

Voter Registration and the Challenge of Voter Suppression

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Overview

- 1. Introduction to the Voterization Project and the Issue of Voter Suppression
- 2. Restrictions and Considerations for 501(c)(3) Organizations
- 3. Overview of NLIHC's 2014 Voterization Plan
- 4. Best Practices in Voter Registration Drives
- 5. Survey of Additional Resources
- 6. Q&A



What is Voterization?

Voterization is a term that encompasses the three part process of effective voter engagement:

- 1. Registration
- 2. Education
- 3. Mobilization



As housing advocates, why should we care about Voterization?

- The Voterization Project is a direct response to the issue of low turnout amongst our constituents.
- If our constituents do not vote, then their needs and concerns will not be reflected in the composition of elected bodies.
- Put simply, low turnout amongst our constituents is not conducive to a favorable housing policy environment. Their needs will not be addressed.



Who exactly are our constituents?

- Predominantly renters and lower income.
- The percentage of renters voting in presidential elections increased from 42% in 1996 to 52% in 2008. This is still far below the voter rate among homeowners of 68% in 2008.
- In 2012, turnout was 62% for voters earning less than \$55,000, compared to 77% for voters making over \$75,000.
 - For the 2010 midterm election it was a 40/60 split.



Voter Suppression

- Historically, our constituents tend to have lower turnout.
- On top of that, there are now concerted efforts to suppress the votes of specific groups of people.
- Collectively, these efforts are known as "voter suppression."



Voter Suppression

- What are some examples?
 - Voter ID Laws
 - Targeting Specific Communities with Misinformation
 - Efforts to Curtail Early and Absentee Voting Opportunities
 - Reducing or Relocating Polling Places
 - "Voter Caging" (challenging registration status at the polls)
- Who is targeted?
 - Low income people
 - Members of racial or ethnic minorities
 - Students
 - Senior citizens
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Significant overlap with our constituents!



Context

- Low turnout and intentional efforts to suppress the votes of our constituents are the context for the Voterization Project.
- Today, we are specifically going to focus on the first component of Voterization: Registration.



Nonprofit Organizations and Voting

- 501(c)(3) organizations ARE allowed to participate in voter registration efforts.
 - Direct service providers can and should register clients at intake processing, events, or meetings.
 - All voter registration activities MUST be nonpartisan.
 - Voter registration efforts cannot be coordinated with any campaign or political party.
 - Staff and volunteers must register anyone interested, and not just people with certain party affiliations.
 - Organizational staff time, facilities, and resources cannot be used to support any candidate, campaign, or political party.
- Staff, volunteers, and board members can participate in partisan political activities, but cannot be representing the organization when doing so.
 - Staff who do volunteer work or organizing for campaigns and candidates should use vacation or sick leave during any activities taking place during business hours.



Federally Funded Organizations and Voter Registration

- Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) CAN participate in voter registration activities.
 - PHAs can provide materials for voter registration and can help residents fill out registration forms.
- Certain federal funds do restrict voter registration activities.
 - Staff who are paid through AmeriCorps or HeadStart funding cannot participate in voter registration activities.
 - Legal Services groups cannot participate in any election activity, even if nonpartisan.
 - Recipients of Community Services Block Grant funding can participate in voter registration, but CSBG funds cannot be used.
 - More information on federal funds and voter registration restrictions can be found at: http://bit.ly/1lnQxh7



NLIHC Tools

• The **Voterization Plan** is a step-by-step model for launching a campaign to register, educate, and mobilize voters.

 The Voterization Narrative is a companion piece to explain steps in the Voterization process.

NLIHC's Field Team!





2014 VOTERIZATION Narrative Guide

This narrative accompanies the National Low In is designed to help you through the steps of pla 2014 Voterization materials offer resources for underrepresented people in the civic process.

Our Voterization Plan takes you through all of t integrate registration, education, mobilization, or resources, while staying within legal guidelin template, and then use other resources describe

Our plan presents a menu of activities for your be able to undertake all of the suggested activit your first voter engagement project, remember and build your project over several election cycl

Please let us know you are conducting a Voteriz 662-1530, or email us at outreach@nlihc.org, W in requirements for voting and registration, y in your state. Remember that we are here to be

Thank you for doing your part!

WHY BECOME VOTERIZED?

Raising housing on the national agenda will happen on of affordable housing is important to voters. At the san the decisions made by federal elected officials directly a to get to the polls on Election Day.

However, census data confirm that low income voters a citizens. While 80% of people with incomes over \$100, of people with incomes below \$20,000 were registered, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008.

Low income people face several challenges to voting: le difficulty obtaining legal identification; transportation



2014 VOTERIZATION Plan

Completing a Voterization 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. The companion Voterization Narrative provides additional information. Please let us know you are participating!

Contact NLIHC's Outreach Team at 202-662-1530 or outreach@nlihc.org with a description of your project.

WHY BECOME VOTERIZED?

Below are some reasons that organizations have undertaken Voterization 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.

- __Educate elected officials on low income housing issues and on how their decisions affect residents.
- Build power 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 thirdparty voter registration.

- __Take a look at the Permissible Activities Checklist put together by Nonprofit VOTE at: www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2010/09/501c3-activities-en.pdf
- Participate in NLIHC's webinar series on Voterization. Sign up for the sessions at: http://nlihc.org/VOTE
- ____ Visit the League of Women Voters at www.vote411.org for the latest information on voting in your state.
- ___ Read and review Nonprofits, Voting & Elections produced by Nonprofit VOTE at: http://bit.ly/1qFLEBk

Getting Started—Goals and Roles

REGISTERING VOTERS **Setting Goals for Registering Voters** A. How many residents/clients does your agency have? B. What percentage of your clients will you register? What number? C. Will your agency also register other low income members of the community, beyond your clients? If so, how many? D. What is your agency's total goal for new registrants (B+C)? E. How many weeks do you have until the deadline to register voters? F. How many people must you register on average per week to meet your goal? **Assigning Responsibilities** A. What staff person will ultimately be responsible for meeting registration goals? B. What resident leaders will have responsibility for meeting registration goals?



Getting Ready—Know the Law!

Preparing To Register Voters

Your local Board of Elections can be a valuable source of information as you plan to register clients to vote.

You will want to check in with them to:

- Learn the registration deadline for the general election in your state.
- Ask whether anyone can register voters in your state, or whether a person must first become deputized or meet other requirements.
- Request the voter rolls for your locality. There may be a small charge for this, but it's important; you will use this
 list to determine which of your residents and clients are already registered, and which need to change their official
 voting address.
- · Request enough voter registration forms to meet your registration goals.

Are there special requirements someone must meet before registering voters?
Who will obtain the county voter list and pick up the voter registration forms?
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Who will obtain the county voter list and pick up the voter registration forms?



Register Voters!

Fitting Voter Registration Into Your Agency's Regular Contact With Residents
Add voter registration to the client intake process. Specifically, ask people to register and
assist them in completing the form; don't just provide the form.
Register clients when they come in to receive your services.
Train all staff and volunteers who work directly with clients to be able to answer questions
and assist with registration forms.
Add a voter registration component to all job training, computer, or other classes offered by
your agency.
Other:
Planning Specific Voter Registration Activities
Hold a social or other event at which voter registration is an activity.
Host an event for National Homeless and Low Income Voter Registration Week (Sept. 27-
Oct. 3, 2014), www.nationalhomeless.org/campaigns/voting
Other:
Organizing A Door-To-Door Campaign
Train residents, staff, and other volunteers who are already registered to go door-to-door to
register low income renters. Use the county voter list to determine who needs to be registered
and whose registration needs to be updated.
Appoint residents as building captains, floor captains, etc. Ensure they are trained on the
rules in your state, and make them responsible for registration (and turnout) where they live.
For locked buildings where you have not recruited a resident captain, approach landlords to
ask if they will allow door-to-door registration or a registration table in the lobby.
Consider offering public recognition to those who register the most new voters or the highest
percentage of their area.
Reaching Out To the Community
Have your registrars reach out into the community to register other low income, homeless or
underrepresented people.
Provide a voter registration and information table at neighborhood events.
Make sure everyone on the staff and board is registered!



Make it Count—Keep a Good List!

- Keeping a voter list on hand can help with updating addresses for people who have moved, and can be used to verify who is already registered.
- Developing a list of new registrants is essential. This list can be used for Get Out the Vote efforts and follow up for voter education activities.

KEEPING RECORDS

Keeping records of the people you register to vote helps both with determining whether you have met your registration goals and with planning Get Out The Vote activities. NLIHC has a sample database that you can use for recordkeeping at the end of this document.

Where allowable by law, one easy way to gather the information for your list is to collect voter registration forms from new registrants, then photocopy the forms or portions of forms before mailing them in. You can also have new registrants fill out a two-part pledge card. They will keep the half of the card that reminds them of their pledge to vote; you will keep the half with their contact information.

Who will be responsible for keeping records of who becomes registered to vote?



Best Practices for a Successful Voter Registration Drives

Get to Know Local Election Officials

- Registration forms, processes, and timelines will be coordinated by local authorities.
- Local authorities will give the best information on required training voter registration volunteers.

Build a Coalition

- Involve other organizations in your community or neighborhood to pool resources, volunteers, and facilities.
- Prevent overlapping registration efforts.
- Participate in organized events like National Voter Registration Day,
 September 23, 2014
 - More information on National Voter Registration Day: http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org



Best Practices (continued)

Recruit volunteers

- Use voter registration as an opportunity to get more community involved in organizational activities. Registration efforts can be a great way to recruit new volunteers and a great activity for interns.
- Assign specific roles such as building captains or canvass captains to make volunteers feel ownership over the project.

Publicize Your Efforts

- Make it clear to any community member entering your office that they can register to vote. Have registration forms easily available.
- Use your website, blog, Twitter account, and other social media to make sure people know where to register to vote.
- Make registration materials available at all events, meetings, and facilities.



Common Issues

Homeless Voters

- Various court decisions have affirmed that homeless people cannot be denied voting rights simply for not having an address.
- Homeless people can use a shelter or a park as an address when registering, though state laws proving residency vary widely.

Voter Apathy

- Non-voters are often concerned that nothing will change because they vote. Registration staff
 and volunteers should be trained to connect housing and neighborhood policy issues to the lives
 the voter. Making this connection can be key get someone interested.
- Point out that registering to vote does not require a person to vote, but just provides the option.

Felon Voters

- In most states, voters with prior felony convictions can legally register as long as the parole or probation periods of the sentence have been completed.
- This varies by state. To find out the rules in your state, see this map from the ACLU: http://bit.ly/1u5i2jm



Additional Voter Registration Resources

- Beyond our 2014 Voterization Plan, there are some other great resources for voter registration.
 - 1. Fair Elections Legal Network's (FELN) State-By-State Resources
 - 2. Florida Housing Search
 - 3. Online Voter Registration Tools



FELN's State-By-State Material

- FELN offers an extensive array of state-specific and issue-specific resources on its website.
- http://www.fairelectionsnetwork.com/



Working to remove barriers to voting and improve election administration across the United States.

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Mobile Voters

Redistricting

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Voter ID

Voter Mobilization/GOTV

Voter Registration

STATE RESOURCES

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

District of Columbia

Florida

Georgia

Resources

The Fair Elections Legal Network, since it's founding in 2006, has worked with national and state c3 and c4 voter mobilization groups to provide guidance and resources as they conduct voter registration and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) drives. Each state has a different set of rules and guidelines to follow. FELN aims to help organizations to navigate these rules and procedures to ensure compliance and maximize their registration and GOTV efforts in the state. Additionally, FELN will provide reports and practical recommendations to overcome the hurdles that many voters face when trying to cast a ballot – particularly youth, students, those facing foreclosure, and jobseekers that frequently move.

This section breaks down our resources in two ways: by issue and by state. You can navigate through the section using the links in the sidebar on the left.

In the Issues section are the issues on which FELN has worked. On each issue page you will find a basic explanation of the issue, recent developments and news from FELN on the issue as well as downloadable reports, fact sheets, and guides on the issue.

In the State section you will find pertinent electoral information for the state such as the state's chief election officer with contact information, basic information on absentee and early voting, voter registration deadlines, and identification requirements. You will also find information on any recent

RESOURCES

Election Administration Foreclosure

Issue Briefs

Mobile Voters

Redistricting

Student Voting

Voter ID

Voter Mobilization/GOTV

Voter Registration

Voter Registration

Voter registration is the first step to getting voters to the polls. However, many have not taken that first step - particularly among young adults. In 2010, only 45.3 percent of eligible 18 to 24 year olds registered to vote compared to 65.1 percent of overall eligible voters.

For young people, there are barriers they face to registration, particularly among students. In 2010, over a third of students cited lacking information, missing registration deadlines, or not meeting residency requirements as reasons why they did not register to vote. To increase registration, its important to reach students on campus. In 2008, of those that did register to vote, 30% reported that they registered through a voter registration drive or through their school, a hospital, or other location.

Any effort to engage citizens in our democracy should recognize that a key component to any successful voter registration effort is an understanding of the applicable laws, rules and practices. Every election, thousands of voters are turned away from the polls because they have missed voter registration deadlines. Additionally, state legislative efforts around the country are making it more difficult for individuals to register to vote and for 3rd party registration groups to help people get registered. The Fair Elections Legal Network works with groups to help them build legal guidelines and best practices into their voter registration plans. Amongst the resources on this page are our state quides to voter registration and voter mobilization.

FELN is also committed to promoting voter registration reform that reflects 21st century realities. Individuals should be able to register to vote online, but only about 20% of states have adopted such legislation. Also, with statewide voter registration databases now in place throughout the country, individuals who have moved should be allowed to update their addresses throughout the state on Election Day and vote a regular ballot. Common sense reforms such as these will allow more citizens to participate in our democracy.

Working to remove barriers to voting and improve election administration across the United States.

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Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

District of Columbia

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

Idaho

Illinois

Indiana

lowa

Kansas

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Virginia

- Conducting Voter Registration Drives in Virginia (2014)
- Guide to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) in Virginia (2014)
- · Voter Eligibility Guide for Virginia (2012)
- Identification Requirements to Vote in Virginia (2012)
- Virginia Student Voter Guide (2013)
- Palm Card Voting In Virginia: The Basics (2013)

Virginia's State Board of Elections Website

Florida Housing Search

- FloridaHousingSearch.org provides a database of affordable housing developments in FL that can be used to scout locations for voter engagement work, but that's not its actual function.
- You might try finding or creating something similar in your own state. Or generally, you can also try to work with your PHA.



Florida Housing Search.org

A Free Place to List & Find Affordable Housing in Florida

About Us Find Housing Tenant Tools & Links Resources





FOR TENANTS













PARA INQUILINOS



FOR PROPERTY PROVIDERS



Log In to Your Existing Account



Online Voter Registration Tools

- Many states have online voter registration that allows residents to forego any paperwork, postage, or travel.
- This is a great option for people with mobility issues.
- If you live in one of these states, you might consider putting together an online registration campaign as part of your Voterization Plan.



States with Online Voter Registration

 AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, IN, KS, LA, MD, MN, NV, OR, SC, UT, VA, and WA.

 Visit the webpage with links for all states: http://rtvote.com/1hPrtkp



Nonprofit Vote's Voter Registration Tool



- Regardless of whether your state has online voter registration, you can use Nonprofit Vote's Voter Registration Tool at: http://bit.ly/1kPu6BW
- It's a widget that you can install on your website that allows users to complete a state-specific voter registration form without leaving your webpage. They can then print the form and mail it.



Engaging America's nonprofits in voting and elections.

OUR MISSION | OUR PARTNERS | HOW IT WORKS | RESOURCES



★ GET A VOTER ★ **REGISTRATION TOOL**

for your website

ROCK! OTE







CHECKLIST: 2014 TIMELINE



JUNE 26TH WEBINAR

Engaging Candidates in 2014

Elections are a great way to connect with current and future elected officials. While they're running, use the opportunity to get your issues in front of candidates, share your research, host a forum, or invite them to events. Find out how to make the most of this election season by browsing all of our nonpartisan candidate engagement resources.



Election Modernization in Massachusetts

In May, Massachusetts passed a sweeping election bill that allows for early voting, online registration, post-election audits of voting machines, and pre-registration for 16 and 17 year-olds. Learn more.

Options	Code	Snippet

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Use a text link on your site: Register to Vote Here!	<pre>Register to Vote Here!<script src="http://www.rockthevote.com/register/nonprofit- vote/widget_loader.js" type="text/javascript"></script></pre>
REGISTER TO ** VOTE ** HERE	<pre><script src="http://www.rockthevote.com/register/nonprofit- vote/widget_loader.js" type="text/javascript"></script></pre>
Button option 2: REGISTER TO ★ VOTE ★ HERE	<pre><script src="http://www.rockthevote.com/register/nonprofit- vote/widget_loader.js" type="text/javascript"></script></pre>

In addition to using the buttons provided above, you can easily modify the code to use your own voter registration button, appropriate to your site. Simply replace the hyperlinked image with an image of your own.

For example:



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VOTER Registration



Let's get started.

In order for you to cast your vote come election time, you need to be registered to vote. This quick form will allow you to complete the necessary information in order to generate a voter registration form which you will then print out and sign.

Do you have an email address?

NO YES

If you choose "yes," you will have the option to receive follow up emails with election information from our nonpartisan voter registration partner, Rock the Vote. The emails are limited to helpful reminders about the next upcoming election where you live.

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VOTER Registration



New Registrant

ZIP Code

Date of Birth

I am a U.S. citizen.

I have a drivers license or state ID card.

I will be 18 by the next election day.

I am registering to vote for the first time.

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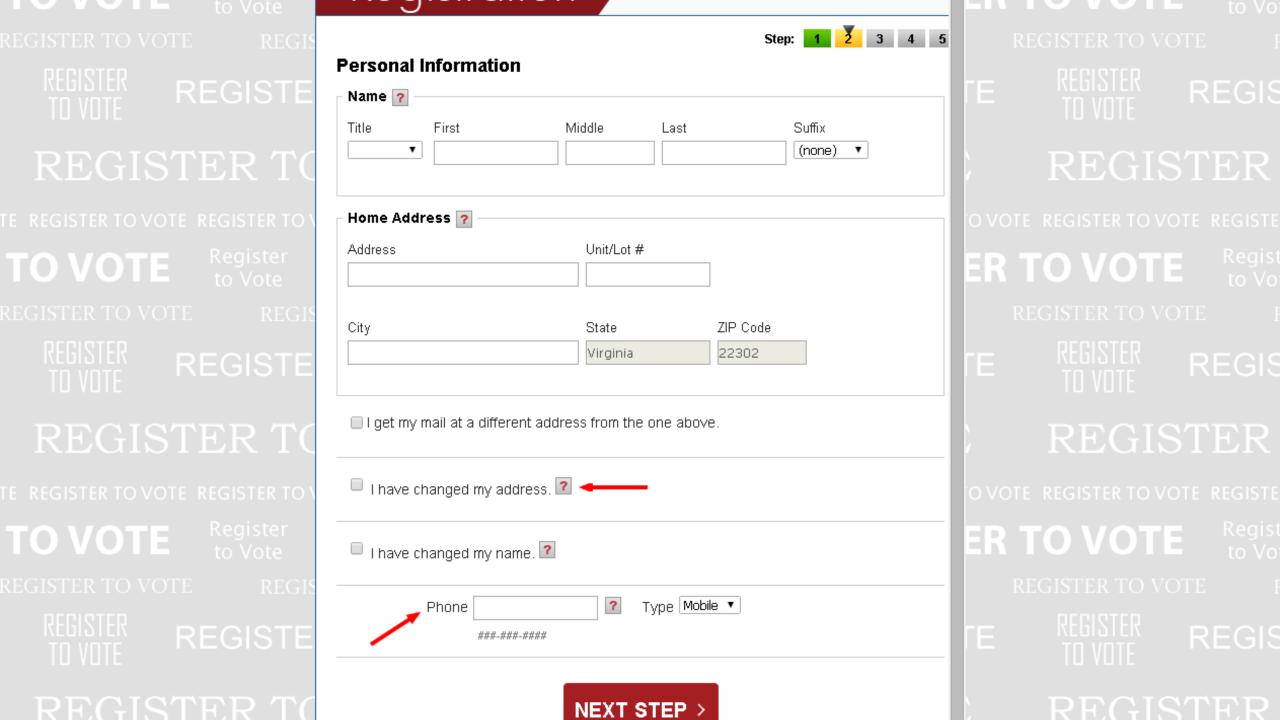
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Registration



Step: 1 2 3 4 5

Stay Informed and Take Action

Questions For You

What nonprofit helped you register to vote?

REVIEW APPLICATION >

< Previous Step

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EDIT

Step: 1 2 3 4

Review and Confirm

New Registrant

Please review the following information and confirm its accuracy.

ZIP Code
Date of Birth

Personal Information

Name
Home Address

Additional Registration Information

Additional Registration Information

ID Number

Race

Party

I have reviewed the above information, and it is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

PREPARE FORM >

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VOTER Registration



Step: 1 2 3 4

Print Your Form

You are not done. Click on the print form button to print out your voter registration form. Sign it and mail to the address located on the form.

PRINT YOUR REGISTRATION > FORM NOW

You won't be registered unless you print, sign and mail in your form!

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You are not registered until you sign, stamp, and mail your completed form!

INSTRUCTIONS

Take these easy steps to complete your voter registration:

- Sign the form. You must sign the voter registration form before you mail it.
- Make a mailer. Fold the form and address sheet in half.
 Make sure the address is visible on the outside. Tape or staple the folded form at the bottom to create the mailer.
 Alternately, place your form in an envelope and hand address it to the Secretary of State.

HOW TO MAKE A MAILER



- Stamp it. Place first class stamp on your envelope or folded mailer.
- 4. Mail it. Put your voter registration form in the mail.
- 5. Vote. On Election Day, go to the polls and vote.

SUBMIT YOUR COMPLETED, SIGNED FORM TO:

State Board of Elections 1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor Richmond, VA 23219

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

received 22 days before the election

SEE

http://www.rockthevote.com/registration/instructions/VA-en.html

FOR COMPLETE GENERAL AND STATE-SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION.

FIRST TIME VOTERS WHO REGISTER BY MAIL

If you are registering to vote for the first time in your jurisdiction and are mailing this registration application, Federal law requires you to show proof of identification the first time you vote. Proof of identification includes: A current and valid photo identification or a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or government document that shows your name and address.

Voters may be exempt from this requirement if they submit a copy of this identification with their mail in voter registration form.

If you wish to submit a copy, please keep the following in mind: Your state may have additional identification requirements which may mandate you show identification at the polling place even if you meet the Federal proof of identification.

Do not submit original documents with this application, only copies.

Voter Registration Application

	ou a citizen of the United State of America?					This s	spa	ace for office use only.			
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•	e see state-specific instructions for rule regarding										
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2	Home Address				Apt. or Lo	t #	С	ity/Town	Sta	A	Zip Code
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Diffe	rent F	From Above				С	ity/Town	Sta	te	Zip Code
1	Date of Birth Month Day Year	Month Day Year 5					ID Number - (See Item	6 in the instruc	tions	for your state	
7	Choice of Party (See Item 7 in the instructions for your state) None	8	Race or Ethic G (See Item 8 in the		your state)	6					
	I have reviewed my state's instructions an I am a United States Citizen I meet the eligibility requirements of my required.	state	and subscribe to	,							
9	The information I provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false infromation, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States. Date					Ple	eas	e sign full name (or pu	t mark)		
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More Voterization Webinars to come!

Educating Voters on Housing Issues

- Thursday, July 24, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET
- Learn about providing voter guides, producing candidate questionnaires, and making the election speak to your issues.

Mobilization—Getting Out the Vote!

- Monday, September 8, 2014 at 2:00 pm ET
- Ensure that low income voters get to the polls!
- Effective strategies for organizing on election day, coordinating rides to the polls, and encouraging early voting.



Thank You for Joining Us!

For more information about Voterization, or to find out how you can get involved, please contact:

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Joseph Lindstrom, 202-507-7441, joseph@nlihc.org
Mary Kolar, 202-507-7452, mary@nlihc.org

