



**OUR HOMES,
OUR VOTES**

**Building the Base: Voter Registration of Low
Income Renters and Their Allies**

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Presenters



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Agenda



- Before You Begin Registering
- Registering Voters!
- Tips for an Effective Registration Campaign
- Common Obstacles
- Question and Answer
- Additional Resources

Our Homes, Our Votes



Our Homes, Our Votes is NLIHC's voter engagement effort focusing on increasing voter registration and turnout amongst low income housing renters and advocates.



Legal Considerations for Nonprofits



501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations ARE allowed to participate in voter registration efforts!

501(c)(3)s **CAN**

- Register voters
- Educate voters
- Engage candidates on issues
- Get voters to the polls

As long as all efforts and activities remain NON-PARTISAN!

501(c)(3)s **CANNOT**

- Make endorsements of any political candidates.
- Donate money, resources, or time to any particular candidate.
- Any staff engaged in partisan political activities **MUST** do so without representing the organization, **NEVER** on staff time, and **NEVER** using 501(c)(3) resources.

Before You Begin Registering

Automatic voting machine with privacy
curtains, invented in Iowa, 1939.
Gift of Rockwell Manufacturing Company


**VOTE
HERE**

Preparing a Registration Campaign

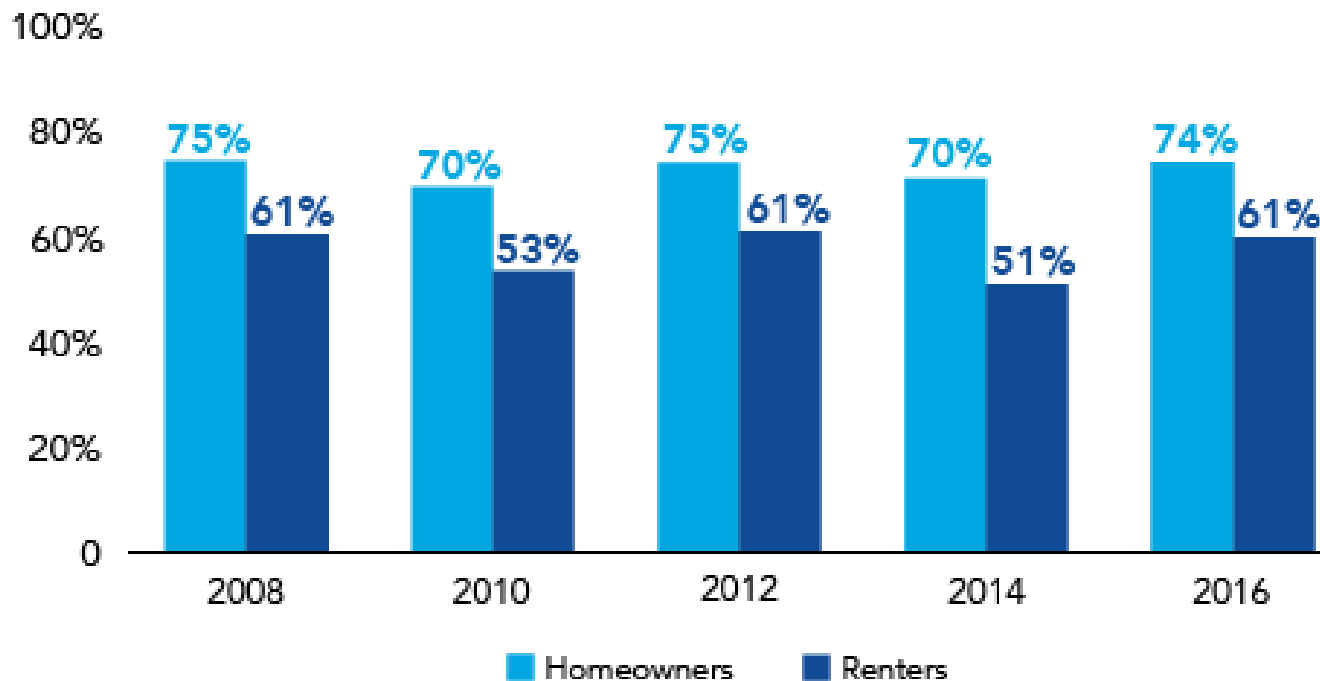


- Define your goals
- Connect with the local Board of Elections
- Registration trainings
- Consider resources

Registration Rates: Renter Vs. Homeowners



U.S. Citizens Who Reported Being Registered to Vote
(2008 to 2016)



Source: November 2008-2016 Current Population Survey data

Goal Setting and Voter Registration



- Define your constituency
- Produce an intended registration number
 - Increases over previous years can be strong goals
- Establishing roles
- Volunteer recruitment

Know the Law of Registration



- Voter registration laws vary from state to state
 - Some states require trainings of voter registration deputies
 - Some states have rules on when registration forms must be turned in
- Get information from local election officials
 - Often either County Clerk or Board of Elections
- NonProfit VOTE resource: Voting in Your State
 - <https://bit.ly/2mEwUlf>

NonProfit VOTE—State Page Example



Voting in Minnesota

Use the links on the right to find official voting information directly from your state's elections website.

Special Circumstances

- Voting as an Ex-offender
- Voting and Homelessness
- Voting and Domestic Violence
- Voting with a Disability
- Voting for Minnesota Military and Overseas Voters

Nonprofit Resources

- Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

STATE ELECTION OFFICE

LOCAL ELECTION OFFICE

REGISTER TO VOTE

REGISTER TO VOTE ONLINE

CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

Registration Trainings



- All staff and volunteers must be trained on voter registration
 - Legal considerations
 - Filling out forms correctly
 - Ensuring forms are handed in promptly
- Invite local election officials to conduct trainings, if available

Resources and Tools



- Always have enough registration forms
- Pledge cards
 - Mailed back to registrants to remind them of their pledge to vote
- Sample ballots
 - Demystify voting process
- Factsheets on issues impacted by elections



Registering Voters!



Registering Voters



- Build registration activities into day-to-day work
- Plan specific activities
- Door-to-door campaigns
- Establish a community presence
- Keep records



National Voter Registration Day—September 25



- National day of coordinated volunteer registration events throughout the country.
- Excellent website to post local events that volunteers can find.



Online Voter Registration



- 38 states now allow online voter registration.
- Registration drives can now be done with tablets or smartphones instead of clipboards and paper forms.
- League of Women Voters maintains an excellent online voter registration resource.
 - <http://www.vote411.org/register#.W1JP2NJKhQA>

Updating Registrations



When in Doubt, Re-Register!

- Renters change addresses with more frequency than homeowners and are more likely to need to update registrations
- Voter roll purges
- Consider: Municipal ordinances similar to Minneapolis requirement that all landlords provide registration forms to new renters

A grayscale background image showing a hand holding a pen and filling out a registration form. The form has various fields and text, including a heading that reads "Application for Processed Paper Recycled Paper". The text on the form is partially legible, mentioning "I am a U.S. citizen" and "I am 18 or older".

Tips for an Effective Registration Campaign

Tips for Effective Registration Campaigns



- Get to know local election officials
- Build a coalition
- Its never too early to start planning
- Recruit volunteers and staff
- Incorporate “Active Tabling”

Tracking Progress



- Be sure to record total number of registrations collected, and new addresses
 - Include updated registrations
- Demonstrating a large block of registered voters will help with engaging candidates



Common Obstacles



Common Obstacles



1. Voter Apathy
2. Locked Apartment Buildings
3. Formerly Incarcerated Voters
4. Voting without an Address

Confronting Voter Apathy



Effective Messaging

- Focus on a better future
- Connect voting with personal struggles of a given voter
- Use language that refers to civic duty

I CAN'T VOTE...
BUT YOU CAN VOTE FOR ME

- ✓ Access & quality healthcare
- ✓ Better schools
- ✓ Safer communities
- ✓ Jobs

My future
depends on you.



I VOTE, I COUNT.

For more information about registering to vote or poll locations, contact your health center or go to www.communityhealthvote.net

LOCAL VOTING INFORMATION:



Locked Apartment Buildings



- Voter registration is NOT soliciting, and simple indications of “no soliciting” do not apply to civic engagement.
- Most owners and operators will allow non-partisan door-to-door registration when it is requested in advance.
- Neighbors can always engage neighbors.

Locked Apartment Buildings: Finding Subsidized Residents



- Use the National Housing Preservation Database produced by PAHRC and NLIHC.
- www.preservationdatabase.org

National Housing Preservation Database

Filter Criteria Filtered Properties

National Housing Preservation Database Filters

Number of features found: 578

● Target Tenant Type	Missing
Occupancy Rate	
One Bedroom Units	
Two Bedroom Units	
Three Bedroom Units	
Property Assisted by HOME	No
Property Assisted by HUD Insured Mortgage	No
Property Assisted by LIHTC	Yes
Public Housing Property	No
Property Assisted by Section 515 Rental Housing Loans	No
Property Assisted by Section 538 Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program	No
Property Assisted by Section 202 Direct Loans	No
Property Assisted by Section 236	No
Project Assisted by Section 8 Project Based Rental Assistance	No
Property Assisted by State Subsidy	No

Voting for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals



- Generally, a person with a conviction who has completed all parole and probation requirements is eligible to vote, but **THIS VARIES BY STATE**.
- States where all people with felony convictions are **PERMANENTLY** banned from voting are Florida, Virginia, Kentucky, and Iowa.
- Only two states allow people with convictions to vote while still in prison: Vermont and Maine.
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) maintains a great map resource at: <https://bit.ly/2t8ioyn>

Common Obstacles



Registration for People Without Addresses

Annie Leomporra



You Don't Need a Home to Vote!



- Frequently Asked Questions
- Misconceptions
- Tips for an Effective Voter Registration Campaign Focusing on Unsheltered People
- What Else Can Organizations Do?



Questions?





Additional Resources



Voter Engagement Tools



Our Homes, Our Votes: A Guide to Voter Engagement Activities for Nonprofit Housing Providers and Resident Organizations



Our Homes, Our Votes is NLHC's effort to expand voter engagement work conducted by community organizations dedicated to expanding affordable housing. This guide is designed to help you through the steps of planning your agency's voter engagement work. These materials offer resources for organizations seeking to engage traditionally underrepresented people in the civic process. Beyond this guide, NLHC will offer trainings and additional tools through the 2018 election. Be sure to visit nlhc.org/library/voter-engagement for the most updated materials and announcements.

This voter engagement plan provides all of the steps you need to implement a campaign to integrate registration, education, mobilization, and voter protection without overtaxing your staff or resources, while staying within legal guidelines for nonprofits. Our plan presents a menu of activities for your group to consider. Your organization may or may not be able to undertake all of the suggested activities; plan according to available resources. If this is your first voter engagement project, remember to think long-term. It is usually best to start small and build your project over several election cycles.

Please let us know if you are conducting a voter engagement effort so that we can provide assistance, connect you with helpful resources, and spotlight your election-related work on our blog or in other NLHC publications such as Tenant Talk. Call NLHC's Field Team at 202-662-1530, or email us at outreach@nlhc.org.

WHY ENGAGE IN ELECTION WORK?

Raising housing on the national agenda will happen only when candidates for elected office understand that the issue of affordable housing is important to voters. At the same time, it is vital that low income voters understand how the decisions made by federal elected officials

directly affect their lives; know how to register to vote; and, know how to get to the polls on Election Day.

Census data confirm that low income voters are registered and vote at lower rates than higher income citizens. While 85% of people with incomes over \$100,000 were registered to vote in 2016 and 74% voted, just 60% of people with incomes below \$20,000 were registered, and only 38% actually voted. (U.S. Census Bureau. Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2016. May 2017.)

People in low income communities face several challenges to voting such as less-flexible work schedules that may not allow time off to vote; more difficulty obtaining legal identification; transportation impediments that may make getting to the polls more difficult; and, a greater likelihood of misinformation about their rights as voters. People experiencing homelessness, ex-offenders, and survivors of a natural disaster may face especially tough barriers to voting.

Nonprofit organizations, which benefit from close ties with their members, are a natural fit in helping people overcome these challenges. Nonprofits that have implemented voter engagement projects have identified several benefits of doing so:

- Residents engage in civic life and learn how decisions of elected officials affect their lives.
- The issue of homelessness and housing scarcity is elevated in public debate.
- Elected officials become educated on low



**OUR HOMES,
OUR VOTES**

2018 Our Homes, Our Votes Engagement Plan



Completing a voter engagement plan for your agency will help you assess how best to incorporate voter registration, education, and mobilization into your agency's work. This plan template presents a menu of activities that your organization may want to consider.

Please let NLHC know you are participating! Contact NLHC's Field Team at 202-662-1530 or outreach@nlhc.org with a description of your project.

WHY BECOME VOTERIZED?

Below are some reasons that organizations have undertaken voter engagement projects. Check those that apply to your organization, and add any others that apply.

- Engage residents in civic participation and help them become familiar with how decisions of elected officials affect their lives.
- Elevate the issue of homelessness and housing scarcity in public debate.
- Educate elected officials on low income housing issues and on how their decisions affect residents.
- Build influential relationships with elected officials. Help develop residents' leadership skills.
- Assist residents in meeting community service requirements, if applicable. Earn positive press for your program or project.
- Other: _____

LEGALLY SPEAKING

501(c)(3) organizations can, and should, engage in nonpartisan election-related activity, including voter registration, education, and mobilization. 501(c)(3)s cannot in any way support or oppose particular candidates. For detailed information on these issues:

- Contact the Office of the Secretary of State or Board of Elections in your state to learn your state's rules for voter registration drives.
- Take a look at the Permissible Activities Checklist put together by Nonprofit VOTE at: www.nonprofitvotes.org/documents/2017/04/nonpartisan-election-activities-501c3-nonprofits.pdf.
- Visit the League of Women Voters at www.women411.org for the latest information on voting in your state.
- Read and review Nonprofits, Voting & Elections produced by Nonprofit VOTE at: <http://www.nonprofitvotes.org/nonprofits-voting-elections-online/documents/2010/11/nonprofits-voting-and-elections.pdf>.

REGISTERING VOTERS

Setting Goals for Registering Voters

- What percentage of your clients will you register? What number? _____
- Will your agency also register other low income members of the community, beyond those served by your program? _____
- How many weeks do you have until the deadline to register voters? _____
- How many people must you register on average per week to meet your goal? _____

Upcoming Webinars



Tuesday July 31

The Importance of Voter Lists! A Key Tool for Successful Mobilization

Tuesday, August 7

An Informed Debate: Effectively Engaging Candidates while Remaining Non-Partisan

Tuesday, August 14

“I Vote for More Affordable Homes!” Educating Voters Before Election Day

Tuesday, August 21

Voter Mobilization: Getting Out the Vote

All Webinars begin at 3:00pm ET
For more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2KooyTi>

It's never been easy.

Our commitment is unwavering.

**Join us and amplify the voices of
the poorest families in need.**

**OUR MEMBERS
ARE OUR STRENGTH.**



NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION

JOIN TODAY
WWW.NLIHC.ORG/MEMBERSHIP

Contact Us



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