



"You Don't Need a Home to Vote"

Voting Rights: Registration Manual

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A Publication of the National Coalition for the Homeless
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Introduction

The cornerstone of our democracy in the United States of America is the right of citizens to make their wishes known through the election process, yet low income voters, and particularly persons experiencing homelessness, are consistently one of the most poorly represented blocks when it comes to voter turnout, historically having faced numerous barriers across the country which have limited their participation in the election process.

Many potential homeless and low income voters may not have the appropriate identification documents required by some states to register or to vote. Furthermore, individuals who are experiencing homelessness may lack the resources to educate themselves about candidates or may not be able to get to the polls on Election Day. Many individuals, homeless or otherwise, aren't even aware that no state requires residents to have a traditional residence in order to vote in elections.

The "You Don't Need a Home to Vote" campaign seeks to promote voting access for low income and homeless persons to ensure that people who are economically disadvantaged maintain a voice in shaping their future. This manual endeavors to provide ideas for individuals and organizations interested in helping people experiencing homelessness to overcome the obstacles that have traditionally prevented them from becoming registered, active voters.

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The National Coalition for the Homeless, a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission: To prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights protected. We envision a world where everyone has a safe, decent, affordable and accessible home.

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Things to Keep in Mind Before Starting a Voter Registration Drive

So you'd like to help low income and homeless individuals register to vote? Great! But before you rush out to participate in a voter registration drive in your neighborhood, there are some things of which you need to be aware. The following list will help you and your organization in putting together a proper, successful drive.

Can my organization or organizations we work with to register voters do so on behalf of a particular party or candidate?

No. All voter registration services by nonprofit organizations must be nonpartisan. Nonpartisan means that the activity or program shall not be influenced by, affiliated with, or supportive of the interest or policies of any political party or candidate. Support for candidates of two different parties in an election ("bipartisanship") is not a nonpartisan activity. Participating organizations and individuals cannot make any statements in support of or in opposition to any particular candidate or party, nor carry on any other activity designed to reflect a preference or recommendation for any political candidate or party.

Can vehicles and drivers provided by my organization be used in registration drives or to transport voters to the polls on Election Day?

Yes. You can even affix non-partisan messages to vehicles encouraging voters to go to the polls. However, make certain that the vehicles and the drivers do not have any partisan literature, buttons, posters, flyers, bumper stickers or other political propaganda.

Can you give me some examples of what I am allowed to say while offering information to voters?

You can say:

- "Public policy is decided at the polls. Take a position on health care, nutrition, and other issues affecting our families. Register to vote here today."
- "You can have an impact on the decisions affecting your life. Register to vote now."
- "Budget cuts are reducing services provided by this agency and many others. If you care about housing and daycare, register to vote today."

But, you can't say:

- "Support family values. Vote Buchanan in 2016! Register now."
- "Stop the reactionary Whig Congress. Elect Roger! Register here."
- "Budget cuts are reducing services provided by this agency. Register to vote here, and let the candidates know you won't take it anymore!"

How much time after the drive do I have to send in the completed forms?

Usually, states require the completed forms to be sent in no later than a few days after completion of the forms.

May I send photocopies of voter registration forms to the elections office?

No. For the purposes of a voter registration drive, the actual form received from the elections office must be filled out and mailed. However, an individual may print a voter registration form off the Internet and mail it to the county election office.

May I refuse to give any eligible voter a registration form?

No. You must give a registration form to any person eligible to vote.

May I attach any flyers or other information to the registration forms?

No. You may not attach anything to the voter registration forms.

Can rewards like balloons or pens be given out after a person registers?

Many states have laws against such “rewards.” Check with the office of the Secretary of State in your state or county office.

Is my agency allowed to do voter registration?

Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations can operate voter registration drives if they do so in a nonpartisan manner. In fact, Section 1b of the National Voter Registration Act encourages all non-governmental entities to register their clients. This includes homeless shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, soup kitchens, daycare centers, child welfare agencies, community health centers, etc. As a non-profit you can register people to vote, but you cannot take positions on candidates.

Does my organization have to become a deputy registrar to conduct a voter registration drive?

Many states do not require any sort of registration or official representation. However, some states do require voter registration drives to be registered or require the presence of a deputy registrar at the drive. States requiring a deputy registrar or some other official allow anyone to be trained, usually in a short, one-time session, to conduct a proper registration drive. Other states may also require voter registration forms to be notarized. ***When registering voters who are currently experiencing homelessness, what address should they provide on the registration form?***

Most states allow a shelter address, a description of a general location at which the individual usually spends the night, or even a drawn map to be recorded as an address.

An address is needed primarily for assigning people precincts and mailing election information. Confirm what may be used as an address with your local elections office.

I'm not sure my agency has the staff or volunteers to do voter registration.

We're all strapped for time, but you can make it easy. Here are some ideas:

- Appoint one person, either staff or volunteer, to be a coordinator.
- Make it part of your intake or exit interview process. Add to your forms: "If you are not registered where you now live, would you like to register today?"
- Put up signs announcing that people can "Register to Vote Here."
- Have outreach workers do voter registration.
- Get volunteers and clients to help.
- Pay clients to register other clients. Contact your local City/County Elections Office to find out how to do this.

I'm not sure my clients are interested in registering to vote.

Our experience is that clients want to vote and do vote if barriers to their exercising this basic right are removed. Studies show that 70% of those registered to vote by volunteer efforts in welfare and food stamp offices actually go to the polls and vote in presidential elections. Low income people are no more or less interested in politics than anyone else. Please don't let your attitude be a barrier. Our clients are often disconnected from community life. Voting helps them reconnect with their community in a positive way.

What are some tips for conducting an effective voter registration campaign?

- Homeless shelters, drop-in centers, food pantries, soup kitchens, and other social service agencies can offer voter registration at intake/exit interview or via outreach programs.
- Non-profit organizations owning or managing affordable housing developments can organize door-to-door voter registration drives.
- Tenants residing in affordable housing developments which are at risk of being converted to market rate rental units can organize door-to-door voter registration.
- During voter registration, consumers should get an "I'm registered & I vote" postcard on which to write personalized messages to their elected officials.
- Promote voter education on issues affecting your clients through:
 - Community meetings and candidate forums sponsored by nonprofit homeless & housing groups.
 - Distribution of educational flyers at social service agencies and door-to-door in affordable housing developments.
 - Distribution of information to people who are not U.S. citizens, along with a list of organizations that help with the citizenship process.

What else can my organization do?

Here are a few ideas. Call us if you want more information or help.

- Let your clients use your agency as a mailing address for their sample and/or absentee ballots.
- Call your City/County Elections Office and find out if your agency can become a polling site on election day.
- Organize a candidates' forum and ask the candidates to address your issues.
- Help clients to get to a candidates' forum in your community.
- Talk to your peers in other non-profits, and encourage them to involve their clients in the democratic process.



Conducting a Successful Voter Registration Drive in Four Steps

Step One: ***Develop a plan for your drive***

- Appoint one person or a group of people to head up organization of the drive. This person/group should:
 - Call the county elections office to find out the specifics of conducting a voter registration drive in your area, as requirements vary from state to state.
 - Assign responsibilities to individuals to handle matters such as publicity, obtaining registration materials, and making arrangements pertaining to the site.
 - Decide the day, location, and time for your voter registration drive.
 - Have a registration table at a large event or conduct the drive on a special day to increase the number of voters you register.

Step Two: ***Prepare for and publicize the drive***

- Obtain necessary registration materials like forms, pens, and clipboards.
- Obtain other materials like stickers, voting brochures, and polling place maps.
- Make arrangements for the drive including, arranging a location and food.
- Recruit some volunteers or other staff to help out with registration. Area high school or college students are a valuable resource to help with registration.
- Create flyers and posters to publicize the registration drive.
 - Make sure that staff of your organization and the clients the organization serves is aware that a registration drive is coming up.
 - Frequently, individuals experiencing homelessness are unaware that they are able to vote. In the buildup to the registration drive, you can inform people that even though they may not have a physical address they may still vote.

Step Three: ***Conduct the registration drive***

- Have food available to attract passers-by and have stickers and other voting materials on hand to give out if permitted by local laws.
- Be ready to answer questions that people may have about registering. Refer to the frequently asked questions below.
- Do not be shy. Ask everyone who passes by if they are registered to vote, would like to register to vote, or would like to re-register to vote. Try to find ways to overcome any excuses people give for not registering to vote.
- Check to see if the forms are filled out correctly.
- Offer to mail the completed forms.

Step 4: *Get out the vote!*

- Put flyers up in your organization to remind your clients to vote on Election Day.
- Hand out sample ballots at your organization.
- Help educate newly registered voters about the voting process by inviting elections officials to speak at your organization.
- Hold a candidates' forum or invite candidates to volunteer at your organization in order to get clients better acquainted with the issues and the candidates.
- Offer transportation to the polling place.
- **Volunteer your organization as a polling site** (contact your county elections office to learn more about this).



Frequently Asked Questions (and how to answer them)

While every voter registration drive faces unique challenges, there are some questions which you can probably expect to hear when working to register low income and homeless citizens to vote. The following section should provide useful tips on how to answer them.

Am I eligible to register and to vote?

Yes, if you are:

- a citizen of the United States
- a legal resident of your state
- at least 18 years old by election day
- not in prison, on probation or parole for a felony conviction
- a convicted felon whose voting rights have been restored (varies - check local laws)
- not declared mentally incompetent by a court (varies - check local laws)

Must I be able to read or write in English in order to register?

No. You may register and vote even if you cannot read or write. You may take to the voting booth a literate and registered individual who can assist you in the voting process, but not actually vote for you.

Where can I find a voter registration form?

Voter registration forms are available at post offices, libraries, fire stations, Departments of Motor Vehicles, welfare departments, Registrars of Voters, and City/County Elections offices. Also, many social service agencies have forms.

When can I register to vote?

You can register at any time up until your state's deadline for the election in which you wish to vote (varies - check local laws).

How much does it cost to register?

Registration is always free of charge.

Am I registered once I fill out and mail the registration form?

No. You can't be sure you are registered until you get a voter notification card from the county. If the notification card does not arrive within three weeks of mailing your registration, call your Registrar of Voters or City/County Elections Office and ask if you are registered.

When do I have to re-register to vote?

If you move, change your name, want to change your political party, or have completed all conditions of a felony charge, you must register again. Registration rules and procedures for convicted felons vary by state (check with your City/County Elections Office).

What if I move between registration and Election Day?

You may still vote by returning to your former precinct or by requesting a vote-by-mail ballot.

If I fail to vote in an election, will I remain registered for the next one?

Yes.

Can I register for someone else?

No. You can only register for yourself. However, you may help others fill out a form, but they must sign the form.

How do I join a political party?

Check the box for the political party of your choice on the registration form. There are no requirements to join a political party.

Am I obligated to vote or work for or contribute to a party I wish to join?

Absolutely not.

Do I have to choose a political party in order to register and to vote?

No. You may check the “decline to state” or independent box on the form if you do not wish to belong to a political party.

What is a Sample Ballot?

Before each election, in some states, each registered voter receives a packet of information including a Sample Ballot, which is a replica of the ballot the voter will see at the polls. The packet also gives the time and date of the election, the location of your polling place, and an application to vote-by-mail.

What if I do not receive a Sample Ballot?

If it doesn't arrive two weeks before the election, call and request one from the Registrar of Voters or your City/County Elections Office.

Where must I go in order to vote?

Your polling place will be in your neighborhood. If you receive a Sample Ballot, the exact address will be shown on the back. Otherwise, the address will be on your registration card. Both should show whether the polling location is accessible to the disabled. Polling places may change from one election to another. It is important to go to the correct polling place because your name will not be on the roster of voters anywhere else.

What if my polling place is not accessible to the disabled?

In most states, you may vote by absentee ballot. Check with your local City/County Elections office to learn what you should do. If you prefer to vote in person, get as close to your polling place as you can and a precinct board member will bring you a ballot to cast.

When are the polls open?

The time polls are open on election day varies by state. However, usual hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Many states also allow early voting. Check with your local City/County Elections office to learn exact dates and times.

Can I vote by mail?

Contact your City/County Elections Office for information on obtaining an absentee ballot and about deadlines.

Do I need identification when I go to vote?

In most cases you will just be asked to state your name and address and to sign the roster of voters. Bring along your voter registration card. However, several states have recently enacted voter ID laws. See our section below to find out if this applies to you.

What if I need help in marking my ballot?

Elections Officials are available at the polling place to assist you.

How long may I stay in the polling booth?

Take your time. Some states limit voting to ten minutes, but will extend that time if no other voters are waiting. You may take your pre-marked Sample Ballot into the polling place for assistance.

What if I make a mistake on my ballot?

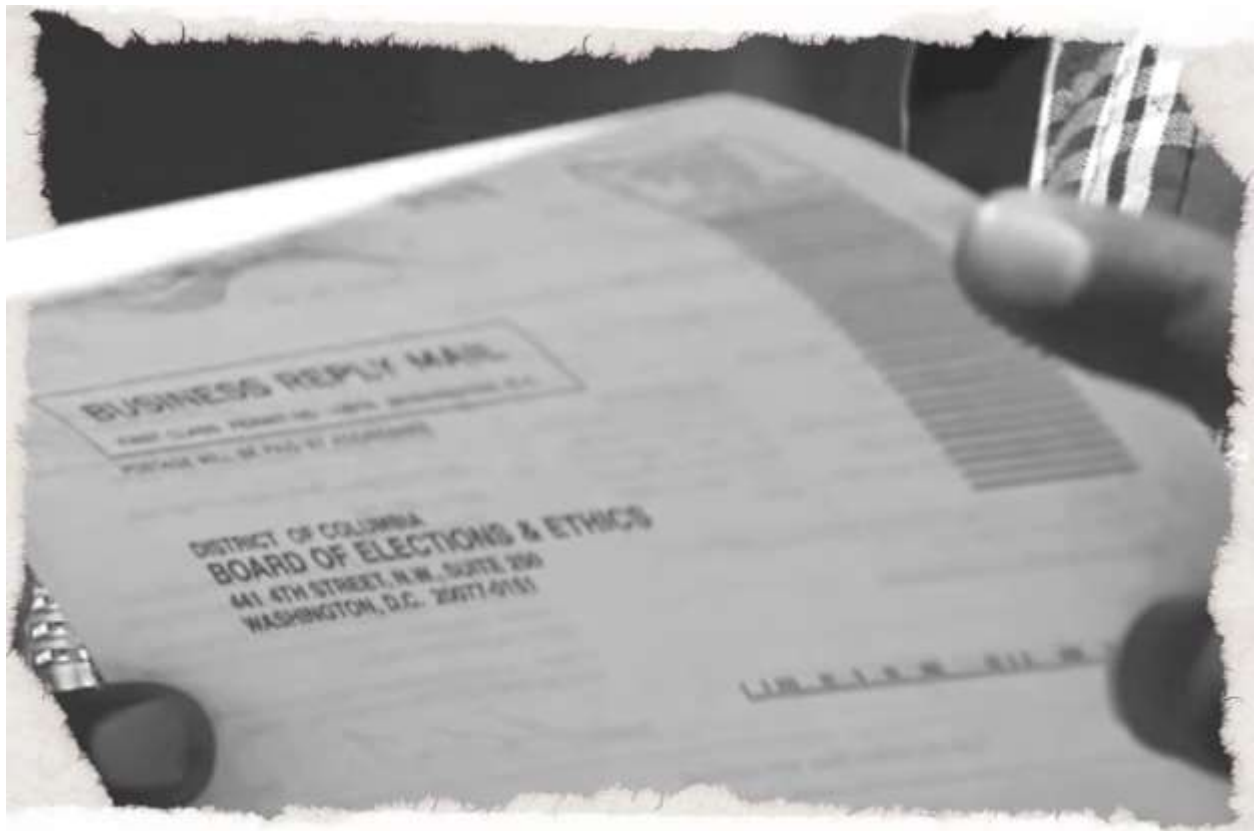
You may request another ballot if necessary.

What will I be voting on?

We vote on two types of things:

- People: candidates who are running for elective office.
- Plans: ballot measures that change local or state laws.

You do not have to vote on everything. You can just vote on the things you care about.



The Four-step Transformation Strategy

When a person doesn't wish to register to vote, it's often because they don't understand how voting can affect their lives. It's your job to find out why they don't want to register and to then help them see why it is important that they register and vote. The following four steps can assist you in convincing someone to register.

1. Find out why she is saying "no."

Remember an excuse may hide a more basic reason. For example, she may say, "I really don't have time," when, in fact, she really means, "I don't want to take the time to register because I don't believe voting matters."

2. Agree with her.

Make yourself her friend, not an opponent. Let her know that you heard what she said and that you share her concern.

3. Use her reason to convince her.

Explain how her concern is really a reason she should register.

4. Ask if you can help her fill out the registration form.

Let her know that you're a trained volunteer and can answer any voter registration questions that she may have.

Here's one hypothetical example of the above strategy put into action.

Volunteer: "Hi, I'm concerned about affordable housing and am out here today registering people to vote. Would you like to register?"

Non-Voter: "Thanks anyway, but I don't want to register."

1. Find out why he is saying "no."

Volunteer: "Why not?"

Non-Voter: "Those politicians are all alike anyway. They don't do anything for us once they get elected."

2. Agree with him.

Volunteer: "Yeah, I know what you mean. Sometimes it seems like none of the politicians are working for you and me; they're just working for people who have a lot of money."

3. Use his reason to convince him.

Volunteer: "That's why I'm out here registering voters. I'm fed up with politicians getting away with that just because people like us aren't voting. You know, four years ago some elections were decided by just a few hundred votes."

4. Ask if you can help him fill out the registration form.

Volunteer: "It takes just a couple of minutes to fill out the form. Can I help you?"

The following are some more common excuses people give for not wanting to register and sample responses you can give using the 4-Step Strategy.

Excuse: "I don't have time."

Your response: "I know you're busy. That's why we're out here, to save you the time of going down to the registrar's office. This way you won't have to give up your right to vote, and it will take less than a minute. Can I help you fill out this form?"

Excuse: "My candidates always lose anyway."

Your response: "I know what you mean. I've been really frustrated the same way. And then I found out that half our people didn't vote last time. That's thousands more people than it would take to win! So people like you and me who are fed up have gotten together, and we're going to register 5,000 people right here in town. Can I help you fill out this form?"

Excuse: "I think I'm already registered."

Lots of people who think they are already registered have actually been taken off the registration rolls, usually because they moved. If someone tells you they have already registered, try this response: "Great, but you haven't moved or changed your name since then, have you?"

Excuse: "I've been convicted of a crime."

Most people think that they can't vote if they've been convicted of a crime, yet many states allow convicted felons to vote, either automatically after release from prison, parole, or probation or once they have applied for restoration of their voting rights. Ask your City/County Elections Office about your state's laws in this regard, and be ready with a suitable response.

You try it!

Write down an excuse you've heard people use for not registering to vote. Now work out a response to the objection using the 4-Step Strategy.

Bonus Step: Turning Registered Voters into Volunteers

If you've made sure that a person is registered, is your job done? No! People who are already registered are best prospects for becoming volunteers. What do you say once you know someone is already registered?

"Great, but don't go away. Listen, it's people like you and me, people who understand how important it is for everyone to vote, who are the heart of our campaign. You know we have an election coming up, and it could have a big impact on the future of housing, human services, jobs, and all kinds of issues. Do you think you could work with us for a few hours?" (Get their name, address, phone number, and email.)



Sample Voter Registration Outreach Script

Below you'll find a brief sample script which you can adapt for your staff and volunteers to use when conducting voter registration outreach.

“Hi!”

- Approach people individually. Don't wait for them to approach you.
- Smile and make eye contact. Be enthusiastic!
- A proffered handshake is particularly hard to ignore.

“We're (Agency Name) volunteers out registering voters today because...”

- Tell them why you're registering voters (for example: to keep politicians accountable).
- Remember to avoid endorsing, supporting, or opposing any candidate or political party. You must register everyone who wants to register, regardless of party or candidate affiliation.

“What's your name?”

- Ask their name and fill it in on the registration form. Do not ask them if they wish to register. Assume they do!

“Can you fill this out for me, please?”

- Hand them the form and a pen and ask them to complete the process.
- If they hesitate to take the form or seem in need of help, offer to fill it in for them.
- Move on to the next person while they finish their form

“Whoops!” Check the form for these common mistakes:

- Can you read the writing?
- Is the form signed?
- Is the ethnicity box filled in?
- Did they write today's date where the form asked for a birth date?
- If they have no address to use, is there a map drawn of the person's sleeping area?

Incorporating Voter Registration into the Intake Process

One easy way to register people to vote on a regular basis is to do so during the intake process - when a client first comes to your organization and is already filling out forms or providing necessary information to receive services. Rules governing voter registration vary from state to state. Here are some simple steps to follow when incorporating voter registration into your intake process (please check with your local or state elections office to ensure that your organization's voter registration process is conducted properly).

Appoint a Voter Registration Coordinator.

Appoint a staff person to coordinate the incorporation of voter registration into the intake process. The coordinator should:

- Contact the county elections office or the Secretary of State's office to get information on how to conduct voter registration during the intake process.
- Obtain voter registration forms
- Find out voter requirements, such as voter eligibility, address, and identification requirements
- Find out how often completed forms should be mailed in (each week, every two weeks, etc.) and what the deadlines are for submitting forms before the next election
- Obtain any voter education information, such as a map of the local precincts and polling places or sample ballots, that would be helpful for newly registered voters obtain any other information necessary for the registration process
- Train the front desk staff on how to register voters and assist in voter registration based on the information you obtain from the county elections office or the Secretary of State's office.
- Coordinate the collection of voter registration data with the staff, including the number of voters the staff registered and the contact information for those registered.

Make Voter Registration Part of Your Intake and Publicize It.

Make sure clients know that being homeless does not exclude them from the democratic process.

- Post signs stating that clients have a right to vote, may register to vote here, and that they may use your organization's address as a mailing address when registering to vote.

- Amend agency intake forms and procedures to include the question, “If you are not registered to vote where you now live, would you like to register here today?”
- Ask whether the person has moved, changed names, been arrested, or done anything that could alter his/her status as a registered voter.
- You may also want to hold periodic meetings with staff to discuss any problems that arise out of making registration a part of the intake process or to answer any questions the staff has about registration.

Offer Clients Help in Filling Out Voter Registration Forms

Based on the voter registration information you receive from your county elections office, train staff to determine eligibility of voters, assist those registering to vote, and address issues that may arise such as problems with identification documents.

- If a staff person fills out the registration form for someone who cannot read or write, then the staff person must sign the registration form in addition to the person registering to vote.
- The staff should check over the registration form after the client finishes filling it out to make sure all required information has been provided.
- Your organization should offer to mail the registration forms to the elections office or a staff person may take the forms to the office.

Keep Track of Voter Registration Statistics

Keeping track of the voters you have registered will help to streamline the registration process during intake and will provide valuable insight into challenges facing homeless voters. For instance, the data may identify particular problems with registering homeless voters or may indicate that registration efforts are highly successful. Ultimately, it will help in assessing any changes that need to be made to the registration process. Keep track of how many clients register to vote, are currently registered to vote, or do not want to vote. Also, be sure to gather contact information for those who register so that your organization may target them in your “get out the vote” campaign.

You will want to devise a system of data gathering that works for your organization. Perhaps gathering data from the front line staff each week or each month is more efficient for your organization. Otherwise, it may be easier to keep track of those registering to vote based on the registration forms your organization sends to the elections office.

Getting Out The Vote

Once clients/shelter residents are registered, they face not only the difficulty of actually getting to the polls on Election Day, but also finding out where they need to vote. “Get Out the Vote” drives are critical for high levels of participation. Of all the homeless people that do manage to register as a voter, many end up not voting often because they are unable to find transportation to the polling site or they did not manage to find out where their polling site was.

There are many ways to encourage people to vote on Election Day and ways to give them the means of getting to the polling site. The following is a list of suggestions that can be tailored to your specific needs and should provide a good starting point for developing a successful “Get Out the Vote” drive at your agency.

Leading Up to Election Day

- Hang signs in shelters telling the open hours and location (with a map) of the designated polling place if registered at the shelter. Frequent reminders can increase incentive for homeless persons to go to the polls on Election Day.
- Provide information about absentee ballot and early voting requirements and deadlines for your state. Such information could be provided at shelters in the form of flyers.
- Print newsletters or flyers about the candidates and issues and distribute them in shelters shortly before Election Day. This not only serves to educate but also to encourage the voter to take the final step and go out and vote.
- Hold a candidate’s forum so that people can become more familiar with candidates and their positions. Information on how to hold a successful candidate forum is provided in Section II of this manual.\

On Election Day

Getting People to the Polling Sites:

- Have a shelter designated as a polling place! This is a very effective way of getting out the vote.
- Have volunteers on call to walk or drive clients or shelter residents to the polling places.
- Arrange for a church or school bus to shuttle people to the election site throughout the day.
- Encourage taxi companies and other forms of public transportation to provide free rides to the polling places.
- Hold a rally, complete with food and music, and then march to the polling place(s) together.

Facilitate Voter Comfort at the Polling Site

Invite local election officials to bring voting machines to your organization to familiarize people with the process of voting. Alternatively, have a mock voting booth at your agency beforehand with sample ballots so people feel more comfortable when voting.

Staff the election site with poll watchers who will assist homeless persons if they encounter any voting problems with local election officials. Where possible, recruit poll watchers who are already known within the homeless community.

Match volunteers with registered voters a week before the election. The volunteer will contact the registered voter a week before the election to talk about Election Day, the polling site, and ask if any assistance is needed to get to the polls. The volunteer can then call or visit the registered voter the day before the election to remind him or her. On Election Day the volunteer can accompany the registered voter to the polling site.



Homeless Voter Registration Laws and Policies - State Breakdown

The following table is provided to give you a general idea of the laws and policies affecting low income and homeless voters. Contact your local elections officials for more details.

	Allows shelter residents to register	Allows unsheltered residents to register	Mailing address required to register	Written policy/reg. allowing registration	Verbal-only policy allowing registration	State has homeless voting rights statute	ID Required To Vote *
Alabama	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Photo ID
Alaska	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Arizona	Yes	Yes	No			Yes	Strict Non-photo ID
Arkansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
California	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required
Colorado	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Connecticut	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Delaware	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
District of Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
Florida	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Photo ID
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Photo ID
Hawaii (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Photo ID
Idaho	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Photo ID
Illinois	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No ID Required
Indiana	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Strict Photo ID
Iowa	Yes	Yes	No			Yes	No ID Required

Kansas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Photo ID
Kentucky	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Louisiana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Photo ID
Maine	Yes	Yes	No			Yes	No ID Required
Maryland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
Massachusetts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
Michigan	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Photo ID
Minnesota	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		No	No ID Required
Mississippi	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Strict Photo ID
Missouri	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Montana	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Nebraska	Yes	Yes	No			Yes	No ID Required
Nevada	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Photo ID
New Jersey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
New Mexico	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required
New York	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required
North Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Strict Photo ID
North Dakota (2)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	Strict Non-photo ID
Ohio (3)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Non-photo ID
Oklahoma	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Oregon (4)	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No ID Required
Pennsylvania (5)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	No ID Required

Puerto Rico	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
Rhode Island	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Photo ID
South Carolina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Non-photo ID
South Dakota	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Photo ID
Tennessee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Photo ID
Texas (6)	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Strict Photo ID
Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required
Virgin Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	No ID Required
Virginia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Photo ID
Washington	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Non-strict Non-photo ID
West Virginia (7)	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No ID Required
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	Strict Photo ID
Wyoming	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No ID Required

* In "strict" states, a voter cannot cast a valid ballot without first presenting required ID. In states with "non-strict" voter ID laws, other methods of validation are allowed; this varies by state. Check with your City/County Elections Office to find out what ID is accepted in your community.

1. Hawaii Administrative Rule 2-51-25 (a) (3) prescribes that an individual without a conventional home address or home shall provide: (A) A description of the location of the residence sufficient to ascertain a voting district and precinct; and (B) A mailing address within the state, and where the person is legally entitled and does in fact receive mail.

2. North Dakota does not require a person to be registered to vote. The only requirement is that you live in the state for at least 30 days prior to the election.

3. In Ohio a mailing address is required if it exists. If not, a geographical description is required.

4. In Oregon the elections clerk's office may be used for a mailing address During mail elections, persons using such an address must go to the office to get their ballots.
5. In Pennsylvania the voter registrar in each county has the discretion to allow registration whether the person lives in a shelter or on the streets. They have the same discretion for the Page 41 mailing address requirement.
6. In Texas if the homeless voter is able to receive mail at the residence address provided (e.g. address of the Salvation Army facility), a mailing address is not required (e.g. U.S. Post Office General Delivery).
7. West Virginia requires a "residential address" which can include a P.O. Box, a shelter address, a next of kin's address, or a description of the geographical area in which a person usually stays (i.e. a street corner or park)

Appendix of National and State Resources

Federal Resources

U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC): eac.gov

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ): justice.gov

Listings of congressional districts: house.gov

Find your county: naco.org/Counties/Pages/CitySearch.aspx

State Board of Election Websites

Alabama: sos.state.al.us/Elections/Default.aspx

Alaska: elections.Alaska.gov

Arizona: azsos.gov/election

Arkansas: sos.state.ar.us/elections.html

California: sos.ca.gov/elections/

Colorado: sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/main.htm

Connecticut: sots.ct.gov/sots

Delaware: elections.delaware.gov

District of Columbia: dcboee.org/home.asp

Florida: election.dos.state.fl.us/

Georgia: sos.georgia.gov/elections/

Hawaii: hawaii.gov/elections/

Idaho: idahovotes.gov/

Illinois: elections.state.il.us/

Indiana: in.gov/sos/elections/

Iowa: sos.state.ia.us/elections/

Kansas: voteks.org/

Kentucky: sos.ky.gov/elections/

Louisiana: sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/68/Default.aspx

Maine: maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/

Maryland: elections.state.md.us

Massachusetts: sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm

Michigan: michigan.gov/sos/

Minnesota: sos.state.mn.us/

Mississippi: sos.ms.gov/elections.aspx

Missouri: sos.mo.gov/elections

Montana: sos.mt.gov/Elections/index.asp

Nebraska: sos.ne.gov/elec/voter_info.html

Nevada: sos.state.nv.us/elections

New Hampshire: sos.nh.gov/electionsnew.html

New Jersey: njelections.org

New Mexico: sos.state.nm.us/sos-elections.html

New York: elections.state.ny.us

North Carolina: sboe.state.nc.us

North Dakota: nd.gov/sos/electvote

Ohio: sos.state.oh.us/SOS/voter.aspx

Oklahoma: ok.gov/elections/

Oregon: sos.state.or.us/elections

Pennsylvania: dos.state.pa.us

Rhode Island: elections.state.ri.us

South Carolina: scvotes.org

South Dakota: sdsos.gov/electionsvoteregistration/

Tennessee: tennessee.gov/sos/election/

Texas: sos.state.tx.us/elections/index.shtml

Utah: elections.utah.gov

Vermont: uselections.com/vt/vt.htm

Virginia: sbe.virginia.gov/cms

Washington: sos.wa.gov/elections/Default.aspx

West Virginia: sos.wv.gov/elections/Pages/default.aspx

Wisconsin: gab.wi.gov/elections-voting

Wyoming: soswy.state.wy.us/Elections/Elections.aspx

National Organizations

Advancement Project

The organization seeks to produce social change by helping marginalized communities claim their rights. They partner with community organizations, bringing them the tools of legal advocacy and strategic communications to dismantle structural exclusion.

1220 L Street, NW, Suite 850

Washington, DC 20005

Tel: (202) 728-9557

Fax: (202) 728-9558

Email: ap@advancementproject.org

Web: advancementproject.org

Alliance for Justice

A national association of more than 100 organizations dedicated to advancing justice and democracy. Premised on the belief that all Americans have the right to secure justice in the courts and to have our voice heard when government makes decisions that affect our lives. The website contains information for nonprofits about how to legally get involved with election activity.

11 DuPont Circle NW

2nd Floor

Washington, DC 20036

Tel: (202) 822-6070

Fax: 202-822-6068

Web: afj.org

FairVote

FairVote acts to transform our elections to achieve universal access to participation, a full spectrum of meaningful ballot choices and majority rule with fair representation for all.

6930 Carroll Avenue Suite 61

Takoma Park, MD 20912

Tel: (301)270-4616

Fax: 301-270-4133

Email: info@fairvote.org

Web: fairvote.org

Lawyers Committee for Civil Right under Law: National Campaign for Fair Elections

The organization is at the forefront of the legal struggle to achieve equality and protect advances in voting rights for racial and ethnic minorities and other traditionally disenfranchised groups.

Eric Marshall: Campaign Manager

1401 New York Ave NW

Washington DC 20005

Tel: (202) 662-8315

Fax: 202-783-0857

Email: eric@nationalcampaignforarielections.org

Web: lawyerscommittee.org/projects/voting_rights

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

A coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States.

1629 K Street NW

Washington DC 20006

Tel: (202) 466-3311

Website: civilrights.org/voting-rights

National Coalition for the Homeless

2201 P Street NW

Washington DC 20037-1033

Tel: (202) 462-4822

Fax: 202-462-4823

Email: info@nationalhomeless.org

Website: nationalhomeless.org

National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty

An organization that works to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness. The website contains advocacy information about protecting the right to vote for people who are homeless and low-income.

1411 K Street NW, Suite 1400

Washington, DC 20005

Tel: (202) 638-2535

Email: nlchp@nlchp.org

Web: www.nlchp.org


Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network (NVEN)

An organization dedicated to expanding the role of America's nonprofits in voting and elections. The organization works with state nonprofit VOTE initiatives and their website provides resources and tools for 501(c)(3) nonprofits to help their communities participate and vote.

89 South Street, Suite 203

Boston, MA 02111

Tel: (617) 357-VOTE (8683)

Email: gpillsbury@nonprofitvote.org This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. 

Web: nonprofitvote.org/index.php

People for the American Way

An organization that is working toward a vibrant, diverse democratic society in which everyone is treated equally under the law, given the freedom and opportunity to pursue their dreams, and encouraged to participate in our nation's civic and political life.

2000 M Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: (202) 467-4999

Web: pfaw.org/issues/the-right-to-vote

Project Vote Smart

A non-partisan, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization aimed at encouraging voter registration and turnout. At their website, you can find out who your elected officials are and where they stand on various issues, as well as find information about voter requirements and the voting process in each state.

Philipsburg, MT 59858

Tel: (406) 859-8683

Email: comments@votesmart.org

Web: votesmart.org

Sentencing Project

People with felony convictions can vote in many states, but the laws are different state-by-state. This website gives information for each state.

1705 DeSales Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Tel: (202) 628-0871

Email: staff@sentencingproject.org

Web: sentencingproject.org/



" YOU DON'T NEED A HOME TO VOTE "
VOTING RIGHTS: REGISTRATION MANUAL

A PUBLICATION OF

**THE NATIONAL COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS**

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'PUREE')

KGS.

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