



Housing & the Election: 5 Ways You Can Take Action

Wednesday, September 7



Speakers:



Sarah Mickelson
Director of Public Policy



Elayne Weiss
Senior Policy Analyst



Joseph Lindstrom
Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy

5 Ways You Can Take Action:

1. Increase Affordable Housing Resources
2. Expand and Improve the Housing Tax Credit
3. Include Housing in Criminal Justice Reform
4. Join the Make Room Campaign
5. Make Affordable Housing an Election Issue

Increase Affordable Housing Resources

Background on FY 2017 Spending Bills:

The House FY17 spending bill provides \$1.2 billion in additional funding for HUD's affordable housing and community development programs over FY 2016 enacted levels, while the Senate version of the bill provides \$1.5 billion in additional spending.

Both bills propose significant increases for several programs, including the Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Rental Assistance, and Homeless Assistance Grants. In addition, both bills level funds other programs, such as the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program, and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

Please urge your Members of Congress to enact their final Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 spending bills as soon as possible.

Expand and Improve the Housing Tax Credit

S.3237, the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2016

Introduced by Cantwell (D-WA), Hatch (R-UT), and Wyden (D-OR)

- Expands the Housing Credit by 50% over 5 years
- Goes beyond S.2962 by including several reforms, including (1) additional incentives for developments that serve homeless or ELI households, (2) incentives for developing in rural and Native American communities, and (3) income averaging.

Please ask your Senators to cosponsor S.3237 and tell them that any expansion of the Housing Credit must be tied to reforms to ensure that this resource better serves our nation's most vulnerable families.

Include Housing in Criminal Justice Reform

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI) is working with colleagues from both sides of the aisle to bring a package of criminal justice reform bills to the House floor for votes in September.

While some of the bills include some language around housing, none include a comprehensive plan to meet the housing needs of—or reduce barriers for—formerly incarcerated people.

Please tell your Representatives to push for a vote on criminal justice reform legislation and support future legislation that includes a comprehensive plan to address the housing needs of justice-involved individuals.

100 days.

2,000 organizations.

**1 million messages to Congress
that America's housing affordability
crisis must end.**

**Join us Sept. 1 – Nov. 8 at
www.MakeRoomUSA.org.**

**MAKE
ROOM**
#makeroom

Join the Make Room Campaign

- (1) Sign onto the national letter;
- (2) Use the advocacy toolkit—including sample e-newsletters, op-eds, LTE, social media, and more—to raise awareness of the campaign; and
- (3) Create a online profile on the Make Room digital advocacy platform and invite your networks to do the same.

Make Affordable Housing an Election Issue




Things you can do during this important election

- Conduct voter registration within the communities you serve and organize
- Attend candidate forums and town hall meetings
- Produce candidate questionnaires about affordable housing and distribute to your networks
- Invite candidates to speak at your events and community meetings
- Get Out the Vote!
 - Community phone trees
 - Coordinating Rides to the polls

NLIHC Voterization Resources

Visit: bit.ly/NLIHCVote

**VOTERIZATION:
2016 Voterization
Narrative Guide and Plan**



This guide accompanies the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Voterization Plan*, and is designed to help you through the steps of planning your agency's Voterization work. NLIHC's Voterization materials offer resources for organizations seeking to engage traditionally underrepresented people in the civic process.

Our *Voterization Plan* takes you through 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. Start by printing out the plan template, and then use other resources described in the plan to determine your next steps.

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 that you are conducting a Voterization effort. Call NLIHC's Field Team at 202-662-1530, or email us at outreach@nlihc.org.

WHY BECOME VOTERIZED?

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 75% of people with incomes over \$100,000 were registered to vote in 2014 and 53% voted, just 48% of people with incomes below \$20,000 were registered, and only 26% actually voted. (U.S. Census Bureau. *Voting and Registration*

in the Election of November 2014. July 2015.)


Low income people face several challenges to voting such 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 that may make people shy away from voting. 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 clients, are a natural fit in helping people overcome these challenges. Nonprofits that have implemented Voterization projects have identified several benefits of doing so:

- Residents engage in civic life and learn how decisions of elected officials affect their lives.
- Elected officials become educated on low income housing issues and on how their decisions affect residents.
- Influence is built with elected officials.
- Residents develop leadership skills.
- Assists residents in meeting community service requirements, if applicable.
- Positive press is earned for the program or project.

LEGALLY SPEAKING

Nonprofit organizations can, and should, engage in nonpartisan election-related activity, including voter registration, education, and mobilization. The basic rule is that 501(c)(3) organizations cannot in any way support or oppose particular candidates. For detailed guidance, you may want to consult:




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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.

**VOTERIZATION:
2016 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.

Please let us know you are participating! Contact NLIHC's Field 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 influence 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 third-party 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
- 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://www.nonprofitvote.org/documents/2010/11/nonprofits-voting-and-elections.pdf>



For More Information:

Sarah Mickelson, Public Policy Director

smickelson@nlihc.org

Elayne Weiss, Senior Policy Analyst

eweiss@nlihc.org

Joseph Lindstrom, Senior Organizer for Housing Advocacy

jlindstrom@nlihc.org

A copy of this presentation and advocacy materials will be provided after the webinar.