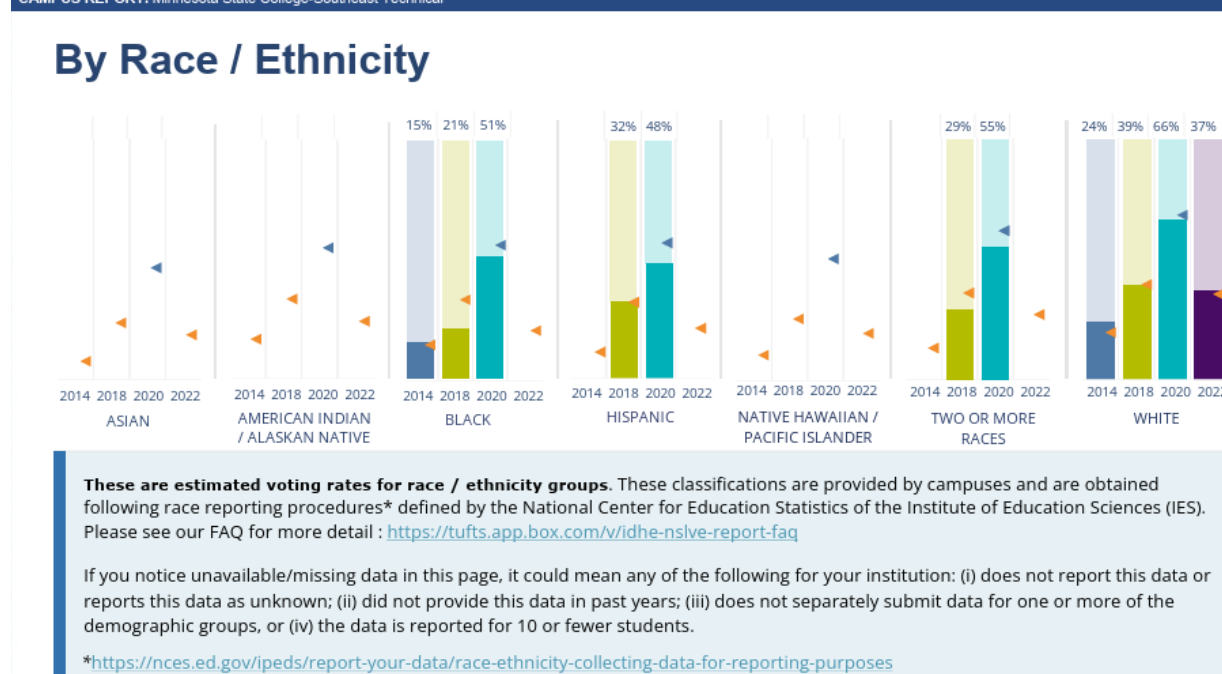


Figure 4. Campus voting rate by age group

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical

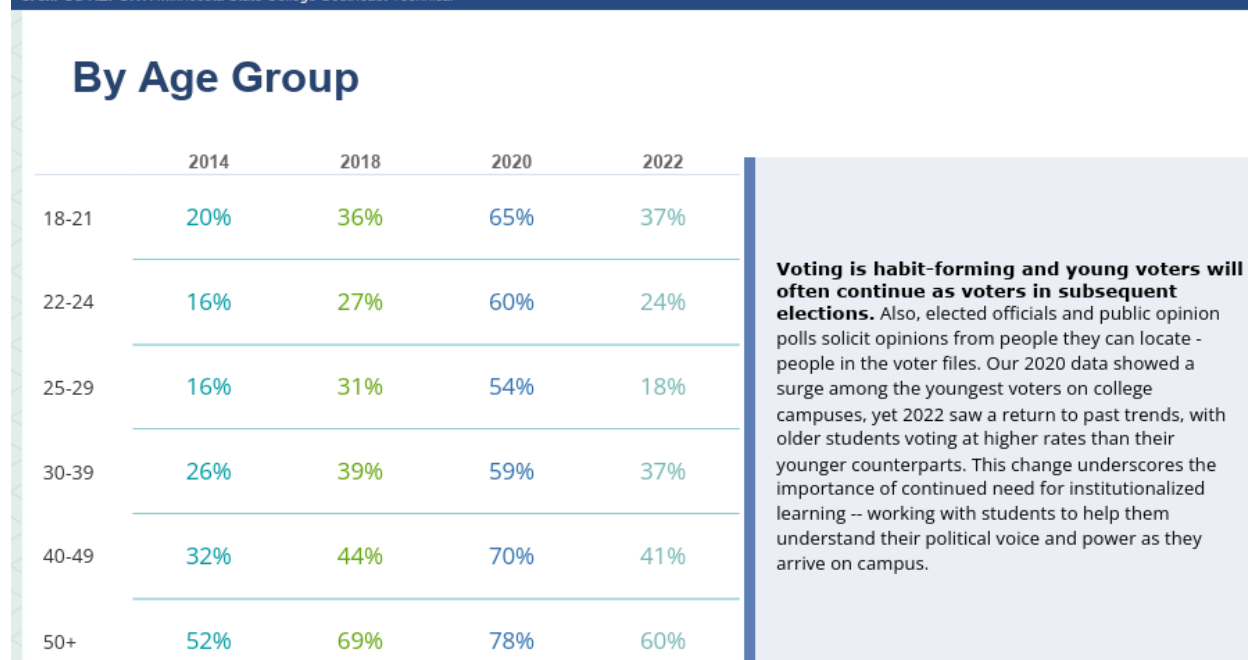
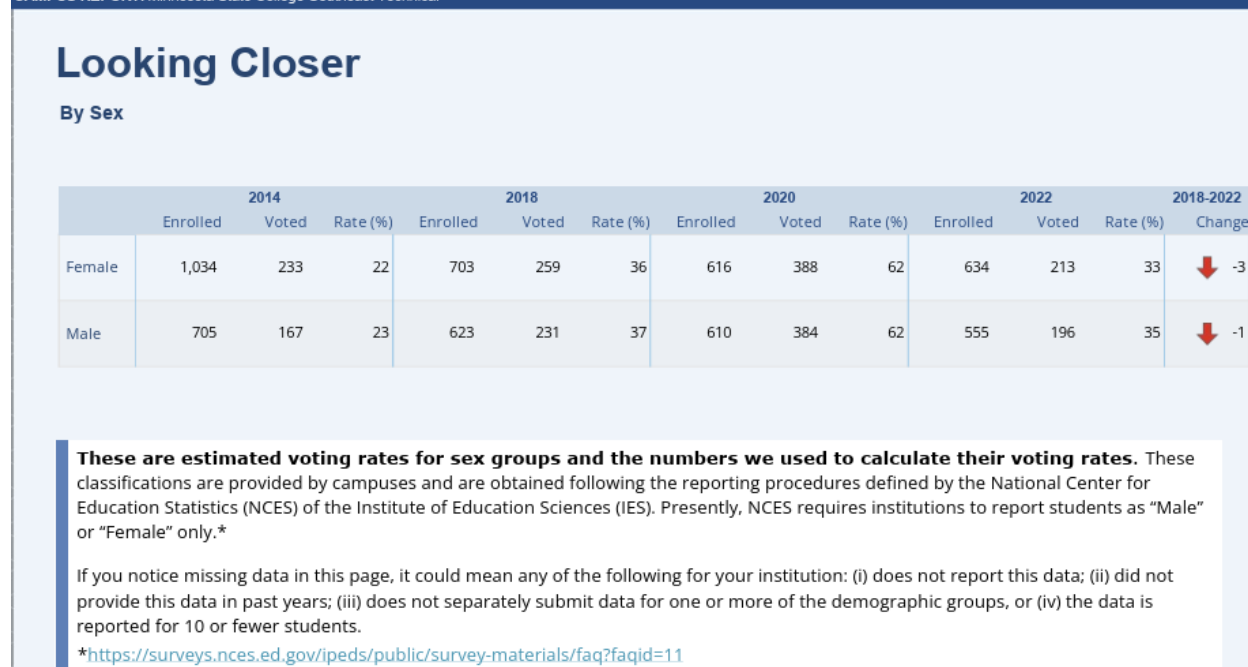


Figure 5. Campus voting rate by sex

CAMPUS REPORT: Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical



Southeast participates in the following initiatives to support the development and implementation of our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts on campus:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- National Voter Registration Day Community Partner
- Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV)
- Vote Early Day Partner
- Vote.gov access for students to find their voter registration information
- League of Women Voters events/trainings on how to register voters, how to vote in MN, and voter forums with local candidates
- Student Senate voter registration tabling events

The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation in 2023 to ensure additional accountability measures be in place at Minnesota colleges and universities. These requirements include:

- Designation of a campus vote coordinator
- Provide voter registration forms to students each semester including during orientations (in-person and online)
- Communicating with students who resident in MN, ND, SD, IA or WI as early as possible in the fall semester the instructions on how students can register to vote, residency requirements, absentee voting, etc.
- Consultation with Student Senate on voter registration and voter engagement plans
- Accessible webpage on the college website with voter and election information
- Submission of annual campus voter engagement report/plan
- Written agreement with county election officials/auditor to provide student lists for those who reside in the cities of each campus.

In addition to these requirements for colleges and universities, Minnesota has the following election laws:

- **Voter Registration:** Open to U.S. citizens age 18 or older on Election Day (16- and 17-year-olds can pre-register), must be a resident of Minnesota for 20 days, not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and not under a court order that revokes the right to vote. Pre-registration must be complete 21 day prior to the election. Automatic voter registration allows eligible Minnesotans to register to vote or update voter registration when they apply for or renew their MN driver's license, instruction permit or State ID card.
- **Voter ID:** If registration is current and active, voters do not need to bring an ID to vote. If voters need to register, update their registration, or have not voted in 4+ years, they will need to show proof of residence before they vote.
- **Vote by Mail/Absentee Ballots:** Registered voters can request an absentee ballot and return then by election day via mail or in person. Smaller precincts with 400 or fewer voters by vote by mail in lieu of an election polling place.

Important Minnesota 2025-2026 Election Dates & Deadlines

- June 28 – August 12: Vote by mail or in person for Primary Elections
- By July 23: Register in advance for Primary Election Day
- August 13: Primary Election Day
- September 17: National Voter Registration Day (civic holiday)
- Sept. 20 – Nov. 4: Vote by mail or in person for General Elections
- Oct. 7-11: National Voter Education Week (civic holiday)

- By Oct. 15: Register in advance for General Elections
- Oct. 29: Vote Early Day (civic holiday)
- Nov. 4: Election Hero Day (civic holiday)
- Nov. 5: General Elections

Goals:

Southeast's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

Short Term Goals (2025-2026): Since this is our second edition of our Action Plan, our main focus this year will be to continue to increase access to educational and voting materials, establish the plan, and build the coalition. We will plan to host events on Civic Holidays and coordinate closely with the Student Senates to facilitate these events.

Long Term Goals (2-4 years in the future): With a more comprehensive understanding of the coalition's capacity, the work will have continuity and an established action plan with outlined responsibilities. For future election cycles, it is our goal to strengthen our relationships and networks with local community and national organizations. Local election officials and those who have knowledge of related topics would be an invaluable resource for Southeast, as they can provide insight and possibly present in a workshop or panel session for staff and students. Each year will give us a better understanding of the landscape and needs of our students, so taking the time to assess and analyze data we collect will allow us to better meet those needs.

- **Voter Turnout:** Increase student voter turnout rate from 65.4% in 2020 to 75% in 2024 and 80% in 2026. As we had an increase of 10.6 % from 2016, we think a goal of 10% this year is reasonable although we will reassess each election year as that may not be realistic each cycle.
- **Voter Registration:** Increase voter registration rate from 77.8% in 2020 to 85% in 2026, maintaining a steady increase of 11% from 2016. We will reassess this goal as this increase is not realistic every cycle.
- **Participation Gaps:** Address participation gaps in NSLVE data and aim to work with student leaders to determine how to impact change in those groups who had lower turnout rates.
- **Programmatic Goals:**
 - Grow our coalition to include more voices and representation from around the college and communities.
 - Integrate voter registration into more events and touchpoints.
 - Create and utilize a student ambassador program to share voting resources and information.
 - Network and develop relationships with local election officials in both communities.
- **Metrics & Evaluation:**
 - Track attendance at events and registrations collected.
 - Establish who will collect and analyze the data.

Strategy:

Southeast will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

- Utilization of Civic Holidays such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day.
 - September 18, 2025: Red Wing campus “What Floats Your Vote” root beer floats and free pizza from Pizza to the Polls; voter registration assistance by the Winona League of Women Voters chapter.
 - September 24, 2025: Winona campus “What Floats Your Vote” root beer floats and voter registration assistance by the Red Wing League of Women Voters chapter.
- Work side-by-side with both campus Student Senate leaders on tabling and civic holiday events. Review the NSLVE data and action plan with the Senates and any other interested constituents at the college.
- Voter registration information and tabling during events such as College Kick-off Days and other campus events at the beginning of each semester.
- Partner with the local League of Women Voter chapters to assist with voter registration efforts, training opportunities, How to Vote in MN educational sessions, and local candidate forums.
- Partner and utilize any voter engagement efforts sponsored by LeadMN.
- Offer information for faculty to share with students on D2L, our online learning management system. Voter Engagement widget with link to the campus voting information website posted September-November;
- Create various marketing tools to promote voter registration and voting information (i.e., posters, digital signage, etc.) as elections get closer.
 - Created a quick guide to voting with graphics that was distributed to students electronically after the pre-registration closed so they knew how they could register on election day, how to find their polling place, where to find ballot information, and how to research candidates on the ballot.
- Spring 2026: Share information electronically with new students and those who turned 18 after the November elections of how they can register to vote. Update the campus voter information and engagement website with 2026 election information.

The following strategies are required by MN State Board Policy 2.3.1.1—Student Voter Registration:

- Transmit a message of referral to a centralized voter registration website or platform that provides voter registration forms. Each campus shall identify one person to be the “Campus Vote Coordinator” to ensure compliance with this procedure. The Coordinator’s contact information must be posted on the institution’s website.
- Consult with their campus student association to determine the most effective means of distributing voter registration forms, supporting election day registration of students, and how to promote “get out the vote” activities.
- Provide students attending on-campus orientation with a physical voter registration form or access to the online form.
- Provide students attending on online orientation with a link to the Minnesota Secretary of State’s website or other centralized voter registration website or platform that provides voter registration forms.

- Communicate with students who reside in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, or Wisconsin as early as possible in the fall semester the instructions for how students may register to vote, making information available regarding State registration deadlines, residency requirements, and absentee voting, as applicable.
- Communicate a reminder after the voter registration deadline has passed on how they can register to vote on Election Day.
- Ensure that all physical Minnesota voter registration forms received from students at the campus are submitted in a timely manner to the Minnesota Secretary of State or county elections office.

The following strategies are required by the State of Minnesota Legislature as of 2023:

- Require postsecondary education institutions to enter into an agreement with their county to share residential housing lists at least 60 days prior to an election. This list also includes all students who live within the city or cities where the campus is situated.
 - An updated list must also be sent to the county 20 days in advance of the election.
- Require postsecondary education institutions to provide voter registration information and resources to students at least twice a year in fall and spring. In state election years, this information must be provided 15 days prior to the preregistration deadline for the state general election.
 - First email with voter registration information shared on Sept. 16, 2024, which also helped promote the National Voter Registration Day events where they could learn more.
 - Another email will be sent out in January-February 2025 with voter registration information to encourage those who did not register to vote previously or who are newly eligible
- Require postsecondary education institutions to designate a staff person as a campus vote coordinator, create a voter engagement plan, and maintain a webpage providing voting information for students.
- Require postsecondary education institutions submit a report by November 30 of each year to the Office of the Secretary of State on their implementation of these statutory provisions. This shall include the voter engagement plan and when and how voter registration forms were distributed to students. The report may also include information about methods the institution identified that were effective in increasing student registrations.

Evaluation:

We seek to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts to increase voter turnout and civic engagement on campus. Assessment and evaluation may live in the Student Life Program of the Student Success Division with assistance from the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for further analysis of our results and data collected.

NSLVE Data: Southeast has authorized the National Student of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) through 2033, and we will use our campus voting data to help with the evaluation of our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts. As 2024 was the first year of our action plan, we will look to the results of the next NSLVE report to assess our goals and outcomes of voter registration, turnout, and engagement.

Metrics Beyond NSLVE Data:

We will look to collect data via methods such as:

- Attendance at events and voter registrations completed
 - Sept. 18, 2025: Red Wing National Voter Registration Day
 - Approximately 70 students in attendance
 - League of Women Voters did voter registration: 13 received information, 5 completed voter registrations
 - Sept. 24, 2025: Winona National Voter Registration Day
 - Approximately 100 students in attendance
 - League of Women Voters did voter registration: 32 received information, 5 completed voter registrations

Data Collection: Overall, we have been looking to increase the assessment of our programs, events and activities. The Student Life Program and Student Senates will be collecting a large part of the data as the organizers and staff of the events hosted on campus.

Ideas for data collection include: a counting clicker, sign-in sheet, pledge card collections, voter registration forms. We would likely store this data in our own spreadsheets hosted on a Microsoft Teams site. This data would be collected and organized to inform and contribute to future action plans and future coalitions.

Southeast does not currently participate in additional evaluations like Community College Survey of Student Engagement or the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement.

Reporting:

This action plan will be shared internally and externally. The campus action plan and NSLVE reports will be shared on and made available to administration and all students on the Voting Information and Resources page on the Minnesota State College Southeast website under Student Life (website currently under revision). Information will also be passed along to the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office to satisfy state statute requirements.

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/minnesota-state-college-southeast/>.

Minnesota State College Southeast has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.