

Can Poor People Vote?

YES! 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.



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. Your job is to assist with **Registering** homeless and low-income voters, and **Engaging** them in the process of voting and keeping elected officials accountable to their needs.

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 advisory group to help, or what you can do to help them encourage registration among clients and homeless community members.
- Let your clients use your agency as a mailing address for their sample and/or absentee ballots.

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 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).

The National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH), 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 end and prevent homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected. We envision a world where everyone has a safe, decent, accessible and affordable home.

NCH affirms that we CAN end and prevent homelessness; that people who are currently experiencing homelessness or have been homeless must be leaders in all the work of NCH and in the movement to end homelessness; that housing, healthy food, quality health care, education and livable incomes are basic human rights; that it is morally, ethically, and legally wrong to discriminate against and criminalize people struggling to meet their basic needs; that public policy makers and elected officials at all levels must be held accountable to end the systemic and structural causes of homelessness, that structural racism and discrimination are root causes of homelessness and violate human dignity; and that collaboration between NCH and its diverse stakeholders is critical in directing NCH's work.

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/>

National Organizations

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>

Alliance for Justice provides information for nonprofits about how to legally get involved with election activity. <https://www.afj.org/>

FairVote is a nonpartisan champion of electoral reforms that give voters greater choice, a stronger voice, and a representative democracy that works for all Americans. <http://www.fairvote.org>

Sentencing Project gives state-by-state information on how felony convictions affect voters. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement/>

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/>