

Housing Providers Step Up to Help Renters Vote Successfully

A coalition of housing providers throughout the country has come together under the *Our Homes, Our Votes: 2020* banner, committing to increasing voter registration and voter turnout among their residents. Renters face so many barriers to voting, and even more so with the health risks presented by the ongoing pandemic. Housing providers are uniquely positioned to encourage voter registration and help residents register successfully, to provide information on how to vote, and to boost vote-by-mail and early voting so the renters can vote safely.

The Housing Providers Council currently includes organizations who own or operate more than 1 million subsidized rental homes. All participants are committed to non-partisan voter engagement in all of their efforts. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/y4srblmn>.



BY SUMAN GIDWANI

Making Voting a Priority

SOLUTIONS DURING A PANDEMIC

Jonathan Rose Companies is one of the country’s leading developers and investors in sustainable, affordable, and mixed-income multifamily real estate, with 15,000 units owned in 19 states and the District of Columbia. Founded in 1989, the company believes that helping its residents become civically engaged creates a sense of common purpose and connects residents to their community and each other. “We strongly encourage the active participation of our citizen residents in their communities to have a voice in shaping policies that affect their daily lives,” said Jonathan F.P. Rose, president of JRCo. “Voting increases the chance that their voices will be heard.”

In 2018, Jonathan Rose Companies partnered with the League of Women Voters Education Foundation to launch RoseVotes, a voter engagement campaign across 30 communities nationwide. The initiative focused on voter registration events, distributing non-partisan voter educational materials, and testing rides to the polls in partnership with Lyft.

In 2020, the pandemic presented new challenges, and required the company to find new ways to help residents vote. In order to ensure resident safety, the RoseVotes *Vote at Home* campaign promotes voting by mail. A “Voter Roadmap” was delivered to each

resident across our personally managed properties outlines the steps involved in voting by mail, with action steps and associated dates specific to that state. Posters in the buildings remind residents why voting is important and share critical state-specific deadlines for voting by mail. Finally, prerecorded phone call messages at each deadline remind residents to complete the step. These communications are supplemented by virtual and socially distanced events that encourage camaraderie between residents.

Jonathan Rose Companies believes that one of the most effective ways to help residents vote is to incorporate voter registration into the leasing process. The company has found that many residents don’t realize they need to update their registrations when they move, and residents who haven’t voted in a while may not realize that they’ve been removed from the voter list until its too late. Helping residents register to vote when they are signing a new lease, renewing an existing lease, or completing recertification is an easy and cost-effective way to ensure all residents are registered to vote. Moving forward, Jonathan Rose Companies is working closely with NLIHC through the Housing Providers Council to get other owners and property managers to pledge to incorporate voter registration into their leasing process.

CURRENT PARTICIPANTS

- ACTION-Housing
- Avanath Capital Management
- Beacon Communities
- Bridging the Gap Development
- Church Housing Corporation
- City of Philadelphia – Dept of Behavior Health
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- Columbia Residential
- Community Housing Resource Partners
- Dominium
- EAH Housing
- Edgewood Management/Vantage Management
- Enterprise Residential
- Envolve Communities
- Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority
- Habitat America
- Hope Communities
- John Stewart Company
- Jonathan Rose Companies
- L+M Development Partners/C+C Management
- Landex Development
- LDG Development
- Linc Housing
- Maiker Housing Partners
- McCormack Baron Salazar
- Mercy Housing
- The Michaels Organization/Better Tomorrows
- National Church Residences
- National Housing Trust
- NHP Foundation/Operation Pathways
- The NRP Group
- Peabody Properties
- Perry Rose
- Preservation Management
- Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH)
- Richman Property Services
- Schochet Companies
- Silver Street Development Corp
- Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp
- TESCO Properties
- The Community Builders
- Volunteers of America
- WinnCompanies
- Wishcamper Companies
- Woda Cooper Companies



**National
Housing Trust**
...the key to your home

NHT Communities Getting Out the Vote

BY RAISA JOHNSON

National Housing Trust Communities (NHTC) preserves and improves housing so that it is healthy, safe and affordable for all people. NHTC raises the power of community voice through non-partisan, voter mobilization. NHTC has been involved in Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts for more than a decade through resident outreach and collaboration. While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way NHTC has thought about GOTV in 2020, the organization remains committed to making sure every resident who wants to vote gets to vote. NHTC owns and operates 35 multifamily properties across the U.S. Much of the resident engagement is done by property management and resident services staff who reach out directly to residents at home. Taking the time to vote can be a commitment that may seem overwhelming. Often individuals and families, especially renters, are simply too busy between work and childcare to spend time on voter education or to find out when and how to vote. NHT Communities aims to provide residents with the necessary information to make voting as accessible as possible through information distribution via fliers, mail, email, and property events. For example, in 2018, NHTC launched Where Will We Live campaign to lift resident voices and mobilize renters around housing affordability. Voter registration tables were organized in all affordable housing properties, so residents did not have to go far to register.

In 2020, NHTC's efforts are focused on raising awareness around voter safety during the COVID-19 pandemic and supporting residents in making the voting choice that works best for them, whether by voting in person or submitting mail-in/absentee ballots. During the pandemic, instead of organizing voter registration tables and organizing rides to polling stations, NHTC is working with local organizations to lead phone drives for direct outreach to residents. NHTC is also sending voter kits to affordable housing properties that make voting a family affair. In addition to including information on polling stations and CDC recommendations for voting safely, the kits include youth activities to help children understand the importance of voting.

Lastly, NHTC will continue to work with other affordable housing owners to explore best practices in voter mobilization and to strengthen efforts to promote community self-determination.