



NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION

NLIHC's Training Institute Civic Engagement 101: The Power of Advocacy and Voting Rights

October 30, 2025

Agenda



Welcome & Intro

- Dee Ross, Tenant Leader Fellow, NLIHC

Supreme Court Case *Louisiana v. Callais* Brief

- Ajay Saini, Southern Poverty Law Center

Turning Voters to Renters: Lessons in Engaging Low-Income Communities Report

- Dr. Bambi Hayes-Brown, Georgia ACT
- Katie West, Housing Network of Rhode Island

Our Homes Our Votes Resources

- Tia Turner, Project Manager of *Our Homes Our Votes*

Welcome & Intro



Dee Ross

Tenant Leader Fellow

National Low Income Housing Coalition

NLIHC
www.nlihc.org



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Supreme Court Case: *Louisiana v. Callais* Brief

Ajay Saini

Senior Staff Attorney, Democracy: Voting Rights Litigation Team
Southern Poverty Law Center

NLIHC
www.nlihc.org

About *Our Homes, Our Votes*



- NLIHC's nonpartisan campaign to boost voter turnout among low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness, and to elevate housing as an election issue
- Empowers housing providers, advocates, tenant leaders, and direct services organizations to register, educate, and mobilize voters



Civic Engagement 101: Turning Voters to Renters – Lessons Learned in Engaging Low-Income Communities



- Renters, especially low-income renters, are severely underrepresented in the political process. In the 2024 general election, only **52.1%** of eligible renters voted, compared to **70.3%** of eligible homeowners. The disparity between low-income and high-income people is even greater: only **46.1%** of eligible voters in households making below \$20,000 voted, compared to **78.4%** of eligible voters in households making above \$100,000.
- While approximately one-third of Americans rent their homes, researchers estimate that renters constitute somewhere between 2% and 7% of elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels.





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Civic Engagement 101: Turning Voters to Renters –
Lessons in Engaging Low-Income Communities

Lessons Learned from Georgia

Dr. Bambi Hayes-Brown

President & CEO

Georgia ACT

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Civic Engagement 101: Turning Voters to Renters –
Lessons in Engaging Low-Income Communities

Lessons Learned from Rhode Island

Katie West

Director of Strategic Initiatives
Housing Network of Rhode Island

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT 101 WEBINAR OCTOBER 30, 2025

OUR HOMES
OUR VOTES

BECAUSE HOUSING IS BUILT WITH BALLOTS
★★★★★

HOUSING



NETWORK



ABOUT US

WWW.HOUSINGNETWORKRI.ORG

WWW.HOMESRI.ORG



HOUSING NETWORK
OF RHODE ISLAND

- Membership organization of 20 nonprofit community development organizations
- Mission: Increase the supply of high-quality affordable homes through coalition building, public engagement, and advocacy
- Backbone for Homes RI
- State partner organization of NLHC, pilot community with Our Homes, Our Votes



- Multisector coalition of 80+ organizations focused on increasing the supply of safe, healthy, affordable homes
- Staffed and coordinated by HNRI
- Vehicle for multiple advocacy campaigns, as well as OHOV

VOTER ENGAGEMENT IN 2024

- **To reach low-income renters, partnered with nonprofit affordable housing providers:**
 - NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
 - West Elmwood Housing Development Corp.
 - House of Hope CDC
 - Omni Development Corp.
 - Women's Development Corp.
 - WinnCo
- **Engaged Resident Service Coordinators**
- **Partnered with mobile outreach service (Shower to Empower) to reach unhoused residents**
- **Tabled at community events**
 - Back to School events
 - Major bus hub for National Voter Registration Day
- **Canvassed 1,800 residents living in affordable housing May - November 2024**
 - By phone
 - Knocked doors
 - Recruited volunteers from local universities and partner orgs to help canvass



VOTER ENGAGEMENT IN 2024

- **Housing Bond Campaign**
- **Voter Pledge drives (combined with events)**
- **Posters**
- **Kickoff event / ice cream social**
- **Mail Ballot drives**
- **Get Out the Vote Push**
 - Canvassed 300 renters in person 3 days before Election Day
 - Reminder calls the day before and on Election Day
- **Social Media**
 - Instagram campaign
 - #VOTERREADY newsletter with important voting info
 - Key partners: Looking Upwards, Latino Policy Institute, Common Cause, Economic Progress Institute, Providence Streets Coalition



REFLECTIONS

- Prep is very important
 - Locations, scripts, materials
- Meeting people where they are
 - Ask questions to learn more
 - Connect to issues
- Nonpartisanship
- Access to voter list is extremely helpful
- Accessibility
- Know your state voter laws
- Partnerships with community-based orgs
- Peer leadership
- Collect feedback



YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE



MAKE IT COUNT



Take the 2024 voter
pledge, check your
voter status, and get
election info here:

How to use a QR code:

1. Open your phone's camera app.
2. Point the camera at the code.
3. Wait for the notification and link to pop up.
4. Tap the notification to open the link.

**OUR HOMES
OUR VOTES
2024**
BECAUSE HOUSING IS BUILT WITH BALLOTS
★★★★



www.homesri.org

401-721-5680

CONTACT INFO:

Katie West

kwest@housingnetworkri.org

401-721-5680 x 105



THANK YOU



homes_ri



homesRI_



Housing
Network of
Rhode Island



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Civic Engagement 101: Turning Voters to Renters – Lessons in Engaging Low-Income Communities

Tia Turner

Project Manager

Our Homes, Our Votes Campaign

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Building Blocks of a Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Campaign



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Voter Registration



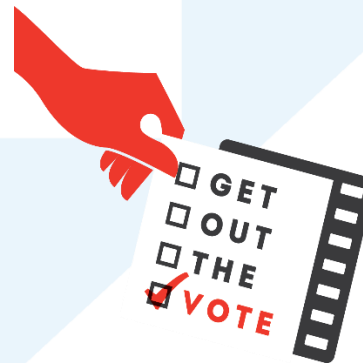
- Make forms available
 - Tabling
- Canvassing
 - Voter registration events

Voter Education & Candidate Engagement



- Voter ID clinics
- Candidate forums + questionnaires
- Nonpartisan voter guides
- Signs & messages about deadlines, polling places, etc.

Voter Mobilization



- Reminder phonebanking or textbanking
- Canvassing
- Transportation
- Post-Election celebration

Voter Protection



- Distribute info about Election Protection Hotline
- Inform voters about provisional ballots

Our Homes, Our Votes Educational Resources



- Comprehensive online resource library
 - Visit: <https://www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/resources>
 - Best Practice Report: <https://nlihc.org/resource/now-available-our-homes-our-votes-2025-best-practices-report>
- 2026 Webinar series kickoff – STAY TUNED!!!



OurHomes.TurboVote.org



OUR HOMES
OUR VOTES

BECAUSE VOTING IS HARD WITH BAD GPS
★★★★

Make Your Voice Heard!

Your vote is your voice. Use this tool to register to vote, check your registration status, update your registration, and sign up for reminders about elections in your community.

Never miss an election!

Enter your address or [Select your state](#)

Address



Register To Vote
with help from TurboVote

Check Your Registration

Preregister To Vote
Under 18? Register as soon as you can!

[Vote Early >](#)

[Vote by Mail >](#)



Our Homes Our Votes Mini Grant Program



APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 7th!!!

Funding Grassroots Democracy

MINI-GRANTS FOR 2026 VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Our Homes, Our Votes has launched its first-ever mini-grant program to increase our field's capacity to engage voters. The mini-grant program will fund nonpartisan activities that empower low-income renters and/or people experiencing homelessness to participate in the democratic process. Funds can be used to support immediate nonpartisan voter mobilization activities for state and local elections in 2026, and/or voter registration and education initiatives for participation in the 2026 midterm elections.



Affiliates Network

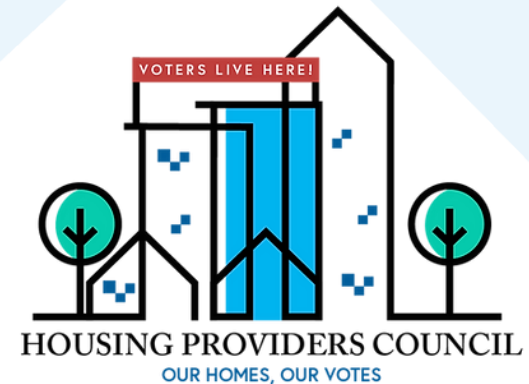


- Open to all nonpartisan organizations that share campaign's goals
- Regular office hours, email listserv, and post-election virtual gathering
- TurboVote referral codes
- Sign up: www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/affiliates

Housing Providers Council



- Nonpartisan group of housing developers, property managers, and resident services staff committed to boosting voter turnout among their residents
- Regular virtual meetings (bimonthly in 2024) to exchange ideas and receive trainings on best practices in nonpartisan voter engagement
- Topics have included: connecting with city clerks, transportation to the polls, language access, connecting residents with voter ID
- More info and application link:
<https://www.ourhomes-ourvotes.org/housing-providers-council>



Our Homes, Our Votes Swag



- Visit <https://nlihc.myshopify.com/>





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Questions?



Email: tturner@nlihc.org

Support NLIHC: Become a Member!

Why Join NLIHC?

- Discounted tickets to NLIHC's annual Housing Policy Forum in DC
- Exclusive access to quarterly members-only Policy Advisory Committee meetings
- Discounted rates for print publications
- Prioritized support from NLIHC staff to advance affordable housing solutions

Support NLIHC in advancing our mission



www.nlihc.org/membership

Upcoming Webinars!



- **Advocacy 101** — Thursday, November 13, 2025
- **Policy 101** — Thursday, January 29, 2026
- **Equity, Race & Culture 101** — Thursday, February 26, 2026
- For a full description of the Tenant and Resident Training Institute and to access past webinars, visit: <https://nlihc.org/training-institute>
- For questions, please contact: dross@nlihc.org or ideas@nlihc.org