

NONPROFIT NEWS

Information and connections for Minnesota's nonprofit sector.

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Guest column by Stacy Johnston, attorney; Courtney Gerber, MCN program director

Developing a COVID-19 Vaccine Policy for your Nonprofit: Q&A with attorney & HR expert

There is nothing simple about living through a pandemic, including wading through the legal questions and answers around COVID-19 vaccine policies while also attuning to potential and varying levels of vaccine deliberation.

As MCN developed our vaccine policy, we simultaneously built internal understanding of one possible cause for vaccine deliberation: identifying with communities who have had trauma inflicted upon them by the medical research industry. For us, the legality, humanity, and science driving vaccine policy intermingled.

This past July, [MCN hosted a webinar “COVID-19 Vaccines and Your Nonprofit,”](#) with Minnesota health experts, attorneys, and policymakers, including attorney and HR expert Stacy Johnston.

Below is a follow-up interview with Stacy, going deeper into some of the legal considerations for employers implementing a COVID-19 vaccine policy.

Can employers mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for employees?

Some employers are making vaccinations mandatory and a condition of employment. These are still murky waters and federal and state rules are evolving.

[The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

guidance clearly indicates that “federal EEO laws do not prevent an employer from requiring all employees physically entering the workplace to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject to the reasonable accommodation provisions” for employees with disabilities and employees with religious beliefs that conflict with receiving a vaccine,

unless providing an accommodation would pose an undue hardship. (Generally, nonprofits with 15+ employees must comply with EEO laws.)

The analysis for undue hardship depends on whether the accommodation is for a disability or for religion. In October, the EEOC posted updated and expanded technical assistance addressing questions about religious exemptions to vaccine requirements.

Labor attorneys caution that for workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement, the issue may need to be bargained with the union prior to implementation.

Employers requiring proof of vaccination status must take safeguards to keep the information, like all medical information, confidential and stored separately from the employee’s personnel file.

Employers must carefully think through communication and logistics in making these decisions and be prepared for employees that may resign rather than agree to be vaccinated. As the headlines across the nation prove, this is an evolving landscape with pending litigation that could impact these issues.

If an organization provides in-person programs and services, can they mandate the vaccine for people accessing these offerings?

Nonprofit communities are waiting for further guidance on this question.

What about HIPAA and asking people to share medical records?

Employers are permitted to ask employees if they have been vaccinated against

COVID-19. However, use caution to avoid soliciting information that may be related to an employee’s medical condition. Aim for a simple Yes or No response. Any further inquiry should follow strict confidentiality protocols and comply with restrictions around engaging in dialogue around medical information.

What avenues do employers have to inform, dialogue, and incentivize employees who are vaccine hesitant or deliberating about the vaccine?

Employers may provide employees with information to educate about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, address common questions and concerns, provide paid time off, and work with local public health authorities or medical providers to make vaccinations available.

Also, under certain circumstances employers may offer incentives to employees who receive COVID-19 vaccinations, such as cash payments or gift cards. Restrictions on incentives may apply for employers that offer a vaccination program directly to employees

Can employers have different internal rules for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals?

Generally, yes, as long as the rules follow federal and state guidance and are applied on a consistent basis. For example, many employers allow vaccinated individuals to forgo wearing a face covering, but require that non-vaccinated individuals must wear a face covering.

[This article continues on page 12.](#)

Letter from Nonoko Sato, executive director

Working from a place of abundance

When I first met Jon Pratt on Halloween Day in 2017 I told him that nonprofits should be striving for a world where we don't have to exist. Basic human needs are simply met and we should all be out of a job.

I thought I was very clever.

He then kindly reminded me that schools, hospitals, museums are nonprofits too — and I left that interview thinking “Oh well. MCN was never going to hire a non-Minnesotan anyway.” In January of 2018, I started my new job as MCN's associate director.

Four years later, you may be wondering, “So, who is this non-Minnesotan who dares try to fit into enormous shoes Jon left behind?”

The human in me identifies as a partner, mother, daughter, sibling to an incredible group of relatives and chosen family who shower me with their love and support. I am an immigrant, first-generation college student, Chicagoan who was born in Tokyo, and spent 13 years being gifted with an opportunity to support low-income youth in a small direct-service nonprofit in San Francisco.

Professionally, I consider myself a nonprofit generalist and love supporting organizations that uplift voices of individuals and communities that are underrepresented and often marginalized — specifically in education and in theater arts. Most importantly, I am not who I am without the network of professionals whose voices, expertise, experiences, and passion drive me to be the best that I can be.

We are at a pivotal point as a sector. We look around and see a stark divide in our communities. We see the failure of systems that continue to harm, and it is heartbreaking to watch institutions and individuals in power who want to protect that system at all costs.

And yet, despite the acute exhaustion of nonprofit professionals, they have carried on, day after day to provide services our communities need to survive. But what if we can work on thriving, instead of simply surviving?

What if we can work from a place of abundance? Imagine harnessing the power, the creativity, the expertise of

professionals who have devoted their lives to making the world a better place.

I believe in that world. By nature, nonprofit workers are optimists, even — or perhaps especially — when we are facing the impossible.

MCN will continue to champion nonprofits, challenge systems of power, provide critical data and research to ensure decision makers keep nonprofits front and center. We are committed to both internal and external work on racial equity, as we amplify and listen to voices of small, culturally-specific, and rural nonprofits.

We recognize that we would not be here to advocate on behalf of nonprofits — for recovery funds, for a better workforce, to have this power and privilege to lift up voices of people most marginalized — if it wasn't for our elders who paved the way and set us up for our work to empower nonprofits to be leaders as employers, as social justice advocates, and as change makers.

I am so grateful to Jon and many others whose influence and vision have impacted the work that we do and for the community we want to be. Most importantly, thank YOU for attending our trainings and events, for responding to our calls for action, and for sustaining us as members.

We are YOUR state association, and we could not do this work without you.

In community,
Nonoko



Nonoko, pictured center, with MCN staff. From L to R: Clark Goldenrod, Meghan Marriott, Grace Fogland, Nonoko Sato, Courtney Gerber, Jesse Chang, Kari Aanestad.

Helping you understand & access American Rescue Plan dollars

by Marie Ellis, public policy director

Take a minute to imagine a warm, sunny day, a kid, and a sprinkler. Any kind of sprinkler will do, but I'm going with the kind people imitate when they do the sprinkler dance. The child has a small bucket, and is having fun unsuccessfully trying to catch the water being spewed into the air in all directions. Metaphor much? Stick with me.

Here at MCN we talk a lot about American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. [As you'll read on page 11, there's a lot of money coming into the state.](#) Because it's collectively known as "ARP dollars," it seems like it should be fairly easy to find some of those dollars for your nonprofit — like filling a bucket under a spigot. In reality, ARP dollars are coming into the state through many, many avenues.

If the sprinkler is like the federal ARP dollars coming into the state, nonprofits are the kid with the bucket trying to catch it. And really, there are more like 100 sprinklers that turn on and off at different times, and each bucket can only catch the water coming out of a specific sprinkler.

In a recent survey of MCN members, we learned that understanding and accessing ARP dollars is one of the top priorities for our sector in the coming year.

We want you to know that we hear you and are working on ensuring nonprofits are not left behind in accessing critical funds needed to serve the communities most impacted by the pandemic.

There are some resources available now to help you figure out if there's a sprinkler that has a funding opportunity your organization is eligible for. [Subscribe to MCN's Minnesota Grants Alert e-newsletter \(and the Nonprofit Advocate as long as you're on the subscriptions page!\).](#) Sign up for email alerts from state agencies, boards, and commissions whose issue areas align with your organization's work. State agencies, like the [Department of Education](#) or [MNDOT](#), should have a link on their home page.

In related news, the state is expecting a significant budget surplus for 2021, which means the state legislature and governor have an opportunity to make bold investments to create a more equitable state. This fall and winter are great times to connect with your legislators! Share with them how your organization supports and enhances your communities, and where you see the greatest needs for state investment.

The various sources of potential funding can be overwhelming, but the good news is that you don't need to know which dollars would make the most sense for what you're proposing. Your expertise is in what's happening in the legislator's district day in and day out, doing work the legislator likely isn't familiar with. You know where additional investment would be best put to use.

To continue the metaphor, talking with your legislators is akin to alerting the gardener that a patch of the garden isn't being reached by any of the sprinklers, and asking them to set up a new sprinkler to fortify the flora.

And a bonus — more legislators understanding the value of nonprofits in their districts will also support MCN's advocacy for a nonprofit relief fund. So please, connect with the gardener (your legislators) and share where you see patches of land in need of attention (opportunities for state investment)!

Save the Date: MCN 2022 Session Lineup, 2/4/22

We are three months away from the 2022 legislative session and MCN's policy team is gearing up for a busy session!

Between allocating ARP dollars, an expected state budget surplus, and a likely significant bonding bill, the legislature has its work cut out. There is also new leadership in the Senate GOP caucus and the Senate DFL caucus. All four caucuses will be sharing their priorities soon, and we look forward to finding alignment with what the nonprofit sector needs.

In the spirit of prepping for legislative session, you are invited to MCN's annual Session Lineup, hosted virtually on Friday, February 4, 2022 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. CST.

We have invited the Governor, Lt. Governor, and a panel of legislators. We are switching the panel invitees this year — instead of inviting the four caucus leaders, we are inviting legislators who represent different parts of the state, racial and gender identities, and political parties. Of course, we will ask them all about their caucus' priorities, and the audience (you!) will be able to ask them questions.

Make sure to follow our social media for updates and registration information.

Guest column by Pollen Midwest; illustrations by Leeya Makes Noise

Celebrating Ruth, Richard, KingDemetrius & Rawhi: 2021 Unsung Hero Award recipients

This is a preview of Pollen’s feature announcing the [2021 Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award](#) winners. Watch for the full feature in December 2021.

Every year, the McKnight Foundation and MCN honor four change agents who exemplify a commitment to building strong communities. We are honored to announce the 2021 recipients.



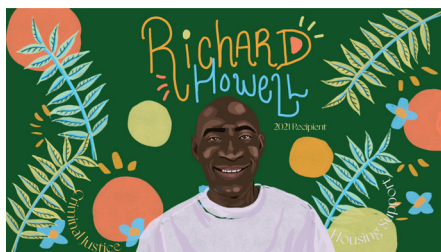
Ruth Evangelista knows the data: the benefits of early childhood education last long into adulthood. As the founder of La Red Latina de Educación Temprana (The Latino Early Child Care Provider Network), she has a simple vision for quality child care: “Happy and educated children.”

Ruth believes that anyone, with the right support, can be capable of providing quality child care, regardless of formal training. “You can offer your kids the best when you have the necessary resources.”

Ruth has been a tireless advocate for community caregivers, imploring the government to recognize them as an essential part of our early childhood network.

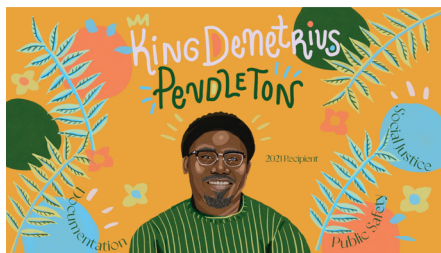
Richard Howell experienced first-hand the ways our housing markets exclude citizens who have been impacted by the criminal justice system. Rather than lose hope, his experience inspired Richard to work to find rental housing for

people with felony backgrounds, while also helping them stabilize their lives.



Richard sees opportunities — for connection, for change, for new and better systems — everywhere. He has launched addiction recovery programs, organized housing for people with felonies, collected resources for people to help them survive COVID-19, and now helps young people transition from school to jobs.

Richard views his work as a means to eliminate the barriers between people and resources, creating more direct lines of access to opportunity. “When I go out on the streets, I don’t dictate to people,” he says. “I listen to them.”



“You can change the frame, but the picture will always remain the same,” says **KingDemetrius Pendleton**. “Once you see something, you can’t deny it.” And once you know the truth, you’re able to act.

A photographer and journalist, KingDemetrius understands the power of and importance of stories. In 2015, when police killed Jamar Clark in North

Minneapolis, KingDemetrius brought his camera out to the site. As he bore witness and spoke with others who were there, he noticed the difference between what he was seeing and hearing, and what mainstream media was portraying.

He bases his work on his values, photographing and livestreaming protests for racial justice, working with people to prevent distracted and drunk driving, and taking photographs for organizations working with breast cancer.



When **Rawhi Said** was three years old, he and his family came to Minnesota as refugees. “So many folks helped me when we first arrived, that it only felt right that I was able to pay it forward.”

In 2020, the pandemic exposed the depths of the digital divide in Rawhi’s community. With the help of community partners, Rawhi has been able to provide free internet for nearly 145 families in Olmsted County.

Whether helping people see things from a new perspective, or working to make the internet accessible to everyone, serving as a Commissioner for the Olmsted County Human Rights Commission, Rawhi’s work centers around equity. “Providing the opportunity to have a fair and equal playing field — that’s where my passion lies,” he says.

2022 funding trends: Minnesota Grantmakers event preview

by Kari Aanestad, associate director; Grace Fogland, development & communications assistant

Every year, Minnesota foundations grant \$2 billion in crucial support to nonprofit organizations and communities providing essential services. This amount has grown consistently over the last few years, and especially in the past 18 months as a number of groups have increased payouts to provide responsive funding in light of the disruptions posed by COVID-19.

While one hopes past behavior indicates future trends, a big lingering question on many nonprofit leaders' minds is: What will grantmaking in 2022 hold?

As the MCN team prepares our digital *2022 Minnesota Grants Directory* and for our [Minnesota Grantmakers event \(held virtually on January 13\)](#), we're eager to share a few early insights that are emerging:

- **Continued focus on equity:** A little over a year after the murder of George Floyd and an international racial justice movement, many corporate, private, and community foundations are continuing to advance racial equity in Minnesota through their grantmaking.

(The Bush Foundation will distribute \$100 million to Black and Indigenous people to close the wealth gap, and 3M has pledged \$50 million to support equity initiatives).

- **System changes in grant cycles:** Continued system changes from many foundations, who have eased their grant processes in response to the ongoing operational challenges brought on by COVID-19 (ie: accepting grant applications that were written for a different funder, showing the full grant application in a Word doc beforehand, relaxed reporting requirements).
- **Leadership transitions:** Key foundation personnel are shifting, and there have been both retirements and transitions of staff across the sector.

[Join us virtually on January 13 at the 2022 Minnesota Grantmakers event](#), formerly known as Minnesota Foundations, an annual exploration of trends and financial outlooks of dozens of the most important Minnesota foundations.



A team of panelists conduct interviews with foundation representatives and then offer key insights you won't find anywhere else. This information-packed workshop will be hosted virtually; over 300 participants enrich the event by offering insights in real time through the chat.

Region-specific events are offered separately, including:

- [Northeast, January 19](#)
- [Northwest, January 20](#)
- [Central, January 25](#)
- [West Central, January 26](#)
- [Southwest, February 1](#)
- [Southeast, February 2](#)

Participants will also receive a complimentary copy of MCN's digital *2022 Minnesota Grants Directory*.

(Note: Those who face barriers to access due to socio-economic status, disability, geography, and/or technological accessibility, are able to request one of a very limited number of hard copy directories. If you qualify, please contact info@minnesotanonprofits.org.)

Interested in learning more about giving trends and the nonprofit economy? Check out these reports:

- [2020 Giving in Minnesota report by the Minnesota Council on Foundations](#)
- [Various impact reports issued by MCN](#)

Nonprofit News & Announcements



Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced two new staff joined the organization in key leadership roles:



Margaret King has been named senior director for Single Adult Housing and Anthony Baisley has been named director of

marketing and communications.

The Minneapolis Foundation welcomed Tom Waknitz as its vice president of Information Technology, effective August 23.



Wilderness Inquiry's board of directors announced the selection of a new executive director, Erika Rivers, effective November 30.



The American Red Cross Minnesota and Dakotas Region named Tonia Teasley as its new regional chief executive officer.



A new board leadership team and four new members have joined the board of trustees at the Duluth Superior Area



Community Foundation. Joscelyn Skandel as board chair, Koresh Lakhan as vice chair, David Montgomery as treasurer, and Daniel Lew as secretary.



The new trustees area: Lee Jensen Bujold, Dudley Edmondson, Moira Villiard, and Jane Vogt.



The Minnesota Museum of American Art board of directors announced the appointment of Dr. Kate Beane as the tenth executive director of the museum, effective December 13.



FamilyMeans named Melena Nelson director of development and communications.

Cathy McLeer has been appointed as AARP Minnesota's new state director.



Code Savvy named Valerie Lockhart as their next executive director. Valerie is taking over the position previously held

by Jean Weiss, who is retiring.

MCN announced three new staff members: Laura Jones has been named development manager; Joo Ning Lim joined the Minnesota Budget Project as research analyst; and Jes Wysong has been named Southern Minnesota regional coordinator.

Submit Your Announcements

MCN member organizations are invited to submit your organization's awards, staffing announcements, and other news to [Laura Dunford](#). MCN cannot guarantee that all announcements will make it into *Nonprofit News*.



Find your next career on Minnesota's largest Nonprofit Job Board.

BROWSE THOUSANDS OF NONPROFIT JOBS, WITH FREE POSTINGS FOR MCN MEMBERS.

ARPA can fund transformational change ... if we choose to act

by Nan Madden, director, Minnesota Budget Project

Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP or ARPA) passed in March, the federal government is providing substantial — but temporary — resources to state and local governments to support COVID-19 response and recovery.

These federal dollars create opportunities to continue to fight the pandemic, address its harmful effects, and invest in a stronger, more equitable future.

However, without nonprofits and others strongly making the case for real change, the opportunity could be lost and we could find ourselves largely back at a status quo that wasn't working for so many of us.

ARP is a combination of several different funding sources, and decisions being made at different levels of government and different periods of time.

ARP funds coming to Minnesota public services fall into three major categories:

- The Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (\$2.1 billion), flexible funding to counties, cities, and towns;
- The State Fiscal Recovery Fund (\$2.8 billion), flexible funding to state government; and
- \$3.5 billion in program-specific dollars, including \$1.2 billion for supporting working families, \$1.6 billion to ensure students catch up on learning, \$604 million for small businesses and economic recovery, and \$84 million for public health.

The ARP sets out several goals and purposes for the flexible fiscal recovery funds, including responding to the public health emergency, serving those hardest hit and addressing inequities, responding to the negative economic impacts of the pandemic, premium pay for essential workers, and infrastructure.

Fiscal recovery funds can also be used to replace government revenues lost due to the pandemic, which allows their use beyond these specific categories and goals.

Policymakers must decide how to use their fiscal recovery funds by the end of 2024, and spend them by the end of 2026.

What decisions have already been made?

Earlier this year, state policymakers agreed to the following approach for the state fiscal recovery fund:

- \$500 million for COVID-19 immediate response, with Governor Tim Walz determining the uses
- \$1.2 billion for revenue replacement to fund the state budget passed this summer (\$633 million in the FY 2022-23 biennium and \$550 million in FY 2024-25)
- \$1.2 billion will be determined by the legislative process in 2022

How can you influence ARP decisions?

ARP decisions are being made by state and local governments through both processes focused specifically on ARP and in general budget decisions.

As nonprofits, we should make the case for bold investments that address areas of chronic disinvestment, center equity in decision-making, and create a post-COVID reality that is stronger and more equitable than what came before.

[Learn more about ARP funding decisions from the Minnesota Budget Project.](#)

Did you know the Minnesota Budget Project is a nonpartisan initiative of MCN?

Established more than 20 years ago, the [Minnesota Budget Project](#) has identified and advanced policy solutions so that opportunity and economic solutions are within reach for all Minnesotans, regardless of who they are or where they live.

For more of their policy and budget work, [subscribe to their e-newsletter](#) with the latest economic policy analysis, advocacy opportunities, and important news suggests.

MN redistricting goes to courts

by Ileana Mejia, public policy advocate

We are in the thick of redistricting — a U.S. Constitutional process that takes place every 10 years right after the Census. Every state and its municipalities are required to redraw their districts based on the results of the census to achieve “one person, one vote.” MCN, on behalf of our nonprofit members, plays a role as part of a civic coalition that is working for transparency and a solution that serves all people, not partisan preferences.

Minnesota 2020 Census key findings:

- Minnesota’s official 2020 population is 5,706,494. Between the estimates and the 2010 Census, this growth was more than expected.
- The seven county metro area grew 11 percent — more than 300,000 people. Suburban counties near the metro grew by 9 percent and the rest of the state grew a little over 2.5 percent.
- The population of Minnesotans of color increased. About 76 percent of Minnesotans identify as white, down from 83 percent just 10 years ago.

How does this data inform redistricting?

It’s likely that all of Minnesota’s districts will need to be redrawn at the federal level. The 1st, 7th, and 8th districts will need to have their borders adjusted to be larger as their current districts have too few people. The other five districts will also need to adjust their borders to be smaller because they have too many residents in the districts.

Currently, there are several redistricting lawsuits in Minnesota. Redistricting lawsuits in Minnesota are common and have been since the 1970s. Since then, the legislature has failed to reach an agreement on newly drawn districts and has relied on the courts to finalize maps. Various groups have filed lawsuits against the state in anticipation of the legislature not agreeing on new boundaries. Several nonprofits have either filed or joined a lawsuit, including [Common Cause v. Simon](#); and [Wattson v. Simon](#).

Currently, the legislative redistricting committees are holding public hearings to hear from community members about how redistricting impacts them. The courts are also holding public hearings. The new districts must be completed by February 15, 2022. To stay updated on these redistricting lawsuits, check out [MCN’s redistricting webpage](#) and [sign up for updates through the MN Courts website](#).

Collaborating across the country

by Shannon McCarville, program manager

At the beginning of the pandemic, MCN’s trainings and conferences went 100 percent virtual. While a sudden pivot to online-only programming came with challenges, it also created opportunities.

MCN belongs to the nationwide network of nonprofit state associations, the [National Council of Nonprofits \(NCN\)](#).

To help strengthen the national nonprofit sector, NCN encouraged its members to share online trainings over the years, and these interstate partnerships took off in 2020. The virtual shift allowed nonprofit membership organizations like MCN to share educational opportunities — and revenue — with state associations across the country.

Director of eLearning Sondra Reis has been building MCN’s virtual training program since 2016, so when all learning went online, MCN was able to quickly transition and continue offering a broad range of trainings.

At present, 11 state associations are sharing one, or many, of MCN’s trainings with their nonprofit members. In this collaboration, their membership receives MCN’s member discount, and the association receives part of the revenue.

We’re thrilled to have the opportunity to share trainings with participants from around the country, and to offer programming from other associations to Minnesota nonprofits.

The next time you attend an MCN training, keep an eye out for participants from [Hawaii](#), [Kansas](#), [Kentucky](#), [Maine](#), [North Carolina](#), [North Dakota](#), [Nebraska \(Midlands\)](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Vermont](#), [Washington](#), and [West Virginia](#)!

For more information on state partnerships, contact MCN’s program manager at smccarville@minnesotanonprofits.org.

For information on MCN’s virtual learning program, contact MCN’s director of eLearning at sreis@minnesotanonprofits.org.

League of Women Voters of Minnesota honored for work supporting elections and engaged voters and safe elections

by John Wurm, membership and communications director

[The League of Women Voters of Minnesota \(LWVMN\)](#) was founded in 1919 after the passage of the 19th Amendment, which expanded voting rights for women. With over 35 leagues throughout Minnesota, the organization's mission is to empower voters and defend democracy by encouraging informed and active participation in government, working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.



LWVMN volunteers helped voters register for 2020 elections.

Together, the state and local leagues reach thousands of people each year through voter registration and outreach, candidate forums and guides, civics education and public forums, and legislative and legal advocacy to ensure that all voices are heard and fairly represented within our democracy.

LWVMN launched their "Vote from Home" advocacy campaign during the 2020 elections, which were severely affected by the global pandemic, with two main goals: for voters to stay safe AND stay engaged.

To achieve these goals, the organization used three strong advocacy initiatives to support voters in 2020, including:

- Creating a branded education and communications campaign that helped communities stay informed, through a dynamic website, strong social media, yard signs, Vote411 Candidate Guide, and strong partnerships with organizations serving communities of color to help register and support voters.

- Successfully advocating at the state Capitol to get the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funding approved by Minnesota's legislature, so funds could be released to the Secretary of State to support changes necessary to expand absentee voting and ensure safe elections.
- Participating in two major lawsuits fighting for flexible witness signature requirements during COVID-19 pandemic and combatting voter intimidation from privately hired militias.

As a result of the Vote from Home Campaign, nearly 95,000 voters accessed information on 7,732 candidates in 4,390 competitive races across the state; HAVA funding was approved and used to support election safety and integrity; the witness signature requirement on the absentee ballot was removed for the 2020 election; and the company recruiting militias to "guard" our elections was forced to stand-down through the 2022 elections.



LWVMN's campaign included branded education like their yard signs.

By working at the grassroots level in communities throughout the State of Minnesota, LWVMN's statewide network of members and community partners have helped our state's voters access their voting rights and to feel confident about the outcomes of our elections.

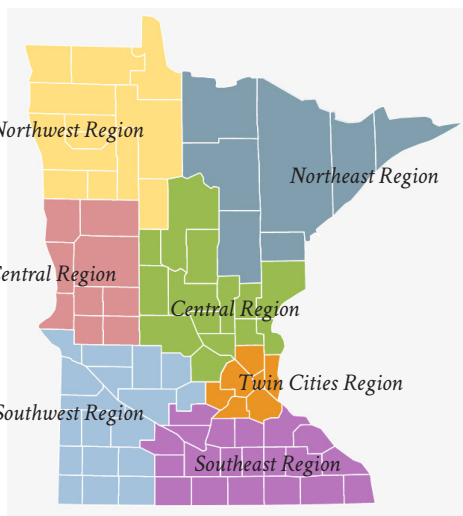
As a result, [MCN is pleased to present the organization with the 2021 Minnesota Nonprofit Mission Award for Advocacy.](#)

Learn more about the [League of Women Voters of Minnesota.](#)

Greater Minnesota Regional Committee: small commitment, big impact

by Kelly LaCore, northern MN regional coordinator & greater MN team lead

MCN was founded in 1987 to meet the increasing information needs of nonprofits and to address issues facing the sector. We are committed to meeting the needs of organizations throughout all of Minnesota, and although our main office is in St. Paul, MCN relies on staff and advisory committee members in our [six Greater MN regions](#) to inform our work.



MCN's Regional Chapters

While the commitment to serve as a regional advisor is minimal, the impact is big.

We need you: Connect with nonprofit leaders, meet MCN staff

MCN's regional team is working to formalize regional advisory committees; each of the six committees meet quarterly for one hour to discuss current nonprofit trends and hear MCN sector updates.

Serving on a regional advisory committee is an opportunity to inform the nonprofit sector about what work is needed to improve your own

community, and to support regional MCN work. The advisory committees look the same across the state as far as meeting times and basic agendas go, though they vary in service sector representation.

Serving is a chance to meet other nonprofit leaders in your region. It is also a chance to connect more often and on a deeper level with MCN metro staff. Representatives from the program, advancement, public policy, and administrative teams like to drop into advisory committee meetings to meet members and hear more about the work of Greater MN folks.

Explore joining MCN's board of directors

If you have ever thought you might be interested in serving on MCN's main board of directors, serving on a regional advisory committee first would connect you deeper with the organization and give you a good sense of the involvement you're looking for. Regional advisors are MCN champions in their communities and regions and help MCN better do its work – statewide regional involvement is vital to MCN's success.

What's to come

While our regions vary from one another and different issues arise in different places (this is why we need you — you help us pinpoint these regional needs!), we also see patterns. We recognize we all struggle with many similar things and are stronger when we work together; hence our state association of nonprofits — it is the largest in the nation in case you didn't know. There is strength in numbers.

The standardization and formalization of these committees is new and we are dreaming up what these could look like in years to come. I'm envisioning being back in person for future Annual Conferences and things like gathering all regional committees together for a Greater MN "VIP luncheon"...stay tuned.

How to get involved

If you're interested in getting involved, or talking more about the opportunity and getting more information, contact your regional coordinator:

- Northwest and Northeast: [Kelly LaCore](#)
- West Central and Central: [Warsame Warsame](#)
- Southwest and Southeast: [Jes Wysong](#)

Welcome Jes Wysong, MCN's new Southern Minnesota regional coordinator!

Jes grew up in St. Peter, MN, currently resides in Mankato, and has served in the nonprofit sector for roughly 20 years. She is excited to work in a role that allows her to support nonprofits generally and all of the wonderful missions they work to achieve.



Continued from page 2...

Developing a COVID-19 Vaccine Policy for your Nonprofit: Q&A with attorney & HR expert

What do nonprofits need to know about White House vaccination and testing requirements?

On September 9, President Biden announced new vaccination and testing requirements impacting employers. The announcement has generated both widespread support and threats to challenge the executive order.

According to Gallup, roughly six-in-ten Americans generally approve of the vaccination requirements. However, experts also anticipate that additional states will follow in the footsteps of the Arizona Attorney General, who announced on September 14 that his office is challenging the constitutionality of the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

Employers with 100+ Employees

According to the order, employers with 100 or more employees must require its workforce to be fully vaccinated or require any workers who remain unvaccinated to produce a negative test result on at least a weekly basis before coming to work.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) to implement this requirement. Employers must provide paid time off for the time it takes for workers to get vaccinated or to recover post-vaccination side effects.

As of the date of this publication, the ETS has not yet been released, so stay tuned for news from OSHA.

The requirement is expected to impact over 80 million workers in private sector businesses with 100+ employees.

Biden officials have announced penalties of up to \$14,000 per violation.

Federal Employees and Contractors
The order will require all federal executive branch workers to be vaccinated and extends this requirement to employees of contractors that do business with the federal government. The Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Indian Health Service, and the National Institute of Health are in the process of implementing the standard.

On September 24, the administration announced a December 8th timeline and are urging employers to take steps now to be on track for implementation.

Medicare and Medicaid Participating Health Care Settings

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is taking action to require COVID-19 vaccinations for workers in most health care settings that receive Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement, including but not limited to hospitals, dialysis facilities, ambulatory surgical settings, and home health agencies.

This action builds on the vaccination requirement for nursing facilities recently announced by CMS, and will apply to nursing home staff as well as staff in hospitals and other CMS-regulated settings.

These requirements are expected to impact approximately 50,000 providers and cover a majority of health care workers across the country.

What state and federal rules and other government guidelines do you point nonprofits to most frequently as they are building out their policies?

Employers should continue to follow guidance from the CDC and state and local public health, and stay updated on EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) regulations. In addition, employers may be impacted by state and local regulations.

Author's note

COVID-19 and vaccinations are complex topics. The following is provided as general guidance and is informational in nature. Check with an experienced professional and stay tuned to changes as you create and update policies.

Author's citations

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws.](#)

[The White House: Path Out of the Pandemic.](#)

[The White House: Executive Order on Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors, September 9, 2021.](#)

Guest column by Minnesota Secretary of State, Steve Simon

Three years in a row, Minnesota is number one in voter turnout

2020 was the year that changed everything.

This time last year, election administrators everywhere were exhaling after the scramble to count absentee ballots, keep voters and themselves safe during a pandemic, and prepare for endless unknowns.

A year later, our election system is even stronger, having passed that difficult test.

[In the November election, Minnesota voters cast their ballots in over 180 local contests across the state.](#)

The people spoke on important issues like the funding of school and municipal projects, governance structures for local leaders, and how to make meaningful changes in public safety.

Minnesotans know that local elections make a big difference in daily life, so it's no surprise that we stepped up in every corner of the state to make our voices heard.

It's that level of involvement and participation that's the hallmark of our elections.

Minnesota's historically outstanding voter turnout—currently number one in the nation for the past three election cycles—is evidence that our people believe in voting, and believe in the power to make change at the ballot box.

Despite this abiding confidence in our democracy, disinformation about elections persists from a noisy few.

These false tales of rigged elections are designed to have a corrosive effect on our democracy. The people actively spreading them seem intent on diminishing trust in the institution of free and fair elections.

And the dangers of allowing disinformation to run rampant is clear: confidence will wane, fear and doubt will rise, and people could ultimately lose out on their most basic rights in our democracy.

As we look forward to the next statewide election, in 2022, it's critically important that everyone has trustworthy information about how to participate and how the system works.

[And that's the mission of our office:](#) to be that trusted source so every eligible voter can contribute to the voice of the people.



Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon.

MINNESOTA
COUNCIL OF
NONPROFITS

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

2314 University Ave. W, Ste. 20 | St. Paul, MN 55114

Phone: 651-642-1904

Toll Free: 800-289-1904

Fax: 651-642-1517

info@minnesotanonprofits.org

www.minnesotanonprofits.org



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MCN works to inform, promote, connect, and strengthen individual nonprofits and the nonprofit sector.