

# + Act Locally: Voter Registration and Engagement

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# What Can You Do? Stand Up and Fight Back!

- Make Issues of Homelessness Part of the Debate
- Educate Yourself and Your Clients on Voting
- You Don't Need a Home to Vote. Help Your Clients Register!



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# Assist Clients in Registering to Vote

## First of all...

### IT IS LEGAL

- The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 **encourages** nonprofits to register historically underrepresented groups
- Outstationed eligibility workers are **required** to do voter registration
- Court cases have repeatedly ruled that you do not need a traditional dwelling to vote



# Assist Clients in Registering to Vote Second...

## IT IS OUR MISSION

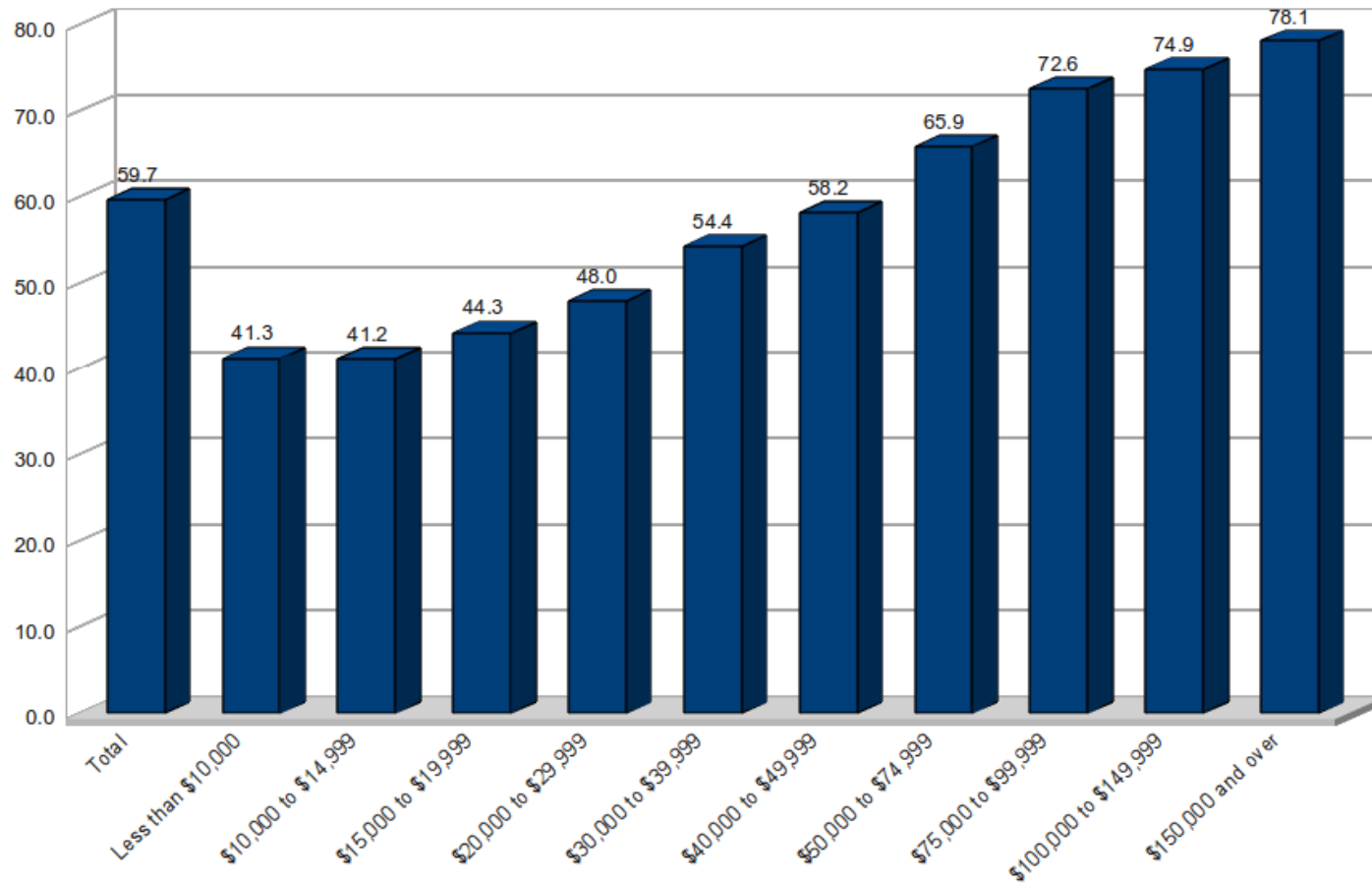
- All people have the right to participate in the decisions affecting their lives
- Public policy decisions impact our clients and services
- Integrate service and advocacy
- Empower clients



# Participation Rates

Voter Turnout by Income, 2008 US Presidential Election.

Source: US Census Bureau.



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# Word of Caution: Remain **Nonpartisan**

(Discuss Issues – Not People)



- Do not explicitly support a candidate or party
- Do not implicitly support a candidate or party
- Offer same support and materials at all sites
- Choose partners carefully



# Word of Caution: Source of Funding and State Law

- Federal funds (like Health Center grants) cannot be used
- Private dollars may also have restrictions
- Account for staff time and expenses using other funds
- Check with your State/County Elections Office for other restrictions





# Options for Integrating Voter Registration



- Provide registration materials in lobby
- Register during intake
- Include in case management/clinical work
- Voter registration drives
- Consumer Advisory Board sponsorship

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# Register at Intake



- Appoint a coordinator for training intake staff, collecting forms, and communicating with Elections Office
- Publicize effort in lobby – include voter education posters
- Include on intake forms (if you are not registered, would you like to register today?)
- Intake staff should assist with forms, ensure complete information, and facilitate f/u for any additional documentation (IDs, etc.)



# Voter Registration Drive



- Establish a coordinator on committee
- Set date, time and location – possibly around a special event
- Advertise effort in lobby and elsewhere
- Engage your Consumer Advisory Board, recruit volunteers
- Have all needed materials on hand
- Assist in completing forms, answer questions, offer to mail forms



# Voter Registration Do's and Don't's

## DO

- Assist with forms
- Educate about voting process
- Offer the HCH project as a mailing address
- Discuss importance of policy
- Offer to mail in forms
- Check state/county law

## DON'T

- Refuse anyone the opportunity to register
- Attach information to the registration forms
- Discuss the candidates' positions on issues
- Have any materials endorsing candidates or parties



# Overcome Common Barriers

- I do not have time
- My vote does not matter
- I am homeless
- I do not have an ID
- I have a criminal record
- I am already registered





# You Do Not Need a Home to Vote! (But You Might Need an ID)

you a citizen of the United States?  
All you be 18 years of age on or before election day?  
you checked "No" in response to either of the above, do not complete this form.

CHECK ONE:  NEW REGISTRATION  NAME CHANGE  
 ADDRESS CHANGE

1 LAST NAME  
2 ADDRESS WHERE YOU LIVE (DO NOT GIVE A P.O. BOX)  
3 *Homeless*  
4 ADDRESS WHERE YOU GET YOUR MAIL (IF DIFFERENT FROM #3)  
5 DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH 6 SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SEE INSTRUCTIONS)

By completing the conditions on this form, I am certifying (or affirming) that I am subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

- Check your local laws for registration and election day requirements:

- Mailing Address
- Photo Identification
- Citizenship
- Registration Deadlines
- Criminal Background

**Help Overcome these  
Barriers!**

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# Get Out the Vote Leading Up to Election Day



- Early voting opportunities
- Absentee ballots
- Polling places
- Sample ballots, voting machines
- Nonpartisan issue education
- Publicize information widely
- Consider becoming a polling place or an election volunteer



# Get Out the Vote Election Day



- Have volunteers provide transportation (no partisan bumper stickers)
- Can use company vehicles for transportation
- Ask for in-kind donation of a bus or taxis for the day
- Walk to polling station in a group
- Have a get out the vote rally
- Have volunteers at the polling places



# Other Election Year Activities

- Host a candidate forum
- Attend town hall meetings
- Invite candidates to tour or volunteer at your project
- Write letters to the editors and/or op-eds



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# Candidate Forums



- Make sure all candidates are invited
- Avoid even the appearance of partisanship
- Plan well in advance
- Invite the media



# Many Resources Available Online

(Special thanks to the National Coalition for the Homeless)

- National Coalition for the Homeless Manual:  
[http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual\\_2012.pdf](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/projects/vote/Manual_2012.pdf)
- Community Health Vote (NACHC):  
<http://www.nachc.com/Community%20Health%20Vote.cfm>
- League of Women Voters: <http://www.lwv.org/>
- Nonprofit Vote: [www.nonprofitvote.org](http://www.nonprofitvote.org)

**USE THESE SITES FOR POSTERS, FORMS,  
BALLOTS, EDUCATION MATERIALS, WIDGETS  
AND STATE INFO!**

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# Voter Suppression

- **Changes in Voting Rights:**
  - **Photo ID laws.**
  - **Proof of citizenship laws.**
  - **Making voter registration harder.**
  - **Reducing early and absentee days.**
  - **Making it harder to restore voting rights.**



# Voting –age Americans Who Lack Valid, Government-Issued Photo IDs



25% of African Americans

20% of Asian Americans

19% Latino Americans

18% American citizens between 18-24 lack photo ID with current name and address

15% of American citizens earning less than \$35,000 per year



# GOT ID Recommendations



- Know the process and requirements for obtaining the required ID in your state.
- Identify eligible voters in need of photo ID.
- Ascertain whether the eligible voter has or needs the necessary underlying documentation to obtain a government-issued photo ID. If not, then an organization must be prepared to assist in or identify resources for voters to obtain the underlying documentation to obtain a photo ID.



# GOT ID Recommendations (Cont.)



- Assist the voter in navigating the process to acquire a government-issued photo ID.
- Record the necessary information to follow up with each voter assisted to ensure they are properly registered to vote and have all the information needed to get to the polls on Election Day.



# + Things to Remember

- Be Informed
- Focus on the Issues
- Educate on the Importance of Voting
- Understand the Bottom of the Ticket is just as Important as the Top.
- Work with other Coalitions in your Community



# Using social media to protect the right to vote



- Project Vote
- <http://projectvote.org/?gclid=CKbTwoeN-a8CFQSynQodkIvxRQ>
- American Progress

```
<iframe src="
http://interactives.americanprogress.org/projects/2012/voter\_suppression/
frameborder="0" scrolling="no" width="600" height="800"></iframe>
```

*Gotta Register*

<https://www.gottaregister.com/>





# More Information on the Council



The National Health Care for the Homeless Council is a membership organization for those who work to improve the health of homeless people and who seek housing, health care, and adequate incomes for everyone.

- Our site: [www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)
- NHCHC offers free individual memberships at: <http://www.nhchc.org/council.html#membership>