



[HTTPS://NATIONALHOMELESS.ORG/VOTING](https://nationalhomeless.org/voting)



CAN PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHOUSED VOTE?

YES! The cornerstone of our democracy in the U.S. 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.

People who experience homelessness and poverty (most of whom are people of color) have historically been disenfranchised. The “[**You Don't Need a Home to Vote**](#)” campaign seeks to promote voting access to ensure that people who are economically disadvantaged maintain a voice in shaping their future.





Voter Registration Tips:



- Make registration part of your intake or exit interview process.
- Put up signs announcing that people can "Register to Vote Here."
- Have outreach workers do voter registration.
- Ask your client/lived experience advisory group to help.
- Let your clients use your agency as a mailing address for their sample and/or absentee ballots.

Barriers to Registration



- Lack of ID
- Difficulty in keeping registration current
- Election officials lack of understanding of state guidelines
- Lack of accessibility
- Trauma, survival activities
- Discrimination
- Employment



Voter Engagement Tips:



- Create a multi-lingual voter information card.
- 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.
- Offer transportation to the polling place.
- Volunteer your organization as a polling site (contact your county elections office to learn more about this).



Barriers to Casting Ballot

- Registration is not current
- Election officials lack of understanding of state guidelines
- General voter disengagement
- Voter suppression and misinformation
- COVID-related:
 - – Agency closures, access to mail
 - – Limited polling locations

HOW WE CAN HELP

- 1. Help with a voter registration drive among those without housing.** The last thing a person is thinking about when they lose their home is to change their registration, but it is important in order to be able to vote is to notify the local board of elections of a person's change in residency. Every non-profit can help participants in their programs with voter registration. As long as this is done in a non-partisan manner, there are no issues that will jeopardize the agencies non-profit status. NCH can help with a training or publicizing your work at the national level. Politicians listen to groups who encourage their participants in voting.
- 2. We are encouraging events during National Homeless and Low-Income Voter Registration Week, held the last week in September.** We encourage registration events in shelters, meal programs, or subsidized housing complexes. These events can also be used as public education events to encourage greater action around solving homelessness. NCH staff can provide materials and additional information as well.
- 3. Voter education is critical to keeping those without housing engaged and enthusiastic about voting.** Non-profit organizations are allowed to host candidate forums as long as the charitable organization does not endorse a candidate and is fair to all the candidates running for a particular office. The non-profit organization can publish the answers to housing related questions from all of the candidates. An informed electorate is important for the success of democracy.
- 4. Finally, we are encouraging you to assist people who are unhoused to actually cast a ballot.** Early voting is often the easiest way for a person without a stable residence to vote. Non-profit organizations can help with transportation to a polling place both for early voting or for election day voting. Informed staff at service agencies should be encouraged to speak with residents or guests about the voting process. It is critical that everyone participate in electing leaders who will work to end the affordable housing crisis in the United States.

4 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

1. Develop a plan for your drive.

Appoint one person, or a group of people, to head up the organization of the drive. He/She/They 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 others 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.

2. Prepare for and publicize the drive.

- Obtain relevant materials: voter registration forms, pens, and clipboards; computer or tablet for online registration; voting stickers, voting brochures, and polling place maps.
- Plan logistics for the registration event, including arranging a location and food.
- Recruit 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 the staff of your organization and the clients the organization serves are 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.

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE CONT.

3. Conduct the registration drive.

- Have food, stickers and other voting materials on hand to give out, if permitted by local laws, to attract passers-by.
- Be prepared to answer questions that people may have about registering.
- Do not be shy. Ask everyone who passes by to register. 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. If you are submitting registrations online, ensure that your internet connection is secure, and confirm submission of registrations.

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).

REGISTRATION FAQ'S FOR ORGANIZATIONS



Is my agency allowed to do voter registration?

Yes. 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, or be partisan in any of your communications.

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.

How much time after a registration 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. Check with your state's election board.

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.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC):** <https://www.eac.gov/>
- **Congressional districts:** <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>
- **County data:** <https://explorer.naco.org/>
- **Check your registration status at:** <https://www.vote.org/>
- **Our Homes, Our Votes**, run by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, is a non-partisan campaign to register, educate, and mobilize more low income renters and affordable housing advocates to be involved in voting. [https:// www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org](https://www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org)
- The national, nonpartisan **Election Protection** coalition works year-round to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to vote and have that vote count. <https://866ourvote.org/>
- **Nonprofit VOTE** is the largest source of nonpartisan resources to help [nonprofits integrate voter engagement](#) into their ongoing activities and services. <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/>
- **VOTE411.org**, run by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, is a "one-stop-shop" for a wide range of election related information. <http://www.vote411.org/>

Check your registration status, learn about your candidates, and much more!

Follow the QR code →

or visit us at:

<https://bit.ly/HomelessVoting>



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Thank you!

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


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