

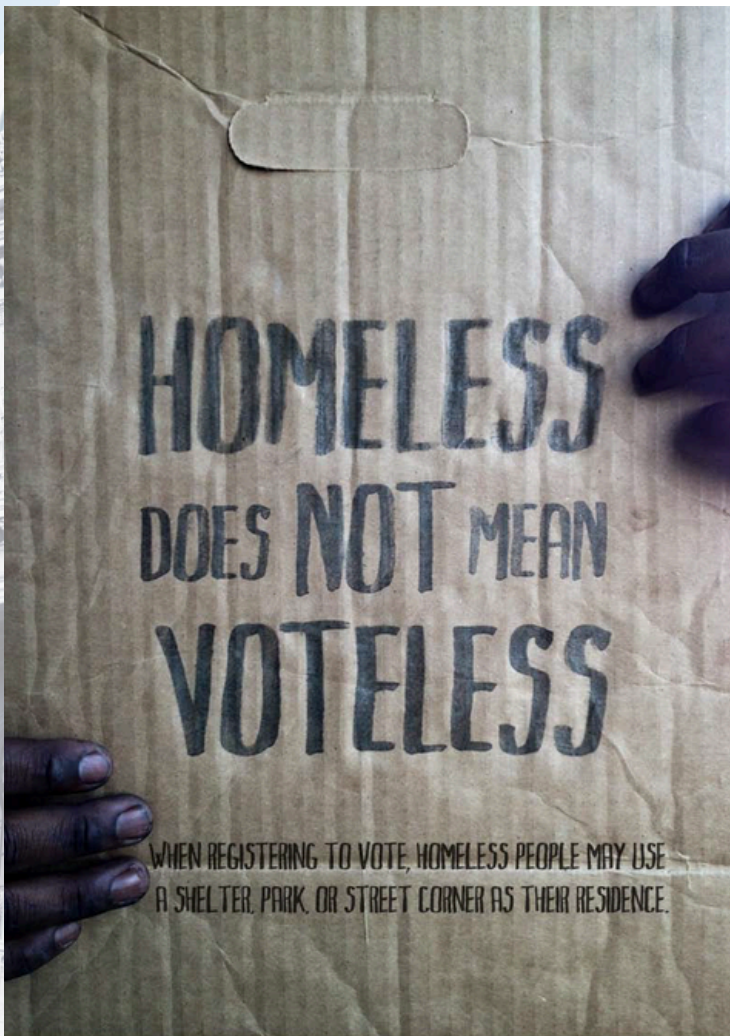
GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Barriers to voting still exist even after someone successfully becomes registered. Many folks end up not voting 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. Advertise other candidate forums and assist clients in attending.



GETTING OUT THE VOTE CONT.

On Election Day

Tips for getting people to the polling sites:

- Have your shelter/agency 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.