

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).

1. 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 to 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.

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2. 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 mailing address or 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.

3. 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 the 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.

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4. 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.

There isn't a way that I can encourage America's homeless to vote.

There isn't a way that I can encourage America's homeless.

There isn't a way that I can encourage America.

There isn't a way that I can encourage.

There isn't a way that I can.

There isn't a way.

There is.

Half of all U.S. states require a permanent address to vote. That's a problem when you don't have one. Please become a member of NCH, and join us in *bringing America home*. We've organized the *You Don't Need a Home to Vote Campaign*. To help get the word out in your community, download or order your NCH Voter Rights Registration Packet at www.nationalhomeless.org.



**NATIONAL
COALITION
FOR
THE
HOMELESS**